Negotiating ‘Finnishness’

– The discursive construction of Finnish national identities in online discussions around immigration

Inna Sinersaari

Supervisor: Peo Hansen
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1. Introduction

During the past thirty years, the Finnish society has become increasingly diverse due to the relatively rapid increase of immigration to Finland since the 1990s and the diversification of countries of origin, among others (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, pp. 38-39). Reactions to immigration and its consequences have provoked strong feelings among people and created new political controversies (Martikainen, Saukkonen, & Säävälä, 2013, p. 14). In the immigration debate, hierarchies of immigrants have been developed (Horsti, 2009, p. 77), creating greater boundaries for some groups, while incorporating others more easily. Social media has provided a new space for public discussion that, optimistically, allows for more voices to be heard and more opportunity for dialogue between people in different places, but which often has also become a space for more extreme racist rhetoric and polarized discussions among those of the same opinion (Petterson & Sakki, 2017, p. 319; Hakala & Vesa, 2013, p. 207). Public discussion around migration – both online and offline – inevitably defines ‘us’ through the inclusion and exclusion of, for example, people, languages and religions.

Nevertheless, the immigration debate has tended to concentrate on migrants while discussing diversity and migration, while ‘Finnishness’ has been perceived as natural and as a given, as a benchmark against which to evaluate the ‘others’ (Lehtonen, 2009, p. 109). However, it was only the Fennomans in the 19th century – the Finnish nationalist movement seeking to bring the Finnish language and culture to a dominant position in the society – and later their successors that made people to adopt the idea of ‘real Finnishness’ through creating boundaries between Finland and the rest of the world. Lines between different regions, religions, ethnicities, professions, and genders within the country were blurred. (Lehtonen, 2009, p. 114-115.) Indeed, although Finns are represented as a homogenous group of people characterized by some innate attributes, Finns and Finnishness as something homogenous and singular is a historical fiction – it has never existed (Klinge as cited in Anttila, 2007, p. 148). Instead, the idea of a homogenous nation different from ‘others’ is constructed and reproduced in discourse.

Finnishness, as any other collective identity, is then negotiated in interaction – it is constantly defined in discourse. How people talk about issues such as ‘migration’ and ‘Finnishness’, ‘migrants’ and ‘Finns’ does not only reflect their personal opinions, it also constitutes ‘realities’. Through using language – or other semiotic systems, – ‘common truths’ are created and reproduced. However, this construction and reproduction of ‘common truths’ is marked by inequal power relations: the ‘realities’ are constructed by those who can get their voices heard. Consequently, the construction of Finnishness
is inevitably connected to power relations: Lehtonen (2015b, p. 138) writes that to define Finnishness is to use and to pursue symbolic power, i.e. to have the ability to modify mental categories and emotions through which we experience and categorize the world and its events. The shared, largely unconscious understandings are not born from nothing – they are produced through constant symbolic work that naturalizes them. This constant reproduction makes the products of the reproduction itself to seem as the starting point while the consequences are presented as the causes. (Lehtonen, 2015b, p. 138.) By othering someone, one denies the right to name and to define oneself from the other as well as denying their belonging – they are not thought to belong ‘here’ nor to ‘us’. Thus, othering is based on inequality and intertwined with relations of power in the society. (Lehtonen, 2015d, pp. 267-268.)

Critical discourse studies takes a special interest in the existent power relations in society and their connection to discourse; it could be described as an approach to the study of discourse that emphasizes the connections between language use and its social context, more specifically how social change, power, and inequalities are connected with discourse (van Dijk, 1993, pp. 252-253). Discourse analysis views discourse as both constituting and reflecting the world: when we communicate, we are restricted by the wider social context in which we are situated, but we also construct it. Communication, then, is necessarily intertwined with power. However, the notion of ‘reality’ being socially constructed also opens up the chance for change. As Lehtonen (2005a, p. 23) points out, understanding Finnishness as something that is constructed, reproduced, and learned implies that Finnishness can also be constructed, reproduced, and learned differently. Changes in discourse may both reflect and help foster wider social changes. Analysing text and talk (or any semiotic event), then, can tell us about the dominant ways in which the world is perceived, of the naturalized ‘truths’, and the ways in which they are reproduced and challenged.

Much of the critical study of discourse has concentrated on revealing ideological discourse on the traditional media. However, Internet has turned into a space for public discussion in the 21st century (Hakala & Vesa, 2013, p. 205) and with the rise of social media, power concentrations have become more unfixed and dependent on the context. Social media has played a role in changing the processes of production and distribution of contents, affecting the power a text (or any communicative event) may have: the linear flow of contents from established producers of media contents to the consumers has shifted to a circulation between the two. A content produced by an ‘ordinary person’ may now have significant effects on broader social level if it manages to spark an interest of others to share it. (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, pp. 206-209.) Thus, a critical analysis of the way people talk online is of
interest, and apart from reflecting the views of the participants, it can shed light on how elite discourse is reproduced or challenged by the participants. Moreover, of course, the discussions online do not necessarily stay online but they also may have effects on discussions ‘offline’ – and produce new elite discourse.

In this thesis, the discursive construction of Finnish national identities in online discussions around migration and integration will be analyzed. Drawing on Critical Discourse Studies and on the notion of a nation as a social construct that is constantly reproduced in mundane ways, the ways in which ‘Finnishness’ is defined – and consequently who is excluded and included – in the discussions will be examined. The present thesis will take as its object online discussions on a Finnish discussion forum Suomi24 – a forum in which around 20 000 messages are published daily (Väyrynen, 2015). Suomi24, the 6th most visited Finnish website (FIAM – comScore MMX, January-March 2018), advertises itself as ‘known by everyone’ as well as ‘open for everyone’ and in addition to its discussion forum, it is comprised of services such as e-mail and dating service. (Aller Media Oy, n.d. c.) The discussion forum is a general one rather than with a focus on a certain topic, as can be seen, for example, in the way in which Aller Media (n.d. c.) promotes the discussion forum: “the discussions can help you with your everyday problems, they provide you with support in your purchase decisions through bringing you information about other people’s experiences of the products, as well as providing you with entertainment for the day”. Indeed, the discussions range from topics such as fashion and beauty to hobbies and entertainment, and to politics and the society. It could be assumed that its general nature would provide a space for more dialogue than social networking sites, such as Facebook pages, that are often targeted to a certain group of people with common interests.

The present thesis views Finnishness as a product of a constant negotiation, and its construction is understood to be based on both the construction of otherness as well as of sameness. It aims to examine the conceptualizations of Finnishness that dominate the discussions in terms of exclusion and inclusion – who and what is excluded from and included in Finnishness and on what basis and how is this done discursively? In order to do that, it 1) looks at the dominant discourses of migration and the conceptualizations of ‘nation’ and ‘migration’ that underlie such discourses in the discussions selected for analysis; 2) focuses on the discursive construction of ‘otherness’ through investigating representations of ‘us’ and ‘them’; and 3) examines the ways in which unity within ‘us’ is constructed and constantly reproduced discursively, constructing ‘us’ as one, homogenous groups that is different
from ‘others’. Although the main focus is on the contents level, the strategies and linguistic means of realisation are also examined. The research questions are:

- How is Finnish national identity, i.e. ‘Finns’ as a unified group different from ‘others’, discursively constructed and constantly reproduced in the discussions?
  o How is sameness discursively constructed? What linguistic means and strategies are employed in the construction of sameness?
  o How is ‘otherness’ discursively constructed? How are ‘us’ and ‘them’ represented in the discussions?

- What are the dominant discourses around immigration in the threads of discussions analyzed and how do they conceptualize ‘migration’ and ‘nation’?

- How do the discourses of immigration and the constructions of Finnish national identities relate to previous research on immigration debate and the construction of Finnishness? Do they reproduce or challenge the exclusionary ways of representing ‘Finnishness’ and ‘immigration’ identified previously?

To follow, the selected theoretical frameworks will be elaborated together with a discussion on the Finnish context, followed by an overview on the method employed and the materials analyzed, as well as the analysis itself.
2. Theoretical framework

In this section of the present thesis, the relevant theoretical framework will be outlined. First, Critical Discourse Studies and the sociocognitive approach will be introduced. Second, theories on nation as a social construct and a discursive approach to (national) identities will be elaborated in Chapter 2.2. Third, in Chapter 2.3, Internet as a space for public discussion will be discussed.

2.1. Critical Discourse Studies

Critical Discourse Studies (henceforth, CDS) is a critical perspective on language in society; it views language as social practice that is intertwined with power relations. Rather than being a fixed discipline, it is rather a term used to refer to a range of approaches used for the analysis of naturally occurring semiotic events; of discourse. In this thesis, I will draw upon the sociocognitive approach. Van Dijk (2014, p. 1) emphasizes the need to be able to explicitly relate society and discourse and to explain how structures of power are enacted and reproduced in discourse. The sociocognitive approach does this through discourse-cognition-society triangle: it assumes that discourse and society are cognitively mediated through mental representations. These mental representations include mental situation and context models (personal cognition) as well as socially shared attitudes and ideologies (social cognition). (van Dijk 2014.) To follow, the discourse-cognition-society triangle will be further elaborated. First, however, the term ‘discourse(s)’ will be defined as understood in CDS and language as social practice will be discussed.

2.1.1. Discourse(s): a definition

‘Discourse’ (as an abstract noun) refers to any semiotic event: to written, spoken and sign language as well as visual images, for instance. Here, it is used interchangeably with ‘text’ – ‘text’ thus does not here only refer to written language but to any semiotic event.

‘Discourse’ as a countable noun – ‘discourse(s)’ – is defined as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1). A discourse is thus a way of presenting the world and producing knowledge (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 143). Following Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 144), a discourse here is understood as an analytical concept; “that is, as an entity that the researcher projects onto the reality in order to create a framework for study”. They are not, then, something that exist “in a delimited form in reality, ready to be identified and mapped” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 144), but rather something that is constructed as objects by the researcher.
2.1.2. Language use as social practice

CDS considers language use as social practice. Its interest lies in the dialectical relationship between discourse and other aspects of social practice; that is, it aims to find out “how the world (or aspects of it) is ascribed meaning discursively and what social consequences this has” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 145). Taking as a starting point structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy and their claim of language being our access to the reality, CDS does not see language as a mere channel of communication and information, but as constituting the social world, including social identities and social relations. Semiotic events create representations of the world, of reality, that at the same time both reflect and construct it. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 9.)

In CDS, discourse is thus considered as both socially constitutive and socially conditioned. First, discourses, as being particular ways of (re)presenting the world, constitute subjects and objects according to the worldview of the discourse in question, ascribing meaning to the world and creating their own ‘realities’. Discursive practices – the practices of the production and the consumption of texts – constitute the social world. Second, while semiotic events represent the world in a particular way, (re)producing the social world, they also reflect the world and other social practices; discursive practices are restricted by societal forces. (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 61-62, 145; Blommaert, 2005, p. 25.)

CDS then does not consider our knowledge of the world as objective truth: the ways we talk about the world are not neutral reflections of the world, social relations and identities – they are historically and culturally specific and subject to change (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1). Consequently, how we talk about the world matters, as our ways of representing the world play a role in (re)producing the social world: creating, maintaining as well as changing it. Common truths are created in interaction, through discourse, as distinct discourses compete. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 5.) However, although knowledge and identities are seen as subject to change, they are, however, restricted by the context: “Specific situations place restrictions on the identities which an individual can assume and on the statements which can be accepted as meaningful” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 6). It is in this way that discourse has social consequences: a particular worldview places restrictions on the forms of action, some of them becoming natural while others being considered as unthinkable, leading to different social actions (Burss, and Gergen as cited in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 6). Discursive changes, then, both reflect changes in the social world as well as can be considered as a means to change it (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 9), and consequently, “…language-as-discourse is both a form of action […] through
which people can change the world and a form of action which is socially and historically situated and in a dialectical relationship with other aspects of the social” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 62).

2.1.3. Cognition: mental models, attitudes and ideologies

Socio-cognitive approach to the critical study of discourse is a multidisciplinary theory that relates the discourse structures and the societal structures with each other, assuming that the relations between discourse and society are cognitively mediated (van Dijk, 2014, p. 1). Thus, it is able to explicitly relate society and discourse and to describe and explain how structures of power are enacted and reproduced in discourse – something that van Dijk (2014) argues a critical study of discourse should be able to do. Van Dijk writes,

A socio-cognitive theory assumes that social structures need to be interpreted and represented cognitively and that such mental representations affect the cognitive processes involved in the production and interpretation of discourse. The same principle holds true for the reverse relationship, namely how discourse is able to affect social structure — namely through the mental representations of language users as social actors. (2014, p. 1-2.)

In other words, the socio-cognitive approach explains how discursive practices are influenced by the social and how the social can be influenced by discourse through mental representations. In terms of mental representations, the socio-cognitive approach makes a distinction between personal and social cognition. Personal cognition is related to how individuals subjectively produce and interpret text. However, in discursive practices, the personal and the social are inevitably intertwined: being members of different social collectivities, individuals’ production and understanding of texts is influenced by socially shared representations. The mental representations are acquired, changed and socially reproduced in social interaction. (van Dijk, 2014, p. 3.)

In terms of personal cognition, mental models play a fundamental role in discursive practices, i.e. in the production and interpretation of discourse. Mental models are divided into situation and context models. Situation models, or ‘semantic’ models, are personal representations of the events or situations the discourse is about. In order to understand discourse, these situation models need to be activated, updated and constructed. Context models, or ‘pragmatic’ models, are personal representations of the communicative event that is occurring at the moment; they are, thus, what traditionally has been referred to as the ‘context’ of the discourse, for instance, in sociolinguistics. Subjective context models that represent the communicative event in question control the discourse in a way that discourse and the
interaction in general is adapted to the environment. The knowledge device is a crucial parameter of the context model: a pragmatic knowledge device defines the common ground in a communicative event, i.e. the mutual and shared knowledge of the participants. The common ground allows participants to presuppose knowledge that the other participants are believed to have or to be able to infer from the socially shared knowledge. Both situation and context models are assumed to be represented in the part of Long Term Memory where personal memories and autobiographical experiences are represented, namely in the Episodic Memory, and they are comprised of knowledge, personal opinions as well as emotions that the person associates with the ongoing situation or event. Both types of mental models feature a spatiotemporal setting, an ongoing action together with its goals and the participants of the action in their diverse identities, roles and relationships. (van Dijk, 2014, pp. 4-8) They are, as van Dijk (2011, p. 390) writes, how “people personally interpret, live and remember the events in their daily lives”.

Personal and social cognition, as argued previously, are inevitably intertwined. As members of social collectivities, we share a natural language, sociocultural knowledge, norms and values as well as the attitudes and ideologies that are based on them. This shared knowledge is the basis of discourse and interaction: it allows the knowledge device of context models to operate and is central for the construction of personal situation models. On the one hand, we need general knowledge in order to construct mental models, and on the other hand, general knowledge can also be based on mental models. (van Dijk, 2014, pp. 9-10). As van Dijk points out,

most of the general knowledge we have about the world beyond our daily experiences, such as about natural catastrophes, war, social conflicts, countries and famous people, is derived from the generalization and abstraction of mental models of specific instances of public (mostly media) discourse. (2014, p. 10.)

Moreover, shared general knowledge is also the basis for, for instance, the implicit arguments of argumentative discourse and interaction (van Dijk, 2014, p. 10).

As discussed earlier, mental models may also include personal opinions that are not simply based on the general, shared sociocultural knowledge. Mental models, then, are also based on attitudes, i.e. evaluative representations that a social group shares. Attitudes, thus, are essentially social; they are a form of socially shared cognition and should not be confused with personal opinions. (van Dijk, 2014, pp. 10-11.) They “represent the relationship between social group and their members and the ways members as language users express opinions about social events, situations, people or groups” (van Dijk, 2014, p. 11). Thus, attitudes function as the basis for social practice: for instance, for the exclusion and
discrimination of certain groups as well as for racist talk. It is through the socially shared attitudes and personal mental models that discourse, as a type of social practice, is connected to the societal structures. In other words, social practice and societal structures are mediated by attitudes. That is how, for example, discriminatory discourse is involved in the reproduction of social structures of domination. (van Dijk, 2014, p. 11.) Therefore, as van Dijk notes,

race and hence white group power is not reproduced by individually bigoted people, but by the joint or separate daily cooperation of (white) group members to exclude, marginalize and problematize members of other ethnic groups in many different everyday situations. (2014, p. 12.)

Van Dijk (2014), however, argues that “Many attitudes have a broader and more general sociocognitive basis that allows different attitudes to be formed, acquired and applied, namely by underlying ideologies” (2014, p. 12). Ideologies are belief systems comprised of beliefs shared by a group (van Dijk, 2011, p. 382), which together with the socially shared group knowledge function as the ‘cognitive core of social groupness’ (van Dijk, 2014, p. 12). As van Dijk defines them, ideologies are “the basis cognitive self-schema of a group and its interests, and defined by such general categories as the identities, actions, goals, norms and values, relations with other groups and the (power) resources of a group” (2014, p. 12). An individual belief is therefore not an ideology; rather ideologies are shared mental representations that organize group members’ thoughts, speech and actions. These beliefs are shared and distributed over the members of the group. In other words, new members of the group learn the beliefs of the group in interaction: from public discourse, from the media as well as from personal experiences and other members of the group. Ideologies may be imparted by certain groups of the society, e.g. the symbolic elites controlling the public discourse. As ideologies may take years to fully acquire, they cannot be changed overnight either. Van Dijk, thus, emphasizes the sociocognitive nature of ideologies: according to him, members of a social group are controlled by mental representations in their social practices. One of these social practices is discourse; however, as van Dijk stresses, ideologies should not be reduced to their discursive manifestations. (Van Dijk, 2011, pp. 380-384; van Dijk as cited in Blommaert, 2005, pp. 161-162.)

Ideologies are characterized by being socially relevant to the group in question, general and abstract as well as by being used for the interests of the group. First, beliefs of each ideology need to be socially relevant, that is, relevant for the social life and social relations of the group. Because of this, different ideologies are developed by different groups. Second, such ideologies tend to be general and
abstract in order to be applicable in several situations, and consequently, to be more useful. Third, ideologies are developed to serve the interest of the group, thus, they tend to be related to social relations with other groups, either the dominated, dominating, or competing groups. Ideologies, then, can be developed by any group of people. As van Dijk (2011, p. 380) points outs, ideologies may be used to defend the interests of any group of people as well as to guarantee loyalty, cohesion, interaction and cooperation of the members of any group. What this implies is that ideologies are not only used to dominate or oppress others – although they often also reproduce unequal relations of power, domination and exploitation – but they can also be used in order to resist such domination or oppression depending on the socio-political circumstances.

To sum up, discourse as social practice is linked to societal structures through mental representations. These mental representations can be divided into personal and social cognition: personal cognition entails mental situation and context models that are intertwined with the social cognition in terms of socially shared attitudes and ideologies. Racist attitudes, for instance, may be based on more abstract racist ideologies. Those socially shared attitudes, in turn, are represented in personal opinions (located in situation models) and expressed in social practices, including discourse, that are controlled by the context models. (van Dijk, 2014, pp. 12-13.) Conversely, when interpreting a text, an individual draws on mental models in order to create the meaning of the text, to interpret and understand it. As each text has several ‘meaning potentials’, several possible, different interpretations also exist; the meaning of the text, thus, is created both in the production of the text as well as in the process of interpretation (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 75).

An individual is typically influenced by the ideology of the group but the extent to which that ideology affects the person’s actions or language use in each situation varies depending on with whom one interacts and what are their interests, goals, opinions or ideologies. Ideological discourses, then, are controlled by non-ideological constraints as well. One does not, thus, always express one’s ideologies clearly; ideologies can also be concealed or expressed indirectly. In fact, individuals do not tend to express ideologies directly in discourse. Typically, only parts of an ideology are expressed, for example, in the form of an attitude. Because of ideologies being expressed usually as small fragments, especially in situations when a direct ideological expression would be inappropriate, ideologies are not always directly visible in discourse. Rather, it is through an analysis of the context that they become visible, e.g. in the form of code words that reveal to be ideological. (van Dijk, 2011, pp. 389-393.)
2.1.4. Discourse and power

What characterizes CDS is its interest in power, especially in the social power relations between groups, organizations or institutions (van Dijk, 2014, p. 14). CDS aims to analyse “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak as cited in Blommaert, 2005, pp. 24-25). As van Dijk (2014, pp. 14-15) argues, power can be defined, for instance, in terms of control – controlling discourse is one way of exercising power. Being able to control actions of another group and its members – their freedom, thus, being limited – implies that one group has power over another group. One important source of symbolic power is the access to public discourse. The access to public discourse is usually limited to the symbolic elite, to journalists, professors and politicians, for instance. Van Dijk writes,

> most common citizens have only passive access, as recipients to such forms of discourse, or only as participants in the representations of discourse, for instance as news actors or citizens talked about in political or educational discourse. (2014, p. 15.)

Nevertheless, as social media has led to changing production and distribution processes, the dichotomy of powerful and powerless voices has eroded, as will be further discussed in 2.3. Internet and social media as a space for public discussion.

Power, according to Fairclough (2003, p. 43), can be discussed as both in discourse and behind discourse. As defined by Fairclough, power behind discourse refers to the ways in which power relations affect discourse, for instance individuals’ access to discourses or the standardization of language. Power in discourse, in turn, is connected to the use of power in discourse itself: the hidden use of power of the mass media or power relations exercised in face-to-face interaction, to name a few. Discourse, then, is an instrument of power (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25). Discursive practices – the production and consumption of texts – contribute to unequal power relations: they take part in the creation and reproduction of power relations between groups of people (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 63). Power, however, is not permanent: it is constantly reasserted and constructed – or challenged – in discourse (Fairclough, 2003, p. 68).

