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Emotive Strategies and Affective Tactics in The Islam Night Television Show

Tuuli Lähdesmäki and Tuija Saresma

The Increase in Populist Discourses and the Transformation of Public Discussion

European societies have faced the rise of extreme right-wing activity. During the past decade, populist and nationalist movements have gained prominence side by side with the anti-immigrant or 'culturally racist' (Mulinari & Neergaard 2012) political parties. Both have objected the current cultural, social, and societal changes by criticizing what they perceive as (over)liberal immigration policies, development of multi- and intercultural societies, and loosening of traditional values. Their agendas and attempts have often centered on creating or maintaining borders and rejecting threats that are considered to be resulting from the increasing 'borderlessness' of societies and cultures (Lähdesmäki 2014). Extremist and populist movements commonly circulate rhetoric in which diverse discriminative discourses are brought out and conjoined. In this rhetoric, anti-immigration-minded, xenophobic, Islamophobic, heteronormative, homophobic, chauvinist, and misogynic notions and opinions mingle (Lähdesmäki & Saresma 2014). In extreme right-wing activity these notions are commonly explicitly expressed, while in populist discourses explicit expressions are often avoided, censored, or 'cleaned up'. The discriminatory views can be rhetorically hidden under seemingly neutral utterances, such as 'immigration criticism' instead of anti-immigration (Mäkinen 2013), 'culture' instead of ethnicity, and 'immigration' instead of race (Balibar 1991), veiling the prejudiced or racist connotations.

The widespread use of the Internet and social media has had a major effect on contemporary civic activism: blogs and online discussion fora are central sites for debate today (Keren 2006; Sunstein 2007; Moe 2011; Lähdesmäki 2013; Saresma 2012; 2014a; 2014b). They have also had a crucial role in the rise of populist and extremist movements in Europe. The democratizing and equalizing effects of social media – based on the potentially universal participation and the ideal of democratic production and the sharing of information that may question the hegemony of those in power – have been celebrated, but the blogosphere offers the possibility to promote *both* progressive and reactionary ideologies (Boler 2006; Kirkup 2010; Pole 2010; Saresma 2014a). Public discussion on the topics of multiculturalism and immigration takes place particularly in social media. Although online discussions do not represent the opinions of the society as a whole, they are, however, influential in shaping public opinions by giving the opportunity for those with the 'loudest' voice to promote their views (Nikunen & Horsti 2013). While the journalistic material in traditional media is filtered through a professional editing process, social media enables the publication of unfiltered material, which may encourage the polarization of views and increase aggressive and discriminative rhetoric (Saresma 2014b). The practices and content of the edited and unfiltered media are, however, closely intertwined: traditional media is influential in shaping opinions and encouraging discussion on the Internet by providing topics and launching debates on them, and the unfiltered online debates and views published in the blogosphere are often reacted to in traditional media.

In this chapter, we investigate the debate on Muslim immigration, usually vociferously argued in various discussion forums and blogs, when it is brought to a national media. How are emotions and affects intertwined in the more or less rationally validated arguments presented in a prime time television show produced by the Finnish public broadcasting

company Yle? What new frames does the authority of the national broadcasting company – which is funded by tax revenue and explicitly aimed at "bringing a versatile and comprehensive publicly served repertoire of television and radio programmes with related supplementary services available to everybody with equal terms" (Yle 2014a) – bring to the public discussion on immigration and Islam? These questions are answered by analyzing the Finnish prime time talk show The Islam Night broadcast by Yle in October 2013. The Islam Night combined the traditional format of a talk show with its hosts and prestigious guests and the velocity of social media by engaging the audience to participate in the preparation of the show by providing them the possibility to suggest studio guests and by inviting the audience to send tweets and SMS texts to be published and discussed in the live broadcast.

Defining Populism

According to Ernesto Laclau (2005), populism is a social logic that is mobilized by rhetoric. Populist rhetoric constructs and justifies populist movements through its functional performativity. In studies on populism, populist rhetoric is often described as relying on affective, emotive, and metaphoric language as well as on polarization, simplification, stereotypes, and vague expressions. Populist rhetoric perceives threats, faults, and enemies and appeals to 'cultural commonplaces', that is, "shared physical places or more abstract sentimental areas of cultural meanings which need no justification and cannot be rationalized" (Thévenot 2011). The 'discourse of people' and appealing to 'the people' is in the core of the rhetorical strategies of populism (e.g., Westlind 1996).

The rise of the populist climate in Europe is closely related to the crumbling of the traditional socio-political order, characterized, e.g., by the blurring of the right/left-dualism (Mouffe 1995, 498; 2005, chapter 4). Instead of the traditional dualistic socio-political order, the antagonist logic of populism is usually articulated through the distinction between 'right' and 'wrong', or in the moral register through the categories of 'good' and 'evil' (Mouffe 2005). These categories include a strong emotive dimension.

