

Legitimizing Sexism

Critical Discourse Analysis on Sexism in a Political U.S. Podcast

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Sexism in media and in politics is not a new phenomenon, yet the current U.S. political landscape and new forms of media, such as podcasts, demand the issue to be researched further. In this thesis, I analyze the sexist language used in a *The Ben Shapiro Show* podcast episode. Research questions explore what kind of sexist language is used and how sexism is legitimized in the podcast. Additionally, the impact of sexist discourses on the podcast's audience's attitudes and stances is discussed. The analysis is based on Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on especially its feminist branches as well as the Foucauldian understanding of power. Works of Michelle Lazar, Sarah Mills, and Alice Freed are used to form a base for sexism analysis. The legitimation analysis is completed by basing it on Theo Van Leeuwen's Social Actors Approach and legitimation theory and realized via M.A.K Halliday's transitivity analysis.

The analysis shows that the most used type of sexism is overt sexism and that legitimations via authorization and evaluation are used equally. The results suggest that sexist language is utilized in right-wing conservative media to limit women's participation in politics. Sexist attitudes are fostered and naturalized via podcasts and a podcaster creates a community from their audience which trusts the information spread by the podcaster. The study on sexism in podcasts adds to the research on sexist language in media. As podcasts have a unique position in the field of media, located somewhere between traditional and social media, the current study provides a unique point of view on media sexism and sexism in politics.

Keywords: sexism, Critical Discourse Analysis, legitimation, podcast, sexist language, overt sexism, covert sexism

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1 Introduction

Sexism is a term that was coined during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. Alongside other civil rights movement questions, people became more aware of the issues of women and started to organize to fight for a common cause and to change society at large. Phrases such as “The Personal is Political”, which was popularized after Carol Hanisch published an essay in 1969 where she discussed how women’s issues are discussed and more importantly, where they are discussed and by whom (Hanisch 1969) became slogans to shout while protesting. The social movements were backed by legislation and language reform efforts were started to encourage social change by bringing up the issue of discriminatory practices to wider audiences (Talbot 2007, 754). In this thesis, I analyze the sexist language in a political podcast episode of Ben Shapiro’s *The Ben Shapiro Show* about Kamala Harris. Harris is the first woman in a vice-presidential position in the United States and has in her political career faced a lot of criticism due to her way of doing politics and especially due to her way of doing politics as a woman. Because of this unprecedented position as the second most influential person in the United States, it is important to discuss what kind of discriminative language is used of her and what it is based on. If the discussion and the discrimination detected are based on gender, the current study adds the discussion of women in politics and sexism in media from a unique point of view due to Harris’ pioneering title as the vice president and the growing influence of podcasts in the field of media.

Harris was chosen to be the subject of the study because of her unprecedented position as a woman vice president of the United States. The discussion that Joe Biden’s announcement generated during the last election cycle covered bases from a progressive new era in U.S. politics to archaic notions of women in charge. The data analyzed in this thesis is collected from a podcast episode released after the announcement. The discussion around Harris in the public eye has not only sexist tones but racist tones due to her ethnic background as Black-Asian American. The media focus on women politicians has always had sexist undertones and a comparison between media coverage of Kamala Harris and other recent vice presidents has been conducted to prove the point that sexism and racism are more prevalent when the discussion is on women in politics (Harrington 2020). The theory of sexism from a social studies perspective and how sexism in media and politics can influence partaking in politics are discussed further in section 2.

Sexism is not a one-size-fits-all process but has different ways to manifest itself in language use and these manifestations can be very detectable or more covert based on the linguistic elements applied. Most frequently, sexism is divided into overt and covert sexism based on the level of detectability. The interest is not just in what kind of sexism can be detected from the episode, but also in how sexism is legitimized within the community that Shapiro and his audience construct. The research questions are:

1. What kind of sexism can be identified in the podcast?
2. What legitimation strategies are used to legitimize the identified instances of sexism?
3. How can sexist language and legitimation of sexism help foster sexist ideologies and attitudes within the communities formed by the audience of the podcast?

Discussing these topics and answering these research questions relating to the data of the thesis is important due to Shapiro's position as an influential political commentator. By upkeeping discriminatory discourses and legitimizing sexism via his podcast, Shapiro influences his audiences to accept the issues as they are and consider them as norms. The detectability of sexism found in the podcast becomes important when thinking about the audience and the communities the audience members take part in. If sexism in language is more readily used overtly that could transfer to other types of sexist discrimination. In the same sense, when covert sexist language use is applied and accepted, those linguistic strategies could become a way to legitimize sexism without the speaker considering them as sexism.

To answer the research questions, I base the analysis on the theoretical background of *Critical Discourse Analysis* focusing especially on the works of Michel Foucault about power and Theo Van Leeuwen's social actor's approach, as well as Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer's introduction to critical discourse analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach that sets out to produce information on how we construct the world around us via discourses from a critical point of view. It reveals the underlying power structures of discourses at hand and discusses the implications of discourses on individuals' attitudes, and opinions as well as society at large. The current study draws especially on the Foucauldian field of discourse analysis on such concepts as power and truth as well as the feminist branches of the sociolinguistic approach. To support the linguistic analysis of sexism, a framework based on the works of Sara Mills (1997 and 2008) is conducted and utilized when analyzing different

types of sexism. The legitimation aspect is done via transitivity analysis by M.A.K. Halliday (in Matthiessen & Halliday 2014) and based on the work of Theo Van Leeuwen (2008) on social actors, discursive representation, and discursive legitimation. These frameworks will be explained further in section 4 and the analysis of both sexism and legitimation is conducted in section 5. The analysis and the third research question are discussed further in section 6.

While sexism is not a new phenomenon, the popularity of podcasts is. Podcasts date back to the 1980s, but they have gained more prominence since the mid-2000s. In the field of media, podcasts land somewhere between traditional and social media, producing a variety of content that fits into both categories while simultaneously creating unique media between them. The role of traditional and social media in producing political discussion on women has been studied substantially, but the role of podcasts in creating discussion and spreading ideologies on the matter is not researched as widely, maybe due to the novelty of the form of media. Podcasts' position in the field of media makes it possible to spread the ideological and sexist agenda in a seemingly more official way than on social media generally, giving it similar status to the information distributed through traditional media. The podcast episodes have themes, and the preparation often includes research on the matter, and that background work is then compiled with the podcasters' ideas, motives, and opinions. This is why the credibility of the information often mimics traditional media. Traditional news media itself generally increases the credibility of podcasts via producing their own podcasts giving the media form a higher status when considering the level of informativity. This is not to say that content creation on social media does not require work, but the delivery of the intended message differs between podcasts and social media. Podcasts have become an information source on many matters, especially recently.

Research shows that an estimated 74 million Americans above the age of 12 listen to podcasts on a weekly basis (Edison Research, 2022). The influence of podcasts on political decision-making is hard to determine, but I argue that regularly listening to podcasts can affect the opinions and voting decisions of their listeners, especially when the podcaster and the audience are politically aligned strengthening the listeners' opinions and ideologies while confirming their voting choice. That is why the language and ideals propagated by these podcasts should be studied to understand their possible effects and compare their influence in the wider scope of media. The study of sexism in United States' politics is especially notable now that the vice head of state is a woman. Looking into how the sexist discussion on Kamala Harris has shaped the opinions of American citizens could give us some more

insight into the future when we see more female candidates running for offices and what kind of language is then applied when speaking about them during the election cycle. The brief history of podcasts and their influence on modern media is discussed in section 3.

Additionally, the thesis adds to the wider discussion of sexism and misogyny in media. While the material analyzed is already a few years old, understanding how the discussion in the podcast at hand might affect women's participation and public opinion of women in forthcoming elections, both midterm and presidential. It also adds to the global discussion on how women are represented in media. Current examples of bigoted media representation can be drawn from the traditional media representing Finnish prime minister Sanna Marin, locally and globally, and from social media content creators such as Andrew Tate, a former kickboxer and current social media personality, spreading openly sexist and misogynist opinions on women. The current issues prove that, while feminists have worked for equity now for over 60 years, there is still a long way to go to see the results take effect in reality.

2 Sexism

The term sexism originates from the second wave of feminism, during which the awareness of specifically women's issues in academia grew and demanded new theories to address the concerns that were especially related to how women were treated in society. Simultaneously, language reform was kick-started to reveal the everyday practices that were fundamentally sexist (Humm 1992, 55). Sexism is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes gate-keeping social practices, physical violence against women, and misogynistic verbal harassment and denigration (Lazar 2005, 10). It can be defined as a belief that one sex is superior to the other, it can set limits on what different genders can and should do (Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s.v. "sexism," n.), and it can be defined as a language which discriminates women. Instances of sexism are, not exclusively, practices that foreground gender when it is not the most prominent feature (Mills 2008, 2). Yet, sexism is often not considered as intentional usage of evaluating speech but as something unintentional and flawed. It should be noted that while this study focuses on women's issues when we look at sexism, nowadays the term has been widened to cover genders and sexual identities beyond the heteronormative binary of sexes that the theories have originally been based on.

In the following sections, I first examine the theoretical background of sexism from the point of view of social sciences after which the more mainstream forms of sexism in politics and media are discussed to develop a base for the topic of the analysis. The theory of sexism related to language is discussed in section 3.

2.1 Theory of Sexism

Traditionally sexism in different contexts has been evaluated with a scale developed by Spence, Helmreich, and Staff in 1973: the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) (Swim and Cohen, 1997, 103). It draws attention to the difference between the treatment of women and men. Often sexism can be categorized into three different types of how it manifests: overt, covert, and subtle (Swim and Cohen 1997, 104). Overt, as the name suggests, is visible and easily distinguishable, and is the type that AWS is especially concerned with. Covert sexism then is the opposite, a hidden form of sexism, that is not readily detectable. Subtle sexism is the unequal treatment of women that often goes unnoticed due to its routine nature (Swim & Cohen 1997, 103). The Modern Sexism Scale (MS) by Swim et al. and the Neosexism scale (NS) by Tougas et al. are better at detecting especially subtle forms of sexism whereas

AWS is better at assessing overt sexism. This is because the MS and NS do not rely as much on traditional gender stereotypes to consider something as sexist as AWS but tackle especially the type of sexism that is normalized in modern society (Swim & Cohen 1997, 104). AWS and Modern Sexism Scale are both related to negative attitudes toward women and positive attitudes toward men (Swim and Cohen 1997, 114), leaving out the positive gender roles of traditional women which Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) by Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske, addresses through its inclusion of benevolent sexism alongside hostile. Their theory on ambivalent sexism will be explored further.

2.1.1 Hostile and Benevolent Sexism

The two most common types of sexism are *hostile sexism* and *benevolent sexism*. Hostile sexism, as the name implies, describes sexism that includes hatred towards women due to the assumption that women are aiming to subvert the assumed power relationship between men and women where men are the more powerful gender. The shift in power relations is executed by promoting and applying feminism in everyday life or through sexuality (Glick & Fiske 2001, 109). Hostile sexism eradicates antipathy toward women that generates discriminatory acts toward the targets of prejudice (Glick & Fiske 2001, 110). Another approach is that sexism does not itself foster hostility, and if a sexist speech leads to hostility, it becomes misogynistic: “Coercive enforcement mechanisms are the functional essence of misogyny, but sexism is conceptually distinct; it does not coerce” (Richardson-Self 2018, 261). However, as the focus of the thesis is on language and its use, the theory by Glick and Fiske about hostile sexism is applied as it is. It is interesting then to discuss whether sexism and especially which kind, turns into misogyny.

Benevolent sexism then is somewhat opposite of the hostile sexism. It is seemingly favorable toward women, highlighting and promoting stereotypically feminine traits and tasks such as housekeeping and motherhood. Simultaneously it boosts the chivalrous ideology which assumes that men are supposed to protect women as their roles as housewives and mothers limit their abilities to defend themselves. Benevolent sexism is a more subtle form of prejudice than hostile sexism, but similarly promotes gender inequality (Glick & Fiske 2001, 110). When observed, benevolent sexism might seem like kindness, but when experienced it can be threatening (Bradley-Geist, Rivera & Geringer 2015, 39). When benevolent sexism is applied, women’s agency is diminished allowing women only to work in specific areas and in specific ways, which is suggested to be natural and correct for women. These tasks and services could be something that men are dependent on like emotional support or men

completing them might be considered less masculine (Dixon and Levine 2012, 313). Still, both, hostile and benevolent sexism, foster the prejudices that allow the justification of men's superiority over women.

While both hostile and benevolent sexism are considered to be harmful ideologies for equality, hostile sexism is viewed as more damaging than benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is rejected more often than benevolent sexism, especially in the most sexist cultures, as benevolent sexism has a complementary nature (Glick & Fiske 2001, 114). Both derive from the stereotypical and structural societies that present men with more power and status than women (patriarchy), which divides women and men based on stereotypical gender roles (gender differentiation). These patriarchal societies assume the relationship between genders to be dependent on each other only due to reproduction (sexual reproduction). These factors together generate hostile and benevolent attitudes toward the other sex (Glick & Fiske 2001, 111 – 112) and at the same time strengthen the self-view of the perpetrator's own gender. Hostile and benevolent sexism feed into each other as benevolent sexism requires a strong protector to be in power justifying the antipathy toward women or other gender identities that are in the minority and who are not agreeing with the roles that are imposed on them.

2.1.2 Ambivalent and Ambient Sexism

Kate Manne argues in her book *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (2017) that misogyny is primarily the law and legal functions of the patriarchal order while sexism is the justifying factor in the same order (Manne 2017, 78 – 79). Manne also argues that while sharing the purpose to maintain patriarchal societies they function differently. According to Manne, sexism deals between men and women whereas misogyny similarly deals with men and women, but it differentiates between women based on whether they are good or bad (Manne 2017, 79 – 80). However, as discussed previously, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism do just that, especially when applied together. Hostile sexism attacks bad women for trying to disrupt the patriarchal order and benevolent sexism puts good women on a pedestal to work as some kind of a model for all women. And this is the cross-section where *ambivalent sexism* takes place. Modern models of sexism prove that the general attitudes toward women are increasingly ambivalent. Thus, as there is the positive aspect, “society does not treat sexism as completely unacceptable” (Freed et al. 2008, 168), yet it is not completely acceptable either (ibid.).

Ambivalent sexism theory by Peter Click and Susan T. Fiske combines hostile and benevolent sexism and highlights the prejudices in both ideologies. The factor analyses Glick and Fiske compiled of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, a scale that measures attitudes toward women, suggested that sexism has both hostile and benevolent traits and those are projected to be part of coherent belief systems in many cultures (Glick & Fiske 2001, 112). Ambivalent sexism does not exist in specific societies, but the concept travels and adapts between cultures and their characteristics of gender inequality. When hostile sexism and benevolent sexism emerge together, they have positively correlated factors. Hostile sexism factors, power relations (e.g., women running for higher positions to gain power over men), gender differentiation (e.g., women are more prone to let their emotions control decisions), and sexuality (e.g., women use sex to attain power) women are discussed but the subfactors of benevolent sexism, protective paternalism (e.g., “ladies first” mentality), complementary gender differentiation (e.g., women are softer and purer than men), and heterosexual intimacy (e.g., men need to have women in their lives to know what it means to be a man) typically appear more often (ibid). The main notion is that prejudices are more easily justified if the perpetrator has some positive experiences and assumptions about the other group (Glick & Fiske 2011, 530). Ambivalence is often understood as a simultaneous experience or alternation between conflicting ideas, feelings, or beliefs. The conflict between hostile and benevolent sexism is present especially when there are individual women, not women as a gender group, as targets.

Ambient sexism refers to the sexism that is experienced indirectly by observing sexual harassment and while not being direct, has similar kind of effects as sexism experienced first-hand (Glomb et al. 1997, 309). Ambient sexism influences especially the bystanders and has an effect on how sexist instances are reacted to in the community. And while not being the direct target of sexism, the bystander experiences can be harmful in different ways. Additionally, when looking at sexism toward women, ambient sexism impacts everyone in the situation no matter the gender. Studies on ambient sexism have focused especially on professional spaces and the interest is in the impact of sexism on career aspirations and professional self-esteem. For example, a study by Bradley-Geist, Rivera, and Geringer (2015) researches the effects of ambient sexism on bystander self-esteem and career aspirations. The study reveals that both male and female bystanders are impacted by ambient sexism but in different ways. Women who as bystanders observed hostile sexism had lower self-esteem with regard to professional performance while men had higher performance self-esteem (Bradley-Geist, Rivera & Geringer 2015, 39). While the ambient sexism and bystander effect has been studied in natural

situations, it is interesting to see what kind of an impact ambient sexism has in less natural conversation such as in podcasts where the audience nor the target is not in direct conversation with the speaker.