Social world places limitations on what can be said and which identities can be assumed in communication. According to Fairclough (2003, p. 17-28), discourse figures in social practice in three ways: as part of social activity (action), by producing representations in discourse (representation), and in the constitution of identities (identification). In other words, discourse constitutes genres (ways of acting - Action), establishes discourses (ways of representing - Representation), and constitutes styles
(ways of being - Identification). As Jørgensen & Phillips (2002, p. 17) write, in CDS, subjects are seen to be created in discourses – they, then, do not become interpellated in one position. To the contrary, different discourses provide individuals with different, even contradictory subject positions from which to speak. Discourses, then, together with genres and styles are resources that individuals use, selecting different elements from different discourses, drawing upon mass media and interaction with others for example.

The use of discourses, genres and styles – that is, resources – in a communicative event is controlled by orders of discourse; the semiotic aspect of social order, consisting of discourses, genres and styles that are in use within a social domain. As ideologies consist of ideas and beliefs shared by a group of people that influence how people speak and behave, they shape orders of discourse and are thus reflected in semiotic events. As the use of these resources is controlled in a communicative event, orders of discourse are consequently reproduced. Ideologies, then, by shaping orders of discourses result in some genres, discourses, and styles being more dominant than others – to the point that they might reach naturalization and thus become hegemonic and common-sense. Hegemony, then, is a process of negotiation that results in a consensus regarding meaning. This means that hegemony, like power, is not permanent. Rather, it is subject to change. As discourses, styles and genres are seen as resources that people draw upon in communication, selecting elements from different discourses, new hybrid discourses may come about. Through creative language use, dominant discourses can be challenged and changed through using resources in new ways or importing them from other orders of discourse. (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 17, 71-72, 76.)

Fairclough (as cited in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 76) sees the concept of hegemony as providing analysts with the means by which to analyse the relation between discursive practice and larger social practice that involves power relations: discursive practice can be considered to be part of hegemonic struggle. Through discursive practice, the order of discourse of which it is part is reproduced and/or transformed. Although change can happen when resources are used in new ways, the creative use of resources and thus possibilities for change are limited. First, creativity is restricted by the necessity of being understood: it is always necessary to also draw on existing resources in order to be understood in a communicative event. Second, discourse, as seen in CDS, is embedded in the wider social practice and thus the material and institutional need to be taken into consideration when discussing discursive change. Power relations, for instance, delimit change through determining each actor’s access to resources; not everyone has the same access to different discourses, styles and genres. (Jørgensen &
Phillips, 2002, pp. 74, 139, 142.) As power relations limit change, orders of discourse “can be seen as one domain of potential cultural hegemony, with dominant groups struggling to assert and maintain particular structuring within and between them” (Fairclough as cited in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 74). Furthermore, not all orders of discourse are as open to change: unstable orders of discourse – in other words, those where different discourses are competing with each other and do not all share the same common-sense assumptions – are more open to change than the more stable ones (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 142).

2.2. Nation, nationalism, and national identities

Next, the selected theoretical framework in terms of nation and identities will be introduced: 1) ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ as they are understood in the scope of the present thesis will be defined; 2) (collective) identities as a social phenomenon and as processes of identification will be discussed; 3) the construction of nations and national identities will be elaborated.

2.2.1. Defining ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’

The dictionary definitions and everyday understandings of ‘nation’ often emphasize such attributes as ancestry, culture, language, state, territory, and governance (Ruuska, 2005, pp. 197-198). For instance, Oxford dictionary (Oxford University Press 2018b) defines ‘nation’ as “A large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory”. People and nations are often perceived to naturally belong to certain places (Malkki as cited in Ruuska, 2005, p. 199) – and consequently, nations are seen as different from each other, as unique (Ruuska, 2005, p. 199). While primordialism views nations as natural phenomena, modernist theories have problematized the notion of nation: instead of viewing nation as a natural phenomenon, nations are understood as constructed (Ruuska, 2005, p. 212). Anderson (1991) famously defined nation as a cultural artefact, an ‘imagined political community’. As Ruuska (2005, p. 214) explains, Anderson’s interest lies in the ways in which boundaries, sovereignty and communities are constructed, resulting in a group of people considering certain other people as belonging to the same big family, even though they have not, nor ever will, meet all of them. As a nation is considered as modern phenomenon – the modernist approaches connect its emergence to modernity – the argument of a nation having always existed, then, is part of the ideology that constructs nations (Ruuska, 2005, p. 212).

The understanding of a nation as a social construct implies the need for a nation to be constructed and (re)produced. Billig (1995) argues that nations and nationals are constantly reproduced within a
world of nations. According to him, instead of viewing nationalism as being located on the periphery, as the property of ‘others’, nationalism should be viewed in the light of the everyday, mundane ways in which nations and nationals are produced: the reproduction of beliefs, habits, representations and practices through which the nation is ‘flagged’ – the ‘banal nationalism’. (Billig, 1995, pp. 5-6.) The production of a nation, then, entails constant reminders to the nationals of their belonging to the nation. This is done through mundane ways, such as talking about ‘us’. (Ruuska, 2005, p. 214.). Ruuska (2005, p. 192-193) argues that only paying attention to fanaticism when talking about nationalism ignores the organizing nature of nationalism: nationalism could be understood as a rather commonplace way of thinking that organizes our world. Calhoun, in turn, defines nationalism as a “discursive formation that gives shape to the modern world. It is a way of talking, writing and thinking about the basic units of culture, politics, and belonging that helps to constitute nations as real and powerful dimensions of social life” (2007, p. 27).

Nationalism, as defined by Pakkasvirta and Saukkonen (2004, p. 8), is a central social and cultural phenomenon: for most of the world population, it seems natural to divide the world into nations, nations-states and nationals. Despite nationalism having been estimated to die in the globalizing world, as Calhoun (2007, p. 171) states, “Globalization has not put an end to nationalism – not to nationalist conflicts nor to the role of nationalist categories in organizing ordinary people’s sense of belonging in the world”. Instead, nationalism has proved to be versatile, capable of adapting to different times and situations, creating sense of belonging and of social cohesion; it functions as a sort of civil religion. Nationalism is reproduced in everyday life – it is reflected in the well-established habits, rituals and ceremonies as well as in the commonplace habits and talk. Nevertheless, there is no generally accepted definition for the term ‘nationalism’; however, it is generally agreed upon that different types of nationalisms have developed in different historical situations. (Pakkasvirta and Saukkonen, 2004, pp. 8-9.)

Nationalism is often divided into ethnic and political (civic) nationalism. Ethnic nationalism perceives ethnicity as the defining attribute for the boundaries of a nation, while civic nationalism is seen as essentially political, and nationhood thus being defined by common citizenship. (Ruuska, 2005, p. 205.) Ruuska (2005, p. 208-210) criticizes such a division for being too simplistic: instead, he suggests that both ethnic/cultural and political elements are resources that exist concurrently rather than being characteristic to some nationalist projects. This implies that, for instance, ethnic nationalism would not be considered as an attribute that defines, say, Finland, but rather it is an alternative; both ethnic/cultural
and political elements, i.e. resources, can be leaned in in changing situations. Indeed, both ethnic/cultural and civic nationalism is drawn upon for instance in the Finnish immigration debate. Accordingly, Ruuska suggests that rather than emphasizing the idea of different nationalisms being characteristic to certain territories/states, the focus should be on how and in which situations different actors drawn upon these resources. Consequently, ‘nation’ is seen as a product of constant negotiation.

In addition to primordialism, modernism and ethnosymbolism – an approach criticizing modernism by arguing that nations cannot be born out of nothingness, – new approaches have come about that seek to overcome the opposition regarding the origins of nation and its links to modernity. These approaches have led to more attention being paid to the grassroots, i.e. to people’s own experiences and the construction and reproduction of social identities. An example of this is Billig’s ‘banal nationalism’ and the ‘flagging’ of a nation that has been briefly discussed in the beginning of this chapter. Postmodernism, in turn, has challenged the idea of stable and one-dimensional identities even further through replacing it with the notion of changing and plural identities. Hall, for example, has discussed the construction of identities in relation to the ‘others’. (Pakkasvirta and Saukkonen, 2004, p. 38.)

In the scope of this thesis, nation is understood as an ‘imagined community’, a mental and social construct. Drawing upon Billig’s ‘banal nationalism’, nations are understood to be constantly reproduced: the members of the nation are reminded through mundane ways of their belonging to the nation. The understanding of a nation as a social construct implies that national identity is not something that a member of a nation is born with; rather, it is acquired. Hall (1996b, pp. 611-613) defines ‘nation’ as a system of cultural representation; apart from being a political entity, it, thus, also provides meanings. According to him, national culture is a discourse that constructs meanings with which members of a nation can identify – indeed, Hall argues that national cultures are the principal sources of cultural identities in the modern world. These meanings are conveyed through the narrative of the nation that represents its shared experiences and gives meaning to the nation, connecting the present with the past and future. The meanings as represented by the national culture influence the actions of the members of a nation as well as their conceptions of themselves. Members of a nation, then, as Hall writes, “participate in the idea of the nation, and they know what it means to be a member because of the ways in which the nation is reproduced within the society” (1996b, p. 612). Before discussing further the construction of nation and national identity, the notion of identities and collective identities as understood by discursive approaches is elaborated next.
2.2.2. Collective identity

Identity, as defined by the Oxford dictionary (Oxford University Press 2018a), refers to 1) “The fact of being who or what a person or thing is” and 2) “A close similarity or affinity”. Indeed, identities traditionally have been seen as something natural and inherent, as a set of attributes one is born with. They have also been viewed on the light of sameness, of the state of being identical, a natural unity. However, contemporary discursive accounts view identity as a social phenomenon: identities always exist in relation to the ‘other’ that validates the existence of the identity itself. Therefore, it is through difference that an identity is constructed. (Hall as cited in Benwell & Stokoe, 2010, p. 83; Hall, 1996a, p. 4.) Identities, then, are understood as being socially constructed and context-specific. Rather than being located in the ‘private’ realms of cognition, emotions and experience, identity is constructed (as well as interpreted) actively and dynamically in interaction. Identities, thus, entail social and discursive work: they are a product of the social and of discourse. (Benwell & Stokoe, 2010, p. 83.) Viewing identities as a process involving social and discursive work allows them to be considered in terms of the concrete ways in which people assume identities, categorize themselves and others as well as resist those attributes (de Fina, 2011, 267).

Van Dijk (1998, p. 118) defines identity as both a personal and a social construct, as a mental representation. According to him, people construct themselves as members of different categories and groups based on personal experiences (models) of events. These self-representations (self-schema) are located in their personal memories. Such models include representations of social interaction and of interpretation of discourse, and consequently, personal experiences as well as the self-representations are also socially constructed. The way others see, define, and treat us influences our self-representation and the representation of self may merge with the self-presentation of the group.

Identities are divided into personal identification and collective identities (Anttila, 2007, p. 159). Collective identities are comprised of social representations (Anttila, 2007, p. 160), i.e. of sets of thoughts, mental images, values and practices that help people to orient in the material and social life and in interaction with others (Tieteen termipankki, 2018). According to van Dijk (1998, p. 118), once a group develops an ideology, this ideology then becomes to define the identity of the group in question. Personal identity, in turn, takes two forms: on the one hand, it is a mental representation of the personal self with one’s own experiences and life history as they are represented in one’s mental models; on the other hand, it is a mental representation of the social self as a member of different groups and the identification processes related to them. An individual may have several social identities; some of them
may be abstract and context-free while others may be more salient in some concrete situations than in
others. Consequently, the social practices of a social actor are influenced by the salience, hierarchy or
relevance of group identification in the situation in question. (van Dijk, 1998, pp. 119-120)

The identification processes then may depend on the comparison between personal and social
self: in the case that the mental representation of the personal self corresponds with the image of the
group, i.e. with the membership criteria, activities, goals, norms, values as well as position or resources
of the group, an individual may identify with the group strongly. Such a strong identification and co-
operation is usually valued by the group. In the opposite case, a process of dissociation may occur. People
may be ‘objectively’ members of a group as well as considered as members by others although they do
not identify with the group themselves and, likely, do not share the ideology of the group either. In this
case, they may face sanctions and reactions – such as derogative terms – when denying or leaving the
group. (van Dijk, 1998, pp. 119-120.)

Although personal variation exists and the manifestations of group ideologies in everyday life are
complex, social identities have a social nature in that they are shared and need to be defined at group
level. It is then assumed that groups share a social representation of what it means to be a member of that
group, therefore defining the identity (the social self) of the group. Social identity is thus intertwined
with the group self-schema, as well as the group ideology. In other words, the ideological group-schema
likely represents the fundamental beliefs that are shared by the group. These questions include questions
such as ‘Who are we?’, ‘Where do we come from?’, ‘Who belongs to us?’, ‘What do we (usually) do,
and why?’, ‘What are our goals and values?’, among others. The answers to these questions, included in
the group self-schema, are acquired and (re)produced in social interaction within the group. However,
the answers to these questions may also change: just like personal identities may change over time, so
may social identities. While the basic principles of the group may remain the same even over long periods
of time, attitudes and other more specific social representations may change as social and political change
occurs. (van Dijk, 1998, pp. 120-121.)

Although social identities may also be defined in terms of social practices of the group, social
identity can also be limited to a shared core of social self-definition, in other words, to the social
representations that members perceive as typical for the group. Different social practices typical for the
group as well as symbols, settings and forms of organization are then seen as ‘contextually variable
manifestations of social identity’. (van Dijk, 1998, p. 124.) This type of approach to the analysis of social
identity, van Dijk argues, “allows for a systematic relationship with the role of discourse in the
construction of social identity” (1998, p. 125) – a significant part of the formation as well as the reproduction of social groups may be done discursively, both in the form of intragroup discourse as well as intergroup discourse.

2.2.3. Identity as a process of identification

Rather than seeing identity as an attribute, a property, identity can be defined as a process in which the collectivity is engaged (van Dijk, 1998, p. 121). Indeed, identities can be considered as “a never-ending process, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended” (van Meijl, 2010, p. 71). Accordingly, rather than using the term ‘identity’ that implies a static state, it might be more appropriate to use the term ‘identification’ that, in turn, emphasizes its nature as a process rather than a series of attributes (van Dijk, 1998, p. 121; de Fina, 2011, p. 267).

The processes of identification involve the positioning of oneself and of others into different social and moral positions even in mundane, everyday activities. People position themselves, and are positioned by others, in different ways, depending on the context; in other words, identities are relational and plural. The identity categories used by people reflect the types of identities that are used in the society at the moment as well as the identities available to the individual in a situation. (de Fina, 2011, pp. 272-275.) Identification, then, entails adopting or inhabiting available positions in and being positioned by discourses that one’s sense of self and relationship with others is determined by – discourses function as points of identification (Benwell & Stokoe, 2010, pp. 85-86). Pre-constituted histories place constraints on the construction of one’s identity, leading to an identity that may not necessarily be “the ideal, self-determined product of a reflective agent” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2010, p. 86). However, the constant repetition and (re)production of identities is also what allows for change to happen as each repetition may introduce new elements (Benwell & Stokoe, 2010, p. 86).

Identities, thus, are in constant negotiation in discourse; they are ascribed, rejected and assumed by people in interaction. These negotiation processes are intertwined with power relations, making some identities more easily negotiable than others, leaving some people without voice and positioning them into roles that they cannot easily oppose. An analysis of identity categories and the processes of identity negotiation can reveal labels of identification, membership criteria as well as attributes, actions and situations associated with a group of people. These associations are often stereotypical and part of the shared knowledge and representations of the groups, feeding into wider ideologies and beliefs – or as
argued by scholars such as van Dijk, part of somewhat fixed and stable social structures, of mental models that are activated when making claims about identities. (de Fina, 2011, pp. 272-275.)

### 2.2.4. Constructing nation and national identities

National identity is a type of collective identity (Anttila, 2007, p. 160), and, thus, as discussed above, it is a system of shared beliefs, of shared representations. The members of a group – in this case, of a nation – acquire these shared beliefs and representations through socialization as national identities are (re)produced and shaped in interaction (Hall 1996b, pp. 597, 612). To imagine oneself as part of a nation involves internalizing general identity representations as part of how one conceives oneself (Anttila, 2007, p. 161). However, to identify with a nation is not only about imagining oneself as part of the group; it also implies defining the group (Anttila, 2007, p. 79). Attributes are assigned in the dialectics of a definition of internal and external; the constitutive process, categorization, entails exclusion and inclusion (Anttila, 2007, p. 160). As national identity – like other collective identities – are seen to be continuously produced and negotiated in interaction, no one national identity exists. Rather, different identities – and consequently different categorizations – are constructed depending on the context (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009, p. 4).

Hall (1996a) emphasizes the role of the ‘other’ in the construction of identities. He argues that it is “only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the ‘positive’ meaning of any term – and thus its ‘identity’ – can be constructed” (1996a, p. 4). Thus, the capacity of an identity to function as a point of identification relies on its capacity to mark a difference and to exclude. Identities, then, – despite the natural ‘unity’ that a social identity is perceived to have – are a product of the exclusion of the ‘other’ rather than a product of ‘sameness’. Who ‘we’ are is defined by who ‘we’ are not. (Hall, 1996a, pp. 4-5; de Fina, 2011, p. 271.) As identities – or identification, to put an emphasis on the process of subjectification to discursive practices as well as the politics of exclusion (Hall, 1996a, p. 2) – depend on the ‘other’, what exists at their margins and what the identity itself ‘lacks’, they involve processes of marking a difference, of marking of symbolic boundaries and of exclusion. Identity, in other words, is intertwined with power: “the constitution of a social identity is an act of power” (Laclau as cited in Hall, 1996a, p. 5). The seeming homogeneity, the ‘unity’ that an identity is perceived as, is not a ‘natural’; rather, it is constructed in the processes of exclusion (Bhabha, Hall as cited in Hall 1996a: 5).
Accordingly, the construction of a nation includes social processes of inclusion and exclusion, in other words, of categorization: to imagine a nation involves imagining ‘them’, the ‘other’ from which ‘we’ are different (Billig, 1995, p. 66). A nation, then, is imagined in relation to the ‘other(s)’: it is through the contrast to the ‘other(s)’ that the characteristics and categories of a nation are defined (Kleiner-Liebau, 2009, p. 20). Thus, the notion of ‘other’ is central for the construction of a nation (Triandafyllidou, 1998, p. 596). To be part of a group – to imagine oneself as ‘in-group’ – entails differentiating oneself from an ‘out-group’. As Billig (1995, p. 78) writes, “The national community can only be imagined by also imagining communities of foreigners”. Both the ‘in-group’ as well as the ‘out-group’ are often represented stereotypically. As individuals have a need for a positive social identity (Tajfel as cited in Billig, 1995, p. 66), nations tend to create positive stereotypes of themselves, while contrasting them to negative stereotypes of the ‘out-groups’, thus securing the group’s existence through maintaining the positive self-identity (Billig, 1995, p. 66). Stereotypes, then, are a means of differentiating ‘us’ from ‘them’ and of validating ‘our’ unique identity. However, understanding a nation as a social construct, as a discourse, entails that these ‘other(s)’ and the boundaries of the nation are constantly discursively negotiated – as well as the meanings of what it means to be of the in-group or of the out-group.

When it comes to nation-states, territorial borders are a way of differentiating between those belonging to the nation and those not. Borders, however, can be imagined as well as experienced in very different ways and collectivity boundaries may also be imagined in terms of race, ethnicity and culture. In nation-states, the cultural ‘other’ is produced as an alien, even as an enemy, when those at the margins of the boundaries of belonging are seen as a threat to the integrity and uniqueness of the nation and the national culture. Separation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ may then be perceived as necessary for the human welfare. (Yuval-Davis, 2004, pp. 218, 220.) However, not all the ‘foreigners’ are imagined in the same way: some are imagined as more praiseworthy than others (Billig, 1995, p. 80).

While presenting nations different from the ‘other(s)’, at the same time, they are imagined as uniform (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 4). The intra-group heterogeneity is largely ignored, while uniformity is emphasized. National culture attempts to unify its members under one collective identity by representing the members as “belonging to the same great national family” (Hall, 1996b, p. 616), although they are different in terms of gender, ethnicity and class, among others. However unified national cultures are represented, Hall (1996b, p. 617) argues that they should be rather thought as “a discursive device which represents difference as unity or identity”: they are represented as characterized by homogeneity, but
they are, in reality, deeply diverse with internal divisions and differences; cultural hybrids stitched together through the exercise of cultural power and differentiated from others through the marking of difference, the construction of symbolic boundaries using discursive categories such as race and ethnicity. Thus, the assumption of a uniform nation, rather than being a realistic description of the situation, is rather a hegemonic way of talking that seeks to produce exactly what it is representing (Löytty, 2015, p. 54).

2.3. Internet and social media as a space for public discussion

Public media and personal communication – which before social media were thought as separate – have been brought together by the ‘web 2.0’. Social media can be defined as media that combine both personal communication and public media. (Meikle, 2016, p. xi.) It is characterized by ‘mediated quasi-interaction’ (Thompson as cited in Meikle, 2016, p. 19): interaction that is oriented toward potential recipients, i.e. “it addresses the general anyone of its intended audience as someone, without knowing quite who that someone is” (Scannell as cited in Meikle, 2016, p. 19). A central aspect of ‘mediated quasi-interaction’ is the way in which it links spaces and people – it connects people who are not in one same space at the same time – as well as the consequent absence of cues in how to interpret what has been communicated (Meikle, 2016, p. 19).

‘Web 2.0’ has been argued to facilitate participation and interaction through enabling users to produce content (Sergeant and Tagg as cited in KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 207). The distinction between producers and consumers has become blurry: consumers are put to work as websites increasingly rely on the content produced by their users (Ritzer and Jurgernson as cited in KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 207). Consumers are no longer merely consumers but ‘prosumers’ – in addition to viewing content, they co-create and co-distribute it as well (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 207). Indeed, what characterizes distribution processes in social media is that it is often horizontal: ordinary people distribute content that they find interesting and relevant. While sharing contents has undoubtedly always happened, ‘web 2.0’ allows this sharing to happen easily: it enables sharing the content itself rather than just describing it verbally. (Villi, 2011, p. 49.) Through new combined spaces that accommodate both institutions and ordinary people, genre differences have also become blurred (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 209).

