

**The Portrait of Ms Prime Minister.  
Beauty and Professionalism on the Cover of a News Magazine**

***WORK IN PROGRESS***

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## **Abstract**

Gender theorists have pointed that in their public presentations women in leading positions confront the pressure to prove both their achievements and femininity. It has been noted that in spite of the equal possibilities between men and women to act in the political sphere, this situation still prevails.

This article argues that this discursive complexity occurs in everyday procedures of photography and magazine design, and that small details of the production process – intended or unintended – can strengthen this complexity. In our view, to understand the complex discursive practices which determine women's spaces in the media, in addition to the analysis of media representations we need an ethnographic view into the production processes.

We present a case study where two controversial discourses, based on the old dichotomy of private and public, were articulated in the studio while the portrait of Ms. Mari Kiviniemi, the Prime Minister of Finland, was being made for the cover of a news magazine. Two photojournalistic traditions, namely the documentary tradition and the tradition of women's magazine type of presentational portrait, both affected the work process. In the photographic performance, the frontstage and backstage discourses were mixed.

Drawing on the literature on media and cultural studies and gender theory, we investigate the content production process of a news magazine. We focus on the power relations that led to the double discourse in the studio and give special attention to the concrete actions that were taken on the spot. Observing a woman leader in front of the camera revealed how narrow space she was given in the intersection of the discourses of 'neutrality' and femininity.

### **Keywords:**

Gender, politician, discourse, ethnography, journalistic work, frontstage/backstage, photography, magazine.

## **Introduction**

In contemporary western societies, political journalism has turned its focus on political personalities instead of traditional political questions (van Zoonen 2005, 69), and tends to mix the political and popular contents (Dahlgren 2006; Street 2004; Corner 2000) in hope to persuade readers. This means that political leaders have to be ready to stage their person. The questions that intertwine the political scene, media representations and gender are many-folded and complicated. Cultural studies offer a fruitful field to study them for its interdisciplinary approach and capability to see phenomena through everyday lens. According to Street (2004, 449), "we need to see political representation as a cultural act" because cultural, especially popular cultural gestures and images standardize and shape the political representation.

The question of political sphere has been the central view to politics in the field of cultural studies (Lewis 2006), and the division between public and private in the media has been widely discussed (Thornborrow and Haarman 2012). Politics and economics are the most important sectors of the public field, referring to the old division between public and private life spheres. The public is culturally connected to attributes such as reason, rationality and objectivity, whereas private

connects to personal, emotion, and subjectivity (Dahlgren 2006; Eagly & Carli 2008). For example Corner (2000) has outlined how these spheres come across in politicians' media representations. Gender theorists have seen this division widely problematic, because traditionally women have been positioned to the private sphere and men to the public, and though there is no consensus about where the line between the two spheres should be drawn, the division into two is strong and widely accepted (Couldry 2006).

Dahlgren (2006) states that we cannot understand the political sphere if we analytically exclude the public-private perspective. The division is rooted deep in cultural practices, and comprehensive analysis of discursive processes is needed to solve why the old gender contract still persists even if women have officially equal rights to take part in politics. Like Burman (2006) states, the talk of gender neutrality does not necessarily have anything to do with actually embodied women.

This study lies on an understanding that gender is not a natural, self-evident or biological trait. It is a construction being formed in social contexts. When representing politicians, the media construct and strengthen the traits that are traditionally seen as feminine and masculine. Female politicians as well as other women leaders have a contradictory double role to fulfil in media portrayals: they must assure their audience of their capability and expertise, and they must live up to stereotypical roles as visual objects. Men still dominate the news, and are portrayed as doing (active males), whereas women are portrayed as being done to (passive females) (Ross 2011). Also political posts have traditionally been divided so that female politicians have been seen as more capable of taking care of 'feminine' issues such as education or health care whereas areas such as military and foreign policy have been regarded as more suitable for men. This dualism has again its roots in the old division of the public and private sphere, and it still has a vast influence on western and Finnish politics (Kuusipalo 2011, 16). This causes problems as the most powerful levels in politics have been considered to need masculinity to be effectively taken care of. (Burns et al. 2013).