2.2 Sexism in Politics

Politics all around the world have historically been men's field. In United States politics, the turning point of thinking women being in power was thought to be the 2008 presidential elections, when Alaska Governor Sarah Palin was chosen to be Senator John McCain's vice-presidential running mate (Dolan 2014, 1). Additionally, during the same year, Hillary Clinton was a prominent candidate to be on the Democratic party's ticket but was defeated by Barack Obama and dropped out of the competition during the primary elections. The 2008 and subsequent elections have proven that women candidates are often evaluated based on gender stereotypes. One of the biggest questions is whether they can fit into the role of a politician while simultaneously fulfilling the feminine stereotypes of domestic goddesses and, even more, the role of good mothers. The discussion has been especially on how women could move from domestic to public life and how the women's role from the domestic life is adaptable to the public life rather than how women can create a role for themselves in public life. The discourses in politics encourage the use of similar language outside their "normal" settings, like in media, further affecting the societies' acceptance of women in politics.

While sexism towards female candidates can be widely discussed and criticized in society, sexist discussions are either created or highlighted by the ones generating those discussions. Media, the academic and political communities who study and try to tackle the phenomenon, and the campaigners themselves who aim to gain the attention of the first mentioned are constantly producing into the public discussion about sexism for their own gain. The actual impact of sexism on the success of candidates' campaigns can be questioned (Dolan 2014, 2). Women's political ambitions and positions become media scoops as long as they remain to be something out of the norm, and that will be the case as long as there is an underrepresentation of women in office (Dolan 2014, 3 – 4). It seems to be a vicious circle: the disproportional media attention on gender directly influences the political parties' tendencies to nominate women to high positions (Haraldsson & Wägnerud 2019, 524), further widening the gap between men and women in politics and thus gaining media attention. Thus, the question of how much sexism has impacted women's possibilities to advance in the political field will be relevant. One way to analyze the political parties and their readiness to tackle the issue is by nominating more women, and another way is to focus on voters and their possible voting patterns.

As a long-term politician, Kamala Harris was not experiencing sexism for the first time during the 2020 presidential elections. Harris's career has been colored with more or less serious accusations about her using her relationship with Willie Brown, the former Speaker of the California Assembly, to get ahead in the political field. Brown himself has stated that he “influenced her career by appointing her to two state commissions” and “certainly helped with her race for district attorney in San Francisco” (Brown, 2020) really bringing up his involvement in Harris's career in the past. In 2010 when Harris was running for California's attorney general, people questioned her chances to win because she was “a woman running for attorney general, a woman who is a minority, a woman who is [...] anti-death penalty, a woman who is [...] DA of wacky San Francisco” (Harris 2020, 83). Noteworthy here is that the emphasis was first on gender.

2.3 Sexism in Media

While politicians themselves might utilize sexism to gain coverage or popularity for their campaigns in traditional media, the effect of this is counterproductive to the goals of modern feminism. Sexism in media is a double-edged sword. It reflects the sexism in society criticizing it, yet simultaneously foregrounds it and produces unequal gender-based content. Through media, we can see the current state of sexism in society but accept the fact that it creates a more sexist society at the same time. The media, both traditional and social, play a part in how people in general view gender in society, and thus have a responsibility to mirror the society as authentically as possible, going deeper than the surface level and showing critique when there is a disparity in the representation of genders in media. In 2012, UNESCO drafted Gender-Sensitive Indicators for media to encourage gender equality and women's empowerment through and within media as media can be seen as social actors themselves transmitting and creating cultures while having the power to be the catalyst for social development (UNESCO 2012, 14). UNESCO defines sexism in media as “[s]upposition, belief or assertion that one sex is superior to other, often expressed in the context of traditional stereotyping of social roles based on sex, with resultant discrimination practiced against members of the supposedly inferior sex” (UNESCO 2012, 54). These stereotypes, according to previous studies, originate from the labor that female candidates have to do when negotiating their position in the political field (Sisco & Lucas 2014, 493).

TIME'S UP, a foundation that aims to prevent sexism and related forms of harassment by, for example, offering legal help to victims of sexual harassment, conducted an analysis of media coverage of the vice-presidential announcement of Kamala Harris in 2020 and Mike Pence and Tim Kaine in 2016.

Compared to the media coverage of Pence and Kaine, Harris's coverage mentioned gender over twelve times more (61% to 5%) implying that for white males the position of leadership is more natural. The adjectives used described Harris more negatively than Pence and Kaine, and Harris's ancestry was brought up over seven times more (36% to >5%) than the white male candidates' (Harrington 2020). The report truly embodies the fact that for women politicians, politics is personal politics, echoing the feminist agenda but from an ill-founded offset. Sexist media coverage forces women candidates to walk a tightrope, balancing between including enough personality to induce likeness and keeping the focus on policy to be taken seriously.

In their study on the effect of media sexism on women's ambitions to participate in politics, Amanda Haraldsson and Lena Wägerud (2019) studied the relationship between sexism in media and the share of women candidates in lower chambers in national governments globally, focusing especially on the bystander effect. According to the study, the "sexist portrayals of women in the media have a bystander effect on women citizens, stifling ambition among those who, in a less sexist media environment, would be willing to stand as political candidates" (Haraldsson and Wägerud 2019, 524). Media sexism can be defined as reproductions of sexism that exist in society, but through a gendered lens by under- and misrepresenting women leading to a portrayal of a society that bears no truth about women's participation in it (ibid.). Haraldsson and Wägerud agree with the UNESCO definition of sexism in media but add to it the indirect nature of sexism that may affect women's willingness to run for political positions (Haraldsson & Wägerud 2019, 525). Traditional media remains the source of information, generating ideas and inspiring opinions for the majority of people all around the world (UNESCO 2012, 15), but I argue that the effectiveness of media in influencing people is even stronger within social media where the content creator is more relatable to its audience than traditional media comes to its. This relationship is discussed further in the following section.

2.4 Sexism and Language

Studies on sexism in language focus especially on how people talk to or about women, and how women are represented in discourses, as individuals, and as a collective. It involves both lexical forms of sexism as well as discursive practices (Freed 2020, 4). Mills describes that in language, sexism is not visible only in certain words or phrases that can be objectively decided to represent sexism, but behind sexism are the belief systems that stem from larger societal forces and institutional inequalities (Mills 2008,3). The types of sexism, in Mills' case overt and covert, can linguistically be interpreted as sexist

in particular contexts, but the local meanings depend on a notion of an archaic form of overt sexism against which the covert sexism meanings are negotiated (Mills 2008, 136). The tackling of sexist language can be seen as successful when looking at lexical reform, but the sexist language that preserves sexist beliefs and offensive communication is still prevalent in public discourses all around the world (Freed 2020, 5). Sexism is often an evaluation of the intention of an utterance rather than the utterance itself and it manifests itself in complex ways (Mills 2008, 77). That is why it is difficult to agree on what is sexist and whether an utterance is sexist or not.

2.4.1 Overt Sexism

Direct, or overt, sexism is the type of sexism that can be identified through the usage of a linguistic marker. It is the type that has become marked as archaic or stereotypical by most language users (Mills 2008, 11). Overt sexism has many forms, most notably words, and meanings. Naming practices were under inspection by the feminist theorists of the 1970s and 80s, who argued that language was predominantly male, and women were excluded from the process (Mills 2008, 43). Today, the issue is not so much focused on the fact that naming has been based on the male experience, but on the fact that language as a system has embedded within itself a set of stereotypical beliefs about women. Institutionalization is another issue when we consider sexism via words and meanings. Often, institutionalized language is understood as a natural way of using language, yet, nowadays institutionalized sexist practices are criticized and corrected. With the public backlash in mind, it can be argued that the sexist language use that has once been considered normal due to institutionalization is intentional and the aim is to maintain or reinstate those practices as norms.

Another process of overt sexism is reported speech, a way to frame women's speech into a desired discursive model. Studies have shown that women's speech if quoted or retold by someone else is more indirect speech than direct speech. Because of this lack of direct quotations, women's statements are mediated, which often leads to evaluative statements being made through reporting (Mills 2008, 71). The process of reporting speech, or a kind of projection in Systemic Functional Grammar, is the representation of verbal events. Those representations, even though quoting might suggest so, are not always true to the wording but rather a summarization of the message (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 519) and this leaves a lot of room for interpretation of the message or could lead to misrepresentation of the message. When delivered by some kind of authority, those misrepresentations might go by unquestioned, and the speaker may claim no responsibility for those misinterpretations. A similar kind

of avoiding responsibility happens with sexist jokes (Mills 2008, 71). Some sexist humor is more readily detectable, yet some go unnoticed, as will be discussed in the further section. However, sarcasm is a type of humor that explicitly addresses the opposition of meaning and it can be understood as overt humor.

2.4.2 Covert Sexism

Sexism, especially in media, is often visible, but it has been modified because of the responses of feminism and, furthermore, because of the responses of men to feminism (Mills 2008, 133). The way sexism is hidden is through discursive practices such as topic control, interruption or silencing, and monitoring of women's speech (Freed 2020, 4). Often also, but not always, humor and irony are used to lessen the effect of sexist remarks by exaggerating the message, signaling it should not be taken seriously (Mills 2008, 134). Mills describes these processes of hiding sexism as 'indirect' sexism which at the same time "challenges overt sexism and keeps it in play" (ibid.). Whereas Lazar names the phenomenon 'subtle sexism' which is seemingly harmless yet essentially discursive when concerned with power relations (Lazar 2005, 9). These processes of sexism do not change the sexism itself, but they might change how the sexism is reacted to.

The responsibility that an individual has over their sayings can be denied to a certain extent when the saying is mediated through irony, humor, innuendo, or with hesitation (Mills 2008, 135). Additionally, when sexism is mitigated via humor, the speaker actively modifies what is accepted discrimination against the group the sexist, yet humorous, remark is targeted at (Ford 2000, 1095). In his study on the effects of sexist humor on sexist events, Thomas Ford finds that being exposed to sexist humor, people with higher tendencies toward hostile sexism become more tolerant of sexist discrimination (Ford 2000, 1106). By using humor to mitigate sexism, the speaker is able to reinforce the sexist mindsets of the listener and create group cohesion this way. Through sexist humor, a context that justifies prejudice against women is created (Ford et al. 2008, 168), and this normative context further reinforces stereotypes of certain stigmatized groups (Lawless et al. 2020, 292).

Sexist language is not only covered through humor but by controlling, or even silencing, women and their speech in public spaces. This can be done for example by declining the access of women to certain discourses based on the subject of the discourse deeming it to be masculine (e.g., automotive industry or contact sports) (Mills 2008, 135). "Men frequently cut women off, explaining as they do

what the rationale is for their behaviour” (Freed 2020, 11) when the aim is “to silence women, to embarrass women, or to devalue women in general” (Freed 2020, 12). As topic control, interrupting, or silencing do not have specific linguistic forms to mark them, they are examples of covert sexism rather than overt sexism. Another way to convey sexism covertly is by monitoring women’s speech. This includes commentaries on how women “sound”, the words they use, the pitch of their voices, their laughter, tone of voice, or communicative style in general (Freed 2020, 12 – 13). All of these ways to use sexism against women are heavily based on stereotypes.

2.5 Sexism, Racism, and Political Correctness

Analysis of sexism is not a simple process or an entity that can be analyzed alongside other forms of discriminatory language without alterations. Different kinds of discriminatory language have some similarities, but the origins and reactions vary widely. For example, racism and sexism have very different effects due to quite recent changes in legislation. Racism is more likely to be acted upon by law enforcement than in the case of sexism. If linguistic discrimination based on gender is the sole function of the analysis of sexism, the only issues brought awareness to are the issues of white, heterosexual, middle-class, and able-bodied women as often women of color face sexism that is different from sexism experienced by others due to racism. That is why discriminatory language prejudiced on the grounds of class, race, disability, and sexual orientation needs to be addressed (Mills 2008, 73-74). Sexist language has the same origin as racism, but it differs in effects from other forms of discrimination. White hostility toward people of color is well-learned and automatic, and researchers argue that sexist attitudes can become automatic. However, the difference between these two discriminatory ideologies is that sexists have some positive feelings toward the discriminated group (hostile vs benevolent sexism) whereas racists' positive feelings derive from the perpetrator’s own desire for egalitarianism (Glick & Fiske 1996, 494).

When discussing issues such as sexism and racism, the concept of political correctness is often brought up. By definition, political correctness means “excessive attention to the sensibilities of those who are seen as different from the norm” (Mills 2008, 100), and at the core of the term and usage is a conflict of values. The term is associated with negative evaluation and occurs in the context of problems and difficult topics. Critics may see it as a progressive desire to restrict the use of language and an attack against freedom of speech (Talbot 2007, 753) and more importantly it poses a challenge to the dominant power relationships in society. Political correctness comes up especially when discussing, or

discrediting, forms of cultural politics by the political right (Talbot 2007, 759). As political correctness is seen as a way to limit free speech and suffocate opinion politics, “there is some debate both about how to combat it and about the continued promotion of anti-sexist, anti-racist initiatives” (Talbot 2007, 760). Political correctness comes often into play when touchy opinions are presented. In bipartisan political climates, such as in America, it is used by both left and right-leaning politicians.

3 Podcasts

Podcasts lie somewhere between traditional and social media. The accessibility factor and the fact that anyone can start their own podcast are aspects that different social media platforms share with podcasts. However, some well-established podcasts have gained similar informative status as traditional media has in society as credential expertise, the accuracy and quality of information, and the quality of production are important factors for listeners when choosing a podcast (Nelson & Faux 2016 49; Renisyifa, Sunarti & Pebriyanti 2022, 228 – 229). More importantly, due to the streaming platforms being online, these credentials and credibility factors are readily accessible online as well (Nelson & Faux 2016,55). Sometimes, especially in the cases of academic podcasts, the information comes straight from the professionals without anyone retelling the facts forward. In the following section, I explore the history of podcasts and discuss the influence and availability of the form of media.

3.1 Brief History and Popularity of Podcasts

The term ‘podcast’, a conjoined word from ‘iPod’ and ‘broadcast’ (Samuel-Azran et al. 2019, 483), was first used by journalist Ben Hammersley in an article in Guardian (Berry 2016, 8). In the article, podcasts were described to be this new form of radio, accessible no matter time or place and interactive by nature (Hammersley, 2004). In general, the early distinctions of podcasts were heavily affected by the notion that they were just a branch or a type of radio broadcasting. Radio has proven to be an evolutionary form of media, adapting to the popularization of the internet, and surviving the emergence of other competing mediums. When it comes to the survival of radio, podcasts do not necessarily pose a threat to it, but they offer an alternative that is not tied to a certain broadcasting slot (Berry 2016, 9). It is a medium that lies at the intersection of digital and non-digital media, often a digital audio file, that is downloadable and therefore conveniently accessible (Chadna et al 2012, 389). The accessibility allows for a different kind of consumption and creates different kinds of audiences.

In comparison to radio, podcast listeners are more active participants when engaging with the medium. While radio is often a process of limited choices, deciding what podcast and which platform is used to listen to them increases the engagement of the listeners. When listening to the radio, the consumer has the choice of the channel but no control over the topics discussed or the possibility to take a break from listening and return to it later. Podcasts have an additional level of engagement as podcasts are often offered on platforms with subscription possibilities. This automatizes the process of reaching the

podcasts and allows the listeners to better control the information consumption (Chadna et al 2012, 389). The time and place to listen to podcasts are usually predetermined by the user and often defined to be without distractions due to the engaging nature of the podcasts (Berry 2016, 12). This level of engagement can be explained by the level of intimacy between the podcaster and the listener. It is “the headphone-oriented approach” that grounds the intimacy: podcasters are talking straight to the listeners' ears (Berry 2016, 14) According to Pew Research Center analysis, nearly a quarter of U.S. adults receive at least a part of their news input from podcasts and younger adults are more likely to listen to podcasts for news (Walker 2022). The demand for podcasts has grown steadily since the early 2000s and podcasts have gained prominent ground in the field of media, especially during the past decade.

