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Female leadership under the scrutiny: Discourse analysis of the Finnish media representation of the prime minister Sanna Marin during the COVID-19 crisis

MA Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has increased the interest of female leaders in the media and increased global cooperation. However, the participation of women in decision-making in the foreign policy domain is lower than men. Therefore, it is essential to study what type of representations the media portrays of women as leaders in external relations. The media display an essential role in generating information and representations in society. This thesis focuses on discovering and analyzing the discourses associated with the prime minister of Finland, Sanna Marin, in external relations during the Covid-19 pandemic through critical discourse analysis. The study benefits from social representation theory and interprets the discourses by placing them in social and gender contexts. The study found four discourses associated with Marin's political performance in external relations. These four discourses were the discourse of power, the discourse of age, the discourse of unity, and the emotion discourse. The study discloses that Marin navigates between feminine and masculine leadership traits. Marin partially overturns stereotypes and norms of a female leader and a prime minister. Marin's political performance in external relations generates new social representations and challenges society's traditional notion of leadership.

Keywords: female leadership, leadership traits, external relations, power relations, gender, social representations, media

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ABBREVIATIONS

EU: European Union

DA: Discourse Analysis

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

HS: Helsingin Sanomat

IS: Ilta-Sanomat

IL: Iltalehti

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

COVID-19: Coronavirus disease

INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, female leaders have been praised for being more eligible to handle a health-threatening crisis. Are women better leaders during a crisis? (Henley et al., 2020). Not necessarily, but the media has paid particular attention to their gender and age in their news coverage. Gender roles have been strongly present in the media for decades, and women have always faced different expectations and pressures than men (Van der Pas et al., 2020). The role of the media in shaping public images of political leadership is prominent. The cognizance available through the media can be the only public source of information. Politicians themselves also benefit from the media. It helps them gain visibility among the audience, and they can pass forward the information they want to share (Mäkelä, 2017).

When Sanna Marin was elected as prime minister in December 2019, she received extensive media attention in Finland and internationally (Apu, 2020). Sanna Marin became Finland's third female prime minister and the youngest prime minister in Finnish history (Valtioneuvosto, 2022). A few months after her election, the global pandemic Covid-19 started spreading globally. She has been called a crisis leader who has received both commendation and criticism in the Finnish media (Apu, 2020). Prime Minister Marin has enjoyed wide media attention during the Covid-19 pandemic, both positive and negative. From the opposing point of view, there have been various headlines about Marin where she has been criticized for doing things not "appropriate" for a politician (Ukkola, 2021). Popular commotion in the media in December 2021 around Marin was the so-called nightclub uproar. She was spotted partying in a nightclub even though she had received information that she had been exposed to the Covid-19 virus and should have been isolating. In about a week, her nightclub visit became a popular topic in international media. Especially her young age was in the spotlight, and a contrast was created by comparing Marin's young age to Joe Biden's age (Kallionpää, 2021).

When Marin became prime minister in 2019, she faced new challenges in the foreign policy domain. As prime minister, she took over the responsibility of EU politics. Marin's first appearance at the EU summit received wide media attention before the summit even started. Before the meeting, she was titled "super famous" (Turunen, 2019). Before being elected as prime minister, Marin was an unknown face in EU politics. Therefore, the media paid particular interest in her after her election. On the other hand, the media did not ask for her statements on foreign policy, but she was compared to her predecessor and said being similarly inexperienced

in foreign policy. However, as a prime minister, Marin is an important figure in the foreign policy domain since she represents Finland alone in EU politics (Huhta, 2021).

This study focuses on the research of female leadership during a crisis and focuses on Marin's media coverage in external relations. The selected period of the study starts at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, January 2020, and ends in December 2021. A two-year period during the Covid-19 crisis was selected as time period, since cooperation between the EU countries increased during the pandemic. During the peak times of the pandemic, the EU leaders met regularly via video calls. They focused on, among other things, discussing the standard quarantine regulations and vaccines (Council of the European Union, 2022). The Covid-19 crisis has also raised interest in female leadership; women have been described as better leaders during the crisis than men (Johnnsson et al., 2020). Qualities such as empathy, which are considered traditional characteristics of female leaders, are compared with the traditional qualities of male leaders. There have been suggestions that female leaders better manage crises precisely because of these feminine qualities. The Covid-19 pandemic has juxtaposed a male and a female political leader (Johnnsson et al., 2020). Thus, the study does not focus on how Marin managed the Covid-19 crisis. Instead, the Covid-19 timeframe has been selected because of its meaningfulness to external relations and female leadership.

The theme of the study is salient because how we observe the image of female leaders creates a broader societal impact. Talking and emerging the topic of female leadership provides opportunities for a more egalitarian society (Jauhola et al., 2020). It is essential to focus on the role of the media in this matter since how the media portrays female political leaders is prominent. The media display has a considerable amount of power in the world, and it has the capability to affect our imagination. The study focuses on finding the discourses associated with Marin in external relations, and the topic is essential since women are under-represented in foreign policy decision-making. In the foreign policy domain and its power relations, emphasis is placed on masculine values, leaving aside women and their experiences (Jauhola et al., 2020). For this reason, it is essential to consider what type of representations the media produces about female leaders, especially in the domain of external relations. The study suggests that the media influences the perceptions of gender in foreign policy leadership.

Finnish prime minister Sanna Marin is selected as a case study since she has received large amount of publicity during her term as prime minister, partly because of her gender and age but also for her active participation in foreign policy (Turunen, 2019; Ristamäki, 2020). Marin

can also be viewed as new phenomenon in the Finnish political domain, who challenges our social perceptions of politics and power and engenders new representations (Simola, 2021).

Marin's political performance in external relations is scrutinized by placing it in the concept of gender and social debate. In the study, the focus is shifted to Marin's political performance in external relations, such as her performance in EU politics as well as her activity with the non-EU-member states. The study aims to research the discourses and representations created by the media about Marin's political performance in external relations. Two following research questions guide the study:

Q1. What type of discourses has been associated with Marin's political performance in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis?

Q2. In what ways the Finnish media shape Marin's political credibility as a leader in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis?

The theoretical framework of the study is social representations theory. The social representations theory offers a new way of looking at how the media and the citizens view societal and political issues (Höijer, 2017). The social representations theory is particularly interested in phenomena that diverge our traditional views and causes tensions in society (Höijer, 2017). Diverged phenomena are suitable for researching how expected, and traditional ideas transform and how new social representations are generated (Höijer, 2017). Social representations focus on phenomena that create public conversations, intense feelings, and ideological struggles (Höijer, 2017). The study's theoretical framework will help clarify how female political leaders are presented in the media overall. With the help of social representation theory, it is possible to observe how the media views female political leadership and what type of representations it displays in society. The study argues that female politicians are portrayed differently in news media if their actions diverge from traditional views about leaders and leadership.

This study will be constructed by focusing on a single case of Sanna Marin. The study focus on how the media has portrayed her political performance in external relations during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the study, critical discourse analysis as a research method is used. In critical discourse analysis, language is seen as an action (Habibie, 2018). Empirical data will be constructed using news articles collected from four Finnish news media sites.

The study is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the background of the study. The chapter explains the media coverage of female politicians as a phenomenon and provides a literature review of substantive scholarly work on media coverage of female political leaders. After the literature review, the study explores Sanna Marin as a politician, briefly explaining her background. The second chapter will introduce the theoretical framework. First, focusing on explaining the basics of social representation theory, formation of social representations, and research of social representations. Then moving on to the concept of female politicians' media presence during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as explaining the role of women in the domain of external relations. The last subchapter focuses on the relationship of journalism to gender and power. The third chapter will introduce the methodology of the study, explaining the research method used, data gathering and analyzing process, as well as the limitations and ethics of the study. The fourth and final main chapter includes the empirical analysis and introduces the discourses observed in the study. In the last main chapter, discourses are observed deeper, and the proposed research questions are answered. The study will end with a conclusion. Possibilities for further research are presented at the end.

1. BACKGROUND

This chapter explains the media coverage of female politicians and provides a literature review of the existing scholarly work. The chapter also focuses on Sanna Marin as a politician and briefly explains her background story. The literature and existing scholarly work reflect the leadership capabilities of women and focus on gendered attributes.

1.1 Media Coverage of Female Politicians

Different researchers in the past years have focused on proving how female politicians are under-represented and presented differently in the media than male politicians (Van der Pas et al., 2020). Female politicians, regardless of their position, whether holding a position of President or prime minister, are underrepresented in the news but also their media discourse is different. Women are often trivialized, and their gender seems the most exciting aspect (Ross et al., 2020). Gender biases are visible in the stereotypes of a female and male (Davis et al., 2022). Gender has always played an essential role in defining the roles of society. Women are viewed through their biological characteristics; their job is to give birth and raise decent citizens in society. Women represent permanence and cultural respect. In comparison, men are seen as drivers of society who determine the goals and norms of society (Railo, 2011).

These biases are also visible in the media. More precisely, we can observe them in the word choices (Davis et al., 2020). The media uses a different type of language when talking about political figures (Davis et al., 2022). Many news outlets create different narratives and perceptions between male and female politicians. For example, a word such as harsh is viewed as a masculine trait, and it is perceived to be a positive thing for male leaders. In contrast, the word harsh is considered harmful to women in politics (Davis et al., 2022). Discriminatory treatment in the media also appears to be a greater focus on femininity and personal qualities such as speech, behavior, appearance, and dressing (Mäkelä, 2018).

In fact, the way we interpret different stereotypes has a significant meaning in media coverage of female politicians (Van der Pas et al., 2020). Stereotypes guide into believing how one should act and behave. Women's stereotypical behavior is that she is emotional, friendly, and helpful. Therefore, we expect a woman in a leadership position to behave based on this stereotype (Van der Pas et al., 2020). This causes discrepancy because the stereotypical behavior of women conflicts with the demands of political leadership (Van der Pas et al., 2020).

The demands of political leadership favor the masculine stereotype. As a result, female leaders are viewed as failing at least on some level since they cannot display both, behave like a stereotypical woman, and at the same time fulfill the demands of political leadership (Van der Pas et al., 2020). Therefore, the media tends to use a more negative tone about female politicians since the non-stereotypical behavior can be more easily observed and condemned (Van der Pas et al., 2020).

Stereotypes also define the display of emotions in public presences. For example, in 2022, Sanna Marin spurted into tears while talking about the War in Ukraine (Pullinen, 2022). These events evoked a discussion in Finnish news media outlets. Marin received criticism for showing her emotions and crying during a public appearance (Pullinen, 2022). The debate began when a columnist criticized Marin's actions in a national media outlet. She was criticized for being too emotional. The column stated that a political leader should remain cold-headed during a crisis and the leader should not cry in public (Ukkola, 2022). Marin's tears, on the other hand, were considered permissible. Decision-making should not be judged based on emotion (Pullinen, 2022). In Finland, political leaders have been seen tearing up in the past. Jyrki Katainen, former Finnish prime minister spurted into tears during a public appearance in 2017 (Pullinen, 2022).

Political leaders' display of emotions and their permissibility pertain to be a debate among scholars (Brooks, 2011). Various academic scholarly studies have shown conflicting results on whether gender matters in the permissibility of showing emotions (Brooks, 2011). Indeed, it seems like the display of emotion is contradictory among scholars. Brooks (2011) argued that if a woman politician displays sadness or anger, it has a different effect on voters than men have. The general public is also more likely to see women display more sadness than men. However, she concluded that *"people may hold strongly gendered stereotypes about the emotionality of ordinary people, but they do not seem to hold them about political candidates"* (Brooks, 2011, p. 603). Brescoll (2016), on the other hand, came to a different conclusion in her study (Brescoll, 2016). She confirms this outcome by bringing Pat Schroeder as an example. She briefly ran for President in 1987, and during her candidacy speech, she spurted into tears. The media castigated her as being too emotional (Brescoll, 2016). Female politicians receive increased amount of attention in the media while displaying emotions since they display stereotypical gender behavior (Brescoll, 2016). According to Brescoll (2016), the media makes more references to women's emotions than men. This hypothesis was supported by examples

such as the vice-presidential debate with Geraldine Ferraro and George H. W. Bush (Bresscoll, 2016).

Political leaders have always been in the public eye, but according to Mäkelä (2018), the publicity of female politicians and especially the public image of women is challenging and contradictory (Mäkelä, 2018). Female politicians often must face and break unwritten gender codes. These unwritten gender codes became present in different situations, such as in social gatherings, but they can be detected only when violated (Mäkelä, 2018). As a result, female politicians may deliberately obscure their gender and reduce the news coverage focused on their appearance. For example, prime minister Sanna Marin has publicly stated that she repeats her looks since she does not want the media to focus on her appearance (Mäkelä, 2018; Peltola, 2020).

Van Der Pas et al., (2020) studied the differences between male and female politicians in the media. The research systematically analyzed 90 studies that included more than 25,000 thousand politicians as well as 750,000 thousand media stories (Van Der Pas et al., 2020). Their data suggest that, in general, more attention is paid to the appearance and personal life of female politicians (Van Der Pas et al., 2020). The topic of reconciling working life and family is increasing, and politics is nowadays more personalized and entertained. Women encounter more pressure to take care of the family, home, and themselves while working. For men, a similar "I can do it all" attitude is not required (Mäkinen, 2018; Railo, 2011). In fact, for male politicians, interest in their own families and children increases their positive publicity (Railo, 2011). Van der Pas et al., (2020) data suggest that male politicians are often dealt with more positively. The media highlights masculine features and creates an illusion that these features are more valued in politics (Van der Pas et al., 2020).

In Finland, Tuomikko (2015) and Suhonen (2021) have been focused on studying the media image of female leaders. Tuomikko (2015) studied the media image of President Tarja Halonen. The analysis showed that the Finnish media focused firmly on gender and presented Halonen strongly through her gender (Tuomikko, 2015). The data also suggested that Halonen was placed between soft and hard, pointing out the differences between femininity and masculinity, and she was combined around the maternity discourse (Tuomikko, 2015). Suhonen (2021) focused on comparing the discourses associated with Sanna Marin and Alexander Stubb when they were appointed as a Prime Minister of Finland (Suhonen, 2021). The study scoped similarities and differences between the discourses and the implication of

gender. The data analysis suggested that Marin received more neutral treatment than Stubb from the media, mainly because of the combination of her gender, but Marin was repeatedly viewed through these qualities (Suhonen, 2021). A different publicity will limit but also contribute to women's success in politics (Van der Pas et al., 2020).