Representations in news media tend to naturalize gender via the strong truth claims and rituals of objectivity built in the journalistic culture. Professional journalists in established news media, including the case magazine of this study, conform to the shared journalistic ideals like public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and high ethical standards. These ideals come close to the traditional attributes of the Habermasian informed citizen and rational public debate (Habermas 1962/1989). However, they might not be easy to follow concretely in journalistic practice (Deuze 2005, 446–447). News media is changing: also experience and feeling have become a part of news journalism (Hermes 2006).

The production of photography within the consumer magazine context has been the subject of little research compared to the amount of ethnographic research done on news media. With this case study, we open up the journalistic production process of the news magazine *Suomen Kuvalehti* (SK) making a cover story of the Prime Minister (PM) of Finland, Ms Mari Kiviniemi. We show how the private and public sphere can come visible in the practices of the journalistic work process. In the case process, generic traits and practices of two different journalistic traditions – news magazine and popular women's magazine – as well as frontstage and backstage types of social performances (Goffman 1959) coexisted.

Our study contributes to the beforementioned discussion in the field of cultural studies on the private and public in politics. It shows concretely how practitioners of journalism and the portrayed

politician tried to balance between discourses and how, consequently, a woman leader, despite her high political status as the PM of a country with a reputation of a high gender equality, had to act in a narrow discursive space and present herself both as a competent leader and a feminine figure.

We analyse the practices by which the story was produced and give special attention to the ambiguous but strong power relations between the main participants: the PM, the make-up artist, and the photographer. Our empirical materials consist of nine interviews with six journalists, and our ethnographic observations in the photographic studio. Also the printed magazine and the making-of video that was made during the photography session by the magazine for the magazine's iPad version are referred to in the analysis.

### ***Gendered media representations***

A woman's experience of being watched starts in an early age, and that experience is not always positive. In the postmodern life, a woman's body and habitus carry important sources of inequality and displacement, and e.g. only being short can be humiliating. (Julkunen 2004.) Altogether, women are very conscious about 'suitable' appearances in varying contexts and keep balancing between masculinity and excessive femininity, the former being 'too aggressive' and the latter 'too attractive'. Gherardi (1994) calls this being 'in tune' regarding the respective situation. Doing so, women in leading positions easily become categorized as non-leaders or 'the other leader' (Mavin et al. 2010).

The media do significantly more than just mediate information. Through discursive practices they create, strengthen, resist, question and negotiate about social phenomena. Also the meaning of gender is constantly negotiated in discourse, and institutionalized ways of seeing male and female leaders are based on ideological attitudes of what is right or natural. Media imagery has a strong impact on our impressions on the world and on the cultural norms that constrain how we judge politicians and other leaders, also in relation to their gender.

The media frame people differently in different contexts. Townsend (2012, 48) has pointed out that media characterizations of women leaders depend on situational context and especially the newsworthiness of the situation. According to Wodak (2005), women, even in leading positions, still confront 'double discourses', meaning that women and men are not evaluated in the same way, but that women need constantly to prove their achievements whereas men's competence is taken for granted. Women have also often been positioned in the private sphere instead of the male-dominated public sphere that is the place for political action. (van Zoonen 2005, 87–88.) In her study of two female state leaders, Tarja Halonen and Angela Merkel, van Zoonen (2006) has depicted that only by closing out the private from the media could they maintain their professional identity.

Journalistic genres do not stay separate but influence each other, and women's magazines affect media representations of female politicians in other journalistic genres. While not questioning the contradiction between public and private, women's magazines actually have even stricter conditions regarding how women are allowed to present themselves in the society (Stuart & Donaghue 2011). Van Zoonen's (2006) notion is that celebrity journalism does not easily fit into political journalism, when it comes to women. In Finland, though, political journalism has fitted into celebrity journalism to a certain extent – Finnish women's magazines have a long tradition of covering social

and political issues like women's rights, entrepreneurship and women leaders among their purely entertaining content (Ruoho & Saarenmaa 2011, 46; Railo 2011, 19).

As for gendered media representations, journalistic content is not on the pages of magazines alone. According to a case study on the *New York Times Magazine's* special issue on women in power photographed by women (Sultze 2003), the overall gendered look upon women in the publication persevered – not in the actual editorial portraits, but due to the accompanying advertising content where women were portrayed as passive objects. Sultze's conclusion was that looking at magazine content cannot be the only means of studying women's visual representation from the gender perspective, but attention should be paid to media conventions that arise through the social organisation of production (Sultze 2003, 289).