The value of podcasts as reliable news media has increased as prominent actors in traditional media have invested in podcasting platforms and editing software and have started to create podcasts on their own (Chadna et al 2012, 389; Adgate 2021). The surge of traditional media in the field of podcasting has affected the accessibility of the medium as the economic benefits have increased the number of podcasts behind paywalls (Hagood 2021,182) and advertisers are more heavily including podcasts in their media strategy (Adgate 2021). The commercialization of podcasts has affected the way podcasts are done. To gain some ground in the field of podcasts, the importance of uniqueness has been declining as, quite contradictory to the aim, hosts utilize the more universal podcasting “sound” to liven up the scripted materials to sound more natural (Mertens et al. 2021, 154 – 155). While in the category of entertainment in podcasting the uniqueness of sound and topic can be seen as advancement to the creator, the convenience of podcasting in other genres, such as news and politics, has been compromised to increase credibility. News and politics categories demand a more serious tone that mimics traditional media to be taken seriously, while other categories benefit from creativity and uniqueness of sound.

3.2 Politics, Gender, and Race in Podcasting

The influence of podcasts on politics is hard to define, but the consumption of podcasts affects individuals' identity-building and political standing (Bratcher 2022, 188). Podcasts are considered to be a space for uncensored opinions and the so-called “truth”, whatever the podcasters deem that to be. Podcasting is a good way to spread information, or misinformation, to specific audiences. Politics became a fast-growing genre during the 2016 elections and has rapidly risen ever since as illustrated in Figure 1. The data has been collected from 79 of the most prominent political podcast series and shows

how many episodes have been published since 2012. Additionally, Figure 1 depicts the distribution of the episodes according to the political stance and shows how conservatives are using podcasts more to discuss relevant political issues. These discussions are often to spread misinformation. A study was conducted on political podcasters' role in the January 6 United States Capitol attack in 2021. The findings concluded that after the election, political right podcasts increased in episodes that distributed misleading electoral narratives, the popularity of these podcasts increased simultaneously, and those episodes that included misleading narratives had a broader audience due to cross-platform reach (Wirtschaftler and Meserole 2022).

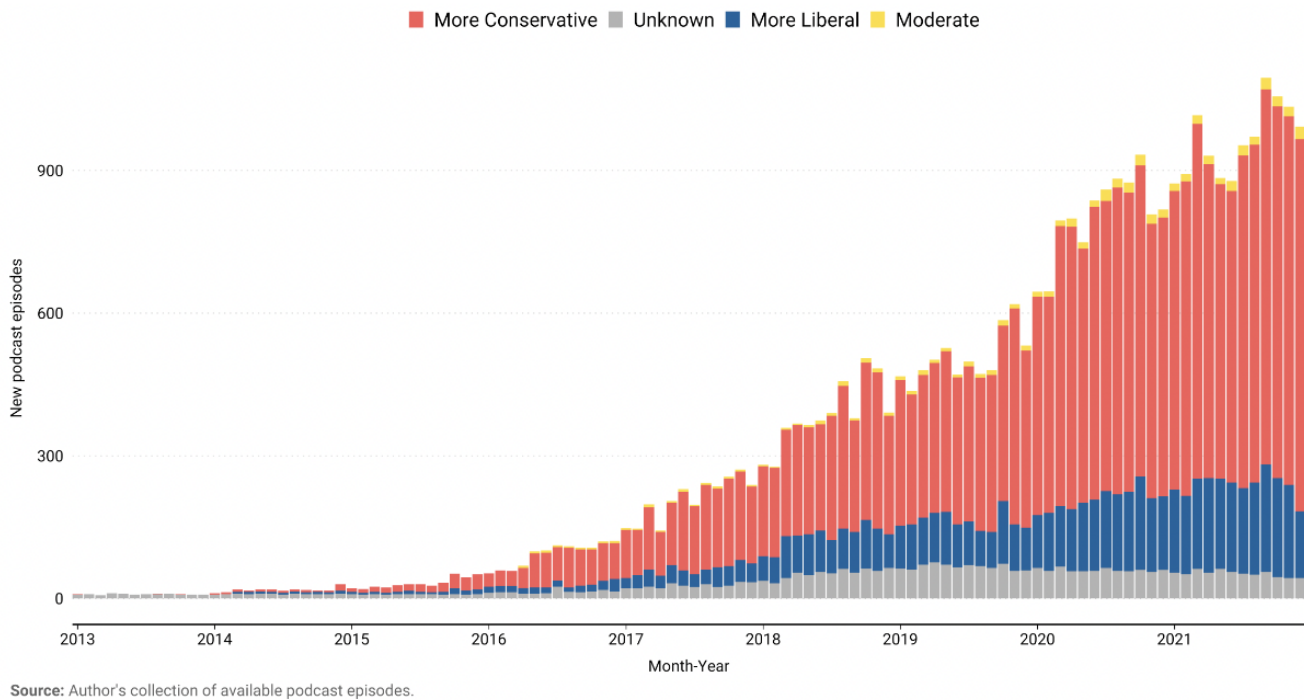


Figure 1 Growth of the political podcast medium over time by partisan leaning (Politicalpodcastproject 2023)

Much like in politics, there is a gender imbalance when looking at who are the hosts and voices of podcasts, and this imbalance is visible, especially within the genres of news and political podcasts. Under entertainment, self-help, and true crime categories, women dominate the field, but in more academic and information-heavy genres the space for women is limited. In 2020, the top three apps used for listening to podcasts in the United States of America were Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts (Göttning 2022). On these platforms, under the genre of news, the top 10 podcasts are more often hosted by men than women (Chartable 2023). It raises the questions such as whose voices

are heard and what kind of representations and narratives are available for consumers. While the issue can be understood as a problem of a specific field when in media women are seen rather as consumers than producers (Hylan Wang 2021, 56) it reflects how available society is for participation by women.

The position of podcasts somewhere between traditional and social media puts it simultaneously in the position where it needs to be discussed whether podcasts are a hobby or a profession, and often women's podcasts are put in the first category making it virtually not possible to monetize and gain the attention of the larger public audience as the monetarization of the medium support the professional side (Hylan Wang 2021, 66). Another issue of inequality can be seen when looking at the diversity of race in the field of podcasts. Podcasting is dominated by men, more specifically white men. The issue is not that people of color (POC) did not make podcasts but the fact that networks do not include POC creators in their rosters (Friess 2017). Research shows that 85% of U.S. podcasts of a sample of 537 podcasts had white hosts and only 18% had non-white hosts (Morgan 2017). The absence of women and people of color in podcasts echoes the same issue in politics, women's or POC voices are not wanted to be heard in public spaces.

4 Theoretical Background

The theoretical background of the current study is in Critical Discourse Analysis. Due to the focus on women in the material, the feminist branches of the field, such as Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis (Lazar 2007) and Feminist Post-Structural Discourse Analysis (Baxter 2003) are applied. As the interest of this thesis is in how women in powerful positions are described and how the power status is challenged, distributed, and managed, the Foucauldian discourse analysis (in Mills 1997) that has a heavy focus on power offers a base for the study. At the same time, as the media under analysis are podcasts, and the influence of such forms of media, Theon Van Leeuwen's (2008) studies on discursive social practices are utilized to analyze how the participants of podcasts, the podcaster, and their audience, form, and normalize certain social formations. As the base to analyze sexism and language, the works of Sarah Mills and Alice Freed are used to establish a framework for the analysis.

First, I introduce the field of Critical Discourse Analysis focusing on Foucault and the feminist branches. Then Theon Van Leeuwen's Social Actors Approach and legitimation theories are discussed. Lastly, the framework for linguistic analysis of sexism is presented.

4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) studies the social phenomena of discourses that are by nature complex and demand a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological approach to study them (Wodak & Meyer 2009, 2). CDA, along with other critical theories, aims "to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection" (Wodak & Meyer 2009, 7). While the focus is on language, linguistical analysis is not always the main approach in CDA, but all the approaches share a problem-oriented and interdisciplinary nature (Wodak & Meyer 2009, 3). Many theorists who study CDA have their own understanding of what CDA embodies and this is due to its multi-disciplinary nature which draws from different schools of social inquiry such as neo-Marxism, Foucauldian archaeology, poststructuralism, and postmodernism (Locke 2004, 25). The current study draws especially on the two schools in the middle, Foucauldian and poststructuralism, from a feminist point of view.

Terry Locke discusses the notion of 'critical' in CDA from three points of view: "critique as revelation, critical practice as self-reflexive and critical practice as socially transformative" (Locke 2004, 26).

Critique as revelation is especially the focus of Foucault, which is discussed further in the next section, but other theorists have their own views on the process of revelation. Discourses and revelations happen when an individual's 'common sense', which is their understanding of the world, is revealed to be discursive constructions rather than the natural ways of the world (Locke 2004, 30). This point of view is especially applied when discussing ideologies. CDA, when the 'critical' is understood as self-reflexive, poses a challenge to the researcher, as before going into the research, they need to understand the social construct of their chosen method. In this mode of thought, the individual as a meaning-maker is replaced with the social product of discourse, representing assumptions rather than truths (Locke 2004, 36 – 37). Finally, the critical practice as socially transformative involves the thought of discourse as a tool of power. The amount of power that certain discourses have is dependent on the speaker's social status and the audience of that speaker (Locke 2004, 37). The interest is especially in how the power status is maintained. Due to the complex nature of discourses, CDA is the tool needed to reveal the hidden meanings and functions of those discourses managing power relationships.

4.1.1 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Foucault challenges the dominant assumptions of a wide range of concepts such as sexuality and language within his work. The interest in Foucault's work, generally and more focused on in this study, is in how he defines discourse as a tool of power, knowledge, and truth (Mills 1997, 17). He views discourses as functions that actively create, shape, and deconstruct the things they speak of as discourses do not exist in and of themselves (ibid.). Discourses, as part of society, can exercise power because they establish and control ways of thinking, speaking, and acting (Jäger & Maier 2014 [2009], 35). As discourses do not exist in isolation, contextual connections can be drawn out to detect discursive structures that further create discursive frameworks with a different focus, such as gender. This analytical approach to understanding the true nature of discourses as promoters of systems of rules and values is where the 'critical' is applied in the Foucauldian discourse analysis (Locke 2004, 27). As discourses can be understood as tools of power, these discursive frameworks and the discourses that happen within those frameworks are more likely to have a transformative effect on the context in which they are used (Mills 1997, 17 – 18).

As mentioned earlier, Foucault has a strong focus on the function of critique as a revelation. In his work, he analyses the labor put into intentionally excluding certain knowledge from consideration as 'true' (Mills 1997, 18). Discourses do not exist in a vacuum but are in constant conflict with other

discourses and other social practices which inform them over questions of truth and authority (Mills 1997, 19). Interest is in how and why one discourse is produced as the dominant discourse, controlling the ‘truth’, and supported by society at large whereas others are considered faulty, damaging, and recognize only the margins of society. Power, according to Foucault, is dispersed throughout social relations and produces different kinds of behavioral models, both unrestricted and restricted. This becomes especially important when considering sexism in language. Dominant discourses create acceptance of sexist language in society, normalizing it and forcing “subjects into an acceptance of status quo and prevalent views of women as inferior [...] with men as superior, in control and so on” (Mills 1997, 43 – 44). Within the discourse theory model, sexism is the site of contestation; it is both the arena where some males are sanctioned in their attempts to negotiate a powerful position for themselves in relation to women, and it is also the site where women can contest or collaborate with those actions.

4.1.2 Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis & Feminist Post-Structural Discourse Analysis

Feminist theory has drawn heavily on Foucault’s discourse theory work and thus inspired the use of discourse from the Foucauldian usage to serve better the wider feminist framework (Mills 1997, 77). Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis (henceforth CFDA) and Feminist Post-Structural Discourse Analysis (henceforth FPDA) are approaches to analyze discourses as sites where individuals define their identities, build relationships, and situate them in the world. CFDA does not differ dramatically from CDA, but, as Lazar puts it, the studies within CDA that have gender as their focus often “adopt a critical feminist view of relations, motivated by the need to change the existing conditions of these relations” (Lazar 2007, 3). The main focus, however, is on criticizing the discourses that maintain the current power status of a patriarchal society. Baxter defines that a “feminist post-structuralist approach [to discourse] [...] seeks out the more troublesome issues of working with spoken discourse, highlighting the unresolved tensions, competing perspectives, shifts of power, ambiguities, and contradictions inherent within all texts” (Baxter 2003, 2—3).

Post-structuralism is especially relevant for this study because its interest lies in language as “a ‘site’ for the construction and contestation of social meanings” (Baxter 2003, 6). Through its focus on language, “post-structuralism also attends specifically to the fictionalizing [the view that all research is, in the end, creating a world through language] process of any act of research, and the phenomenon that any act of research comprises a series of authorial choices and textual strategies” (Ibid.). Additionally,

the view of world-building relates to the notion that every act of language, spoken or written, directly influences the production and maintenance of power relations and social order because of its fundamental function of meaning-making. The theoretical feminist framework of this study somewhat challenges the view that the study is criticizing, the centralization of gender in discourse. By using FPDA as a theoretical framework, the focus in discourses is inherently drawn to be on gender, while, as defined earlier, sexism is visible in language when gender is made the prominent feature in the discourses. However, FPDA highlights the issues of gender and does it so that it simultaneously foregrounds the feminist perspective while examining it thoroughly (Baxter 2003, 11—12).

4.2 Van Leeuwen's Social Actors Approach

The current study draws also from the Social Actors Approach by Theo van Leeuwen, which explains the role of action in the formation of social structure. Leeuwen defines discourses as “socially constructed ways of knowing some aspect of reality” (Wodak & Meyer 2009, 9), social practices, that should be studied as representations and interactions (Van Leeuwen 2008, 4). Key to the social practices is interaction and especially the participants with certain roles performing actions in a sequence. This sequence could follow a more or less strict pattern with either some or no room for variation depending on the actions of participants (Van Leeuwen 2008, 8). The participants are assigned roles depending on their agency within the discourse. However, these roles are not set, nor do they need to be stated within the text (ibid.) yet to have a certain role in discourse the participants must fulfill specific “qualifications” (Van Leeuwen 2008, 10). The flexibility is in that anyone in the situation can claim any of the available roles and the roles may switch between participants if the qualifications are fulfilled.

An important function of forming social structures and, even more, upholding them is the legitimation of these practices. Van Leeuwen has defined four categories of legitimation and those are *authorization*, *moral evaluation*, *rationalization*, and *mythopoesis* (Van Leeuwen 2008, 105 – 106) of which the two first ones are considered in the current study. These forms can be used to legitimize or delegitimize, separately or with other forms (Van Leeuwen 2008, 106). When legitimating something, there is an underlying assumption that the something “is illegitimate, in some official sense, in the relevant context” (Simpson 2021,5). In social contexts, especially the ones that can be considered to be a contestation of values or representation, legitimation is discussed in the sense of acceptance rather

than something being legal or lawful. So rather than considering if the sexism in podcasts is legal or how it is made legal, the current study explores how sexism in podcasts is normalized.

4.2.1 Authorization

Authorization can be conveyed through *personal status, expertise, status in societies* (role models), *laws and rules, traditions, or conformity*. The authority vested in people in personal authority is based on their status or role in specific situations (Van Leeuwen 2008, 106). Often no justification is needed, and the clause includes the utterance by the assumed authority, which itself “contains some form of obligation modality” (ibid.). When considering expert authority, legitimacy is conveyed through expertise, not status. In some cases, the expertise is stated through credentials, but sometimes the expert is so prestigious in a specific context that the expertise can be taken for granted (Van Leeuwen 2008, 107). This type of legitimation is typically expressed with verbal or mental process clauses. Both personal and expert authority have the issue, or benefit, of a plurality where in a specific context there may be several experts or people with personal authority (ibid.). Both authority forms within individuals may vanish due to a lack of revision or respect.

Opinion leaders and role models may convey authority due to their status in society. Their status allows them to have the legitimizing factor as their followers are more inclined to accept and mimic their actions rather than criticize them (ibid.). When the active human agent is taken away from the authorization process, we can talk about the impersonal authority that laws, rules, and different regulations convey. These can take the place of a subject in verbal process clauses, but they need the specific mention of “policy”, “law”, “rule”, etc. to have the authority (Van Leeuwen 2008, 108). Another impersonal way to convey authority is through tradition. Traditions are well-established in society, have the repetitional aspect, and respect of the participants, so they carry the assumed authority which is itself seemingly unchallengeable (ibid.). Lastly, the authority of conformity has the social pressure aspect (Van Leeuwen 2008, 109). Important aspects of it are frequency and optionality. (ibid.). All the authority forms have their legitimizing power due to the participants in the process, whether it is a specific community or a society at large. Those entities give the power to authorize by following, mimicking, and respecting them. This becomes relevant when considering how media can influence consumers.