Although traditional media still represent concentrations of economic and political power and accordingly, exercise influence on the society (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 206), the significance of
the internet and the social media should not be underestimated. As KhosraviNik and Unger (2016, p. 206) discuss, the circulation of print newspapers is decreasing, while social media and newspaper websites are flourishing: for instance, in the US, it has been estimated that around 30 percent of adults retrieve their news via Facebook. Social media communication has led to a new dynamic of communication and to changing distribution processes. This new dynamic at the heart of the ‘web 2.0’ – the participatory internet – breaks away from the linear flow of content: the flow of content does not simply go from the privileged to the powerless, from producers to consumers, anymore. It is through pull communicative strategies that the power of the text is now determined. In contrast to the push strategies of traditional mass media, now a text has power if it is capable of convincing ordinary users to react to it. Communication on social networking sites, consequently, is not necessarily only private, personal and mundane anymore; it can have serious significance on collective, political as well as cultural level. (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, pp. 206-209.)

As social media breaks away from the unidirectional content flows of traditional media, the lines between ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ have eroded, leading to the dichotomy of powerful and powerless voices to erode, too. Mass media power – the power behind discourse – may have weakened; however, the power in discourse has not. (KhosraviNik as cited in KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 211.) By providing access to the processes of production and distribution of texts, social media has led to the concentrations of power to be rather unfixed, dependent on the contextual environments (Kelsey and Bennet as cited in KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 211). On the one hand, social media, then, provides space for resistant discourses – spaces that are embraced, too (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 211). It may enable new practices of social inclusivity, group recognition, pluralized participation, and political conversation and engagement (Cottle as cited in KhosraviNik & Unger, 2016, p. 212). On the other hand, although social media has shifted power concentrations from traditional media to also ordinary people as well enabled communication across places and between new kinds of users (Meikle, 2016, p. x), social media also provides a space for trolling and controversies about speaking rights, for instance (Phillips as cited in Meikle, 2016, p.xi).

Internet has proven often to be the first space for public discussion in the 21st century. Online discussions, however, tend to be very polarized: it appears that people often form ‘discussion groups’ that are comprised of people that have similar opinions. (Hakala & Vesa, 2013, pp. 205, 207.) Furthermore, it has been discussed whether those participating in online discussions have stronger opinions on the issues than those who do not (Hakala & Vesa, 2013, p. 207): strong opinions and views
could possible lead to more participation, making social media arena for political discussion for those with already strong views on issues, rather than those with more neutral views, consequently leading also to a more extreme rhetoric in terms of racism, among others (Pettersson & Sakki, 2017, p. 319.) Even if it was only those strongly opinionated participating in online discussions, to some extent, they reflect people’s opinions on different issues, including topics such as immigration (Laaksonen & Matikainen, 2013, p. 190).

Apart from reflecting the participants’ opinions, social media has also become an important context in which news are interpreted: more and more people end up reading a piece of news through a link on social media. Although the discussion is not part of the news, it still affects the way it is interpreted (Horsti, 2009, p. 82). Consuming media contents has become increasingly a shared, social experience (Villi, 2011, p. 48) as media contents function as an important source of topics for online discussions (Laaksonen & Matikainen, 2013, p. 184). People tend to curate media contents actively – these curated contents are also consumed actively (Villi, 2011, p. 55). Social media and traditional media, then, have become intertwined and their contents are harder to strictly separate from each other (Couldry, Matikainen as cited in Villi, 2011, p. 56).

Furthermore, online discussions can also play a role in the societal normalisation of certain ways of talking. For instance, there is some evidence that political communication online may be characterized by being more extreme than one “offline” (Pettersson & Sakki, 2018, p. 319) and that overt racism is becoming less of a taboo (Sakki & Pettersson, 2016, p. 156). In Finland, the explicit racism from the online discussions has spread, in a ‘tidied up’ form, to the immigration debate ‘offline’ in the form of statements by ‘immigration critics’ (Keskinen, 2009, p. 43). Racist ways of talking have become a part of daily public discussion in Finland (Keskinen, 2009, p. 43) and social media plays an increasingly relevant role in the transmission of nationalist political rhetoric and its societal normalisation (Pettersson & Sakki, 2018, p. 316).
3. **The Finnish context**

In this chapter the context of the discussions around immigration and the construction of Finnish national identities will be outlined. First part of this section, Chapter 3.1, will focus on historical perspectives on the construction of the Finnish nation, Finnish national identity, and ‘Finnishness’. Second, Chapter 3.2, in turn, concentrates on migration and diversity in Finland both at the present as well as in the past. Third, Chapter 3.3, will outline previous research on immigration debate and the construction of ‘Finnishness’.

### 3.1. **Finnish national identity and Finnishness**

To follow, ‘Finnishness’ will be discussed focusing on the processes of the construction of the nation as well as national identities in the past. A historical perspective to the construction of Finnish national identity(ies) will be given, starting with the Grand Dutchy of Finland of the 19th century and the intelligentsia’s process of creating a category ‘Finns’ and its contents. Second, a brief overview on the ‘others’ that were used to define ‘Finnishness’ will be given, focusing on Russia and the Swedish language.

#### 3.1.1. **Constructing ‘Finnishness’**

The collective Finnish identity can be seen to be based on the general and commonly shared representation of Finnishness. It defines all that is Finnish, important values, ‘common-sense’ theories about Finnishness. Prevailing representations specify the characteristic and significant dimensions of identity and determine the group’s boundaries, in other words, they determine categorization and the auto-stereotypes of the group. (Anttila, 2007, p. 78; my translation.)

Finland as it understood now did not exist until the 19th century: in the 19th century Grand Dutchy of Finland, consciousness about a Finnish nation was constructed by the elite, specifically by the intelligentsia as well as artists, the aim of whom was to produce an identity and identity symbols (Anttila, 2007, p. 132). Finnishness was a product of its socio-political context – a response to the political and military needs of the time, rather than being based on some particular historical realities. As the well-known phrase, “Swedes we are no longer, Russians we shall not become, let us then be Finns!” illustrates, Finland was created rather than born. (Klinge as cited in Anttila, 2007, p. 133.) This phrase reveals the needs of categorization related to a Finnish identity – categories that still influence the definition of the boundaries of Finnishness. However, at the time, the category ‘Finnish’ was still empty when it came to its contents. (Anttila, 2007, p. 134.)
In the 19th century Grand Dutchy of Finland, Fennomania – the Finnish national movement – sought to at the same time civilize the ‘common people’ and to bring the elite closer to the them. The construction of the Finnish nation in the beginning emphasized cultural elements; the idea of an independent state started to develop quite late. The emphasis was especially on the Finnish language and improving its status as well as on raising national consciousness. (Saukkonen, 2013, p. 20.) Fennomans found the basis for Finnish identity among the peasantry, and language and folklore became the means of promoting nationalism – an example of which is the Kalevala, a piece of epic poetry published in 1835 that was seen as the ‘entrance ticket’ into the group of civilized nations, and its birth was seen as having created the Finnish history. (Anttila, 2007, pp. 132, 135.) As the ‘real Finnish nation’ idolized by the leading nationalists – mostly Swedish-speaking upper-class and intelligentsia – was comprised of the Finnish-speaking peasantry, many members of the intelligentsia made Finnish their home language and switched their surnames into Finnish ones. Fennomania, thus, sought to make Finland into a monolingual nation according to its ideology of ‘one nation, one language’. Another view was then developed by some Swedish-speakers, according to which there were two nations, speaking two different languages. (Saukkonen, 2013, p. 20.)

During the first years of independence of Finland, certain minorities were given a rather protected status, while others were discriminated. Both Finnish and Swedish language were given the status of national languages; in 1919, a principle of equal status and treatment was included in the Constitution. While the state was officially bilingual, the municipalities were either mono- or bilingual. As separate social institutions were in many areas established for both Finnish and Swedish-speakers, the two groups formed over time two parallel language communities. In addition to the Swedish-speaking population, the Orthodox Church in Finland has had a protected status, as it has been considered one of the two national churches of Finland, together with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. (Saukkonen, 2013, pp. 20-21.) Moreover, freedom of religion was specified in the Freedom of Religion Act of 1922 (Saukkonen 2013, p. 21), and, for example, in 1925 ‘The Finnish Islamic Congregation’ – an Islamic congregation for Tatars in Finland – was established (Sakaranaho, 2012). Although the Swedish-speakers and the orthodox were given a protected status, at the same time, a certain cultural prototype was constructed that portrayed only certain parts of Finland and certain groups of Finns as ‘Finnish’, that is, the Finnish-speaking peasantry of the inland. Minorities, such as the Roma and the Sami, faced attempts of assimilation, discrimination and oppression. This exclusionary representation of Finnishness and the Finnish national culture has endured through time. The construction of the Finnish nation, then, has
always included a certain contradiction – it has portrayed ‘Finnishness’ as something exclusive while at the same time rights of certain minorities have been protected. (Saukkonen, 2013, pp. 21-22.)

In the 1960s with the rapid modernization of the country, the understanding of the nation began to diversify. As the culture started to become urbanized and the society diversified, marginal cultural identities became legitimised; allowing deviation together with the recognition of individual rights (Anttila, 2007, p. 154). At the same time, the position of minorities such as the Roma and the Sami started to improve. Later the Sami have been recognized as an indigenous people, the three Sami languages have gotten an official status in the Sami homeland in northern Finland, and in 1996, the Sami Parliament of Finland was established. (Saukkonen, 2013, p. 21.) The central values and cornerstones of the Finnish national identity in the 1980s included an idea of a militarily non-allied, neutral state; of a Western democracy; and of a Nordic welfare state. Simultaneously, a conception of an ethnic-culturally homogenous country existed – one that was perceived as a nation with a unique national culture that combines both Eastern and Western traditions and is based on the Finnish language and traditions. (Saukkonen, 2013, p. 23.) ‘Finnishness’, then, was not only defined by embracing national uniqueness, but also by ideas that crossed national boundaries, such as the idea of a ‘Western democracy’ and a ‘Nordic welfare state’. However, the Finnish national identity reflected the idea of a unified Finland in which the state, nation, culture and territory are intertwined (Saukkonen, 2013, p. 23).

3.1.2. Finland and its historical ‘others’: the Swedish-speaking elite and Russia

As discussed earlier, to imagine a nation is not only to imagine ‘us’, but to imagine the ‘others’ as well. ‘Foreign’ is defined as the lack of or the opposite of Finnishness (Lepola as cited in Lehtonen, 2015d, p. 263). It is only in relation to the ‘others’ that ‘us’ can be defined and understood. National and cultural identity therefore is not defined from the inside – who we culturally are is defined by the relations between the community and its ‘others’, by marking a difference between the familiar and the unknown (Lehtonen, 2015d, p. 263). Finnish identity, too, has been constructed both based on differences and on sameness (Lehtonen, 2005c, p. 198). For Finland, the external ‘other’ has been both Sweden (and Europe) and Russia (and Asia). The ‘West’ has been represented as a desirable ideal worth pursuing, whereas the ‘East’ has been seen as something that needs to be rejected. (Lehtonen, 2005b, p. 148.)

Different threats have been part of the Finnish national narrative. As they have allowed both differentiation as well as the drawing of boundaries, they have been part of the construction of Finnish
identity. (Joenniemi as cited in Lehtonen, 2005c, p. 202.) According to Anttonen (as cited in Lehtonen 2005c: 202), threats and defending oneself from them have played a significant role in the construction of Finnish identity: the experiences of Finland and Finnishness being under constant threat are what constitutes Finnishness, leading to the need to be constantly defensive about Finland and everything Finnish. Both internal and external threats have been constructed: the Swedish-speaking nobleman as well as Russia. To define the boundaries of Finnishness, also the upper class, both sides of the Civil War – the Reds and the Whites – as well as mental, physical and moral impairment have been used as the ‘other’ within the Finnish nation. (Vuorinen, 2004.) Vuorinen (2004, p. 248) argues that other minorities in Finland, such as the Sami, the Jews, the Roma and the Somalis – although constructed as the ‘other’ – have not been used to define the official Finnishness to the same extent. To follow, however, the focus is on the role of Russia and the Swedish-language as the ‘others’ in the construction of Finnishness.

In the 19th century, when determining the contents of the category ‘Finnishness’, the most central ‘enemy’ was the nobleman that symbolized the old power, attacking from above. The non-noble elite that was seeking to strengthen their position defined themselves as Finnish national, open and democratic, reflecting modernity, progress and the future, whereas the noble were represented as Swedish-speaking, closed and hierarchical; in other words, the conservative past. A contrast was also created between academic education versus hereditary nobility. (Vuorinen, 2004, pp. 248-250.) The threat that the Swedish-speaking Finns were represented to pose was, in fact, a version of this ‘noble enemy’; it ignored the existence of the non-noble Swedish-speakers. The basic idea of Fennomans was ‘one language, one mind’ – the essence of the people was supposed to crystallize in the language. Consequently, Swedish language was associated with foreignness. (Vuorinen, 2004, p. 258.) The long history as part of Sweden and the consequent Swedish-speaking elite became something that the Finnish-speaking upper class could appeal to when claiming to be the voice of the people (Vuorinen, 2004, p. 258): the Swedish-speaking elite was constructed as a foreign element with no real connection to the people (Alapuro as cited in Vuorinen, 2004, p. 260).

Finnish identity and the representation of Finland have also been determined in relation to Russia. (Joenniemi as cited in Lehtonen, 2005c, p. 202.) The self-representation of the groups constructing ideological Finnishness was comprised of lawfulness, honesty and self-control, and, thus, the Russian became to be defined as vulgar, violent, untrustworthy and corrupted. Diligence and morality were contrasted with laziness, filthiness as well as strong, primitive emotions. The Russians were perceived as a threat to the Finnish way of life (Vuorinen, 2004, p. 258) – and later on, they were constructed as a
threat, as Alapuro argues (as cited in Vuorinen, 2004, p. 258), also consciously in order to unify the nation that had been divided in the Civil War.

3.2. Migration and diversity in Finland

Finland has been culturally as well as linguistically diverse for long – although it needs to be pointed out that Finland, as it is understood now, did not exist until the 19th century when the eastern parts of Sweden were ceded to Russia and the borders were defined in 1812 (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 34). Since the days when Finland, as it is understood now, was part of Sweden, foreign merchants, public officers, clerics as well as common people moved to the territory (Leitzinger, Tuomi-Nikula as cited in Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 33). Under Russian rule in the 19th century, Finland became more and more diverse: Russians, Jews, Tatars and East-Asians moved to Finland in addition to immigrants from Germany, England and Norway, for instance. Immigration, in fact, was central for the industrialization of Finland and many of the traditional Finnish companies were in fact established by immigrants and/or their offspring in the 19th century. (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 34.)

The first years of independence were characterized by relatively high numbers of immigrants moving to Finland, but soon, partly due to the economic depression of the 30s, the numbers of immigrants declined while emigration was on increase. During the past 150 years, over 1,3 million Finns have moved abroad\(^1\). While in the end of 19th century Finns emigrated mostly to North America, Sweden became the destination after World War II. (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, pp. 26; 33, 35-36.) In the 70s and 80s, immigration started to increase again as those who had moved to Sweden were returning to Finland (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 37). During most of the 20th century, immigration to Finland was comprised mainly of return migration of those who had previously left the country and their descendants. (Martikainen, Saukkonen, & Säävälä, 2013, p. 14; Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p 26.) Nevertheless, in the 1970s, the first refugees were taken and a more systematic arrival of refugees began in 1979 (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 37).

The end of Cold War marked the beginning of a new period in the history of migration in Finland: the numbers of immigrants increased, even if, compared to many other European countries, the numbers were still rather low (Martikainen, Saukkonen, & Säävälä, 2013, p. 14). In contrast to the return migration

\(^1\) In April 2018, the population of Finland was that of 5 513 902 (Suomen virallinen tilasto, 2018)– those 1,3 million individuals moving abroad would account for over ¼ of the current population of the country.
earlier in the 20th century, most of the people migrating into the country were foreign nationals (Korkiasaari and Tilastokeskus as cited in Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 37); nevertheless, Ingrian Finns were a significant group among migrants2 (Miettinen and Tanner as cited in Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 37). With Finland’s membership in the European Union in 1995, more nationals of other EU countries moved into Finland for studies or work; however, also the numbers of people coming from outside the European Union increased, and refugees from Africa and Balkans were received (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 37). The last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century were characterized by a rapid increase of immigration: the number of residents born abroad almost quadrupled, while the number of foreign nationals in 2010 was over six times higher than in the beginning of the 1990s and the number of speakers of foreign language (i.e. those whose mother tongue is not registered as either Finnish, Swedish or Sami) was over nine times higher (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 38).

The Finnish society, thus, has changed and rapidly become more diverse since the 1990s (Martikainen, Saukkonen, & Säävälä, 2013, p. 14). Migration has been characterized by the diversification of diversity as immigrants have arrived from more and more diverse backgrounds (Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 39). In 2016, 6.6 percent of the population of Finland was of foreign background (i.e. their both parents or they themselves had been born abroad) (Tilastokeskus, n.d. a). 84 percent of them were themselves born abroad, whereas 16 percent were born in Finland to foreign parents. The most common countries of origin were the former Soviet Union and Estonia: over 60 000 were born in the former Soviet Union and over 40 000 in Estonia. The next biggest countries of origin were Somalia, Iraq and the former Yugoslavia. (Tilastokeskus, n.d. c.)

Most of the population of foreign background is found in Uusimaa – the region in which the capital as well as the Greater Helsinki Area are located – where 12 percent of the population is of foreign background. Indeed, it is where over half of the population of foreign background is registered. (Tilastokeskus, n.d. c.) Although the number of residents of foreign background has increased elsewhere

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2 Ingrian Finns refers to descendants of Finnish immigrants to the region of Ingria after it was annexed to Sweden in 1617 from Russia and Finns were encouraged to move there in order to replace the Orthodox population of the region. The term is also used to refer to any individuals of Finnish descent from the areas of former Soviet Union. (Mähönen et al., 2015, p. 126.) They were given a status of return migrants in the beginning of 1990s – the immigration politics favoring Ingrian Finns were abandoned in 2011. In some 20 years, around 30 000 Ingrian Finns moved to Finland (Miettinen and Tanner as cited in Martikainen, Saari, & Korkiasaari, 2013, p. 37).
in the country, too, as asylum seekers and refugees have been placed to different municipalities, in most of the country there are relatively few residents of foreign background and the population of foreign background increasingly moves from other parts of the country of Finland to Uusimaa and the Greater Helsinki Area (Tilastokeskus, n.d. b; Sjöblom-Immala as cited in Martikainen et al., 2013, p. 40). Indeed, in 2016, there were thirty municipalities where the amount of people of foreign background was under one percent (Tilastokeskus, n.d. a.).

Migrants tend to move to Finland mostly because of family ties: in 2014, 54 percent of the population of foreign background living in Finland had moved for family ties, while 18 percent had come for work and ten percent for studies. Ten percent of migrants had come for humanitarian reasons. (Sutela & Larja, 2015.) Before 2015, some 3 000 - 4 000 asylum seekers claimed asylum each year in Finland (Maahanmuuttovirasto, 2018b). In 2015, however, the numbers of asylum seekers in Finland, too, grew significantly: compared to the 3 651 ones in 2014, 32 476 people claimed asylum in 2015 – a number that is almost nine times higher than the year before (YLE, 2016; Sisäministeriö, n.d.). Since then, nevertheless, the numbers of asylum seekers have been decreasing: in 2017, the number of first-time asylum applications fell below the numbers of asylum applications before the record high year of 2015 with 2 139 first time asylum applications. 2017 witnessed an increase of 58 percent compared to the year before in terms of residence permit applications of family members of those who have been granted international protection in Finland – family ties continue to be the most common reason for migrating to Finland. In 2017, also residence permit applications for work were increasing. (Maahanmuuttovirasto, 2018b.) The majority of people migrating to Finland come from EU countries (Tilastokeskus, n.d. b).

3.3. Immigration debate and discourses of immigration

For decades, immigration debate in Finland has been very polarized: discussions around immigration have either concentrated on the alleged threats posed by immigration or multiculturalism as enriching the society. Accordingly, immigrants have been portrayed as either a threat to the Finnish society or as a resource, while Finns have been represented as either too tolerant or as racists. (Aden, 2009, p. 30.) The discussions of the 21st century have been characterized by the rise of populism: populist statements tend to be centered around threats and problems, sometimes from explicitly racist perspectives and they tend to equate the expenses of the public sector and to present very one-sided cause and effect relations. In other words, what is typical for populist statements is to argue that, for instance, the more asylum seekers arrive to Finland, the fewer resources there are available for the care of the elderly; or that the fewer
immigrants there are in the country, the more jobs there are for Finns and, thus, fewer Finns are unemployed. (Keskinen et al., 2009, p. 12.) As Aden writes,

> There has been discussion about what we [immigrants] are going to cost for the Finnish society, and about what types of problems we have had or what types of problems we might cause. What has not been discussed is how much effort we have put into integrating into the society nor that we, too, have been part of the construction of the Finnish society for long, together with other Finns. (2014, p. 15; my translation.)

Indeed, while the immigration debate has concentrated on the alleged threats and problems caused by immigration, it has been often ignored that Finland is already a multicultural society (Keskinen, 2009, p. 41); immigration is presented as a new and recent phenomenon (Keskinen et al., 2009, p. 18).

To follow, the immigration debate both in the 21st century and in the end of 20th century is discussed in terms of 1) the rise of populism and the ‘immigration critics’ during the past decade, 2) the alleged threats posed by immigration, and 3) the representations of immigrants in the Finnish media.

### 3.3.1. The rise of populism and the ‘immigration critics’

What has characterized the public discussion in the 21st century has been the rise of populism. The support for the Finns party began to increase in the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2006 and 2007. While some local and/or rather marginal nationalist and extreme-right parties and groups had existed, the criticism towards immigration politics and asylum seekers was for long restricted to individual politicians and celebrities. Before the parliamentary elections of 2011, the Finns party’s policies became more nationalist, and the neo-nationalistic movement integrated with the said party. Its support started to increase strongly in the spring of 2010, and at the elections of 2011, the Finns party received 19 percent of the votes and 39 representatives in the parliament (out of 200). (Saukkonen, 2013, pp. 35-36.)

