

“I can write about basically anything. And I have.”
An Analysis of Politician Alexander Stubb’s Columns in Finnair’s
Blue Wings Magazine

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English Language and Literature
Master’s Thesis
Autumn 2015

Tampereen yliopisto
Kieli-, käännös- ja kirjallisuustieteiden yksikkö
Englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden maisteriopinnot

LÄKSY, INKA-MINTTU: ”I Can Write About Basically Anything. And I Have.” An Analysis of Politician Alexander Stubb’s Columns in Finnair’s *Blue Wings Magazine*

Pro gradu –tutkielma, 80 sivua + 1 liite
Lokakuu 2015

Tämän englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden alaan kuuluvan tutkielman aiheena ovat suomalaispoliitikko Alexander Stubbin kolumnit lentoyhtiö Finnairin *Blue Wings*-matkustamolehdessä. Tutkimus sai alkunsa silkasta uteliaisuudesta: miksi pääministeri kirjoittaisi kolumneja vieraalla kielellä, hyvin rajoitetulle yleisölle?

Analyysin aiheena on Stubbin käyttämä diskurssi sekä poliitikon kirjoittamiin kolumneihin nivoutuvat valtasuhteet, niin kirjoittajan ja lukijan välisenä suhteena kuin laajemmassa kolumnien ja muun median keskinäisessä kontekstissakin. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu kolumneista vuosiväliltä 2005-2014, jona aikana Stubb on toiminut muun muassa europarlamentaarikkona sekä Suomen pääministerinä. Kolumnien kirjoittajan poliittisen aseman vuoksi tutkimuksen teoriapohjana käytettiin kriittistä diskurssianalyysiä. Kyseessä ei kuitenkaan ole puhdas kriittinen diskurssianalyysi, sillä tämän teorian ja metodologian lisänä käytettiin kirjallisuuden-, median- ja kulttuuritutkimuksen tieteellisiä keinoja. Koska tutkimusmateriaali koostuu kolumneista, analyysissä käytettiin myös tiedotusopin ja journalistiikan metodeja.

Analyysissä keskityttiin kansainvälisiin, erityisesti angloamerikkalaisiin teemoihin. Suomeen ja suomalaisuuteen liittyvät kysymykset jäivät tieteenalasta johtuen ymmärrettävästi vähemmälle huomiolle.

Tutkimus osoitti, että poliittisen ja journalistisen toimijuuden yhdistyminen Stubbin kolumnien kirjoittamisessa ilmentää useita, erilaisia valtasuhteita. Poliitikolle huomiota herättävä esiintyminen mediassa on tärkeää, mutta tutkimus osoitti laaja-alaisen läsnäolon aiheuttavan myös negatiivisia reaktioita. Stubbille kolumnien kirjoittamisen huomattiin olevan silti ainoastaan hyödyllistä. Tutkimuksen myötä ilmeni, että kolumnit ovat jääneet vähäiselle huomiolle, vaikka ne ovat olleet laajalti luettuja jo yli vuosikymmenen ajan. Erityisesti median kiinnostuksenpuute kolumneja kohtaan nousi analyysissä esille.

Tutkimuksessa kävi ilmi, että englannin kielen käyttäminen ehkä rajoittaa Stubbin kommunikaatiota suomen- tai ruotsinkielisen äänestävän yleisön keskuudessa, mutta antaa hänelle mahdollisuudet kansainväliseen, rajat ylittävään kommunikointiin. Analyysin myötä huomattiin myös yhtäläisyyksiä Stubbin ja brittipoliitikko Boris Johnsonin välillä, joiden katsotaan tässä tutkimuksessa viittaavan uudenlaiseen kansainvälisen poliittisen julkisuuden ilmiöön. Tätä ilmiötä soisi tutkittavan lisää.

Kaiken kaikkiaan tutkimus osoittaa, että jopa pääministerin korkeaa asemaa nauttivan poliitikon on hyödyllistä olla mediassa esillä ja erityisesti sisällöntuottajana.

Asiasanat: Alexander Stubb, Boris Johnson, Finnair, columns, discourse, political celebrity

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1. Introduction

Politics affect every society as a whole as well as every individual on a personal level, thus the study of political language and communication is always warranted. Philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1994) argues that through conditioning, the elite's worldview becomes the general worldview held by the whole society. Additionally, fellow French philosopher Michel Foucault argues that the ideational domination of the elite is inescapable (2000). What and how the political elite choose to communicate is not insignificant by any means.

This Master's Thesis studies the columns by politician Alexander Stubb published in Finnish national airline Finnair's in-flight magazine *Blue Wings*. The magazine, as a company magazine only available on aircraft and online, is rather unknown. However, it is inarguably the most international Finnish print publication; after all, each issue of the magazine travels thousands of miles during its month of circulation. Similarly, on a global scale, a small country such as Finland and Finnish politicians have little significance, but it could be argued that Stubb has the most international influence, significance and status of Finnish politicians.

Politicians need to make a name for themselves in order to attract voters. Personal contact to every single constituent in any larger election is of course impossible, so media appearances play the largest role. Every politician wants media attention, preferably positive at that. Drawing attention is important, as is standing out of the crowd. In the United States, politicians have traditionally provided "photo ops (photo opportunities)" for the media, posing with happy babies or attending ribbon-cutting ceremonies. For several years now, top tier politicians have also appeared in connection to fashion and rock music. Former San Francisco mayor, current lieutenant governor of California, Gavin Newsom, posed in a fashion shoot in *Harper's Bazaar* in lieu of documentative shots in the office (Navarro, 2006), and former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair launched "Cool Britannia" by inviting members of rock group *Oasis* to 10 Downing Street (*Telegraph*, 2010).

Television appearances also have a broad range. Aside from press briefs and conferences, members of the current US administration have ventured to more lighthearted media appearances. President Barack Obama has appeared in late night talk shows (Garcia, 2015), and vice president Joe Biden acted or rather, played himself, in the scripted comedy series *Parks and Recreation* (Diamond, 2015). In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister David Cameron appeared in a charity-related music video for the pop group One Direction (BBC News, 2013). Boris Johnson, the mayor of London, is a former journalist and is as known for his (from a British point of view) unique name and physical appearance as he is for his antics in the media and actual politics¹. Media attention, positive or negative, has served these politicians well over the years.

Stubb has followed in the footsteps of his international peers, appearing in various media platforms from television appearances to radio and print media. Active participation has offered him constant media attention. Stubb's position as a columnist for *Blue Wings* seems unique: based on a perusal of online editions of the in-flight magazines with highest circulation numbers (including magazines from Cision's top ten list of US airlines², as well as British Airways' *High Life*, KLM's *Holland Herald*, Lufthansa's *Lufthansa Magazin* and *Scandinavian Traveler* from Scandinavian Airlines), similar instances cannot be found in any international airline magazines. The in-flight magazine for Baltic Air, *Baltic Outlook*, has in the past included a greeting from Latvia's president, but the magazine is not available online and the airline's representative chose not to comment whether such a practice still exists. Nonetheless, a simple greeting is very different from a monthly column. Based on these findings or rather, lack thereof, writing such a column is certainly one way of standing out.

¹ Cf. Chakelian, 2015; Greenhill et al, 2015; Wyatt, 2015.

² In order of circulation numbers, highest to lowest: Sky, Hemispheres, Southwest Airlines Spirit, American Way, US Airways Magazine, American Airlines Nexos, Celebrated Living, Hana Hou!, The Private Journey, Go (Cision)

Politicians' participation in social media is a growing area of interest among different academic fields, including but not limited to political science, communications and journalism, and of course, language studies. Social media is open for everyone, but chances to voice opinions in traditional media are always limited. The magazine *Blue Wings* provides a very specific site for communication. Writing in English, in *lingua franca*, the Prime Minister of a country is able to address an international audience.³ Additionally, the politician is able to maintain communication to a domestic (voting) audience, provided they understand English. As this thesis falls under the category of English Language and Literature, the international, Anglo American aspect of communication is the main focus of this thesis.

This Master's Thesis seeks to find answers to the following questions:

- How are power relations present in the position of this columnist?
- What kind of discourse(s) do these columns entail?

The columnist's position refers not only to authorship in general but in this specific case simultaneously to the political position of the columnist in question. What kind of an effect does the possessed political authority of the author have on the columns? Aside from issues concerning the position of a columnist, the actual content of the columns is equally object to analysis. The title of this thesis includes a quote from one of Alexander Stubb's columns (*Blue Wings* May-June 2010). According to his own words, in his post as a *Blue Wings* columnist, he can (that is, is allowed to) write about "basically anything" and continues to add that he has, indeed, done just that. Whether this is the case is the other major question this thesis is concerned with: what does Stubb write about, what kind of topics and themes emerge from the columns and what implications do they offer and what conclusions can be drawn?

³ It ought to be noted, that this thesis is not concerned with linguistic English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL or EFL) issues as the column writer in question is a near-native speaker of English through family and educational and work related connections.

The theoretical framework utilized in this thesis is based on Critical Discourse Analysis, an explicitly multidisciplinary academic field. The thesis relies heavily on both the actual theorisation of Michel Foucault as well as the legacy he has left behind, focusing mainly on the works of Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer. It ought to be noted here at the very beginning that the approach of this thesis is less linguistic and more based in literary studies, as is appropriate for the multidisciplinary tool of analysis. Stubb's columns are not studied as microlinguistic specimens but rather as narratives. In addition to Critical Discourse Analysis, theory and methodology from mass communications and media and cultural studies are employed where needed.

Noted critical discourse analyst van Dijk notes that critical discourse analysis is not “. . . motivated by the wish to picture these elites as the villains in a simplistic story of social inequality, but rather to focus on the unique access of these elites to public discourse, and hence their role in the discursive management of the public mind” (1993, 280). Similarly, this master's thesis is not based on any kind of malice nor does it aim to place the politician or their writings on any kind of a pedestal. The political stance of the author is neutral, as is the tone of this thesis. Antoni Gramsci argues that hegemony, predominance and leadership of one party over others, is under constant negotiation, that is, no position of control or domination is eternal. However, for the purposes of this thesis, Stubb's columns are studied as they are, as columns written by a politician in power. The Finnish government will likely undergo changes during the writing process of this thesis, but as the research material is set in a certain time, so is the discussion included in this thesis. That is, Stubb's political position is discussed as it is at the publication time of the columns, ranging from Member of the European Parliament (first column, March 2005) to Prime Minister (last column included in the thesis, December 2014).

The thesis consists of five chapters altogether. The second chapter provides background information on the subject matter and research material used in this thesis. Theory is introduced in chapter 3, in which the background and purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis is discussed and the additional methods of mass communications and media and cultural studies used in this thesis are presented, with an emphasis on framing. In addition to the specific chapter on theory, theoretical elements are incorporated in the background chapter as well as the analysis. Chapter 4 contains the analysis, which is split into three subsections. The fifth chapter provides conclusions based on the research findings, followed by a bibliography and an appendix.

Chapter 2 provides background information included to aid the reader in following the analysis and understanding the purpose of this thesis. First, the research material is presented along with information on prior research on topics related to the thesis at hand. Second, the subject matters of this thesis, *Blue Wings* magazine and Alexander Stubb, are introduced. *Blue Wings* is Finnair's in-flight magazine and along with information on its background and current format, some basic information on airline magazines in general is offered, along with notes on the position of *Blue Wings* in comparison to its international correspondents. The columnist, Alexander Stubb is introduced in his own chapter. Stubb began writing the *Blue Wings* columns in 2005 when he was an elected member of the European Parliament. He has written the columns non-stop since then, for every issue of *Blue Wings* (currently ten times a year). Stubb's tenure in Brussels came to an end in 2008 when he was appointed Foreign Minister of Finland. Since then he has been elected member of the Finnish parliament and has held other minister posts until becoming Prime Minister of Finland in 2014. Despite the changes in his political position, Stubb's position as *Blue Wings* columnist has gone unchanged. The second chapter also includes information on columns as a genre and the specific traits that are unique to the text format. Columns are shown to have a special

nature, maintaining a closer relationship to their authors than other genres of text as well as a less neutral tone than most non-fictional texts published in newspapers or magazines.

Chapter 3 offers information on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the theoretical framework of this thesis. The complementing concept of framing is also introduced and discussed at length. First, the term discourse is discussed extensively with an emphasis on Foucault, whose theorisation of the term is the basis of this thesis. Second, a look into the history of CDA is presented along with notes on the most vital aspects of the field that are relevant to this thesis. Additionally, observations on how this thesis falls in line with CDA are presented along with thoughts on where this thesis might differ from other works in the field. This study is unique in the sense that it combines classic elements of CDA with methodology from literary studies, mass communications, as well as media and cultural studies. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this work, it is an important addition to this field of study and hopefully improves further upon its multidisciplinary dimension.

Chapter 4 contains the analysis part of this thesis, providing answers to the questions arisen earlier in this introduction. The analysis chapter is split into three subsections. First, framing techniques used in the columns are studied through the theory of Fairhurst and Sarr, followed by a closer inspection of selected columns that represent the major themes present in the writings as a whole. As this thesis operates within the boundaries of English Language and Literature, the internationally relevant themes are of specific interest, especially themes related to Anglo American culture. For instance, columns focused on issues such as marketing Finland as a tourist destination are left with less attention as their nature and purpose are clear, while columns concerned with sports are given special attention due to the intriguing similarities between Stubb and Boris Johnson, the British politician.

The second section of chapter 4 discusses the phenomenon of celebrity politicians that emerges from the analysis of Stubb's columns. The third section focuses on issues of context regarding discourse from two approaches, first being the relationship between author and audience, that is, a question of Stubb's intended readership. The second viewpoint is concerned with the context of Stubb's columns in relation to other discourse. Chapter five provides conclusions based on the research findings as well as ideas for further research, followed by a bibliography and an appendix.

2. Background Information: Source Material and Prior Research

This section of the thesis presents the research material and provides background information on the subject matter. This introductory section, concentrating on presenting the research material, is followed by three subsections, providing information on *Blue Wings* magazine, column writing, and Alexander Stubb.

The research material of this thesis consists of columns written by politician Alexander Stubb, published originally in the in-flight magazine *Blue Wings* of Finnair airline⁴. Aside from theoretical works, additional research material consists of electronic mail correspondence between the author of this thesis paper and Stubb and his team, as well as screen captures (that is, pictures).

The research material contains all of Stubb's columns from March 2005 to December 2014, with the exception of a possible September 2006 column, which was not available from the Sanoma Magazines archives. The *Blue Wings* staff at Sanoma Magazines were unable to locate said issue and were unsure whether it was ever published; the case may be that the summer issue ran until the publication of the October 2006 issue, which is included in this thesis. In any case, all available magazines have been included and no form of censorship has taken place. The total number of columns used as research material in this thesis is 96 (n=96); consisting of seven columns from the year 2005, nine from 2006, and ten from each year between 2007 and 2014.