4.2.2 Moral Evaluation

When legitimation is based on values rather than any kind of authority, Van Leeuwen talks about moral evaluation legitimation (Van Leeuwen 2008, 110). Often the moral evaluation is linked to specific discourses that include the conversation over moral values. Adjectives such as “normal”, “natural” or even “useful” are used to trigger the moral values of the issue, yet they are “detached from, the system of interpretation from which they derive, at least on a conscious level” (ibid.). The issue of moral evaluation, from the point of view of CDA, is that it is difficult to find a linguistically motivated method to detect moral evaluations. The evaluations can be detected only through cultural and general knowledge (ibid). However, as evaluative adjectives are crucial in conveying moral evaluation legitimation, linguistic items can be analyzed. Other ways to express moral evaluation are *naturalization*, *abstraction*, and *analogy* (Van Leeuwen 2008, 111). They disperse the boundaries between morality and natural order and take from other sociocultural contexts to enhance their credibility. The moral evaluation is utilized especially when other forms of authorization are not effective, or authorization is based on loosely researched arguments. It is a way to modify discourses to cover a wider set of participants when often the issues should not be up to moral evaluation.

5 Material and Methods

As the current study analyzes an individual's opinion and sexism toward a woman of color, in the following section I reflect on the ethics of the study. The material and the data-gathering process as well as the methods are explained.

5.1 Ethics of the Study

In the end, the analysis focuses on the statements of an individual, Ben Shapiro. But, as the podcast itself is published under a media company it presents itself under the scrutiny of the public, even when the analysis is on statements of an individual. Moreover, Ben Shapiro is a public figure whose opinions, statements, and actions can work as a model for the actions of his audience. Furthermore, he has influence, and his work can be understood as expertise from which his audience can draw validation for their ideologies and attitudes. An issue that the subject of the study presents is that sexism is often up for interpretation. Personal political opinions can affect the analysis of political figures, especially if their views do not align with one's own, and close reading might be affected by those differences. Personally, my political views do not align with Ben Shapiro's; in fact, they are very much in opposition to his views. Recognizing this difference is the first step when aiming for objectivity. To avoid political views affecting this thesis, a well-established framework has been constructed to base analysis on previous research from different fields of sociolinguistics.

It is important to note that the focus of the study is on sexism toward women. As Mills states: "Sexism is not a homogenous entity" (Mills 2008, 75) and should not only consider the sexism that women experience. However, the analysis of the current study is based on and adds to the discussion about sexism toward women, due to the target of sexism. Kamala Harris has stated her pronouns to be she/her and her gender identity to be that of a woman. The aim of the study is not to disregard any gender identities and the harassment they experience. As well as being a woman, Harris represents two United States minorities by having African American and Asian ancestry. While the antipathy toward women is explored, race is not analyzed to the same extent. As the theoretical background mainly covers sexist discursive practices, racism in this study is reflected through the lens of sexism.

5.2 Material

The Ben Shapiro Show is a podcast established in 2015 by political conservative commentator Ben Shapiro. Shapiro was born in January 1984 in California. He attended the University of California, Los Angeles for political science and continued to Harvard Law School graduating in 2007 (May 2017). He is a syndicated columnist (i.e., a columnist whose works are published in several different newspapers and magazines), becoming one of the youngest in the United States to do so, and an author. The media company behind The Ben Shapiro Show, the Daily Wire, was founded by Shapiro and his colleague Jeremy Boreing in 2015. On the website of the company, the show is stated to be “the fastest growing, hardest hitting, most insightful, and savagely irreverent conservative podcast on the web” (The DailyWire). The media company is owned by Bentkey Ventures, LLC, of which Ben Shapiro is also a co-owner. The episodes are released daily from Monday to Friday, and as of February 2023, just under 1700 episodes have been released. On the show, Shapiro discusses current events in U.S. politics, offering a conservative point of view on the matter. Most often Shapiro is the sole host of the show, yet at times he has guests included in the episodes. On different popular podcasting platforms such as Spotify, Apple Podcast, and Soundcloud, the Ben Shapiro Show has been in the top 5 in the category of most popular news podcasts on different charts in the United States.

The podcast, titled *The Ben Shapiro Show*, was chosen for this study because of its influential position at the top of the charts of “News” podcasts and its positioning in the political field of the United States. The Ben Shapiro Show is considered to be one of the most conservative podcasts in the country. The podcast represents the right wing of U.S. politics, leaning toward the far right rather than the center. Under analysis is what kinds of sexism can be found in the podcast and gives insight into how the sexist instances are used to influence the audience and to legitimize the sexist ideologies. The podcast episode that is the focus of this study has been chosen due to its focus on Kamala Harris and her role in the presidential elections in 2020. The episode on Kamala Harris, the 1072nd episode titled “Biden’s No Good, Very Bad VP Pick”, was published on August 12, 2020, a day after the announcement by Joe Biden. On the Daily Wire website, the episode has three parts, the first one being the main episode that is available on most podcasting platforms and the two latter parts being additional material with guests commenting on the topic. Only the first part is analyzed as it is the one that has been distributed more widely across different platforms gaining a wider audience.

The length of the episode under the analysis is 1:02:15. Of the full length, 7:58 is advertisements for the show itself or sponsors of the show. These were excluded from the analysis due to their planned nature. A transcript of the episode was collected from a website (podscribe.com; app.podscribe.ai) that provides auto-generated transcripts of podcasts. The transcript was reviewed, corrected where needed, and typed up by listening to the episode several times and working on the transcript simultaneously. As the focus is not on spoken language or its features, the transcription was not completed with pauses, stresses, pitches, tempo, etc. Only the features that affect the delivery of meanings and that might influence the way the audience interprets those meanings were included. For example, sarcasm was detectable due to the tone of the speaker when listening to the audio file. The sexist instances were collected from the transcript based on the theoretical frame established in the previous section. The sexist instances were categorized first based on their overtness or covertness, after which the category was specified under those umbrella categories.

5.3 Methodology

In the current study, I aim to reveal underlying sexist discourses in platforms that are utilized more and more in the modern day to help form decisions on one's political agendas. While sexism is an issue that has been under scrutiny since the first wave of feminism and different aspects of it has been analyzed throughout history, there seems to be an assumption that sexist discourse lives within certain communities that are often described to be archaic, conservative, or in the political right. The current study discusses whether this is true.

5.3.1 Sexism analysis via Close Reading and Close Listening

The study at hand is qualitative media content analysis. The first part, sexism analysis, is done through close reading and close listening. In studies on media, close reading “provides a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the functioning of representation than simply asserting that the presence of images of particular indicates fairness, equality, or justice” (Harvey 2020, 41). At the core of the methodology is interpretation and it “goes beyond the text in criticism, as the critic shares insights” (Brummett 2010, 30). The techniques of close reading are many, but the current thesis focus on especially *narratives* or *forms* and *persona*. Within the technique of narratives, the interest is especially in tensions and resolutions as well as alignment and opposition as those ideas can be used to understand how texts could affect their audience (Brummett 2010, 58). Similarly, the technique of persona, affects

how we view and understand texts and what kind of role we take when reviewing different kinds of texts. (Brummett 2010, 66 – 67). As the interpretation process itself depends on aspects that are subjective to the individual, a well-established theoretical background is needed to base the close reading on something that does not rely on personal frames. The sexism analysis is based on the theoretical framework that has been constructed based on especially the works of Sara Mills and Alice Freed.

The data is collected from a transcript and audio file of the episode with a close reading and close listening by picking out the detectable sexist instances. The instances are picked and considered sexist based on how they describe Harris with little to no reference to her career as a politician or lawyer but focus on her character. These sexist instances are then categorized: first based on the level of detectability to overt and covert categories and then their more specific subcategories are considered. The distinction between overt and covert is based on Sara Mills' work. The combination of close reading and close listening is applied especially when making a distinction in the use of sexist humor to sarcasm (overt) and irony (covert). While in written form both instances might have similar forms and could be understood as irony, the audio file is needed to understand the difference in the tone of delivery of the sexist instances. Some of the instances could include more than one type of sexism, but the choice of subcategory is based on the most prominent type. Deciding which subcategory an instance of sexism belongs to depends on the context i.e., what is said immediately before and after the utterance in question. In cases such as reporting speech and monitoring speech, which could be understood to be quite similar to each other, the deciding factor is how Shapiro frames Harris' speech.

After identifying and categorizing the instances of sexism, the sexism analysis is then conducted subcategory by subcategory. The analysis is organized based on Mills' book *Language and Sexism* (2008). Categories are considered one by one and some examples from each category are analyzed more closely. Both clear and less clear examples are utilized to create a dependable analysis of each category. For example, in the subcategory of words and meanings where instances such as "She's manipulative. She's Machiavellian" and "Brown was married at the time. Willie Brown is one of the most powerful people in California" are considered to belong to the same category while seemingly by topic and form they are not similar. Still, they represent two different types of the same category of words and meanings. Examples that reflect the same category more widely and from a different point

of view are chosen to create an understanding of how sexism can be manifested linguistically and how different types are represented in the material.

5.3.2 Legitimization Analysis via Transitivity Analysis

The second part of the analysis on legitimation is done using transitivity analysis originated by M.A.K. Halliday. Systemic Functional Linguistics focuses on how the functions of language make meaning in different contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 1). Meanings are made on three different levels that are textual, interpersonal, and ideational, and the embodiment of these three is a clause (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 88). Both interpersonal and ideational metafunctions express people's views, stances, and attitudes. Interpersonal metafunction does this by proposing through a linguistic element, the Mood element, consisting of a subject and a finite operator (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 140). Transitivity is a sign of ideational function, which, similarly to interpersonal metafunction, shows people's views, attitudes, and stances and "provides the lexicogrammatical resources for construing a quantum of change in the flow of events as a figure" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 213). The experiences that people convey through language consist of figures that involve different types of processes. Imposing linguistic order on our experiences through these processes is transitivity. The focus is on who does what to whom. The processes related to transitivity are material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential. Each of the processes has its own semantical and grammatical distinctions, the former of which will be the focus of this thesis.

Of importance here is what meanings each process conveys. Among the most common types of processes are material, mental, and relational processes, followed by verbal and then behavioral and existential processes (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 215). All apart from the existential process, are detectable from the data. Material processes express doing or happening and can influence the flow of events as often doing or happening is done by the role of the Actor, often referred to as the subject (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 224). In a simple sentence such as 'I build a house', 'I' is the actor, 'make' is the process of doing, and 'a house' is the goal or the "one to which the process is extended" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 226). The necessity of a goal depends on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive (ibid.). The doings and happenings most commonly either bring something into existence via 'creative' clauses, such as the example above, or they have a transformative effect where the process affects the actor or the goal of the clause, such as 'I painted the house green' (Halliday and

Matthiessen 2014, 230). In the current thesis, the focus is on what kind of happenings and doings different actors or participants, especially Kamala Harris, are said to have done.

Mental processes express how we ‘sense’ the world. With mental processes, the actor (the Subject) is called ‘the senser’, the one who internally experiences the process, and the goal is called ‘the phenomenon (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 248). The senser is most often a conscious being, but larger collectives can also be defined as conscious, such as ‘radical left types’ in the data at hand (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 250). The mental processes can be categorized by their type into perceptive (I feel), cognitive (I think), desirative (I want), and emotive (I like). The categories define the experience as indeterminate, as the borders of these categories are not definitive (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 257). Relational processes are the clauses that characterize or identify something. Within these clauses, the process is marked with the verb be and they often have two participants, the identified and the identifier such as in the clause ‘She is manipulative’ where ‘She’ is the identified, ‘is’ process, and ‘manipulative’ the identifier (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 259). The principal types of relational clauses are ‘attributive’ and ‘identifying’ and are based on whether the identifier is an attributive factor of the identified or whether it is the identity of the identified (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 265). Relational processes are applied semantically where the meaning behind the processes is interpreted rather than their grammatical functions.

Verbal processes are the clauses of saying and especially contribute to the creation of a narrative (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 302). These clauses have always at least one participant, the speaker, but may have additional ones, the addressee, and these acts of saying can be either directly quoted (She said ‘I’m a democrat’) or indirectly reported (She said she was a democrat) (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 303). With the verbal processes, the focus of the current thesis is on whether the speech acts are direct or indirect, and what kind of meaning the verb representing the verbal process conveys.

Behavioral processes are the clauses that represent physiological and psychological behavior such as smiling, laughing, or breathing. The active participant is called ‘the Behaver’ (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 301).

To conduct a legitimation analysis, each clause within the identified sexist instances is categorized based on the process type after which the legitimation strategy of an instance is determined based on other elements. Often authority legitimation is performed with verbal and mental process clauses (van Leeuwen 2008, 106) in which the authority is subject. The assumption is that something must be true,

natural, or legitimate because the authority says/states/claims/etc. so. “[t]ypically, expert legitimation takes the form of ‘verbal process clauses’ or ‘mental process clauses’ with the expert as subject” (van Leeuwen 2008, 107), and the same works with role model authority. However, I argue that with role model authority the effectiveness of legitimation is not done with the verbal process, but the utterances are especially effective when the mental process is used. In legitimation analysis, the focus is especially on the actors who are taking part in the conversation in one way or another. Because the topic of discussion is assumed not to take part in the discourse, not even as an audience, how Harris is included as a social actor is important. Additionally, it is important to note how the audience is included as social actors they do not have an active role in the discourse.

6 Analysis

To detect what kinds of sexism are visible in the podcast episode, in the following section, I analyze the sexist instances found in the text. The general analysis is divided between overt and covert forms of sexism and the hostile and benevolent tendencies are explored simultaneously. The aim of the analysis is to reveal sexist discourses that enable and enhance sexist ideologies in the communities in which the media is consumed. After the sexism analysis, the discursive legitimation of detected instances is analyzed. The legitimation analysis is divided based on the legitimization type into authoritative and evaluative categories and a combination of these two.

6.1 Sexist Instances

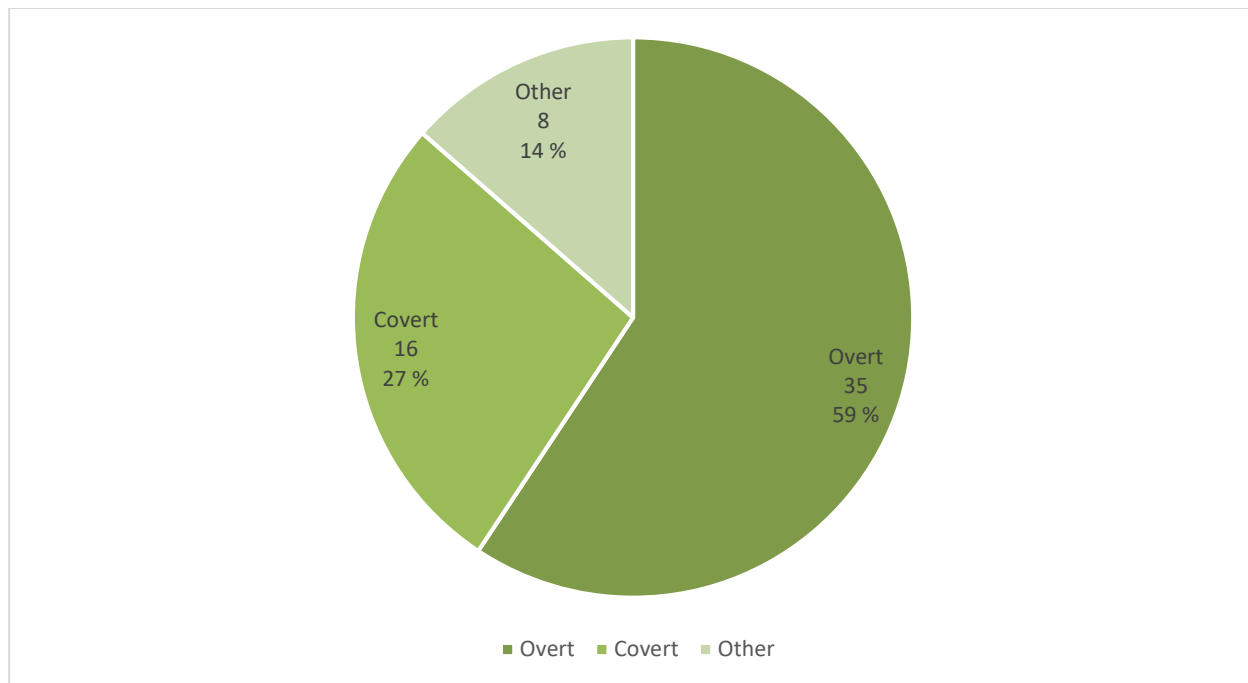


Figure 2 Instances of Sexism by Type, $N=59$

In the episode, there are altogether fifty-nine instances of sexism. As in Figure 1, the distribution between overt, covert, and other, is quite clear. Out of the total 59 sexist instances, 59% (35) are Overt, 27% (16) are Covert, and the last 14% (8) are other. The instances that have been categorized as ‘other’ do not fit in over or covert sexism but are sexist by nature. The instances are distributed quite evenly throughout the episode and there is no distribution of the types based on, for example, the context of

the ongoing topic. The instances are categorized further into subcategories of types of sexism and while not all of the instances are analyzed, examples from each category are included in the analysis.