The Internet has provided a space for political discussion and this space has been effectively employed by nationalists, those opposing immigration as well as the critics of the status of the Swedish language. The Scripta-blog, started by the current chairman of Finns party, Jussi Halla-Aho, in the

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3 The Finns party at the time could be described as conservative in terms of values, nationalist as well as critical to immigration – it was personified in its previous chairperson Timo Soini whose policies could be defined as critical to the EU as well as left-wing populist (Saukkonen, 2013, p.35).
beginning of 2000s, became especially popular. (Saukkonen, 2013, pp. 35-36.) The comment section of the Scripta-blog evolved into Hommaforum, a discussion forum the aim of which was to normalize the criticism towards immigration as a political stance (Mäkinen, 2013, pp. 11-12); something that the activists of the forum have also managed to do as members of extremist movements as well as a straightforward criticism to immigration politics have been given more space in the mainstream public discussion (Maasilta as cited in Mäkinen, 2013, p. 11). Hommaforum is nowadays one of the most significant online forums for anti-immigration discussion in Finland. The most prominent themes both in the Scripta-blog by Halla-aho and in the discussions in Hommaforum are about dysfunctionality of ‘multiculturalism’, Islam, and unintegrable immigrants, among other themes. (Keskinen as cited in Mäkinen, 2013, p. 12.) The discussions are not characterized as such by opposition to immigration – rather, they aim to control and restrict immigration based on ethnic, religious and cultural categories (Mäkinen, 2013, p. 12). Certain terms now widely used in the discussions of the Hommaforum were originally coined in the comments of the blog, such terms include ‘hyysäri’\(^4\), ‘mokutus’\(^5\) and ‘suvaitsevaisto’\(^6\) (Mäkinen, 2013, p. 12).

\[3.3.2.\]  
\textit{The alleged threats of immigration}

Immigrants have been portrayed as a threat to the rights and well-being of the ‘Finns’ and as ultimately taking over the country in the Finnish immigration debate. A prevailing assumption of a natural connection between ‘Finns’ and the state of Finland exists in the public discussion as immigrants have been represented as not entitled to the benefits nor jobs in Finland due to their nationality and/or ethnicity. The representation of immigrants as a threat to the rights and well-being of the ‘Finns’ is intertwined with an economic rhetoric that is used to oppose immigration. However, economy has been central theme for the both sides of immigration debate, as the perspectives and questions presented by the media and the politicians have mainly centered around economy, and the costs and expenses of immigration have been given much attention, whereas other social values have been largely ignored (Keskinen, Rastas, & Tuori, 2009, pp. 8, 15).

\[\textit{4}\] The term ‘hyysäri’ (derogatory) means ‘a person who treats someone in an overprotective way or takes care of someone who does not deserve it’ (see Hyyssätä, 2017); used as a derogative term in the public discussion.

\[\textit{5}\] ‘Mokutus’ (derogatory): for example, a blog post or a statement online or on the media that is favorable to migration and/or multiculturalism (Mokutus, 2011).

\[\textit{6}\] ‘Suvaitsevaisto’: the ‘tolerant’ – used as a derogatory term in the public discussion.
By the end of the 20th century – at a time when the number of immigrants was increasing, and their backgrounds diversified – the young and the underprivileged in Finland were becoming more and more intolerant against immigrants. At the time, the former Soviet Union as well as refugees were perceived as the main future threats by one third of the population. (Ruuska, 1999, p. 211.) It was commonly assumed that only a nation with its own state can truly be a self-governing nation; consequently, rather than considering the ‘mixing’ of different ethnic groups or different groups living together as viable options, the possibility of changing power relations was perceived as more realistic a consequence of immigration. Immigrants were not perceived as eventually becoming ‘Finnish’ – they were represented as ultimately taking the power away from the Finns (Ruuska, 1999, pp. 212-213). Thus, that which was perceived as different from ‘us’, from ‘Finnishness’, was often considered as a threat (Ruuska, 1999, p. 210). What was feared was losing one’s own rights, benefits, the conditions for one’s life as well as, finally, the country. The basis for the existence of one’s rights had been for long been considered to be ‘ethnic Finnishness’; accordingly, other ethnicities had not been perceived as entitled to the same rights. (Ruuska, 1999, pp. 212-213.)

In the 1980s and 1990s, immigration was also discussed in terms of enriching the Finnish society – that which was different from ‘Finnishness’ was considered as something positive that the nation needs. Immigration was represented as the solution for the population decline and the labour shortage. However, there was a prevailing idea of a division of work between ‘Finns’ and ‘immigrants’: immigrants were represented as the solution for only those fields in which there were not enough Finnish workers available or as doing ‘worse’ jobs. However, by the end of the 1990s, immigrants were rather represented as competing for the same jobs with Finns. In terms of population decline, the public discussion around immigration was marked by a ‘preoccupation over a vanishing nation’ (‘huoli hupenevasta kansakunnasta’; Ruuska, 1999, p. 203). Although immigration was represented as the solution to the population decline by some, it was also portrayed as the worse option: a higher birth rate of Finns was a preferred option, and refugees and the population decline were portrayed as two issues that were to be solved separately, in the territories were each ‘belonged’. (Ruuska, 1999, pp. 201-211.)

After the 1980s and 1990s, the public discussion around migration has continued to centre around economy. Economic rhetoric has been identified as a central way of argumentation when opposing immigration, intertwined with moral evaluations of religion, ‘culture’ and gender (Mäkinen, 2013, p. 29). Mäkinen (2013) argues that the discussions around immigration on Hommaforum, a Finnish discussion forum for the ‘immigration critics’, are marked by a certain kind of understanding of economy, in which
the wealth of the society is seen as a cake: the more people there are sharing the cake, the less cake there is available for each individual. The question then becomes who has the right to get their share of the cake – ‘we’ (the ‘Finns’) are represented as having that right as ‘we’ are already here, ‘nationals of this country’ and not ‘new-comers’. Immigrants together with the elite are represented as the cause of ‘us, Finns’ doing worse than before. (Mäkinen, 2013, p. 16.) Denying these rights from the ’new comers’ is based on nationality, ethnicity as well as images of immorality and the consequent drawing of boundaries: moral decay is associated with certain ‘cultures’, and the members of those ‘cultural groups’ are represented as different from ‘us’ also in terms of physical appearance (Mäkinen, 2013, p. 19). Nevertheless, sometimes the division between ‘us’ and ‘others’ is not that clear cut, as some Finns are also blamed to be lazy and unwilling to work; “beside the drawing of boundaries in terms of ‘culture’ and religion, there exists an economic and moral argumentation that crosses these boundaries and starts to break the imagined uniformity of the white nationalist project” (Mäkinen, 2013, p. 28; my translation). However, as nationality and ethnicity are still used to draw the boundaries, the assumption of a natural connection between a people and a state continues to exist in the debate.

3.3.3. Representations of immigrants

Since the 1980s, the Finnish public discussion around immigration has centered on refugees and/or asylum seekers. In the mid-1980s, after the beginning of a systematic arrival of refugees to the country, the main focus of the discussion was on refugees, their reception as well as the attitudes of Finns. The discussion around refugees revolved around the themes of demography and labour as they were portrayed as the solution for both labour shortage as well as the decreasing population of the country. The discussion around the reception of refugees was thus framed by a way of talking and thinking that considered them in the light of benefits they bring to the country. After the mid-1980s, nevertheless, the reception of refugees soon became a question of humanism. (Ruuska, 1999, p. 201.) The public discussion, thus, was characterized by the need to justify the presence of non-nationals in the country – either by humanism or benefits. (Ruuska, 1999, p. 201.) Simultaneously, it reproduced the construction and distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Ruuska, 199, p. 206). The public discussion in the 21st century, too, has often revolved around refugees and asylum seekers despite the numbers of asylum applications having been relatively low most of the years, as seen previously in ‘3.2. Migration and diversity in Finland’. The arrival of asylum seekers – even before 2015 – was portrayed as ‘floods’ and ‘explosions’ (Matikainen, Pärnänen, & Åberg, 2009, p. 159; Keskinen et al., 2009, p. 18) and the asylum seekers were framed as either ‘victims’ or ‘a threat’ (Horsti, 2009, p. 77).
When discussing immigration, it seems to be rather unclear what and whom exactly is discussed (Matikainen et al., 2009, p. 157): On the one hand, immigrants are imagined as a homogenous group, despite nothing else unifying them as a group than them having been born abroad; on the other hand, certain people are assumed to be immigrants even if they were born and have spent their whole lives in Finland (Keskinen et al., 2009, p. 17-18) while others, such as highly educated Europeans who have moved to Finland, are not even considered as immigrants (Haavisto & Kivikuru, 2009, p. 88). Different attributes, thus, are associated with different groups of people (Haavisto & Kivikuru, 2009, p. 88), and hierarchies of minorities are constructed in the Finnish public discussion (Horsti, 2009, p. 77).

The public discussion of the 1980s and 1990s was characterized by homogenization of the group ‘immigrants’: statistics as well as newspapers portrayed them as one homogeneous group (Ruuska, 1999, p. 201). The discussion, Ruuska (1999, p. 202) writes, was also often based on mental images and stereotypes. Quoting Paasi, Ruuska (1999, p. 203) emphasizes the role of school education in constructing those images and stereotypes: the majority of the Finns alive in the end of the 1990s had learned in their school geography books that certain groups of peoples were strange, stupid or suspicious; or that they would be inclined to criminality. Others, on the other hand, had been portrayed as friendly, intelligent or clean. However, by mid-90s, such negative stereotypes had disappeared from the media.

During the first decade of the 21st century, the media’s way of portraying immigrants and ethnic minorities was under a scrutiny by Finnish scholars (Raittila, 2009, p. 69). It was shown that media focused on problems, and in the cases of crimes and problems, the ethnic background was highlighted needlessly – immigrant status or ethnicity was perceived as relevant even in situations when the discussion was not related to immigration as such. Moreover, the media fell silent about prejudices and racism in the Finnish society, and negative writings moved to online discussions and to the websites of racist organizations. However, with the rise of social media, circulation between the rest of the web and the journalistic contents has increased as media contents are referred to on social media and vice versa. In addition, the media has again been active in giving voice to those opposing immigration (Raittila, 2009, pp. 69-72). Nevertheless, the media has also been shown to transmit a more inclusive image of the Finnish society visually: while media contents dealing directly with migration and immigrants have been shown to reproduce certain stereotypes, its visual contents otherwise have been shown to portray Finland as a more diverse society and ‘Finnishness’ as more inclusive (Haavisto & Kivikuru, 2009.)

However, Keskinen (2009, p. 45) argues that there is a lack of public discussion in Finland about the role of emphasizing cultural differences in the construction of stereotypes and generalizing
representations of minorities. The Finnish immigration debate appears to have ‘stamped’ certain groups of people by the use of generalizing language and by bringing up only negative issues in relation to those groups, having led to these perceptions and ways of talking to become tolerated – if not accepted, – also constructing more favourable context for the rise of racism (Rastas, 2009, p. 61). Indeed, Rastas (2009, p. 58) writes, although discussions emphasizing equality between all and even antiracist discussions exist, they often stay in the shadow of the explicitly racist statements.
4. Data and methods

4.1. Description of the materials and the discussion forum analyzed

The research materials were systematically selected from the discussion forum Suomi24. Suomi24 ranks as the 6th most popular Finnish website in Finland, being the most popular discussion forum visited by the internet users in the country7 (FIAM – comScore MMX, January-March 2018). The website is owned by Aller Media Oy, a company concentrating on media and marketing (Aller Media Oy, n.d. a). In addition to a discussion forum, under the name of Suomi24, services such as a dating service as well as free e-mail service are provided. Aller Media Oy describes Suomi24 as “Finland’s biggest online community” (“Suomen suurin verkkoyhteisö”) that is “known by and open for everyone” (Aller Media Oy, n.d. c). The discussion forum of the website is the biggest in Finland with around 20 000 messages written daily (Väyrynen, 2015). It is advocated by the company as a space in which one can find “help for everyday problems, experiences of products to aid in making purchase decisions, or entertainment” (Aller Media Oy, n.d. c; my translation). It is, thus, branded as a discussion forum that is not concentrated around any specific topic – but it is rather represented as a space for everyday discussions. Indeed, the discussion forum is divided into various sections including ‘vehicles and traffic’ (‘ajoneuvot ja liikenne’), ‘pets’ (‘lemmikit’), ‘fashion and beauty’ (‘muoti ja kauneus’), ‘food and drink’ (‘ruoka ja juoma’), ‘work and studies’ (‘työ ja opiskelu’), and ‘society’ (‘yhteiskunta’), among others. These sections are further divided into subsections.

Suomi24 discussion forum provides its users with the possibility of discussing anonymously – a policy that the company defends appealing to anonymity as easing conversation around certain topics, such as one’s own health, even if, simultaneously, it might create a ground for more hateful discussions. The messages written in the discussion forum are not checked before their publication, but the users of

7 During the first three months of 2018, Suomi24 ranked as 6th with around 2 200 000 monthly users, with a slight decline in March. The next most popular Finnish discussion forums, Vauva and Kaksplus, had considerably fewer users, ranking as 10th with around 1,6 million users and 16th with around 1,3 million users, respectively. However, it needs to be noted that not all of the monthly users of Suomi24 necessarily use the discussion forum, but might be users of the e-mail or the dating service, too. The total number of Finnish internet users was 4 608 000. (FIAM – comScore MMX, January-March 2018.) FIAM – comScore MMX states that statistics are corrected to reflect the real use of the websites by Finnish users to the extent that it is possible; the statistics represent the numbers of users in Finland in Finnish websites (FIAM, n.d.).
the website can report a message as being against the rules of the forum – up to a couple of thousands of such communications are received by the site daily. In addition, more ‘sensitive’ discussion sections are moderated directly by the moderators. In total, Aller Media Oy states that several hundreds of messages are deleted daily as being against the rules of the site. (Väyrynen, 2015.) This is also reflected in the materials analyzed, which include relatively many comments that have been deleted due to their contents.

The materials analyzed in the present thesis are comprised of 32 different threads of discussion, ranging in their length from a couple of comments to tens of comments in addition to the opening message, from different sections of the forum. Most of the threads are from the section ‘Society’ (‘Yhteiskunta’) and its sub-sections ‘Happening in the world’ (‘Maailman menoa’) and ‘Immigration’ (‘Maahanmuutto’) (10 and 13 threads, respectively). However, threads from other sub-sections of ‘Society’ are also among the selected materials – ‘The Finns Party’ (‘The True Finns’), ‘Racism’ (‘Rasismi’), and ‘The European Union’ (‘Euroopan Unioni’) – as well as threads from other sections and sub-sections, including ‘Forssa’, ‘Turku’, ‘Imatra’, ‘Helsinki’ and ‘Oulu’ in ‘Localities’ and ’50 plus’ and ’60 plus’ in ‘Groups/age groups’ (‘Ryhmät/ikäryhmät’).

The threads of discussion were selected with the search tool of the forum, using key words ‘maahanmuutto’ (‘immigration’), ‘maahanmuuttajat’ (‘immigrants’), ‘mamut’ (short for ‘immigrants’), ‘kotoutuminen’ (‘integration’), and ‘suomalaisuus’ (‘Finnishness’), selecting those being connected to the theme of migration. The seven most recent ones were chosen from the results of each search, limiting, however, the discussions to those where the latest comment was made during the year 2018 (thus, with some search words fewer threads were chosen as they were older). Instead of focusing on the ‘immigration’ section of the forum, the discussion threads were searched for in the whole forum to include as much variety as possible.

As the threads of discussion were selected from different sections of the suomi24.fi forum, the topics of the discussions vary quite a lot. There are opening posts explicitly about racism (with titles such as, ‘Does inequality cause racism’) and immigration (e.g. ‘Immigration is simply power politics!’) as well as immigrants (e.g. ‘Migrants bring many disadvantages, not so many advantages’, ‘Immigrants upstairs’). Some discussions are focused on certain Finnish localities (e.g. ‘Are there any Finns living in Turku?’), while others discuss immigration in wider European context (e.g. ‘The EU is already ordering a new flood of immigrants to Europe’). A few threads discuss directly Finnishness in relation to immigration (e.g. ‘If we want to conserve Finnishness’). In some, the perceived threats posed by immigration and immigrants are emphasized (e.g. ‘Research: intelligence on the decline in mass
immigration countries’, ‘Free immigration or social security’), whereas others are questioning criticism against immigration (‘a critic of immigration upset me’, ‘the critics of immigration just don’t get it’, ‘unnecessary criticism against immigration’). The data used for analysis was collected April 11, 2018. All the threads of discussions are in Finnish, and the examples provided in the analysis were translated to English by me (the original Finnish versions of the extracts are provided in the appendix).

4.2. Method

In order to analyse the construction of Finnish national identities in the discussions around migration, both discursive construction of sameness and of difference was examined qualitatively. Following de Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999), the analysis took place on three different levels, i.e. the contents and topics of the discussions, the strategies used to construct Finnish identities, and the linguistic means and forms of realization. Nevertheless, the main focus was on the contents level, and thus, this analysis does not intend to be a deep analysis of strategies and linguistic means employed by the participants of the discussions due to the scope of the thesis. The materials selected consisted only of written language and hyperlinks; thus, no multimodal approach to the analysis was used, but the analysis concentrated on the written language. The external sources hyperlinked to the discussions were read when necessary for the analysis of the comments, but they were not included in the analysis itself.

As a starting point for the analysis, the materials were examined, observing the ways in which migration, different groups of migrants, Finns and ‘Finnishness’ were represented in the selected discussion threads and which attributes were associated to them. Different themes and categories were identified in the materials, the most prominent of which were then selected for the final analysis. In the analysis, attention was especially given to the words and terms used to denominate and describe both ‘us’ and ‘them’. In addition, the strategies for discursively constructing sameness and unity within ‘us’ was examined. When looking at the ways in which migration was discussed, attention was paid to the underlying assumptions: what is taken as given in the discussion on immigration about ‘Finns’ and Finland, on the one hand, and ‘foreigners’, on the other hand, and the relations between the two groups? How does it contribute to the construction of difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and to the construction of sameness within ‘us’? The results of the analysis were then contrasted with the construction of Finnish identities and discourses of immigration in the past (see Chapter 3).

The analysis of the levels of the strategies and linguistic means drew on the work of Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart (2009) as well as of van Dijk (n.d.). De Cillia et al. (1999, pp. 160-163; see
also Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009) propose five different strategies for the discursive construction of national identities: 1) constructive, 2) perpetuating, 3) justification, 4) transformational, and 5) destructive. Constructive strategies serve to build and establish national identity and a we-group; perpetuating and justification strategies aim to maintain, support and reproduce national identities, e.g. through supporting continuity or constructing certain groups of people as a threat; transformational strategies attempt to modify meanings of certain, more or less well-established, aspects of national identity into other aspects; and the destructive and dismantling strategies try to de-mythologize or demolish (elements of) existing national identities. Different sub-strategies include, among others, ‘pre-supposing intra-national sameness/similarity’ (e.g. the use of ‘we’ as ‘national we’), emphasizing national singularity, presupposition and emphasis of differences between nations, and positive self-presentation. Van Dijk (n.d., pp. 43-44) identifies positive self-presentation, on the one hand, and negative other-presentation, on the other hand, as an overall strategy of ideological discourse. As argued by van Dijk (n.d., pp. 45-49), typical topics about ‘others’ are ‘difference’, ‘deviance and transgression’ and ‘threat’, while the level of description and the degree of detail, word choices, examples and illustrations on ‘our good deeds’ and ‘their bad behaviour’, disclaimers, and topoi (i.e. ‘ready-made’ arguments that do not need to be defended), among others, are commonly being used in ideological discourse.
5. Analysis

In this section of the present thesis, the analysis of the materials chosen will be presented. The analysis is divided into five sections: 1) Chapter 5.1 discusses discourses of sameness and how ‘Finns’ and the Finnish nation is defined – implicitly and explicitly – in the discussions analyzed; 2) Chapter 5.2 concentrates on language politics, i.e. how the question of linguistic diversity is represented in the discussions in terms of national languages of the country and how, accordingly, the boundaries of Finnishness are drawn; 3) Chapter 5.3, in turn, looks at the ways in which the past is used in the immigration debate to justify or oppose immigration to Finland at present, and consequently, how people emigrating from Finland in the 20th century are represented in contrast to those immigrating into Finland at present; 4) Chapter 5.4 centres around one of the most prominent discourses of immigration in the sample analyzed, ‘immigration as a threat’; 5) Chapter 5.5 finally brings the main findings of each section together in a summary and discusses the ways in which Finnishness is imagined and how Finnish national identity constructed.

5.1. Discourses of sameness and defining ‘Finnishness’

The existence of a Finnish nation that is inherently different from ‘others’, tied to a certain territory and characterized by a shared language and a shared single culture is mostly taken for granted in the sample analyzed. Throughout the discussions there is a presupposition that such a difference exists, that ‘we’ are Finns and those who do not fit into the ‘criteria of Finnishness’ are not. While some explicitly define the criteria for the category of ‘Finns’ or ‘Finnishness’, in other occasions, a presupposition of such a shared knowledge exists, and, thus, this understanding of ‘us’ and ‘them’ remains implicit, as a shared knowledge that the participants of the discussions are assumed to have. This is reflected, for example, in the use of the ‘national we’, the deictic personal pronoun that assumes national singularity and homogeneity, which, among others, is employed in the discursive construction of sameness (Costelloe, 2012: 328-329). Although the understanding of ‘us’ and ‘them’ remains mostly implicit, various markers of difference to exclude can be observed, including aspects such as common heritage and language; Finnishness, then, is often represented as something one is born with rather than something one can become, while each culture/nation/people are portrayed as belonging to a certain territory.

