

**REPRESENTATIONS OF FINNISH PRIME MINISTER (2019-
2023) SANNA MARIN IN MAIL ONLINE'S ARTICLES**

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Medialla on nykypäivänä yhä vahvempi rooli ihmisten elämässä. Media on helposti saavutettavissa, ja sekä nuorilla että vanhemmilla ihmisillä on mahdollisuus kuluttaa mediasisältöjä helposti ajasta tai paikasta riippumatta yhden laitteen avulla. Media yhdistää, viihdyttää, tiedottaa ja opettaa ihmisiä monissa asioissa ja tilanteissa. Ihmiset voivat lukea, katsoa ja kuunnella erilaista sisältöä useista eri lähteistä vain muutaman klikkauksen avulla.</p> <p>Tässä tutkielmassa keskitytään siihen, millaisia representaatioita brittiläisen Daily Mailin uutissivuston Mail Onlinen artikkeleista löytyi Suomen entiseen pääministeriin Sanna Mariniin liittyen. Tutkimus toteutettiin valitsemalla aineistoksi neljä Sanna Marinista kertovaa artikkelia Mail Onlinen sivustolta hakutoimintoa käyttämällä. Artikkelit sijoittuvat Marinin pääministerikaudelle eli vuosien 2019–2023 ajalle. Marin valikoitui tutkimuksen kohteeksi, koska Marin keräsi huomattavasti suosiota ja herätti paljon huomiota sekä mielipiteitä pääministerikautensa aikana sekä Suomessa että ulkomailla. Artikkeleja valittaessa huomioitiin se, että artikkelit keskittyvät vain Mariniin. Tutkimuksen menetelmänä toimi diskurssianalyysi, jonka avulla artikkeleista löydettyt representaatiot jaoteltiin neljään eri representaatioon sana- ja aihevalintojen perusteella.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tuloksena artikkeleista löytyi neljä erilaista representaatiota Mariniin liittyen. Marin esitettiin uutisartikkelien perusteella kahden äidin kasvattamana ja Pride-tapahtumiin osallistuvana henkilönä, billettävänä äitinä, harkitsemattomana ja vastuuttomana johtajana sekä roolimallina. Kaiken kaikkiaan Marin esitettiin artikkeleissa negatiivisessa valossa, harkitsemattomana, vastuuttomana ja kiistanalaisena johtajana. Mediassa ilmenevien representaatioiden tutkiminen on tärkeää, koska representaatiot kertovat paljon siitä, miten ihmiset kokevat maailman ja miten media voi vaikuttaa ihmisten mielipiteisiin tai ajatuksiin.</p>	
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2	BACKGROUND.....	5
	2.1 Media and media literacy.....	5
	2.2 Representation.....	6
	2.3 Representation of women in media.....	7
3	THE PRESENT STUDY.....	10
	3.1 Aims and research questions.....	10
	3.2 The data.....	10
	3.3 Daily Mail and Mail Online.....	11
	3.4 Data collection.....	12
	3.5 Methods of analysis.....	12
4	REPRESENTATIONS OF SANNA MARIN.....	14
	4.1 Sanna Marin, raised by two mothers and attending pride events.....	14
	4.2 Sanna Marin, married mother-of-one and still goes clubbing.....	15
	4.3 Sanna Marin as young, reckless, and irresponsible leader.....	17
	4.4 Sanna Marin as a role model.....	19
5	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	20
	REFERENCES.....	22
	APPENDICES	

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world the media has a powerful role in affecting and shaping people's lives, thoughts, and opinions. The media entertain us, socialize us, inform us, educate us, and help shape our identities and attitudes (Berger, 2012, p. 20). The media is easily approachable for everyone as smart phones and internet have had major advances during recent years. People can read, listen, watch, and write anything with just a few clicks, and there are also several different social media platforms and news websites or newspapers for readers to choose from which is why media literacy and critical thinking are one of the most important skills for people today. Ross (2017, p. 66) explains that traditional media and their websites are still the primary sources for decisionmakers to access political information. Therefore, it is important to examine the power of the media and how the media may affect people's opinions.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the media representations of Sanna Marin in Daily Mail's website Mail Online. Sanna Marin is a former Finnish prime minister who attracted attention around the world and lifted Finland's profile internationally. Sanna Marin was also the world's youngest prime minister after taking the position in 2019. Marin gained both popularity and criticism nationally and internationally during her time as prime minister and the coverage on the news was harsh from time to time. The focus of this thesis is on British online news as Marin's international attention was noticeable and the coverage was broad worldwide. Hall (1997, p. 16) describes representation as the construction of meaning through language. The representations are examined in four different articles on Mail Online by studying different linguistic features with the help of discourse analysis.

