Finland's Biggest Dress Party

A Study of the Role of Women’s Appearances at the Independence Day Reception

Viivi Laakkonen
Cover picture: President Urho Kekkonen and First Lady Sylvi Kekkonen waiting for the guests to arrive at the Independence Day Reception in 1962.¹

Abstract

*Finland’s Biggest Dress Party – A Study of the Role of Women’s Appearances at the Independence Day Reception*, aims to understand the role of dresses at Finland’s Independence Day Reception by focusing on how the reception has earned a title “Finland’s biggest dress party”, and meanings behind the dresses. The aims are studied combining fashion and media studies in three analytical chapters focusing on the media’s development and influence, how the dresses work as a communication tool and what kind of messages are sent through dresses, and Finnishness and national identity in the dresses. The chapters are linked to each other by the importance of the communication between the dresses, the media and the audience during the hype around the Independence Day Reception. The study is based on interviews, which were conducted with seven reception guests and three dress designers, archival studies, visual culture studies and (fashion) media discourse. The study draws on theories by Roland Barthes, Malcolm Barnard and Erving Goffman.

Key words:

dress, fashion, communication, media representation, Independence Day reception, linnan juhlat, fashion studies, media studies, semiology, fashion media discourse
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Introduction

Dresses and appearances at the Independence Day Reception, which is annually hosted by the President of the Republic of Finland in the Presidential Palace, have taken plenty of space in the media and discussions during Finland’s Independence Day celebrations. Nowadays the Independence Day Reception is sometimes called with a title: Finland’s biggest dress party. Moreover, every year there are people, mainly in social media and in comment sections of online articles, criticising the reception and claiming it as elite’s dress party. In this master’s thesis, I studied how the Independence Day Reception has earned the title ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ and the messages behind the dresses on this specific event.

Background

Finland got Independency in 1917 after being an autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland within the Russian Empire in 1809-1917. During the Finnish war in 1808-1809, the Russian Empire conquered Finland from the Kingdom of Sweden to which Finland had belonged since the 13th century. When becoming a part of the Russian Empire, Finland got autonomy and its own Diet, the Diet of Finland. After the revolution in February 1917 in Russian Empire, Russian Emperor Nicholas II was forced to abdication and in November Bolsheviks ab ducted the authority from the temporary government of the Russian Empire. These events got Finland to decide to get the Independence, and on the 4th of December in 1917 the Senate of the Grand Duchy of Finland gave a declaration of independence that the Parliament accepted on the 6th of December in 1917.

The history of the independent Republic of Finland has not been easy. Right after receiving the independence, the Finnish Civil War took place on the 27th of January in 1918 due to political and military crisis since 1917. The people were divided into two parts: The Red Guards, consisting mainly of industrial and agrarian workers led by the Social Democratic

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Party, and the ‘Whites’, made up of upper and middle-class citizens and peasants led by the socialist-averse conservative. On the 15th of May in 1918 the war ended to the victory of the ‘Whites’. About 36,000 people were killed during the war. The Finnish Civil War lasted less than 5 months, but the scars of this ideological conflict can still be seen in the Finnish society. According to an inquiry of the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle about the sensitiveness of the Finnish Civil War as a topic in family circles in 2016, the memories of the war lay on many people’s minds still in the 2010s.5

In the Winter War, from the late November in 1939 - March 1940, Finland lost the Rybachy Peninsula, Karelia, areas from Salla and islands from the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland and needed furthermore to lease Hanko for 30 years to the Soviet Union.6 The inhabitants living in the ceded areas left their homes and moved inside to the new borders, to the Finnish side. During the Continuation War in 1941-1944 Finland tried to take back what it had lost to the Soviet Union in Winter War but needed to cede Petsamo and lease Porkkala for 50 years instead. Anyhow Finland showed morale and acquired a defensive victory.7 These war experiences are still in Finnish people’s minds and strongly present during Finland’s Independence Day celebrations.

Joining the European Union in 1995 “was punching above [Finland’s] weight”.8 The EU membership affected Finnish economy positively and gave Finland a stronger international voice.9 Along with thousands of lakes, sauna, Sibelius, Nokia and the heaviest coffee consumption in the world per capita, Finland is nowadays known for its successful education system, healthcare, high-technology, and innovations.10 In spite of the rough

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7 Eino Jutikkala and Kauko Pirinen, Suomen historia (Juva: WSOY, 1999), 395-406.
9 Ibid.
beginning as an independent country, Finland has grown from a small and poor nation to a modern and successful welfare state.