Author of all columns is Alexander Stubb and publisher of all columns is Sanoma Magazines. At times, *Blue Wings* has been bilingual, including articles in Finnish in addition to English. However, Stubb's columns have always been in English. Having studied in the US and the UK, Stubb is fluent in English due to his academic career as well as personal life, as his spouse is from the UK. Therefore the decision to write in English instead of Finnish is understandable,

⁴ The columns are referred to as follows: title of column (when mentioned for the first time), BW name of publication month (three letter abbreviation)/year of publication, for example "'What does an MEP really do?' BW Jan/08" for the January issue (more precisely, column in said issue) of the year 2008.

especially since it offers the opportunity to broaden the scope of his readership. Column writing among politicians in Finland is not rare. In addition to Stubb, leader of the Finns Party, Timo Soini, for instance, authors a regular column. Unlike Stubb, Soini has opted to write columns in Finnish for *Hymy* magazine as reaching an international audience is likely less vital to his political aspirations as it is to those of Stubb.

Each of Stubb's columns appear under a header of "European Voices" and include a phrase introducing the author, ranging from "Alexander Stubb is a Member of the European Parliament and holds a PhD in international relations" ("Welcoming Bulgaria and Romania" BW Jan/2007) to "Alexander Stubb is Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs who travels 120 days a year on average" ("Falling for Asia" BW Jan/2010) and "Alexander Stubb is Finland's Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade. You can follow him on Twitter and Facebook through WWW.ALEXSTUBB.COM" ("Languages are good for you" BW Jan/2012). Aside from the text, the columns are from the start accompanied by a large photograph of Stubb, often in a lively pose, that is posing while performing a one-handed push-up wearing a sporty outfit and special glasses ("The agony and ecstasy of turning 40" BW Apr/2008) or enjoying the Autumn weather throwing a bunch of colourful leaves in the air while a bicycle is seen in the background ("No sweat!" BW Nov/2013). The topics range greatly and include anything from free trade negotiations ("When the World Trade became sexy again" BW May/2014) and the crisis in the Caucasus ("Georgia on my mind" BW Oct/2008) to various encouragements to visiting Finland (including the self-explanatory "Top reasons to spend your summer in Finland", BW Jun-Aug 2007, and "In love with Lapland", BW May/2009 as well as "The naked truth" discussing saunas, BW Feb/2008, to name but a few) and tips on, among others, column writing ("Bringing a column to life" May-Jun/2010), managing one's schedules ("It's the calendar, stupid!" BW Jun-Aug/2010), giving lectures ("Death to PowerPoint" Sep/2010) and running ("Born to Run", Nov/2012), meaning the physical sports

activity, not running for political office. Stubb also calls attention to books he has read (“The secrets to success”, BW Feb/2012) and openly addresses people he appreciates (“Go Cathy go!”, BW Apr/2010 about Cathy Ashton, the British Labour politician who served as the First Vice President of the European Commission in the Barroso Commission from 2009 to 2014 and served as the EU’s foreign policy chief, “A love letter to Michael Booth”, BW Mar/2014 about the English author specialised in food and travel writing). Closer inspection on the various topics is given in the analysis, in chapter four.

Prior research on this matter has not been conducted. In Finland, no studies related to either Stubb or *Blue Wings* beyond the MA level are available at this time. In the same vein as this thesis is Candida Yates’s research on Boris Johnson, including analysis on the media representation of the aforementioned mayor of London during the 2012 Olympic Games (2012). Yates’s research is discussed in relation to similarities between Johnson and Stubb later in the thesis.

In the following three subsections, the *Blue Wings* magazine is introduced along with information on columns as a specific format of text. The third subsection offers information on politician Alexander Stubb, who is the author of the *Blue Wings* columns.

2.1. Introduction of the In-Flight Magazine: *Blue Wings*

Finnair’s customer magazine *Blue Wings* was first published in 1980 and is one of the oldest in-flight magazines, *Holland Herald* of KLM being the oldest. *Blue Wings* is published ten times a year, and has a circulation of 70,000. In comparison, *Hemisphere* magazine of United Airlines in the US had the largest circulation of any airline, at 800,000 in 2011 (Cision). According to the publisher, Sanoma Magazines PLC, a third of their readers take a copy of the magazine with them as they disembark the aircraft. Their main target audience is “businessmen that travel often”, and

they emphasize that half of *Blue Wings* readers have a personal annual income of over 60,000 euros and that they reach 62,000 Finnish “decision-makers”.

The magazine is published in English and aside from its affiliation to a certain airline, it reads much like any travel lifestyle magazine, such as *Condé Nast Traveller*, for instance. However, since this is a company magazine and the company in question is an airline, the articles focus on travel destinations that can be reached via Finnair’s routes or at the very least through routes provided by its partner airlines of the One World alliance. The magazine also includes so-called practical information for travellers on Finavia airports and Finnair’s fleet, aeroplane models and the Finnair frequent flier programme. As mentioned, despite being a company magazine it is not produced nor published by Finnair itself but outsourced to Sanoma Magazines, a Finnish publishing giant. This is not unusual, but rather the norm with in-flight magazines. For instance, Australian Qantas airline held a “custom publishing relationship” with Bauer Media for 14 years, before opting to move the publishing of *Qantas the Australian Way* magazine to Medium Rare in 2015 (Micallef, 2015).

There are two major restrictive qualities to the *Blue Wings* magazine: it is in English and it is available on aeroplanes. This excludes, for the most part, readers with limited English skills and everyone not on Finnair flights. However, a third restrictive quality applies as well: while on a plane people are restricted to their seats with very little to do. Most people end up at least flipping through the magazine, and indeed, many do so even if their English skills are minimal. A purely empirical experience of this author is that people who have flown with Finnair are familiar with Stubb’s columns, regardless of language skills. The columns seem to draw passengers’ attention, regardless of their political views, even if they do not actually read the texts.

The restriction of having to be on a plane to read *Blue Wings* has been lifted since it is nowadays available online. How many people take the time and effort to locate and read the magazine online is unknown. More importantly, how many people would think to seek it out had

they not encountered the magazine while flying Finnair? This limits the audience of the magazine, and the columns, significantly. It is noteworthy that Stubb has deemed it worthwhile to continue his participation in the making of the magazine throughout his political career. In *Blue Wings*, Stubb's readership varies greatly. Presumably, most readers do not travel often enough to read every column and some international passengers may only encounter his writings just once. Stubb's readership may change from one month to another but he is always guaranteed an audience consisting of every Finnair plane on every Finnair route. Regardless of restrictions, this is great exposure for him.

2.2. "A Beginning, a Middle and an End": The Column as a Text Format

Although Stubb himself advises readers that "The column should also have three parts: a beginning, a middle and an end" ("Bringing a column to life" BW May-Jun/2010), a column is more than the sum of its parts. The column is a specific genre of text, published periodically in newspapers or magazines, or, nowadays, online. Columns are published on a regular basis, and unlike generic news articles, they express the author's views instead of just stating the facts while presenting the subject matter. In other words, neutrality is not necessarily expected of columns. Tony Harcup assesses that in these types of articles the columnist or columnists "tend to write from a personal, specialist or opinionated point of view" (2014).

The online *Handbook of Journalism* by Reuters news agency provides their guidelines for writing different text formats, including columns. It is stated in the handbook that columns are opinions of each author and that they are able to offer "extra value" to audiences while allowing seasoned journalists to showcase their insight in their area of expertise. According to Peter Cole (2008), columns are ". . . defined by ownership; the column 'belongs' to its author who has that ultimate journalistic luxury, a slot, guaranteed space over which he or she presides and has, in some cases, near total control over content." Harcup concurs: "Columnists are often engaged because of

their expert knowledge, forthright opinions, or entertaining style of writing, and they are sometimes treated as prized assets with big picture bylines and salaries or freelance fees to match” (2014). As mentioned, Stubb’s columns are always equipped with a photograph, a big picture byline.

Thus it can be said that columns are a specific form of journalism as they rely on the author and the expression of their views instead of merely focusing on a story, a recounting of events. Letters from the editor stand for the publication as a whole, whereas letters from the reader are singular opinion pieces from a random source. The Reuters handbook specifically states that any columns ought to be labeled as not representative of the news agency as a whole but rather emphasizing that they are opinion pieces. Unlike letters from readers, columns are usually published as part of a series for a certain period of time which adds to their value. And unlike letters from random readers, columns seem to contain inherent value due to their authors. This inherent value works to both directions: a significant author brings value to the column, but column writing brings value to its author. P. David Marshall notes that to journalists, column writing equals a promotion from anonymous “byline” reporting, because “As a columnist, the journalist becomes more equal to the celebrated individuals that he or she may cover in politics, entertainment or sports” (2006, 322). It is important to keep in mind the specific nature of a column when moving to the analysis section of this thesis.

Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday (2011) note that, ideally, mass media should be impartial and refrain from taking sides by offering opposing views to be discussed in equal measure, “. . . balance may be sought through an equal (or at least equatable) allocation of airtime (or *column inches*) to each of the parties” [italics added]. It ought to be noted that Stubb is the only politician writing columns for *Blue Wings*, that is, he does not for example have to take turns bimonthly with another politician from an opposing party. This aspect is revisited in the chapter on the theoretical background, specifically in relation to the research done by Norman Fairclough.

Traditional print media is a particularly interesting field of research, since nowadays online communication is the most used tool of politicians. Twitter allows for engaging with the voting audience on a daily basis, as often as one pleases. The response is immediate. Blogs on the other hand allow politicians to take up as much space as they want, column inches so to speak are endless within the confines of their own personal blogs or those of their host parties. A magazine column seems very unfashionable and out of date in comparison. However, online communication is open and free for all. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook do not charge their users and free blogging platforms are equally available. Columnists, on the other hand, receive monetary compensation for their published work. Since any such compensation hardly makes a difference in addition to an MP's or a PM's salary, the luxury of having one's own publication spot is far more alluring.

Social media accounts and blogs have to be sought out, meaning voters do not stumble upon them by accident. Gaining the attention of a random reader picking up a magazine for their pastime offers the opportunity to impress a possible new supporter and secure their vote in the next election. Indeed, the luxury of having a guaranteed place in broadly read publications is enhanced during election season. Despite democratic direct elections used in Finland, candidates need to invest vast sums of money to gain space in the media to attract votes. As Finnish elections and polling expert Sami Borg notes, candidates need substantial budgets in order to be elected, and despite free social media platforms, money allows for better quality and subsequently more effective content, resulting in more votes and increasing the likelihood of being elected (Läksy, 2015a).

During elections, elections quarantine is used in some cases to restrict candidates' media appearances, for instance prohibiting television personalities from appearing in their usual programmes. By all accounts, such quarantine is not placed on Stubb regarding his *Blue Wings* columns, allowing him to use his own judgement regarding content he wishes to publish in a

magazine issue that were to be published during campaigning. Additionally, already the publication has chosen to publish said columns thus voicing their vote of trust in the columnist. As mentioned before, *Blue Wings* does not contain writings from other politicians and they have trusted Stubb with his position for over a decade with no end in sight: “I will be sure to deal with the agony and ecstasy of turning 80 in my *Blue Wings* column in April 2048. The text will have been filed from a microchip in my head” (“Agony and ecstasy of turning 40” BW Apr/2008).

2.3. The Politician as the Author: Alexander Stubb

The focus of this thesis is not on Stubb himself and his persona, instead the focus is on his political position, as a member of the “powers that be”. To provide information to those who are not familiar with the Finnish political field, an introduction is in order.

Cai-Göran Alexander Stubb (born 1 April, 1968 in Helsinki, Finland), known professionally as Alexander or colloquially ‘Alex’ Stubb, is a member of the National Coalition Party, which resides in the centre-right of the Finnish political landscape and is considered to correspond to liberal conservatism. Stubb was elected member of the European Parliament (MEP for short) in 2004 (Finnish Government website) and sat in the European People's Party-European Democrats group. In 2008, after the resignation of then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ilkka Kanerva, Stubb was appointed minister and left his post in the EP. In the 2011 elections, Stubb was elected member of the (Finnish) parliament (MP for short) and given the post of Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade, EU affairs at the Prime Minister’s Office, and the Ministry of Finance in Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen’s government. In 2014, Katainen gave his resignation as Prime Minister and head of the National Coalition party, and Stubb became Prime Minister (PM for short) 24 June 2014 and Leader of the National Coalition party, as well. Stubb has a PhD from the London School of Economics. It is noteworthy that after upper secondary school, Stubb has only studied abroad in

the US and in Europe. This is unusual among Finnish politicians, as most have studied in Finnish universities.

In addition to his work in politics, Stubb is known for his physical appearance and fondness of sports, and for his active participation in social media. In fact, the social media networking site Twitter encourages new Finnish users to follow Stubb's account (see picture 1, Appendix 1)⁵. On the other hand, there are also reports that numerous users have allegedly been "blocked" by the Prime Minister on Twitter (Finland.Inc, 2014). Aside from the open for all social media, Stubb has access to the closed off spaces of parliament and cabinets and the private communication that takes place there. As Prime Minister, he has been able to expand his communication to radio on the monthly *Question Hour* programme on Finnish National Broadcaster, Yleisradio. Van Dijk notes that: ". . . one of the social resources on which power and dominance are based is the privileged access to discourse and communication. . . . only parliamentarians have access to parliamentary debates and top managers to meetings in the boardroom" (1993, 255).

Alexander Stubb has held his columnist position in *Blue Wings* for over a decade, since 2005. In an e-mail in March 2015, Stubb states that he has not and does not use a ghostwriter for the *Blue Wings* columns, although he does name editors Katja Pantzar, Laura Palotie, and Amanda Soila. The role or rather extent of the editing process remains unclear. Thus far two books based on the columns have been published, consisting of Finnish translations of the *Blue Wings* columns. The second compilation has been published in English under the title *The Power of Sisu* (2013). Stubb's publications are listed on the Finnish Government website as follows: "16 books, dozens of academic articles and hundreds of columns" (2015). Aside from *Blue Wings*, Stubb has previously

⁵ It ought to be noted that the recommendation message from Twitter was based on the geographical location (Finland) of the receiver. At the time, the algorithm that Twitter uses could not "know" the subject of this thesis, that is, Twitter did not recommend following Stubb's account based on online searches or such as no action of the sort had been conducted on the mobile device.

regularly written a column in the *Dagens Industri* newspaper, communicating with a Swedish-speaking audience.

3. A Multidisciplinary Theoretical Background: Information on Critical Discourse Analysis and Framing Methodology

The theoretical background of this thesis lies in Critical Discourse Analysis, but as brought up in the introductory section, other academic methodologies are used in connection to it. This section discusses the background, aims, and possible challenges of Critical Discourse Analysis as well as the methodological tools of mass communications and media and cultural studies that are used due to the challenges brought on by CDA involving this kind of research material.

As this thesis utilises Critical Discourse Analysis, it is vital to begin with the term discourse itself. Jenny Stringer (2005) finds three different meanings to the term: first as a translation of the Russian term “sjuzet” which is similar to the concept of a “plot” in fiction, second as the “flow of language” in specified situation, comparable to P.H. Matthews’ assessment: “[Discourse refers to] Any coherent succession of sentences, spoken or (in most usage) written” (2014). Discourse entails written and spoken (as well as even non-verbal) communications and is unavoidable, that is, discourse is everywhere. For instance, this thesis is an academic text and as an academic text it falls under the category of English Language and Literature and the discourse of this thesis operates within the boundaries of the field.