6.2 Overt Sexism

The most common type of sexism in The Ben Shapiro Show is overt sexism. Out of the six elements included in the category of words and processes by Mills, only three were recognizable in the episode, as seen in Table 1. The three categories are naming, reported speech, and sarcasm. The last process ‘jokes’ is titled ‘sarcasm’ in the current thesis, as the material does not include the types of jokes Mills define to be overtly sexist but have a type of sexist humor that should be studied as overt.

TYPE	N	%
Words and meanings	12	34.3
Reported Speech	11	31.4
Sarcasm	12	34.3

Table 1 Instances of Overt Sexism by Type, N=35

6.2.1 Words and Meanings

Out of the 35 instances of overt sexism twelve belong to the category of words and meanings. Mostly, these instances are adjectives, how Harris is described, and these adjectives withhold sexist undertones. When characterizing people, there are differences in what kind of terms are associated with men and then again with women. Often, the characterizations of how people should behave, or descriptive terms, are associated with men and masculinity whereas the terms that tell how people should not act, or proscriptive terms, are associated with women and femininity (Smith et al. 2019, 160). These characterizations often operate on agentic-communal dichotomy, agentic covering the task- and goal-oriented characteristics of a leader and communal covering the relationship-oriented and nurturing characteristics (ibid.). Within the theory of sexism, the division can be seen between hostile and benevolent sexism.

- (1) “She’s manipulative. She’s Machiavellian. She has very few principles and what principles she does have are radical.” (4:28)
- (2) "The question about Kamala Harris is not that she is a phony. The question about Kamala Harris is that she is an extraordinarily radical candidate who is indeed

manipulative. I would be going Trojan Horse Harris. A pretty obvious Trojan Horse Harris, right?" (16:39)

Shapiro tends to use these proscriptive terms to characterize Harris. As in Example 1 and Example 2, Shapiro narrates Harris to be “manipulative”, “Machiavellian”, and “radical”. These are not communal characteristics because they do not have a relationship-focused orientation, but the agentic evaluation of the terms is negative. While the negativity might derive from the political juxtaposition between Shapiro and Harris (“radical” is a common term used against the opposition in United States politics), the choice to use for example “manipulative” instead of “persuasive” or “cunning” have sexist undertones. By using these negative evaluative terms, Shapiro gives Harris negative attributes further demonizing her. These types of descriptions are hostile by nature. They have the assumption, that Harris’ aim is to influence people in dishonest, immoral, and even cruel ways covering a lot of the characteristics of hostile sexism toward women who are thought to want influence over men.

(3) "Kamala Harris is actually quite cruel, which she absolutely is. [...] Not just to small children, but her- also to the person who she's now running with."(13:36)

In Example 3, the sexism is quite ambivalent. Shapiro points out how Harris is cruel. However, Shapiro does not leave it there but links small children to the cruelty without explaining what he is implying here. By doing this, Shapiro makes it noted that Harris, who is not a biological mother herself but has two stepchildren who call her ‘Momala’, does not agree with the benevolent ideas of nurturing and motherly women. Shapiro reveals his sexist attitude toward women by doing so. In addition, with the implication that Harris has been cruel toward Biden, the hostility of sexism is made apparent again with the underlying idea that women only seek power over men. A similar kind of ambivalence can be detected in Example 4.

(4) "...and several people referred to her as Brown's girlfriend. [...] They called Harris the speaker's new study." (17:50)

(5) “Brown was married at the time. Willie Brown is one of the most powerful people in California.” (17:50)

Furthermore, in Example 4, Harris is referred to as “Brown’s girlfriend”. Brown here, is Willie Brown, whom Harris dated in the early 1990s. Media back then, and Shapiro in the episode, implied that Harris’ political career was started due to the advances granted by Brown to Harris during and due to their relationship. Here, interestingly, the reference to girlfriend could be seen as a desirable role for Harris, agreeing with the benevolent idea of a submissive woman, but then again suggesting that this

relationship has been formed due to Harris' interest in advancing in politics, the hostile sexism's understanding of women aiming to gain power through sexuality makes the notion somewhat ambivalent. And when we look at Example 5, the hostility is even more visible. By bringing up Brown's marital status, which in a sense was true but he had been separated from her wife for over a decade (Reuters Staff 2021), and then his position, Shapiro diminishes Brown's responsibility for the implied affair and enhances the view of Harris as willing to do anything to gain power.

6.2.2 Framing and Reported Speech

Out of the 35 instances of overt sexism, there are 11 instances of framing or reported speech. According to Mills, women's speeches are more often represented in indirect speech rather than direct speech to modify the statements (Mills 2008, 71). In the podcast, the distribution of direct and indirect quotes is quite even, five and six, respectively. Interestingly, Shapiro provides direct quotations of Harris in the form of recordings, often first quoting the message indirectly. Reported speech, or framing, often includes an evaluative tone about the speech act reported and could modify the message, taking the agency away from the speaker. It is placing our mental structures in discourses to affect the participant's world views and it "is about getting language that fits. [...] The ideas are primary – and the language carries those ideas, evoke those ideas" (Lakoff 2004, 4). Shapiro utilizes framing especially with the recordings to influence the listener's opinion.

- (6) "Here is Kamala Harris laughing at her own marijuana use: [Recording of Harris] [Un-transcribable] ...looks like yoga... [Un-transcribable]. Okay, but she actually went to a podcast where she laughed about her own marijuana use." (22:07)

The use of recordings of Harris is most likely due to the credibility that the show claims to respect, but when listening to the recordings, the statements between the direct and indirect speeches do not match. As in Example 6, Shapiro makes a statement that Harris was laughing at her marijuana use, but when listening to the recording right after the statement, the only understandable passage of speech has no mention of drug use. This is one of the clearer ways to manipulate the listener to have a certain kind of presupposition of what is said in the recording. Shapiro had already claimed that Kamala Harris was laughing about marijuana use, so the listener expects that to happen in the recording. There was no clear statement of said marijuana use, but the listener is more likely to interpret the recording to say so. And even more so, when Shapiro in a way admits that the recording was not agreeing with his original

claim by saying ‘Okay, but she actually went to a podcast where she laughed about her own marijuana use’ the frame is still influencing the listener.

The differences between indirect and direct speeches are more prevalent in other instances of reported speech in the episode. In Example 7, Shapiro refers to an open hearing from 2018 where Harris was interviewing Ronald Vitiello, the director of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the time, about ICE’s policies.

- (7) “In an open hearing, she associated ICE, right, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement with KKK. Here was- here is Kamala Harris doing just that: [Vitiello] “I do not see a parallel between what is constitutionally mandated as- as it relates to enforcing the law...”, [Harris] “Are you aware that there's a perception” [Vitiello] “...that we know...” [Harris]“Are you aware that there's a perception...” [Vitiello] “...to put ICE in the same category as the KKK? Is that what you're asking me?” [Harris] “No, I'm very specific about what I'm asking. Are you aware of a perception that the way that the discretion..” [Harris] “I see no parallel, “I’m not finished” [Vitiello] “I see none”. [Harris] “I'm not finished. I'm not finished. Are you aware that there's a perception that- that ICE is ministering its power in a way that is causing fear?” (48:11)

Here, once again, Shapiro frames the recording by stating what the listener should interpret from it. Harris does not mention KKK at all, but Vitiello is the one to bring the organization up. Here the difference between indirect and direct speech is clear. Harris specifically states what she is asking, but due to Shapiro’s framing and the context that Vitiello has created the assumption is that Harris is herself framing ICE as a terroristic organization.

6.2.3 Sarcasm

Similarly to the other categories of overt sexism, there were 11 instances of sarcasm. As Mills has framed, humor and irony are considered covert forms of sexism due to their mediating nature. The response to it is expected to be of a similar kind and it receives a lesser critique. However, the type of humor that Shapiro uses the most in the podcast is sarcasm, which is a variety of irony. Sarcasm expects a different kind of response from irony as it is a more apparent, more aggressive type of humor and that is why sexist sarcasm is considered an overt type of sexism. Sarcasm is the most common type of sexist instance in the episode covering over one-fourth of the instances.

- (8) "They've got the full-on hero picture of Kamala Harris. She's crossing her arms. She's looking into the distance. Che Guevara style. It's really, it's really a beautiful photo. The giant headline has "Harris joins Biden ticket achieving a first". Uuuu [Mocking]. And

then there are three more headlines. [...] Ready for this? "Political warrior, shaped by life in two worlds." Wow [mocking]. "[...]pick seen as safe but energizing". Oh, safe and also energizing! Why that's as good as it gets. It's both safe and energizing" (8:20)

(9) "He was 60. She was 29, so it's a love match." (17:50)

By using insulting humor or sarcasm, Shapiro mediates the actual criticism he has toward Harris and simultaneously implies that these characterizations in Example 8, where Shapiro comments on the front page of The New York Times, are either negative attributes or blatant lies. He is shaping the image of Harris in the minds of his listeners by doing that, but as the delivery of the statements is through sarcasm, the message is mediated not as much of an insult but as less spiteful criticism. In Example 9, the characterization of an opportunist is enhanced with the use of sarcasm.

The use of sarcasm seems to be intentional as Shapiro is aware of his audience and more importantly, he is aware of the audience who is not favorable toward his content. By using a lot of this overt sexist form of humor, Shapiro creates an accepting space for prejudice and hostility toward women in the community he influences, normalizing the degrading language used about women.

(10) "That is Kamala Harris. Don't worry. She's not an opportunist in any way. She is merely a sincere pragmatic moderate. A sincere pragmatic moderate. You have nothing to fear. From the manipulative opportunistic authoritarian radical come nothing to fear guys. Nothing to fear. She was the safest possible pick". (31:21)

(11) "Mmmh [Agreeing tone], so don't worry guys. We can rely on her. She's definitely going to keep America safe as well."

In Example 11, we can see some ambivalent sexism. Here, through sarcasm, Shapiro intends to bring up the feminist characteristics that benevolent sexism support. Using terms such as 'sincere' and 'safe' in a sarcastic manner makes it clear that according to Shapiro, Harris is neither of these. Instead, Shapiro implies that there is a reason to be afraid of the VP pick, which agrees with the hostile sexism narrative.

6.3 Covert Sexism

Almost a third (29%) of the sexist instances were covertly sexist. Out of the six types, framed by Mills, humor (here irony), scripts and metaphors (with the addition of idioms), and collocations were detectable from the episode. Outside Mills' framework, monitoring speech included the second most instances, covering nearly a third of the covert sexism, as seen in Table 2.

TYPE	N	%
Irony	2	12.5
Scripts and Metaphors	9	56.2
Monitoring Speech	5	31.3

Table 2 Instances of Covert Sexism by Type, N=16

6.3.1 Irony

Mills explains that sexist humor often overemphasizes or stereotypes specific groups or aspects for comic effect and that humor relating to gender can “help to create a sense of solidarity amongst men” (Mills 2008, 140). The difference between irony and sarcasm is that irony is more difficult to detect. Especially when there are no changes in tone, it is almost impossible to prove that something is irony, and thus “irony can operate to simultaneously affirm and deny a particular value” (Benwell 2007, 540). Shapiro utilizes irony specifically when discussing issues that are about Harris, but it seems that bringing these issues up via irony has other motivations.

- (12) "The incredible stuff, they don't even believe women exist [...] There are no differences between men and women to the point where a man can be a woman but it's very historic that Kamala Harris is, in fact, a woman."
- (13) "This is a pretty great country, is it not? Yeah. I've been told that opportunities are not available to people of color. Kamala Harris is the daughter of a Jamaican immigrant and an Indian American immigrant. And she rose through the ranks to become a senator from California and then was elected as the Vice President of the United States. Seems like a pretty great life. Seems like this is a pretty damned great country."

In Examples 12 and 13, sexism is strongly tied to policy issues. In Example 12 the issue is not so much that Kamala Harris is a woman, but it is more generally about gender identity and the multitude of it, which conservatives are against. In Example 13 Shapiro disregards racism in U.S. politics and by using irony here, Shapiro is able to explain his view on matters “whilst disclaiming responsibility [...] of them (Benwell 2007, 540). As Shapiro has defined the podcast's political and ideological natures, he knows to which audience he is producing the content, the irony is more readable and understandable to the audience.

6.3.2 Scripts, Metaphors, and Idioms

Scripts and metaphors have the most instances out of all categories of overt sexism. By using metaphors, we can create realities, and as such, they can direct future actions that fit the metaphor. Actions based on metaphors further enhance their incentive metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 156). The power of metaphor is in that the speaker of a metaphor puts an idea into words that are then transferred to the audience who unravel the message based on their personal context. A lot of metaphors that are used to convey facts are based on our choices of what kind of truth we want to represent. When making a statement, we choose what is included and what is left out (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 163).

- (14) "Here's Trump going after Harris yesterday: 'Plus she was very very nasty to- on the reasons that surprised me - [...] she was probably nastier than even Pocahontas to Joe Biden. She was very disrespectful to Joe Biden and it's hard to pick somebody that's that disrespectful and she said things during the Democratic primary that were horrible"
- (15) "She'll savage anyone to get ahead"
- (16) "She'll switch her positions. She will flip on a dime. She'll make accusations that are really ugly about people simply to punch herself forward"

In Examples 14, 15, and 16 we can also see a comparison between how Shapiro views political debates. In Example 14 Trump is referred as to 'go after' Harris implying, in the context of the presidential race, a competition between the political opponents. Harris, however, is described in Example 15 as to 'savage' political opponent to get ahead, implying that a level of cruelty and uncontrollability is included in the debate. Additionally in Example 16, the uncontrollability is enhanced with the idiom 'flip on a dime' suggesting that Harris is untrustworthy and unpredictable. This kind of juxtaposition reveals the sexist ideology, that a man, in this case, Trump, is calculated in the debates, whereas Harris would rather let emotion take over. While both have agency, the level of rationale is debatable. In addition, the objects of the act refer to some level of cruelty. Trump is 'going after' a political opponent Harris, which in the context of the race, is acceptable, but Harris in a similar situation goes after 'anyone'.

6.3.3 Monitoring Speech

Shapiro monitoring Harris' speech is the second most prevalent type of covert sexism. On several different occasions, Shapiro brings up the way Harris laughs and by doing so he depicts Harris to be undesirable. This is not uncommon when it comes to women in U.S. politics. In an article about how the media represented Hilary Clinton during her Democratic nomination for President in 2007-2008, Tanya Romaniuk found that Clinton was more likely to be evaluated negatively due to her laughter than her male counterparts (Romaniuk 2016, 547). The same kind of phenomenon can be seen in Shapiro's episode.

- (17) [...] and Kamala Harris is like 'Oh, yes, we can.' [Mocking laughter] How you know like Joker laughs. [...] So, the next Suicide Squad would have been Kamala Harris laughing with that crazy Cesar Romero kind of giggle. (27:49)

Similarly in Example 13, by bringing up Harris' laughter, Shapiro makes the decision to make a seemingly non-gendered reaction an evaluation criterion for the office Harris is running for. In addition, by characterizing the laughter with terms such as 'crazy' or 'hysterical', Shapiro not only creates an illusion that Harris would be unfit for the position due to mental instability but utilizes another form of oppression with hysteria being categorized as women's disease in the past. In modern media, hysteria and its derivatives are used as buzzwords that aim to disprove those who speak against for example systemic violence, misogyny, racism, right-wing populism, and far-right extremism (Krasny 2020, 127). As the term itself has origins that are extremely sexist, the modern implication in a negative context is sexist as well.