A presupposition of the existence of a homogenous and singular nation, the ‘Finns’, is reflected, for example, in the use of the deictic pronoun ‘we’. As discussed by Billig (1995, p. 106), in the contemporary political discourse, ‘we’ is not only used to refer to ‘us’, including the speaker and the
hearer(s), but it is also used to refer to a wider group of people, such as a nation. The use of ‘we’ implies the existence of ‘them’, just like the deixis ‘here’ implies that there is another place, beyond the borders of ‘here’; in other words, ‘there’. Indeed, in Billig’s words (1995, p. 144), “this constant deixis shows the continuing presence of the homeland, and the ease with which it can be taken for granted”. The deictic ‘national we’ is employed in discourses of sameness; it assumes national singularity and homogeneity, and it is used to speak both to and for the group (Costelloe, 2014, p. 320).

Deictic pronouns are widely used in the discussions analyzed. The participants refer to ‘our beloved fatherland’ (‘meidän rakas isänmaamme’; pseudonym poishetisuomestatai, 31/3/2018, 8:58, Helsinki torjuu maahanmuuttajat epäreilusti!), ‘we Finns’, and just simply ‘we’. This use of deictic pronouns takes for granted the existence of the group ‘Finns’ as a homogenous and singular group, different from ‘others’. ‘We’ is also employed to speak for the whole group, as illustrated by Example 1:

1) Should we Finns be very happy and WHY, when these non-native species THAT WE DO NOT WANT IN OUR HOME are inhabited everywhere? (Pseudonym Lainaaja, 7/4/2018, 20:26, Tervetuloa kaikkialle Suomeen pakolaiset!; emphasis added)8

Here the repetition of the deictic pronouns ‘we’ (‘us’, ‘our’) emphasizes and brings intensity to the assumed homogeneity and singularity; repetition can be employed as a strategy for emphasis as well as for encoding emotions (Costelloe, 2014, p. 329). Moreover, the writer represents themselves as speaking for the group of Finns; their opinion is represented as a universal one, shared by all Finns. Indeed, Billig (1995, p. 166) writes that ‘we’ can be employed as a device for presenting interests as universal ones, picturing a harmonious world.

In Example 1, the groups ‘Finns’/‘us’ are taken for granted – it is assumed that the consumer of the text knows what is referred to when using these terms. This is connected to the ‘knowledge device’ and context models discussed in ‘2.1.3. Cognition’. The definition of ‘Finns’ (and ‘non-native species’) and the reference of ‘us’ is considered as knowledge shared by the visitors of the discussion forum – if not by all ‘Finns’. Nevertheless, these terms are sometimes also defined in the discussions analyzed. Example 2 explicitly defines ‘Finnishness’ and the ‘Finns’:

2) Finland = the Finnish people/nation9

8 Example 1, as all examples, is a translation from Finnish to English; the original Finnish extracts from the discussions can be found in the appendix.
9 The Finnish word used here, ‘kansa’, has several meanings, including those of a ‘nation’ and a ‘people’. As defined by Kotimaisten kielten keskus ja Kielikone Oy (2018), ‘kansa’ refers to: 1) a group of people that is connected by a shared
What does a people/nation consist of?
A people/nation is comprised of ethnic heritage, culture and a shared language…

What does a state consist of?
A state has territorial borders that have been internationally recognized, it has its own INDEPENDENT government and its own currency. And its own army. A nation-state is comprised of these both…

(Pseudonym Uhuhuhuhuhuhu, 2/4/2018, 11:15, Millaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?)

Example 2 represents Finns as being defined by a common heritage, culture and language – any intra-national diversity – language-, heritage- or culture-wise – is downplayed, and those not fitting into the said definition of Finns are implicitly excluded from the nation. The comment above also reflects – and reproduces – the idea of a nation being linked to a certain territory as well as of a nation as being sovereign. A nation, then, is represented as having the right to a certain territory and to govern over that territory.

Moreover, an underlying assumption that a nation-state, i.e. Finland, should exist to serve first and foremost the Finns is also visible in the discussions, as reflected in Example 3:

3) I miss times when the economy would serve the Finnish people, its welfare, culture and language. Now we are just a bunch of slaves that can be replaced and the mental wellbeing of which does not matter.
(totuutta-hieman-, 1/4/2018, 11:57, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata)

Even when ‘Finnishness’ or the ‘Finns’ are not explicitly defined as in Example 2), the same assumptions about what a Finn or Finnishness is exist – as well as the taken-for-granted links between a people, a culture, and a state, as was illustrated by Example 3. This can be also observed in Example 4 in which the writer defines an ‘acceptable immigrant’:

4) The only type of immigrant can then be a return migrant that already has the Finnish nationality or a national of another country that moves to the country because of a real marriage. In the case of separation or divorce, the Finnish nationality obtained through marriage should also be cancelled. All refugees and others arriving to the country need to return to their own culture or wherever they go as soon as that becomes a possibility! They should get the conditions for life according to the norms and circumstances over there, just like Finns need to do in their own country. Sustaining the nationals of other countries is not the business of Finns, just like nothing else related to them! (Pseudonym Kalervo54, 2/4/2018, 10:10, JARI LINDSRÖM (SIN): "SUOMEEN MAAHANMUUTTAJIA").

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culture and often also by government and language; the population of a state; as antonym to those in power, i.e. the commonalty; 3) the population inhabiting a certain area; 4) the peasantry, working people, the lower social classes; 4) an innumerable, big crowd; people.
Example 4, then, uses such a taken-for-granted link as an argument to oppose immigration, emphasizing how each nation should not only stay in ‘their culture’ but also ‘is not the business’ of others.

In addition to assuming a link between Finland as a state and a territory and Finns as a nation, Finns are also constructed as being characterized by a certain kind of common mentality. In the discussions analyzed this shared mentality is mostly talked about in the form of critique related to an idea of Finns as being characterized of not having their own will but rather following others and as being easily controlled; this representation of Finns was present in the discussions, for example, in the metaphor of a ‘sheep’ used by one participant (Pseudonym Köller, 30/3/2018, 15:05, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?). Examples 5 and 6 further illustrate this ‘mental character’ that is allegedly shared by Finns as leading to their ‘destruction’ and mistreatment by authorities:

5) It’s bad that we Finns are so phlegmatic and obeying the authorities so that we don’t even dare to stand our ground. We accept everything, even with a knife in our back, and even to that we will adapt, because we are capable of lying to ourselves. (Pseudonym Prof.Alperitti.Ykskivi, 1/4/2018, 18:13, Millaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?)

6) The Finns have been able to live in cotton wool, and they do not rise to resist. Everything has been given to them too easily. I mean nowadays, not at the times of the wars and after them. That nowadays people are so soft that only an absolute catastrophe will (if it will) make them to rise to revolt against their destruction/suicide. (Pseudonym qäääzm, 30/3/2018, 10:16, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

Finns as a group are here represented as not ‘standing their own ground’, even ‘with a knife in their back’ – in other words, even when they are mistreated, they blindly follow the authorities.

While the use of deictic ‘we’ was discussed previously in terms of constructing sameness, a certain distancing from the group of ‘Finns’ occurs in Example 6. Instead of employing the pronoun ‘we’ as in Example 5, the writer refers to ‘Finns’ from a seemingly external position. Examples 5 and 6 both portray a rather negative image of Finns. This has been identified as typical for discussions about Finnishness. Alasuutari and Ruuska write,

> It appears that those discussing Finnishness would often be discontent with the nationality that they represent, ashamed of themselves and their fellow countrymen (according to Matti Peltonen discussions about Finnishness are about men indeed) – or as if they would position themselves as something else than Finnish. (1998, p. 9; my translation.)

Nevertheless, even when one positions oneself as external, which happens when referring to the ‘Finns’ as a third party rather than ‘us Finns’, such talk about Finnishness and Finns still contributes to the
construction of ‘Finns’ as a homogenous group, in this case characterized by a certain shared mental character.

Despite the negative presentation of the ‘in-group’ in some occasions, the general strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is also employed in the discussions analyzed, justifying the exclusion of ‘others’ and the existence of ‘us’, as reflected in Example 7:

7) This nation should not be replaced by any other nation. Finnish, former [in a later comment corrected to ‘ethnic’]\(^{10}\) minority in the world has its right to exist. Finns are one of the most technical and innovative nations in the world. Maybe the Jews are more innovative than our nation. This nation of ours has given the world inventions that the people of the world have been able to enjoy. No way should one put down “a cow that milks”. (Pseudonym qääzm, 1/4/2018, 11:12, *Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?*)

Example 7 represents ‘Finns’ as a nation as beneficial for the whole world: as ‘one of the most technical and innovative nations’. Again, a shared characteristic of a Finnish nation – this time innovativeness and technicality – are assumed to exist, which is seen as being under threat if Finns are replaced by other nations. The ‘others’, in turn, are mainly represented in a negative light, a theme that will be discussed further in Chapter 5.2.4.

As seen above, ‘Finns’ are represented as a homogenous group sharing certain characteristics – negative as well as positive – that define them as a group. This assumed homogeneity is reflected, among others, in the use of ‘national we’. The deictic ‘we’ is also used to imply singularity within the nation through representing personal opinions as universal ones, shared by all ‘Finns’. The discussions around immigration and Finnishness often implicitly define Finnishness as exclusive, representing ‘Finns’ as being unified by something inherent. Indeed, nations and cultures are represented as belonging a certain territory and/or state that should serve, first and foremost, its own nationals. Immigrants, then, are represented as invading the country rather than eventually becoming ‘Finnish’, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.2. In the next part, however, ‘Finnishness’ and its representations in terms of languages will be elaborated.

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\(^{10}\) The Finnish words for ‘ethnic’ (‘etninen’) and ‘former’ (‘entinen’) are very close in terms of spelling. The comment includes a typo (‘former’ instead of ‘ethnic’) that was corrected in a following comment by the same author (1/4/2018, 14:16). However, in a following comment the author also writes, “If things continue in their course our nation might even become a former minority” (“Tällä menolla kansamme voikin olla entinen vähemmistö”) (1/4/2018, 14:19)), implying that the Finnish nation would be ‘becoming extinct’.
5.2. Monolingual Finland?

As was seen in the chapter 3.1., the Finnish language has played a central role in the construction of Finnish national identity. Ruuska (1999, p. 200) argues that this tight connection between the language and the membership in the nation became even more problematic in the end of the 20th century as Finnish language again became the basis for the construction of Finnishness, while at the same time the country also became an increasingly diverse one. The central role of the Finnish language is also reflected in the sample analyzed, especially in relation to Swedish and Swedish-speakers in Finland. A Finn appears to be imagined most of the time as a Finnish-speaker, and Swedish-speakers are often excluded from Finnishness, while the existence of other linguistic minorities are mainly disregarded. The discussions constantly disregard the internal heterogeneity that exists within the Finnish state and its citizens even before the increasing arrival of immigrants since the 1990s. ‘Multiculturalism’ appears to be associated only with immigration and foreign countries/languages/cultures/religions; it is discussed as if diversity within the state would be something new, rather than having existed within the country since its independence.

The Swedish language is often represented as a disadvantage and an inconvenience, and a ‘Finn’ is implicitly portrayed as a Finnish-speaker. The status of Swedish as a national language is hardly considered from the perspective of the Swedish-speaking minority, but rather from that of a Finnish-speaker who is represented as being disadvantaged by it, as shown by Example 8, the opening message of a thread of discussion called ‘Demand Finland to become monolingual!’:

8) The Swedish language only brings disadvantages to a Finnish-speaker.. (Pseudonym Sjuksköterska, 25/3/2018, 17:27, Vaatikaa Suomea yksikieliseksi!)

The alleged disadvantages brought by the Swedish language to Finnish-speakers are used as a justification for the demand of a monolingual Finland. Example 9 portrays such a demand as ‘relevant’, appealing to the ‘uselessness’ of the Swedish language for Finnish-speakers:

9) They [Finns party] are demanding that the ‘public servant’s Swedish’11 would be abandoned. The demand is relevant as Swedish is needed in few jobs. Finnish-speakers do not need service in Swedish. University

11 The so called ‘public servant’s Swedish’ (‘virkamiesruotsi’) refers to Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences and the requirement of demonstrating one’s knowledge of Swedish as an obligatory part of a bachelor’s degree.
students can decide themselves whether to study Swedish or not. (Pseudonym Sjuksköterska, 26.3.2018, 15:14, Vaatikaa Suomea yksikieliseksi!)

Swedish in Finland is therefore represented rather as an inconvenience for the Finnish-speaking population than as a part of ‘Finnishness’ and the Finnish state. Swedish-speakers (as other linguistic minorities, too) are sometimes explicitly excluded from Finnishness as Examples 10 and 11 illustrate:

10) Yes you see, Finns and those ”Fennomans” are one and the same thing. You, in turn, are a ‘hurri’12 [Swedish speaking Finn], in other words, not Finnish. (Pseudonym hshfhflhdhdhhd, 9/4/2018, 19:35, Suomalaisuus on rikkaus)

11) You see, we Finnish-speakers are real Finns, but you are not. And you will never be. (Pseudonym saamme.nauraa, 10/4/2018, 19:18, Suomalaisuus on rikkaus)

Nevertheless, Swedish is included in Finnishness and in the imagination of Finland as a state and a nation when it is seen to be beneficial: it is suggested that Swedish should be maintained as obligatory in the education as well as for obtaining the nationality13 in order to complicate immigration into the country, as Example 12 shows:

12) Good idea, that [Swedish as mandatory for immigrants] would discombobulate immigrants (Pseudonym Voihankoukkunokka, 31/3/2018, 14:42, Persut ryhtyneet kanattamaan [sic] pakkoruotsia?)

In this case, Swedish is represented as something desirable for Finland as immigration, which is portrayed as more threatening, is seen as being hindered by it.

Although Finnishness to a great extent is constructed as monolingual and tied to the Finnish language, this representation is also challenged. One participant portrays Finland and Finnishness in a more inclusive way, proposing the Sami to be given the same status in Finland as Finnish and Swedish14, representing it as ‘an old, traditional language in the area of Finland’ and, at the same time, challenging the idea of Swedish being an inconvenience to the Finnish-speakers:

13) Finland needs to be demanded to become trilingual (Finnish, Swedish, Sami), because the language of the Sami is also an old, traditional language in the area of Finland. I can’t speak Swedish, nor Sami, but they don’t cause me trouble either. (an odd thought that they would be an inconvenience??!!) (Pseudonym eivoikunihmetellä, 26/3/2018, 15:25, Vaatikaa Suomea yksikieliseksi!)

12 ‘Hurri’ is a derogatory term used to refer to Swedish-speaking Finns.
13 At the moment, either Finnish, Swedish, Finnish sign-language or Finnish-Swedish sign language is required (Maahanmuuttovirasto, 2018a).
14 Since 1992, the Sami languages spoken in Finland have had an official status in the municipalities of Enontekiö, Inari and Utsjoki and northern parts of Sodankylä, giving the Sami the right for services in their own language in bureaus and hospitals (Kotimaisten kielten keskus n.d.); Finnish and Swedish, in turn, are national languages in the whole country.
Although Example 13 does indeed fight the representation of ‘Finnishness’ and Finland as monolingual, it does, however, homogenize the Sami population of the country. While demanding ‘the language of the Sami’ to obtain the same status as Swedish and Finnish, the diversity within the Sami is ignored: in fact, three different Sami languages are spoken in the territory of Finland instead of the one ‘language of the Sami’ that was referred to in Example 13. In addition to including the Sami and the Swedish languages into ‘Finnishness’ and Finland, Example 14, in turn, challenges the monolingual representation of Finland even further by arguing for Russian to become an obligatory language to study in the country:

14) Russian should be mandatory. (Pseudonym Putinin.terska, 26/3/2018, 15:32, *Vaatikaa Suomea yksikieliseksi!*)

Thus, in terms of languages and language politics, competing representations of Finland exist side by side in the discussions; Finland is at the same time represented as a Finnish-speaking nation as well as a country characterized by linguistic diversity.

5.3. Collective memories of Finland’s past as an emigration country

The discussion on immigration analyzed most of the time centres around immigrants and the present time; however, every now and then, ‘us Finns’ and the past are discussed as well, constructing a common past. This discussion mainly follows the strategy of ‘positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation’: Finns who emigrated in the past are pictured as having integrated to the host society or as the ‘victims of the host countries’ in comparison to the ‘lazy and unintegrable’ immigrant in the present-day Finland. Nevertheless, competing memories exist in the discussions, reproducing different types of Finnish identities and ideas of the Finnish nation. The most prominent example of this is a discussion around the Finnish migrants in Sweden in the latter part of the 20th century, in comparison with the Russian immigrants as well as asylum seekers in the present-day Finland.

The discussion around Finnish immigrants in Sweden sheds light on the ways in which the participants of the discussion view immigration and integration. The lack of any signs of ‘foreignness’ is represented as the ideal, as illustrated by Examples 15 and 16:

15) Almost every tenth Swede is actually Finn but Finnishness is invisible in the country. Incredible accomplishment from the part of Sweden. (Pseudonym 67i65uy, 17/3/2018, 9:35, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka*)

16) The Finns who moved to Sweden became Swedish quickly, both in terms of their language and their minds. 720 000 Swedes have Finnish roots but one can’t see Finnishness in the country. We can talk about Sweden’s perfect success in integrating the Finnish immigrants (Pseudonym yokt7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka*)
Examples 15 and 16 represent Finnish immigrants as having ‘become Swedish’, which is described as Sweden’s ‘incredible accomplishment’ and ‘perfect success’. In Example 16, it appears that the ideal is – apart from hiding one’s ‘foreignness’ – to change one’s language and mind. Moreover, in both of the examples, the focus is on the state rather than the immigrants – it is Sweden’s ‘perfect success’ and ‘incredible accomplishment’. When referring to the Russian immigrants in present-day Finland, in turn, their unwillingness to ‘become Finnish’ is emphasized, as shown by Example 17:

17) the Russians who have moved to Finland don’t want at all to become Finnish (Pseudonym yokt7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka*)

Although in Examples 15 and 16, the Finnish immigrants ‘becoming Swedish’ was described as a success and accomplishment, they are also represented as being victims of ‘harsh measures’ taken by Sweden:

18) Sweden has used harsh measures in order to make their Finnish minority Swedish. And Finland hasn’t protested much against it. Forbidding the use of Finnish during recess in schools, for example. That was done already before the wars in Northern Sweden. (Pseudonym 68i5u75, 17/3/2018, 11:11, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka*)

Furthermore, Example 18 constructs Finnishness as connected to the Finnish language: it is not only the Finnish migrants in Sweden who are discussed, but the Finnish-speakers in Sweden in general, for instance in Meänmaa in northern Sweden. Finnish-speakers in Sweden are constructed as victims in present-day Sweden, too, as seen in Example 19:

19) Finns have no dignity in Sweden,it was just on the news that in schools Finnish language is forbidden during the recess. Somali etc one can freely speak,it’s only Finnish that’s forbidden (Pseudonym vilivili, 17/3/2018, 9:50, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka*)

While assimilation was represented as the ideal in Examples 15 and 16, here, in turn, being able to speak one’s first language is seen as a sign of dignity. Finnish immigrants ‘becoming Swedish’ goes from being an ‘incredible achievement’ of Sweden to ‘harsh measures’ taken by the Swedish state and the loss of dignity.

All these examples above represent Finnishness (or Swedishness) as connected to language. ‘Becoming Swedish’ for the Finnish immigrants was described as changing one’s mind and language, whereas Finnish-speakers in northern Sweden were referred to as a ‘Finnish minority’, even if they may
never have had any connection to the Finnish state\footnote{A unified Finnish-speaking region existed in the northern parts of present Sweden and Finland before the territories of present Finland were ceded to Russia and the border was defined in 1809. Finnish has thus been spoken in Sweden even before the existence of Finnish state, and has since then developed into ‘Meänkieli’ – both Finnish and Meänkieli are official minority languages in Sweden nowadays. (Ehrnebo, 2000; Mantila, 2000.)}. However, Finnishness is also represented as something inherent and permanent; even after ‘becoming Swedish’ Finnish migrants and their descendants in Sweden are described as ‘Finns’: ‘Almost every tenth Swede is actually a Finn’ (Example 15).

The emigrating Finns of the 20th century are also contrasted to immigrants, specifically to asylum seekers, in the present-day Finland. On the one hand, the history of Finland as a country of emigration in the 20th century is used as an argument to support migration to Finland at the moment:

\begin{itemize}
  \item It was forced migration. The economy in Finland was really bad and unemployment was high. Small holdings had come to the end of the road and there were no jobs. At the same time, for the luck of us Finns, there was a great labour shortage in Sweden. Almost 400,000 moved to Sweden. Because of this it is funny to even talk about immigration when it comes to Finland. A few thousands of people have moved here, whereas hundreds of thousands of us moved only to our closest neighbour. (Pseudonym niinpähän, 22/2/2018, 0:31, \textit{Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?})
\end{itemize}

On the other hand, Finnish emigrants are represented positively in order to justify their presence in Sweden, while migrants in Finland are portrayed negatively to justify their exclusion:

\begin{itemize}
  \item In Finnish villages there were Swedish “agents” recruiting healthy, brisk Finnish men to work in Sweden. There was a catastrophic labour shortage, so it wasn’t out of mercy that they gathered Finns there. […] Finns were wanted as labour force, because they came from the neighbouring country, where the society, education, work culture and legislation were quite compatible, so there were hardly any problems of adaptation. […] After arriving to Sweden, they started working the next morning. A rental apartment worked out right away. Rent was paid with one’s own savings. It was hard work and one needed to work overtime. […] The system benefited both sides. Sweden got labor force it needed and Finns were paid well. (Pseudonym otjhl, 22/2/2018, 00:07, \textit{Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?})
  \item Yeah, now that we have a catastrophic shortage of camel jockeys and a chronic shortage of clay pottery. Yeah, really funny. Sweden got brisk girls and boys from a neighbouring country with a Western education to ease their labour shortage and we get a couple of tens of thousands of pets from far-away lands, whose only talent is to demand this and that from Finland, to ease chronic unemployment. (Pseudonym rojrs, 22/2/2018, 00:48, \textit{Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?})
\end{itemize}

Example 21 portrays ‘Finns’ as wanted in Sweden due to the labour shortage and to them allegedly being easily adaptable to the Swedish society. Example 22, in turn, represents the current situation as completely different from that of the past: Finland is described as having ‘chronic unemployment’ and
immigrants as not having any useful skills. Finnish migrants’ presence in Sweden in the 60s and 70s is justified by the character of the Finns, the territorial closeness of the two countries, and the labour shortage of Sweden back then – this is contrasted with a very stereotypical portrayal of the ‘immigrants’ character’. ‘Brisk’ and ‘educated’ Finns are contrasted with ‘unskilled camel jockeys’ and makers of ‘clay pottery’, and with people that are dehumanized by contrasting them to ‘pets’ and represented as only making demands.