As the media has a significant role in affecting people's opinions, it is important that the media remain as neutral as possible. Ross (2009, p. 103) points out that it is normal for contemporary news media to be interested in women's corporal rather than intellectual features, political

views or aims. It is crucial to study how the media handle a young female leader that can make a difference in people's lives and receives vast attention worldwide based on their ability to lead, not just because of how they look like.

This thesis begins with an introduction of previous research related to the topic such as media and media literacy, the concept of representation and how women are represented in the media. Section 3 will introduce the aim of this study, the research questions, the data, and the methods used for analysis. Section 4 will introduce the main findings of this study and the final section 5 will conclude and wrap up the thesis.

2 BACKGROUND

This section will introduce previous studies that are relevant for this research. The themes discussed are the importance of media literacy, the media and representation, and representations of female politicians in politics, news, and the media.

2.1 Media and media literacy

Media contents have been widely studied from different perspectives. When examining media and language use in media, the concepts of media and media literacy are essential. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines media as the main way that people receive information and entertainment, that is television, radio, the internet, and newspapers. The media have replaced older institutions such as the Church as the dominant source of understanding the world and the media serve as an important public forum in modern democracies (Talbot & Alia, 2007, p. 3). Online media newspaper's writers create certain rhetoric or narrative of celebrities or in this case politicians, and readers are often led to believe those representations and narratives. The immense selection of media content on different platforms offers several different perspectives and the ways in which people are presented is difficult to prove factual or false. Hence, the media has a significant impact in the creation of these visions.

When talking about media, it is important to bring up the importance of media literacy. Everywhere we go or look, there are information and communication technologies being used. Smartphones allow us to read and use media content anywhere we go and from sources that are not necessarily valid. New media technologies are having important social, economic,

cultural, and political consequences (Berger, 2012, p. 133). According to Lewis (2021, pp. 31-35), media literacy focuses on a person's competence and knowledge of media. The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) and the Center for Media Literacy (CML) see media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and act using all forms of communication" (Lewis, 2021, p. 35). Media literacy education focuses on developing awareness and understanding of media and its contents. The importance of media literacy is ever more crucial as there are fake news and fake or misleading media content shared daily. People should be able to separate fake and disinformation spreading news from news that come from valid sources.

Berger (2012, p. 59) highlights that when thinking about media, we should keep in mind that texts have the power to help shape our consciousness and give us perceptions about how to live and what is right and wrong. Media platforms and their owners can publish news and articles suitable for their views and thereby influence readers and viewers to their ideological attitudes, viewpoints, and ideas (Berger, 2012, p. 172). According to Berger (2012, p. 172), newspapers, radio and television stations can determine which kinds of news they publish and most importantly, how they cover their stories and, in that way, influence the readers' opinions. Durant and Lambrou (2009, p. 85) explain as well that the language used in news media constructs how what is happening is represented and with language and linguistic choices news is organized and presented in a certain way. News language serves rhetorical purposes and may offer a colored account of how the world is when the writers aim to present a certain agenda by using storytelling techniques to focus on certain issues or attract attention to or detract attention from other events (Durant & Lambrou, 2009, p. 85-86). Mills and Mullany (2011, p. 25) point out that "language is used to constrain, coerce and represent women and men in oppressive ways, and producing linguistic analysis within socio-cultural contexts can reveal some of the mechanisms of how this takes place". Therefore, it is important to research news articles from a linguistic perspective.