1.2 The case of Sanna Marin

Sanna Marin is a 36 years old Finnish politician who has been active in politics for ten years (Marin 2014). Her core values are based on freedom, equality, and solidarity (Marin, 2014). Marin supports the fight against climate change and considers the loss of biodiversity one of the biggest problems of our time (Marin, 2014). At the age of 34, Sanna Marin was elected as the prime minister of Finland on 10th December 2019. She is Finland's third and longest-serving female prime minister (Pitkäranta, 2020). As a leader, Marin has been described challenging and bold leader who will defend her position (Sillanpää, 2020).

When Marin was nominated in 2019, she became the youngest prime minister in Finnish history and the world's youngest currently serving prime minister (Pitkäranta, 2020). The combination of her gender and young age has made her an exciting figure in Finland as well as abroad. The media has paid attention to her role as a mother, family history, and working experience as a cashier (Sakki et al., 2022). During the Covid-19 pandemic, her crisis management has also gathered media interest. In 2020, the Finnish one of the most significant media outlets Helsingin Sanomat made an investigative story about Marin (Sillanpää, 2020). Sanna Marin is the politician of the Instagram generation who represents change and new beginnings. At the same time, there are people around Marin wishing her to fail (Sillanpää, 2020). The story also mentioned Marin's relationship with the media. When Marin became a Member of the Parliament in 2015, she had already attracted media attention. However, the media soon noticed that Marin was very pedantic about her public image (Sillanpää, 2020). Marin is used to having a low-key smile on her face and keeping strict eye contact with the camera when presenting in public (Sillanpää, 2020). Her usual pose is always the same, hands in front of her body. Marin has created a media image that emphasizes three features: businesslike, low-key, and stylish (Sillanpää, 2020). As prime minister, Marin maintains a tight line on her public image. However, considering all the uproars, she cannot always control it (Sillanpää, 2020).

As a female politician, Marin has received online harassment during her time as a prime minister (Yle, 2021). In 2020 she talked about sexism in politics in Vogue magazine. During the interview, she talked about her gender being the starting point in every position (Kale, 2020). As a prime minister she has received sexist questioning along with her female majority coalition government (Kale, 2020). NATO's, Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (2021) uncovered the extent of misogynistic online harassment towards Finnish government ministers, including Marin, on Twitter (Van Sant et al., 2021). Explorative analysis showed how targeting and offensive language occurs toward Finnish female ministers on Twitter. Female ministers in Finland face misogynistic behavior online to a vast extent. Female ministers were delegitimized and criticized regardless of the topic (Van Sant et al., 2021). Online harassment towards female politicians is a growing global issue, but it is not concerning only politicians. Online harassment of women is a new way of perpetrating violence against women (Wagner, 2020).

As prime minister, Marin has also been exposed to different media uproars. In October 2020, she posed on the cover of a Finnish fashion magazine. The cover image caused a stir since Marin wore a V collared blazer. The outfit was considered improper for the Prime Minister (Vedenpää, 2020). Ironically, Marin talked about criticism of her appearance in the magazine story and said how she usually dresses the same way every day since she wants to avoid conversation about her appearance. In other words, Marin is aware of the criticism of women's appearance and perceives her dressing as a political statement (Peltola, 2020; Koskinen-Koivisto et al., 2021). She has also been part of the so-called "breakfast debate." The media became interested in the prime minister's breakfast, or mainly who pays for it (Keski-Heikkilä, 2021). There was also uproar about private parties she held in Kesäranta, the official residence of the Prime Minister of Finland (Tani, 2021; Waris, 2021). The uproar in December 2021 around Marin was based on events where the prime minister was in a nightclub after she was reported to have been exposed to Covid-19 (Yle, 2021). In addition to being out while exposed to Covid-19, Marin was criticized since she did not carry official government phone and did not receive messages sent by the Chief of Security (Yle, 2021). Marin was reported only carrying a parliamentary phone, where she received a call later during the night, even though the minister's handbook suggested always carrying two phones (Yle, 2021).

In addition to these uproars focused on Marin's personal life, according to media outlets, the current President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, and Marin have been on a collision course (Ristamäki, 2020). The uproar began when Marin tweeted and took a stand on the release of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny (Ristamäki, 2020). After this, the Finnish media hurried to remind about the order of foreign policy leadership: the President in cooperation with the government. In practice, this means that Marin's responsibility is the EU-level policy, while the President focuses on relations with the non-EU countries (Hämäläinen, 2021; Ristamäki, 2020)

2. THEORIZING FEMALE LEADERSHIP

This chapter focuses on introducing the theoretical background of the study and the theoretical concepts. Social representation theory is selected since it allows one to understand socially shared understandings about leadership and reflect that representation into this study. Using social representations theory as a frame of reference allows for researching the conception given by the media about female political leadership. The theory also supports the methodological part of the study since the discourses and representations are well suited together. Discourses will help to establish a representation of a particular person or phenomena. The theory introduction starts by explaining the basics of social representation theory, the formation of social representations, and research of social representations. After this, the chapter focuses on media coverage of female politicians during the Covid-19 pandemic, explaining the role of women in the foreign policy domain. The chapter ends with a subchapter focusing on journalism's relationship to gender and power.

2.1. Social representation theory

Social representations theory provides a theoretical frame for researching narratives and discourses created by the media (Höijer, 2017). According to Höijer (2017), social representation theory is relevant for media research since the media engender collective cognition and enables social thinking (Höijer, 2017). Social representation theory seeks to explain the views of individuals and communities on pertinent and problematic issues and how these are transformed into common sense (Höijer, 2017). In social representation theory, the focus is directed toward thinking and vision (Sakki et al., 2015). Theory suggests that the diversity of perspectives and sounds can be understood by putting them in a particular social context (Sakki et al., 2015).

Serge Moscovici first formulated social representation theory in 1961 (Sakki et al., 2015). Social representation theory focuses on attitudes, social cognition, and stereotypes. The theory is closely like discourse analysis or social constructivism (Moscovici et al., 1998). A piece called *La Psychanalyse* (1961) by Moscovici was the founding of social representation theory. It focused on the relationship between social representation and language as well as propaganda as a linguistic tool (Moscovici et al., 1998).

2.1.2 Defining Social Representations

Social representations are present in our everyday thoughts, and we need them to interpret the world (Myyry et al., 2014). Social representations have an impact on different areas of everyday life. They affect, for example, our relationships and political activities. Social representations help communicate our worldview to others since they are connected to our everyday environment, such as the media. Social representations oblige people to take a stand in the public debate because we cannot avoid them daily (Myyry et al., 2014). Social representations establish common cognitions. These cognitions will generate common social bonds that unite different social groups (Höijer, 2017). Moscovici (1973) theorize that values, thoughts, images, and practices all have different functions. They create order and enable the community to communicate with each other (Moscovici 1973, cited in Sakki et al., 2015). Social representations focus on phenomena that provoke powerful feelings, cause debates and intertwine the individual and society (Höijer, 2017; Sakki et al., 2015). Eminently, it is interested in phenomena that somehow challenge society's traditional thinking, as well as phenomena that create tension between citizens, social groups, and institutions. Such phenomena also raise public debates, which can generate social reforms (Höijer, 2017).

Social representations are not just values or attitudes, but we can interpret them also as metaphors and images, including different emotions and judgments (Sakki et al., 2015). Social representations can also be viewed as theories allowing communication. They can be fused in dialogues, conversations, and different discourses (Höijer, 2017; Sakki et al., 2015). Social representations are not limited only to images of individuals or discussions between social groups. We can observe them in different structures of society, such as architecture, the church, families, and social movements (Sakki et al., 2015).

Social representations serve three different communication groups: diffusion, propagation, and propaganda (Breakwell, 1993). Each group varies in structures and organizations. These three different communication groups differ based on the information conveyed (Breakwell, 1993). Differences are observed when the extent of the shared information within groups and how much information is shared unanimously within a group are scrutinized. In addition, it is vital to scrutinize differences on how much the information leaves room for creating own opinions, whether it has a persuasive effect or authoritarian effect (Myyry et al., 2014; Breakwell, 1993). According to Breakwell (1993) *"The Predicted internal structure of representation and the*

extent to which it is dispersed within a recognizable group or social category will depend upon the functions it is serving" (Breakwell, 1993, p. 1).

2.1.3 Formation of Social Representations

Social representations are built from the content of thinking and the result of the process (Myyry et al., 2014). Content refers to the object of social representation, and process refers to a place where certain thinking is created. Therefore, attitudes are the first stage of representation, as they play a significant role in selecting information and forming an opinion (Myyry et al., 2014). Thus, *“social representations are quite biased information”* (Myyry et al., 2014, p. 54). Social representations are built when matters become topics affecting the whole society. This often leads to individuals choosing the information that best suits their purposes (Myyry et al., 2014). Nowadays, many sources of information are available for creating social representations, such as the press and the internet. Internet, especially social media, has enabled various discussions in different forums (Sakki et al., 2015). The importance of opinion leaders cannot be underestimated either (Myyry et al., 2014)

There are two different socio-cognitive mechanisms for constructing social representation: anchoring and objectification (Sakki et al., 2015; Höijer, 2017). Anchoring transforms insignificant things into relevant and unknown ideas and becomes part of society's collective frame of reference (Sakki et al., 2015; Höijer, 2017). The encounter of new and unknown phenomena is called anchoring. Anchoring allows us to compare, evaluate, and integrate new phenomena into existing knowledge and re-conceptualize innovative ideas and phenomena into a known phenomenon or context (Markova, 2000). Objectification occurs when a foreign idea or phenomenon is turned into reality (Sakki et al., 2015). In objectification, a known phenomenon becomes concrete, for example, through an object, image, or person, and becomes a symbol of a new phenomenon (Sakki et al., 2015; Höijer, 2017). Höijer (2017) uses climate change as an example and elaborates on how the media associates' storms and heat waves (Höijer, 2017). Climate change, which has previously been an abstract phenomenon, is objectified. Objectification emerges nearly automatically when a new phenomenon arises (Höijer, 2017). Objectification is more about change, while anchoring is about stability (Markova, 2000).

Language and communication have been the core of the study of social representations since the beginning (Markova, 2000). Alongside, however, concepts themata and cognitive polyphasia have emerged. Markova (2000) describes the concept of themata meaning culturally divided preconceptions and perceptions (Markova, 2000). Thus, divided preconceptions and perceptions may vary from culture to culture since they are based on normative customs and memory (Markova, 2000). Themata as a concept provides a starting point for creating social representations. Preconceptions and imagery often appear as opposite pairs, for example, masculinity-femininity (Sakki et al., 2015). Preconceptions are usually beliefs rooted in society that emerge through social debate. Preconceptions as well as imagery come to life in crises and create new social representations. (Sakki et al., 2015; Markova, 2000). Cognitive polyphasia as a concept, on the other hand, focuses on the complexity of the logic of thinking, i.e., taking into account different ways of thinking within a group. For example, one person may have various thoughts in their speech and actions (Sakki et al., 2015).

2.1.4 Research of Social Representations

The research of social representations typically focuses on topical phenomena in society (Sakki et al., 2015). The research on social representations focuses on how matters are presented, focusing on information and communication (Sakki et al., 2015). Social representation theory is quite extensive and there is no particular data collection or analysis method tied to the theory (Sakki et al., 2015). Moscovici (1984) presented four methodological principles for social representations research (cited in Sakki et al., 2015). According to Moscovici (1984) (cited in Sakki et al., 2015), the third principle states that social representations and upheavals are visible during a crisis. Therefore, when unheralded phenomena occur, it provides an adequate opportunity to research social representations (Moscovici, 1984, cited in Sakki et al., 2015). When reflecting the third principle to this study, it is particularly well suited since the aim is to study discourses during the Covid-19.

2.2 Media coverage of female leaders during Covid-19

It can be said that the female leadership has risen to a particular surface during the Covid crisis (Johnson et al., 2020). Female leadership is constantly associated with feminine qualities. During the pandemic, features that were before associated with women's private lives, such as flexibility and caring, are more valued than ever (Johnson et al., 2020). This has also increased the favorable media visibility of women's leadership (Johnson et al., 2020). The media has suggested that women are better leaders during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been a popular

narrative in many news media internationally, such as The New York Times and Forbes. Headlines of female leaders have been praiseworthy; *"Women Leaders Have Shone During The Pandemic: Men, Take Note"* (Forbes, 2021), *"Why Are Women-Led Nations Doing Better With Covid-19?"* (The New York Times, 2020).

The Covid pandemic has provided an opportunity for female leaders to confront gendered norms in leadership (Windsor et al., 2020). In general, male political leaders have been viewed as masculine figures who are in charge in the political field as well as in the household. Women leaders have been viewed through the lens of feminine protectionism (Johnson et al., 2020). In some cases, femininity can be viewed as inferior to masculinity, where being feeble and powerless is not an option. This leads to a reluctant demonstration of femininity among female leaders, which sometimes forces female leaders to perform like men (Kwan et al., 2020). Often, female leaders have been forced to display both masculine and feminine qualities such as toughness and empathy. Since women are often viewed as caregivers; the pandemic has created an opportunity for female leaders to leverage the traditional women's role and use it as an advantage in the political sphere (Johnson et al., 2020). Suggested reasons why women leaders have done better during a pandemic can be found by looking into their use of words. Female leaders use their words more softly, and allegedly, female leaders are better prepared for a crisis, and they consciously avoid risk-taking (Kwan et al., 2020).

The media has emphasized female leaders by using examples of countries with a female leader who has been doing relatively well in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, The New York Times has highlighted female leaders of New Zealand, Germany, Finland, and Taiwan (Taub, 2020). Comparing female leaders with male leaders in terms of media attention, some male leaders have been described as incompetent and impassive during a pandemic (Johnson et al., 2020). Johnson et al., (2020) found that female leaders are mainly presented in a positive light in the media during Covid-19 but a small amount of criticism was also externalized (Johnson et al., 2020). Criticism dealt with how female leaders are dealing with the pressure of the pandemic on the national economy (Johnson et al., 2020).