The rise of populist and right-wing extremist movements in Europe has to do with the meanings and functions of the emotions that draw people to them (Salmela 2014). Emotions are, according to Eva Illouz (2007, 2), not action *per se*, but "the inner energy that propels us toward an act", giving it "a particular mode or coloration". If emotions are "cultural meanings and social relationships that are very compressed together" (Illouz 2007, 3), it is important to look at both the individual psychological mechanisms and the socio-economic changes in explaining the emotionally affected attraction of these movements (Flecker 2007). Several studies (e.g., Haynes *et al*. 2006; Flecker, Hentges & Balazs 2008; Swank & Betz 2003; De Weerdt, Catellani, de Witte & Milesi 2007; Guibernau 2013; Hoggett *et al*. 2013) have emphasized that the feelings of injustice, resentment, powerlessness, vulnerability, defeat, and lack of self-esteem are associated with xenophobic, nationalist, ethnocentric, authoritarian, and neoliberal or welfare chauvinist political responses and attitudes. In addition, scholars have emphasized the feeling of shame as a catalyst of anger in the populist and extremist movements. As Jonathan H. Turner (2007, 517) notes, when individuals cannot meet the expectations in encounters lodged in key institutional domains, such as family, education, economy, polity, or religion, or are negatively sanctioned in these encounters, they are likely to experience shame. Shame experienced in different personal and social identities crops up and intensifies anger at 'wrongs' committed by others who are perceived to have

attacked one's social identity (Salmela 2014; Saresma, forthcoming; on the emergence of left-wing populism, see Lawler 2014; McGuigan 2014).

Juris Pupcenoks and Ryan McCabe (2013) have noted that extremist fringe groups (both Islamist and right-wing anti-Islamist groups) have managed to gain a notable influence on national public discourse in Britain, although their direct electoral impact has been minor – until 2014. In the European election in 2014, the UKIP won the majority of the votes making it the largest UK party in the European parliament (BBC News 2014). Populist groups are given extensive media coverage because of the simplistic arguments that make punchy headlines and selling articles, a prerequisite for the media to survive in the global contest for publicity. The emotive nature of extremist activities and protests has had a broad influence on the dynamics of public discussion on migration and especially on Islam in today's Europe. The affective anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant protests and debates about racialization (see Meer 2013; Bangstad 2014) have also produced public emotive counter-reactions, therefore turning the public discussion on Islam and immigration into an exchange of affective arguments using emotive rhetoric, in which appeals to rationality and reason are common (Alsultany 2012). The emotive and affective rhetoric of the extremists and populist parties have also had an impact on the rhetoric of their political opponents: traditional political parties have either aimed to take distance from their rhetorical style or adopted hardened vocabulary in their own political discourse (Bos & Brants 2014). The rise of populist movements and the spread of their emotive and affective rhetoric have caused the political agents to re-position in European societies. Similarly, the development of social media as a key forum for public debate has affected the position of national media companies. What is the role of publicly owned media companies such as the Finnish Yle in the public debate on

Muslim immigration and the pluralization of European societies? To whom do they give voice and are they also influenced by the increase in populist discourses?

Emotive Discussion on Islam in Finnish Media Publicity

In Finland, the rise of the populist climate coincides with the success of Perussuomalaiset (The Finns Party), established in 1995. The party has increased its popularity in each parliamentary election, gaining 19 per cent of the vote in the 2011 election. Since then, their support has varied between 23 and 15 per cent in the opinion polls (Luukka & Roppola 2014). The Finns Party could be classified as nationalist-populist, and both of the terms are indeed used in a positive sense in both the party programs and the writings of the party leader Timo Soini (Mickelsson 2011). Their agenda is a mixture of traditionally left-wing social and income distribution politics, right-wing value conservatism, Euroscepticism, and nationalist interests. Emphasizing the role of the party as an alternative that challenges the 'old' political parties and their consensus-seeking politics has blurred the divisions of the Finnish political sphere. This emphasis has enabled the party to draw together protests against a variety of faults found in the society and thereby bring together politicians with diverse interests and views (Ylä-Anttila 2012; Pernaa *et al*. 2012).

National emphasis was strengthened in the end of the past decade in the rhetoric of The Finns Party. The establishment of The Finns Party Youth in 2006 and the launch of the anonymous online discussion forum Homma – an outgrowth of the comment section in the anti-immigration blog of Jussi Halla-aho, who has been a member of the Finnish Parliament since 2011 – in 2008 increased the interest in questions on culture and identity. Halla-aho together

with his supporters and the youth organization of the party have been particularly concerned with the impacts of immigration on Finland and Europe.