5.4. A nation under threat

In this section, the analysis is divided into three categories that were identified as salient in the discussions: 1) Russian immigrants as ‘others’ within Finland and the state of Russia as a threat, 2) Islam and ‘Islamic culture’, and 3) racialized immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. First, however, the different ways in which Finland is constructed as being under threat of immigration in general is discussed briefly.

5.4.1. Representations of immigration as a threat

Possibly the most dominant discourse of immigration in the discussions analyzed represents immigration as a threat to Finland. Immigration is constructed as a threat to a) the security of the country and that of ‘Finns’, b) to the existence of the ‘Finnish nation’, and c) the well-being and social security of the ‘Finns’.

To follow, each of these alleged threats are discussed further.

First, many of the participants appear to worry about the security of Finland; they perceive immigration to pose a serious threat to the security of the country as immigrants are portrayed as deviant and more inclined to criminality. Examples 23 and 24 reflect a certain worry around an alleged rise of criminality and terrorism in the country:

23) Finland is following Sweden’s course, in other words, it is becoming a country that is uninhabitable as criminality is on rise. (Pseudonym Rajat_kiinni247, 21/3/2018, 16:11, Maahanmuuttokriittiset ei vaan tajua)

24) We have to specifically remember that according to the statement today by the Finnish Security Intelligence Service the threat of terrorism in Finland has even increased and there may already be 370

16 The focus is on asylum seekers and refugees as that appears what most of the discussions are centered around – however, they are often referred to just ‘immigrants’. Thus, who exactly is discussed is often unclear. ‘Groups’ such as Muslims, refugees and asylum seekers are often intertwined in the discussions, and therefore, the analysis, too, sometimes goes from discussing asylum seekers and refugees to Muslims.
“potential terrorists” to watch. That may also be an underestimation, as there are thousands of “heroes” parasitizing in the country, some of them with military background! (Pseudonym Totuuskomissio1, 21/3/2018, 16:44, Maahanmuutokriittiset ei vaan tajua)

Examples 23 and 24 represent a rise of criminality and an increased threat of terrorism as ‘truths’ – both in Finland and abroad. Countries with higher number of immigrants (as Sweden in Example 23) are represented as unsafe – they are often given as examples of what Finland will become if immigration is not stopped. Simultaneously, they assign negative actions and attributes to the ‘others’ and seem to aim to educate those who are not yet aware of the threats posed by immigration (see also Sakki, Hakoköngäs, & Pettersson, 2017, p. 170).

Second, immigration is also represented as a threat to the Finnish nation. Finns are depicted as a nation that will eventually become extinct, whereas immigrants are depicted as taking over the country and the power from the ‘Finns’, as Examples 25 and 26 illustrate:

25) If and when the population of Finland is replaced by another, we will become extinct as a nation. There’ll be no more ‘Finland’ or ‘Finns’. (Pseudonym totuutta-hieman-, 1/4/2018, 11:57, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

26) These people who come to the Western countries takes the power by reproducing. When they in one generation, or even sooner, will be enough in numbers, they will start to demand for their rights. Now this is already in practice happening in Sweden. Finally, the power relations will tip over for their benefit. Bloodless revolution will have happened. (Nimimerkki qâââzm, 25/2/2018, 12:08, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymykseen?)

Whereas Example 25 represents Finns as being in danger of becoming ‘extinct’, in Example 26, the high birth rate associated to certain groups of immigrants is represented as leading to a ‘bloodless revolution’, taking the power from the ‘Finns’.

The idea of the threat of the replacement of Finnishness and Finns implies that ‘Finnishness’ is something one is born with, as can be observed in Examples 27 and 28:

27) The Finnish nation can only be saved by us leaving the EU and the international refugee agreements and by restoring our genome to what it was in 1985. (Pseudonym Japani-malliksi--, 2/4/2018, 12:46, Millaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?)

28) Of course one can’t replace a Finn, one wouldn’t be Finn anymore if one was replaced, even if one can observe such an attempt to be going on already! (Pseudonym nurkantakunen, 30/3/2018, 11:48, Millä kансoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

While Example 26 represents Finnishness as something inherent in one’s genes (indeed, it considers the only way ‘to save’ the Finnish nation to be ‘restoring’ the genome), Example 27 implies that Finnishness is something unchangeable, static, and something that cannot be learned: an immigrant replaces a Finn.
rather than becoming Finnish themselves. Indeed, as seen in Example 26, immigrants are then seen as taking over the country rather than eventually becoming Finns, as discussed in Chapter 3.3.

Moreover, immigration is represented by some as a conscious plan to replace the nations of Europe. Some participants refer to a so-called ‘Kalergi plan’, the goal of which, they write, is the replacement of the peoples of Europe, as seen in Example 29:

29) I believe that this replacement of peoples is because of a conscious replacement politics, not because of people’s distress. … There is so called Kalergi-plan that I believe is carried out now. It is a conscious plan to replace peoples into ones that are easy to govern. Into ones that don’t think much but serve a small elite. (Pseudonym qäääzm, 30/3/2018, 9:15, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

These comments are characterized by the idea that it is the plan of the elite to replace the people of Finland (or Europe). The elite as well as the European Union are blamed for enabling or being behind the plan, and, thus, as being a threat to the ‘common people’.

Third, economy and immigration are tightly intertwined in the Finnish immigration debate and this is also reflected in the discussion threads analyzed. Immigration is seen as a threat to the rights of the ‘Finns’ – and, especially in the times of economic depression, the ‘national resources’ are represented as scarce, and immigrants as taking something they are not entitled to, while ‘Finns’ are portrayed as mistreated. As discussed in Chapter 3.3, this way of discussing immigration constantly reproduces the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘others’ – and it is also one of the most prominent themes, if not the most prominent, in the discussion threads analyzed.

There appears to be a constant worry that ‘Finns’ are being mistreated – Finns are represented as being left without adequate social welfare payments as well as without jobs. Immigrants are largely portrayed as competing with ‘Finns’ for the same jobs – and ‘we’ are considered to be entitled both to the jobs as well as to the social security because ‘we’ are already here and ‘we’ (or ‘our’ parents) have paid taxes ‘here’. Immigrants, in turn, are portrayed as ‘stealing’ these jobs and rights from ‘us’. As Mäkinen (2013; see ‘3.3. Immigration debate and discourses of immigration’) discusses, jobs and social security are seen as a cake – the more immigrants get of the cake, the less ‘we’ are perceived to be left with. This is reflected in Example 30:

30) Finland is providing for them [the Somalis], they could go back to their own country. Don’t even the deciders realize that there is unemployment among Finland’s own population and they haven’t been employed. Are the jobs rather given to foreigners than to a real Finn whose parents have been paying taxes to this country their whole lives. A Finn feels like a second class national. (Pseudonym vääryysvääryss, 21/3/2018, 9:06, Maahanmuuttajat tuoneet väestöräjähdyksen EU:hun)
One participant compares immigration to a crime, equating the jobs, degree places, and social security of immigrants with that of Finns:

31) Immigration is a crime against Finns, as each employed foreigner takes a job from a Finn, each foreign student takes a degree place from a Finn, each immigrant takes social security from the many poor Finns and each child from an immigrant background takes ‘school peace’\(^{17}\) from a Finnish child as well as the money that could have been invested in their education. (Pseudonym Kansakunnantuholaiset, 2/4/2018, 10:41, *Millaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?*)

As typical for populist statements (see chapter 3.3.), simplistic cause and effect relations are constructed, and costs of the public sector equated: more immigrants are represented as leading to fewer jobs left for ‘Finns’, less social security, and less money for the education of the ‘Finns’ and a less safe and equal learning environment for ‘Finnish’ children.

5.4.2. Russian immigration as a threat to the Finnish state

For long, Finnish identity has been constructed in relation to Russia, as was discussed in Chapter 3.1.2. The ‘Russian’ has been identified to have been defined as vulgar, violent, untrustworthy and corrupted (Vuorinen, 2004, p. 258); however, in the materials analyzed, such representations of laziness and violence seem to have passed from the ‘Russian’ to the ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘Muslim’ to some extent. Russians, still, are constructed as excluded from ‘Finnishness’ and as unloyal. ‘Russianness’ is represented as incompatible with ‘Finnishness’ in the discussions analyzed, and Russia as a country – rather than the Russian immigrants themselves – are constructed as a threat to Finland. Moreover, the Finnishness of the Ingrian Finns who were considered as return migrants and who had a special status in the end of the 20th century is questioned.

While most of the discussions concentrate on racialized/Muslim refugees and asylum seekers, there are two threads of discussion solely on Russian immigrants in Finland (‘Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potenialinen uhka’ & ‘Onko tämä venäläisen mamutulvan syy?’). The Russian immigrants are represented as not having ‘become Finnish’, and Finnishness is constructed in contrast to

\(^{17}\) ‘School peace’ – literal translation from the Finnish term, ‘koulurauha’, – is declared each year in Finland, the aim of which is to remind students, teachers (and other staff) and parents about everyone’s right to have a safe and equal learning environment (see for example Skolfredsprogrammet, n.d.). Thus, taking away ‘school peace’, here, could be interpreted as taking away one’s right to a safe and equal learning environment.
Russian nationality as well as taking part in Russian politics rather than as not having learned the language or adapted to certain values, as was the case of Finnish immigrants in Sweden (see chapter 5.3):

32) The Russians that have moved to Finland don’t want to become Finnish at all. They want to keep their Russian nationality and to follow and take part in the Russian politics. (Pseudonym yokt?yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka?)

By representing the Russian immigrants as active actors who “don’t want to become Finnish at all”, ‘integration’ is constructed rather as a conscious choice of the Russian immigrants rather than not being possible because of cultural reasons as in the case of Muslims (see ‘5.4.3. Excluding Islam from Finnishness’). As seen in Example 32, having a Russian nationality/double nationality and following Russian politics is constructed as incompatible with ‘being Finnish’. Similarly, the ‘Finnishness’ of the Ingrian Finns that have moved into the country as return migrants is questioned:

33) Did Koivisto commit an error when he allowed the Ingrians to move into Finland as Finns even if they might be Russians? (Pseudonym Wtsaarivisertää, 17/3/2018, 13:18, Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka?)

Example 33 represents Ingrians as Russians rather than as Finns, and thus, as a threat to Finland in the same way as other ‘Russian immigrants’. Again, being both ‘Finnish’ and ‘Russian’ is constructed as impossible.

In another thread of discussion speculating by which nations Finns should be replaced (‘Millä kансoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?’), one participant also represents ‘Russians’ as people who do not belong to Finland:

34) There’s no need to replace Finns but the ‘Russkies’ should be thrown to Siberia. (Pseudonym Koko.Suomen.Kansa, 30/3/2018, 12:37, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

A response to this, Example 35, reflects how while Russianness, while it is to some extent constructed as not belonging to Finland, is also represented as a ‘better option’ than nationals of ‘developing countries’:

35) I would rather have the criminals from developing countries to be thrown to wherever they go, because many Russians value nationalist Finns and support the maintaining of Finland as a respectable country” (Pseudonym y5ts554sd, 30/3/2018, 12:47, Millä kансoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

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18 Koivisto was the Finnish president when the Ingrian Finns were given a special status as return migrants.
19 The Finnish term used, ‘ryssänatsi’ is a combination of the derogatory term used to refer to Russians, ‘ryssä’, and the Finnish word for ‘Nazi’.
Example 35 depicts Russians as some sort of ‘allies’ of nationalist Finns and Finland – who help to keep the country respectable. Through this representation of Russians, the immigrants from ‘developing countries’ are implied to be the opposite: not appreciating nationalist Finns and contributing to the making the country unrespectable. Simultaneously, a hierarchy of ‘foreigners’ is constructed.

Russian immigrants are not directly represented as a threat to Finland, although their loyalty is questioned; rather, it is Russia as a state that is described as a ‘potential threat’, as can be observed in Examples 36 and 37:

36) If there’s going to be a conflict between Finland and Russia, the Russians living in Finland will probably take Russia’s side. … Finland can take some measures against them [the Russian immigrants] and Russian army will come over the border to help them as the law of the country obliges it to do. (Pseudonym yokt7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka?)

37) Finland cannot take same measures to make Russian immigrants Finnish [as Sweden took to make Finnish immigrants Swedish]. If we tried Russia could cross the border with tanks” (Pseudonym 68i5u75, 17/3/2018, 11:11, Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka?)

In contrast to Islam – as will be discussed in the following chapter, – Russian immigrants are not represented as a threat to Finns in terms of replacing Finns (even though immigrants from the territories of the former Soviet Union are the biggest group of immigrants in Finland, as discussed in Chapter 3.2, nor are they portrayed as a direct threat to the security as Muslims are – rather, it is the country from which they come from that is represented as the threat.

5.4.3. Excluding Islam from Finnishness

Finns, despite holding rather critical attitudes toward religion, hold positive attitudes towards Christians and Christianity as a tradition. The attitudes towards Muslims, in turn, are some of the most negative ones in Europe, while immigrants coming from countries with high living standard and/or that are seen as culturally close to Finland are perceived rather positively. (Ketola as cited in Rissanen, Kuusisto, & Tirri, 2015, p. 279; Jaakkola, 2009, p. 33.) Islam in Finland is associated with negative phenomena, such as terrorism and violence (Taira as cited in Eriksson, 2008); indeed, Muslims in Europe are, and have been throughout history, constructed as the ‘other’. They are made into caricatures and portrayed as violent, fundamentalist, ‘closed-minded semi-citizens’, or ‘intolerant religious bigots’ (Mohiuddin, 2017, p. 404). This is also clearly visible in the materials analyzed. Islam in general is represented as something for which there is no place in the Finnish society.

Islam is sometimes quite clearly excluded from Finnishness, as is done in Example 38:
38) The new foreign minister\(^{20}\) of Germany stated: Islam does not belong to Germany. The same should be done in Finland, too. (Pseudonym nurkantakunen 16/3/2018, 16:52, *Vapaa maahanmuutto vai sosiaaliturva?*)

Islam in general is constructed as external and Muslims as unintegrable in the Finnish society. The impossibility of the integration of Muslims is argued, on the one hand, to be because of ‘their culture’ and ‘their values’, and on the other hand, Islam as a religion. First, the Quran is mentioned several times as the reason for the impossibility of them to be integrated into the Finnish society:

39) How are you going to integrate the followers of a certain religion here? Their Book forbids adapting among infidels. I am going to ask this until someone gives me a satisfactory answer (Pseudonym qåääzm, 30/3/2018, 11:30, *Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?*)

In Example 39, Quran is represented as forbidding Muslims to adapt to the life in Finland with non-Muslims. The writer of Example 39 in a following comment also contrasts Muslim immigrants to Christian ones, referring to ‘Christian morality’:

40) In principle I have nothing against millions of Christians coming here. They have the readiness to integrate and get employed per se. Christian morality has an influence on that. It is different with another religious-political system that is forcing its way here. But what would be better than the country becoming an actually Christian country? (Pseudonym qåääzm, 30/3/2018, 11:38, *Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?*)

In Example 40, Christianity is represented as the ideal and as part of Finnishness, while Islam is portrayed as the opposite: as making it impossible for Muslims to integrate and get employed. As in both Example 38 and 39, it is common for Islam not to be referred to as ‘Islam’ but rather as a ‘religious-political system’ whose followers are hard to integrate and/or who are ‘invading’ Finland. Not having to specify which religion it is or what ‘Christian morality’ is and why it automatically implies ‘readiness to integrate and get employed’ reflects how widely spread these ideas are and how this is ‘knowledge’ that the participants of the discussions share – whether they agree with the statements or not, everyone knows what it is that the writers refer to.

Second, a clear boundary between ‘our culture’ and ‘their culture’ is drawn, and the difference between ‘their’ and ‘our’ culture – in addition to Quran – is represented as the reason why ‘they’ cannot adapt to ‘ours’:

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\(^{20}\) This was said by the German interior minister, not the foreign minister as stated in the discussion.
Do you deny the sociological studies on cultural differences that prove that it is nearly impossible for those coming from other places to be taught new social norms and values? Norms, attitudes and values are adopted before the age of 10. A cold fact. … This rabble that has come to Europe as ‘bogus refugees’ will never adapt to Europe. They are only going to mean expenses and problems. Especially, because they do not even want to adapt, in other words to embrace new attitudes and values. I made a generalization here because only very few of them are secular and ready to live according to Western, tolerant values. Depending on a study, from 62 to 68% of Muslims already living in Europe support sharia and despise European legislation. Out of the newcomers, one would guess even a bigger share. (Pseudonym elämän.kevät, 21/3/2018, 13:54, EU tilaamassa jo UUTTA mamutulvaa Eurooppaan).

Example 41 represents Muslims as not being capable (and at the same time, willing) to adapt to Finland. They are portrayed as the opposite of ‘Western, tolerant values’; as despising the European legislation. Consequently, while drawing a boundary between Finland and Islam, Finland is also, simultaneously, constructed as ‘Western’ and ‘European’. Furthermore, by declaring Muslims as non-secular, Finland is represented as being characterized by secularity.

The opposition between ‘our’ and ‘their’ culture – and the distancing from ‘their culture’ – is also reflected in the way ‘Islamic culture’ is referred to ‘that kind of culture’ or ‘those cultures’:

It feels bad to think about wives and children being left to that kind of a culture. Solitary women there are constantly under the threat of being raped or kidnapped. … In those cultures, a solitary woman is “free game” like a free-running cat here. You can mistreat it [her] and if someone complains one just says that why did you let your wife/cat run free. In a culture in which a woman belongs to a man, it is the responsibility of a man to take care of the security of the woman, so that no mob comes to the door with bad intentions or kidnap the woman to become a sex slave when she is walking on the street” (Pseudonym iääö, 22/2/2018, 0:37, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?; emphasis added.)

Example 42 also ascribes certain attributes to ‘Islamic cultures’: in general, they are represented as being characterized by the lack of gender equality and by violence. Indeed, several other comments represent women as worthless in Islam, as Examples 43 and 44 illustrate:

When it comes to Muslims, one needs to remember that women have no worth in Muslim societies. So families try to send primarily boys and young men to safety. (Pseudonym näin.on, 22/2/2018, 11:01, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?)

But the truth is harsh: A woman has no worth whatsoever in that religion, one can always have new ones, and at the same time one can take “a little” younger one. And who knows, maybe one can get into beds

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21 In Finnish spoken language ‘it’ is commonly used to refer to persons as well; thus, here the writer could either be dehumanizing the Muslim women (as already done by describing them as ‘free game’ and contrasting them to ‘free-running cats here’) or just using the term ‘it’ (‘se’) as referring to a person, as is common in spoken language.
of many blond Western ones, as Toyboy to Finland, so one forgets the wife and children that were left home” (Pseudonym junttilanantti, 22/2/2018, 11:18, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinysymyksen?)

Examples 43 and 44 represent women as worthless in Islamic societies— and Muslim men as treating them badly. Through the emphasis on the negative attributes associated with Islam and the distancing from ‘Islamic culture’ in the comments, Finland is implicitly represented as the opposite: characterized by ‘Western, tolerant values’, including gender equality, among other things.

As ‘Islamic culture’ is represented as being characterized by violence, the lack of gender equality and the culture of honour, they are also constructed as a threat. This can be seen, for example, in Example 45, which is a response to Example 42 that expressed worry and sadness over the women and children left to ‘those cultures’:

45) Who do you think has created that culture? Who do you think maintains that culture? Who are the ones raping and abusing and kidnapping actively? One could imagine they are the men of active age, not women, children or older persons… Once these who dominate women; the rapists, torturers and terrorists arrive here they want to bring their “culture” with them here. Something just isn’t right… (Pseudonym Geelitukatulos, 22/2/2018, 8:41, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinysymyksen?)

Example 45 portrays Muslim men arriving to Finland as a threat to the Finnish society, by bringing ‘their culture’ (that is implied to be characterized by gender inequality, violence and terrorism) with them. This is intertwined with the way Muslim men are depicted as rapists as will be seen in the following chapter (5.4.4). Furthermore, Islam is not only represented as ‘other’, it is also portrayed as an illness that one needs to ‘recover from’.

46) Few, too few people recover from Islam and the collective honour cultures and that means great social problems for Finland in the future. (Pseudonym vbngghngfh, 28/3/2018, 3:57, JARI LINDSRÖM (SIN): “SUOMEEN MAAHANMUUTTAJIA”.)

Islam is also constructed as a threat in terms of terrorism and violence: Muslims are also represented as actively wanting to conquer the world in the name of Islam:

47) You know that Muslims want to conquer the whole world and to eliminate all the “infidels”. (Pseudonym u3736355re 3/3/2018, 20:20, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

48) That system does not treat infidels with silk gloves. Not yet, but in the future and on the sly. (Pseudonym qåaäzm, 12/1/2018, 9:43, Mamutas on silkkaa valtapolitiikkaa!)

49) As far as I can recollect, 43% of the Muslims in a certain European country want to have sharia law to be effective everywhere. They are jihadists, and in one million there are 430 000 of them. (Pseudonym ud66et, 24/3/2018, 9:16, Maahanmuuttokrititiset ei vaan tajua!)

As can be seen in Examples 47 and 48, Islam is depicted as treating ‘infidels’ badly – Islam, then, is constructed as a threat to everyone who is not a Muslim, i.e. to the majority of the Finnish population.
Example 49, in turn, connects sharia law with jihadism, while simultaneously depicting nearly half of the Muslim population of some European country as jihadists. However, in the comment it is never stated which country it refers to nor where the statistics the writer of Example 49 uses come from – it appears to be typical to use exact numbers in argumentation without giving any sources.