- (18) She's like, yeah, the plastics straw- you want to hear some hysterical? Kamala Harris left- right, it's been a solid few minutes since we played Kamala Harris laughing hysterically and awkwardly when she realizes what she's saying is kind of crazy. Here is Kamala Harris laughing crazily about plastic straws. (54:35)

When looking more into the use of 'hysterical', as in Example 14, underlying sexist implications can be linked to a wider discussion about women in public life. The use of *hysterical* in political contexts can work as an enthymeme, a form of argumentation that agrees with the specific world views of its audience, an argument that "fits into a well-worn groove in the hearts and minds of its audience" (Koerber 2018, 158). Emotionality has become one of the key characteristics when women run for high positions and generally women are thought to be more emotional and thus less competent (Carnevale, Smith & Campbell 2019, 3). This derives from the historical discourses "that all women are

pathological because of their female hormones” (Koerber 2018, 168). Shapiro is able to simultaneously frame the recording of Harris discussing plastic straws and depict her as hysterical or too emotionally responsive to such a politically unimportant matter.

6.4 Legitimizing Sexism

The 59 instances of sexism detected in the podcast can be divided into categories based on the legitimation process. Based on how the legitimation was grounded, three categories were detectable from the data, as seen in Table 3. The three categories are authority, moral evaluation, and a combination of the two. 42.4% of the instances were legitimized via authorization, 37.3% via evaluation and the remaining 20.3% via a combination.

LEGITIMATION	<i>N</i>	%
Authorization	25	42.4
Evaluation	22	37.3
Combination	12	20.3

Table 3 Sexist Instances by Legitimation strategies, *N*=59

There are 240 processes included in the 59 sexist instances. 97 processes (40.4%) were relational, 51 (21.3%) material, 42 (15.8%) verbal, 38 (15.8%) mental, 6 (2.5%) behavioral, and 6 (2.5%) existential. Clauses of the last process type were detected from the data, yet not included in the analysis as those did not convey sexism.

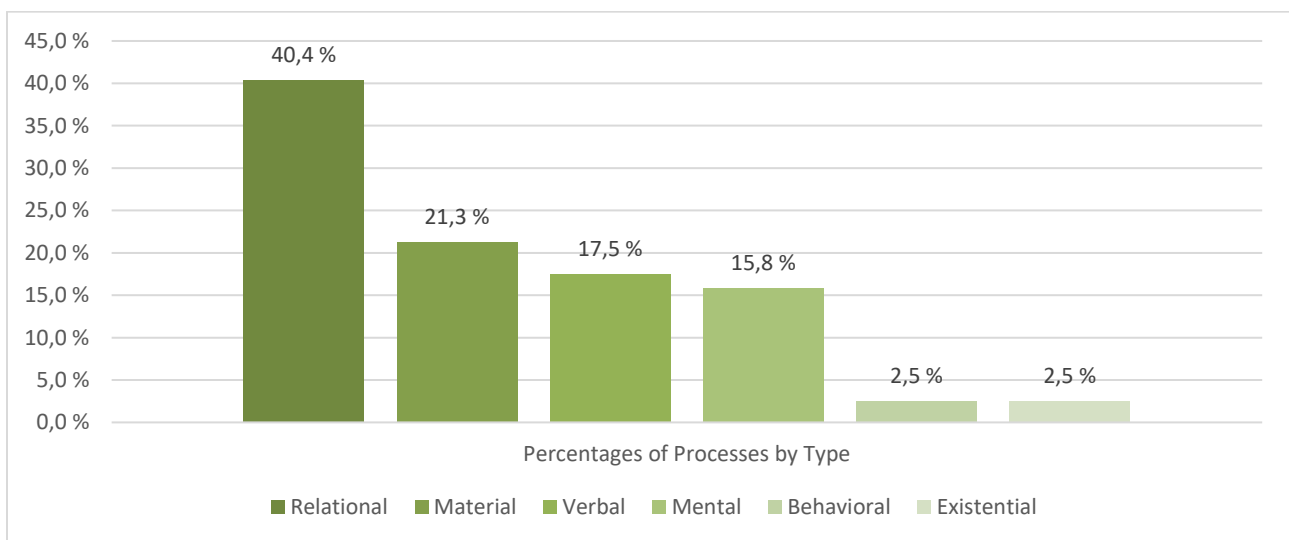


Figure 3 Transitivity Processes within Sexist Instances by process type, *N*=240

As can be seen in Figure 3, the most prominent type of process was the relational process, covering almost half as many processes as the second largest category, material processes. The relational process is the largest category as Shapiro often describes Harris' character rather than talking about her actions. This in itself can be understood as sexist as her policies and actions should be under scrutiny when considering whether or not to vote for her, yet her character is deemed to be more important by Shapiro. Verbal and behavioral processes could be seen to agree with the analysis of Reported Speech and Monitoring speech of Sections 6.2 and 6.3, as these subcategories of sexism are often conveyed with verbal or behavioral processes.

6.4.1 Legitimation via Authorization

The most prominent way Shapiro legitimizes sexism in his podcast is via authority. This is manifested especially via the personal authority of Shapiro as often the instances are Shapiro describing *what* Harris has done or is going to do. Some of this authority can also be vested in his status as a political commentator, granting him some expertise in the field of politics. Additionally, due to his following in the media, Shapiro can be described as an opinion leader, and his authority can also be grounded in role model authority. Most of the legitimation via authorization has been done via material processes, where Harris is the participant doing something, or via mental processes where Shapiro is not the senser, but the audience or the addressee is. Additionally, the verbal processes where either Harris is claimed to do something, or Shapiro expresses his opinion on the matter are used to legitimize sexism.

- (19) “She’ll **switch** her positions. She **will flip on a dime**. She’ll **make** accusations that are really ugly about people simply to punch herself forward.”
- (20) “**Don’t worry** guys, she’s *not radical*. She’s *pragmatic moderate*. **I keep saying** it over and over. Why **don’t you believe** me that she’s a pragmatic moderate? **I mean**, who you gonna believe, me or the words coming out of Kamala Harris’ face.”

Often the personal authority is explicit when Shapiro is directly or indirectly quoting Harris or when Shapiro describes something that Harris has allegedly done or will allegedly do. Statements, such as in Example 19, have Harris as the participant (she) completing the verbal processes such as ‘**make accusations**’ in the future. While there could be an implication that these are legitimized because Harris has done so before, the instances only include Shapiro stating them as facts. Legitimation can be thus credited to personal authorization, Shapiro being influential and knowledgeable enough to say

such things. In Example 20, the legitimation can be similarly credited to Shapiro's authority. In this case, the legitimation is more role model authority or expert authority. The imperative mood in the mental process '**don't worry**' displays assurance that an expert could give you. Additionally, the mental process of '**why don't you believe me**' suggests that Shapiro is someone to believe in these kinds of matters referring to some kind of credibility through expertise or popularity.

- (21) "And several people **referred** to her as 'Brown's girlfriend' [...] They **called** Harris the speaker's new study."
- (22) "And this **has led** obviously to a lot of consternation among radical left types about her being a cop."
- (23) "What we **learned** is that she's incredibly manipulative, that she will use people to get ahead and then she will ditch them at the first available opportunity."
- (24) "So **don't worry** guys. We **can rely** on her."

Another authorization strategy Shapiro utilizes is the authority of conformity. In Example 21, the verbal processes '**referred**' and '**call**' are done by participants (several people) outside the context of the podcast validating the sexism from someone other than himself. The implication here is that as others have already said these things, it is acceptable for Shapiro to state so as well. As in Example 22 the participants are 'radical left types', the validation of sexism is also drawn from the opposition of the target audience of the podcast. The same implication works here as well and could be even more influential because if the community that is against Shapiro's community is not trusting her, why should her opposition trust her? Another aspect of authority of conformity is the use of 'we' as a participant as in Examples 23 and 24. Mental processes are often subjective processes and the *senser* is the speaker. However, Shapiro includes himself and the audience to be the senser of mental processes of '**learning**' and '**relying on**' by using the pronoun *we*. Sexism in these cases is legitimized due to the common experience from which the audience, and Shapiro, can draw for support.

6.4.2 Legitimation via Evaluation

The legitimation that has been done through moral evaluation has often Shapiro stating *what* or *who* Harris is according to him. Most of the relational processes are used to legitimize via evaluation. The relational processes of Harris being something have either an attributive or identifying mode.

- (25) "She's *manipulative*. She's Machiavellian. **She has very few principles and what principles she does have are radical**"
- (26) "She's extraordinarily radical in her policies."
- (27) "The question about Kamala Harris is that she is an extraordinary radical candidate who is indeed manipulative. **I would be going** Trojan Horse Harris."

This can be seen in Examples 25, 26, and 27 as the relational processes of *being* or *having* are given either an attributive mode as '*manipulative*' or '*radical*' or an identifying mode as '*an extraordinarily radical candidate*'. In these cases, the moral evaluation could also be based on a role model, or even an expert authority, considering Shapiro's position as a top conservative political commentator. However, as in Example 21, his personal contribution with the verbal process '**would be going**' works more to enhance the moral evaluation of Harris. These legitimation strategies are most natural with overt sexism of words and meanings, where the target is given names or described somehow.

- (28) "What an opportunist. She is running on the same ticker as a man that she called segregationist *essentially* then she doubled down on it"

Moral evaluation is most effective when the participants share the same values. Shapiro utilizes moral evaluation well by using buzzwords that rises concern among his audience. '*Radical*', '*manipulative*', and '*authoritarian*' are evaluative attributes that resonate well with audiences that are politically inclined. Still, as explained in section 6.2.1, the choice of words is still sexist. Furthermore, the moral evaluation becomes visible as in Example 28 the verbal process of Harris **saying** something is modified with the adverb *essentially*. When using *essentially*, Shapiro shifts the responsibility of interpreting the utterance to the audience and trusts that his audience agrees with him.

6.4.3 Legitimation via the Combination of Authorization and Evaluation

- (29) "We are gonna hear a lot of that, get ready. You got a lot of that. That crazy laugh [...] So, she's an authoritarian who can laugh crazily."
- (30) "She's a pragmatic moderate who is going to enforce the law and ensure that you and your family- **I mean, look** at her record as a prosecutor. It's not as though she would use power conveniently and for whatever she decided to use it for that day. This person cares deeply **about** you and your family and keeping you safe."

In Example 29, we can see a similar kind of authority of conformity as in Examples 23 and 24 earlier by using the 'we' as the senser and the mental process to unify the experience, utilizing the authority of

conformity. However, the relational processes of the audience ‘**having**’ and Harris (she) given an identity via the relational process of **being** implies legitimation via moral evaluation, especially when the identity of an authoritarian is modified with the behavioral process of ‘**laughing**’ which is further given the attribute of the adverb ‘*crazily*’. The audience is more likely to accept the sexism and evaluate it to be fair because they have Shapiro’s authority backing it. In Example 30, the authority aspect comes in two parts. First Shapiro utilizes personal authority by using the verbal process ‘**mean**’ to claim some authority. This is further emphasized with the material process ‘**look**’ giving a suggestion or command drawing attention to the rest of the sentence, where the moral evaluation comes to play. With modality in the material process of Harris ‘**using power**’, Shapiro leaves the interpretation up to the audience whether she would do that.

7 Discussion

The most common sexism type was overt sexism, and the three detected subcategories had a similar frequency of instances. Under the covert types of sexism, scripts, and metaphors had the most instances. Shapiro's use of sexism throughout the podcast was especially hostile. The way Harris was described to be or act had the underlying assumption that her reasons to run with Joe Biden for the presidency were not honest. Highlighted especially was Harris' capability to be a rational leader, as the underlying assumption agreed with the stereotype of women being too emotional to act rationally. This does not affect the opinions of the audience during the election season but could result in long-term resentment of women in powerful positions and further divide the United States politically. While the hostility toward Harris derives from political rivalry, the normalization of this type of hostile sexist language affects the women of Shapiro's party. By using sexist language, Shapiro creates an acceptable mold of women in politics. The agency of women is taken away with little acts like reporting and modifying women's speech and language, and further by limiting the scope of what women in politics look like.

Even though ambivalent sexism is not explicitly detected in the material (e.g., Shapiro praising conservative women politicians for their values while criticizing Harris for hers), aspects of it are implicitly expressed when benevolent or hostile aspects are found to be part of sexist instances. Harris' hostility was reflected in regard to a lot of benevolent sexist ideals of women and thus enhancing the hostility aspect. The ambivalence was stronger in cases where Harris was described to be something or act a certain way. This could be to paint a picture of something undesirable. Whether the ambivalence was implicitly expressed via direct statements or sarcasm, the effect enhances both hostile and benevolent ideas. A woman like Kamala Harris is bad and aiming for powerful positions is undesirable for women. Women who are then again opposite to her are good. This applies both in the political and general sense. The ambivalence of sexism here surely has political disparities affecting it, but Harris was also always paralleled with men whether it was Che Guevara or Joker.

Shapiro seems to rely a lot on his position as a popular political commentator when legitimizing sexism. When legitimizing sexism, both authorization and moral evaluation were represented equally, and a combination of the legitimation strategies was also detected. When authorizing sexism, Shapiro relies on people's knowledge of him and his career as a political commentator. This role model authority has been granted to him by his vast following. The expert authority that Shapiro also utilizes

can be vested in his career as a columnist, author, and commentator. The other authorization strategy, authority by conformity, is important when considering the community aspect of the study.

Legitimizing actions based on other people seems to be the strongest and it is also the strategy that increases and spreads without any kind of authority. It is easier to transfer into everyday life with an attitude such as 'My neighbor is doing it, so it's OK for me to do it'. Shapiro is able to enhance its effectiveness by including himself in the group.

Understanding one's community and how to utilize its values is an important factor when legitimizing via moral evaluation. Shapiro knows his community and knows that his opinions raise controversy among those who do not share his opinions. In a way, the juxtaposition itself encourages sexist attitudes as sexism is often framed as traditional family values within conservative politics (Lakoff 2004, 39). Challenging those values can result in more aggressive protection of them. Because of this, Shapiro is able to legitimize sexism via moral evaluation. Additionally, I argue that ambivalent sexism comes into play when moral evaluation is used to legitimize sexism. Conservative communities value the idea of a nuclear family which agrees with benevolent sexism's idea of women. Then again as the opposition is described with negative attributes, their values, or even just the idea of them, become something that threaten the idea of benevolent sexism and hostile sexism starts to have an effect on the audience's view of society. Hence, even when ambivalent sexism is not explicitly detectable in the podcast episode, its influence can be understood as a factor in legitimizing through moral evaluation.

Shapiro utilizes his podcast as a platform to create an image of Harris as an incompetent candidate, attacking essentially her character rather than her policies. Moreover, the character and identity that Shapiro gives to Harris can be politically motivated, but the underlying criticism derives from Harris' gender, essentially implying that women are unfit to lead. By foregrounding gender and recognizing it as a legitimate attribute when considering political positions, Shapiro takes political power away from Harris when using discriminatory sexist language. While criticism based on gender should not be considered a valid form of criticism, by legitimizing sexist language use, Shapiro is simultaneously legitimizing gender as a valid factor when deciding which candidate to support. Essentially, this foregrounding of gender in politics can also be harmful to Republican candidates, even if Shapiro would speak of them more favorably than of Harris. This aspect could be an inspiration for a future study on how political commentators speak of women in politics who have the same political alignment as them. Additionally, studying whether the political alignment, being Republican or Democrat, affects

the amount or types of sexism when discussing women politicians could add to the research on sexism in politics and media.

While the current study answers the first two research questions, the third one leaves a lot for interpretation. I argue, that as Shapiro legitimizes sexism, especially via personal authority, and trusts the moral values of the community to agree with his own, listening to *The Ben Shapiro Show* can increase the support of sexism within the communities of the listeners and furthermore, the same kind of legitimation strategies are used to either explain the issues to supporters and opposers alike. Shapiro's way to humor sexism makes it easier to accept due to the positive feelings that jokes make us feel. Additionally, humor makes it also easier to use sexist language as it is easy to deny as 'just a joke', and therefore distancing oneself from sexism becomes easier as well. However, the level of accepting sexism or sexist attitudes within the communities can be only proven by questioning the audience of The Ben Shapiro Show on their personal beliefs and thought models and then detecting sexist attitudes from those results. Nevertheless, the current study suggests that there is a strong foundation for sexist attitudes to flourish because of the podcast and Shapiro's position as an influential person.