The immigration figures in Finland are relatively moderate compared to many other European countries: the number of residents who were born outside the country is one of the lowest in Europe (Embassy of Finland 2014). There has however been an annual increase in the figures and anti-immigration views have simultaneously gained ground and prominence in Finnish public and political debates. (ENDNOTE 1.)

The Finnish national, publicly funded broadcasting company Yle (ENDNOTE 2) participated in the vivid discussion on immigration and the increased plurality of the Finnish society by broadcasting and hosting a live prime time talk show entitled The Islam Night on October 28, 2013. The show can be interpreted as reflecting Yle's operational principles which emphasize democratization, by bringing topical issues available for everybody (Yle 2014a), and the education of citizens. In addition to these noble motives, Yle's operations are guided by the need to compete for viewers in the mediatizing and digitalizing culture (Hellman 1999). The Islam Night was a part of a series of similarly organized thematic talk shows which Yle has broadcast since 1969. The topics of these talk shows have tackled timely and controversial societal issues such as nuclear power, taxation, unemployment, internet, sex industry, sex crimes, alcohol, obesity, hate speech, homosexuality, drugs, begging, and Russia – all of them arousing polemical debates and emotive responses.

In The Islam Night, the topics ranged from the warlike politics of the Islamist groups to the everyday religious practices of the Muslims; from the history of Muslim immigration to the position of women and homosexuals in Islam; and from human to animal rights. Twenty

guests representing various groups and communities involved in the public discussion on Islam in Finland were invited to the studio. They included religious figures such as representatives of Christian communities and imams; politicians with both Finnish and immigrant backgrounds representing the Finns Party, the Greens, the Social Democratic Party, the National Coalition Party, and the Center Party; a researcher of Islam; a Muslim school teacher of Islam; a foreign correspondent; young Muslim women who had decided to stop wearing a veil; and young Muslim women who were defending their right to wear the hijab. The show had 628 000 viewers (program reach), which is 13 per cent of the national population (Finnpanel 2013).

The aim of Yle was to engage the public in the preparation of The Islam Night: people were involved in the process by letting them nominate guests and suggest themes and questions for the hosts via Facebook, Twitter, and a live chat on the Yle website (Leskinen 2013). The show itself was interactive, emphasizing the active role of the audience. The viewers were asked to send SMS texts and tweets that scrolled on the screen throughout the show. In addition, the viewers were able to participate in the show in two chat rooms – moderated and unmoderated – which were open on the Yle website on the talk lshow evening. Some of the talk show guests participated on the moderated chat and some of the questions posed in this chat were discussed in the talk show. The moderated chat contained 221 and the unmoderated chat 3588 messages. The unmoderated chat attracted various trolls and aggressive comments directed at different groups of people and the messages shown on the TV screen also contained discriminative expressions.

The public discussion regarding the talk show started on various online forums before it was actually broadcast and continued weeks after it, bringing to the fore polarized views in which

certain stereotypes of Muslims and anti-immigration-minded and liberal debaters were reinforced. In the discussion preceding the broadcast, the debaters assumed, e.g., that the hosts will favor the views of Muslims and liberal guests; that the discussion will be aggressive and polarized; that the guests will not listen to other speakers; and that there will be no attempts from the different parties to understand each other. Although the structure of the talk show was organized under highly polemic headings, the hosts posed straight-forward questions, and some extreme opinions were brought out in relation to, e.g., jihad and sharia, interaction between the guests in the show mostly consisted of a calm, good-humored, and well-structured dialogue. However, we aim to show that the externally calm interaction included emotionally charged argumentative strategies and that the tactics used for justifying opinions were affective.

Investigating the Emotiveness of The Islam Night

Scholarly interest in the emotional and affective qualities of culture and social interaction has increased remarkably during the recent decade. In what is called the affective turn in human sciences, affects have become foregrounded (Liljeström & Paasonen 2010). They are perceived as complex powers that include both mental and bodily dimensions (Hardt 2007) and as something that cannot be precisely and unequivocally defined or measured (Helle 2013). The concept of affect, like the concept of emotion (Illouz 2007), refers to the understanding of feelings and sensations as social, shared, and circulated (Ahmed 2004). Lauren Berlant (2008) describes the contemporary *affective public* as the intimatization of the media and the public domain. Focusing on the affectivity of public discussion enables us to analyze the emotive reactions of the discussants not as those of individuals but as those of

members of an audience shaped by the affective public. In our investigation, the affective public forms the theoretical frame through which we look at the emotive elements of the rhetoric in the discussion on Islam.