5.4.4. Representations of asylum seekers and refugees

The discussion surrounding refugees and asylum seekers is mostly characterized by the presuppositions that, first, they are rather economic migrants than in the need of international protection. They are referred to with terms that represent them as bogus, as seeking a better life standard as well as their presence in Finland as being dubious; with terms such as ‘fake refugee’ (‘valepakolainen’), ‘illegals’ (‘laittomat’), ‘living standard surfer’ (‘elintasosurffaja’), ‘beard children’ (‘partalapset’) and ‘anchor refugee’

(‘ankkuripakolainen’). By referring to them with these terms, a portrayal of a group of dishonest people is constructed: they are represented as lying about their age (‘beard children’) and their “justification” of being in Finland (‘fake refugees’) and taking advantage of Finland (‘living standard surfers’), and their presence in Finland is constructed as unjustified in the first place (‘illegals’). These ‘bogus refugees’ who are portrayed as the majority of ‘immigrants’, are contrasted to the few ‘real refugees’. The ‘bogus refugees’ (‘immigrants’ and ‘invaders’ as they are referred to in the discussions) are portrayed as capable of committing crimes in order to get what they want, i.e. a residence permit in Finland, as reflected in Example 50:

50) Criminals and the most despicable people are coming to Finland, people who are ready to even murder to cheat an asylum in Finland for themselves and thus to hide from something from where they come from -- (Pseudonym KKU77, 2/4/2018, 18:46, Millaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?)

As discussed in the previous chapter, Islam – and racialized immigrants – are associated with violence and terrorism. They are labelled as ‘despicable people’ (‘kurja väki’), ‘criminals’, ‘rapists’ and ‘terrorists’ as well as ‘jihadists’. Examples – statistics, stories and anecdotes – are often given in order to prove ‘their criminality’, as is done in Examples 51 and 52:

51) “Between 2006-2009, 34 percent of convicted rapists were of foreign background.” [reference to an external source] In 2016, 4.44% of the Finnish population were foreigners, it can be assumed that the

22 The Finnish term ‘ankkuripakolainen’ (literally ‘anchor refugee’) represents a refugee/asylum seeker as an anchor that attaches a foreign family to Finland – referring to family reunification that is often represented as a refugee bringing their whole extended family to the country.
percentage at the time of the study was smaller. (Pseudonym vitunvitunvitutus, 1/3/2018, 8:22, *Turha maahantuottokritiikkiä ärystää*)

52) Well there hasn’t been really any positive aspects about them [immigrants] visible. Some [positive stories] have been searched for by force and modified a little so that it’d look better. These robberies, rapes, harsh demands there are though -- (Pseudonym Käytäntösenosoittaa, 16/3/2018, 0:21, *Turha maahantuottokritiikkiä ärystää*)

Second, asylum seekers and refugees are represented as unwilling to work and dependent on the social security payments – in other words, to have come to Finland only to find an easy life without having to work but being supported by the state (‘living standard surfer’). They are portrayed as lazy and uneducated, as in Example 53:

53) There’s no proof of highly educated Middle Easterners and Africans. To the contrary, only illiterate people, the only aim of whom is to seek for an easy, financed life paid for Finland, have come from there. There are also people in Finland, who have lived here over 20 years but can’t speak Finnish. They are usually immigrant women who have stayed home to take care of the kids partly tempted by the child home care allowance. … The fact, however, is that the majority of the men don’t do anything because they are not interested, they don’t need to, and no one is demanding them to do something. (Pseudonym VasenVihreät, 27/3/2018, 10:46, *Astuuko turussa Suomalaisia?*)

Moreover, asylum seekers and refugees are referred to sarcastically with terms such as ‘multi-expert’ (‘moniosaaja’) and ‘golden egg’ (‘kultamuna’). These denominations are related to the argument that immigration would be part of the solution for declining dependency ratio as well as labour shortage, and are used sarcastically to imply the opposite, i.e. certain groups of immigrants are represented as lazy, uneducated and unwilling to work.

Apart from being represented as uneducated and lazy, immigrants from Middle East and Africa are also portrayed as unintelligent. There appears to be worry about the intelligence of Finland decreasing; one thread of discussion centres only around the topic of intelligence decreasing in ‘countries of immigration’ called ‘Research: intelligence declines in countries of immigration’ (‘Tutkimus: älykyyys laskee mamutusmaissa’) and the theme of intelligence is discussed in other discussion threads.

23 The term ‘moniosaaja’ literally means ‘multi-expert’; it is a term that is defined in Urban dictionary as “A ‘jack of all trades’ who has come from abroad to save the economy of Finland. Thrives specifically around social welfare offices. Hard to spot in darkness due to its camouflage” (Moniosaaja, 2008; my translation); it is therefore a derogatory term used to refer to racialized immigrants.

24 ‘Kultamuna’, literally translated as ‘golden egg’, is used figuratively to refer to something precious or that will produce great revenues (Kultamuna, 2017); however, in relation to immigration it is used to refer to immigrants coming from African or Arab countries – it is used sarcastically as a reference to the argument that immigration would be a solution to the labour shortage and to the deteriorating dependency ratio (Kultamuna, 2008).
as well. Intelligence is often represented as a national attribute; certain nations are depicted as more intelligent than others. This is also used as an argument against immigration from certain parts of the world:

54) Well in order to get the real multiexperts and rocket scientists, well then we should take here people that are more intelligent than we are, in other words, nations equipped with IQ on average of 97 or more [referring to the book ‘IQ and the wealth of nations’]. (Pseudonym Dr.Doom, 5/4/2018, 17:53, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

55) There is nothing that can compensate for the decline of the intellectual level that is caused by the Muslim invasion. (Pseudonym äly.hoi, 4/4/2018, 9:43, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)

As in Example 55, Muslims in general are represented as being inherently less intelligent.

Moreover, racialized immigrants are also portrayed as less ‘civilized’ than ‘Finns’. A term often used is ‘a person from a developing country’ (‘kehitysmaalainen’), as in Example 56:

56) -- ‘being from a developing country’ ['kehitysmaalaisuus'] is connected to several shortcomings that make it difficult or hard to get a job, let alone to make it in a challenging role or profession; illiteracy, lacking language skills, the level of intelligence, lacking education, know-how and work experience, incapability to adapt, great differences in habits, values, attitudes etc. The conditions of a developing country compared to civilized countries may be so shockingly different that adapting may become a process of several generations that risks failing. (Pseudonym Prof.Alpertti.Yksikivi, 1/4/2018, 18:13, Millaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?)

Example 56 depicts ‘persons from developing countries’ (‘kehitysmaalaiset’) as having ‘shortcomings’; through contrasting ‘developing countries’ with ‘civilized countries’, the skills that ‘persons from developing countries’ are portrayed as lacking are represented as belonging and/or being characteristic to Finland.

In addition, asylum seekers and refugees are also constructed as cowards and disloyal to their countries. They are referred to as fleeing from something; however, this fleeing is represented as something negative, as a lack of courage or loyalty to their country; as lacking bravery to face whatever it is they are ‘fleeing and hiding from’. This is done, for example, through contrasting them to a positive portrayal of those who fought in Winter and Continuation War\(^{25}\), as is done in Examples 57 and 58:

57) Was it for nothing that our fathers fought for Finland, for Finns. They paid a high price, redeemed it with their blood. A Finnish soldier fights, they do not flee. What are those, who come to enjoy the benefits of

\(^{25}\) The military conflicts between Finland and Soviet Union during World War II.
Finland, who do not defend their own country but are deserters. Those away from Finland and now.
(Pseudonym poishetisuomestatai, 21/3/2018, 8:58, Helsinki torjuu maahanmuuttajia epäreilusti!)

58) How many hero war veterans fled during the winter/continuation war, for example to Somalia, give me some statistics PATHETIC ‘SUVAKIT’
(Pseudonym kaapeli12, 21/2/2018, 20:27, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymykseen?)

Examples 57 and 58 represent the Finns that fought in the wars as heroes who have redeemed Finland as a country ‘with their blood’; soldiers characterized by courage and loyalty, as those who ‘do not flee’. Asylum seekers, in turn, are implied to be the opposite: people ‘who do not defend their own country but are deserters’. They are excluded from Finland through contrasting them to ‘Finnish soldiers’ (“A Finnish soldier fights”) and through demanding them to leave the country (“Those away from Finland and now”).

Immigrants are also represented as an annoyance in general. Some of the representations of immigrants depict them as taking up space and making noise, as in Examples 59 and 60:

59) Does anyone else get annoyed when going to Status [a club]? Immigrants there think they are kings. They are all the time harassing young girls and they invade the whole dance floor and constantly film other people dancing. I’ve now watched a couple of weekends them driving Finnish men away from women’s tables. I’m puzzled! (Pseudonym liibalaaba82, 26/9/2017, 22:53, Status ja maahanmuuttajat)

60) In my building, there are two immigrants living upstairs, both young men. Every weekend they get plenty of visitors and they make such a noise that it is unbearable. (Pseudonym uupunu, 19/3/2018, 14:10, Maahanmuuttajat yläkerrassa)

Examples 59 and 60 depict immigrants as ‘invading the dance floor’ and ‘making noise’ – and this visibility of them is represented as offensive, as making trouble. Moreover, in Example 59, through describing them as ‘thinking they are kings’, they are also represented as if they considered themselves as ‘better’ than ‘Finns’. Immigrants are represented as standing out – deviating from the ways in which one should behave.

In some cases, people from ‘developing countries’ are represented as victims of ‘us’, and the presence of ‘others’ in Finland is justified by morality:

61) We have a moral responsibility to help those in most distress. Racists have attacked them. We cannot set quotas because then we would say to many that their distress is not enough. We have to keep the doors open and to take care of everyone. We can only hope that the atrocities of Assad will come to an end. Until then we need to construct the country together with refugees.

26 ‘Suvikki’ (pl. ‘suvakki’) is a derogatory term used to refer to the ‘tolerant’. A combination of words ‘suvaitsevainen’ (‘tolerant’) + ‘vajakki’ (‘a retard’).
It seems people from Oulu do not know what the tar that made them rich was used for? We have an undeniable responsibility of the situation at the moment. We have only taken from developing countries. Also, we are an inbred nation and we need healthier genes to survive. Women have understood this better than men. (Pseudonym Unelmikko, 18/3/2018, 15:07, Kalevan mamutus on törkeyden huippu!)

Example 61 represents ‘us’, the ‘Finns’, as responsible for what is happening in other parts of the world, by referring to the history of Oulu as a port from which tar – that by the end of 18th century had become the most important export good of Finland – was shipped, among others, to the British navy, for whom almost half of all the tar from Oulu was shipped in the latter half of the 19th century (Sanoma Media Finland Oy, 2005). Apart from appealing to the ‘moral responsibility to help’, they are also justifying the presence of immigrants by the idea of ‘Finns’ as an ‘inbreed nation’ that needs foreign genes to survive. Instead of justifying the presence of immigrants by labour shortage or population decline (see Chapter 3.3), an idea of a need for a healthier nation is used instead.

5.5. Discussion: main findings of the present analysis

As identified in previous research (see Chapter ‘3.3. Immigration debate and discourses of immigration’), in these discussions, too, nations, nation-states and the division between ‘us’ and ‘them’ are taken for granted. Indeed, the division between ‘us’ – the ‘Finns’ – and ‘them’ – the ‘immigrants’, ‘foreigners’, and other nation-states – is not questioned, but terms such as ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘Finns’ and ‘immigrants’ are constantly used. The discussions analyzed are characterized by an underlying assumption of a seemingly natural association between, on the one hand, peoples and territories and, on the other hand, citizens of states and their territories – two naturalisms challenged, for example, in anthropology by Gupta and Ferguson (1992). This idea of ‘naturally discontinuous’ space – i.e. the idea of cultures and places as distinct and easily identifiable entities and each place having its own unique culture and society, identifying people and cultures as ‘spots on the map’ – exists as imagined communities are attached to imagined places (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). In the discussions, the Finnish nation and culture are associated with the territory of the state of Finland, whereas nationals of other countries and other cultures are represented as belonging to other parts of the world. The thematic contents of discourses of national identity identified by Wodak et al. (2009; see Chapter ‘4.2. Methodology’), i.e. a shared culture, a common territory and the concept of homo nationalis were, then, present in the discussions analyzed.

In the discussions, both state- as well as culture-based elements are drawn on when defining ‘Finnishness’, as was identified also by Ruuska (1999) in the immigration debate of the 1980s and 1990s (see Chapter 3.3). Aspects such as heritage, language, culture, and paying taxes are associated with
‘Finnishness’ and the right to be in Finland, as well as with the benefits, i.e. social welfare and jobs, that come with it. Finnishness is even referred to as something in one’s genes. The nation-state is presented as existing first and foremost to serve its nation, although Finland continuously is represented as failing to do so by discriminating ‘Finns’ and favouring immigrants. Immigrants are represented as competing for the same jobs with Finns and taking a bigger share of the “cake” of benefits – dominant discourses on the anti-immigration discussion forum, Hommaforum, identified by Mäkinen (2013; see Chapter 3.3.2) are then largely reproduced in the discussions analyzed. Anti-immigration statements of the so-called ‘immigration critics’, as Mäkinen (2013) concludes, are not about being critical when it comes to migration, but rather about seeking to control immigration based on ethnic, religious and cultural categories. The basis for rights such as social welfare – and even for immigrating to Finland, – then, is represented as ‘ethnic Finnishness’, as identified by Ruuska (1999) in relation to discourses of immigration in the 80s and 90s.

As characteristic of populism (see Chapter 3.3.1), threats and problems are central to the discussions: immigration is to a large extent constructed as a threat, and Finns and Finland as being under a constant threat and in need of being defended. Three different threats, at least, can be identified: threat to the nation, to the security of the country and of Finns, and to the social welfare and the rights of Finns. The discursive construction of these threats is intertwined with the dominant representations of immigrants: as invading the country, as criminals, rapists and terrorists, and as dependent on social welfare payments, unwilling to work and, thus, taking advantage of Finland. First, immigrants are not portrayed as eventually becoming Finns but rather as taking over the country. A fear of changing power relations within the country is therefore present. Second, examples of crimes committed by ‘others’ in Finland and warning examples from abroad are given. Third, expenses of the public sector are equated and one-sided cause and effect relations presented, as immigrants are portrayed as ‘stealing’ from Finns. The dominant themes discussed in the media in relation to immigration – economy, threats, and problems – are reproduced in the discussions to a large extent, when Finns and Finnishness, the security of the country and the rights of Finns are represented as being under threat. However, despite these preoccupations dominating much of the discussion, these views are also challenged every now and then.

In the discussion the terms ‘migrant’ and ‘Finn’, ‘foreign’ and ‘Finnish’, are taken as given and they are hardly defined. In the data analyzed, it appears that the term ‘immigrant’ (‘maahanmuuttaja’, ‘mamu’) most of the time refers to refugees and asylum seekers and is specifically connected to Islam. Non-racialized persons as well as highly-skilled immigrants or international students are rarely discussed,
although there are a few mentions of them, too; instead, the discussion often revolves around Islam and asylum seekers and refugees from certain areas of the world (Somalia and Middle East, the ‘developing countries’) that are often referred to as ‘invaders’ (‘maahantunkeutuja’, ‘matu’). The Finnish immigration debate has been centered on asylum seekers and refugees for decades (see Chapter 3.3), and the discussions analyzed do, too – although asylum seekers still, except maybe the year of 2015, continue to be a rather small group of immigrants among all immigrants in Finland. ‘Immigrant’ as a term, then, is reduced to the meanings of ‘asylum seeker’, ‘refugee’ or to refer to racialized individuals or perceived Muslims in general, unless it is specified further, e.g. ‘Russian immigrant’. Nevertheless, the use of the term is rather unclear and alternating, even within one discussion. Islam and asylum seekers and refugees were the most prominent ‘others’ in the discussions. However, the historically significant role of Swedish-language and Russia as ‘others’ in the construction of Finnishness is reflected as well in the sample analyzed. Russian immigrants and the Swedish language were not discussed to the same extent than Islam and asylum seekers and refugees, but they were some of the only groups explicitly mentioned and discussed in addition to Islam and asylum seekers and refugees. Construction of hierarchies of immigrants is visible among the categories of analysis, too, as some groups, such as Russians, are occasionally referred to as the ‘better option’. ‘Immigrant’ as a term seems often to be loaded already with negative associations.

The strategy of negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation is employed constantly while Finns are represented as a homogenous group inherently different from ‘others’. A common past is constructed in relation to Finland as an emigration country in the 20th century as well as in connection to Finnish war veterans. The collective memories of the emigrating Finns compete, creating images of different kinds of pasts which are used as arguments and justifications for either taking immigrants into the country or closing the borders. The immigration of Finns to Sweden is justified by the labour shortage of Sweden at the time and by Sweden being represented as actively recruiting Finns. The character of Finns as ‘brisk’ and ‘educated’ people who would not rely on social security payments is also used to justify their presence there – Finns are portrayed as workers that were wanted by Sweden. This positive portrayal of Finns is contrasted with negative representation of immigrants in the present-day Finland: Russians who do not want to become Finnish, and uneducated and lazy asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East. At the same time as Russians are portrayed as unwilling to become Finnish, the responsibility of integration/assimilation is also shifted to the state: Finns ‘becoming completely
Swedish’ is represented as the ‘success of Sweden’, and Finland is portrayed as not being able to take the same measures to make Russian immigrants Finnish due to the threat of Russia as a state.

The representations of the past also shed light to the ways in which Finnishness (or in general nations) is understood. Finnish migrants in Sweden in the 60s and 70s are represented as having become completely Swedish, both in terms of their mind and language. Becoming Swedish is, then, related to the language and ways of thinking – however, despite portraying them as having become completely Swedish, they are still referred to as Finns. Finnishness therefore seems to be represented as something inside the person, something in-born that does not disappear even when one’s mind and language have changed. Nevertheless, Finnishness is also connected to the Finnish language, as it is also extended to Finnish-speaking minorities abroad – the discussion around Finns in Sweden in the 20th century moves seamlessly between both Finnish immigrants and the Finnish-speaking minority in Torne Valley.

Collective memories are also employed through referrals to the wars. Asylum seekers are represented as ‘cowards’ and ‘disloyal to their home countries’. They are portrayed as not being courageous enough to face what they are fleeing from in their countries of origin, while contrasting them to Finnish war veterans. Finnish war veterans are portrayed as having fought, died and been injured for their country – asylum seekers, in turn, are represented as deserters. The idea of the spirit of the Winter War continues on living in the discussions analyzed. Patriotism is represented as part of ‘Finnishness’.

Although not elaborated in the analysis due to the scope of the thesis, this is also reflected in the way in which, for example, ‘sivari’, a term used to refer to those having chosen to do non-military service instead of military service, is used as a derogatory term in the construction of internal ‘others’. Although the green left and the elite are constructed as internal ‘others’ who embrace immigration, tolerance, and multiculturalism (which is also represented as unpatriotic), ‘Finns’ are represented as a homogenous and singular group through, for instance, the use of deictic personal pronoun ‘we’ that is employed both to talk to and for other Finns. Finns as a group are often represented as collectively being against immigration.

The heterogeneity within Finland is disregarded. Diversity as well as certain aspects attributed to others (e.g. criminality) in relation to Finland are often ignored. Finland is mostly represented as a monolingual Finnish-speaking nation that is hindered by ‘obligatory Swedish’ – Swedish-speakers are portrayed as not being ‘real Finns’ and the existence of the Sami is most of the time completely disregarded. Swedish is, nevertheless, embraced as part of Finland when it is considered as beneficial in order to make immigration to and the integration of immigrants in Finland more complicated.
Consequently, multiculturalism is only attributed to immigrants and ‘their cultures’, whereas Finland is constructed as inherently homogenous. Furthermore, the existence of Finns is defended sometimes with referrals to Finns as an ‘innovative nation’, for example. Nevertheless, Finns are also represented as sharing a common mentality that is criticized: Finns are compared to ‘sheep’: they are represented as blindly following the elite even when that means ‘suicide’ or ‘genocide’.

Islam and ‘unintegrable’ immigrants – prominent themes in the Scripta-blog of Halla-aho and later on in Hommafoorumi (see Chapter 3.3) – dominate much of the discussion in the materials analyzed. Islam is represented as being characterized by violence, gender inequality and intolerance. It is declared as not belonging to Finland and Muslims are represented as unintegrable. Simultaneously, an image of Finns as the opposite is constructed: characterized by ‘Western, tolerant values’, gender equality, work ethic and decency and secularity. Gender inequality and criminality are mainly attributed to Islam and Muslims – apart from one comment emphasizing that the majority of crimes in Finland are committed by ‘Finns’ (Pseudonym mammassaamamua, 4/2/2018, 19:41, Kalevan mamatus on törkeyden huippu).

Moreover, by declaring Islam as not belonging to Finland, the participants of the discussions disregard the presence of Islam in Finland before the arrival of asylum seekers and migrants during the past decades. However, Islam – and a Muslim minority, the Tatars – have been part of the Finnish society for more than a century. Albeit a small minority, Muslim associations and congregations have existed since the beginning of 20th century (since 1915 and 1925, respectively) as Russian Tatars moved to the country in the 19th century. To this date, Tatars continue to be a small minority – the population of which has been estimated to be around 700 individuals, – and, despite the representation of Muslims as ‘unintegrable’ to the Finnish society, Tatars are often considered an example of a cultural and religious minority that has managed to integrate into the host society without much problem, preserving their culture and religion while adapting to the majority society and Finnish customs and traditions. At the moment, concerns surrounding the Tatar minority are about them blending into the majority society and losing their Tatar identity rather than their integration. (Sakaranaho, 2012.)