Overall, in the media, female leaders are often described using characteristics associated with femininity and motherhood (Johnson et al., 2020). In general, the private lives of women leaders have always been in the spotlight. Now during the pandemic, their personal life is connected to the fight against the pandemic, meaning their actions in their personal life have a

straight connection to the pandemic behavior (Johnson et al., 2020). For example, the Prime Minister of New Zealand appeared in a sweatshirt while talking about the lockdown in her Facebook live chat. This made her more approachable, and she appeared as an example of "staying home". (Friedman, 2021; Johnson et al., 2020). This also creates a difference to pre-pandemic, since then the presence of a sweatshirt would have been a question mark (Johnson et al., 2020). Also, during the pandemic motherhood has been seen as a symbol of caring, therefore female leaders have faced comparison to mothers (Johnson et al., 2020).

Soremi et al., (2020) suggested that female leaders during the pandemic developed their policy solutions based on stereotypes and gendered expectations. Female leaders tend to prioritize interplay first instead of focusing on resolution (Soremi et al., 2020) Glass cliff phenomenon brings its own aspect in the conversation. Especially during the crisis, glass cliff phenomenon suggest that female leaders may fail and imperil the leadership probabilities if they held the position of a leader (Soremi et al., 2020). While seeking to explain the female leadership performance, often factors influencing the execution are excluded and focus is more shifted on the features and tendency of a gender. Also, female leaders personal qualifications are left out (Soremi et al., 2020). However, institutionalized settings will provide more opportunities for women to perform politics without ostentatious interest on their gender (Soremi et al., 2020).

Dada et al., (2020), analyzed how much words matter in public speeches during the pandemic. The research found significant differences between male and female leaders (Dada et al., 2020). Leaders recognize the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic, but female leaders tend to focus more on individuals and how the Covid-19 influences their daily life. Especially, female leaders were more often concerned with people in vulnerable situations such as refugees, and people with substance abuse and mental health issues (Dada et al., 2020). Female leaders also more often highlighted the link between domestic violence and the pandemic (Dada et al., 2020). The authors also argue that the use of emotions in the language was quantum among female leaders. Male leaders more often compared the pandemic to war, whereas female leaders' use of words was more personal and emphatic (Dada et al., 2020)

To sum up, the Covid-19 pandemic and exceptional circumstances may activate the opportunities of women politicians (Piazza et al., 2020). Piazza and Diaz in (2020) argues that the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the popularity and prospects among female politicians (Piazza et al., 2020). Their data suggest that female leaders have managed to handle the Covid-

19 pandemic better. The media has portrayed women leaders in the positive spotlight and this could lead to a situation where voters will consider and vote for more women candidates in the future (Piazza et al., 2020). However, the evaluation of leadership style based on gender can increase the detrimental judgement and limit female leaders' professional prospects (Soremi et al., 2020).

2.3 Women in the domain of external relation

This chapter briefly focuses on examining female politicians in external relations. The topic is relevant for this study since it provides an insight into how female politicians are involved in this particular domain and what type of representations society forms in terms of external relations leadership.

Gender stereotypes can prevent women from proceeding to upper-level management positions since an advisable leader is often associated with masculine traits such as rationality and certainty (Aggestem et al., 2020). Indeed, in external relations and diplomacy, women remain underrepresented. In the power relations of foreign policy, masculine values are more patronized, while women and their experiences are more easily marginalized (Aggestem et al., 2020; Jauhola et al., 2020). In the case of female political leaders, this may equal a situation where female leaders seek to hide their feminine qualities in the foreign policy field since they need to show more masculine behavior as a leader (Aggestem et al., 2020; Jauhola et al., 2020). Stereotypes affect the distribution of political responsibilities, which is why men mostly run the portfolio of defense and foreign policy ministers while women are left with socio-cultural ministerial positions (Aggestem et al., 2020). Thus, women in external relations similarly encounter stereotypes than in other leadership domains.

It has been suggested that including women in the foreign policy domain would reduce the risk of conflicts and increase the emergence of new paradigms (Lazarou et al., 2019). Over the years, there has also been a debate about the extent of change in the foreign policy domain (Lazarou et al., 2019). However, female leaders tend to face this double-blinding phenomenon, which can transform them into conflicting leaders (Burns et al., 2021). According to Burns et al., (2021), the inclusion of equality in legislation makes states more peaceful, but the presence of female leaders can lead to more conflicting conceptions (Burns et al., 2021). In states where attention toward human rights is more prominent, the risk of conflict is lower. Also, gender equality inside the country reduces the conflicting perception of the role of men and women (Burns et al., 2021).

A contradiction arises when stereotypes associated with female leaders determine how women are seen as leaders, for example, in international negotiations (Post et al., 2019). In the foreign policy domain, generally, female leaders are not expected to behave similarly to men. Therefore female leaders may become more confrontational (Post et al., 2019). As a leader, women have more to prove that their decision-making ability will not be questioned (Post et al., 2019). In the case of female leaders, it can be conceivable that women have gained power by exploiting masculine traits since feminine traits are not traditionally belonged to the foreign policy domain. A situation like this could escalate negotiations since women need to indicate resoluteness more as a leader (Post et al., 2019).

In the foreign policy domain, female leaders are forced to display both traits as a leader, masculine and feminine, which places them in the middle of the perception of a contradictory leader (Burns et al., 2021). Burns et al., (2021) use Hillary Clinton as an example to describe this type of contradictory situation. When Clinton was a Secretary of State, she perpetrated two different foreign policy leadership styles (Burns et al., 2021). Clinton supported the USA military actions, while at the same she advocated equality and women's rights across the globe. Clinton supported women and girls' rights in Afghanistan and devoted these values to stability and prosperity, but she also actuated war activities in Afghanistan (Burns et al., 2021). Her foreign policy activities were taut but cooperative. Therefore, she provides an excellent example of how the behavior of a female leader is guided by masculine stereotypes of a good leader, while at the same women are expected to display also based on feminine stereotypes (Burns et al., 2021).

In Sweden, the scarcity of women in foreign policy has been detected (United Nations, 2022). Therefore, Sweden is one of the first countries to adopt a feminist foreign policy. Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström introduced the concept in 2014 (United Nations, 2022). Feminist diplomacy seeks to promote, among other things, gender equality and combat sexual violence, and promote opportunities for women and girls in both education and economic independence. It also seeks to increase the participation of women in politics, particularly in foreign policymaking (United Nations, 2022; Huupponen, 2017). According to feminist foreign policy, the role of women in decision-making, conflict, and war is significant, and their visibility needs to be increased (United Nations, 2022; Huupponen, 2017).

The world has received the idea of feminist foreign policy positively but with caution (Huupponen, 2017). Feminist foreign policy faces three challenges; world politics and ethical

problems, conservative leaders in power, and the confrontation situation in power, such as soft versus hard power (Huupponen, 2017). While scrutinizing feminist foreign policy, it is possible to observe contradictions between its ideology. For example, the question arises as to whether a feminist foreign policy would be able to resolve conflict situations credibly enough if it wants to adhere to all the values it upholds in its foreign policy. Feminist foreign policy pursues a so-called pragmatism that examines the situation when choosing between soft power and hard power (Huupponen, 2017).

Thus, in sum, female leaders in the foreign policy domain similarly encounter different expectations than in other domains of leadership. As a result, the feminist foreign policy adopts different perspectives on gender equality. It aims achieve and develop more democratic decisions making and broad perspectives on gender equality in the foreign policy domain (Mikkola, 2020).

2.4 Journalism, gender, and power

The media has the power to determine what society is talking about, and the press is one of the significant producers of gender representations (Kuusipalo 2011). The media builds a perception of gender, and we can observe gendered representations in our daily news coverage. Different individuals adapt these representations based on their values and interpretations (Kuusipalo, 2011; Mäkelä, 2018). The perception and attitude in journalism towards gender have been compared to the perception of gender roles in society (Ruoho, 2015; Ruoho et al., 2018). In society, gender roles are viewed through individuals, but gender roles are also strongly guided by societal perceptions. This is also true in journalism. How society understands gender also determines the attitude toward it in journalism (Ruoho, 2015; Ruoho et al., 2018). According to Rönkkä (2018), the inclusion of gender in journalism reinforces gender stereotypes (Rönkkä, 2018). Journalists are aware of their power to reinforce stereotypes and their power to make linguistic choices. These linguistic choices reinforce gender stereotypes and the image of power. However, this power is also used to break the traditional narrative of gender in the media (Rönkkä, 2018).

Thus, creating a specific type of image is all about choice; the media chooses how and who it presents (Mäkelä, 2018). These choices made by the media affect the public presence of the politicians, and their reputations may rise or fall. The media uses its own power to construct social reality (Mäkelä, 2018). For example, personal issues are more visible in news coverage

of female politicians. Also, female candidates will face more suspicion from the press about their foreign and economic policy professionalism since these domains traditionally belonged to men (Kuusipalo, 2011; Mäkelä, 2018). Thus, media coverage matters. For example, it can reduce women's political opportunities or shorten their careers. Media coverage can also influence female politicians' under-representation in politics and reinforce the image that politics is a masculine domain (Van der Pas et al., 2020)

News media outlets are building these gender-related power structures, and media has the power to build perceptions of political power (D'Heer et al., 2021). In the grip of power, female politicians in elevated positions, such as heads of state, are experiencing gender-based and sexist writing more in the media. Female politicians with less power also face similar writing but in less quantity (D'Heer et al., 2021). The use of masculine language in the media strengthens political power and supports the connection of culture to political power (Wagner et al., 2019). News discourses reveal apparent differences between the words and tone used in news coverage of female and male politicians (Ross et al., 2020). There are certain gender-oriented assumptions, such as men being convincing and reasonable while women are emotional and aggressive (Ross et al., 2020). On the other hand, according to Suhonen (2021), how a politician is represented in the media and what kind of discourses and representations are built are based on who the politician is (Suhonen, 2021). It is also important to remember that the attitude and values of the journalist matter, and to some extent, they carry more weight than gender (Mäkelä, 2018).

According to Van der Pas et al., (2020), the relationship of journalism to gender and power research faces three shortcomings (Van der Pas et al., 2020). First, the overall picture of the results concerning this area is missing, leading to conflicting narratives (Van der Pas et al., 2020). According to Van Der Pas (2020), some researchers cut corners and represent results this way: *"women politicians receive less media attention than their male counterparts."* (Van der Pas et al., 2020, p. 115). While others rely on a trend that emphasizes the position of women a couple of decades ago, and they compare it to the present, where women are somehow equal to men. Therefore, this could cause a string and make studies against each other (Van der Pas et al., 2020). The third shortcoming is the limited understanding of the nature of gender bias in the media coverage of politicians. There are different circumstances in every country. (Van der Pas et al., 2020) Research is usually limited to one country. Each country's different structures

and setups influence the outcome of the study influence the outcome of the study. Research should be more systematic and comprehensive (Van der Pas et al., 2020).

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter will demonstrate the research method used in the study and explain the data collection and analyzing process as well as its limitations and ethics. The study aims to explore what type of discourses has been associated with Marin's performance in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis and how the Finnish media has shaped Marin's political credibility as a leader in external relations. The study aims to seek answers to these research questions by conducting a critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is selected as a research method since it provides a methodological tool to explore social norms in a societal context (Fatin et al., 2017; Pynnönen, 2013; Mullet, 2018).

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a qualitative approach that focuses on studying the contribution of social power and its inequalities, as well as the relationship between language, values, and opinions in the social and political context (Fatin et al., 2017; Pynnönen, 2013; Mullet, 2018). CDA is used to conduct an analysis on the bias which may occur in different discourses. CDA takes a critical approach to explain, describe and interpret different ways how discourses are built in the society and how they legitimize social inequalities (Fatin et al., 2017; Pynnönen, 2013; Mullet, 2018). It aims to explain the significance of meanings that are often taken for granted and how power is built through these meanings (Fatin et al., 2017; Pynnönen, 2013; Mullet, 2018). The basic notion of CDA is that the language society uses is purposeful even though we cannot determine our discursive choices. They can be conscious or unconscious (Mullet, 2018). CDA views the language as an influencer in the society, which has emerged as a social output and therefore sets a relationship between language and power under scrutiny (Fatin et al., 2017).

CDA focuses on the stature of the dominant discourses for attitudes and socially shared understanding and how these discourses affect actions and interpretation in the society (Pynnönen, 2013). Thus, CDA seeks to explore deterministic and causal relationships between discourses and social structures. There is an invisible relationship between discourses and power that CDA seeks to make transparent (Pynnönen, 2013). Discourse analysis (DA) transforms into a critical one based on what issues it seeks to explore. The starting point of CDA is to study social order, which is based on the exercise of power. Power is one of the most central concepts of the CDA (Van Dijk, 2001).

The one with power, has the influence to usher the activities and thoughts of other clusters in the society (Van Dijk, 2001). Those in power usually enjoy a privileged position, and they have access to different social resources such as money, status, knowledge, and force. Power and these social resources are connected, and we can distinguish different types of power (Van Dijk, 2001). Van Dijk (2001) sets a few examples; rich people have power since they have money, whereas professors have power since they have knowledge (Van Dijk, 2001). Power can be abused in many different ways, and in everyday life, we can observe this in the form of sexism or racism. While studying the relationship between discourse and power, it must be remembered that access to various forms of discourse, such as science and politics, is a power resource (Van Dijk, 2001). Also, social groups with power can influence people's minds and actions. Those groups who have the most influence in the social debate have the best control over the thoughts and actions of other groups (Van Dijk, 2001).

One of the key factors in the relationship between power and discourse is the inequality that emerges when examining the influence of different social groups (Van Dijk, 2001). Discourses emerge from different interpretations and actions. According to Pynnönen (2013), there are three different types of criticism that CDA can produce (Pynnönen 2013). These three types of criticism are ideological, rhetorical, and strategic (Pynnönen, 2013). The ideological critique focuses on how discourses are reflected in social power structures, while rhetorical critique focuses on single texts and speeches and how these effects the individual level in the society. Strategic criticism, on the other hand, is interested in the relationship between goal-oriented social change and discourses (Pynnönen, 2013).