2.2 Representation

This research focuses on online newspaper's articles and representations presented there. According to Hall (1997, p. 15), representation connects both meaning and language to culture. Representation is an essential part of the process in which meaning is produced and exchanged

between people. Representation involves the use of language, signs and images which stand for or represent things. Representation has an impact on people's status, and it is connected to questions related to power. The concept of representation focuses on the picture of a certain person, group, phenomenon, matter, or "truth" and how that representation is built with linguistic and other means (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019, p. 79). With the concept of representation, we can analyze, address, and examine further the ways in which language works and creates meanings (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019, p. 79). Representation is the link between concepts and language. In addition, media is the link that connects readers and visions of people in news articles together.

2.3 Representation of women in media

Representation of women in media has been researched to certain extent. The new media platforms have increased the way women in politics represent themselves and are represented by others, and even relatively positive hints to the physical appearance of women leaders can lead attention away from what they have to say (Walsh, 2015). Walsh (2015) claims that there is a double standard: the appearance of male politicians attracts far less critical comment from the media, with the result that women with serious political ambitions must subject themselves to more critical self-scrutiny than their male peers. Ross (2017, p. 53) found as well that women are interesting because of their biology, not because of their politics and the media covers their bodies, not their minds. The stories and articles posted about women are very different from the stories posted about men as the focus is more personal than political and the tone of the news is often negative (Ross, 2017, p. 53). Women are portrayed through a narrow repertoire of gendered frames and women are firstly illustrated by their biological sex and then their behavior and lastly by their professional occupation (Ross, 2017, p. 54). Including irrelevant aspects about a politician, such as her wardrobe or her family, imply that her sex is intrinsic to her political credibility (Ross, 2017, p. 56). Numerous different linguistic choices and strategies used by journalists aim to play down women politicians as well as disregarding women politicians as sources of information for news stories (Ross, 2017, p. 56). For example, men are described as "assertive" and women as "strident" (Ross, 2017, p. 56). Playful and undermining word choices were used to describe women who were chosen as Members of Parliament in 1997 as they were labelled as "Blair's babes" and later in 2010 women candidates were labelled

as “Cameron’s cuties” (Ross, 2017, p. 59). In addition, Walsh (2001, p. 43) discusses the example of labelling female politician’s as “Blair’s babes” and highlights that when language is used this way, women are sexualized, and they are not taken seriously. The genitive case implies that the women were a man’s property.

Paxton and Kunovich (2003), found that women’s low rate of participation at the highest levels of politics is an enduring problem in gender satisfaction. Previous studies have found three explanations for this: social-structural, political, and ideological. The social-structural explanation focuses on the pool of available women, political explanation focuses on the openness of the political system to women, and ideological explanation focuses on general impressions of women in politics and how viable women are as candidates and leaders (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003, p. 88). According to Paxton and Kunovich (2003) women’s educational achievements and women’s participation in the labor force will positively affect women’s levels of representation.

Ross (2011, pp. 35-36) also claims that gendered mediation is the term used for the way in which politics is reported by a male-oriented agenda and the language or images used to support the norm. An example of gendered mediation and the way in which women are constructed in media at the level of language and multimodal content is how Hillary Clinton was presented in media and news articles. Hillary Clinton has been the center of attention of the media for decades as political candidate and the First Lady of the United States. Ritchie (2012) utilized analysis of digital imagery and found in their research that Clinton’s viability as a presidential candidate was attempted to destroy by constructing her as monster or cyborg in media with images. During presidential campaigning in 2008 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was referenced as a ‘monster’ by Obama’s foreign policy advisor Samantha Power (Ritchie, 2012). This reflects and reinforces wider cultural anxieties about women’s place in the political sphere and the research established the potential of online media to produce harmful representations of female politicians (Ritchie, 2012). Falk (2013) utilized critical discourse analysis and examined how the media used mediation and the gender-card metaphor to stand in for complex claims about women in politics. Falk (2013) found that the media used the gender-card during the presidential election campaigning in 2007 when Hillary Clinton for example discussed about historical and current oppression of women in political campaigning and when Clinton pointed out extant sexism.