The third meaning is the one this thesis concerns itself with, the theorisation of Foucault. Discussing the works of Foucault, Chris Hudson notes that discourse is language in context (2015). Stringer writes: “Foucault uses the term ‘discourse’ to indicate large-scale signifying practices, sometimes called discursive formations, that is, any historically identifiable pattern of verbal and nonverbal behaviour which transmits sets of propositions and implications”, noting that discourses for Foucault are characteristically political and concerned with power relations (2005). Discourse according to Foucault is related to power as it operates by rules of exclusion (2000), allowing only

the privileged the chance to voice their views and to control what is said, where and by whom. Iara Lessa describes Foucault's idea of discourse thus "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (2006, 283–298). Foucault (2000) further stated that power is always present and can both produce and constrain the truth. Ian Buchanan (2010) describes discourse as "language use shaped and determined by situational rules and context", continuing that in the works of Foucault, discourse not only entails linguistic aspects but those of power relations: "Foucault asks who has the right to use a particular discourse, what benefits accrue to them for using it, how is its usage policed, and where does it derive its authority from?" These questions are put forward in the analysis chapter.

The role of Foucault is significant in this thesis if not only for his own work but due to his legacy. A branch of discourse analysis includes Foucaultian Discourse Analysis (FDA), which shares similar traits with Critical Discourse Analysis, such as an interest in power relations, although the former is naturally focused on Foucault's theories. Rainer Diaz-Bone et al note in connection to FDA on the productive disposition of discursive practices that "they [such practices] produce the specific semantics of the words in use, and they relate words to objects and to strategies of acting towards and thinking about things, persons etc." (2007). As this thesis utilises the works of other theorists, including Norman Fairclough, it cannot be categorised as FDA even though some aspects are similar. Foucault can be seen as a predecessor of Fairclough (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, fig.1.1), so the presence of Foucault is understandable.

In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2009), Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer compile a history of CDA, noting its multidisciplinary background: "the roots of CDA lie in Rhetoric, Text Linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, Socio-Psychology, Cognitive Science, Literary Studies and Sociolinguistics, as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics", noting that the terms CDA and

Critical Linguistics (CL) were used interchangeably until the former became the norm and replaced the latter. Currently, the term Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is preferred by some scholars. Wodak and Meyer note that CDA stems from general Critical Theory, and as mentioned before, name for instance Foucault as a predecessor to Fairclough (4, 20, fig. 1.1).

Wodak and Meyer refer to a “CDA Group” when discussing a group of researchers that have greatly influenced the field of CDA. They note the important role of researchers Teun van Dijk, the aforementioned Fairclough, Günther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen as well as Wodak herself, all of whom participated in a 1991 symposium that along the launch of *Discourse and Society* journal mark the “beginning” of CDA (3-4).

The decision to use CDA in this thesis follows the argument of van Dijk that political discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis are interchangeable, and the goal is to study power relations and the act of legitimizing one’s own actions and delegitimizing opposing factors (1993, 249-282). My argument is that Stubb as a political figure automatically engages in political discourse regardless of medium, and therefore his columns are analysed as such. However, this thesis does not entail a (micro)linguistic analysis (prominent in CDS) but instead combines CDA with literary analysis, analysing Stubb’s columns as narratives. Additionally, works from mass communications and media and cultural studies are applied in the analysis of the research material.

In making a distinction between CDS and CDA, Wodak and Meyer comment that CDA is more concerned with the study of social phenomena than linguistic units, as these phenomena are complex and therefore a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach is required (2). Van Dijk notes that CDA is focused on issues of dominance and inequality, and because of this focus, CDA is unlike other approaches in discourse analysis, which may aim to contribute to specific disciplines or paradigms. CDA is motivated by the wish to provide better understanding of social matters through discourse analysis (1993, 252). As mentioned before, the roots of CDA lie in numerous fields,

including literary studies. This background combined with the complexity of the issues, the matters discussed by both Wodak and Meyer and van Dijk, therefore warrant the interdisciplinary work. As already pointed out, the motivation of this thesis lies in understanding of social phenomena and therefore a multidisciplinary theory framework is in use.

As said, the theoretical background of this thesis lies in CDA. However, this is not entirely unproblematic nor without its challenges. CDA is especially useful in analysing political speeches, such as Fairclough's analyses of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's radio speeches (1989) and the discourse of New Labour in the UK (2000). However, these are examples of explicitly political speech, the kind of discourse that is directly connected to political decision making and action taking. The challenges and obstacles of implementing the same kind of methodology to the research material of this thesis lie in the nature of the research material. Although a political actor, Stubb's columns are not pure political statements unlike his speeches in parliament and other official instances. The context plays a major role: these texts appear in a decidedly non-political environment, in an in-flight magazine. Therefore the theoretical basis of CDA is complemented by methodological tools based on mass communications, media studies and cultural studies.

According to Wodak and Meyer, the defining feature of CDA is its attention to the struggles for power and control in social life and the competition of discourse in public spaces (10). In discussion on hierarchy of powers, van Dijk chooses to call "power elites" the groups and members thereof that have a special role in control over the enactment of power, "[power elites] are literally the ones who have the most to *say* [emphasis original]", continuing to explain that symbolic power (quoting Bourdieu) is measured by the extent of their discursive and communicative scope and resources (1993, 249-283). Stubb's communicative scope and resources seem broad, and not by accident as he tells in his personal introduction on the Prime Minister's official website, "Since the

beginning of the 1990s, I have taken an active part in social debate. I have written columns for a number of newspapers and magazines”, continuing to list a myriad of publications (2015). It is significant that Stubb equals taking part in social debate to being a published author. As mentioned in the previous chapters, *Blue Wings* has been part of Stubb’s arsenal of communication for over a decade and one could argue that it must be a lucrative position to hold, and the pros must outweigh the cons. Indeed, during his tenure as columnist for *Finnair*, Stubb has moved up the political ranks, from MEP to PM.

Power through discourse creates a circle that feeds itself: Stubb has actively pursued a vast communicative scope aiding him in his political aspirations and vice versa, as for example the Prime Minister’s *Question Hour* on Finnish radio is only entitled to the current PM, much like the Queen’s Speech in the UK is not given by anyone else but the reigning monarch and White House Press Conferences are strictly White House staff only. Van Dijk draws parallels between discourse access and social power as follows: “the more discourse genres, contexts, participants, audience, scope and text characteristics they (may) actively control or influence, the more powerful social groups, institutions or elites are” (1993, 249-283). As noted earlier, Stubb’s political career has been, so far, rising. And as Prime Minister, holding one of the most powerful political posts in Finland, he has held onto such seemingly insignificant forms of communication as the *Blue Wings* columns. Stubb emphasises his own role as a communicator (the aforementioned quote from the government's website, listing his published works) and gains more prominent communication ground. Stubb is in the habit of promoting his communication skills, for instance in this seemingly casual mention “In the future I would like to be a journalist and a columnist - well, I already am a columnist” (Junkkari, 2014b; translation by thesis author).

As the research subject matters often deal with societal positions, Wodak and Meyer note that CDA researchers themselves also attempt to make their own societal positions and interests clear

and remain self-reflective while retaining their respective scientific methodologies (2-3). Van Dijk argues that “critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance” (1993, 252-3, parenthesis original), which may well be true for seasoned, experienced researchers. However, as noted in the introduction, this thesis in tone is neutral and is based on simple curiosity of the fact that a Prime Minister chooses to write seemingly frivolous columns for a magazine with a specifically limited circulation. Media has long been a subject of research in CDA, Wodak and Meyer continuing: “Particularly the language of the mass media is scrutinized as a site of power, of struggle and also as a site where language is often apparently transparent. Media institutions often purport to be neutral, in that they provide space for public discourse, reflect states of affairs disinterestedly, and give the perceptions and arguments of the newsmakers” (12) and Fairclough has studied how the assumption that mass media is neutral in its reporting is false (1999, quoted by Wodak and Meyer, 2009, 12).

As noted by Stefan Titscher et al (2000), Fairclough deems control over discursive practices as struggle for predominance over orders of discourse. Fairclough bases his theory on Gramsci, and as noted earlier, Gramsci views hegemony as unstable and a non-constant. Fairclough finds orders of discourse as areas of “potential cultural hegemony” using former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as an example of political predominance as means to an end regarding control over discursive practices (151). As mentioned in the chapter on the nature of columns as texts, Marshall mentioned the desire of journalists to reach the status of a columnist as it establishes them as important authors. For Stubb, gaining cultural hegemony by acting as a columnist is useful in the struggle over political hegemony. Hegemony is unstable, as stated, but it does not mean that all hegemonies follow the same timeline. Stubb’s political power may increase or decrease depending on election results, but his part in cultural hegemony has so far remained stable, at least in *Blue Wings* for the past ten years. *Blue Wings* does not include columns from other politicians, so Stubb

has complete political hegemony in that context. These aspects have already been brought up in the chapter describing columns as a text genre, where it was mentioned that Stubb is the sole politician writing for *Blue Wings*. Chandler and Munday were quoted as saying that an equal weight should be allotted to opposing political sides, but this is clearly not the case. As stated above, Fairclough's research has shown this to be false in general when it comes to mass media. It was mentioned that Stubb does not take turns in writing columns bimonthly nor do columns from other politicians appear in the magazine. The major shareholder of Finnair is the government of Finland and therefore the presence of governmental power in its various functions is natural, perhaps even including their magazine aimed at customers. In that sense, *Blue Wings* is not as decidedly unpolitical a media site as assessed earlier in this chapter, although my argument is that the columns are nonetheless decidedly different in nature in comparison to parliament speeches or such events.

However, in the beginning of his career in *Blue Wings*, Stubb was not part of the Finnish government but a member of the European Parliament. The columnist post may as well be passed down from Foreign Minister or Trade Minister or Prime Minister to their successors if neutrality was a crucial factor, which it clearly is not. Stubb's columnist position seems to be a non-issue for his colleagues in politics, since no one has voiced displeasure in Stubb's exclusive spot in the magazine. Perhaps other politicians would appear in the magazine if they so wished, but none seem to have made the effort to attain a similar spot nor expressed interest in doing so. Furthermore, it was mentioned that leader of the Finns Party, Timo Soini, writes columns for a Finnish magazine and he does so unopposed as well. Finnish politicians seem not to mind in general. Stubb's own supposed neutrality in his column writing is discussed in the analysis chapter, in relation to his column "Guggenheim in Helsinki?" (BW Mar/2012).

Fairclough (1992) differentiates between "power in" and "power over" discourse. "Power in discourse" refers to unequal encounters such as classrooms with teacher-pupil relationships or those

of doctor-patient appointments, whereas “power over” refers to behind the scenes ability to shape and constitute orders of discourse and even control what discourses are available in the first place. This thesis is focused on the issues regarding “power over” discourse, as the research material consists of written texts and not physical events. However, the issues related to “power in” discourse are ever present due to the position of Stubb as part of the establishment. Generally speaking, the relationship between author and reader is not unequal as the reader can always choose to not read the text. This act of ignorance from the reader removes the author from any position of power. It is my argument that any text unread is powerless. The discourse between Prime Minister and citizens is equal or unequal depending on the point of view. Naturally, any Prime Minister is part of the state’s elite. However, one could argue that in democracies, the voting public hold power over their Prime Minister in equal measure. Any member of the political elite can thus be removed from power. The case of Stubb and his column writing cause slight confusion regarding this differentiation between power in and power over discourse.

As an author, Stubb loses his power if readers do not take notice of his texts. As a Prime Minister, Stubb relies on the support of the public vote. However, as a Prime Minister operating as a columnist, he is in a unique position. Whether readers pay attention to his columns is seemingly meaningless regarding his political position. In other words, Stubb the Prime Minister does not lose his authority even if Stubb the author does. On the other hand, Stubb’s columns may be read by an audience that have no say in his election, whether because as foreigners they have no right to vote or because they do not share Stubb’s political values and choose actively not to vote for him.

As mentioned regarding hegemony, it can be political or cultural or a combination of both, and often one aids in achieving the other, but lacking hegemony in politics does not diminish the chance of cultural hegemony and vice versa. Artists may have cultural hegemony without political aspects and politicians may achieve power without cultural impact. The distinction between power

in and power over discourse is further disoriented by the notion that Stubb is seeking the reader's attention in order to harvest as many votes as possible. Ultimately, he would lose his power as a politician were people to lose their interest in him in general. Ignorance of one column or even a series has limited effect in election results, as politicians can seek attention in a number of other media platforms. But ignorance altogether results in loss of power and hegemony.

Van Dijk has studied power and how it is enacted through the means of persuasion, dissimulation and manipulation, noting that "managing the minds of others is essentially the function of text and talk" and stating that this kind of cognitive power is modern and effective (1993, 254). This thesis concerns itself with a powerful political actor not only appearing in mass media but actually producing media himself and the aspects and use of power that are present. The aforementioned "power over" discourse, the ability to shape discourse and even control what discourses are available to begin with, is vital in practising the persuasion mentioned by van Dijk. Manipulation and persuasion are present in Stubb's columns as the analysis will show, and Stubb's column writing in general is part of his ability carry out power over discourse. Managing minds of others that van Dijk refers to is linked in an essential way to Bourdieu's comments about an elite worldview that becomes the viewpoint of society as a whole. This elite worldview is linked to the idea of "common ground" by Fairclough (2003). He presents three forms of assumption that allow a person in power to establish so-called "common ground" of thought. These include existential assumptions, propositional assumptions, and value assumptions.

The first includes assumptions of what is, the second assumptions of what can be or what will be, and the third assumptions about what is good or desirable, which lead to ideological assumptions (2003, 55, 58-59). My argument is that like the phenomenon of an elite worldview, which is a representation of the hegemony of said elite, this common ground is a tool for obtaining hegemony. Fairclough continues that assumed meanings are of particular ideological significance,

and that seeking hegemony is seeking to universalize meanings in order to achieve dominance – “this is ideological work” (60). As well as the persuasion methods used by Stubb, the ideological work present in his columns is discussed in the analysis section.

Hegemony is a key concept in CDA, so let us remind ourselves of its significance in the field and regarding this thesis. According to Fairclough, it is economic, political, cultural and ideological leadership and domination in society, and about “constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating sub-ordinate classes, through ideological means, to win their consent” (2003, 61). As a politician, Stubb seeks hegemony for himself and is constructing alliances through his writings, both nationally and internationally. Stubb has political authority both in Finland as well as internationally, in his role as an MEP and later as minister with duties representing Finland globally. This dual role is significant and not without its implications regarding his discourse, which are considered in the analysis.

As mentioned in the chapter on columns, as a text genre, column writing as an act is executing exclusivity, which as mentioned above is the operating tool of power according to Foucault. Not everyone is granted such a privilege, the less powerful are excluded from this practice and may only observe. In this thesis, the discourse of the columns and the discourse of the author’s position in society are intertwined and the very core of the following analysis. Just as any text is intertextually connected to other texts, the produced discourse is always related to the author. Unlike in literature, in fiction writing, where the texts may stand on their own (The Author is Dead school of thought), columns as a genre rely on acknowledgment of authorship, as discussed earlier. Stubb would not be entitled to his position as a columnist were it not for his position in politics and in the same vein, the columns would not be published were they not written by Stubb. Bluntly put, a lesser known author would have to produce better material. An otherwise unknown journalist may reach a columnist’s status by first proving their skills in regular newspaper reporting. Stubb’s

opinion pieces are worthy of publication because they are *his* opinions. Once the powerful position has been established, what does the columnist choose to do with the acquired power? The need to persuade and build common ground has been mentioned and in the analysis section, these aspects are explored further.