The discussions, then, reproduce the dominant discourses of immigration present in the Finnish media and the conceptions of Finnishness that have been constructed in the immigration debate for the past decades. Intertextuality is visible in the discussions as themes and stereotypes that have been identified in the traditional media are reused in the discussion forum analyzed as well. Moreover, racist arguments and stereotypical representations of racialized persons and Islam in Finland continue on online discussions and seem to dominate them at least in the discussions analyzed, even if they are absent in
their explicit forms from the traditional mainstream media. These stereotypical, negative representations of ‘otherness’ are employed to justify keeping the ‘others’ out – simultaneously, defining Finnishness based on excluding attributes that not everyone living in Finland share. The media has been shown to represent Finland as a somewhat diverse society visually when not covering immigration per se (see Chapter 3.3) – however, the discussions analyzed mostly represent Finland tied to a language, heritage and, to some extent, if not Christianity, at least to everything non-Islamic. Nevertheless, some challenging of these representations is also visible – neither one Finnish national identity nor one conception of Finnishness then exists but rather their meanings are constantly negotiated discursively.
6. Conclusions

The present thesis examined the construction of Finnish national identity and ‘Finnishness’ in online discussions around immigration from an interactional and discursive perspective – specifically, how Finnish national identity is constructed in the online discussions, and who is included in and excluded from ‘Finnishness’. The discursive constructions of Finnishness and the Finnish nation in the online discussions analyzed were contrasted with findings from earlier research on the immigration debate in Finland and the construction of ‘Finnishness’ in order to see whether the online discussions reproduce or challenge exclusionary ideas about ‘Finnishness’.

Discussions around immigration inevitably define the boundaries of ‘Finnishness’, excluding certain groups of people while including others. They determine who (and what) is perceived as belonging to the Finnish society and who is not. ‘Finnishness’ and Finnish national identity is constantly negotiated in interaction as identities entail social and discursive work, categorizations and positioning of oneself and of others. These self- and other-representations both reflect and construct the world as we understand it. ‘Common truths’ about ‘us’ and ‘others’ are then (re)produced in interaction and different discourses, i.e. understandings of the world, compete, possibly leading to certain discourses becoming hegemonic and naturalized. Despite the heterogeneity within the Finnish society in terms of languages and religions, among others, the discursive constructions of ‘Finnishness’ reproduce an exclusionary picture of Finland – one that often defines ‘Finnishness’ as Finnish-speaking, Christian and secular, and ‘Western’.

Indeed, it appears that certain ways of talking about immigration – and consequently, Finnishness – have spread from the online spaces centered around ‘immigration critical’ themes to general discussion forums, such as Suomi24 – the discussion forum analyzed in the present thesis, – having therefore become normalized to a certain extent. It has to be noted, though, that ‘discussion groups’ of similar opinions tend to form online, and online discussions may be marked by more ‘extreme’ ways of talking than discussions ‘offline’, as discussed in Chapter 2.3. However, Suomi24 – a discussion forum that is not centered around a certain topic, but that rather advertises itself as a space for everyone – was chosen for the analysis in order to avoid such ‘discussion groups’ of similar opinions and to include as much variety as possible. Indeed, the discussions analyzed involved opening messages both opposing immigration as well as objecting ‘immigration critics’. Both types of opening messages were mostly followed by comments opposing immigration of certain groups of people and characterized by
exclusionary representations of Finnishness with only very few messages challenging such representations.

The dominant ways of representing ‘Finns’ and ‘immigrants’ in the online discussions analyzed therefore construct ‘Finnishness’ as exclusionary: Finnishness is represented as something inherent. Combining Finnishness and ‘Russianness’ or Islam, for example, is constructed as almost an impossibility. Ruuska wrote about the construction of Finnishness almost twenty years ago:

…with [Finland’s] accession to the European Union and, among others, with the special status given to the Ingrian “return migrants” by the Finnish law in 1996, Finnishness has been increasingly defined based on language and culture. The speakers of Swedish and Sami as well as the speakers of other languages and the nationals of different cultural backgrounds have been, in a way, defined as non-Finnish, or at least less Finnish than the majority population.

(1999, p. 237.)

Manifold identities – being both Finnish and Russian or Finnish and Muslim (or Finnish and Swedish-speaker, to a lesser degree) – do not appear to be perceived as possible by many of the participants of the discussions. Consequently, it seems that, on the light of the discussions analyzed, Finnishness is, almost 20 years later, to a great extent represented as being based on language and culture, too, despite the increasing diversity in the country.

These exclusionary representations of ‘Finnishness’ are discursively reproduced through constructions of both sameness and difference. The nation is constantly, in Billig’s (1995) terms, ‘flagged’ through, for example, the use of deictic pronouns such as ‘we’ and ‘here’, simultaneously reproducing difference to ‘them’ and ‘there’ – those who are not considered to belong to ‘us’. The idea of a unified, homogenous nation is also reproduced through the construction of shared mental characters, shared history, culture, values, and language. Negative other-presentation together with positive self-presentation is employed in the construction of ‘otherness’, as negative presentations of ‘others’ is used to justify their exclusion.

Language use is always intertwined with power relations – and defining ‘Finnishness’ and its boundaries involves the use of symbolic power. Not everyone has the same access to get their voice heard. The discussions analyzed were mainly dominated by exclusionary ideas about ‘Finnishness’; they were often characterized by Finnish-speaking ‘Finns’ discussing ‘others’ – positioning those ‘others’ to certain roles that may be hard to escape. ‘Immigrants’ were constructed as representatives of certain
categories, denying them right to define themselves – instead, they were defined by the participants of the discussions.

The online discussions around immigration reflect personal opinions the participants have. Personal opinions as expressed in discourse, in turn, reflect socially shared attitudes – i.e. evaluative representations shared by a group of people. These attitudes are the basis for social practice, including exclusion, discrimination and racist talk, and may be based on more abstract ideologies, as was discussed in Chapter 2.1.3. The stereotypical, negative representations of immigrants and the derogative terms used to refer to them, thus, are not ‘just’ instances of language use – they may be based on wider attitudes and ideologies that control orders of discourses and function as a basis for the exclusion and discrimination of certain groups of people. Indeed, power is constantly reasserted in discourse – and the online discussions around immigration analyzed are an example of a daily cooperation of people to exclude, marginalize and problematize certain groups of people (see van Dijk, 2014, p. 12). Explicitly racist representations and talk continue well and alive on everyday discussions online – and they may trigger the reproduction of such representations and talk on elite discourse, too.

As was discussed in Chapter ‘2.3. Internet and social media as a space for public discussion’, with the shifting processes of the production and distribution of texts, the concentrations of power have become unfixed and the flow of contents does not simply go from the ‘powerful’ to the ‘powerless’ anymore. The power a text has depends on the context, whether a text can make others to react to it. Online discussions, too, do not only reproduce the discourses dominating the traditional media, but also dominant discourses on social media: the discussions analyzed reproduced themes and discourses that are dominant, for example, on the Hommaforum, an ‘immigration critical’ discussion forum in Finland.

Nevertheless, this analysis does not pretend to give an all-encompassing picture of all the constructions of ‘Finnishness’ and ‘otherness’ nor the discourses of immigration at the Suomi24 discussion forum – let alone on social media. Rather it sheds lights on different ways in which ‘Finnishness’, ‘foreignness’ and ‘immigration’ are discussed at least in the discussion forum in question during the first three months of the year 2018. However, it does show that such exclusionary discourses and stereotypical representations exist also in discussion forums such as Suomi24. They are not restricted to neo-Nazi forums and websites. Instead, such ways of talking have become normalized enough to be written in a moderated forum where people discuss everything from gardening to information technology without being considered racist/derogatory enough to be deleted for being against the rules of the discussion forum that explicitly forbids any racist or derogatory material to be presented there.
The materials analyzed also included a great number of comments that were deleted due to being against the rules – the most extreme comments thus could not be accessed.

Moreover, such an analysis, of course, can only illustrate different ways in which ‘Finnishness’ is discursively represented – it cannot clarify how such representations are received by the consumers of the texts nor what type of influence they have on them. The sociocognitive approach to CDS – as discussed in Chapter 2.1.3 – argues that discourse and the social are mediated by mental representations that are acquired, changed and reproduced in interaction. Personal mental representations are intertwined with the social, as individuals’ production and understanding of texts are always influenced by socially shared representations. However, each individual – being members of different groups and having different life experiences – subjectively produce and interpret texts drawing on contextual models that include ideas of how interaction should occur in the communicative event in question (in this case, Suomi24 forum) and situation models that are comprised of representations of the issues that are discussed. A textual analysis, then, could be combined with an ethnographical approach, doing ‘field work’ on the discussion forum in general to further understand the prevailing ‘discussion culture’ at the forum and the ways in which texts are both produced and interpreted there, together with interviews with moderators as well as users of the forum (see for example, Mäkinen 2013).

Furthermore, although examples of the strategies and linguistic means of realisation were given, the analysis does not pretend to be a deep analysis of how sameness and otherness are constructed discursively in the sample analyzed. The focus, then, is more on the contents-level of the discussions. When it comes to the construction of ‘otherness’, the emphasis is on how and which groups of immigrants are othered in the discussions; nevertheless, the discussions would have provided one with plenty of fruitful materials for analysing the construction of ‘otherness’ in terms of other internal ‘others’ of the Finnish nation, such as the elite, the green left and the ‘tolerant’, on the one hand, and the ‘Finns’ party’ and ‘racists’, on the other hand, as well as of other external others, including, for example, the European Union.
Bibliography


Discussion threads analyzed


Appendix: original extracts in Finnish

1) "Pitäisikö meidän suomalaisten olla onnesta väärällämme ja MIKSI, kun joka niemeen ja notkelmaan asutetaan näitä vieraslajeja, JOITA ME EMME KOTIKONNUILLEMME HALUA?" (Nimimerkki Lainaaja 7/4/2018, 20:26, Tervetuloa kaikkialle Suomeen pakolaiset!)

2) "Suomi, suomen kansa ....
Mistä kansa muodostuu ???
Kansa muodostuu etnisestä [sic] perimästä, kulttuurista, yhteisestä kielestä... Mistä valtio muodostuu ?
Valtiolla on kansainvälinestä tunnustetut maarajat, sillä on oma ITSENÄINEN hallinto sekä oma valuutta. Sekä omat puolustusvoimat
Kansallissvatio [sic] muodostuu näistä,molemmin vaikutuksesta...[…]" (Nimimerkki Uhuhuhuhuhuhu 2/4/2018, 11:15, Millaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?)

3) "Kyllä on ikävä aikoja jolloin talous palveli Suomen kansaa, sen hyvinvointia, kulttuuria ja kieltä. Nyt ollaan vain vaidettavissa [sic] oleva orjajoukko jonka henkisellä hyvinvoinnilla ei ole mitään merkitystä.

4) "Ainoa maahanmuuttaja voi siten olla paluumuuttaja, jolla on jo Suomen kansalaisuus ennestään tai aidon avioliiton perusteella maahan muuttava toisen maan kansalaisuus. Asumuserossa tai avioliiton kariuduttua, pitää avioliiton perusteella voimassa olevan Suomen kansalaisuuden myöskin peruuutua.
Kaikkien pakolaisten ja muiden tulijoiden, pitää palata takaisin omaan kulttuuriinsa tai minne tahansa menevätkin heti, kun se tulee mahdolliseksi! Hankikkoit itselleen elämän edellytykset siellä vallitsevien sääntöjen ja olosuhteiden mukaan samoin, kuin suomalaisistenkin on tehtävä omassa kotimaassaan.
Muiden maiden kansalaisten elääntäminen ei kuulu suomalaisille, kuten eivät kuulu heidän mitkään muutakaan asiain suunnitse!!" (Nimimerkki Kalervo54, 2/4/2018, 10:10, JARI LINDSRÖM (SIN): "SUOMEEN MAAHANMUUTTAJA")."

5) "Huono asia, että me suomalaiset ollaan niin fleemmatiasia ja auktoriteettinöyriä, ettemme uskalla pitää edes puoliamme. Hyväksymme kaiken, vaikka puukko selässä, ja siihenkin sopeudumme, sillä osaan myöskin perustellaan olemuaan."
(Milkaista Suomea ollaan rakentamassa?)


7) "Ei millään kansoilla pidä tätä kansaa korvata. Suomalainen, entinen vähemmistö maailmassa on oikeutettu olemaan olemuse. Suomalaiset ovat maailman teknisimpia ja innovatiivisimpia kansoja. Ekkä juutalaiset ovat innovatiivisempia kuin meidän kansa. Tämä oma kanssanne on antanut maailmalle kaksinkertaa, joista maailman väki on saanut nauttia. Ei missään nimesää pidä menää lopettamaan "lypsävää lehmää"." (Nimimerkki qåaäzm, 1/4/2018, 14:16, Millä kansailla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)
8) ”Suomenkieliselle on ruotsista pelkkää haittaa.” (Nimimerkki Sjuksköterska, 25/3/2018, 17:27, Vaatikaa Suomea yksikieliseksi!)


11) ”Niin katsos me suomenkielisten olemme aitoja suomalaisia, mutta sinä taas et. Et kää tule koskaan olemaan” (Nimimerkki saamme-nauraa, 10/4/2018, 19:18, Suomalaisuus on rikkaus)

12) ”Hvva idea, sotkee matujen pasmoja tuokin [”pakkoruotsi”]” (Nimimerkki Voihankoukkunokka, 31/3/2018, 14:42, Persut ryhtyneet kanattamaan [sic] pakkoruotsia?)

13) ”Suomi on vaadittava kolmikieliseksi (suomi, ruotsi, saame), koska saamelaisten kieli on myös vanha perinteinen kieli Suomen alueella.
En osaa ruotsia, enkä saamea, mutta ei minulla mitään haittaa ruotsin tai saamen kielestä ole. (kummallinen ajatus, että niistä muka olisit jotain haittaa??!!)” (Nimimerkki eivoikunihmetellä, 26/3/2018, 15:25, Vaatikaa Suomea yksikieliseksi!)

14) ”Venäjä pakolliseksi” (Nimimerkki Putinin.terska, 26/3/2018, 15:32, Vaatikaa Suomea yksikieliseksi!)

15) ”Lähes joka kymmenes ruotsalainen onkin suomalainen mutta suomalaisuus ei näy maassa juuri mitenkään.

16) ”Suomalaiset jotka muuttivat Ruotsiin ruotsalaistuivat nopeasti kieleltään ja mieleltäänkin.
720000 ruotsalaisella on suomalaiset juuret mutta suomalaisuus ei näy maassa juuri mitenkään.
Voidaan puhua Ruotsin täydellisestä onnistumisesta kotouttaa suomalaiset maahanmuuttajat.” (Nimimerkki yokt7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka)


18) ”Ruotsi on käytäntö kovia keinoja suomalaisvähemmistöä vastaan. Eikä Suomi ole sitä pahemmin protestoinut.

19) ”Ruotsissa ei suomalaisilla mitään ihmisarvoa, juurihan uutisoitiin että koulussa suomenkielien vähänmailuella kävi ruotsalainen värväämässä terveitä, riuskoja suomalaismiehiä Ruotsiin töihin. Ruotsissa oli talous täysin kuralla ja paljon työttömiä. Pientilat olivat tällöin suurin osa pahähän ja eivät olekaan toimineet. Suomenkielinen värvällä ollut mielenkiintoa, mutta suomalaiset olivat haluttu matkustaa Ruotsiin. Suomalaiset olivat haluttu työvoimaa, koska ryhmä oli naapurimasta, jossa

24) "Erityisesti on muistettava, että Supon tämänpäiväisen lausunnon mukaan terrorismin uhka on Suomessa jopa kasvanut ja seurattavia "potentiaalisia terroristeja" voi olla jo 370 henkilöä. Sekin lienee arviona alakaanttiin, kun maassa loisii laittomasti tuhansia "urhoja" joista osalla soitlastaustaan!" (Nimimerkki Totuuskomissio1, 21/3/2018, 16:44, Maahanmuuttotkrittiset ei vaan taju)


28) "Ei tietenkään millään voi suomalaisita korvata,elähän se enää suomalainen olisikaan,vaikka yritystä tuohon suuntaan on kovin nähtävillä jo!" (Nimimerkki nurkantakunen, 30/3/2018, 11:48, Millä kokoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?)


31) "Maahanmuutto on rikos suomalaisia kohtaan, sillä jokainen työllistynyt ulkomaalainen on työpaikan suomalaiselta, jokainen ulkomaalaisopiskelija vie opiskelupaikan suomalaiselta, jokainen työten maahanmuuttaja vie sosiaaliturvan suomalaiselta köyhältä poikineen ja jokainen


38) ”Suomi ei voi käyttää samoja kehitysmaaalaistus saa heitettä sinne minne menevätkin, sillä monet venäläiset arvostavat kansallismielisiä suomalaisuutta ja haluavat Suomen pitämistä kunnollisena maana.” (Nimimerkki yot7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka?*)


41) ”Suomi ei voi käyttää samoja kehitysmaaalaistus saa heitettä sinne minne menevätkin, sillä monet venäläiset arvostavat kansallismielisiä suomalaisuutta ja haluavat Suomen pitämistä kunnollisena maana.” (Nimimerkki yot7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka?*)


49) ”Suomi ei voi käyttää samoja kehitysmaaalaistus saa heitettä sinne minne menevätkin, sillä monet venäläiset arvostavat kansallismielisiä suomalaisuutta ja haluavat Suomen pitämistä kunnollisena maana.” (Nimimerkki yot7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttajat potentiaalinen uhka?*)


51) ”Suomi ei voi käyttää samoja kehitysmaaalaistus saa heitettä sinne minne menevätkin, sillä monet venäläiset arvostavat kansallismielisiä suomalaisuutta ja haluavat Suomen pitämistä kunnollisena maana.” (Nimimerkki yot7yujt, 17/3/2018, 9:33, *Venäläiset maahanmuuttaj……

Kulttuurissa, missä nainen on miehen omaisuutta, on miehen velvollisuus huolehtia naisen turvallisuudesta, ettei kukaan roskajoukko tule ovelle pahat mielessään tai kidnappaa naista seksiorjaksi kun tämä kulkee kadulla." (Nimimerkki iäöö, 22/2/2018, 0:37, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?)

"Mutta totuus on karu:Naisella ei todellakaan ole minkäänlaista arvoa tuossa uskontosuunnassa, niitähan saa aina uusia, ja samalla voi ottaa taas "hieman" nuorenman. Ja kukaaties pääsee monen menen länsimaisen sänkyyn, Toyboyksi Suomeen, kyllä se unehtuu [sic] kotiin jäänyt vaino ja lapset." (Nimimerkki junttilanantti, 22/2/2018, 11:18, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?)


"Tiedäthän että muslimit haluavat vallata koko maailman islamille ja eliminoida kaikki "vääräuskoiset". (Nimimerkki u3736355re 3/3/2018, 20:20, Millä kansoilla suomalaiset kannattaa korvata?

"Se systeemi ei kohtele vääräuskoisia silkkihansikkain. Ei vielä nyt, mutta tulevaisuudessa ja vaihvihkaa." (Nimimerkki qåaäzm, 12/1/2018, 9:43, Mamutus on silkkaa valtapolitiikkaa?")

"Muistaakseni 43% erään suuren eurooppalaisen maan muslimeista haluaa saharialaisen voimaa kaikkialla. He ovat jihadisteja, eli miljoonassa heitä on 430 000.[…]" (Nimimerkki, ud66et, 24/3/2018, 9:16, Maahanmuuttokriittiset ei vaan tajua!)

"Suomeen saapuu rikollisia ja kaikkein kurjinta väkeä se on törkeää ja mieletöntä kaikinpuolin!" (Nimimerkki KKU77, 2/4/2018, 18:46, Millennium Societa ollaan rakentamassa?)

"Vuosina 2006-2009 34 prosenttia raiskauksesta tuomittuja oli ulkomaalaisia." Vuonna 2016 ulkomaalaisen osuus suomen väkiluvusta oli 4,44%, on oletettava, että prosentti oli tutkimuksen aikoina pienempi." (Nimimerkki vitunvitunvitutus, 16/3/2018, 8:22, Turha maahanmuuttokriittikki ärsyttää)

"Eipä ole yhtään oikeasti positiivista juttua heistä tullut esiin. Joku vääksin etsitty ja kehitelty vähän vinoon että näyttäisi paremmalta. Näitä ryöstöjä raiskauksia, kovia murhamia on ja
ennenhän ajettiin esim. juopot ja joutilaat pois yleisistä tiloista jos koettiin häiriöksi. [...]” (Nimimerkki Käytäntö sen osoittaa, 16/3/2018, 0:21, Turha maahanmuuttokriitiikki ärsyttää)


Kyllä. Maahanmuuttajanaisen työllistyminen on erittäin alhainen juuri tuosta syystä, mutta erittäin haista vastaan ei hirveästi tarvitse tötä tehdä, että se näyttää tilastossa samu-miehen osalta parempalta. Fakta on kuitenkin se, että valtaosa miehistäkään ei tee mitään, koska ei kiinnosta, ei tarvitse, eikä kukaan ole vaatimassa. [...]” (Nimimerkki VasenVihreät, 27/3/2018, 10:46, Asuuko turussa Suomalaisia?)

"No jotta saataisiin niitä todellisia moniosaajia ja raketti-insinöörejä, niin silloin kannattaa ottaa tänne itseään fiksumpaa porukkaa, eli keskimäärin yli 97ÄO:lla varustettuja kansallisuuksia.


"montako sankari sotaveteraania lähti talvi/jatkosodassa karkuun esim ,somaliaan, tilastot tiskiin SÄÄLITTVÄT [sic] SUVAKIT.” (Nimimerkki kaapeli12, 21/2/2018, 20:27, Miksi mamuttajat eivät vastaa ydinkysymyksen?)


"Yläkerrassani asuu kaksi maahanmuuttajaa, molemmat nuoria miehiä. Joka viikonloppu heille tulee porukkaa ja he pitävät sellaista metelää, joka on sietämätöntä. Isännöitsijälle on asiasta valitettu, mutta hän ei ole saanut mitään aikaiseksi. Mitä pitäisi tehdä?” (Nimimerkki uupunu, 19/3/2018, 14:10, Maahanmuuttajat yläkerrassa)