Analytically and theoretically, CDA can be quite diverse, and there can be different types of CDA (Pynnönen, 2013). Often CDA focuses on social problems, and activities and approaches differ based on contexts (Van Dijk, 2001; Fatin et al., 2017). However, the general vocabulary in CDA is often similar (Van Dijk, 2001). While conducting CDA, a deeper understanding and separation of critical discourse and analysis concepts is advisable (Fatin et al., 2017). CDA analysis can be done at the micro or macro level. At the macro level, grammatical structures, the meaning of words and metaphorical functions, and attitudes are analyzed while, at the micro level, the grammatical structures of texts are analyzed (Van Dijk, 2001; Fatin et al., 2017). CDA needs to bridge the gap between the micro and the macro levels since, in our daily lives, these levels unite (Van Dijk, 2001).

For example, power, dominance, and inequality are terms at the macro level of analysis, while discrimination speech in parliament is at the micro level discourse, but at the same, this discrimination speech effects at the macro level as well (Van Dijk, 2001).

Fairclough (1992) has presented different proposals to theorize the CDA (cited in Blommaert et al., 2000). Fairclough (1992) suggests that there is a three-dimensional frame of reference for outlining and analyzing discourses (Fairclough,1992, cited in Blommaert et al., 2000). The first dimension focuses on discourse as text and takes into account its linguistic features, vocabulary choices and patterns, and grammar. The second dimension focuses on discourse as a practice and how discourse is produced, disseminated, and consumed in society (Fairclough,1992, cited in Blommaert et al., 2000). The third dimension, on the other hand, focuses on discourse as a social practice. It takes into account the ideological effects of discourse and hegemonic processes. The third dimension also represents change (Fairclough,1992, cited in Blommaert et al., 2000). Hegemony means power, so when hegemony changes and the form of hegemony changes. For this reason, discourses are also changing. The ways how discourses are represented and talked about are changing as well as the social debate (Fairclough,1992, cited in Blommaert et al., 2000).

For this study, the CDA as a research method is serving an effective research tool in finding discourses. It will provide the eventuality to examine discourses at a linguistic level and find the meaning behind the discourse. As a research method, it allows scrutinizing the discourses as a social practice and phenomena. CDA considers power as a changing element that will also affect the social debate. Thus, CDA is selected as the research method for this study since it provides the opportunity to scrutinize the discourses observed in the study as transforming and influential elements challenging the collective thinking of society.

3.1.2 Critical reactions to CDA

CDA has received criticism regarding its interpretation (Blommaert et al., 2000). It has been said that CDA obscures essential differences between concepts, disciplines, and methodologies (Blommaert et al., 2000). Also, there are claims that CDA deals with concepts vaguely and does not adequately explain what is meant by discourse, text, and structure (Blommaert et al., 2000). The CDA, as its name implies, examines discourses under the guise of critical analysis but, at the same time, leaves out the diversity of the text and the social conditions. Therefore, the CDA assumes that it could speak and study discourses at a critical level on behalf of everyone. It has been criticized for being too selective, biased, and prejudiced (Blommaert et

al., 2000). There are claims that researchers conducting CDA prioritize their prejudices too much (Blommaert et al., 2000). However, it should be noted that the CDA is not the only method that has received criticism about the relationship between language and social structure (Blommaert et al., 2000).

Jones (2007) argued that CDA does not exist (Jones, 2007). All people are users and authors of language, and everyone observes the use of language and communication in their daily lives (Jones, 2007). Jones (2007) argues that *"constant critical engagement with communication cannot be captured or accounted for by conventional linguistic methods and concepts"* (Jones, 2007, p. 1). Jones (2007) also criticized the ideological orientation of texts, meaning that text can be easily detached from its political interpretation (Jones, 2007). The CDA can only interpret certain types of interpretative preferences guided by certain assumptions about politics and the role of discourses in society (Jones, 2007). Therefore, the method of political and ideological criticism of the CDA is misleading and causes misunderstandings about the role of communication in society (Jones, 2007).

If we address the received criticism of the CDA in this study, criticism about the ideological orientation of texts must be considered. The interpretation must be taken into account in the study, meaning the interpretation of the discourses should avoid assumptions and preferences that may guide interpretations in society. As a researcher, one must also minimize own prejudices and consider social conditions in the research. The critique of the CDA by Blommaert et al (2000) criticizes CDA for speaking on behalf of everyone (Blommaert et al., 2000). The purpose of the study is not to speak on behalf of everyone or cause misunderstandings about the role of communication in society. The aim is to highlight the significance of language and communication in constructing discourses and social representations. The study will focus more on the study's limitations on page 35.

3.2 News as a discourse

This subchapter will shortly focus on explaining the concept of news discourse. For this study, it is essential to outline the importance of news discourse since the study uses news articles as data for analyzing the study results.

CDA provides tools to research news discourse; it helps understand the author's point of view and outline the discourses contained in the news (Xie, 2018). Also, it focuses on finding the power structures and ideologies behind news discourse (Xie, 2018; Bednarek et al., 2012).

News discourse is an objective and formal form of discussion, but the definition of news can be complex (Xie, 2018). What is the definition of news? News is used for observing the world, and they are often focused on reporting something extraordinary and evocative (Xie, 2018). Freedom of the press may also affect the definition of news since some people view the news as a piece of reliable and up-to-date information, while some doubt the veracity of the news (Xie, 2018). Since the news has a vital role in society, news should be viewed and reviewed critically. News displays a significant role when people search for information and evaluate the world (Xie, 2018).

The features of news discourses may vary, but they include a similar type of style and language trends (Kiema, 2016; Carvalho, 2008). In general, the language used in a news discourse is neutral. It does not attract attention. However, the use of language in news discourses varies depending on the news topic. For example, used language in entertainment news can be very different (Kiema, 2016; Carvalho, 2008). This should be considered since this study uses different online news media outlets as data sources. However, the generalization of neutrality is beneficial to this study. A neutral tone in language limits the possibilities of preconception (Kiema, 2016; Carvalho, 2008). News discourse seeks to draw attention to the substance of the news. News discourse language uses a lot of nominalizations, active and passive sentences (Kiema, 2016; Carvalho, 2008). The use of language in the news eases the process of finding the discourses in this study.

Van Dijk (1988) focused on presenting a new interdisciplinary theory of news in the press (Van Dijk, 1998). He argued that *'news should be studied as a form of public discourse'* (Van Dijk 1988, p. vii). Van Dijk views news as social cognition, where news is used for gathering information about social situations, and he views the news discourse as part of a complex communication process (Van Dijk, 1988). The relationship between the text and the concept of news is also an interesting one. One of the leading research questions in the book is *"How do cognitive and social constraints determine the structures of news, and how are the understanding and the uses of news influenced by its textual structures?"* (Van Dijk 1988, p. 2).

Similarly to other discourse types, news discourse can be unclear and leave question marks behind (Van Dijk, 1988). Unclear discourses must be inferred for complete comprehension or treated as taken-for-granted information (Van Dijk, 1988). The analysis of news discourses is

a process that is built on people's views and their consequences and effects in different social contexts (Van Dijk, 1988).

3.3 Data collection process

The news articles concerning Sanna Marin are collected for the time period of January 2020-December 2021. The period starts at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, January 2020, and ends in December 2021. Two years during the Covid-19 crisis is selected since, among other things, cooperation between the EU countries increased.

Data for the study is collected from Finland's most prominent online media outlets, Helsingin Sanomat (HS), YLE, Ilta-Sanomat (IS), and Iltalehti (IL). Access to data through YLE, IS, and IL online outlets was free of charge. Getting access to some news articles in HS online outlet is chargeable. One monthly subscription to HS online service was made to access every news article in HS.

In January 2021, Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö observed the trustworthiness of YLE and HS. YLE's trustworthiness among citizens was 80%, and HS was 70% (Tanner, 2021). IS is selected because, according to Media Audit Finland (2021), it is the biggest news media in Finland, and it reaches over 3 064 000 people weekly through its website (Sanoma, 2021). During the Covid-19 crisis, IL has increased its popularity, and according to Media Audit Finland (2021), it reaches 241 000 people daily (Iltalehti, 2021).

Since the media hype around Marin has been prominent, it is crucial to limit the data. Therefore, news articles where Marin was mentioned only in one sentence are excluded. The material thus focused on data where Marin is explicitly mentioned as a person. Also, only if Sanna Marin or the word prime minister was mentioned in the headline, data is selected. The data collection process started with the search option in each news site, YLE, HS IS, and IL. There was a possibility to set a timeframe in the search option. The entered period was January 2020-December 2021. The search started with entering keywords such as Sanna Marin, prime minister. The first round of the research gave too many hits on each site, making it challenging to separate and analyze the data. Therefore, the second round of searching focused on searching articles concerning politics and foreign policy topics. YLE's online site was more challenging to use since it does not have specific search options; therefore, the data search was more time-consuming, and there was a need to use more keywords.

The topic of the study focuses on Sanna Marin's performance in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis. The Covid-19 crisis was selected as a time frame since it has increased global cooperation and has emphasized the female leadership phenomena. Thus, news containing EU-decision making, international cooperation, leadership, etc., are selected as a data material.

Since the study does not directly focus on how Marin has overseen the Covid-19 crisis, all selected news articles do not concern the pandemic itself. However, some have an indirect attachment to it. A more considerable amount of the data selected focuses on Marin and the decision-making in the EU since the prime minister's responsibilities include decisions and measures taken in the European Union (Tasavallan Presidentti, 2022).

After assessing the data in each news media outlet, there are 29 news articles selected for the study. Articles selected as data materials include news articles, op-eds, columns, and opinion pieces. The language of the data material is Finnish. The amount of data selected is a relatively small sample size. However, the study wanted to focus directly on the news where the role of external relations is apparent. Considering all the data collection criteria, 29 news articles qualify as data for the study.

3.4 Data analyzing process

For data analysis, the study benefits from the three-step process proposed by Pynnönen (2013). There is no single and correct method to conduct CDA, but the study uses the three-step process as a guiding framework (Pynnönen, 2013).

In the first stage, data analysis starts by reading the material multiple times and taking notes and making underlining's. The material is analyzed at the textual level, and word choices, structure, and text order are observed. The aim is to find recurring words and patterns which directly or indirectly focus on representing Marin's performance and features in external relations. Then recurring words, expressions, sentences, metaphors, and narratives will be collected together (Pynnönen, 2013). When these are collected together, it is easier to observe the tone and attitudes about Marin's activities and how she is represented as a person at the second stage of analysis. This also allows preliminary to observe what type of activity rises the most. Also, the intensity of the observed discourses will be analyzed. If the discourse appears in the headlines, it is interpreted as a strong discourse. It is possible to draw conclusions at the first stage of the process, but attitude must remain neutral. After the first stage, the data is

classified according to its themes and qualities. The first stage will help to understand the studied phenomenon (Pynnönen, 2013).

The second stage focuses on analyzing the interpretation, which is born as a result of the first stage (Pynnönen, 2013). By analyzing the interpretation, the goal is to understand the content of the data and its discourses more broadly. The aim is to search for words and phrases which will reveal the attitude towards the selected data material. Thus, words are examined from the data material, and attention is paid to word choices (Pynnönen, 2013). This will help reveal the special tone or attitude occurring through the words. (Pynnönen, 2013). In the study, the data is placed in a social and a gender context, and as a result, different representations are created. Through these representations, it is possible to form questions and observe what type of discourses are created (Pynnönen, 2013). For this study, data analysis questions were the following: What does the data talk about Marin? In what words does the data describe Marin's activities? What type of activity takes an active role? What type of qualities associated with Sanna Marin are created? The third and last stage focuses on contesting the representations and discourses that emerged in the second stage (Pynnönen, 2013). The discourses associated with Sanna Marin are attached to the social and gender context, meaning that the study will scrutinize the discourses by looking into the social norms and power structures and how these impact on opportunities and attitudes of women (Kangas et al., 2015).

3.5 Ethics and limitations of the study

The data for the study consist of public data, which means it is accessible to everyone, and therefore no data privacy issues occur. HS makes an exception since some news articles are only available for subscribers. However, in Finnish libraries, everyone can get free access to the news under the paywall. Therefore, the data used in the study is classified as public data. Also, it is possible to access every news site used in the study from abroad. Open data also means that it can be reused and remixed for academic purposes, but it is essential to avoid fabricating data.

The general ethical principle is to avoid causing harm or risks to the subjects of the study (Kallinen et al., 2021). The study aims not to criticize Sanna Marin in a negative light but to find the discourses and social perceptions associated with Marin. Also, the YLE, HS, IL, and IS journalists are not the subjects to analyze in the study. The researcher's responsibility is to ensure that the research does not infringe the subject's right or distort the results, which could

cause long-term harm to a similar target group or research. According to ethical principles, research should produce relevant information on topic not yet known enough (Kallinen et al., 2021)

The study may also face some limitations. One of the ethical challenges is to remain objective and impartial (Kallinen et al., 2021). It is important to keep in mind through the research process that the researcher's preconceptions cannot affect the research in a guiding manner. Therefore, it is essential to keep in mind that the researcher's possible preconceptions should be put to a side as much as possible while selecting and analyzing the data. Another limitation that may affect the result of the study is the available data. The data availability may be too small or, on the other hand, not focused enough on external relations, which may distort the study results. These risks are addressed by focusing more on the quality of the data rather than quantity.

The data collected is in the Finnish language. Since the aim is to find discourses, the study searches and analyzes the discourses in Finnish but observes them in the English language. Thus, it means data must be translated. In DA, language and how it is used plays a significant role. Therefore, the limitations may occur since the data material is translated. Translated data material may lead to different interpretations (Nikander, 2008). To minimize the risk of wrong interpretation, data material is translated carefully, and the examples used in the study will be visible in both languages, Finnish and English.

4. ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on representing the results of the data analysis and concluding the discourses, interpreting them more profoundly, and placing them in social and gender contexts. The last and final main chapter also proposes answers to research questions presented in the study.