### ***Journalistic photography – from truth claims to performance***

Discussions about the photographic medium have varied between stressing the indexicality and 'objectivity' of the photograph and, at the other extreme, the notion that photographs form their realities which do not necessarily refer to a said common reality (Hardt and Brennen 1999, 2–5). The professional conduct with its ethical and technical guidelines for news photography has throughout history been strict, usually referring to the indexical nature of the photograph (Lister 2004; Wells 2004). In addition to news photography, relatively strong truth claims seem to be connected to the ideals and practices of documentary photography. Within these genres of photography, neutrality or 'objectivity' is often understood as a natural discourse, not a form of rhetoric (e.g. Bate 2009, 36–42).

The rhetoric nature of 'objective' photography was famously noted by Bazin (1960) who stated that objectivity may be a feature of a photograph but it still always has an author. According to Tagg (1988, 35), 'the transparency of the photograph is its most powerful rhetorical device'. This type of perspective into photography and photojournalism has flourished in the magazine industry. Summing up the history of one of the world's most influential magazines, the editor-in-chief of *Time* points out that his magazine does not aim at telling what happened, but contextualizes and gives form to events – 'not reporting of history, but making it' (Stengel 2010, 7). The fluidity of the concepts of reality, journalistic objectivity and neutrality has also been noted in the multi-disciplinary field of magazine research (e.g. Hollow 2011; Hartley 2008, 42; Johnson & Prijatelj 2007, 10–13). The visual modalities which affect the definitions of 'real' and the ways of constructing narratives about reality and are, thus, different in different journalistic fields and traditions. They may also vary within magazine concepts – one magazine may well use different modalities and realisms of photography in its various story types.

From the critical perspective, photography has been seen as 'a place of work' rather than 'pure form' or 'a window to the world' (Burgin 1982, 153). Tagg (1988; 1992) has focused on the power relations within the discursive practices around photography. In Tagg's Foucauldian account, the meanings of photographs are formed in discursive frames that are defined more by practical and ideological functions than ways of pictorial representation as such (Tagg 1992, 103). In journalism, this type of practical and ideological functions would be the framing and gatekeeping of photography.

The critical perspective has, to an extent, reduced photographs to vessels of discursive power. Documentary photography, with its indexical nature, can be seen as possessing power via knowledge. Our description and analysis of the events in the photographic studio are based on critical discourse analysis but also an understanding of photography as a social performance and a representation of social presentation (Goffman 1959; 1979), where the concept and status of photographic 'reality' are specified and controlled discursively. We show how the public/private division comes tangible in the frontstage/backstage behaviour of the people in the studio space, and how the journalistic neutrality discourse is constituted in the photographic performance where the feminine beauty discourse also sets the stage.

### **The Portrait of Ms Prime Minister**

The empirical materials presented below were collected within a period of five weeks between January and March 2011. The photography session in the magazine's studio was observed, and six interviews (with the writing journalist, the photographer, the photo editor, the art director, the managing editor, and the editor in chief) were conducted. The outcome of the journalistic process, the portraits and the published magazine article, were discussed together with the photographer and the art director in separate semi-structured interviews.

*Suomen Kuvalehti* can be translated into English as *Finland's Illustrated Magazine*. The weekly issued magazine was established in 1916. SK has a long history of depicting Finnish political, economical and cultural phenomena and the nation's influential people in its high-quality photo essays and portraits. In the magazine's photography documentary style is prevalent, but other technical and compositional styles can also be found. SK has a reputation as a conservative, 'serious' magazine with stiff poses and strictly documentary style articles.

SK considers preserving quality news journalism as a matter of honour. According to our interviews, its journalists express a highly ethical, traditional view of journalism. The interviewed journalists refer to SK's editorial philosophy as a 'combination of *Newsweek*, *The Economist* and *Time*'. It has no competitors in its category in Finland, and it has a more substantial position in the public conversation than its circulation of about 100 000 would suggest. As many general interest magazines, however, SK has an ageing readership, and according to our interviews it has had to consider strategies for gaining new, younger audiences. Developing visuality has been one strategy, and reading the magazine today reveals a thoroughly designed and audience-targeted media product. SK apparently has relatively strict guidelines for both textual and visual styles and a clear navigation, and is in this aspect comparable to more entertaining and popular media such as women's magazines.