We investigate the emotive features in the display of The Islam Night. The emotiveness of the talk show was manifested on many levels: in its editorial narrative, the visual and auditory elements of the inserts, and the modes of argumentation used by the hosts and the studio guests. The investigation was conducted in two phases. First, the editorial narrative and visual and auditory elements were subjected to a qualitative thematic analysis (see, e.g., Taylor & Bogdan 1984; Boyatzis 1998; Seidman 1998). (ENDNOTE 3.) In the thematic analysis, distinct themes are defined as units derived from patterns such as "conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs" (Taylor & Bogdan 1984, 131). Themes can be expressed in "a single word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph or an entire document" (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009, 310). Similarly, themes may appear in images and sounds, which function as semiotic signs transcending their iconic meaning. In thematic analysis, the focus of the investigation is on the expressions of certain meaningful ideas (Minichiello *et al.* 1990) recognized from the data through careful research. Thus, the fundamental point of departure for the qualitative thematic analysis is in the researcher's hermeneutic interpretation process.

Utilizing the idea of interpretation as a process with many layers, both researchers watched the talk show carefully, taking notes on the visual, verbal, and aural aspects of the show, the comments of the talk show guests, and the tweets and SMSs scrolling at the bottom of the screen. We completed the first round of the interpretation process by discussing our preliminary findings and constructing a model of the focal themes of the show. Then the

interaction in the talk show was investigated by identifying different emotive modes of argumentation, sense-making, and justification of opinions used in appealing to and convincing other people, again done first individually by both researchers, and then by taking them to a more abstract level by discussing our observations theoretically. As the result of negotiating and comparing our preliminary interpretations, we identified five emotionally charged argumentative strategies. The strategies include several affective tactics through which these strategies were linguistically operationalized. In what follows, we present the themes of the television show and analyze the argumentative strategies used by the hosts and guests.

Discussion on Islam as Framed by Finland's National Public Broadcasting Company

The Islam Night talk show lasted for approximately two hours. (ENDNOTE 4.) The show consisted of several polemic themes that will be presented shortly. The themes are familiar from the widely repeated Western orientalist narrative, in which Islam is represented through negatively charged stereotypes and extreme imagery (Alsultany 2012; Meer 2013).

The talk show started with an insert with one of the hosts asking: "How to do as the Finns do when Islam is already part of Finnishness and Finnishness is part of Islam. Today, as many as 60,000 Muslims live in Finland. Does Islam constitute a possibility or a threat for Finland?" After the insert, video clips from the Middle East and East African countries were shown, framing the topic "Islam" with aggressive and menacing connotations (1.06–1.53). The clips displayed a large number of Muslims praying; minarets; a massive crowd of pilgrims circling the Black Stone in Kaaba; women wearing niqabs; a crowd of men in an aggressive

demonstration burning US, Israeli, and UK flags; a bomb exploding; the training of armed jihadists; shooting; panic in a mall in Nairobi after the October 2013 terrorist attack; burning buildings; and at the end of the montage, another bomb explosion. The soundscape of the clips included Arabic praying, traditional Arabic music, shouting crowds, clacking of firearms, and explosions followed by the yell 'God is Great' in Arabic. The images bound together religion, aggression, war, terrorism, and the idea of a huge mass of supporters of a bellicose ideology.

Figure 1. A video clip from the live talk show The Islam Night broadcast by the Finnish public broadcasting company Yle on October 28, 2013. An image from the insert for the section "Religion of Peace or of War?"

The talk show was divided into six sections, all of them containing polemic headings. The first heading, displayed immediately after the video clips, asked: "Religion of Peace or of War?" (1.53–4.25). The themes through which the hosts led the discussion in the first section

were: the nature of Islam in relation to war and peace, jihad, and the meaning of Islam to Finland – whether it is a threat or a possibility. The second section, entitled "To the Holy War from Finland?" (4.26–35.05), focused on jihad and on the feeling of rootlessness together with other reasons that might explain why several young Muslim men have left their home countries in Europe in order to join the wars in conflict areas in the Middle East and in Somalia. Besides rootlessness and the impact of the internet, the male host also took up the contents of Quran as a possible cause for the interest in war: "Nevertheless, isn't it so that this kind of old media, such as Quran, is an extremely good source, like, if someone is in this spiral, is frustrated and searching for something, well in Quran there really are a lot of verses which urge one to join an armed battle, right?"