The concept of framing features prominently in CDA as well as in other fields. Like CDA, framing as a theory is multidisciplinary, as Scheufele notes: “Framing theory has its roots in a number of disciplinary traditions, and different scholars have defined framing as a concept at different levels of analysis (1999, quoted by Scheufele in 17, 2009) The origins of framing theory in general are linked to agenda setting theory, a term first coined by Professors of Mass Communications Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in their study on the 1968 US presidential elections, in which they discuss the effect of media coverage on the electors’ views on what election themes are of importance. As CDA concerns itself with issues of political power, it is intertwined with agenda setting theory and therefore different approaches to framing are present in the field. Framing, according to Fairclough, is incorporating the voice of another into a text (2003, 53). Fairclough studies the framing used in news reporting regarding the 1999 handover (a problematic term in itself in Fairclough’s view) of two Libyan nationals for the trial over the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. Fairclough concludes that despite the seemingly positive ‘balance’ between the representation of the Libyan government and the Western governments involved, the reporting “seems more problematic, and less favourable to the Libyan government” (2003, 52-53). As an example, Fairclough notes the usage of the verb *demand* in the reporting about the UN’s stance on the matter: “Part of the framing here is the choice of ‘demand’ as the reporting verb – it is highly improbable that the [UN] Secretary-General said ‘I demand that...’, so ‘demand’ rather than, for example, ‘ask’ would seem to be a framing conducive to an interpretation which casts the Libyans in an unfavourable light: if the supposedly impartial UN is getting tough with Libya, they must be

in the wrong.” In this case, Fairclough has studied the language of mass media. Additionally, Fairclough utilizes framing techniques by Basil Bernstein (2003, 53), Professor of Sociology of Education. These techniques are useful for the analysis of organisations and social events such as classroom environment. For the purposes of this study it is beneficial to follow the argumentation of Scheufele, that framing is intertwined with both the creation and social negotiation in three related areas: those of journalistic norms, political actors and cultural contexts (2009, 22). These three areas are coincidentally apparent in the source material for this thesis: Stubb is a political actor who writes columns, which follow journalistic norms, in the cultural contexts of both the international and the domestic. As the source material consists of magazine columns, it is natural to seek out an approach related to journalism.

To aid in the analysis of Stubb’s columns, the framing categorization by Professor of Communications Gail T. Fairhurst and businessman Robert A. Sarr will be used. According to them, framing consists of three elements: Language, Thought, and Forethought (1996, quoted by Deetz et al, 1999, 72). Language helps us to remember information and acts to transform the way in which we view situations, much like the definition of discourse earlier. To use language, people must have thought and reflected on their own interpretive frameworks and those of others. Sarr & Fairhurst have construed a categorisation of different framing techniques, which consists of altogether seven different categories:

1. Metaphor: To give an idea or program a new meaning by comparing it to something else.
2. Stories (myths and legends): To frame a subject by anecdote in a vivid and memorable way.
3. Traditions (rites, rituals and ceremonies): To pattern and define an organization at regular time increments to confirm and reproduce organizational values.
4. Slogans, jargon and catchphrases: To frame a subject in a memorable and familiar fashion.

5. Artifacts: To illuminate corporate values through physical vestiges (sometimes in a way language cannot).
6. Contrast: To describe a subject in terms of what it is not.
7. Spin: to talk about a concept so as to give it a positive or negative connotation.

This categorisation has originally related to organisations, but I wished to examine if and how this categorisation works in the analysis of magazine columns. Stubb writes his columns for a company magazine, Finnair's *Blue Wings*, and during the time period of 2005 – 2014 he also acts as a Minister of Trade, directly dealing with Finnish business and economics. The combination of the backgrounds of Fairhurst & Sarr, that of an academic dealing with communications and a business chairman, is especially interesting in this sense. The categorisation has originally been published in *The art of framing: managing the language of leadership* which is particularly apt as Stubb has sought out and indeed achieved political leadership. According to Fairhurst and Sarr, language is the most tangible tool used by effective leaders in achieving their desired outcomes (quoted by Hackman and Johnson, 2013, 2).

In the following analysis section, I will use this categorisation, as well as the aforementioned CDA theorisation, as an aid in seeking out answers to the questions first mentioned in the introduction: What kind of power relations are present in Stubb's columns and what kind of discourse do the columns entail? As mentioned in the section on columns as a specific text format, authorship is a vital issue regarding these texts. The opportunity to write columns is unique in itself. Anyone can write letters to the editor, and editors voice the opinion of publications as a whole. But only a selected group are entitled to the restricted space of a column. Concepts and previous research from media and cultural studies is additionally used to study the aspects of political celebrity that are discovered through the categorisation and further theorisation.

4. Analysis

The analysis section of this thesis consists of three subsections. First, the columns are categorised following the seven-point framework by Fairhurst & Sarr, introduced in the previous chapter. The emerging significant themes found in the discourse of Stubb's columns are then discussed in the following subsections, focusing on the relationship between politics and sports (a prominent topic in Stubb's columns) and the implications of Stubb's self-promotion in his writings related to his political stance, as well as the importance of context regarding Stubb's columns. The similarities between Boris Johnson and Stubb are also examined and the concept of international political celebrity is discussed in relation to the aforementioned politicians.

4.1 Through a Seven-Fold Categorisation to a "Three-Point Schema"

This section includes the analysis of Stubb's columns. As said, there are altogether 96 columns included in the analysis and discussing each individual text would not be beneficial nor kind to the reader or for gathering evidence. Instead, the columns are first approached through the concept of framing. This categorization is based on theories founded on mass communications. As Stubb's columns are part of journalism, I wanted to examine if this categorization is usable in analysis of this kind.

The seven categories coined by Fairhurst & Sarr (1996) are as follows:

1. Metaphor: To give an idea or program a new meaning by comparing it to something else.
2. Stories (myths and legends): To frame a subject by anecdote in a vivid and memorable way.
3. Traditions (rites, rituals and ceremonies): To pattern and define an organization at regular time increments to confirm and reproduce organizational values.
4. Slogans, jargon and catchphrases: To frame a subject in a memorable and familiar fashion.

5. Artifacts: To illuminate corporate values through physical vestiges (sometimes in a way language cannot).
6. Contrast: To describe a subject in terms of what it is not.
7. Spin: to talk about a concept so as to give it a positive or negative connotation.

As there is major overlap between the different categories and additionally, categorisation is subjective, Stubb's columns are not strictly categorised individually. That is to say that they are not individually labelled and subsequently quantified. No numeric data is available, as it would be unreliable and moreover, futile in this context and would not improve upon any findings of analysis. Instead, I will present the different categories and provide examples of columns that fall under each categorisation and discuss the implications of framing that arise from this. Additionally, the major themes that prevail in Stubb's columns that were discovered through the categorisation process are presented and a selection of these themes is given a closer inspection.

Before embarking on the analysis, some observations regarding exclusion have to be made. The international topics related to the columns are more of interest in this thesis, whereas domestic, Finnish issues are of minimal concern. For instance, columns promoting Finland as a travel destination are left out for the most part, as their aim and function is to attract customers to Finnair and to increase tourism in Finland. Examples include "In love with Lapland" (BW May/2009), "Finland's gold medal celebration" (BW Oct/2010) discussing Newsweek magazine's country ranking in which Finland came in at number one, a playful comparison "Finland vs. Sweden" during ice hockey world championships (BW Apr/2013), "Invest in Finland!" the title of which is eponymous with its content (BW May/2013) and "Long live Nokia!" (BW Oct/2013) which is technically about the company but basically the same as writing about Finland. Stubb was at the time the Minister of European Affairs and Foreign Trade of Finland and writes that "[Nokia] was

part of the DNA of modern Finland. . . .”, a quote also highlighted in the column layout. The reasoning behind this decision is that the content of these columns are not suitable material for analysis for this thesis. The columns depicting Finland in a positive light (that is, all of them) are naturally advertisement for the country and for Finnair as the route provider to said country. Finland as a state is Stubb’s employer, as is Finnair, more directly Stubb’s employer as the magazine owner. Anything that benefits Finland will automatically benefit both Finnair and Stubb, so these kinds of columns are self-explanatory. That is not to say that they are not worthy of a closer inspection, but they are not of keen interest regarding this particular thesis. The columns promoting Finland would be more suitable research material for those interested in issues related to marketing, travel and tourism and cultural anthropology, to name but a few.

The themes that are of interest regarding this thesis include sports as a political tool, self-promotion in relation to political celebrity, and the question of context in relation to power. Self-promotion refers in this case not only to the obvious vote-seeking behaviour of a politician but to the way Stubb simultaneously promotes the ideal way of being and living and the way he himself behaves. These topics emerged from the categorisation process as the most suitable material for this thesis, as they contain the most internationally relevant material and themes that are of interest to English Language and Literature studies. Other major themes were also present, but as shown by examples regarding Finland-related columns, they are less interesting in this field of study. Similarly, themes such as economics or politics would be of interest for research done in either field. That is not to say that they are not of interest to this thesis, but as stressed above, they appear here in an international context. In other words, in-depth discussion regarding discourse of domestic politics in Stubb’s columns is best left to the field of political science. International, especially Anglo American topics are given deliberate preference due to the field of study, English Language and Literature. Before closer inspection of sports as a political tool, self-promotion in relation to

political celebrity, and the question of context in relation to power, which appear later in the analysis, the results of the categorisation are presented.

The first category of *Metaphor* is present, for example, in the following columns “The United States of Europe” (BW May/07) in which Stubb compares the European Union with the United States and contemplates that the former should adopt positive traits of the latter, a concept revisited a year later in the very similar “What Europeans can learn from Americans” (BW Mar/08). Columns categorized under *Metaphor* that do not contain promotion of the US include “On politics and children” (BW Nov/2010), in which Stubb gives new meaning to both topics by comparing dealing with children to dealing with politicians.

The second category, *Stories*, is a very common one and overlaps with other categories. This is hardly surprising, since it is likely the wish of most writers of any kind to make their texts memorable and storytelling is an effective technique in achieving this. Examples include “Yo, EU cool!” (BW Mar/2007) discussed later in this section, “The EU loves you, dear consumer” (BW Apr/2007) depicting various fictional snippets of situations where consumers benefit from EU regulations, “I want my liquids back!” (BW Oct/2007) in which Stubb takes a stand against airport security measures (discussed in the third section of analysis). Directly political level of discourse is present in numerous columns. In “When world trade became sexy again” (BW May/2014) Stubb, as minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade, discusses free trade negotiations between the United States and the European Union. In the column Stubb, in Fairclough’s terms, blatantly assumes, “taking as an unquestioned and unavoidable reality, the factuality of a global economy (e.g. assuming the existence of a global marketplace . . .)” (2003, 58). Fairclough reminds us that ideological work of text is a tool in achieving hegemony through universalisation of particular discourse (2003, 58). In these cases, Stubb makes no effort to hide the ideological work present in his columns.

Also in the *Stories* category is “Election night history” (BW May/2011). This column recounts in story format the events of the 2011 Parliamentary Elections. The elections were held 17 April 2011, and in the column from the same month Stubb seems very aware of the timing. The column, “What in the world is happening?” begins with a moving account of Stubb beginning his tenure as Foreign Minister of Finland in 2008 by having to react to a fatal bus crash involving Finnish citizens in Málaga, Spain. The column ends with a seemingly innocent “I might have not known what I was getting into three years ago, but given a choice, I would surely do it all over again.” Noting the timing of this statement it reads like a direct plea to voters. Elections quarantine was discussed in the chapter discussing column writing in general, and it was noted that any such restrictions are not placed upon Stubb. As magazines need to be edited long before publication time, it would be difficult to apply any restrictions on Stubb, and usually these quarantines are based on a so-called “gentleman’s agreement”. Nonetheless, it would appear that Stubb is aware of what kind of content to produce at what time.

The third category of *Traditions, rites, rituals and ceremonies* was used in several columns. “Partytime in Finland” (BW Dec/05) describes the Finnish Independence Day Gala, a unique Finnish phenomenon during which the president and their spouse greet their invited guests (approximately 2000 individuals, including all elected politicians but also war veterans, artists and so-called regular folk) during a televised gala that remains the most watched television programme each year (Hirvikorpi, 2006; Finnpanel, 2007). The column is written in an Anglo American manner, with Stubb comparing the televised event to the American football event Super Bowl and noting that “The President’s Castle is not Buckingham Palace.” Additional examples of columns under the heading of *Traditions* include “The ultimate holiday” (BW Feb/2009) in which Stubb contemplates his need for at least four holidays a year, “January in moderation” (BW Jan/2014)

regarding New Year's resolutions and the concept of alcohol-free "Dropless January", which Stubb sums up thus "Some succeed, others don't". These columns are further discussed later in the thesis.

The fourth category of *Slogans, jargon and catchphrases* was extremely prominent. They appear all the time; every column is littered with numerous examples. Along with the seventh category of *Spin*, this may be the most prominent of all. A column picked at random includes the following example: "Why am I so enthusiastic about it [a report of Brand of Finland]? Because this is real, practical stuff. The report concludes that Finland has three strengths above all: great schools, clean nature and functional society" ("Consider it solved", BW Jan/2011) which contains two elements of Stubb's commonly used jargon: questioning himself on behalf of the reader and "talking in threes", that is, exercising a three-point schema. Stubb's linguistic mannerisms are discussed further in the section on political celebrity.

Oddly enough, even the fifth category of *Artifacts* was present in one column. In the June-August issue of 2009, Stubb describes and discusses the Finnish national flag, a "physical vestige that illuminates corporate values", or in this case, the values of a nation state. The column, "True blue and white", describes the flag's history and customs related to the proper use and display of the flag. Category six, *Contrast*, was less prominent, but nonetheless found in "The Working Family" (BW Feb/2007) in which Stubb discusses complications of finding perfect CEOs and perfect parents and ponders if that is even possible.

The near absence of the sixth category is perhaps explained by the abundance of the following seventh category, *Spin*. The concept of spin in general is closely connected to politics and politicians and therefore it is not surprising to find that most of Stubb's columns entail spin, usually of the positive variety. Avoiding negative connotations and therefore negativity in general is undoubtedly a conscious choice. Stubb brands himself as a positive figure and therefore the use of positive spin in lieu of negative is understandable. Examples of very straightforward usage of spin

include the aforementioned “The EU loves you, dear consumer” (BW Apr/2007), “Welcoming Bulgaria and Romania” (BW Jan/2007) putting a positive spin on the expansion of the EU and “Falling for Asia” (BW Jan/2010) in which Stubb once again questions himself “Why am I telling you all this?” continuing to answer that the fastest route to said continent is via Helsinki, “Languages are good for you” (BW Jan/2012) discussing languages and foreign language learning, which besides framing such acts as positives, also frame the multilingual Stubb in a positive way. “The power of social media” (BW Feb/2013) consisting of positive spin on social media, in which Stubb informs readers that Twitter is his “main source of news”, is discussed in the last section of analysis.