In winter 2011, Finland was preparing to the parliamentary elections to be held next April. The media wrote in an escalating speed about the political parties' prospects, and SK intended to publish a series of articles focusing on the biggest parties' chairpersons. The idea of the series was to examine the situation and election themes of each party through the profiles of the party leaders. With every story, the cover of the magazine was to be featured with a photo of the weeks' politician. The series was to be opened in February 2011 with an article of the leader of the Finnish Centre Party and the Prime Minister of Finland, Ms. Mari Kiviniemi.

Ms. Kiviniemi had been elected as the PM eight months earlier after her predecessor had had plenty of negative publicity and resigned in 2010. She also had got the lead of the Central party in a difficult situation, as the party was subject to severe accusations of corruption connected to election campaign financing. At the time of the article publication, she was a 43-year-old mother of two teenagers, protected her family from flashlights, and had succeeded in avoiding tabloid publicity.

As the interviewing and photographing procedures were negotiated, Kiviniemi requested to use a stylist and a make-up artist for the photographs, which was granted by the magazine. According to the interviewed journalists, this was the first time to do so in the magazine's history of delivering political portraits.

### *At the photographic studio*

The journalistic plan for the series of articles had been thoroughly discussed in several newsroom meetings between the managing editor, the art director, the photo editor, and the freelance photographer. The aim was to get 'plain' and 'neutral' photographs. The political leaders were to pose for the portraits in a 'neutral' way; smiling or excessive gesturing would not be allowed. It was also collectively decided to make the photographic procedures completely repeatable in order to get as similar portraits of all four party leaders as possible. Hence, a white background, a colourless transparent acrylic chair and relatively simple flashlights were set in the studio space.

As the PM walked in with her assistant, the make-up artist and her selection of clothes and accessories, there were many people already present in the studio: the photographer, the writing journalist, a making-of-videographer moving around and interviewing people, and two researchers observing the situation. The PM spent the first 50 minutes in the dressing room alone with the make-up artist and her assistant (the PM ordered green tea, we heard plenty of giggling). Then she was ready to start the photo session.

The PM sat on the chair addressed to her and the photographer started directing her position and gaze. The videographer was filming a video clip for SK's iPad version, thus there were two cameras operating. The PM seemed slightly nervous about her looks, and the make-up artist kept correcting her hair and clothing. The photographer had to tell the make-up artist to stop interrupting her work, and the tension between the two could be almost touched. However, the situation turned many times to laughter, often initiated by the PM. In all, the photographic session took 30 minutes – 20 minutes less than the make-up.

After the session we interviewed the photographer who seemed to be overwhelmed by the situation. According to her, the somewhat illogical combination of using a make-up artist and photographing the PM for a prestigious news magazine had been difficult to tackle. She had felt unsecure about how to address the PM and saw the make-up artist as a hindrance for creating a suitable atmosphere. It had been a double task for both the photographer and her model to create an outcome that would be both visually elegant and politically credible.

The article was published in *Suomen Kuvalehti*, February 11, 2011. The article consisted of eight pages with four photographs and the magazine cover. The cover and two additional portraits were taken in the studio; the other two were archive photographs. The title of the article was 'Securely in the centre', and the subtitle 'Mari Kiviniemi learned the facts. She still needs to learn to encourage

others.' The cover line read 'Everybody's friend. Will Mari Kiviniemi's cautiousness cause trouble to the Centre?' In the cover portrait, Kiviniemi had a delicate smile on her face.

### *A collision of two discourses*

All empirical materials were coded according to various themes that arose from both previous research (e.g. gender, neutrality) and the materials (e.g. quality, tradition, community). Based on the division of these codes into two categories, the two discourses we refer to as the *feminine beauty discourse* and the *journalistic neutrality discourse* were formed.

The discursive structure of the photography production process is presented in table 1 below, and further below we analyze its components on the basis of our materials. We depict the actions and the use of language during the photographic process and the interviews. The process is seen as a field of contested ideologies and colliding discourses, and power is seen in the Foucauldian spirit as something that cannot be owned or seen but that is constantly changing and moving between discourses and protagonists.