The representation of women in media has been studied through multimodal content and discourse analysis in general, but further research regarding the linguistic features used in news

articles is needed. As the media and language have great power in creating representations, more research in this field is crucial for women in public roles and women in general.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

This section will introduce the present study, the aims of the study and the research questions. Additionally, the data and methods used for this research will be introduced. This section also provides information about Daily Mail and Mail Online.

3.1 Aims and research questions

This research will focus on the former Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin's media representation on the British tabloid Daily Mail's website Mail Online. The aim is to find out how Sanna Marin was represented in this foreign media source during her time as the prime minister and what linguistic features are used to construct the representations. The focus of this research will be on linguistic features used to build an image of Sanna Marin to the public.

1. How is Sanna Marin represented in Mail Online's articles?
2. What linguistic features are used to construct the representations?

3.2 The data

The data used in this research consists of four articles from British tabloid Daily Mail's news website Mail Online. The articles were published during Sanna Marin's term as the prime minister of Finland because during her days as the prime minister, Marin was regularly present in foreign media outlets. The data was chosen to find out how linguistic features used in articles

affect Sanna Marin's representation in foreign media. More precisely the data focuses on the period when videos of Sanna Marin partying were leaked on social media and Sanna Marin received backlash especially from the Finnish media and from members of the Finnish parliament. This thesis will address and refer to the articles by numbers listed below.

1. Richardson, H. (9.12.2019). A politician for the Instagram generation: World's youngest prime minister Sanna Marin, 34, of Finland shares VERY candid breastfeeding snaps and glamorous nights out on social media. *Mail Online*.
2. Green, J. (15.10.2020). Finnish women take to social media to back their Prime Minister after she was criticized for going TOPLESS under plunging black blazer for magazine photoshoot. *Mail Online*.
3. Pleasance, C. (19.8.2022). Finland's Sanna Marin fights for her right to party: Married leader, 36, says 'nothing inappropriate' happens in leaked video of her dancing intimately with pop star at 4am but submits to a drug test as she defends wild night out. *Mail Online*.
4. Taylor, J. (19.8.2022). Not your average stuffy politician! Finnish PM Sanna Marin, 36, seen dancing wildly in leaked video leads Pride events after being raised by two mothers, posed 'topless' on fashion magazine cover and still goes clubbing. *Mail Online*.

3.3 Daily Mail and Mail Online

The data was collected from British tabloid Daily Mail's website, Mail Online. The Daily Mail is a mid-market tabloid that is known for being a right-wing and conservative values supporting newspaper (Temple, 2008, pp. 90-92). Daily Mail reaches about 700 000 readers daily and the audience spent about 1.6 billion minutes on Mail Online's website in March 2024 (ABC, 2024; Majid, 2024). Tabloids' format is originally based on the assumption that people are not deeply interested in the details regarding politics and popular newspapers did not feature enough information to facilitate people to form their own thoughts and opinions (Bingham & Conboy, 2015, p. 63). Consequently, tabloids adapt their contents to highlight and even create political

drama with the use of hyperbolic and sensational language and aimed to personalize politics (Bingham & Conboy, 2015, p. 67). Bingham and Conboy (2015, p. 64) also point out that the editors and owners of tabloids often have strong political views, and they express those to the public with colorful and accessible language. In other words, tabloids aim for spectacle and intend to reduce the separation between politics and everyday life with editorial and written strategies (Bingham & Conboy, 2015, pp. 66- 67).

3.4 Data collection

The articles were chosen based on their publication date and the possibility to access the articles without signing up on the newspaper's website. The publication date of the articles is important as the focus of this research will be on Sanna Marin's time as the prime minister of Finland. It was also important that the articles mentioned Sanna Marin as the focus of the article. The articles were acquired by using the search functions on the website as the articles chosen for examination were a couple years old already and not easily found by looking through the most recent news articles. Daily Mail's website was chosen for this research as Daily Mail and Mail Online reach notable and various amount of people daily. The decision to examine articles from a news website was made on the grounds that news websites are important communication tools for easily accessing news related to politics and current situations around the world. Websites such as Daily Mail's Mail Online bring the latest news about politicians and politics daily in real time for the readers. News websites are an important part of today's political discussions as they have also spread their information through social media where younger readers are also able to access the news easily and effortlessly. Hence the representations the news websites make about politicians reach millions of readers every day and the readers construct their opinions of politicians based on the articles they read.