8 Conclusion

The study set to answer three questions on how sexism is visible, made acceptable, and how effective sexism is in The Ben Shapiro show. The questions were as follows:

1. What kind of sexism can be identified in the podcast?
2. What legitimation strategies are used to legitimize the identified instances of sexism?
3. How can sexist language and legitimation of sexism help foster sexist ideologies and attitudes within the communities formed by the audience of the podcast?

First, I established the background for the study by explaining the theory of sexism and sexism in more popular contexts of politics and media. This provided a better understanding of the current situation of sexism related to the political sphere and climate. Next, I explored the positioning of podcasts in the field of media to better understand the history of the medium, its different aspects, and its level of influence. After the general background sections, I formed the theoretical background from the works of different scholars of Critical Discourse Analysis. The theory of sexism related to language I based on the works of Sara Mills and expanded to include the current research on sexism in language and cover additional types of sexism. The first research question was answered via sexism analysis that I undertook via close reading. Theo van Leeuwen's research on discourses as social practices offered a methodology for the legitimation analysis that was undertaken using M.A.K. Halliday's transitivity analysis. In the discussion section, I bring the analysis sections together to consider the third research question of how the audiences could justify their sexist ideologies based on the information gained through the podcast.

The current study answers the questions of what kind of sexism is detectable and how that sexism is legitimized in *conservative right-wing* podcasts in the United States. This is a limitation, and a suggestion for further study, as sexism does not have a political view. An analysis of left-wing or centrist podcasts would provide a better understanding of how sexism is conveyed through the medium of podcasts throughout the U.S. political spectrum. Additionally, a wider dataset could provide a better understanding of whether the political stance of the target of sexism affects the number of instances, the sexism types, or the strategies used to legitimize sexism. Another aspect that the study at hand lacks and that further studies should include is intersectionality. While sexism is an issue that can be

understood to affect all women, the effects are different for different identity groups of women due to issues of racism, ableism, economic status, etc. Kamala Harris as the topic of this study presents the possibility to include intersectionality due to her being a woman of color who embraces both her African American and Southeast Asian identities, yet the collected data and the used framework do not cover analysis that includes racial minorities or other identity aspects.

The results of the study show that sexist language is utilized actively in right-wing conservative media to limit women's participation in politics. Sexist attitudes can be fostered, propagated, and naturalized efficiently via podcasts. The study adds to the research on sexist language in media. Sexism in traditional media has been researched a lot but podcasts as a medium have not been considered as much. However, as new social media forms emerge, women take a more active part in politics, and society's acceptance of discrimination shifts, podcasts actively gain more credibility as an information outlet for news. Furthermore, as a media between traditional and social media, they create communities around them as podcasters can be compared to social media content creators with fanbases. These communities can rely heavily on the information that podcasts provide, modeling their actions according to the podcaster and justifying their attitudes based on the podcaster's ideologies. Podcasts have a unique position in the field of media that should be studied more intensely to understand their influence on society better.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Sexist Instances

OVERT	Instance	Timestamp
Naming	"She's manipulative. She's Machiavellian. She has very few principle and what principles she does have are radical"	04:28
	"She's extraordinarily radical in her policies"	04:28
	"Kamala Harris is actually quite cruel, which she absolutely is. [...] Not just to small children, but her- also to the person who she's now running with."	13:36
	"The question about Kamala Harris is not that she is a phony. The question about Kamala Harris is that she is an extraordinarily radical candidate who is indeed manipulative. I would be going Trojan Horse Harris. A pretty obvious Trojan Horse Harris, right?"	16:39
	"...and several people referred to her as Brown's girlfriend. [...] They called Harris the speaker's new study."	17:50
	"And this had led obviously to a lot of consternation among radical left types about her being a cop. And frankly, I think some of the consternation is warranted."	21:29
	"Okay, so. What did we learn from Kamala Harris' tenure? What we learned is that she's incredibly manipulative, that she will use people to get ahead and then she will ditch them at the first available opportunity. As she will do to Joe Biden as well. And she will determine first available opportunity as well too."	26:16
	"Absolutely opportunistic Kamala Harris willing to say or do literally anything to get ahead. Literally anything to get ahead."	36:39
	"What an opportunist. She is running on the same ticket as a man that she called a segregationist essentially then she doubled down on it".	37:50
	"She is authoritarian by nature. She's an opportunist by nature and she's willing to say or do anything to get ahead. Okay, that is perfectly obvious throughout her career."	44:05
	"Okay, this is somebody who's willing to pursue any policy that she thinks is going to bring her power"	44:05
	"...as I like to put it heiress apparent. Aha, Harris apparent. You got it. You got it."	00:21
Reported speech	"Here is Kamala Harris laughing at her own marijuana use: "[Un-transcribable]... looks like yoga...[un-transcribable]. Okay, but	22:07

	she actually went to a podcast where she laughed about her own marijuana use.	
	"She said if it were, if Joe Biden had his way, then little Kamala, a little little baby Kamala, never would have been able to go to an integrated Public school in San Francisco."	36:26
	"She said that Biden should apologize for ever having said any kind words about any senator who ever was a segregationist and she demanded that apology. And in fact, when asked if Biden should drop out of the race, okay, she was like, well, that's up to him."	38:32
	"He's gonna have to make that decision for himself. I wouldn't tell him what to do' [When asked whether Biden should enter the presidential race after the accusations of sexual harassment]. Oh, yeah. I wouldn't tell him what to do. But you know if he- if he dropped out, that'd be great."	40:03
	"Here is Kamala Harris going after Brett Kavanaugh asking him if he had taken polygraph, pushing FBI investigation and then when he's- one of Kavanaugh's lines of defense was there are bunch of women who he has treated incredibly well throughout my [Kavanaugh's] career and Kamala Harris was like well is it true that you can be friends with someone, and treat other women badly. She is just- she's so cynical and so awful."	40:22
	"And she was basically saying that because you're a catholic you shouldn't be on the bench. Because that's who Kamala Harris is."	44:58
	"In an open hearing, she associated ICE, right, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement with KKK."	48:11
	"It is the same lady who says that- oh, by the way, all illegal immigrants should receive medicare."	48:57
	"She was asked on The View how she felt about AOC. About AOC and the Green New Deal and her plans. And she was specifically asked about a seventy percent top tax rate, which by the way is insane.[...] Here was her being a pragmatic moderate endorsing the idea of investigating a seventy percent top tax rate."	51:09
	Here she was being like 'Money? What's that? Why should I care about that? It's not my money. Let's just do it, policy and cost, blrgh.."	56:31
	"And Kamala Harris went on national tv and said we should probably cut funds to the LAPD."	58:18

Sarcasm	<p>"They've got the full-on hero picture of Kamala Harris. She's crossing her arms. She's looking into the distance. Che Guevara style. It's really, it's really a beautiful photo. The giant headline has "Harris joins Biden ticket achieving a first". [Uuuu] And then there are three more headlines. [...] Ready for this? "Political warrior, shaped by life in two worlds." Wow [mocking]. "[...]pick seen as safe but energizing". Oh, safe and also energizing! Why that's as good as it gets. It's both safe and energizing"</p>	08:20
	<p>"I mean, it's like the energizer bunny, but also it's safe. Incredible! Okay, and then there's this headline: "Woman of color in number two slot of major party" Whoa [mocking]. Unbelievable! Groundbreaking! We- use, we had a black president for two terms. We did. And we had a woman who won the most popular votes, but woman of color in the number two slot of major party? Wow. Wow, historic!"</p>	09:06
	<p>"Harris is a charismatic and telegenic politician!". Really? Is she? Is she now? I mean, I suppose she's magnetic on television in the same way Joaquin Phoenix is magnetic in that scene from Joker where he goes on The Late Night show and then proceeds to laugh like a hysterical crazy person"</p>	10:39
	<p>"He was 60. She was 29, so it's a love match."</p>	17:50
	<p>"That is Kamala Harris. Don't worry. She's not an opportunist in any way. She is merely a sincere pragmatic moderate. A sincere pragmatic moderate. You have nothing to fear. From the manipulative opportunistic authoritarian radical come nothing to fear guys. Nothing to fear. She was the safest possible pick".</p>	31:21
	<p>"Charming and moderate Kamala Harris"</p>	34:16
	<p>"What an honorable, honorable, deeply honorable candidate. I mean, I wouldn't fear her in a position of power at all this lady."</p>	38:32
	<p>"So, she is not running on the ticket [...] with a guy who she literally called a quasi-segregationist who sexually harasses women regularly. But don't worry, she loves him and they are best friends. And also she's not an opportunist in any way. She's just a deeply honest politician of conviction."</p>	39:20
	<p>"Don't worry, she's not radical. She's pragmatic moderate. I keep saying it over and over. Why don't you believe me that she's a pragmatic moderate? I mean, who you gonna believe me or the words coming out of Kamala Harris' face?"</p>	48:57
	<p>"That's- that's really what it's about. Don't worry about the cost guys. Cost is of no consequence here."</p>	57:46

	"Don't worry guys. She is a radical, she's- She's not a radical. She's a pragmatic moderate who is going to enforce the law and ensure that you and your family- I mean, look at her record as prosecutor. It's not as though she would use power conveniently and for whatever she decided to use it for that day. This person cares deeply about you and your family and keeping you safe."	58:28
	"Mmmh [Agreeing tone], so don't worry guys. We can rely on her. She's definitely going to keep America safe as well."	59:30
COVERT	Instance	Timestamp
Humor/Irony	"The incredible stuff, they don't even believe women exist [...] There are no differences between men and women to the point where a man can be a woman but it's very historic that Kamala Harris is, in fact, a woman."	03:00
	"This is a pretty great country, is it not? Yeah. I've been told that opportunities are not available to people of color. Kamala Harris is the daughter of a Jamaican immigrant and an Indian American immigrant. And she rose through the ranks to become a senator from California and then was elected as the Vice President of the United States. Seems like a pretty great life. Seems like this is a pretty damned great country."	09:29
Scripts and metaphors	"She'll switch her positions. She will flip on a dime. She'll make accusations that are really ugly about people simply to punch herself forward"	05:20
	"Kamala Harris is not breaking any glass ceilings here because there was no glass ceiling"	07:32
	"The notion that Kamala Harris faces unique obstacles is absolutely ridiculous. In fact, she faces such a non-unique obstacles that you could flame out so dramatically as a candidate."	07:48
	"[...] that she will then set about her mind to- to talk about how terrible it is"	09:29
	"Here's Trump going after Harris yesterday: 'Plus she was very very nasty to- on the reasons that surprised me - [...] she was probably nastier than even Pocahontas to Joe Biden. She was very disrespectful to Joe Biden and it's hard to pick somebody that's that disrespectful and she said things during the Democratic primary that were horrible"	15:58
	"She'll savage anyone to get ahead"	37:03
	"That's what she does. She uses anything at hand in order to harm her political opposition. No matter how honest she has to be."	42:02
	"She is not going to allow religious believers who operate their businesses in accordance with their actual religious scruples."	46:34

	"So, Kamala Harris would force the state of Alabama to run any law that affects abortion, By Kamala Harris is DOJ, before passing the law."	47:01
Monitoring speech	"Like there's a lot of stuff you can't just do as president of the United States and Kamala Harris like "Oh, yes, we can." [Mocking laughter]. How you know like Joker laughs? Okay. So, by the way, like it's, I guess, it's good that she was cast as VP because otherwise she would have been the heir apparent for the Joker part and Jared Leto is out already. So, the next Suicide Squad would have been Kamala Harris laughing with that crazy Cesar Romero kind of giggle."	0:27:49
	"Yeah, they- looking forward to lot of that. We're gonna hear a lot of that, get ready. You got a lot of that. That crazy laugh. Mmm, yeah. Good stuff happening here. So, she's an authoritarian who can laugh crazily. So that's, that's exciting."	28:58
	"No, I want them to laugh more. I want more of that charming, graceful laugh from Kamala Harris. I think it's beautiful. I think it's a beautiful sound. Anybody who doesn't think that that sound is beautiful is simply being misogynistic."	29:44
	"She's like, yeah, the plastic straws- you want to hear some hysterical? Kamala Harris left- right, it's been like a solid few minutes since we played Kamala Harris laughing hysterically and awkwardly when she realizes what she's saying is kind of crazy. Here is a Kamala Harris laughing crazily about plastic straws."	54:35
	"Kamala's like 'Yea, innovation, but you know, it's a process guys again a bit, ha ha ha [Continues to mimic crazy laughter]. Man, get ready years of that coming up. Years! Years, if she wins. Years."	55:39
	OTHER	Instance
	"First, he decided very early on that he was going to pick a woman. Well, as soon as you say that you're basically going to pick a VP based on tokenistic concern, and let's face it, that is a tokenistic concern whether your VP is woman."	02:05
	"The idea that this is a criterion for picking a VP [...] [it] becomes even more bizarre when you realize that the democratic party platform at this point is that women don't exist and a man can be one"	02:50
	"I have to pick somebody who is representative of a particular demographic population in the United States [...]. It has to be a black woman, has to be a woman of color."	03:00
	"Kamala Harris was such a bad candidate that after jumping to the lead early on in the race-based, again, on those Twitter blue checkmarks checking particular boxes: woman, black"	03:47

	<p>"Is that supposed to make people feel comforted and solidified in their belief that he is in the fact a moderate who's going to carry America on gentle waves to better days?"</p>	04:28
	<p>"If I'm Joe Biden, I'm getting a food tasted today. Today. Do not have Kamala Harris in the same room when you're eating lunch, Joe Biden. For your own preservation, at the very least, you might want some life insurance"</p>	05:20
	<p>"Hey, she also famously decided that she was going to support a law that allowed for the prosecution of parents for truancy of children."</p>	20:46
	<p>"That's not the same thing as vice presidents and presidents having general conflicts of views. That is her basically insinuating that Joe Biden is a horrible human being. That was Kamala Harris. But the news for Joe Biden is that he's not the only target of her Tender Mercies."</p>	40:22

Appendix 2 Finnish Summary

Johdanto

Seksismi on 1960-luvulla alkaneen toisen aallon feminismin aikana syntynyt termi, joka tuo esille naisten kokeman syrjinnän yhteiskunnassa. Muiden kansalaisoikeusliikkeiden tavoin feminismi vaikutti lainsäädäntöön sekä aloitti kielireformin, jonka myötä syrjivää kieltä naisista alettiin tarkastella kriittisestä näkökulmasta (Talbot 2007). Tässä tutkielmassa tutkin minkälaista kielellistä seksismiä esiintyy poliittisen kommentaattori Ben Shapiroin podcastin *The Ben Shapiro Shown* jaksossa Yhdysvaltain ensimmäisestä naisvarapresidentistä Kamala Harrisista. Tutkimuksen kohteena ei ole vain se, minkälaista seksismiä jaksossa esiintyy, vaan myös, miten seksismiä legitimoidaan Shapiroin ja hänen yleisönsä muodostamassa yhteisössä. Tutkimuskysymykset ovat:

1. Minkälaista seksismiä podcast-jaksosta esiintyy?
2. Minkälaisia legitimointistrategioita löydettyissä seksistissä esimerkeissä käytetään?
3. Miten seksistinen kieli sekä seksismin legitimointi auttavat seksististen ideologioiden ja asenteiden edistämistä podcastin ympärille muodostuneissa yhteisöissä?