<i>Discourse</i>	Feminine beauty discourse  The evaluation of the PM as a model, as woman, by her looks  Emotional realism  Emotion	Journalistic neutrality discourse  The evaluation of the PM as a political leader, by her expertise  Empirical realism  Reason
<i>Journalistic tradition</i>	Popular (women's) magazine	News magazine
<i>Actions</i>	The use of make-up artist and stylist  Constructing the ideal woman by grooming and positioning  Verbal negotiation of the PM's hair, clothing, preferable angles of view etc.  Secrecy (the make-up session was held privately)	Journalists' efforts in constructing (the illusion of) neutrality by positioning the model and directing gaze and facial expression  Use of plain chair and lightning  Verbal negotiation of a neutral look in the photographic studio  Openness (making-of video)
<i>The main actor</i>	Make-up artist (working individually, not with the journalistic team, refusing to give any comments)	Photographer (aware of the awkward atmosphere, thus feeling slightly uncomfortable, trying to protect the "neutrality")

*Table 1: The construction of the two discourses.*



## *1. Feminine beauty discourse*

The SK journalists had been very strict about impartiality and gender equality in their magazine in the interviews: they would aim at presenting equal amounts of men and women on their pages, and they also criticized gendered media representations in general. Traditionally, SK had portrayed male and female politicians mostly on location, without the use of professional styling and make-up. When the PM brought the make-up artist with her to the studio, the magazine read the PM's announcement as an intention to guide their photographic style towards the women's magazine tradition. This caused some insecurity and tension between the groups in the studio. The main protagonist of the feminine beauty discourse in the studio space was the make-up artist, while the photographer – with the magazine collective of journalists behind her – represented the journalistic neutrality discourse.

The photographer was well aware of the presence of two discourses in the studio. In her interview after the studio session she commented the roles of different protagonists:

*"[S]o in portraying people, it's a bit like, the make-up artist is like the best friend, you know, for the sitter, and the photographer's like, the bad guy, always bossing around and telling them to take poses, and things like that, and the make-up artist always, you know, just makes them perfect and beautiful...[---]...and the photographer just spoils it."*

The photographer's comment is a good example of the concrete power relations and emotional aspects in a photography session. The photographer knew that she, by her directions and use of light, would 'spoil' the beauty the make-up artist was trying to maintain, but she had to act according to her professional role.

The PM, for her position, had a self-evident, strong power over all the other members. On the other hand, in the photo session, she was put to a subordinate position by the photographer and also by the make-up artist who both directed her position and looks verbally and physically. The PM accepted the situation with humour, and the photographer tried to untackle the awkward situation by comments such as *"now you [the PM] have been trapped there"*.

The photographer could direct the Prime Minister in the studio space, but only up to a point. When she asked the PM to stand straight towards the camera, the PM refused.

*[Photographer] "We could make a few shots so that you just walk there between these black elements. Good, fine. [Flashlights going off.] Yes. You can now stay there in the middle. And turn a bit. Yes. And put the hands..."*  
*[The PM, interrupting] "Do I have to?"*  
*[The photographer] "No!"*

The PM commented curtly that only a sideways position was possible, and the photographer did not object. It was obvious that the PM did not refuse to take the straight-to-the-lens position in the full-length portrait as a politician. She refused to do it as a self-conscious woman being photographed.

The photographer, who had worked for several types of consumer magazines, also commented the traditional difference between women's magazines and her news magazine on the discursive level as the difference between 'beautiful' and 'neutral':

*"[The covers of women's magazines] are made so much more on the terms of the sitter. So, it feels like, here in [SK] you have, the photographer has, a lot more responsibility and choice. [In women's magazines] you try to, you know, make them beautiful or so, and to suit the magazine's view of the world, like, the magazine's world that is, like, beautiful and fresh and soft and so on, but then again, [SK's] view of the world is, sort of, putting all things against the wall. And then, [in SK] it has to be like, you know, somehow like neutral, but what is then being neutral I don't know."*

The PM was interviewed and photographed in the article because of her position, but the discursive traits from the women's magazine tradition, which she, probably unintentionally, brought into the studio by asking to bring the make-up artist with her, placed her into a field where she seemed to be slightly insecure. She took an in-between position; there were traits of both discourses in her utterances and action. On the other hand, from the high-profile politician's point of view, she commented ironically in a slightly condescending tone that she was 'approaching the limits of her competence' in stylish posing. On the other hand, she was timid about her looks.