An interesting case of spin is present in “Guggenheim in Helsinki?” from March 2012, in which Stubb pretends to be neutral on the matter of whether a Guggenheim museum ought to be erected in Finland’s capital city but nonetheless is revealed to be all for it. As acknowledged in the theoretical background chapter, CDA has long been invested in inspecting the language of mass media. Wodak and Meyer noted that illusory transparency, neutrality and disinterest is common in mass media, followed by references to Fairclough’s research that proves neutrality and balance to be a myth. As mentioned, this thesis concerns itself with an inherently biased object of media, a politician, producing media himself. In the column on the Guggenheim project, Stubb feigns disinterest, “given the choice I would probably opt for a brand new stadium in the centre of town. . . . But I think the Guggenheim is the best thing that has happened to Helsinki in a long time”, and even attaches oppositors of the museum negative connotations of anti-Americanism which in converse frame Stubb pro-American: “The anti-Guggenheim crowd has been louder than the museum’s proponents. So much so that the debate has been rather one-side. The funny thing is that those people who often promote culture have been the most fervent opponents. This naturally has nothing to do with the fact that the project is commercial and has its roots in the US.” Additionally,

it is equally important what Stubb leaves implicitly unsaid. He mentions the successful Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain, but ignores the idea that the famously pleasing Spanish weather may play a factor in the museum's success there. Stubb employs the same supposed neutrality the aforementioned CDA experts have connected to media institutions on a larger scale.

As noted, strict categorisation was impossible since most columns overlap or fall in between categories. The column depicting the Finnish flag was the only example of a column that could be categorised as *Artifacts*, but similarly it could fall under *Traditions*. More importantly, one could argue that every column contains spin of some kind, at the very least giving Stubb himself a positive connotation. Nevertheless the categorisation was a useful tool in handling a large selection of single, independent texts. All of the categories were present in Stubb's columns, and through the categorisation process some specific themes as well as significant curiosities were brought to attention. All said, this kind of categorisation and the success of its usage depend greatly on the desired results. For this thesis it proved to be of use as a gateway to further analysis, but decidedly not as an end-game due to the overlap. With different research material, a set of texts that are characteristically different from one another, the categorisation might provide evidence that could be organised and used to prove a hypothesis. But in this case, further analysis is needed to achieve any significant results regarding the research questions.

Fairclough notes that through and due to agenda formulating, particular discourses can gain prominence or become marginalised over time (2003, 19) and through the categorisation certain changes in Stubb's discourse over time were made apparent. In his earlier columns, Stubb's language and topics are more colourful and he is more candid in anecdotes regarding his family, including "The art of being kind" (BW Nov/2007) with a tale of Stubb's wife and daughter accidentally destroying a shirt of his for an arts and crafts project, and Stubb's wife buying him a tie as an apology only to forget it in a train by accident. References to family members keep getting

more infrequent and less detailed as time passes, which is entirely justifiable as the career of a statesman can be notoriously of high risk. The change in tone is not as easily explained.

The first years of Stubb's columns are very much European Union related and mostly contain positive spin regarding the EU. The column "What does an MEP really do?" (BW Jan/2008) can be viewed as informative and helpful to readers, offering a description of the duties and work of an MEP. The second column Stubb has written for *Blue Wings*, "Communicating Europe" (BW Apr/2005) is split in two, the first part containing perhaps informative yet innately boring drivel on the EU ("Arguments about a democratic deficit fail to recognise that there can be democracy on the local, national and supranational level") while the second part is much livelier, deliberating condoms and sex toys. Stubb discusses articles published in UK newspapers regarding condom regulation in EU, "The EU is not involved in setting condom standards", and recycling electronic goods, ". . . if someone wants to return to an old dildo it can be done free of charge." Similar colourful tone is present in 2006, including a column titled "Who said the European Union has no sex appeal?" (BW Dec/2006) Certainly not Stubb, as he has proclaimed in two previous columns from the same year that the EU is indeed "very sexy". There is of course nothing wrong with being sexy or bringing up sex toys nor is there fault in choosing a milder tone, as Stubb has later done. The change itself in Stubb's style of writing is of significance and will be discussed later in relation to political fame in the next section. Additionally, the lack of attention brought upon these earlier columns along or after Stubb's political rise, is discussed in the section on context.

The change that can be found in Stubb's texts is in line with Fairclough's assessment that such stylistic aspects can be found to be ideologically significant, "When . . . public bodies such as government ministries produce public information on their schemes and activities, they select *a style of writing* (or indeed televising) partly on basis of the image they thereby construct for themselves. This can be regarded as a special sort of ideological process of subject constitution"

(2013, 61; italics added). In this case the public body consists of one man and his own schemes and activities, but said man is also the head of larger public bodies, as a minister he is the head of said ministry and the schemes and activities thereof. As Stubb moves up the ranks of political power, from a Member of the European Union to Foreign Minister of Finland and ultimately reaches Prime Minister status, the discourse changes in his columns. As shown above, in his earlier columns during his tenure as MEP, Stubb is candidly personal in writings, alluding to his personal life in numerous ways. This could have been part of familiarizing the Finnish audience with his persona, as Stubb has approached domestic politics as an outsider. Stubb first became known as an EU expert, and began his political career in Brussels. Becoming a more familiar face to voters, domestic and international, was perhaps one motivation to begin his career in *Blue Wings*.

In his later columns as Prime Minister, he relies on a different kind of framing than the ones apparent in the seven aforementioned categories. More than before, Stubb chooses to refer to other authors and texts rather than produce his own and share his own experiences. As mentioned in the theory section, framing to Fairclough refers to the act of incorporating the voice of another and framing it to suit one's own agenda (2003, 53). Stubb is no stranger to such tools of discourse, as is evident in several of his columns. As mentioned earlier, columns are opinion pieces and the voice of the author is a key element. Neutrality is not necessarily desired or needed. Despite being opinion pieces, the voice of the author or the voice of others he wishes to incorporate, that is, *frame*, in Stubb's columns varies to levels of absurdity.

In "The United States of Europe?" (BW May/2007) Stubb argues that Winston Churchill "would be happy that the EU will always be more than an international organisation, but less than a state" despite having as good an idea of what the late UK Prime Minister might find happiness in as any of us. A more extensive example of framing following Fairclough's idea is the earlier column from March 2007, "Yo, EU Cool!" In this instance, Stubb uses this kind of framing to criticise the

1997 Berlin Declaration, which celebrated 50 years of the European Union's existence. In the column Stubb incorporates the voices of "people of all walks of life", including fictional characters such as a World War II veteran, a businessman (no further specification), "any concerned European", and a "youngster". Stubb's stylings as the last character are as follows: "Yo, the EU is cool because I can download music from iTunes; buy games on the net; sms my friends from far and away; fly with cheap airlines; and study anywhere I like. Keep rocking. Respect!" Stubb continues by acknowledging that his providings in prose are not "literary masterpieces".

The quote used to incorporate a young person is interesting because of the mention of cheap airlines, which Finnair as a national, commercial airline is not. Alluding to competition is going against the grain of the column's publisher. It is unclear whether this gives more credibility to Stubb's writings, suggesting that they are independent and unrelated to the publication or whether they actually suggest that only youngsters choose cheap airlines. After all, the target audience of *Blue Wings* as mentioned before are Finnish "decision makers" and well-travelled businessmen who can afford any airline of their choosing. Additionally, Finnair in the past has collaborated with more affordable airlines, so the passing reference may be an advertisement of sorts. The relevance of Stubb's intended readership is explored further in the third section of analysis.

Framing in line of Fairclough's definition is closely connected to intertextuality or more crudely, the concept of "name dropping", both of which are not unusual activities for politicians to partake on. Philip Drake and Michael Higgins have taken note that "perhaps concerned that a disaffected public has lost interest in formalized politics, politicians also often attempt to use celebrities to garner media coverage at moments of political need" (2006, 88). Later on, Stubb chooses not to employ as drastic forms of framing as the examples relating to Churchill and youngsters but merely name drops appropriate people and refrains from greater self-involvement. The tone changes later on, when Stubb merely refers to books he has read and "A love letter to

Michael Booth” is as candid as he gets, and even then not very considering his earlier writings with references to the sexiness of the EU and such matters. Additionally, said “love letter” to the English travel writer is actually used as a frame to promote Finland as a desirable travel destination. The relationship between celebrity culture and politics is more closely looked upon in the following section. As said, it is not unusual for politicians to attach themselves to others and frame their own agendas in this way. My argument is that it is already on principle a display of power to take a voice of another and use it oneself. But is there a possibility for a politician to venture into the realm of celebrity so that this kind of framing is no longer needed? Can a politician engage in both political discourse and that of celebrity culture?

4.2 Celebrity Politicians: Stubb’s “Fetish for Sports” and the “Greatness” of Boris Johnson

In the third chapter, Fairclough’s research on Margaret Thatcher was referenced. In his analysis on Thatcher, Fairclough paid close attention to the construction of her persona as a political leader, and Titscher et al note in connection to Fairclough’s work that “Thatcher’s own identity is marked by the tension between masculine authority and a femininity emphasized by various devices such as her hairstyle” (2009, 151).

Aside from the obvious discourse of text and speech, the significance already mentioned in relation to van Dijk’s views in that they help attain hegemony, the discourse of politicians as personas is elaborated upon here. Politicians present themselves as complete packages that include not just their election themes and promises nor their actions and decision-making, but also their physical appearance and mannerisms. The construction of Stubb’s political identity is detectable in his columns, and in this section, these aspects are discussed in connection to research done by Professor in Media and Cultural Studies P. David Marshall, Professor in Politics John Street, and Professor of Film, Media and Communications Philip Drake and Professor in Political

Communications Michael Higgins regarding political celebrity and Yates, regarding the UK politician, Boris Johnson, specifically. It is warranted to connect media and cultural studies to CDA, as media and politics are more and more intertwined. This connection is further studied below.

Marshall argues that in politics, “the leader must provide evidence of familiarity while providing evidence of exceptionality and hierarchical distance” (2001, 227). Such juxtaposition is present in Stubb’s columns. The columns revolve around his persona, which is either of no surprise or of great surprise, depending on reader's preconceived notions about politicians. Do readers take it for granted that politicians promote themselves at all times or do they view politicians as talking heads considering current issues at hand? As mentioned in the previous section, Stubb’s writing style may change as time passes and as his position improves. However, his persona is still the very core material of his columns. This allows him to provide evidence of familiarity, but as will be shown, he mutually provides evidence of exceptionality that allow for hierarchical distance.

In the previous section that showcased the categorisation, it was brought up that several of Stubb’s columns include guidelines and tips and perhaps even policy recommendations. Stubb, whether an MEP or a minister, is an authoritative figure politically speaking. But he appears to consider himself an expert on several non-political issues, based on his keenness to offer readers his insights. Foreign readers are treated to guidance from Stubb in several Finland related matters, as alluded to in the discussion regarding country promotion in the columns. For readers of any background, Stubb provides several how-to guides, including following instruction manuals: the meta-level “Bringing a column to life” (BW May-Jun/2010) about the act of column writing, “How to train for a marathon” (BW Jun-Aug/2010) giving instructions on marathon training, “Death by PowerPoint” (BW Sep/2010) in which Stubb launches attack on said slide-show presentation programme, “Born to run” describing his experience during the Berlin marathon while giving advice on avoiding sports injuries (BW Nov/2012), “It’s the calendar, stupid!” (BW Summer/2013)

on how to time manage and be efficient in general: “Plan each day, week, month and year carefully”. This is improved upon in the following month’s “Work outside the box” (BW Sep/2013) with more info on his beloved 8+8+8 system, consisting of eight hours of sleep, work and playtime, respectively, discussed at length in the third section of analysis. Moreover, Stubb is a firm believer in the individual: “Therefore, you can change. It’s all up to you” (BW Summer/2012).

Spin, as mentioned before, is a constant companion in the columns and positive connotations are linked to the author himself as well. In order to dole out advice to others, he simultaneously describes his own values and choices. Stubb presumably does not use PowerPoint, he plans his days meticulously and executes them to perfection, he exercises fervently and writes lovely columns, as is evidenced by their very existence.

In order not to alienate the voting public by appearing too hierarchical a figure, Stubb offers readers familiarising “insider information” in the form of confessionals, in which he appears to apply negative connotations to himself. However, it is much in evidence that these supposedly negative connotations are paradoxically positive spin and speak for Stubb, not against him. The column “The art of being kind” begins with “I’ll start by coming out of the closet: I love shopping” (BW Nov/2007). Other “weaknesses” besides shopping that Stubb “admits” to include treating himself to chocolate (“The power of habit”, BW May/2012) and feeling frustration due to a sports injury (happens to the best of them), being “a bit of a food fascist” (“Better food for kids, please” BW Nov/2011) and having “a bit of a fetish for sports” (“Falling in love with my bike” Sep/2011). So Stubb’s misgivings include shopping, enjoying sports and being a “food fascist” despite indulging in chocolate on the rare occasion.

These are hardly confessions, and being a food fascist as in a person who eats healthy food is hardly a negative attribute. An actual fascist, yes, that would be disconcerting and certainly a confession leading to negative connotations. But eating healthily, participating in physical exercise

and maintaining a stylish appearance (this based on the shopping affection) are not by any means negative attributes but further frame and brand Stubb as a leader of exceptional quality.

Alcohol is a recurring theme in Stubb's columns. In "The European vodka wars" (BW Dec/2006) Stubb discusses the hard liquors manufactured in different countries and the disputes over these different products. The column contains positive spin for Finnish vodka brands, "The Finns love their Finlandia and Koskenkorva vodka", usually sold in duty frees and available on Finnair flights. This column is notable in that it includes rare negative spin towards a political opponent, with Stubb telling readers that the (then) Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen of the Centre Party does not consume alcohol: "He is a teetotaller." Stubb makes it clear to readers that he on the other hand does enjoy alcohol: "All I need is some real vodka, good company and a snaps song, preferably 'Helan går!'" and his introduction reads "Alexander Stubb is a member of the European Parliament who enjoys an occasional snaps" (*snaps* in Swedish refers to a small dose of clear, hard alcohol). In "January in moderation" (BW Jan/2014) he discusses "dropless January", a Finnish tradition of abstaining from alcohol use during the month of January, presumably after heavy drinking during the Christmas holidays and New Year's celebrations. By the end of the column Stubb has convinced himself to try a month without alcohol, which again implies that he usually does enjoy alcoholic beverages in his everyday life.

Finnish people are notoriously interested and invested in alcohol consumption, and alcohol is a cause of major health issues and social problems in the country (Karlsson et al, 2013, 13; "Yearbook of alcohol and drug statistics 2014", 2014). Despite this, in Stubb's columns alcohol is framed in a positive manner. As noted, even his discussion on abstaining from alcohol emphasise the fact that he is not a teetotaller, unlike some opponents. In a similar vein, during the 2012 US presidential elections, Republican candidate Mitt Romney's Mormon religion and resulting sobriety became a topic of discussion in the country. In the United States it has become a tradition to ask

which political candidate voters would most like to “enjoy a beer” with, implying that the same person is the one they would most wish to become their president (Dickinson, 2012; Scherer, 2015). It is slightly problematic for a Finnish politician to advertise his fondness of *snaps* considering the issues surrounding alcohol consumption in Finland, but taking a note from US politics, Stubb frames himself in a familiar way, as a relaxed, easy-going guy. Stubb is not just an uptight food fascist, he is supposedly also a ‘bro’ you can enjoy an ice-cold ‘brewski’ with during an ice hockey match. In US politics, this seems to matter, so perhaps it matters in Finnish politics as well.