3.5 Methods of analysis

After deciding on which articles will be used for this research, the articles were examined carefully, and observations were pointed out regarding word choices, headings, and context in general. The focus was especially on the word choices and on comparing the articles together as the words used in the articles were quite similar. As mentioned before, each word choice builds the meaning of the topic in question (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019). The linguistic

observations were listed down for further analysis about what kind of meanings or ideas different word choices had in the context of the article. After this process, the findings were connected to a wider theme and finally formed into the four representations.

In this thesis, the method deployed is discourse analysis. With discourse analysis it is possible to examine how language is used in different contexts and how certain word choices affect the conclusions and opinions that readers have after reading news articles about Sanna Marin and how these conclusions might have a wider social affect. With discourse analysis, it is possible to examine how language is used in a wider social context and how different linguistic choices affect the representation of Sanna Marin. The focus of discourse analysis is on language as a resource, not on the structure of the language.

Rapley (2022, p. 2) defines discourse analysis as how language is used in certain context. Language is never treated as a neutral means of communication (Rapley 2022, p. 2). The central idea in discourse studies is about language as a social operator and those who study discourses, research how and why language is used in a certain way (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019). Discourse studies is about both the study of language use and study of the situation in which language is used (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019). Linguistic actions and language use are always connected to certain situations and time that are connected to previous situations, contexts, and norms (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019). In discourse studies language is understood as flexible and multi-functional resources that language users can choose from depending on the situation and context (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019). Each word choice builds meaning and illustrations of the topic in question (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019). Discourses bring together the linguistic and social aspects of conventions and decide what, how, and with what kind of assumptions things or people can be talked about.

4 REPRESENTATIONS OF SANNA MARIN

This section will present the main representations of Sanna Marin that were found in the articles on Mail Online's website. There are four different representations that all were present in each of the four articles chosen for this research. The four main representations were Sanna Marin raised by two mothers and attending Pride events, Sanna Marin married mother-of-one and still goes clubbing, Sanna Marin as young, reckless and irresponsible leader, and Sanna Marin as a role model. The following subsections will present each of these representations. The main finding was that the contents of the articles on Mail Online were all similar and built a similar, consequent, and unfavorable story of Sanna Marin. The articles used similar word choices and focused on similar themes despite that the headings suggested the articles would address other matters. Mail Online uses complicated clause structures and attention seeking word choices in headings and subheadings to create controversy and get clicks.

4.1 Sanna Marin, raised by two mothers and attending pride events

First, in each article it is mentioned that Sanna Marin was raised by two mothers, a female same-sex couple. Marin's background of being raised by two mothers is seen as an important factor in Marin's character as her two mothers are even mentioned in one of the headings in the fourth article and in example 1. The heading is scandal-seeking, and it aims to fit in several irrelevant words to describe Sanna Marin and to get as many clicks as possible. The heading also aims to bring up questions about Sanna Marin's competence and capability to lead Finland as Prime Minister because she is young, goes partying, attends Pride events, is raised by two mothers, and poses on a fashion magazine cover.

In the first article Marin's mothers are mentioned in the lead paragraph (example 2) and later in the article again when talking about Marin's background (example 3). Marin's family background is mentioned in each article in quite similar occasions and Marin's previous interviews about her past are cited often. Referring to Marin's family in headings and lead paragraphs is a choice made by the writers. By mentioning Marin's family, the writers, and as traditional values cherishing magazine Mail Online aim to highlight their own values and raise conversation among their readers regarding Marin's family background even though it should not matter. In addition, having two mothers is in their view something uncommon and different that it must influence Marin's values, her capability to lead Finland and make political choices. As mentioned before, bringing up irrelevant aspects of a politician such as her family implies that her sex is intrinsic to her political credibility (Ross, 2017, p. 56).