## *2. Journalistic neutrality discourse*

In SK, the traditional neutrality discourse had been prevalent several decades as the documentary style of photography had univocally dominated its pages. However, now the magazine's discursive homogeneity had been challenged, as the magazine had updated its visual design and taken along new photographic styles and techniques. Approaches such as staging, lighting and digital editing had become more acceptable, and the magazine's story formats along with their respective styles of photography had become more distinguishable than before.

The old and new principles of journalistic and photographic praxis were questioned in several interviews. One interviewee strongly objected to the formatting of journalistic content and argued that the magazine was not "a smorgasbord" of different story types. One feature of contemporary journalism that he most strongly rejected was the personalization of politics and the journalistic format of 'profile story' with its technically perfect photographic portraiture:

*"[T]he readers can read about things through persons, but what is this format called 'profile', like, what does that mean? The format is just like a tool for journalists, but then some people have started to chant that 'we need*

*profile stories'. But usually they are quite hideous. Kind of, 'sublime portraits', you know."*

The journalist predicted that it is possible to maintain neutrality as long as the content dictates the form. If the format comes first, the result is a designed portrait that may have inappropriate discursive elements. Yet, that – a heavily designed series of portraits of politicians – was exactly what they were now doing.

Thus, there was some clear reluctance towards the idea of formatting the content, but in practice it was accepted. It was commonly admitted that designing and formatting had some visible advantages such as maintainability of high visual quality. The above quoted journalist spoke in length about the 'lame and predictable' quality of (documentary style) photography in the magazine and said that the functions and styles of photographs should be defined clearly.

It can be said that the magazine community's photography-related work practices were in flux. The neutrality discourse was questioned. The ambiguity between documentary approach and designed photography was clearly visible in the case process; especially it was present in the journalists' varying definitions of the concept of neutrality and their views on how neutrality should be constructed.

It seemed clear to all interviewed practitioners that neutrality was something that had to be carefully planned, designed and completed into the portraits. As one interviewee described:

*"[The portraits] must be much more neutral, just like fine face studies, but they can't include any clear visual comment. [---] And then, when they sit in some chair, the chair can't either give any impressions. Like, for example if we put some politician comfortably in some armchair, then the picture will be soaked in power. So, it must be as neutral as possible where they sit. But then again they can't look uncomfortable, because that would be a message, too. [---] So, it will be quite a job for [the photographer] but that's the plan anyway."*

In the quoted journalist's view, the choosing of the chair the politicians would sit in was extremely important. All four party leaders had to sit on exactly the same chair. All possibilities and conditions of feeling comfortable or uncomfortable would be neutralized, and the photographer should maintain the neutral appearance of the sitters. It was, however, admitted that the photographs could show some minimal characteristics of the depicted persons via the different physical gestures they would make on the chair.

In the studio, the Prime Minister wanted to make a 'gentle' appearance. She had been told that the aim was neutrality, but she contested the idea. In the next excerpt, she tries to negotiate with the photographer:

*[Photographer]: "Good. Now you can look straight here towards the camera. Yes."*

*[The PM]: "And is it now OK to smile?"*

*[Photographer]: "No."*

Later in her interview the photographer felt that she should have let the Prime Minister laugh and then have photographed 'what would have turned out'. That would have been closer to her professional ideals as a photojournalist.

As the cover story was printed with the PM in her portrait mildly smiling, one interviewed journalist said that in the feedback meeting there had been some disappointment with the portrait. One old-school photographer had said that this type of portraiture of politicians was not appropriate at all, and the portrait did not tell anything about the person. On the other hand, one of the journalists that had been planning the neutrality theme from the beginning had not been happy with the result: the smile was there, and in addition to that the PM's head was not completely straight but slightly tilted. In his view, the careful constructing of neutrality had not fully succeeded.

### ***Constructing openness: the making-of video***

At some point of the process, the magazine had decided to produce a making-of video of the studio session. The videographer was one of the magazine's most experienced photojournalists, and he managed to get inside the dressing room, where the photographer was not allowed. This was interestingly in paradox with the editorial philosophy of the magazine. In the interviews, the journalists had clearly distinguished their magazine from the yellow press and popular magazines, in one particular interview with the following words:

*"This is a serious magazine. The issues we cover are important for people, issues that really exist. We don't go compare the contents of celebrities' wastebins, and we don't go into the Prime Minister's bedroom or dressing room."*

In the professionally edited video published in the magazine's iPad version, the photographer was interviewed about her lighting techniques and the Prime Minister about her use of a stylist and other beauty-related practices in constructing her public image.