After the complete CDA, there are four discourses discovered. Discourses observed are the discourse of power, the discourse of age, the discourse of unity, and emotion discourse. The discourses in the study are named so they can reflect their purpose as straightforwardly as possible. Some similarity between the discourses was observed, and in principle, they could have been placed in the same category. However, there were minor differences in the discourses, and differences distinguish them from each other. For example, the discourse of power deals more with Marin being a leader. In contrast, the discourse of emotions focuses on Marin's actions and how these actions are talked about and represented.

When the discourses are introduced, the study uses direct references from the data material and uses them as an example while observing and explaining the meaning of the discourse. The direct references will be in both languages. The original text is in Finnish, but it has been translated into English. However, not all words can be directly translated as there is no English equivalent. In these cases, the word is replaced by a synonym. Examples used in the analysis are marked using the short name of the media outlet and number. The direct references used in the analysis can be found in the list of references presented end of the study.

While researching and analyzing the discourses, the context of the study must be considered. Therefore, the study focuses on researching Marin's political performance in external relations from the perspective of female leadership and placing it into the gender and social debate context. Marin is a young woman and a leader; therefore, the study focused on discovering what type of discourses are created about her political performance by looking into the social and gender perspective.

4.1 The Discourse of Power

The discourse of power breaks norms and creates tension in power relations. The discourse of power essentially examines power by placing it in a confrontation position. The discourse of power portrayed Marin's leadership as a contradictory phenomenon where boundaries and responsibilities belonging to the prime minister are blurred.

The discourse of power presents Marin as the determined prime minister who moves beyond her power. Words such as order, power (fin. järjestys, valta), and multiple appeals to the Constitution of Finland (fin. perustuslaki) create and support this discourse.

IS1: "Two popular politicians are measuring each other and marking the limits of their power". (Fin. Kaksi suurta kansansuosiota nauttivaa politiikkaa ottaa toistaan mittaan ja markkeeraa valtansa rajoja).

The Finnish constitution defines that the President and the Government lead foreign policy together. However, the constitution does not precisely define the line between EU policy and foreign policy (Penttilä, 2008). Discourse suggests that Marin knows her role in EU politics, but she also desires to have more power in foreign policy matters.

YLE3: "Vibration, friction, controversy - Scholars: Niinistö has long time filled the space in foreign policy, but now Prime Minister Marin wants to play her part". (Fin. Värinää, kitkaa, kiistaa – Tutkijat: Niinistö on pitkään täyttänyt ulkopoliitiikan tilan, mutta nyt pääministeri Marin haluaa osansa).

The discourse of power portrays Marin as transgressive, who breaks the traditional responsibility areas assigned to the prime minister. The concept of power is on a collision course, and the discourse suggests that Marin breaks the norms of foreign policy leadership. A subtle critique of the power struggle scene was interpreted in the data material. Criticism was observed between the lines. Marin's activities were not criticized straightforwardly, but the criticism was targeted at contemplating the constitution of Finland. The Finnish foreign policy field seems not to be used to (female) prime minister, who valiantly crosses the power lines assigned to the prime minister. For this reason, Marin's activities are provoking a debate on whether the constitution of Finland should be re-examined or even reformed in terms of the division of foreign policy leadership. In the discourse, Marin is violating the written and set rules of leadership order, which makes the discourse power to question her political actions.

IS1: "There is a good reason why the order of leadership in foreign policy is set in the constitution" (Fin. Ulkopoliitiikan johtamisen järjestyksestä ei ole suotta säädetty perustuslaissa).

HS2: "The polite collision of the government shows that the Finnish constitution itself could also be scrutinized". (Fin. Valtiojohtodon kohtelias yhteentörmäys näyttää, että tarkasteltavaksi voi tulla myös Suomen valtiosääntö itsessään).

IS13: "Many parties who follow the foreign and security policy scene paid attention to the timing of the prime minister and Presidents statements". (Fin. Monet ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikkaa seuraavat tahot kiinnittivät varmasti huomiota pääministerin ja presidentin lausuntojen ajoitukseen).

The discourse of power scrutinizes power by placing it in a confrontation position. The discourse places two famous and popular politicians against each other, Niinistö and Marin. They represent the opposite sex but also their age difference is notable. The discourse is also creating a deep tension in their relationship. Niinistö is presented as a calm leader, whereas Marin's tendency to get involved in foreign policy decision-making is described as an urge and as a desire to "show off". While scoping the discourse, Marin's actions are described using more richer language, and she is seen as more impudent than Niinistö. She is portrayed as an ambitious leader who shifts her responsibilities, and she faces a more marveled and questioned attitude. The discourse suggests that Marin's actions in external relations are causing confusion and ambiguity in power relations.

IS13: "Prime minister Sanna Marin stepped on President Sauli Niinistö's land and it causes confusion". (Fin. Pääministeri Sanna Marin astui presidentti Sauli Niinistön tontille ja se aiheuttaa hämmennystä).

YLE14: "Twitter message from prime minister Marin raised a question whether there is uncertainty in the leadership of foreign policy between the prime minister and the President". (Fin. Twitter-viesti pääministeri Marinilta aiheutti kysymyksiä siitä, onko ulkopoliitiikan hoidossa epätietoisuutta pääministerin ja tasavallan presidentin välillä).

IL15: "According to the estimations, in her tweet she pursued to take foreign policy leadership for herself at the expense of the President". (Fin. Twiitillään hän pyrki myös arvioiden mukaan ottamaan ulkopoliittista johtajuutta itselleen presidentin kustannuksella).

Foreign policy has generally been considered a policy field belonging to men, which may be why the media is interested in Marin's desire to get involved. Female politicians have been in the minority in the foreign policy area, and they face more criticism about their professionalism (Mäkelä, 2018). Both sexes have their areas of expertise in politics; men are expected to be better in "masculine" issues such as defense and the economy, while women are more suitable for policy areas where feminine qualities are needed, such as health and education (Sakki et al., 2022).

HS4: "MARIN spoke about the EU emergency funding with quite different tone than President Sauli Niinistö, who discussed the issue earlier this day in the ambassadors' Days". (Fin. MARIN PUHUI EU:n hätärahoituksesta varsin eri sävyyn kuin aiemmin päivällä suurlähettiläspäivillä asiaa käsitellyt presidentti Sauli Niinistö).

Along with other aspects, the discourse of power tries to find explanations for Marin's behavior and actions. She is compared to the previous prime ministers and their deeds. She, as a woman, breaks the traditional view and stereotype that the leader in power is a man. Comparisons with the previous prime minister, whom all have been mainly men, seek to explain why Marin as a prime minister breaks the stereotypical image of a prime minister. Comparison to other prime ministers and comments about the prime minister's enthusiastic attitude discloses change in the power discourse.

YLE3: "The former ambassador also estimated that some previous prime ministers and governments have not showed interest in foreign policy. As a prime minister, Marin is also seeking a role as head of foreign policy, says Professor Forsberg". (Fin. Myös entinen suurlähettiläs arvioi, että pari edellistä pääministeriä ja hallitusta eivät osoittaneet kiinnostusta ulkopoliittikkaan. – Marin hakee pääministerinä roolia myös ulkopoliitiikan johtajana, professori Forsberg toteaa).

YLE3: "Finland has not used to the active role of the prime minister in foreign policy". (Fin. Pääministerin ulkopoliittiseen aktiivisuuteen ei ole Suomessa viime vuosina totuttu).

Marin's interest in foreign policy in the discourse of power is viewed as surprising, groundbreaking, and a power battle. A comparison with previous leaders narrates that the discourse of power is at its turning point. Marin's actions as an external leader are viewed as surprising; therefore, at the same time, the discourse attempts to explain these types of behavior by comparing her to previous prime ministers.

In sum, we can observe two key features guiding the conversation in the discourse of power. The first is Marin's urge to get involved more in foreign policy decision-making. The discourse views her as a power-seeking leader who wants to reform the remit of a prime minister. The second aspect guiding the conversation is unpredictable behavior. The discourse implies Marin's behavior is why the concept of power is questioned.

4.2 The Discourse of Age

The discourse of age focuses on representing Marin as a leader who breaks the leadership boundaries due to her age. Her age has been an exciting aspect in Finland as well as internationally. The age discourse is also comparing her to President Niinistö and seeks to explain their different point of view on external relations by generational differences. The discourse draws attention to Marin's activities on social media. Due to her age, social media is seen as essential for the young leader. The discourse creates an image of a leader who skillfully and occasionally brazenly utilizes social media for political communication purposes. The discourse indicates that using social media for political statements in external relations (in Finland) is a relatively new phenomenon. After all, in recent years, Finland has become accustomed to the fact that an older male leader is making foreign policy statements through official communication channels. Marin is viewed as a "tweeting leader in external relations in the discourse of age." Indeed, while observing the data material, Marin's use of Twitter has risen to the center of the discussion. Tweeting is seen as a hustle used by the younger generations and as a tool to break the boundaries of the formalities in foreign policy leadership. She represents a young generation of politicians who are transforming governmental communication. Marin is strongly viewed as a prime minister representing the young generation. By focusing on age, the discourse creates an image of a youthful, reforming leader.

IL15: "Niinistö is an older man and Marin younger woman, both representing completely different worldviews". (Fin. Niinistö on vanhempi mies ja Marin nuorempi nainen, molemmat edustavat täysin erilaisia maailmankatsomuksia).

YLE3: "Himanen states that the younger generation of politicians uses social media naturally for different purposes. In the eyes of the older generation, social media contains more problems than opportunities. Undoubtedly, the events of the last few weeks have shown the way how differently generations view the governmental communication". (Fin. Himanen toteaa, että nuoren sukupolven poliitikot käyttävät somea luontevasti eri tarkoituksiin. – Vanhemman polven silmissä se sisältää enemmän ongelmia kuin mahdollisuuksia. Epäilemättä viime viikkojen tapahtumissa on nähtävissä myös eri sukupolvien tapaa katsoa valtiollista viestintää, Himanen sanoo).

YLE3: "According to researchers, Twitter diplomacy revealed the generation gap between the prime minister and the President". (Fin. Tutkijoiden mukaan Twitter-diplomatia paljasti myös pääministerin ja presidentin sukupolvi-ilun).

The discourse of age is also focusing on Marin's popularity. The age discourse suggests Marin will benefit from her international attention and knows how to use it. Marin's age is also mentioned in the data material when it has nothing to do with the content. Youth is usually associated with metaphors such as renewal and breaking barriers. The discourse of age emphasizes that Marin's age has increased her popularity, and therefore she has gained a broad audience to drive her own agenda.

IS1: "She has received extensive international attention, so one may ask was the purpose behind the tweet to target the matter directly to her own audience". (Fin. Hän on saanut laajaa kansainvälistä huomiota, joten voi kysyä, oliko twiitin takana myös halua päästä julistamaan asia suorasanaisesti omalle yleisölle).

HS5: "First she became famous as the world's youngest prime minister and the world's youngest female prime minister. Since then, international media have begged her interviews because Finland has handled corona virus better than any other European country". (Fin. Ensin hän tuli kuuluisaksi maailman nuorimpana pääministerinä ja maailman nuorimpana naispääministerinä. Sen jälkeen maailman tiedotusvälineet ovat anoneet hänen haastattelujaan, koska Suomi on pärjännyt koronaviruksen kanssa pitkään paremmin kuin mikään muu Euroopan maa).

HS5: "Marin cannot complain that she hasn't been heard". (Fin. Marin ei voi valittaa, ettei häntä olisi kuunneltu).

The cause-effect axis firmly guides the debate in the discourse. Marin's age is used as a factor to explain various things, such as popularity and utterance differences with the President. The conversation in the discourse pays special attention to Marin's use of social media and seeks to explain it by her young age. The discourse of age views the young prime minister tweeting about external issues as a new phenomenon. The discourse creates an image of a leader who knows what she is doing and consciously assesses her limits as a prime minister. Marin is viewed as a leader who recognizes and utilizes her popularity, but her popularity is partly achieved due to her age. The discourse builds a computational image of a person who knows what kind of attention is worth pursuing to get the desired results.

4.3 The Discourse of Unity

The discourse of unity represents Marin as a politician supporting unity and decision-making inside the EU. The discourse of unity is especially evident in word choices. The word "common" (fin. yhteinen) or "unity" (fin. yhtenäisyys) was observed more than 20 times in the data. Unity can also be interpreted in the data between the lines. The discourse of unity describes Marin's leadership through unity, focusing on her desire to work in coherence with the EU. Also, her desire to follow the standard line with the EU is emphasized. Principally, the discourse represents Marin as an EU-minded politician. She is defending and demanding joint EU decisions since it brings benefits to Finland also. The tone in the discourse is primarily neutral. The discourse of unity emphasizes the "together we are stronger" mentality.

HS4: "Prime minister Sanna Marin (sd) strongly defended the EU's 750-billion-euro emergency funding. She emphasized the importance of the recovery plan as a securing element of the EU's unity". (Fin. Pääministeri Sanna Marin (sd) puolusti voimakkaasti EU:n 750 miljardin euron hätärahoitusta. Hän korosti elvytyspaketin merkitystä EU:n yhtenäisyyden turvaajana).

HS6: "Prime minister Sanna Marin demands European leaders to take more effective joint action in handling coronavirus". (Fin. Pääministeri Sanna Marin vaatii Euroopan johtajilta nykyistä tehokkaampia yhteisiä toimia koronaviruksen taltuttamiseksi).

A politician in a leading position will face situations that require the ability to cooperate and understand others (Mäkelä, 2018). The work of a politician is interactive and requires interaction skills in order to work with different groups and social actors. Also, it is essential to understand that each of these groups are pursuing own agenda and ensuring its security (Mäkelä, 2018). Therefore, political leaders should consider the opinions of other groups in their decision-making (Mäkelä, 2018). The discourse of unity highlights the characteristics associated with the feminine leadership style. The discourse creates an image of Marin as a democratic leader and team player. Democratic leaders are pursuing openness and the ability to cooperate. These qualities are often associated with feminine features (Jogulu et al., 2006).

IS7: " According to her, a common European view about the length of the quarantine is needed". (Fin. Hänen mukaansa karanteenien pituudesta tarvitaan yhteinen eurooppalainen näkemys).