A result of Stubb’s perfect time management skills is his athletic form. In his columns and in public appearances in general, Stubb advocates a sporty lifestyle insisting that an hour of physical exercise gives two hours worth of energy in return. In a combination of authority and familiarity, Stubb advises readers on how to train for a marathon run and encourages them as follows: “Send me an e-mail at alexander.stubb@formin.fi and I’ll be able to tell you if I reached my goal of three hours and 10 minutes [in the Stockholm marathon]” (“How to train for a marathon” BW Jun-Aug/2010). Stubb at the time was Minister of Foreign Affairs and this is his official ministry e-mail address, but it remains unclear whether he wishes the public contact him in matters unrelated to his achievements in sports.

As already evidenced, sports is a constant topic of discussion in the columns, both the activities Stubb participates in himself and the sports activities and ceremonies that affect enthusiasts in general. As he wrote in the September 2011 column, “Falling in love with my bike”: “Reading these columns over the years you might have noticed that I have a bit of a fetish for sports.” Indeed, sports related columns are plentiful and their content range from Stubb’s own experiences to the public sphere of promoting Finland to value judgements regarding other people’s physical activities. Columns that refer to global sporting events and promote Finland include the February 2010 column about the (then) upcoming Vancouver Olympics that merely includes

Stubb's overtly positive medal predictions and so-called name dropping of Finnish sportsmen, and "Let's play hockey!" (BW Apr/2012) about the ice hockey world championships, "For us in the north it's like the soccer World Cup and the Super Bowl combined". Stubb writes about the benefits of children participating in sports in "Youth and sport" (BW Jan/2013) and a year later in "The joy of sports" (BW Feb/2014), in basically the exact same way.

Encouraging adults to exercise is usually included in columns that record Stubb's own personal achievements. Columns include "The joy of triathlons" (BW Sep/2008), "Surviving the Ironman" (BW Sep/2009) about training for the Ironman sports event, the aforementioned Jun-Aug 2010 about Stubb's marathon training, and the Summer 2011 column "Learning from a sports injury" in which Stubb comes out triumphant after injuring his foot, which is followed by the aforementioned September issue and the column "Falling in love with my bike" in which Stubb recounts how he revels in cycling after being unable to run due to the unfortunate events referred to in the previous column. Curiously, most of Stubb's sports related columns appear in the September issues, perhaps due to the summer vacations allotted to parliament members. In 2012 the sports column appears later on, in November, in the format of a strange how-to, which offers no real information to readers but instead informs the public that "My running style is more economical, and my times are improving" ("Born to run" Nov/2012) which may be of importance to some voters but perhaps not many casual readers.

Stubb's sports enthusiasm is natural, after all, his father is a sports headhunter and sports journalist. Nonetheless, the abundance of sports discourse is significant. Sports, the participation in and observation thereof, is of interest to people on a global scale, despite differences in emphases on different sporting events. Therefore politics has long been interested in linking itself to sports for various positive gains. Notorious, unfortunate examples of politics and sports colliding include Nazi Dictator Adolf Hitler in the Berlin 1936 Olympic Games and the 1980 Moscow and 1984 Los

Angeles Summer Olympics which were alternately largely boycotted by opposing political sides. However, despite the political climate of the 1984 games and the continuing Cold War, the hosting role of the United States was considered a political win for President Ronald Reagan. Yates even goes as far as to say that Reagan “used the Los Angeles Olympics to get himself elected as President of the United States of America” (2012, 9). Since then, association with sports is a positive, coveted position for politicians, and not just in the Western countries. Russian leader Vladimir Putin is known for various displays of (physical) power, and in Sochi in winter of 2014, under Putin’s reign, Russia produced the most expensive Olympic Games ever (Forrest, 2014).

Six games, or 28 years since Reagan’s success in Los Angeles, Tory politician Boris Johnson took a prominent role in the 2012 London Olympics. According to Yates, in the mass-mediated sports spectacle, Johnson was able to improve his reputation by associating himself with the success of the London games by exploiting “new, postmodern methods of political communication”. Johnson is indeed a master of these new forms of making a name for himself. During the games, he celebrated a gold medal won by Team GB by attempting to slide on a zip-wire - attempting, as he eventually got stuck and was left dangling mid-air, waving small Union Jacks in both hands⁶. Sonia Purnell (2012) comments that this event “cemented Johnson's status as a towering national – even international – figure and the man who owns the London 2012 Olympics (or at least its successes)”.

In 2011, Purnell wrote a book on Johnson, *Just Boris: Boris Johnson the irresistible rise of a political celebrity* which was mentioned by Stubb in his February 2012 column, “The secrets of success”. In the column, Stubb mentions three biographies he has read: *Matkalla – Martti Ahtisaaren tarina* about former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari by Katri Merikallio and Tapani Ruokanen, *Michael Monroe* by Ari Vääntänen as well as the aforementioned book on Johnson. The column continues with a detailed description on the Finnish rock musician Michael Monroe. Stubb

⁶ Video footage of the event available here: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/aug/01/boris-johnson-zip-wire>

curiously writes “Everyone knows about Boris Johnson and Martti Ahtisaari. Therefore, I’ll focus on Michael Monroe, probably one of the most respected, yet least-known rockstars of the past 30 years.” In this column, Stubb’s Anglo American framing is obvious. Everyone in Finland is aware of former president Ahtisaari and rockstar Monroe, but fewer have heard of Johnson. Internationally, Ahtisaari is well known in certain audiences due to his Nobel Peace Prize win in 2008. Johnson, however, holds a strong domestic position in the UK but is hardly a global figure. At least in Finland, despite his successful appearances in the Olympics in 2012, Johnson remains largely unknown. This assessment is based on an article in *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper from May 2015, in which reporter Annamari Sipilä describes Johnson and his significance in the UK at great length, noting that Johnson is referred to by his first name only, as Boris, even though other politicians are referred to by surname only. Sipilä comments that this is a high compliment to Johnson, and it is desirable among Finnish politicians as well to be known “on a first name basis” in the media and among people and that it is a level of recognition “money can’t buy”.

Still, for Stubb’s intended audience, Johnson and Ahtisaari are household names whereas a Finnish rockstar is warrant of a column. The column ends with the following “The secret Monroe’s success [sic] is a combination of talent, perseverance and hard work: the same recipe for success that has been used by many who have achieved greatness - including Boris Johnson and Martti Ahtisaari.” As said, Ahtisaari was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize - but what has Johnson achieved that Stubb considers ‘greatness’? Perhaps the answers lie in Johnson’s abilities in gaining political fame internationally and Stubb’s apparent aspirations in similar ways.

Stubb and Johnson certainly share some similarities. They both represent the conservative side in their respective domestic politics. They both have resided in Brussels, Stubb as an MEP and Johnson as a journalist reporting on EU issues. In his biography on Johnson, Andrew Gimson writes: “Are these Tories right to take Boris seriously? Not in the sense that he is a serious

economist. Nor, by the standards of Enoch Powell's heirs on the Tory benches, is he a serious eurosceptic. Boris loves Europe. He may have made his reputation by mocking the pretensions of Brussels, but that does not mean he disagreed with everything that Brussels was doing" (2012, 324). Like Johnson, Stubb "loves Europe" and even though he served as MEP he did not shy from presenting critiques either. Johnson is known for his foreign first name and his poignant looks; Stubb is an uncommon surname and he has made a trademark of his large teeth and smile.

Moreover, Johnson is a journalist who has become a politician, whereas Stubb is a politician who desires the career of a journalist, as mentioned in the quotation in the theory part ("In the future I wish to become a columnist or a journalist"). According to Yates, as the 'play' of sports becomes mixed with the 'play' of politics, "the narcissistic politician becomes a mediatised object of identification and fantasy" (2012, 9). Similarly, the play of actors and the play of politicians is mixed. John Street compares politicians to actors, commenting that "skilled politicians vary their performance according to the demands placed upon them by the different media genres in which they appear" (2003, quoted by Drake and Higgins 2006, 90). Based on the fact that Stubb has reached the status of PM, he can be viewed as a skilled politician, and therefore it can be argued that Stubb is aware of different media formats and thus takes into consideration the construction of the column.

According to Fairclough, identification, the construction of social identity, is present in all situations but the particularities of each situation results in differences in identities (2003, 172-5). This means that there are "different 'performances' in these positions depending on the social (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.) memberships and life histories of those who occupy them (Archer 1995), and different identities attached to different performances." Fairclough refers to these identities as they apply to all people and the way performances vary according to situation, whereas John Street discusses performance as it relies to politicians in a specific manner. Street argues that

politics ought to be thought of as a performance, and that politicians deploy a recognizable “idiolect” that is associated with their persona while simultaneously adapting to different styles and settings (2003, 97). Stubb has underlying, constant identities of politician and varying from MEP to PM, as well as identities he wants to focus on, that is, father, husband, sportsman, scholar, positive personality on the whole.

This adaptation and the underlying identities are present in every column in multimodal manner. In *Blue Wings*, each of Stubb’s columns appear under the heading of “European Voices” which remains unchanged from 2005 until 2014 (and beyond, presumably) and is applied to other columns in the magazine as well, and as such is not unique to Stubb. The changing factor in each column is present in the introductory phrase which vary depending on each issue. Examples include “Alexander Stubb is a member of the European parliament and holds a PhD in international relations” (BW Jan/2007) which emphasises his academic credentials and status in the EU parliament, “Alexander Stubb is a Member of the European Parliament who smiles every time he thinks about a summer in Finland” (BW June-August 2007) which frames him as a positive figure and Finland as a lovely summer vacation spot. For several issues in recent times, Stubb is merely referred to by his position, as in “Alexander Stubb is the [Foreign/Foreign Trade/Prime] Minister of Finland”. Perhaps these political positions are considered such heavyweights that they are best presented without further embellishments. Nevertheless, the joy of smiling from earlier monikers is replaced by grave seriousness of a simple title. As said, the columns are multimodal, meaning that every text is accompanied by a visual element, a photograph of Stubb. The photographs are intended to attract attention and are used further to frame Stubb in desired ways. In the pictures, Stubb is often in a lively pose, for instance posing as if swinging a golf club (BW, Jun-Aug/2007) or tying his shoelaces (BW, Mar/2014). Looks are important, and once again the branding of Stubb seems to cross paths with Johnson’s.

Boris Johnson has made a clever trademark of his looks. Johnson is not handsome in a traditional leading man way, so instead he has emphasised his original features, white unruly hair for instance, for maximum effect. Like Johnson, Stubb does not possess the leading man qualities that would allow for a sex symbol status despite being a political “leading man”. As is the case, very few politicians have such qualities the only exception perhaps being the late John F. Kennedy who “benefits” from the tragic “die young, stay pretty” thinking applied to celebrities who have passed before their time.

In an article in *Politico* from 2005, reporter Martin Banks quotes an anonymous Finnish media representative: “The Finnish media love him [Stubb] but on the few occasions he gets bad press he reacts badly. He was once jokingly compared, with his big teeth, to a squirrel and he didn’t like it one bit.” Negative comments regarding one’s look are always hurtful, but it appears that Stubb has long lost his original “bad reaction” and replaced it with a more effective strategy. The 2009 compilation book on Stubb’s columns, *Alaston totuus (The Naked Truth)*, comes with a cover in which is a drawing of Stubb, depicting large front teeth in a broad smile.

As mentioned before, Street describes politicians’ deployment of recognizable idiolects which consist of a range including but not limited to style, voice, expressions and gestures that are connected to their public persona. If Stubb was annoyed by negative comments in 2005, as early as 2007 he had adapted to the situation. In the column “Running the Helsinki Marathon” (BW Sep/2007) Stubb reflects on his public persona while describing his experience running the Helsinki City Marathon: “I grit my teeth. Someone in the crowd shouts, ‘Alex ain’t smiling anymore!’ I have to turn around and smile.” The smile is part of Stubb’s what Corner would call “mediated persona”, a performed “personalized self” that “operates congruently with the political demands placed upon it” (2003, quoted by Drake and Higgins in 2006, 89). Comparisons to small rodents are small change in exchange for a well-known persona and achieving coveted first-name basis with the

public. If indeed such first name terms exist; it could be that Stubb is insinuating such desires in this column to his readers through an imaginary or exaggerated anecdote. Once again, the evolution is clear in Stubb's political performance.

However, it seems that this political performance may become so strong that it results in backlash, as seems to have happened to Stubb and Johnson, both. Marshall comments that "in politics, a leader must somehow embody the sentiments of the party, the people, and the state whereas in the realm of entertainment, a celebrity must somehow embody sentiments of the audience" (1997, 203). Political celebrities appear to have some problems in implementing both sentiments simultaneously. If UK politicians across the board were jealous and envious of Johnson's status during the 2012 Olympics, by 2015 even his own party has in part turned against him. Famous for "Boris bikes", officially called Santander Cycles meaning the public bicycles in London but better known by this mayoral nickname, Johnson has according to Purnell caused annoyance among his Tory colleagues when "he turns up to political cabinet in his bicycle helmet" (2015). Already in 2012, Purnell writes that Johnson's "bumbling" act is carefully calculated: "the most successful jokes and 'off-the-cuff' Boris-isms are rehearsed and recycled". And despite his nonchalant disposition, Johnson is "rarely a friend . . . Indeed, when questioned, these self-professed "friends" often admit that they have seen the mayor socially perhaps only a couple of times in the past few years. Those who are no longer "useful" have not seen him at all" (2012).

Similarly, despite being all smiles and having been selected "Finland's most positive person of the year" in 2009, Stubb's background as a school bully has been brought to the attention for the media and he has openly admitted to having been "a real prick" (Junkkari, 2014a). Stubb's adaptation skills, manifested in his broad smile has begun to garner some negative connotations. For instance in a television interview, during which Stubb realises that the cameras are rolling and his

expression rapidly changes from gravely serious to a broad, almost unnatural smile (*Nyt-liite*, 2014a).

Stubb's linguistic mannerisms and the discourse he uses in his speech and text have already been investigated in this thesis. However, along with his physical political performance, this part of his idiolect has also received backlash. Stubb's first column for *Blue Wings* is titled "In search of the perfect European" (BW Mar/2005) and discusses prejudices among EU nationalities regarding one another, such as Germans enjoying order, the Spanish being talkative and Finns being quiet. In a case of curious foreshadowing, Stubb contemplates that "The French are unable to speak about anything unless they can present a three-point schema." Stubb is nowadays notorious for "speaking in threes", his most known language-related mannerism. *Nyt.fi*, the online edition of Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* weekly supplement did calculations that during an event in Germany, Stubb used a three-point schema five times during a half-hour speech (2014b).

In the section discussing the column as a genre, John Street was quoted comparing politicians to actors and the concept of a personalized self, a requirement of any politician according to Corner (2003) was brought to attention. Curiously, Stubb himself attempts to disprove these theories. In an offhand comment in the column "A Working Family" (BW Feb/2007), he states that "Personalities do not change much between home and the workplace". In any case, Stubb has been shown to adapt as a political performer. His discourse has changed along the way, both his column writing in relation to his political position and in other sites of performance. Moreover, he has done well in his career in politics, first of all being elected as an MEP but then also advancing his career throughout the years. Based on his success, it can be said that Stubb is a skilled politician. Since Johnson is a fellow EU enthusiast, it is presumable that Stubb was aware of him long before reading Purnell's biography on him in 2012 (BW Feb/2012).