The themes of war and conflict continued in the third section of the show, focusing on differences between the Sunnis and the Shias (beginning at 35.06). The section was entitled "The Wrong Kind of Islam?" The female host started the section by asking: "What is this feud about? Does it reach Finland?" She laid the ground for the discussion by taking up the hatred between the Muslim communities and the killings of the members of the opposing community. A young Finnish imam was interviewed about the differences between the Sunnis and the Shias. After the imam had described the history of the two communities and explained some practical differences between them, e.g., how the Sunnis and the Shias hold theirs arms differently when praying, the male host noted: "These sound like quite minor issues, and of course for a Finn, this hundreds of years old… 1400-year-old explanation too sounds a bit far-fetched, but of course it is true to you." The hosts took up the number of mosques and prayer rooms in Finland and indicating the locations of mosques and prayer rooms on the map asked: "Why it is so that you do not fit in the same mosque? Why there has to be such a large number of prayer rooms?" (41.39). The factional disputes of Muslims were

discussed also in the context of teaching Islam in schools and the problematic of selecting a representative spokesman for the Islamic community for official societal events in Finland.

The second hour of The Islam Night started with the question whether a Muslim can marry a Christian (0.49). The discussion functioned as an introduction to the fourth section of the talk show entitled "The Oppressed Woman?" (4.07–43.20). The section was preceded with an image collage (3.26–4.06) displaying photos from the art project *Finlandia – National landscape* by the Finnish artist Rosa Liksom, whose works are characterized by special humor. In her photos, Liksom has depicted people wearing burqas in typical Finnish landscapes. In the images, the blue burqas and snow-white nature highlight the colors of the Finnish flag, forming, however, a strong symbolical tension. In the talk show, the photos were accompanied by a famous sentimental, national-romantic Finnish tango entitled "Blue and White" by Jukka Kuoppamäki. In the show, the humorous recontextualization of burqas in Liksom's photo series was re-recontextualized, when the humorous image collage was followed by a serious discussion regarding the clothing of Muslim women. The discussion dealt with the gender and family roles in Islam, views on homosexuality, sharia law, and its contradictions with human rights, e.g., its view on the death penalty on homosexuality (28.01–36.31) – the latter being the most discussed topic in both traditional and digital media after the broadcast. During this section, two manikins wearing a burqa and a niqab stood in the studio. The image of a veiled woman has a strong symbolic dimension in populist and right-wing extremist imagery, manifesting the various threats associated with Islam (Wodak 2014; Alsultany 2012; Meer 2013). By showing the photos of women wearing burqas in a characteristically Finnish landscape and bringing in the veiled manikins, the symbolic and threatening 'Other' was present in the studio.

Figure 2. A clip from the live talk show The Islam Night broadcast by the Finnish public broadcasting company Yle on October 28, 2013. Studio set during the section "The Oppressed Woman?" displaying photos from Rosa Liksom's art project *Finlandia – National landscape* and traditional Muslim headgear: burqa, hijab, niqab, and kufi.

The short fifth section was entitled according to the Finnish version of the proverb 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do' (45.40–51.45). The section started with a Muslim butcher and a halal food merchant explaining how animals are slaughtered according to the halal rules. The female host emphasized that a section concerning halal meat was especially wished for by the public during the preparation of the show (51.30). The interview was framed in an effective way: the butcher was asked to sharpen his knife and cut raw meat in the studio. The hosts of the show framed the discussion on halal food by asking whether it can be considered as animal cruelty and if it adheres to the Finnish animal rights legislation. The theme of killing, earlier visualized and discussed with references to bombs, jihad, and violence, and later in a

debate on the death penalty of homosexuals, was returned to in a concrete way in discussing halal food.

The show ended with a short section entitled “The Tatar formula for success” (51.50–1.07.50) which brought to the fore the Finnish Tatar minority, the roots of which go back to the 19th century. In the show, the Tatars (ENDNOTE 5) were represented as ‘good Muslims’ – an example of a group of Muslim immigrants who have totally integrated into the Finnish society through work and entrepreneurship (1.00.12). After the interview of a Finnish Tatar, the Muslim guests in the show started to talk about how they should integrate to their new homeland, and that all Muslims are not immigrants but have their roots deep in the Finnish soil. The last shown tweet suggested that the hosts and the guests should end the show with a group hug (1.07.59). Although the hosts told that the discussion in the social media has been fiery and was continuing as such, the talk show ended with a peaceful image of diverse people hugging each other.

Figure 3. A clip from the live talk show The Islam Night broadcast by the Finnish public broadcasting company Yle on October 28, 2013. A Muslim butcher and halal food merchant cutting halal meat in the section 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do'.