HS5: "Marin thinks that the EU simply needs to find common solutions in practical issues if countries want to have the situation under the control and keep their economies open". (Fin. Marinin mielestä EU:n on yksinkertaisesti vain kyttävä löytämään yhteisiä ratkaisuja käytännön asioihin, jos maat haluavat tilanteen hallintaan ja taloudet auki).

The discourse underlines words such as everyday actions and essential tasks, which suggests that Marin is a leader who understands the importance of cooperation and can think from another perspective. Female leaders during the Covid-19 have been viewed from a family perspective, and they have been described with words such as caring and empathetic. Their feminine qualities have been seen as helpful in managing the Covid-19 crisis (Johnson et al., 2020).

On the other hand, the discourse of unity views unity partly negatively. The discourse judges Marin when she pursues Finland's interest first while wanting to work coherently with the EU. Furthermore, Marin's actions as a leader are viewed as controversial. She is a leader ready to compromise but demands unity only when it suits her goals.

IS8: "Finland intends to maintain a strict line in the EU budget negotiations, but according to Prime Minister Sanna Marin (sd), there is willingness to compromise". (Fin. Suomi aikoo pitää EU:n budjettineuvotteluissa tiukkaa linjaa, mutta pääministeri Sanna Marinin (sd) mukaan myös valmiutta kompromisseihin on).

HS5: "Marin explains why she demands common Covid policy to the EU, even though Finland does not follow the recommendations of the EU Commission in this regard. (Fin. Marin selittää, miksi hän vaatii EU:lle yhteistä koronapolitiikkaa, vaikka Suomi ei itsekään noudata EU:n komission suosituksia siihen liittyen).

This initial setting describes well the differences between masculine and feminine leadership. The discourse of unity raises a question whether Marin's contradictory behavior would be scrutinized if she were a male leader. Qualities associated with masculine leadership, such as authority, have dominated the political leadership sphere. If the political leadership does not follow the traditional notion of leadership, it becomes more susceptible to criticism (Johnson et al., 2020). Female leaders often face a phenomenon called double binding. They are forced to play both gender roles in their leadership. This way, they reduce the risk of being subject to constant criticism. At the same time, displaying the masculine leadership style can also be a disadvantage. This is the reason why the double binding phenomenon exists (Sakki et al., 2021). One way or another, it always seems to be the wrong way. A masculine female leader

can be seen as calculating and dishonest, so female leaders tend to transform their activities and ambitions into more beneficial to the community (Sakki et al., 2021).

HS5: "Marin continued to persuade other leaders in the European Council on Thursday". (Fin. Marin jatkoi muiden johtajien taivuttelua myös torstaina Eurooppa-neuvostossa).

HS5: "Many (parties) considers Marin's hopes for common covid policy and travel rules unrealistic since the member states each take care of their own healthcare policy". (Fin. Moni pitää Marinin toiveita yhteisestä koronapolitiikasta ja matkustussäännöistä epärealistisina, koska jäsenvaltiot hoitavat kukin itse oman terveydenhoitonsa).

The discourse highlights Marin's willingness to work together with the EU, while Marin's political behavior is partly viewed as Pro-Europeanism, and the discourse suggests her being a democratic leader. Her leadership style is associated with feminine qualities such as emphatic behavior. The data material especially highlights her willingness to compromise and find joint solutions. However, at the same, she has been criticized for driving Finland's benefit first. Her political actions are described as "unrealistic hopes". Often, female leaders are expected to replace their ambition with the common good. The discourse of unity suggests that Marin's personal ambition is to work coherently with the EU; therefore, Marin's actions are underlying criticism (Sakki et al., 2021).

4.4 The Emotion Discourse

The emotion discourse represents Marin as both an impulsive and pragmatic leader. The discourse is named emotion discourse since *"fundamentally, emotions are about doing something"* (Bucy 2000, p. 199). Emotion is a function caused by a conflict between goals and stimulus (Bucy, 2000). The emotion discourse focuses on describing Marin's activities from the perspective of her emotional state. The discourse creates a contradiction between Marin's actions since she is described with pragmatic and impulsive words. The emotion discourse reflects a contradictory image of Marin's leadership style. The discourse creates an image of Marin where she is represented as an active, calm but fast-phased leader wanting to innovate the leadership norm.

Describing emotions can be utilized when constructing or weakening an image of human activity (Edwards, 1999). Actions, reactions, and attitudes can be transformed into an entirety that explains people's different behavior styles (Edwards, 1999). From the data material, it is possible to interpret that the media used emotional words such as "frustrated" to describe

Marin's actions. Her actions are described by using emotional linguistics. Therefore, she is represented as a frustrated person when cases do not move as planned.

IL16: "Marin and officials are in silent treatment about the EU threat". (Fin. Marin ja virkamiehet mykkäkoulussa EU-uhkauksesta).

IS10: "Marin would have snapped to Sánchez and said that it was time to come forward" (Fin. Marin olisi puuskahtanut Sánchezille, että on muiden kuin "nuukan liittouman" aika tulla vastaa).

HS9: "Between the lines, we can observe frustration in prime minister Marin's article - The covid policy in other countries is now a risk for Finland". (Fin. Pääministeri Marinin kirjoituksen rivien välistä on luettavissa turhautumista – muiden maiden koronapolitiikka on Suomelle nyt riski).

The discourse is constructed and reinforced through images. In news articles where the topic focuses on Marin's activities and behavior, it includes a picture where she appears either emotional or severe, depending on the tone of the news. The discourse thus takes advantage of images and uses them to support the overall image it builds about Marin. People tend to make their interpretations and judgments based on facial gestures, especially if the person is unknown to them (Trichas et al., 2012). For a leader, facial gestures are essential since the expression of negative emotions negatively affects the perception of the leader's effectiveness. While expressing positive emotions makes a leader look more credible (Trichas et al., 2012). Female leaders face more observation of emotions and emotional states (Brescoll, 2016). In the case of Marin, the discourse was observing her emotional state through expressions and gestures. Even the slightest expression of emotion can lead to greater significance for female leaders (Brescoll, 2016). Indeed, the general belief is that women express their feelings more than men. They are assumed and believed to be less capable of controlling the expression of their emotional state (Brescoll, 2016). Expression of masculine feelings such as anger or pride can be interpreted negatively in the case of female leaders (Brescoll, 2016).

IS11 : "Serious-faced Marin did not comment on the negotiations with a single word, she walked silently straight into the back seat of ministerial car and continued her journey away from the airport". (Fin. Vakavilmeinen Marin ei kommentoinut neuvotteluja sanallakaan, vaan käveli vaiteliaana suoraan ministeriauton takapenkille ja jatkoi matkaansa pois lentokentältä)

The discourse creates a representation of a leader who has the need to control her actions and is aware of her role as a prime minister. Marin's activities are described with expressions where criticism can be interpreted. The discourse creates an image that Marin's leadership and actions are occasionally too brazenly. Impulsivity is reflected in the discourse as word choices.

HS12: "This "pragmatic" and long-standing line was shaken exceptionally by Prime Minister Sanna Marin (sd) when she linked an HS story based on a BBC news article on Twitter on Wednesday". (Fin. Tätä "pragmaattista" ja vuosikymmeniä noudatettua linjaa ravisteli poikkeuksellisella tavalla pääministeri Sanna Marin (sd), kun hän linkkasi keskiviikkona Twitterissä BBC:n artikkelin pohjalta laaditun HS:n jutun).

YLE3: "Prime Minister Sanna Marin's (sd.) two Twitter posts have had an unexpected impact. It seems like in the Prime Minister's Cabinet, there is no need to ask permission for tweets". (Fin. Pääministeri Sanna Marinin (sd.) kahdella Twitter-viestillä on ollut odottamaton vaikutus. Pääministerin kabinetissa nähdään, ettei twiitteihin kysyä kenenkään lupaa).

Marin's actions are seen as impulsive and reforming the pragmatic line, whereas she as a person is described using pragmatic words. For this reason, the emotion discourse is quite contradictory. The discourse focuses on representing her as a pragmatic leader who remains eligible in every situation. Pragmatism can be observed by looking at the words used, such as solution-oriented and polite.

HS5: "Marin calls herself as "solution oriented and pragmatic person" who believes that compromises can always be found - as long as there is enough will". (Fin. Marin kutsuu itseään "ratkaisukeskeiseksi ja käytännönläheiseksi ihmiseksi", joka uskoo kompromissien aina löytyvän – kunhan tarpeeksi on halua).

IL17: "A straight forward message from Marin to the stubborn Poland: " We must be strict in this issue". (Fin. Marinilta suora viesti niskuroivalle Puolalle: "Tässä kysymyksessä pitää olla tiukka").

HS2: "Marin, of course does not name any target since she is polite, but she does not need to - the representation is created anyway since the context is there". (Fin. Marin ei tietenkään nimeä mitään kohdetta, kohtelias kun on, mutta ei hänen tarvitsekaan – mielikuva syntyy kontekstin tietäen silti).

IS8: "Prime Minister Marin flashes that Finland will maintain a strict line in the EU budget negotiations". (Fin. Pääministeri Marin väläyttää Suomen pitävän tiukkaa linjaa EU:n budjettineuvotteluissa).

The discourse is contradictory, as Marin's actions are described in impulsive words and pragmatic terms. Marin's actions are seen as emotional behavior, but she is strict and solution-oriented as a leader. Therefore, the discourse observes that Marin is a competent leader. The discourse creates a representation where Marin is seen as stable and rational in her decisions. However, on the other hand, she is portrayed as an emotional leader who tends to behave impatiently and stubbornly. Often, female leaders experience this paradox where showing emotions such as anger is seen as incompetent behavior. In contrast, for men showing feelings is a sign of a capable and robust leader (Brescoll, 2016).

4.5 Observation of discourses

The study observed four different discourses associated with Marin's political performance in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis. These discourses were the discourse of power, the discourse of age, the discourse of unity, and emotion discourse.

The discourse of power represents Marin as a leader breaking the so-called formalities and boundaries assigned to the prime minister. It engenders a picture of a leader who desires to get more involved in external relations and foreign policy. The discourse talks about power by placing it in a contradictory position. The discourse highlights the popularity of two politicians, Marin and Niinistö, among citizens. It also focuses on creating tension in their power relations. The way the discourse talks about Marin can be decoded as different. Occasionally, the power discourse focuses on their external differences. They represent opposite pairs such as masculinity-femininity and young-old. This makes one wonder if the media writing would be different if the prime minister were an older man? Now the discourse presents Marin as a young comer stepping on the toes of a senior leader.

Female representation in politics is no longer a marvel in Finland, and Finland has always been a pioneer in this matter (Mäkelä, 2018). However, there have been only two female prime ministers in Finland before Marin. Female prime ministers seem to be a relatively new phenomenon even in Finland (Mäkelä, 2018). In Finland, female ministers have faced incredulity about their professionalism in the foreign policy field. It has traditionally been viewed as a masculine field since it has been perceived that masculine traits are more beneficial

in foreign policy (Mäkelä, 2018; Kuusipalo, 2011). The discourse of power focuses on explaining Marin as a phenomenon shaking the general norms. We can interpret from the discourse that Marin is an ambitious leader and is not afraid to show it. The discourse observes masculine features such as determination and toughness in Marin's behavior which are customarily associated with belonging to male leaders. The discourse occasionally raises a question, how does she dare? The discourse questions and marvels at her political behavior to a vast extent. The discussion around the power discourse is strongly guided by Marin's ambition to achieve more power and reform the responsibilities assigned to the prime minister and question her activities. In the discourse, questioning goes far beyond and suggests that a revision of the constitution of Finland is needed. On the other hand, Marin's activities are viewed as a renewing phenomenon that could revamp norms. The discourse of power reveals the difference in word choices. While describing Marin's actions, word choices tend to be different. The study suggests that the partly reason for this is that Marin is the one breaking the assignment norms of a prime minister. In comparison, the President has not been deemed to do anything anomalous in terms of his role as a President. From the perspective of female leadership, generally, women tend to face richer language and wording in the news than men (Mäkelä, 2018).

The question arises, do stereotypes guide the media? Stereotypes set genders in specific frames, and it does not consider the individual features. For example, one could say that women are more empathic, whereas men are more controlling (Van der Pas et al., 2020). These are straightforward generalizations about genders. However, stereotypes are also controlling the activities, which may raise contradictions about the views on how the leader should behave (Van der Pas et al., 2020). In the case of Marin, her activity is seen as deviant, and therefore she is breaking the norm of a stereotypical female leader and a prime minister. In terms of media writing, this means that journalists focus more on negative reporting about Marin since her activities are being paid more attention (Van der Pas et al., 2020). Again, this means Marin is breaking the norm of stereotypical behavior.

To sum up the discussion in the power discourse, Marin is viewed as an ambitious leader who is breaking the norms of a prime minister. The discourse of power talks about Marin's external relations activities being an unprecedented and constraint breaking. Marin is an innovational leader who volitionally reneges the responsibilities assigned to the prime minister. The discourse also focuses on change through Marin's activities. It implies that Marin's role in external relations could be revised. Marin's behavior is viewed as a phenomenon that could

lead to change in the future in terms of external relations leadership. More or less, Marin is seen as a boundary-breaking leader.