Could Stubb be taking tips from the master of UK politics and adapting them to his own persona? Or are political animals such as Johnson and Stubb appearing independently, unbeknown to each other? Stubb and Johnson seem to have several similarities between them, most significantly the connection to written discourse. As pointed out, Johnson is a journalist who became a politician; Stubb is a politician with hopes of a career in journalism.

From the perspective of language and literary studies it is interesting that political celebrity and linguistic skills appear to be linked. And specifically from the perspective of English Language and Literature, the Anglo American aspects present in the discourse are significant. Johnson, although a UK politician, was born in the United States, thus he is connected to both cultures as a native. Stubb on the other hand, has adopted an Anglo American reference point. Is the hegemony of the United States as a political superpower and the hegemony of English as a global language essential in achieving international, political celebrity that crosses cultures and raises interest on a global scale?

4.3 Double-Blinds, Dinner Parties, Holidays Abroad: Context is Key

This section focuses on context from two approaches, first regarding Stubb and his intended audience and second, the context Stubb's columns have in the media in general.

The starting off point for Stubb's columns is interesting regarding his audience. An example of the confusion involving Stubb's audience is the column for 2007's summer triple issue, which includes a crossing of cultures. In the column, Stubb encourages tourists to "say 'Hi'" to a Groucho Marx lookalike called "Ben Z." His English-speaking audience will be aware of the physical appearance of the late American comedy legend Groucho Marx, whereas Finnish readers will recognise "Ben Z." as veteran politician and Stubb's teammate from the National Coalition Party, Ben Zyskowicz. In this double-blind, the American audience will find humour in Marx's signature

look whereas Finns will have solved the puzzle of the mysterious Mr Zed. A limited audience will know both figures, so it is interesting that Stubb chooses to produce such restricted discourse.

According to Bora et al, “citizenship is an ongoing communicative achievement” (2001, 3; quoted by Fairclough, 2013, 412) and instead of what citizenship *is* one can look at how citizenship is *done*, meaning “the range of ways people position themselves and others as citizens in participatory events” (2013, 412). For the purpose of this thesis, the participatory event is the column writing and reading albeit they do not occur simultaneously. As discussed before, *Blue Wings* reaches an international audience that Stubb’s columns address. The concepts of *we* and *they* are blurred, since as this section shows, the intended audience of Stubb is not always clear nor is his own stance, for that matter. Stubb’s underlying identities were explored earlier in this chapter, and his various identities appear in relation to citizenship as well. Stubb is a Finn, but hails from a bilingual background and can be considered a member of the language minority of Swedish-speaking Finns (Finland’s official languages are Finnish and Swedish). As a Finn, Stubb is also a citizen of the EU and European in the cultural sense. In *Blue Wings*, Stubb writes in *lingua franca* and directly addresses neither his Finnish nor Swedish speaking voters.

In the previous section, the concept of an international celebrity politician was introduced. In his columns, Stubb is addressing an implicitly international audience. Tomlinson (1999) argues that “globalisation lifts cultural life out of its hitherto close connection with physical locality” (quoted in Fairclough, 2013, 471) and in an aeroplane, cultural life is literally lifted off from physical locality. Aircraft is also considered a ‘non-place’ by French cultural anthropologist Marc Augé (1995, 94). According to him, non-places entail two realities: “spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces” and this relationship between individuals and their non-place surroundings (such as the inside of an aeroplane) is “link between individuals and their surroundings in the space of non-

place is established through the mediation of words, or even texts” (1995, 94). The words in an aeroplane could be the regulated announcements done by the personnel, such as “Cabin crew please be seated for landing”, which are always done in English, lingua franca, regardless of aircraft nationality and native tongue. The texts that link individuals to their surroundings on Finnair flights include the columns by Stubb, which are ‘always there’ in the seat pockets, month after month.

As pointed out earlier, van Dijk believes that the function of text and talk lies in the ability to control minds, as drastic as that may sound. But this mind-control serves the same purpose as the “common ground of thought” described by Fairclough. Seeking power is seeking hegemony, and as discussed in the chapter on theoretical background, hegemony is found in several different aspects. Political hegemony and cultural hegemony are intertwined and for politicians, cultural domination is a key factor in achieving political power.

As van Dijk expressed, the ones with the most power are the ones with the most to say. According to Yates, Boris Johnson was able to “woo the public and promote himself as a celebrity politician to mass audiences via different media platforms” during the London Olympic Games (2012, 9). Stubb has secured his communicative scope by being present in several sites of discourse. In order to improve his international standing, he reaches out to an international audience through the use of Global English. For Stubb, the key with an international audience is to seek an international discourse of culture.

During the time Stubb has been writing his columns, beginning in 2005, domestic readers have become increasingly familiar with his persona. Even though it was mentioned in the chapter on political celebrity that there is concern of “a disaffected public” that has lost interest in formalized politics (Drake and Higgins, 2006, 88), most citizens have at least a vague idea of who their Prime Minister is and what they stand for. Foreign readers are likely unfamiliar with Stubb in general and if they have not read his columns before, have no prior knowledge of his political

affiliations or aspirations. Fairclough finds that “ideologies are primarily in the ‘unsaid’ implicit propositions” (2003, 27). For a domestic audience, much has “already been said” as they are familiar with domestic politics. On the other hand, a domestic audience unfamiliar with *Blue Wings* or unable to understand English, are *othered* by Stubb. He does not hide his political stance (how could he?) but addressing an international audience allows him to hide in plain sight, so to speak.

In his columns as Prime Minister even more than before, Stubb prefers to allude to other authors and texts and subsequently frames them to suit his own agenda. He additionally frames the discussion between himself and his readership. In the column “When World Trade became sexy again” (May/2014), Stubb discusses the relationship between the United States and the European Union. Stubb argues that not only have the two parties involved become closer in recent times but that this close relationship is needed: “*We* [the US and the EU] realise we live a symbiosis. *We* need each other. And shared values are never a bad thing in a marriage” [italics added]. A continuation of a sentiment he expressed four years earlier: “It’s time to renew the wedding vows between Europe and the US” (“A grumpy old couple”, BW Mar/2010).

It is not always entirely clear who Stubb is referring to when he writes about “we” and “us”, but in these instances it is obvious that *we* consists of the US and the EU and in the 2014 column he explicitly addresses who are not part of this *we*: “At the same time the EU and the US are losing ground. *Others* are catching up. In a decade or two China will pass both as the biggest economy in the world. *Other* parts of the world are growing faster than the transatlantic couple” [italics added]. This type of othering is particularly interesting, since due to Finland’s geographical location, Asia is a crucial market for Finnair. Asian passengers are therefore not uncommon on Finnair flights, and yet still Stubb employs an Anglo American viewpoint, conveying distress over the rise of China as an economical superpower. Nationalities aside, there are other ways of discourse to contain elements of inclusion and exclusion.

As mentioned in the theoretical background chapter, Fairclough presents an idea of establishing common ground of thought. This common ground in my view is reached through what van Dijk calls “managing minds of others” through text and talk. Fairclough notes that the assumed meanings that are present in this common ground of thought are ideological. Stubb attempts to build common ground of thought in his columns. As discussed above, Stubb’s intended audience is not always clear. As we already know, *Blue Wings* targets businessmen that travel often, earn over 60,000 euros annually and are considered decision makers by the magazine. In “The Dinner Party” (BW Apr/06), Stubb contemplates his fondness of dinner parties and describes what format parties tend to follow: “Current events often dominate the starter. Some talk about politics. Others go into sports. The business crowd talks business.” He continues to disclose that the guests in these parties include “DINKs (Double Income, No Kids), DISKs (Double Income, Several Kids) and SINOs (Single Income, No Obligations)” but apparently no unemployed people. The common ground built upon this column include such phrasal as “The *apéritif* is for small talk”, assuming readers (even the tight-lipped Finns) engage in small talk and enjoy appetizers.

In the “Ultimate holiday” (BW Feb/2009) Stubb discloses that he finds that he needs four breaks a year. First, at Christmas to Lanzarote, Spain (“I simply need the sun”), second break comes “six weeks later” when school children have their winter break and Stubb travels to the Alps, third is an Easter break in Finnish Lapland, followed by several weeks during summer, when a trip to the Mediterranean is preferred. For Finnair, such suggestions of air travel are undoubtedly helpful. In a different column, “You are what you eat” (BW Sep/2012), Stubb tells readers: “And when others go to a hotel for a holiday, we go to a “*mökki*”, the summer cottage in the countryside [*italics original*], addressing foreign readers from a Finnish perspective. Except that it seems as though Finns go to *mökki*, while Stubb travels abroad. Stubb’s adaptation skills have already been alluded to.

Stubb's common ground with his audience is that they have dinner parties, which are attended by "the business crowd", and take several holidays a year, to multiple international destinations. Stubb is well-to-do and there is no shame in it, but some domestic audiences may feel alienated as they are excluded from such a lifestyle, that of the elite. However, this column appears in an airline magazine and is read in an aeroplane thus the reader shares these traits and capabilities with Stubb. High earning frequent fliers are not alienated by columns depicting Stubb's apparent financial security, in fact, they share common ground with him. As said, the viewpoint of the elite becomes the viewpoint of the society and exclusion is as noteworthy as inclusion. This kind of discourse that Stubb uses only reaches the appropriate audience, it would seem. Perhaps even the "othered" Asians feel included in this part of Stubb's discourse.

As discussed earlier, Stubb is capable of adapting to different situations and his columns reflect these changes. His tone and physical appearance change, as does his discourse. Stubb is aware of his actions, his political performance, and he is equally aware of the opportunities his columns provide him with. An earlier example related to a column published during election season, and as noted above, Stubb is aware that the lion's share of his readers reside in airplanes. In the column titled "I want my liquids back!" (BW Oct/2007), Stubb mixes probable personal annoyance and audience baiting with rather heavy political commentary. He states "In liberal democracies we are always trying to find a balance between liberty and security. In this particular instance [restrictions on liquids carried by passengers], we simply have gone too far." Again, one must remember that Stubb is addressing readers acutely affected by these restrictions, likely seething in their aeroplane seats after queuing in security. Stubb: "Nobody is happy. I'm sure we have all been there." Have we? Most likely, if you read Stubb's text, you have.

Stubb further laments that due to security measures, it takes "three hours to change terminals at Heathrow." In the context of being annoyed by such restrictions, everyone can agree

with Stubb. However, the restrictions have been put to place for security reasons. Stubb is in the political position to influence these decisions. Stubb is not just an annoyed, tired passenger. Similarly, when he states that “For me the idea of a fixed pension at, for example, age 60 is absurd” (“Growing old is cool” BW Dec/2012) it needs to be kept in mind that Stubb as a politician is in charge of set retirement ages in Finland. Or does it? The basis of this thesis is the fact that *a politician* is writing these columns. Stubb in no way hides his political views: “I’m certainly a raving liberal” (“Death by PowerPoint” BW Sep/2010). Stubb is not just presenting ideas, he is actively enacting upon them. Unlike a journalist, Stubb as a politician does not need concern himself with the idea that “the pen is mightier than the sword” when he has the right to use both.

But does this concern readership at large? Is Stubb so effective in his common ground building discourse that there is a general consensus between him and his readers? Fairclough argues that certain sets of discourse conventions, including newspaper reporting, implicitly embody certain ideologies, “particular knowledge and beliefs, particular ‘positions’ for the types of social subject that participate in that practice” including newspaper readers (2013, 129). Is the context of an in-flight magazine, produced to advertise the company and simultaneously keep company to their customers during flights, in the non-place of an aeroplane, so prevailing that it is stronger than the power relations present in the magazine content? The audience seems to be disinterested in the political aspect of Stubb’s columns.

The second half of this section discusses the attention or lack thereof given to Stubb’s columns and how power relations are present in this phenomenon. As per Stubb’s own assessment, he can and has written about basically anything in his columns. As made clear in the earlier sections, he has talked about himself, his family, his peers, his habits, and a range of political issues. Despite this array of topics and the sheer volume of columns (at least 96 by December 2014), hardly any attention has been drawn to Stubb’s discourse. This is particularly interesting, since despite the

intended audience of decision makers, online searches show that these columns are read by people from all kinds of backgrounds. Fans of rap music have written responses to Stubb's column "Why Finnish rap rocks" (BW Dec/2013) depicting Finnish hip hop culture (Sarila, 2013), anonymous immigration critics have discussed Stubb's columns online (Hommaforum, 2013) and a random anonymous participant in Finnish discussion forums has attempted to draw attention to Stubb's "Ten reasons to spend your summer in Finland" (BW Jun-Aug/2007) column through the following quotation: "As an avid golfer I have to recommend midnight golf. Many of the clubs organise night time tournaments. The tee-off is around 9 pm. As a youngster I had two dreams relating to golf: I wanted to turn pro and/or play a round of golf - naked. Neither has materialised yet..." (*Vauva.fi*, *Suomi24.fi*, 2008). They have yet to receive any replies.

It is surprising that there has been very little media attention given to these columns. Annamari Haimi from *Kouvola Sanomat* alluded to Stubb's column on children and sport in her own column of the same subject (2013). So far, Stubb's 8+8+8-lifestyle has elicited the most response. Stubb's superman-esque abilities in time management and scheduling prompted the tabloid paper *Ilta-Sanomat* to inquire whether his fellow ministers live by the eight hours of sleep, eight hours of work and eight hours of pastime regimen promoted by Stubb. The ministers interviewed for the story concluded that such a timetable is impossible for them (Hagert, 2013). Writing these columns, it almost seems as though Stubb is hiding in plain sight. After all, it is not a question of him somehow keeping it a secret that he writes for *Blue Wings*. In an interview for *Helsingin Sanomat* about a an entirely different matter, Stubb says "In the future I would like to be a journalist and a columnist - well, I already am a columnist" and the reporter adds that said columns appear in *Blue Wings* (Junkkari, 2014b; translation by thesis author).

It is interesting to find that the media has expressed so little interest and that Stubb's political opponents have not been interested in his writings. According to Professor of North

American Studies Katri Sieberg, negative campaigning, common in US politics, is not used much in Finland where numerous political parties attempt to attract voters (Läksy, 2015b). Perhaps this in combination with the context of in-flight magazine writing is one reason why some of Stubb's curious comments have gathered no attention. An example of the importance of context lies in the column regarding column writing itself.

This apparent lack of interest is investigated through two examples from Stubb's columns. The first has to do with Stubb's fondness of social media, referred to numerous times in this thesis, the second with Stubb's column writing process.

Stubb's second column for Finnair, "Communicating Europe" (Apr-May/2005), was already analysed at length due to its vibrant references to condoms and sex toys. In the column, Stubb makes a joke regarding the infamous British tabloid newspaper *The Sun*, stating that it is his favourite source of EU information. This is a clear statement of sarcasm, although of course for an MEP reading the notoriously anti-EU newspaper's articles on the EU offers the same ironic delight as hearing the Devil recite the New Testament. Jokes aside, later in 2013 Stubb dedicates a column to the joys of social media. In "The power of social media" (BW Feb/2013) Stubb writes: "Twitter is my main source of news". This statement is slightly unnerving. Obviously, legitimate news outlets post links to their articles on their Twitter accounts, but there is something disturbing about a statesman relying on an online application.