The independence and Finnishness mean a lot to Finnish people. Finland’s Independence Day is not a carnival, but more a traditional celebration led by a historical narrative. Like Heino Nyyssönen explains in his article The Politics of Calendar: Independence Day in the Republic of Finland: “Despite attempts to ‘lighten up’ the nature of the day, it still remains quite a serious anniversary due to being a memorial for several wars.”¹¹ The history of Finland, the wars, and veterans are still on a focus on the Independence Day. Anyhow, after Finland’s 100th Independence Day in December 2017, Sami Koski expressed in his viewpoint article in Finnish tabloid Ilta-Sanomat¹² that ‘Finland 100’ year took the independence celebrations to this millennium.¹³

Annually, on Finland’s Independence Day on the 6th of December, over two and a half million Finnish people gather around the television to follow live broadcast from the Presidential Palace where the Independence Day Reception,¹⁴ or Linnan juhlat (the Castle ball), how the event is informally called, is held. In 2017, when Finland celebrated the 100 years of independence, 2.66 million Finns were watching the live television broadcast from the reception. Independence Day Reception is a part of many Finns’ traditions on the Independence Day in addition to Finnish war movie Tuntematon Sotilas (Unknown Soldier),¹⁵ that is shown

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¹⁴ The Independence Day Reception or the reception mentioned in this master’s thesis refers to Finland’s Independence Day Reception.

in television every year on the Independence Day, and lightening up two blue and white candles on the window sill.

The Independence Day Reception can be perceived as a continuation of the tradition of the ball of the Finnish Diet. The ball, held during the autonomy in the Imperial Palace, which then became the Presidential Palace, was for the high society of that time. The first Independence Day Reception was held as an hour-long coffee reception for 150 guests in the afternoon. Since 1925, the form of the reception as an evening reception or ball with over a thousand guests has remained more or less the same until today.

The Independence Day Reception is a ball to which the President of the Republic of Finland annually invites 1600-2000 guests. The reception starts with the guests entering to the reception along the red-carpet and shaking hands with the President and his wife or her husband at the Hall of State. (Figure 1) Later, coffee with savoury and sweet snacks are served, bands are playing and the dance is taking place. Furthermore, the guests give interviews for live television and radio broadcasts as well as for other media. The most waited part of the reception for most viewers is, however, when the guests arrive at the reception in evening appearances along the red-carpet, and the commenting of the dresses and who have been invited can begin in the home audiences and in the media. At the live radio and television broadcasts, the commentators report who is entering to the reception, and fashion professionals give comments about the guests’ dresses and appearances.

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17 Helsingin Sanomat, “Presidentin vastaanotto.” December 7, 1919, 8.
20 In this study, the dresses refers to the evening gowns at the Independence Day reception.
Watching Finland’s Independence Day Reception from the Presidential Palace on the Independence Day evening has been my annual tradition and a highlight of the Independence Day since I was little. I have always been fascinated by the beautiful gowns seen at the reception. Discussing and judging the dresses and outfits, how they fit this special event and how they represent Finland if they do, has been in a big role when watching the live television broadcast from the Presidential Palace I have also dreamed of to get an invitation to the Independence Day Reception one day. If I got an invitation, I would definitely wear something that represents Finland in some way. It would not have to be something really obvious like wearing only white and blue, colours of the Finnish flag, but something that is linked to Finnish identity, its nature, culture, values, you name it. It would also be something that shows my own values, identity and style. It would definitely be Finnish design, most likely my own.

When I was designing and making a suit for myself for a party in Stockholm at the end of November in 2017, I thought that it would be an honour to get to design a dress for someone to the Independence Day Reception and thus get into the Palace: if not physically but

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via my dress. That would be a dream come true for me as a Finn and as a designer. I started to think more about the Independence Day Reception and how much the dresses, especially women’s dresses, are in the centre of the event: in which ways who are invited, what the guests are going to wear, who is wearing whose design and styles from the previous years are discussed and speculated in the Finnish media and social media before the Independence Day’s evening. Furthermore, I thought to what extent the queen of the Palace votings, who struck with the look and who broke the dress code are discussed in the media during and after the reception.

In 2014, in the separate dress broadcast of the Independence Day Reception, Finnish ex-model and television presenter Anne Kukkohovi stated the reception being the only big dress party of Finland. I think that summarises well the importance of the dresses on that specific event. There is not another such a big national evening gown event in Finland. The glory and the significance of the dresses and the media attention in the Independence Day Reception can lightly be compared to Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science Awards, the “Oscars”, but as in a Finnish level. In both events, the dresses are in a big role and widely discussed in the media.