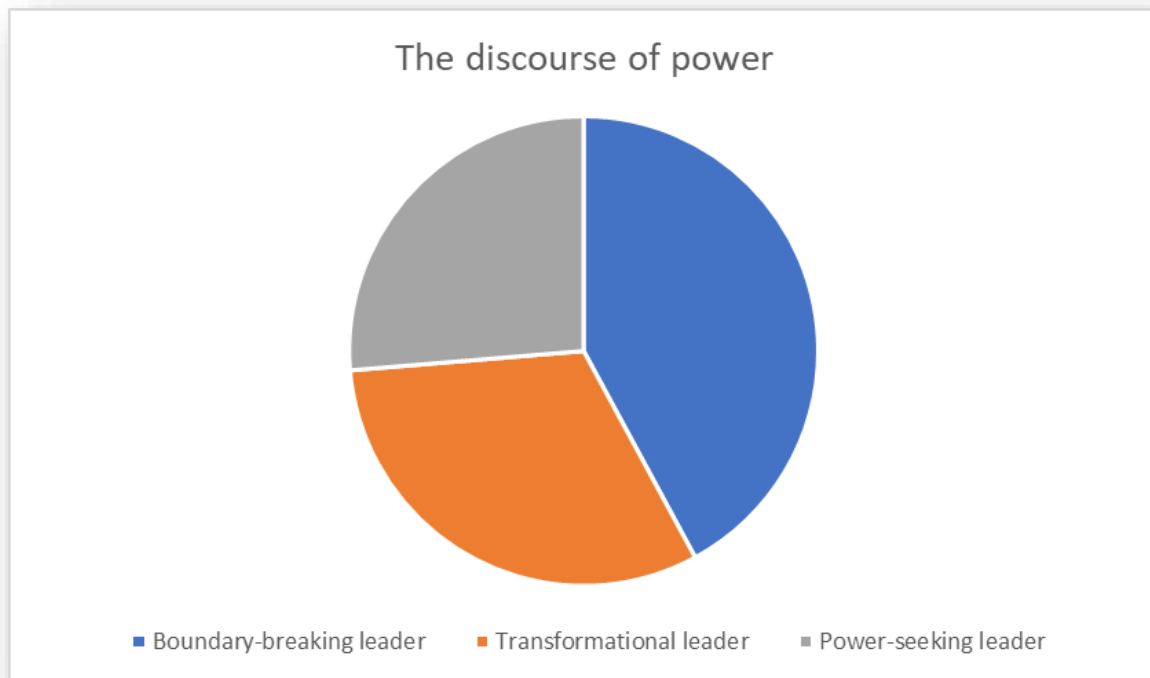


Figure 1. Visualization of main leadership traits found inside the discourse of power. Source: Author

The Discourse of Age views Sanna Marin as a "tweeting politician". The discourse focuses on explaining her activities with her age. Also, her popularity raises attention. Marin has gathered wide attention for her age. The discourse of age focuses on this phenomenon. Is Marin so famous since she is young and a prime minister? Age is used as an attempt to explain her popularity and broad audience. The use of social media raises the most in the age discourse. She is young; therefore, she represents the younger generation and is familiar with the use and communication of social media. Marin's activities on social media are purposeful and planned, as she knows how large an audience she can reach on social media and what type of discussions to create.

Twitter enables instant public communication with the public. It also provides an opportunity for a new kind of communication between politicians and citizens (Isotaulus et al., 2018). Twitter may not yet be able to break power structures, but it has the potential to activate citizens politically. Twitter also allows communication without anyone interfering, and usually, tweets cannot be manipulated by anyone (Isotaulus et al., 2008; Le, 2021). From the discourse of age, it is possible to detect how Marin, as a young generation politician, has embraced Twitter and utilizes it for precisely these purposes. Twitter offers her the opportunity for quick communication without anyone interfering. Of course, Marin knows there could be ramifications for her tweets, but she is willing to take the chance.

Like the discourse of power, the discourse of age also places the President as a foreign policy leader and Marin in a contradictory position. While the power discourse focuses on explaining the activities, the age discourse focuses on explaining the reasons. The discourse of age suggests that the reason for their behavior is partly an age, especially the age difference. Marin's activities are perceived to reform the external relations, and one of the reasons for this is her mindset as a representative of the younger generation. The age discourse did not criticize Marin's professionalism as a politician in external relations but sought to find reasons for it. Young age is seen as an opportunity to reform things.

Marin is viewed as a leader of the young generation in the discourse of age. Therefore, the focus is shifted to her age and social media, more precisely, her way of using Twitter as an official communication tool. Marin knows how to benefit from social media and share her point of view with others. The discourse implies that the reason for this is that Marin is young. Therefore, she is expected to use social media in her political performance. Marin is the new generation leader whose actions are transforming the communication norms.

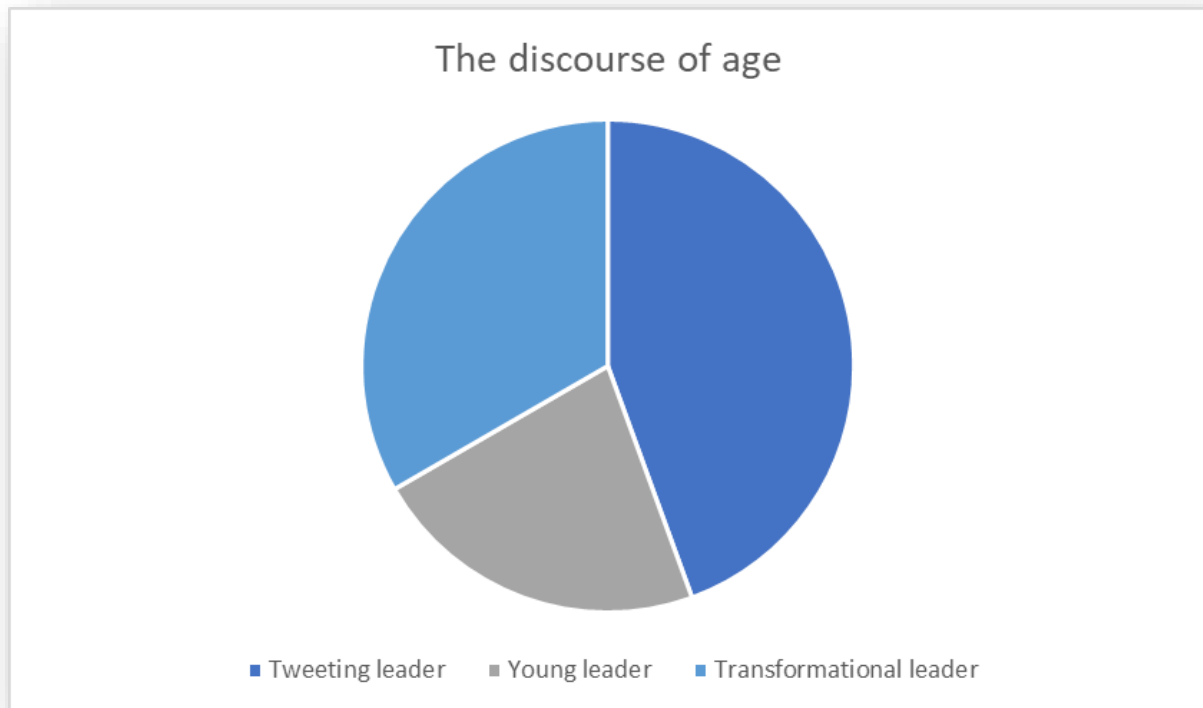


Figure 2. Visualization of main leadership traits found inside the discourse of age. Source: Author

The discourse of unity is building an image of a leader supporting the joint decision made in the EU. Therefore, Marin's activities can be viewed as Pro-Europeanism, which means a political stand favoring EU integration (Leonard, 2021). As an observation, this came as a no surprise since Marin is a member of the Social Democratic Party, which mainly supports the EU (Lehtinen, 2018). As a leader in external relations, the discourse builds an image of a leader who is democratic and ready to compromise. In addition, discourse brings up Marin's set of values, such as human rights. In the discourse, Marin is also demanding things; therefore, she is expected to be a leader standing behind her decisions and demanding standard solutions from others.

Considering the aspects represented in the study comes as no surprise that the unity discourse is also quite contradictory. The discourse judges Marin for doing two things simultaneously, driving the coherent decision inside the EU and focusing on the benefit of Finland. She is a leader who defends the joint solutions inside the EU and, at the same time, does it only because it is beneficial for her and to Finland. This raises a question, maybe the interpretation is proper? Seems like Marin's activities in external relations are widely conscious behavior.

Female leaders are often viewed as democratic figures who are driving the interests of others. On the other hand, making compromises is seen as a weakness in leadership (Jogulu et al., 2006). In the discourse, we can observe Marin performing two roles simultaneously, she is a feminine leader and a masculine leader. The image of female leadership is built in the frames of stereotyping female behavior. Women are expected to behave based on this stereotype, while the exact stereotype of a leader favors masculine elements such as toughness (Van der Pas et al., 2020). Toughness seems to be one of the manly features that need to be adapted to succeed in politics (Van Acker, 2017). Manly values are rooted in the political system; therefore, women have adopted features and strategies and are forced to replicate the behavior of a male leader (Van Acker, 2017). However, if a woman performs these two roles in leadership, she is viewed to be too sensitive if she makes compromises and too aggressive if she demands something (Post, 2019; Vedantam et al., 2016).

The discourse raises the question of whether Marin's intentions to drive coherent decisions with the EU and find a beneficial solution for Finland would be questioned if she were a man? Perhaps the word choice would be different.

To sum up, Marin is an EU-minded democratic leader. The discourse conveys her values which are also reflected in her leadership. The discourse also detects the so-called double binding phenomena. Marin has to perform both feminine and masculine leadership styles as a leader. She demands tough decisions from others but is willing to compromise. Marin is a strict but democratic leader in external relations, and for this reason, her actions seem to receive criticism.

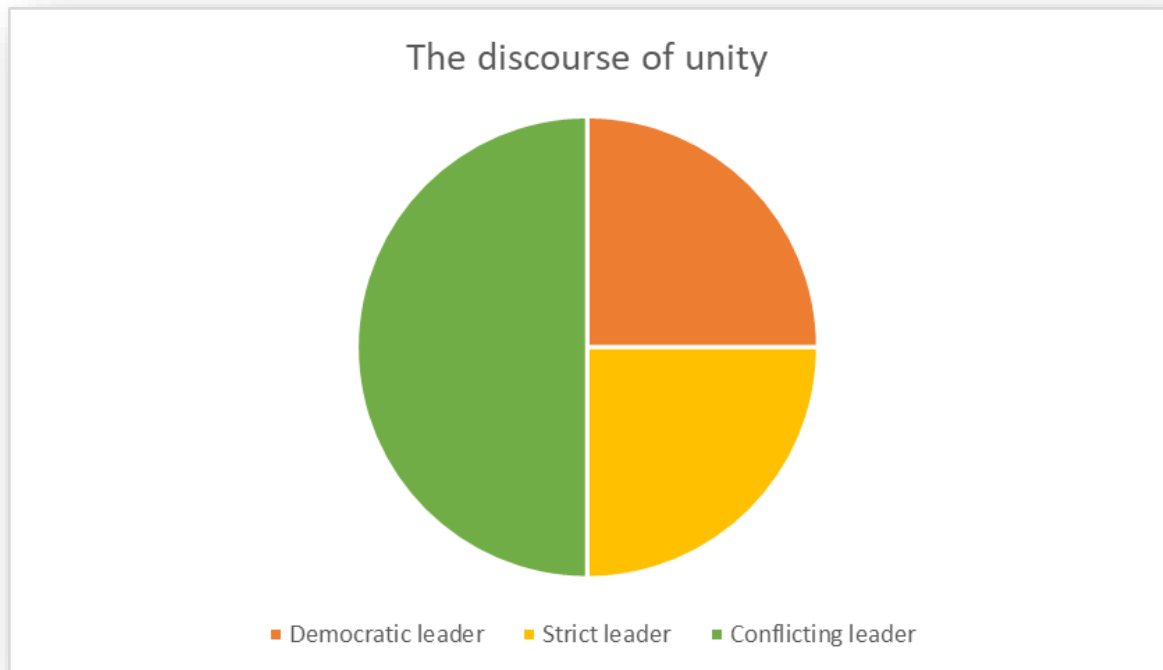


Figure 3. Visualization of main leadership traits found inside the discourse of unity. Source: Author

The emotion discourse represents Marin's actions in external relations with impulsive and pragmatic terms. Words such as frustrated and tough are building the discourse. Discourse is also built and fortified with images. The media selects images based on what kind of representation it wants to pass by. For example, when the discourse focused on explaining Marin's uncompromising attitude in decision making, the image selected was a photo of a serious-faced Marin. According to scholarly research by Trichas., et al (2012), facial expressions and gestures are essential when creating an impression about leadership (Trichas. et al. 2012). This does not concern only politicians but also other professional groups, but especially in leadership, the expression of emotions plays an important role (Trichas. et al. 2012). Our perception of leaders and leadership is based on observations, and especially when creating first impressions, facial features are being emphasized. However, we must always consider the context. Marin's picture is selected based on the context and is chosen to support it in emotion discourse. People tend to observe perception differently since the context is not always the same. Facial impressions have different meanings in different contexts (Trichas et al., 2012).

The emotion discourse describes Marin as a strict-line actor, portraying her as a strong-willed leader. In the discourse, her actions represent the traditional view of leadership. Masculine traits such as hardness and toughness have been associated with the traditional image of leadership (Johnsson et al., 2020). The image discourse is building is determined but practical. This practicableness is emphasized with words such as solution-oriented.

On the other hand, Marin is viewed as a leader whose actions are guided by emotions. Especially in decisions where she cannot decide things alone, she is described as frustrated. Therefore, her emotional state is under scrutiny. The emotions of a female leader are more observed if they vary from the stereotypical behavior of a female leader. For example, female leaders are viewed as warm persons, whereas men are controlling (Brescoll 2016). Marin displays both roles in the emotion discourse, which may lead to observing her emotional state. According to Brescoll (2016), if the emotional state of female leaders was not mentioned when making the decision, their decision was concluded to be due to emotion, and it is believed that the decision-making process was driven by emotion (Brescoll, 2016). Therefore, women are considered more emotional than men, and this statement can have important implications for women leaders (Brescoll, 2016).

Marin is balancing between being an impulsive and pragmatic leader. She is calm and stern in her decisions, whereas sometimes, the discourse represents her as an emotional leader who quickly gets frustrated. Placing the discourses in a social and gender context makes one wonder, similarly to other discourses presented, if she were a man, would she be given more freedom to express her own emotional state? The emotion discourse strengthens the idea of women being more emotional than men. The media tends to get tangled in Marin's emotions and make their own conclusions. Marin is a prime minister of Finland, therefore in a high position, but she is not immune to these stereotypes, which monitor the permissibility of emotions. Marin is continually under the spotlight in a leading position, which makes it harder to navigate between stereotypical roles of leadership (Brescoll, 2016). The emotion discourse displays Marin's action as emotional. As a leader, she is impulsive and guided by her own emotions, while at the same time, her actions are described using pragmatic wording. The emotion discourse is the most contradictory discourse.