Tutkimus perustuu kriittiseen diskurssintutkimukseen, jonka pohjimmainen tarkoitus on tuottaa kriittistä tietoa siitä, miten luomme maailmaa ympärillämme diskurssien välityksellä. Tutkimus hyödyntää erityisesti alan feministisiä suuntauksia eli feminististä diskurssintutkimusta sekä post-strukturaalista feminististä diskurssintutkimusta (Lazar 2007; Baxter 2003). Näiden alojen taustalla ovat Foucault'n ajatukset vallasta sekä diskursseista. Tutkimuskysymyksistä ensimmäiseen vastataan seksismianalyysillä, joka pohjautuu erityisesti Sara Millsin töihin seksismin kielellisiin piirteisiin liittyen. Toiseen kysymykseen vastaava analyysi perustuu Theo Van Leeuwenin työhön kielellisestä laillistamisesta (Van Leeuwen 2008), ja analyysi toteutetaan M.A.K. Hallidayn transitivisuusanalyysinä (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

Tutkimuksen aihe on ajankohtainen, sillä maailmanlaajuisesti naispoliitikkojen toimien käsittely perinteisessä mediassa on ollut vahvasti sukupuolittunutta. Esimerkiksi Sanna Marinin vapaa-aikaan liittyvät median luomat kohut. Lisäksi sosiaalisessa mediassa leviää avoimesti seksistisiä sekä misogynistisiä aatteita, joten media-alan diskurssien tutkiminen seksismiin liittyen on edelleen ajankohtaista. Podcastit ovat suhteellisen uusi median ala, joka on kasvattanut suosiotaan erityisesti

2010-luvulla. Podcastien informaatiostatus on usein verrattavissa perinteisen median levittämään tietoon, sillä yhä useammin kuluttajat hakevat tai perustavat ymmärryksensä podcasteista saamiinsa faktatietoihin. Podcastit eivät kuitenkaan edusta perinteistä mediaa, sillä sisällöntuotto on laaja-alaista ja se on osittain verrattavissa myös sosiaalisen median eri muotoihin. Podcastien uniikki asema antaa uutta näkökulmaa mediassa ja politiikassa esiintyvän seksismin tutkimukseen. Lisäksi Kamala Harrisin asema Yhdysvaltojen ensimmäisenä naisvarapresidenttinä luo itsessään uusia keskusteluja siitä, miten naiset nähdään poliittisissa valta-asemissa.

Tausta

Usein seksismiä tutkitaan erityisesti sosiologian alalla ja useimmat teoriat perustuvat rasismin tutkimukseen. Tyypillisimmät seksismin tyypit ovat vihamielinen (hostile) sekä hyväntahtoinen (benevolent) seksismi (Glick & Fiske 2001). Ensiksi mainitulla tarkoitetaan erityisesti sellaista vihamielisyyttä naisia kohtaan, jonka perustana on oletus siitä, että naiset yrittävät syrjäyttää miehet vallasta tasa-arvon sijaan. Hyväntahtoinen seksismi on tietyllä tapaa vihamielisen vastakohta, mutta se edistää samankaltaisesti stereotyyppioita sekä sukupuolten epätasa-arvoa. Hyväntahtoisessa seksismissä korostetaan erityisesti tyypillisesti feminiinisiä piirteitä, tehtäviä sekä rooleja, kuten kotitalouden hoitoa ja äitiyttä. Samanaikaisesti sen keskiössä on ajatus ritarillisesta miesshahmosta, jonka tehtävä on suojella fyysisesti heikompia naisia. Näiden yhdistelmää, jossa perinteisiä feminiinisiä piirteitä pidetään hyvänä asiana ja modernia feminisimiä pahana, kutsutaan ristiriitaiseksi (ambivalent) seksismiksi (Glick & Fiske 2001). Ristiriitaisessa seksismissä erityisesti hyväntahtoisien seksismin tekijät, kuten ”naiset ensin” -mentaliteetti, täydentävät sukupuolierot sekä heteroseksuaaliset suhteet korostuvat, mutta näiden taustalla vaikuttavat vihamielisen seksismin aatteet, kuten ajatus siitä, että naiset ovat henkisesti liian heikkoja ollakseen vallassa, tai että naiset käyttävät seksuaalisuuttaan päästäkseen valtaa (Glick & Fiske 2011). Tästä syystä alistuva feminiininen nainen nostetaan jalustalle ja valta-asemaa horjuttava modernia feminisimiä edustava nainen koetaan uhkana.

Vaikka useimmat seksismin teoriat perustuvat sosiologiaan, myös mediassa sekä politiikassa esiintyvää seksismiä on tutkittu jo pitkään. Poliittikka on perinteisesti ollut miesten alaa ja Yhdysvalloissa käännekohdan koetaan olleen vuoden 2008 presidentinvaalit, jolloin ensimmäistä kertaa valtapuolueen ehdokkaan varapresidentiksi valittiin nainen (Dolan 2014). Usein naisten nähdään olevan epäsovivia rooleihin, joilla on erityisen paljon valtaa yhteiskunnassa. Tämä ajatus perustuu stereotypiaan siitä, että naiset antavat tunteilleen enemmän valtaa päätöksenteossa. Kamala Harris on kohdannut monenlaista

seksismiä aina uransa alusta lähtien. Hänen nostojohtaisen uransa on usein sanottu alkaneen parisuhteesta poliittisesti merkittävän Willie Brownin. Verrattuna miesvarapresidenttiehdokkaihin, mediakeskustelu on painottunut erityisesti hänen sukupuoleensa (Harrington 2020). Median perusteella saadaan hyvä kuva siitä, miten seksismi esiintyy ja miten se hyväksytään yhteiskunnassa.

Mediaseksismin on tutkittu vaikuttavan negatiivisesti naisten halukkuuteen ottaa osaa politiikkaan. Se, miten naispolitiikkoja kuvaillaan mediassa, vaikuttaa näiden medioiden kuluttajien päätökseen itse ottaa osaa politiikkaan ja esimerkiksi asettua ehdolle (Haraldsson & Wägnerud 2019). Perinteinen media säilyy edelleen pääsääntöisenä tiedonlähteenä, joka mahdollisesti tuottaa seksistisiä kuvauksia naispolitiikoista, mutta väitän, että sosiaalisessa mediassa luodut seksistiset kuvaukset naispolitiikoissa vaikuttavat vahvemmin kuluttajiin, sillä sosiaalisen median sisällöntuottajat ovat helpommin tavoitettavissa kuin perinteisen median edustajat ja näin ollen pystyvät tehokkaammin vaikuttamaan yleisönsä ajatuksiin ja aatteisiin.

Kielellisen seksismin tutkimus keskittyy erityisesti siihen, miten naisista puhutaan ja miten naiset ovat esillä diskursseissa, niin yksilöinä kuin ryhmänä. Kielellisesti seksismiä on kahdenlaista: näkyvää sekä piiloseksismiä (Mills 2008). Nimensä mukaisesti näkyvä tai ilmiselvä seksismi on seksismiä, joka voidaan tunnistaa kielestä tietynlaisten piirteiden perusteella. Näkyvään seksismiin kuuluvat nimeäminen, epäsuorat lainaukset, sekä seksistinen huumori, erityisesti sarkasmi. Piiloseksismi on näkyvästä seksismistä yhteiskunnan kriittisen reaktion myötä muunneltua seksismiä. Piiloseksismin piirteitä ovat esimerkiksi sellaiset keskustelunkäytänteet, kuin aiheen hallinta, keskeyttäminen tai hiljentäminen, sekä naisten puheen kontrollointi, ovat piiloseksismin piirteitä (Freed 2020). Usein huumoria ja ironiaa käytetään lieventämään seksismiä ja näin pyritään vaikuttamaan muun muassa siihen, miten seksismiin reagoidaan (Ford 2000). Usein seksismistä ja politiikasta puhuttaessa keskustellaan myös poliittisesta korrektiudesta, jonka keskiössä on arvojen yhteentörmäys. Etenkin poliittinen oikeisto kokee poliittisen korrektiuden rajoittavan sananvapautta sen sijaan, että syrjivän puheen nähtäisiin olevan pohjimmiltaan vallan väärinkäyttöä.

Teoria

Kriittinen diskurssitutkimus tutkii diskursseja, jotka ovat luonnostaan monimuotoisia ja joiden tutkiminen vaatii monialaista lähestymistapoja (Wodak & Meyer 2009). Muun muassa Foucault keskittyy työssään siihen, miten diskursseilla hallitaan valtaa, tietoa sekä totuutta. Diskurssien ymmärretään muokkaavaan aiheitaan mistä ne puhuvat, ja ne voivat käyttää valtaa, koska niiden avulla

luodaan ja kontrolloidaan ajatusmalleja, puhetapoja sekä käytöstä. Feministinen kriittinen diskurssianalyysi tutkii kriittisesti diskursseja, jotka ylläpitävät sukupuolten välisiä valta-asemia patriarkaalisisessa yhteiskunnassa ja nostaa esille kaikenlaisissa teksteissä esiintyviä epätasa-arvoja (Lazar 2007). Poststruktuurainen feministinen kriittinen diskurssianalyysi nostaa esille sukupuoliin liittyvät ongelmat korostaen feministisiä tasa-arvon lähtökohtia tarkastelemalla näitä diskursseja kriittisestä näkökulmasta. Kaikkien näiden lähestymistapojen keskiössä ovat valta, valta-asetat ja epätasa-arvot (Baxter 2003). Erityisesti kiinnostuksen kohteena on se, miten diskurssien avulla ylläpidetään nykyisiä valta-arvoja, minkälaisia asioita levitetään totuuksina, sekä miten syrjivää kieltä normalisoidaan aktiivisesti erilaisten diskurssien myötä.

Tutkimukseni hyödyntää myös Theo van Leeuwenin yhteiskunnallisten toimijoiden menettelyä. Menettely selittää toiminnan roolin yhteiskunnallisten rakenteiden luonnissa (van Leeuwen 2008). Lähestymistavan keskiössä ovat vuorovaikutus sekä siihen osallistuvat tahot, joilla on tietyt roolit. Nämä roolit annetaan osallistujien keskusteluun osallistumisen toiminallisuuden perusteella, mutta ne eivät ole pysyviä vaan voivat muuttua keskustelun aikana. Kuitenkin tietyn roolin saadakseen osallistujan tulee täyttää kyseisen roolin vaatimukset. Van Leeuwen on osallistujien lisäksi tutkinut kielellistä legitimaatiota, eli sitä, miten sosiaalisia rakenteita perustellaan sekä ylläpidetään kielellisesti. Tämän tutkimuksen puitteissa analyysin kohteena ovat oikeuttaminen sekä moraalinen arviointi. Oikeuttaminen voi perustua yksilön asemaan yhteiskunnassa, ammattitaitoon, lakeihin, perinteisiin tai tapaan. Tätä oikeuttamista ilmaistaan usein tavoin, jotka transitiivisuusanalyysissä jaotellaan verbaalisiin sekä mentaalisiin prosesseihin. Moraalinen arviointi perustuu enemmän arvoihin kuin minkäänlaiseen auktoriteettiin. Legitimaatiostrategian keskiössä on kulttuurinen tai yleistieto, jota hyödynnetään, kun jotain oikeutetaan arvoihin liittyen.

Aineisto ja menetelmät

Tutkielman aineisto on Ben Shapiroin podcastin *The Ben Shapiro Show* jakso 1072 ”Biden’s No Good, Very Bad VP Pick”, jossa Shapiro kommentoi Joe Bidenin 11. elokuuta 2020 julkaisemaa päätöstä ottaa Kamala Harris varapresidenttiehdokkaakseen. Aineisto on puhtaaksikirjoitettu teksti, joka on luotu osittain Podscribe.com sivuston luoman käsikirjoituksen sekä osittain äänitallenteen kuuntelun avulla. Tutkimus on laadullinen tutkimus. Sen ensimmäinen osio, seksismianalyysi, toteutetaan lähilukuna sekä lähikuunteluna. Lähiluvun sekä lähikuuntelun perusteella seksistiset tapaukset kategorisoitiin ensin niiden havaittavuuden perusteella näkyvään sekä piiloseksismiin ja tämän jälkeen

näiden kategorioiden alakategorioihin. Jotkut seksistisistä tapauksista voisivat kuulua useampaan kategoriaan, mutta alakategoria on valittu selkeimpien piirteiden mukaan.

Analyysin toinen osa, legitimaation analyysi, toteutetaan M.A.K. Hallidayn transitiivisuusanalyysinä, jonka perusajatuksena on se, että ihmiset ilmaisevat kokemuksiaan kielellisesti erilaisten prosessien välityksellä (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Analyysin keskiössä on se, mitä kukakin tekee ja kenelle. Ideationaalinen metafunktio, jonka ilmentymä transitiivisuus on, paljastaa ihmisten näkemykset, asenteet sekä näkökannat. Transitiivisuuteen liittyvät prosessit ovat materiaallinen, mentaalinen, relationaalinen, verbaalinen, behavioraalinen ja eksistentiaalinen. Aineistossa esiintyvät prosessit tunnistetaan lähiluvun kautta, minkä jälkeen seksistisissä tapauksissa ilmentyvä legitimaatiota tutkitaan näiden prosessien kautta. Näistä prosesseista relationaalista käytetään eniten, lähes puolet enemmän, kuin seuraavaksi eniten käytettyä materiaalista prosessia. Materiaalisia, mentaalisia sekä verbaalisia prosesseja esiintyy lähes yhtä paljon, ja erityisesti näihin prosesseihin analyysissä keskitytään. Nämä neljä prosessia ovat käytetyimmät, kun asioita legitimoidaan kielellisesti.

Tulokset

Aineistossa esiintyy yhteensä 59 seksististä havaintoa, joista suurin osa, 59 %, oli kielellisesti näkyvää seksismiä. Nämä havainnot olivat erityisesti erilaisia kuvauksia Harrisista ja aineistossa korostui erityisesti Harriksen kyky, tai kyvyttömyys, olla rationaalinen johtaja. Tämä olettaus sopii yhteen stereotypiaan naisista liian emotionaalisina käyttäytyäkseen rationaalisesti. Tällaisilla seksistisillä olettamuksilla voi olla pitkäaikaisia vaikutuksia siihen, minkälaisena naisten poliittinen osallistuminen nähdään. Kuvailemalla Harrisista tai hänen toimiaan seksistisellä kielellä Shapiro luo kuvan siitä, minkälainen nainen saa ottaa osaa politiikkaan. Vaikka ristiriitaista seksismiä ei esiinny aineistossa selkeästi sen piirteitä ilmaistaan epäsuorasti, mikä käy ilmi siitä, että vihamielisen sekä hyvántahtoisen seksismin piirteitä on löydettävissä samasta esimerkistä.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että podcastissaan Shapiro kielellisesti edistää seksistisiä ajatusmalleja kuulijakunnassaan. Jaksossa esiintyy 240 prosessia, joista relationaalinen on käytetyin. Relationaalisia prosesseja käyttämällä Shapiro ilmaisee mielipiteensä siitä, minkälainen Harris on ja hyödyntää näin erityisesti moraalista arviointia legitimoidessaan seksismiä. Toiseksi käytetyimmällä prosessilla, materiaalisella prosessilla, Shapiro kuvailee, mitä Harris tekee ja tukeutuu tässä erityisesti uraansa poliittisena kommentaattorina. Shapiro ymmärtää kuulijakuntaansa ja tietää hänellä olevan

vaikutusvaltaa konservatiivien keskuudessa eräänlaisena mielipidejohtajana. Hän käyttääkin usein verbaalisia sekä mentaalisia prosesseja, kuten 'I mean' tai 'I think', tuodakseen oman mielipiteensä esille. Lisäksi Shapiro hyödyntää seksismiä legitimoidessaan yhteisöllisyyttä viittaamalla yleisöön ja yhteisöön käyttämällä pronominia 'we' (me).

Yhteenveto

Tässä tutkielmassa tutkin sitä, minkälaista seksismiä esiintyy yhdysvaltalaisessa Ben Shapiron poliittisessa podcastissa, miten seksismiä legitimoidaan ja miten seksistisen kielenkäyttö voi vaikuttaa kuulijoiden asenteisiin, ajatuksiin ja ideologioihin. Tutkimuksen taustana on kriittinen diskurssianalyysi. Aineiston perusteella seksismi, jota podcastissa ilmenee, on näkyvää seksismiä ja perustuu erityisesti nimeämiseen. Näitä seksistisiä aatteita Shapiro legitimoit erityisesti tukeutumalla omaan asemaansa vaikutusvaltaisena kommentaattorina sekä sisällöntuottajana. Hän hyödyntää itsensä ja yleisönsä jakamia yhteisiä arvoja myös seksismin oikeuttamisessa. Tämä on toimivaa erityisesti konservatiivisimmissä piireissä. Jatkotutkimuksessa olisi hyvä tuoda esille myös, miten podcastjuontajat puhuvat naisista, joiden poliittiset aatteet ovat yhteneväisiä juontajien kanssa ja minkälaista kielellistä seksismiä heistä esiintyy puheissa. Mielenkiintoisen näkökulman tutkimukseen lisäksi myös politiikaltaan liberaalimpien podcastien tutkiminen ja vertailu siitä, vaikuttaako puoluekanta seksismiin, sen tyyppeihin, määrään tai sen legitimointiin.