Each article also refers to Marin attending Pride events. For example, Helsinki Pride is first and foremost a cultural and human rights event and the event aims to advance the rights, inclusion, and wellbeing of sexual and gender minorities (Helsinki Pride, 2024). Mentioning Marin attending Pride events is irrelevant in the context of the articles, but with bringing this up, the writers and Mail Online highlight their own views of such events with quite delicate hidden picking.

(1) "Not your average stuffy politician! Finnish PM Sanna Marin, 36, seen dancing wildly in leaked video leads Pride events after being raised by two mothers, posed 'topless' on fashion magazine cover and still goes clubbing!"

(2) "Was raised by same-sex parents and spent teenage years working in a bakery."

(3) "According to Finnish media, Ms Marin was brought up in a 'rainbow family' by her mother and her female partner."

4.2 Sanna Marin, married mother-of-one and still goes clubbing

Second, Marin's husband and their daughter are brought up several times in all the articles. Her marriage to Markus Rääkkönen and their underaged daughter is mentioned in contexts where mentioning them is not relevant as in examples 4-7. The choice to mention Marin's family in

these contexts is meant to portray Marin as irresponsible and indicate that she is doing something wrong when she attends parties and has fun. In the third article Marin's marriage and daughter are even mentioned in captions below pictures that show Marin dancing with someone at a club (example 5). "Dancing intimately", "sat in the laps of two male companions", "danced with three different men" are clauses used to imply that Marin's actions are to be judged as the writer includes her daughter and her marriage to these instances. In the third article, Marin is described to being "surrounded by a group of friends, including several male companions" which implies towards something inappropriate as specifically "male companions" are mentioned. It is a knowingly made decision to include Marin's marriage and daughter in the text and captions to send a message to the reader that Marin's behavior is not acceptable because she has a family, and because she is a mother.

On the other hand, Marin's marriage and daughter are brought up in a more positive light as Marin's and Rääkkönen's marriage is seen as beautiful and their marriage is highlighted with several pictures of them attending Finland's Independence Day reception, them together on their wedding day and them together on a holiday that is described as "romantic". As mentioned before, Daily Mail and its web page Mail Online appreciate traditional values and therefore the pictures of Marin and Rääkkönen are used to create controversy. Marin's partying lifestyle that "some people" have raised questions about is seen as bad behavior for a mother and Prime Minister. Based on the articles it is not made clear who is raising these questions and who are "some people" criticizing Marin's actions that were mentioned in the articles.

(4) "Married mother-of-one said her only regret is that videos she thought were private had leaked."

(5) "Ms. Marin, who is married and has a four-year-old daughter, was said to have danced with three different men and then sat on the laps of two male companions, according to witnesses."

(6) "After a video surfaced of Marin, who shares a daughter Emma Amalia Marin with her husband Markus Rääkkönen, dancing with some celebrity friends while music blared in the background, the PM received criticism for her antics."

(7) "Some people have raised questions about the mother-of-one's 'partying' lifestyle."

These clauses in examples 5-7 are put together to highlight that Sanna Marin is irresponsible as she has fun with friends and has a husband and a daughter. According to Ross (2009, p. 103), even when there is a somewhat positive article related to the achievements of a female politician, the discourse is often grudging, and this discourse is apparent on each of the articles.

4.3 Sanna Marin as young, reckless, and irresponsible leader

Third, Sanna Marin is represented as a young and reckless Prime Minister. Marin's age is highlighted in all the articles, which creates controversy: being the youngest Prime Minister is seen as both positive and negative. Highlighting Marin's age creates a question about the aim of bringing it up in several instances and several times within all the articles. In a positive perspective, her young age is seen as a great example for other countries that young female politicians may also be in leading positions. However, the articles also bring up Marin's age and actions related to her age from a negative perspective. In example 12 it is also mentioned that Marin "will appeal to the millennial 'Instagram generation'" which again refers to Marin's young age and her lifestyle. In these cases, it is also apparent that bringing up Marin's age is in a way gentle hidden picking that aims to downplay her credibility as a leader.