The making-of video can be interpreted as an interesting action towards openness and transparency. When it became obvious that the magazine's readers were to be confronted by a series of highly designed and staged portraits produced with the help of a beauty professional, the magazine wanted to open up the process. With the video, they mixed the frontstage (studio) and backstage (dressing room) discourses and showed the Prime Minister's private type of behaviour. The video gave the magazine's readers a glimpse of the passage between public and private, frontstage and backstage, which usually is kept unseen (Goffman 1959, 113). Backstage activities became incorporated into a frontstage report (Thornborrow and Haarman 2012, 8).

Adopting the women's magazine type of private discourse, however, did not only take the news magazine towards the domain of the popular press. From another perspective, this gesture strengthened the magazine's neutrality discourse by showing the constructing of the Prime Minister's public image, thus declaring the magazine's intention at openness. What's more, the making-of video was a manifestation of the magazine's high journalistic quality, showing all the expertise included in the production of the portrait. In all aspects, the making-of video can be seen as a mixture of 'meta-moments' and 'artfulness' types of backstage presentation (Thornborrow and Haarman 2012, 5).

## **Discussion**

Neutrality in photography can be said to be a particular form of rhetoric, and in this case this rhetoric was tried hard to maintain. The difficult concept of neutrality followed the journalists in many guises. The learned and maintained neutrality claim turned partly against itself. To a degree, it shaped and even masked the possibilities of showing some features of everyday life such as smiling for a photographer. When the neutrality discourse collided with the female beauty discourse, the discursive space of photographic expression got even more narrow.

Journalism has been recently discussed as performance (Thornborrow & Haarman 2012; Atkinson 2010). The performance perspective towards photography gives interesting insights. If we look at journalistic photographs as performances which can have different discursive elements, it may help us see how the frontstage/backstage behaviours affect the forming of gendered public/private discourses in the media. Photographs are not windows on the world; they are theatrical acts and constitutive of the world.

How do the discursive demands in the case of photography relate to gendered representations of politicians in the media? Women have traditionally been positioned as 'others' as de Beauvoir stated already in 1949. The otherness can still be seen in politics as well as in the media representing politics, in news and in entertainment. In addition to that, women have traditionally given the position of an object of watching, a position that does not disappear even if they take also take the position as acting subjects. The demand for the feminine discourse drew these underlying traditions into the surface. When interviewed by the political editor, the PM was standing in her own field and able to concentrate on the political contents, but in the photographic studio she had to shift from an actor to an object.

When trying to understand what happened in the photographic studio when photographing the PM, it is impossible to ignore the gendering practices. Kroon Lundell and Ekström (2008) talk about gendering when 'a person's gender is emphasized without it being specifically context-relevant and where appearance is given considerable attention'. In the case of this study, the gendering was not initiated by media, but deliberately by the PM herself. Some feminist researchers have stated that we are living in a post-feminist time: that the old structural and ideological borders are not accurate anymore, and that women – or better put, all sexes – are free to play with identities and change them according to situation (Stuart & Donaghue 2011), and that all individuals take different identities and enjoy them (Hermes 2006). Our materials show that the Prime Minister took an active role in constructing her public image, but for the very same reason her discursive space got narrow as she had to act simultaneously in the beauty performance and in the political, 'neutral' performance.

When starting this research, we had no expectations of any discursive collision that would frame the study. We set out to record and describe precisely what happens in a journalistic process and to show the journalistic discourses that would evolve. The discursive collision, however, was much more interesting and important of its contribution than we would have guessed. Possibly in many cases the journalistic process is not at all as well-structured as we are taught or as the magazines themselves admit. According to our empirical materials, the published portrait was a result of a detailed designing process. However, even in the newsroom of a well-designed magazine with its clear editorial philosophy and selection of story formats, it was not possible to fully control the journalistic process. Constant negotiation took place over the power of deciding which subject positions are suitable and desirable for a female Prime Minister, as the editorial viewpoint was being constructed and considered.

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