Figure 4. Visualization of main leadership traits found inside the emotion discourse. Source: Author

4.5.1 Differences in the discourses

The study observed only a few differences between the discourses. Each discourse intrinsically was quite contradictory content-wise, but unexpectedly only a tiny amount of contradiction was observed between these four discourses presented in the study. The most significant differences were observed between the discourse of power and the rest of the discourses. The study observed minor differences between the discourses:

In the discourse of power, Marin is portrayed as a leader seeking power, shattering the responsibilities of the prime minister. Her actions are described as ground-breaking and adverse, while the discourse of unity paints a picture of Marin as a democratic leader wanting to uncover joint solutions. Thus, Marin is a leader who disregards standard rules and areas of responsibility in the discourse of power. Whereas in the discourse of unity, Marin is viewed as a leader who emphasizes the coherent line and joint actions with the EU and highlights its significance. In the discourse of power, Marin is viewed as a stubborn leader who has the minimum capacity to compromise. In comparison, the discourse of unity represents her as a tough but democratic leader in external relations.

Marin's young age and the consequent desire for change can be interpreted as adverse in the discourse of power. While in the discourse of age, her age is viewed as a renewing phenomenon. Thus, it could be argued that the discourse of power talks about Marin's age more negative tone than the discourse of age.

In sum, the discourse of power focuses more on portraying Marin as a ground-breaking leader, associating her with masculine traits such as toughness. The suggested reason for this could be that power in foreign policy has usually been in the hands of men, and masculine values are superior, while feminine traits are marginalized (Aggestem et al., 2020; Jauhola et al., 2020). Therefore, the media approach the power struggle in external relations by focusing on stereotypical power relations in foreign policy.

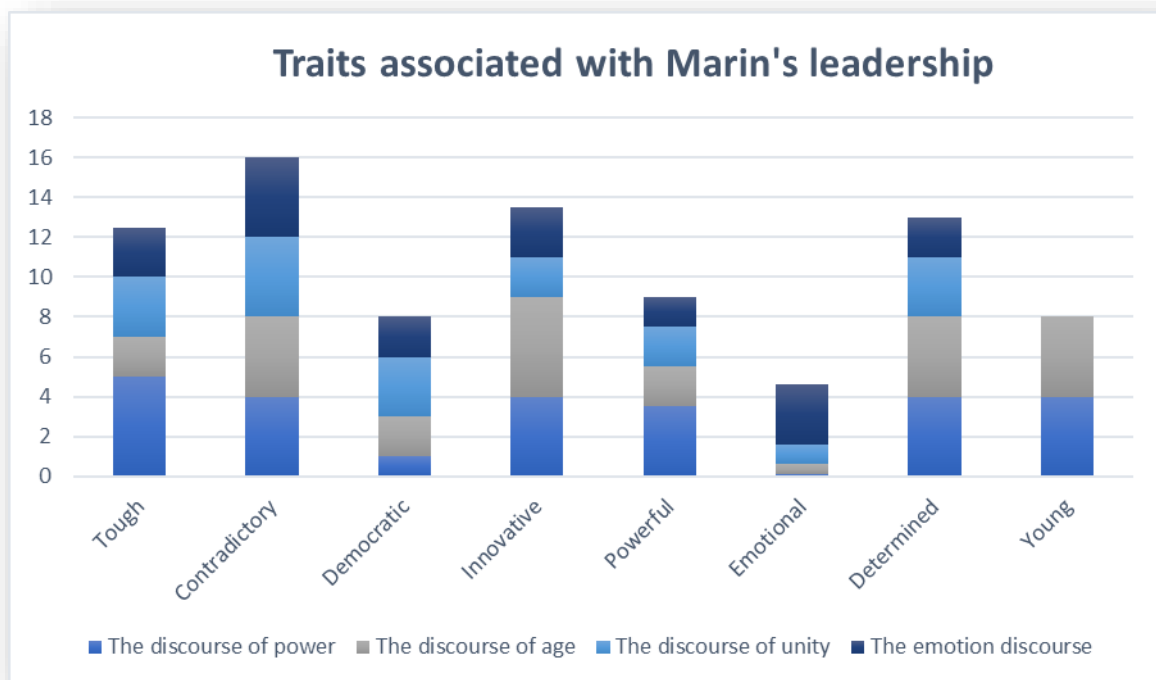


Figure 5. Visualization of traits associated with Marin's leadership. Source: Author

4.6 Reflections on the discourses

This chapter focuses on concluding the discourses, interpreting them more profoundly, and placing them in social and gender contexts. The research questions proposed in the study are answered. The study aimed to determine what type of discourses and representations are associated with Marin's political performance and activities in external relations. The period selected for the study was January 2020-December 2021. Just before the start of a pandemic, Marin had just been elected as prime minister and had little ministerial experience, let alone experience in foreign policy (Huhta, 2021).

The discourses and representations associated with Marin have been explored through social debate and gender context. The study engaged the literature on gender, media coverage of female politicians, and literature on female leadership. Topics reflected the leadership capabilities of women and focused on gendered attributes. The study aimed to find answers to proposed research questions and find discourses created by the media. The aim was also to seek how the media affect Sanna Marin's credibility as a leader in external relations, or does it affect credibility in any way?

There were two research questions proposed in the study:

Q1. What type of discourses has been associated with Marin's political performance in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis?

Q2. In what ways did the Finnish media shape Marin's political credibility as a leader in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis?

The frame of reference was social representation theory, which allows us to understand socially shared notions of leadership and reflect them in the study. Social representation theory is interested in phenomena that challenge the traditional perceptions in society and cause tensions between different social groups (Höijer, 2017). One could argue that Sanna Marin is this type of phenomenon. Many of us share a perception and opinion about her, and while being a young woman and prime minister, she is challenging the collective thinking in society. Also, the role of the media is meaningful in society. Therefore, it was essential to study what type of representations the media is establishing about new phenomena.

The study observed four different discourses associated with Marin's political performance in external relations during the Covid-19 crisis. These discourses were the discourse of power, the discourse of age, the discourse of unity, and emotion discourse.

The study outlines that all four discourses disclose the conflicting expectations and perceptions towards female leadership. One can observe that Marin spheres between feminine and masculine leadership traits in the discourses. Indeed, this type of contradiction exists between female and male leaders. As leaders, men and women are examined and criticized differently (Eichenauer et al., 2021). A role of a leader is typically associated with men. Therefore, female leaders seek to establish more masculine leadership traits to avoid criticism and prejudice (Eichenauer et al., 2021). On the other hand, as the discourses indicate, formulating masculine leadership traits is not always enough for women leaders. Especially, the discourse of unity and the emotion discourse discloses the double bind phenomenon. As a female leader, Marin receives indirect criticism for behaving as a masculine leader, which brings to life the contradiction Marin faces. A good leader is assumed to have more masculine than feminine traits (Sakki et al., 2021; Eichenauer et al., 2021).

Marin's activities and observed discourses can be viewed in a broader societal context. Marin's activities display broader representations and views on the behavior of a female leader. The media's role in producing these views and representations is notable. These representations about female leadership can create a more equal society and decrease the contradiction between genders. Media outlets in Finland and abroad have considerable authority to influence society's views and representations. The discourses composed by the media can break the traditional views in society. Especially the role of women in external relations can benefit from the discourses created by the media since they can abrogate the traditional views that the foreign policy domain is only suitable for men. Although Finland is an equal country compared to many others, women are similarly under-represented in foreign policy in Finland (Mäkelä, 2018). Therefore, what type of representations the media displays about female leadership is essential since those representations create attitudes that influence the formation of knowledge and opinions in society.

Although the research focused on the discourses created by the Finnish media outlets, Marin has also received extensive publicity internationally. Indeed, the discourse on age suggested that Marin's age is one of the reasons why she has received so much international publicity. One could argue that Marin's young age is viewed as a positive thing, as it has brought her

much visibility internationally. Marin's visibility in international media and its representations provides an opportunity to expand the image of female leadership internationally. Therefore, the portrayal of Marin as an innovative and ground-breaking leader can expand the female leadership discourses outside of Finland due to her extensive publicity abroad. Thus, this could increase the interest in female leadership internationally. This applies to the political domain and all types of domains. Marin serves as a role model for female leadership and displays a vital role alongside the media. Increasing the visibility of role models in the media can increase the public debate about female leadership. Consequently, it may become a more familiar phenomenon in society.

Female politicians tend to be overshadowed by male politicians in the media (Van der Pas, 2020). In the case of Marin, the study does not suggest that male politicians in the media have overshadowed her. On the contrary, she has received much media attention in Finland and abroad. However, Marin's media visibility is focused on her political expertise but also extensively on her personal traits. Based on the study, one could assume that male politicians will gain less visibility for their personal traits than female politicians. The discourses discovered in the study reveal power structures and prefer for the masculine leadership style in the media, especially in the foreign policy domain. The discourses highlight how Finland is accustomed to the fact that the President mainly addresses the foreign policy domain and its communication. Foreign policy has been the President's field. When Marin approaches this field assigned to the President, it generates the debate in foreign policy.

Indeed, changing, and breaking power structures usually leads to resistance, or at least arouses astonishment. At the same time, breaking power structures can lead to a change (Fairclough, 1992, cited in Blommaert et al., 2000). Discourses disclose change as well. In the discourses, it is possible to observe Marin's desire to change traditional perceptions of power and reform the responsibilities of the prime minister. As power structures change, the societal debate also changes (Fairclough, 1992, cited in Blommaert et al., 2000). Marin's activity breaks the traditional power structures, but not without criticism. However, Marin's activity can be interpreted to lead to a debate on the change of power structures.

The second research question focused on the media's role in shaping Marin's political credibility as leader in external relations. The Finnish media portrays Marin as a thought leader, assertive in her decisions. The Finnish media presents Marin's political performance in external relations following the strict line, where the joint action guides her decisions with the EU. She

is also seen as a boundary-breaking prime minister whose actions are criticized and occasionally even resented. The Finnish media has also focused on putting her in a confrontation position with the President Sauli Niinistö. Based on the research conducted in the study, the overall conclusion is that the media is not focused on undermining or strengthening her credibility as a leader. Instead, Marin's actions and performance in external relations are strongly viewed through her age and desire to restructure the composition. Marin's visibility in the media creates more diverse representations of female leadership. Furthermore, Marin's active role in foreign policy decision-making and its presentation in the media can increase the normalization of women's participation in the decision-making of foreign relations in Finland and internationally.

The study argued that female politicians are portrayed differently in news media if their actions diverge from traditional views about leaders and leadership. After completing an empirical analysis, the study argues that the statement is *partly* true.

Marin's gender is hardly mentioned in the discourses, but the effect of gender can be observed between the lines. Based on the study, it appears that the discourses created by the media are, to some extent, guided by stereotypes. For example, the media looks at Marin's leadership traits through stereotypical leadership. Marin is a woman, she is expected by society to behave like a stereotypical female leader, but she is also a prime minister, and society, as well as the media, assumes that she is behaving like a stereotypical prime minister who is a rational male figure. This generates a contradiction. In addition to gender, however, the study discloses that Marin's activities have a more significant impact on discourses associated with Marin. Her vision is seen as renewing and breaking boundaries, leading to the emergence of new points of view and sentiments. Marin's actions abrogate and renew the prime minister's usual practices and engender new representations of female leadership.

In sum, Marin and her activities as a leader in external relations are seen as a phenomenon that challenges society's traditional views of external policy leadership. As a phenomenon, Marin challenges both society and institutions. Moreover, Marin's actions lead to a public debate that can spark social reforms.

5. CONCLUSION

When we deliberate these four discourses and observe what type of image they are building about Marin, we can observe ambivalent elements in every discourse. Therefore, the discourses build an ambivalent image of Marin's political performance in external relations during the Covid-19. By excogitating central and theoretical concepts, the study concludes Marin's performance in external relations during the Covid-19 as follows:

Marin is a young leader in external relations who partly abrogate stereotypes and norms of female leadership and prime minister. As a leader, she seems to navigate between the feminine and masculine styles of leadership. The discourses did not focus on Marin's gender straightforwardly, it was rarely mentioned, but it was possible to observe the meaning of gender between the lines.

The fact that she is a young woman prime minister also taking the responsibility in the foreign policy field can be considered a new type of phenomenon. The study observed Marin's capability to abrogate stereotypes that challenge society. Marin's political performance in external relations provides new social representations to the society and challenges the old view of leadership. These new social representations can lead to a more diverse picture of female leadership. Therefore the study was essential since the role of the media is prominent when new social representations generate in society.

6. POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study could be different if the study's time frame would be spring of 2022. When the planning of the study began, the Covid-19 crisis was present in the media every day. However, shortly after the research started, Russia unleashed a war on Ukraine and invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The invasion started a whole new discussion about safety. The focus on foreign policy changed from pandemic to war. In addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, Marin, as a prime minister, is facing different challenges. After Russia invaded Ukraine, Finland's NATO debate is heating up. In May 2022, Finland announced that it will apply for NATO membership. This will increase new challenges for the prime minister. Therefore, one could argue that Marin's role in foreign policy has and will be increased.

In the spring of 2022, news media outlets paid interest to Marin's appearance in the news. The latest example is her visit to Stockholm. In Stockholm, she met the Swedish Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson. The purpose of the press conference was to talk about Finland's and Sweden's views on joining NATO, but Marin's black leather jacket attracted the most media attention. The leather jacket was described as a "liberating" and regenerating phenomenon. (Manninen, 2022). Also, it was interpreted as a sign that Finland does what it wants. The leather jacket symbolized reform in foreign policy (Sykkö, 2022).

For this reason, further research about Marin's political performance during the Ukraine war would be an advisable topic. As a prime minister, Marin will be most likely to be the first prime minister in Finnish history in times when Finland joined NATO members. The Covid-19 pandemic was a threat to societies, but the threat and importance of the war in terms of foreign policy are more significant than the pandemic. Therefore, a study placed on the beginning of the war and beyond would be an advisable continuation of this study. Marin's role in foreign policy may change, and it may also change the political field in external relations.

Seems like, Marin continues the innovative and border-breaking leadership style already observed in the study when guiding the NATO conversation in Finland.

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