Sanna Marin is also portrayed as an incompetent and irresponsible leader. For example, the second article suggests that Marin's choice to pose on a Finnish fashion magazine cover is "inappropriate for Prime Minister". The heading of the fourth article and example 1 also spread questionable information about Marin's "topless" picture on a magazine cover. Marin posed with a blazer that had a deep neckline, not "topless" as the heading suggests. The term "Finland's party Prime Minister" is used to describe Marin in the beginning of the third article written by Chris Pleasance. The word choice suggests that Marin has a reputation of partying often and it downplays and creates controversy to her capabilities as a leader. Marin is described "having a raucous evening with friends", having a "wild night out" and "seen dancing wildly". In example 13 Marin's supporters are called as her "fans" which is quite uncommon and again, further add up with the previous findings and downplay Marin's role as the prime minister. The word choices have negative connotations, and they enhance the representation of Marin as incompetent, irresponsible and reckless.

The heading in the third article also suggests that Marin has used or been in contact with drugs as the drug test is mentioned in the caption of example 8. By mentioning the drug test, that Marin “fights for her right to party” and the “wild night out” the writer creates an image that Marin tends to go partying more often than she does. With these choices the writers build a consecutive, negative, and false image of Marin and her lifestyle. In the heading of the first article, it is mentioned that Marin “shares VERY candid breastfeeding snaps” which indicates the pictures would be quite scandalous or even inappropriate because capitalized letters are used with the word “very”. The writer has specifically chosen to use breastfeeding pictures as an example because by mentioning them the article could receive more clicks from readers.

The articles highlight that Marin has “defended” her actions, “blasted her critics” and “insists” that she has done nothing wrong, and she “submits” to a drug test. These word choices further indicate that Marin is pictured in a negative light. “Blasted” and “insist” are strong and quite unfavorable words to describe how someone reacts or says something. “Defend” and “submit” indicate that Marin gives in or yields to something which creates a somewhat false image about Marin’s actions when these words are connected to “a wild night out” and “submits to a drug test”.

(8) “Finland’s Sanna Marin fights for her right to party: Married leader, 36, says ‘nothing inappropriate’ happens in leaked video of her dancing intimately with pop star at 4am but submits to a drug test as she defends wild night out.”

(9) “Finland's 'party Prime Minister' Sanna Marin has blasted her critics and insisted she has the same right to a night out as everyone else after she was captured on video having a raucous evening with friends earlier this month.”

(10) “The youngest prime minister in the world has been criticized in the past.”

(11) “Despite criticism the PM enjoys plenty of support from the public.”

(12) “Ms Marin is certainly a politician who will appeal to the millennial ‘Instagram generation’.”

(13) “But Marin’s outraged fans were quick to show their support and rally behind her.”

4.4 Sanna Marin as a role model

Fourth, Sanna Marin is represented as a controversial role model. Marin is described as young, having fun, travelling, enjoying life, and completing her duties. The articles cover Marin's background quite extensively which creates the picture of Marin as a role model or a person to look up to. All articles highlight that Marin comes from a background where Marin has been working since a young age and that she was the first person in her family to go to university. Marin's "normality" or "normal" lifestyle is also brought up in two of the four articles. The articles cover Marin's and her husband's marriage and holidays, Marin's pregnancy journey, and how Marin has raised to the political top as a young female politician. Marin's positive actions as prime minister is also brought up, for example in example 14 it is described that Marin visited Ukraine and showed Finland's support by visiting a country under attack. In example 15, it is highlighted that Marin sets a good example when meeting friends during the Covid pandemic.

Despite the articles bringing up positive aspects about Marin, the articles also succeed in undermining Marin at the same time. For example, in the third article and example 15, the word choice "while she certainly knows how to party" regarding Marin's "partying lifestyle" is meant as somewhat delicate tease and to add negativity into something positive about Marin's actions. In two articles Marin's "partying lifestyle" is covered extensively and the writers have chosen words such as "eroded" when talking about Marin's credibility as a politician. The articles emphasize the party scandals and aim to highlight that the "partying lifestyle" is not appropriate.

(14) "In May this year, Marin visited Kyiv where she met with Volodymyr Zelenskyy while Ukraine was under attack from Russia."