The staging of the studio utilized visual elements referring to Islam, such as the manikins wearing the traditional outfits of Muslim women, yet the visual elements used in the staging originating from the ancient Greece and Rome. The guests were sitting on benches forming a quarter segment of a circle which was reminiscent of the auditorium of an ancient Greek theatre. Behind the benches were white columns surrounded by an image band with more white columns on a blue background, strengthening the image of the studio as an ancient Greek stage and strongly referring to European cultural heritage and Western civilization. As for the graphics, the insert of the talk show and the graphics in the background of the section headings repeated the image of a white column circle on a blue background. In addition to the reference to the colors of the Finnish flag, the national sentiments and their accentuated innocence were emphasized by ending the show with the song "Blue and White" in which the narrator ponders what to tell the listeners about Finland, the home country he has left behind. The answer of the narrator includes the immaculate purity of the country: the blueness of its sky and lakes, and the whiteness of its snowdrifts and summer nights.

Emotionally Charged Argumentative Strategies and Their Affective Tactics in The Islam Night

The inserts of the show as well as the questions posed by the two hosts were aimed at provoking the guests and the audiences to join the debate. The mode of discussion of the

hosts of The Islam Night was, in principle, very no-nonsense, but in practice their tone was repeatedly highly outspoken, aggravating, and even provocative, including emotionally charged expressions and vocabulary. This is in line with other "Yle nights" dealing with controversial subjects.

The guests and the audience sending SMSs and tweets to The Islam Night also used emotionally charged argumentative strategies and concrete affective tactics in their attempts to promote or resist their anti-immigration or anti-Islamic views. One of the most common strategies was to bring to the discussion the alleged threats posed by Islam that were claimed to endanger not only the Finnish societal order, Western values, and "our" profound understanding of equality and justice, but also to oppress Muslim women and to expose young Muslim men to fundamentalist recruiters. The affective tactics used in emphasizing the threats and the vulnerability of the 'victims' varied: threats could be emphasized by, e.g., expressing many kinds of concerns and worries brought by Muslims, naming various dangers allegedly connected to Islam, discussing Muslims and their religion in the context of morally and ethically doomed incidents and ideologies such as suicide bombings and terrorist attacks, and inciting fear by taking up highly affective topics such as Nazism, the terror of Anders Behring Breivik, and pedophilia. (ENDNOTE 6.)

The discussion by the guests, led by the hosts, was often at least implicitly polarized between right and wrong, good and evil. Moral stands were addressed particularly when the discussion focused on jihad and the sharia law. In addition, the discussion on gender and sexual norms aroused views according to which moral righteousness and assuming a position of moral superiority was used as an argumentative strategy. The tactics in this strategy had different registers. The subtlest tactic was to indicate that the speaker 'knows better' or has 'true

information' on the discussed topic. The moral superiority could, however, be produced in a more straightforward way by justifying the views with references to the Quran and by appealing to it as a source of immutable truth. These views were commonly responded with a criticism of Islam and its religious values by positioning oneself on a morally higher stand: Western values, human rights, and national legislation were appealed to in the moral positioning.

Besides taking a moralistic and a more or less normative stand on questions of right and wrong, the debaters commonly appealed to a subjective understanding on the topics. In this argumentative strategy, the debaters emphasized ethics as the source of justification for their views and the various subjective choices they had made in their life. This strategy was particularly common when the female Muslim guests explicated their relation to the teachings of Quran, clothing, and religious practices in everyday life. However, politicians also used the strategy in their argumentation. The concrete tactics in this strategy focused on explicating the knowledge of right and wrong on the basis of one's feelings, subjective understanding, and "following one's heart", an utterance repeated by both the Muslims and the anti-Islam, anti-immigration-minded guests.

Whereas the strategies described above were often used to produce or maintain the existence of adversarial groups of 'us' and 'them', the topics of the discussion could also be approached by emphasizing the connections between the groups and the consolidation of the people living in Finland. The need for consensus, mutual understanding, and co-operation was repeatedly brought to the fore by both the guests – the Muslims, a representative of the Christian community, a researcher of Islam, and a politician of the Green Party – and the audience in their SMSs and tweets. The somewhat orientalist narrative of the show that

described Muslims as the Others, and the more or less provocative approach of the hosts particularly urged many of the guests to criticize the polarization between Muslims and non-Muslims and to foster the idea of consensus. The affective tactics used in fostering the consensus varied from describing the concrete examples of the similarities between Muslims and non-Muslims to reminders of the faults and excesses of every religion, not just Islam. However, the hosts of the show incited friction between the representatives of the Muslim migrants and the "natives" in subtle ways. When, e.g., the radio personality and member of the city council Abdurahim Hussein said: "let's not talk out of turn, I would like to prove that even though there are so many people here today, they are just common peaceful people, and (…) I hope we could continue [the discussion] in a [peaceful] way" (37.50), the male host responded: "C'mon, surely you can [talk out of turn] a bit so that the critics will have something to criticize" (38.01).