First, Twitter is notoriously problematic when it comes to facts. As Twitter is a "first come, first served" application it means that speed is essential, integrity and fact-checking comes later. The chance of receiving misinformation is higher than in traditional media outlets. Additionally, Stubb has access to firsthand knowledge to many things that are beyond the scope of regular people, not to mention that his actions are often the news themselves in Finland and even internationally. As van Dijk has noted, parliamentarians have access to parliament meetings. Stubb as a politician

has access that is not warranted to just anyone. As discussed in the chapter on the theoretical background, the power relations regarding normal author-reader-relationships are distorted in connection to Stubb's column writing. He remains a politician in power regardless of the actions of his readers; his political hegemony is not immediately diminished by the weakening of his cultural hegemony.

In a similar vein, Stubb as a follower of news is not in the same position as other people. For people lacking political power it is disturbing to think that those in the most powerful position rely on a free-for-all social media news outlet instead of reliable, straight from the horse's mouth facts. Stubb has "confessed" to many things in his columns, but the statement about Twitter is made with no humour or other embellishment. It is completely neutral in nature. It could be negatively spun to read as an embarrassing incident of a statesman appearing to be hip and cool, something politicians essentially are not despite their best efforts, as discussed in the previous section of analysis regarding the complications of embodying the sentiments of the party, public and the audience. As said, this statement regarding Twitter seems like something competitors and the media could use as a weapon against Stubb, but it has gone by with absolutely no attention whatsoever. Is this because of the context involved? A passing mention in a customer magazine, after all. And perhaps rightly so, it may be an old worldly notion to view Twitter as somehow subpar to other news sources.

A more potentially disturbing comment is found in the column "Bringing a column to life" (BW May-Jun/2010) in which Stubb congratulates the 30th birthday of *Blue Wings*, offers insight into his column writing process and simultaneously gives readers advice on the art of column writing. Stubb says the following: "Finally, be bold. A column is not supposed to be a boring list of facts. Let lose [sic]; be wild, argumentative and *even a bit non-factual* in a column. Make a claim and stick to it" [italics added]. Factual is described by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as follows:

“1. Relating to or concerned with facts or reality; of the nature of fact, consisting of facts. 2. Having a basis in fact; accurate; actual, real” (2015). In other words, Stubb states that in column writing one need not be telling the truth, that is, one can lie. A comment such as this in any context other than these *Blue Wings* columns would not go unnoticed and would attract criticism, after all, is the Prime Minister non-factual or even lying in his columns? Is he non-factual somewhere else? Or everywhere else? Where does Stubb draw the line? Imagine the head of any state appearing on television and during a speech advising people to be non-factual. It soon connects to the same cultural context as former President of the United States Richard Nixon on national television saying “Well, when the president does it that means that it is not illegal” in reference to the Watergate scandal.

But as stressed numerous times, context is key factor here. In (Finnish) column writing tradition, facts are interpreted more loosely than elsewhere. A columnist “asking for a friend” or a comedian telling a joke based on “this happened on the way here” - everyone knows that said friend is the person themselves and presumably nothing happened to a comedian on their way to a stand-up gig. These are merely storytelling devices, aids to tell a more memorable anecdote. A victimless crime, as it were. However, Stubb is not just any columnist. He is a politician in power.

Politicians promise voters just about anything before elections and it is not clear what voters can expect afterwards. A journalist writing columns is doing only that and their only duty is to bring some value to their readers. Stubb is actively in charge of people’s lives, what kind of decisions he makes impacts others. It is up to the readers to decide what they think of this, and it seems that Stubb has developed common ground with his readership. Whether Stubb has embellished his columns or been a bit non-factual here or there is a non-issue to readers. Since there has been so little attention given to these columns during the years Stubb has been writing them, it would appear that in the context of reading an in-flight magazine, the readers merely wish to be entertained for a

short while. In this case, they would rather have their Prime Minister be funny and anecdotal (the website of the National Coalition Party even refers to Stubb as “a humorist”, 2015) than boring and strictly factual. Moreover, since the readership of *Blue Wings* is restricted, it perhaps be best for everyone if Stubb remains strictly factual in more general media outlets.

However, independent of what the public thinks or what Stubb’s intentions are writing these columns, it is strange that the media is so unconcerned with these writings. The media makes it easy for Stubb to establish common ground, as readers who find objection in international travelling and otherwise elite lifestyle are supposedly unaware of such columns in the first place. Bourdieu’s assessment of the worldview of the elite becoming the worldview of the society as a whole has been repeated several times in this thesis, and in the very introduction Foucault’s notion that the ideational domination of the elite is inescapable was brought up. The fact that the media entirely ignores one format of communication from a prominent politician is a disturbing reminder of the issues regarding mass media brought up in the theoretical background chapter. To return to the questions of Foucault first presented in the chapter on theoretical background: Who has the right to use a particular discourse? What benefits accrue to them for using it? How is its usage policed, and where does it derive its authority from?

It has been established that Stubb has the right to this particular form of discourse due to his political power. It can also be said that readers seem happy with the discourse he produces, so it is no longer entirely based on his political position as it certainly was in 2005. The benefits are closely connected to the question of policing this particular discourse, as shown above. Stubb has been able to write these columns, conduct his own brand of discourse, in a very peaceful environment, with no disruptions from his opponents nor the media’s watchdogs. In his columns, Stubb is able to maintain a communicative relationship with his domestic audience, using English as lingua franca among his Finnish- and Swedish-speaking readers, as well as reaching out to international sites.

5. Conclusions

This thesis was originally inspired by genuine curiosity and intrigue over the fact that a Prime Minister of a state would make the time and the effort to write columns for a magazine with a limited audience, as politicians usually prefer to address the public in as large attendance as possible. Due to the fact that *Blue Wings* is an international magazine, a seasoned traveller itself, and because Alexander Stubb writes in English, this unique case provided apt research material. As this thesis belongs to the academic field and tradition of English Language and Literature, the viewpoint is international and focused on language use. The research questions relate to the international and language aspects: the power relations, which in a global world are always international on a larger scale, and the discourse.

Due to the specification of the research questions and the scope of this study as a Master's Thesis, certain interesting aspects were excluded. Further research is encouraged on the domestic, Finnish issues of these columns in, for instance, marketing and tourism. The columns of Alexander Stubb would also provide ample research material in the academic fields of political science, international relations and cultural anthropology. In the field of English Language and Literature, further study in the form of, for example, a multimodal discourse analysis would also be possible, as photographs are used in connection to text in the columns.

Michel Foucault asks who has the right to use a particular discourse, what benefits accrue to them for using it, how is its usage policed, and where does it derive its authority from? Stubb has the right to this discourse because he is a politician, he would not have been allotted this space in 2005 had he not been elected into the European Parliament. The benefits are numerous but can be summarised under the umbrella of self-promotion: Stubb can advertise himself which enables him to gain more power and a more prominent position. Benefits are linked to the question of policing this discourse usage: as discussed in the analysis, little attention has been given to these columns,

allowing Stubb to continue writing about “basically anything” while always promoting himself and his brand. Additionally, Finnair benefits from Stubb’s rise in politics, as they originally hired an MEP but eventually received written work from a PM, which gives the easy-going in-flight magazine some unexpected gravitas. The emergence of international political celebrity was discovered in connection to Boris Johnson and Stubb. The authority of this discourse stems from Stubb’s political position as well as his personal background and skillset, in particular his international image as a multilingual cosmopolitan.

The analysis shows that Stubb’s intended audience is implicitly international. He writes his columns not in his native Finnish or Swedish, both official languages in Finland, but in English. Stubb’s intended audience is at all times global, international. Columns depicting Finland or Finnish culture are written with a foreign audience in mind, explaining Finnish traditions and customs and promoting Finnish brands. Stubb in these cases acts as an expert, advising readers. As the analysis shows, Stubb acts as a hierarchical expert regarding numerous issues and lifestyle choices.

As an answer to the original research question on power relations, it has been established that the position of a columnist is one display of power. Even if readers choose not to read Stubb’s columns, the power of the columns has not been entirely diminished. They exist nonetheless, and it is their existence that is vital in terms of power relations. Not reading Stubb’s columns is the only tool available to a reader opposing his position of power. Ignoring the texts does not allow the reader to gain an equally powerful position, that is, readers cannot become authors in the same sense. Voters can write blogs in response to the columns or tweet Stubb, but they are always left in a far less powerful position.

Communicating in English and adopting an Anglo American tone draws focus to Stubb’s stance as an international politician. He may be the Finnish Prime Minister, but his message in these columns does not target his voters but a much larger audience. Similarly to British Boris Johnson,

Stubb brands himself as a political celebrity figure. He has a unique looks, he is actively present, generally speaking, everywhere and through his vast communicative scope he simultaneously builds his personal brand and promotes neoliberal values.

The research questions regarding discourse and power relations were found to be intertwined. It is my argument that Stubb's societal position can never be forgotten in relation to the discourse, thus the discourse follow power relations and vice versa. First, the columns would not exist were they not for his political fame. Second, the columns cannot escape the political realm. Even in his "personal" writings he is writing as a politician advertising himself. Chouliaraki and Fairclough find that Critical Discourse Analysis is "useful in disclosing the discursive nature of much contemporary social and cultural change" (1999, quoted by Wodak and Meyer 2009, 12). CDA was used as the primary theoretical background, but the addition of methodology from mass communications through the framing categorisations by Fairhurst & Sarr and the works of several researchers in media and cultural studies were found to be useful in this thesis. Through interdisciplinary analysis, the social and cultural aspects related to the research material were discovered.

In the very last section, context was of interest. It was found that Stubb writes to an international audience, and builds common ground of thought. From the point of view of literary studies, the phenomenon of suspension of disbelief may be present. In the environment of air travel and in the context of a customer magazine, readers wish to be entertained rather than lectured to. And in connection to Stubb's own assessment of being "a bit non-factual", perhaps the discourse he uses to build common ground of thought actually builds upon a shared notion of fantasy. Perhaps while in transit, Stubb and his readers are all sports fanatics, who eat well, indulge in (duty free) chocolate and vodka, host dinner parties, and indeed, travel constantly (on Finnair). And as it would appear, what Stubb as a fellow passenger says or confesses to, does not relate to Stubb, the politician, on ground. This would go to explain the lack of attention given to his columns in the

media. Another aspect, especially interesting from the point of view of English Language and Literature, is that Stubb's writings are given little attention because they are in English, a foreign language in Finland.

The lack of attention given to these columns in other media outlets, by Stubb's opponents or the general public altogether leads one to think that perhaps these columns are regarded as part of the so-called entertainment system during flights. In this case they can be deemed a success in that they entertain passengers but never cause them grief nor resentment. Stubb's columns are easy to read and manage to be funny at times - even if it is unclear whether this is intentional or not. Humour in any case is an accomplishment in itself for bored passengers. However, Stubb still remains a politician and therefore Fairclough's following assessment ought not to be forgotten: ". . . political texts are not some superficial embroidery upon political events but a fundamental, constitutive part of them" (2003, 244). As entertaining as the columns may be, they are still political texts due to the position of the author. As this thesis goes to print in October 2015, Stubb has lost his Prime Minister status and is currently Minister of Finance in Finland. Despite his diminished political status, he still resides in utter hegemony as a *Blue Wings* columnist. If Stubb fulfils his dream of becoming a journalist and opts out of politics, the nature, function and implications of his writings can be revisited. As Stubb himself assesses: "I can write about basically anything. And I have", so there should be no shortage of research material.

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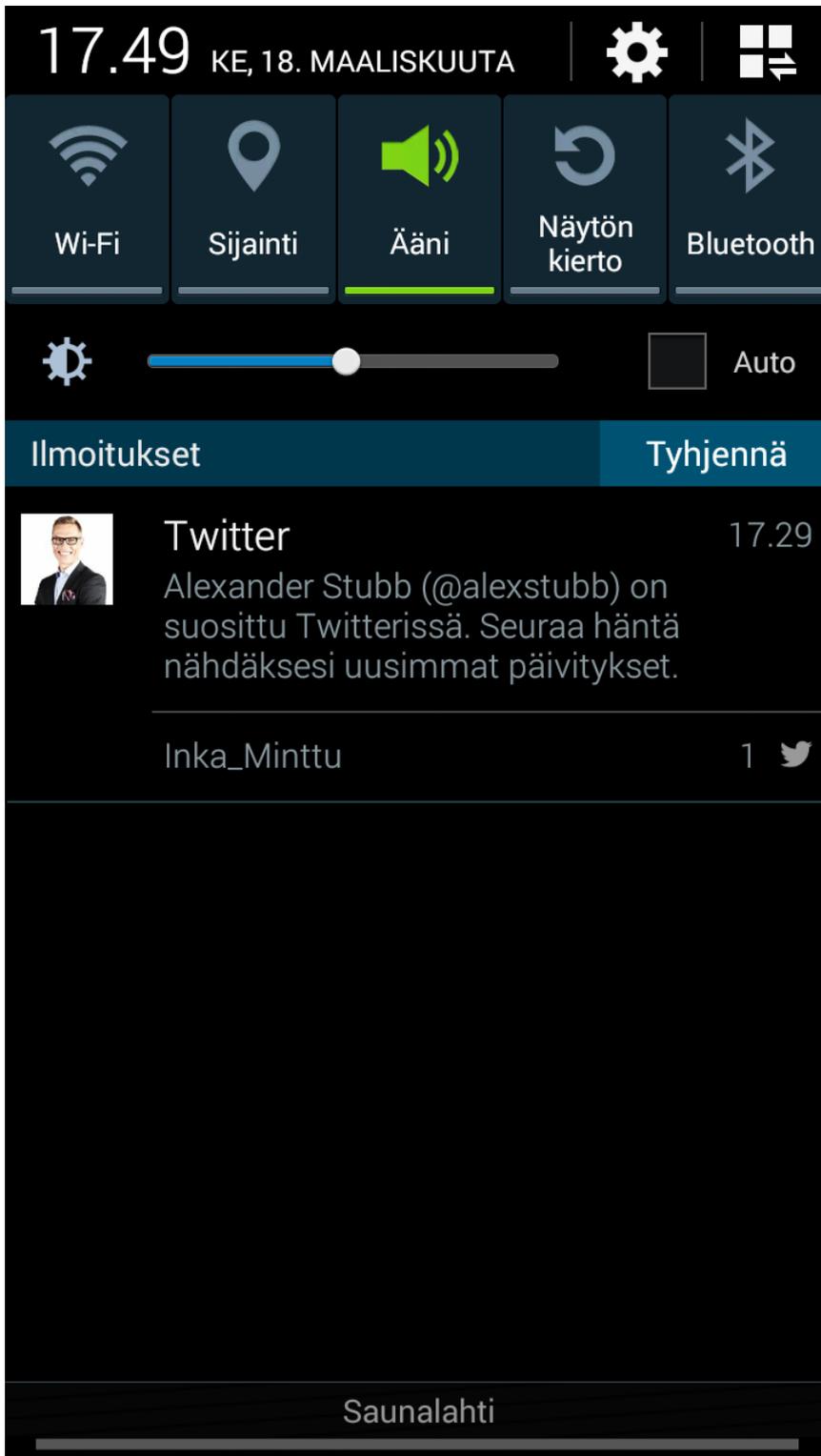
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Appendix



Picture 1. Copyright Inka-Minttu Läksy, 2015.