(15) "However, while she certainly knows how to party, Marin used her Instagram account to set a good example during the Covid pandemic, posting photos of herself meeting friends outside while socially distanced."

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The overall aim of this research was to examine representations of Sanna Marin in Daily Mail's website Mail Online with the following research questions:

1. How is Sanna Marin represented in Mail Online's articles?
2. What linguistic features are used to construct the representations?

The articles formed four different representations of Sanna Marin. The representations were separated into four categories: Sanna Marin, raised by two mothers and attending Pride events, Sanna Marin, married mother-of-one and still goes clubbing, Sanna Marin as young, reckless and irresponsible leader, and Sanna Marin as a role model. Each of these representations involved Marin's gender which implies that the articles used stereotypical and judgmental views of Marin. However, Marin's marriage to Markus Rääkkönen was seen as positive and something to be proud of, but at the same time the articles used negative word choices and portrayed Marin in a negative light.

The main findings of this analysis are that Sanna Marin is presented as reckless, irresponsible, and controversial. Marin is pictured to enjoy a wild clubbing lifestyle and Mail Online even hints towards Marin committing adultery when she is seen publicly dancing with men. The articles have several noticeable spelling errors and citations are not used correctly, which creates an impression of mistrust and the articles' reliability is questionable because of these aspects. Controversial word choices are also used to describe the people who disagree with Marin by describing them as "some" and "people". Mentioning Marin's husband and their daughter is used to create controversy and to indicate that Marin is not a good mother or a wife as she

goes to parties and has fun in her spare time. Marin is portrayed as an irresponsible and incompetent leader because of her lifestyle and actions in her spare time. The ways in which women are represented in media send important messages to the readers about women's place, women's roles, and women's lives (Ross, 2009, pp. 90-91). The differentiated media coverage that women and men politicians receive may have crucial effects on how candidates are evaluated by the voters (Ross, 2002, Bystrom et al. 2004, Aalberg & Jensen, 2007 as cited by Ross, 2009, p. 109). The way in which Marin was represented is aligned with previous findings on gendered representations in research conducted by Walsh (2015), Ross (2009, 2011, 2017), and Ritchie (2013). The findings also emphasize the importance of media literacy as the articles aim to build a negative picture of Marin with multimodal and linguistic choices in their articles, which is why skills of critical thinking and media literacy are crucial while consuming media contents.

The thesis analyzed data from four different articles, but the website was the same for all the articles. The articles were extracted only from one foreign news website. Despite these limitations, the thesis is relevant and could be implemented for future research. In conclusion, this thesis discovered how negative, controversial, and stereotypical representations of a young female politician and leader can be constructed in the media and news articles today. For future research it would be beneficial to examine news articles from different sources and for example sources from the Finnish media. In the future, it would also be beneficial to compare representations of female politicians to male politicians and how the representations are different or similar. This thesis is beneficial for the general public, journalists, politicians, students and people who are interested in things related to feminism and the portrayal of women in media.

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APPENDICES

“A politician for the Instagram generation: World’s youngest prime minister Sanna Marin, 34, of Finland shares VERY candid breastfeeding snaps and glamorous nights out on social media”. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-7771821/a-politician-instagram-generation-meet-worlds-youngest-prime-minister-sanna-marin-34.html>

“Finnish women take to social media to back their Prime Minister after she was criticized for going TOPLESS under plunging black blazer for magazine photoshoot”. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-8839655/finlands-prime-minister-sanna-marin-criticised-wearing-blazer-plunging-neckline.html>

Finland’s Sanna Marin fights for her right to party: Married leader, 36, says ‘nothing inappropriate’ happens in leaked video of her dancing intimately with pop star at 4am but submits to a drug test as she defends wild night out”.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11127073/New-Sanna-Marin-video-leaks-showing-married-Finnish-PM-dancing-mystery-man.html>

“Not your average stuffy politician! Finnish PM Sanna Marin, 36, seen dancing wildly in leaked video leads Pride events after being raised by two mothers, posed ‘topless’ on fashion magazine cover and still goes clubbing”.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-11126483/Who-Sanna-Marin-finland-prime-minister.html>