What is of interest in the frame of affective publics (Berlant 2008) is that despite the controversial topic and affective contents, the display of the talk show itself mainly embraced a matter-of-fact discussion on the themes introduced by the hosts. The SMSs and tweets scrolling on the screen, however, included a lot of ironic and sarcastic, simultaneously often explicitly hostile and Islamophobic, comments in which the audience criticized the discussion in the studio, as well as Islam and immigration more generally. This kind of emotive strategy is common in online debates in general (Saresma 2012; 2014a; 2014b). The Islam Night shows that discriminative views are easily accepted in public discussion when they are expressed in a humorous manner (cf. Wodak 2014).

Social Responsibility of National, Publicly Owned Media Companies?

Eva Illouz (2007, 4) considers emotions to be "the principal characters in the story of capitalism and modernity", leading to the dissolving of "the conventional division between an a-emotional public sphere and the private sphere saturated with emotions". It is thus no wonder that the emotive and affective logic of the debate on immigration and Islam influences the dynamics of discussion on both the public media and the semi-public internet forums. This logic works by polarizing opinions, producing emotive discourses and counter-discourses, and involving emotions and affects as a means of political argumentation. In The Islam Night, the emotive strategies used by the guests and the audience included (1) taking a normative stand in the moral questions, (2) appealing to subjective understanding, ethics, and "following one's heart", (3) emphasizing commonalities of various religious (or secular) groups, and (4) presenting discriminative, even explicitly hostile views of "the Other" in the guise of humor, irony, or sarcasm. The strategies utilize various rhetorical tactics that are based on affective argumentation and populist black-and-white reasoning with wide appeal.

The effects of the emotionalization of public discussion are present in the The Islam Night. Albeit produced by the publicly funded Finnish broadcasting company the mission of which is to educate citizens, the talk show sought to gain a big audience and provoke ardent opinions. Its aims were fulfilled as it started a vivid discussion both in print media, particularly in columns and editorials, and social media, where it was referred to in Facebook and Twitter and commented on various discussion forums and blogs by both anti-immigration- and pro-immigration-minded writers. The opinions of the writers were divided: some applauded the show for its courageous way of dealing with the controversial issue of Islam, whereas others criticized it for cementing either the prejudices of the anti-immigration-minded or the presuppositions of the pro-immigration-minded (Ricks 2013). Obtaining

visibility in the media follows the logic of virality. Studies on social media (e.g., Berger & Milkman 2009) have indicated that the news and topics of discussions invoking high-arousal positive (awe) or negative (anger or anxiety) emotions are much more viral in the social media than other news. In addition, messages arousing anger are spread more quickly and broadly in online networks than other emotions (Fan *et. al* 2013). Virality of emotive, negatively charged messages generates polemical public debates and polarization of views. Bringing to the fore volatile subjects may function as a tool to improve the position of media companies in the tightening media competition. By participating in the inflammable debate on immigration and Islam, Yle not only encouraged a civil dialogue but also won a visible position in the loud debate on immigration.

Yle as the national, state-owned broadcasting company aims at extending, in the name of democracy, its services to the public which includes "special and minority groups" (Yle 2014b). By including the Muslim immigrants as a minority group in a prime time television show, Yle is accomplishing its mission. In addressing a timely topic, The Islam Night also engaged the audience in the making of the show, following the logic of 'from users to producers' popular in social media. The preparation process of the talk show was based on enabling the participation of the audience in its production. On the one hand, the preparation process and possibility of sending chat messages, SMSs, and tweets to the show increased the interactivity of the show, and thus reflected the idea of serving the public. On the other hand, these aims and possibilities created a populist frame for the discussion on Islam. Thus, Yle's aims to enable the 'public' to participate in the discussion, to give the audience a voice and to let it be heard, also had negative effects, which is a common downside of the "democratizing effects" of social media (Keren 2006). The efforts of Yle to tackle the controversial subject turned the talk show into a forum well known from the internet: the program brought to the

fore and helped to maintain, perhaps even promoted discriminative rhetoric. In this sense, the program represented the national broadcasting company as an authoritative institution accepting the othering, discriminating ideologies by approving the rhetoric of hatred disguised as humor (see Haynes *et al*. 2006).

The Islam Night indicates Yle's attempt to take social responsibility for a timely societal issue, but is simultaneously an example of the dangers of public broadcasting companies to enter the competition of the media houses by utilizing affective representations on controversial issues at the cost of losing analytical distance. Yle, as many other public-broadcasting companies, has lost the monopoly on broadcasting that the state once had (Chalaby 2002, 184) and operates now in economically difficult situation, competing with commercial media companies. This has led them to adapt to the modes of commercial media. In this development, the critical societal topics are easily transformed into entertainment. Today, public broadcasting companies have to seek acceptance for their actions on the same criteria as commercial media: the success is commonly measured with the volume of audience. In the case of Yle, the volume has not developed in an expected way (Blåfelt, 2014) and, therefore, Yle's managing director has aimed to increase the attractiveness of its programs. The managing director Lauri Kivinen recently stated in a newspaper interview: "We have been too careful. More effervescency should be expected from us, shall it then be the black Mannerheim or the effervescent talk show 'The Russian Night'" (Luukka 2014). Kivinen referred to two Yle programs that aroused heavy debates in Finland; an autobiographical movie about the Finnish war hero Marshal Carl Gustaf Mannerheim filmed in Kenya and played by local black actors, and a live talk show on Russia which was a part of the same series as The Islam Night.

The display of The Islam Night places the talk show within the frame of Yle's recent attempts to gain broader audiences and arouse affective feedback with sensational topics and emotive formats. The black-and-white narrative constructed in the inserts and themes of The Islam Night represented Islam as an extremist, bellicose religious movement that oppresses women, or at least as an exotic orientalist culture with different, unfamiliar and foreign music, aesthetics, and values. If the dramatization in the show was aimed to attract more audiences, it also revealed the implicit general attitudes towards Islam.

The hosts' outspoken intention of The Islam Night was to "increase constructive dialogue in society", and, in line with the operational principles of Yle, "to serve also the minority groups in Finland". Despite its ambitious aim, the The Islam Night rather brought to the fore the polarization of opinions, offered an arena to express discriminative views on other people, and maintained certain stereotypical themes commonly attached to Islam. In this sense, the new Yle policy to tackle timely, affective, and controversial topics is part of a populist program policy that seeks to compete with the commercial broadcasting companies instead of implementing the strategy and aims of "supporting democracy"; "taking educational and equality aspects into consideration in the programmes"; "supporting tolerance and multiculturalism and providing programming for minority and special groups"; and "promoting cultural interaction", as is declared in the Act on Yleisradio, Section 7. The case of The Islam Night raises the question of the responsibility of the public, state-owned media: Is it to maintain the ideal of equality and integrity of various groups in the contemporary intimate public, or to be involved in the "public exercise in othering" (Haynes et al. 2006) the Muslims?

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Endnotes

1. In 2013, there were 207 511 (3.8 %) persons with a foreign nationality, 289 068 (5.3 %) persons with a foreign first language (other than Finnish, Swedish, or Sami), and 301 524 (5.5 %) persons with foreign background (persons whose both parents or the only known parent have been born abroad) permanently residing in Finland. The largest groups of foreign nationals were Estonians (44 652), Russians (30 878), Swedes (8468), and Somalis (7590), the most spoken foreign first languages were Russian (66 379), Estonian (42 936), English (15 570), and Somali (15 789), and the largest groups with foreign background had their origin in the Soviet Union (68 669), Estonia (40 990), Somalia (15 723), and Irak (11 942). (Official Statistics of Finland, 2014.)

2. Yle is Finland's national public service broadcasting company that operates four national television channels and six nation-wide radio channels as well as 25 regional radio programs. Yle TV1 was the most popular television channel in Finland in 2013: its share of daily television viewing of Finns was 41.9 %. With its radio programs, Radio Suomi ("Radio Finland") as the most popular one, Yle was the dominant market leader, reaching 51 % of the radio listeners. Yearly, Yle's TV and Radio

programs reach 100 % of the Finnish people. In Finland, Yle is commonly considered as a reliable source of news and current affairs. Its operations are financed by Public broadcasting tax, it is 99.9 % state-owned, it operates under the Act on Yleisradio OY, and is supervised by and Administrative Council appointed by the Parliament. (Yle 2014b.)

3. The chat comments were left out from closer investigation, since they form a vast text corpus that is entitled to be analyzed on its own.

4. The Islam Night is available in YouTube in two parts; the first part, 49.42 minutes, at ttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkgYx-Jfdik, and the second part, 1.09.47 minutes, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oqDOHNDA88.

5. The last tactic was not used by the hosts or guests of the show and only appeared in the SMSs and tweets.

6. The Tatars are originally Turkic people who espouse the Muslim faith. They are the oldest Muslim minority in Finland and in the Nordic countries. At the moment, there are less than thousand Tatars living in Finland. They are well integrated into Finnish society, but simultaneously they have preserved their own cultural and religious characteristics. (Embassy of Finland, 2014.)

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