Independence Day Reception is the only significant dress event in Finland since Finland does not have any Royal events or such. The national music, movie or sports awards cannot be compared to the Independence Day Reception because the form and the dress code of these events are freer than at the reception and the dresses do not gain that much attention in the media. When declaring the Independence Day Reception as Finland’s biggest dress party, the word ‘biggest’ does not only refer to the actual size of the event but also the hype it gathers before, during and after the reception. Even though the main point of the Independence Day Reception is not to show stunning evening gowns and evening styles but to celebrate Finland’s independence, the dresses have become a significant part of the event.

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22 A programme aired in 2014 and 2015 focusing only on the appearances at the Independence Day Reception.

Research aims and research questions

The aim of this master’s thesis is to study the role of dresses at the Independence Day Reception by focusing on how the reception has become ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ and meanings behind the dresses. I have divided my research questions into three thematic sets of questions:

1. How have the dresses become such a big part of the media coverage of the Independence Day Receptions? What is the relationship between the media, the dresses and the audience?
2. How do the dresses communicate with the audience? How and what kind of messages are sent through the dresses?
3. To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses?

Each set of questions are studied in its own chapter. The first set in *Dresses in the media*, second in *Dresses as a Tool of Communication* and the last set in *Finnishness and National Identity in Dresses*.

Methodology and Materials

In this study, the methods and materials can be divided into four parts: Interviews, visual culture studies, archival studies and (fashion) media discourse. Interviews are the main method throughout the study and used at least partly as a material to answer to each of the research questions (see *Research Aims and Research Questions* above). Visual culture studies helped me to answer the questions: How and what kind of messages are sent through the dresses? To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses? The main role of the archival studies was to find an answer to the question: How have dresses become such a big part of the media coverage of the Independence Day Receptions? However, archival studies, especially the newer material, is also utilised to answer the other questions: What is the relationship between the media, the dresses and the audience? How and what kind of messages are sent through the dresses? To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses? Finally, the (fashion) media discourse offered important material to answer the questions: How have the dresses become such a big part of the media coverage of the Independence Day Receptions? What is the relationship between the media, the dresses and the audience? How are the messages sent
through the dresses? Thus, several methods and materials were utilised to answer one research question.

*Interviews*

An important method in this study was semi-structured interviews. I interviewed seven people who have taken part in the reception as guests during the past fourteen years and three designers who have designed a dress or dresses for the Independence Day Reception during the past nine years. The interviews were conducted in order to find out what is the guests’ and designers’ relationship to Independence Day Reception dresses, what they want from the dresses, and what they want to express with them.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen instead of unstructured or structured interviews to keep a light structure to make it easier to get answers to the wanted questions but to be able to get more detailed and rich answers and find out the reasons behind the answers with follow up questions. Furthermore, the same questions were asked from each guest interviewee and from each designer to have a possibility to compare the answers.24

As mentioned earlier, there were two different interview groups: guests and designers. However, all members of each group were interviewed individually, not as focus groups. By interviewing the guests, my aim was to find out how important the dress and the whole look is for them and what they want to express with their dress and with the whole appearance. Furthermore, I was interested in if the guests think that their own values and identity, and national identity are important to be recognizable in the reception outfit, and how the media and the consciousness at being gazed and commented by the audience influenced the dress choice. All these aspects helped to understand the role of dresses at the Independence Day reception better and thus to answer my research questions.

To find guest interviewees, I posted public posts on my Facebook page and Instagram asking if anyone has been or knows someone who knows someone who has been as a guest at the Independence Day Reception. I received several answers and contact information for people who I personally did not have any connection to beforehand, except to my former team member. Many of the interviewees are friends/relatives or friends’ friends/relatives of my Facebook friends / Instagram followers. I interviewed seven guests of which two had got a personal

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invitation to the Independence Day Reception whereas five were taking part as a date of their partner who was invited. (Table 1) Six interviews were conducted via Skype or Facebook Messenger’s video call\textsuperscript{25}, whereas one interview was held in the end by phone because of the bad Internet connection. All the interviews were held from home to home. Skype interviews were a good compromise since face-to-face interviews were not able to be conducted due to time and locational issues. One of the interviewees lives in the United States, one in Germany and the rest in Finland, whereas I live in Sweden. With Skype, the interviews were able to be conducted at the most suitable time for interviewees. Furthermore, the Skype enabled me to see interviewees’ facial expressions and body language as well as a bit of their personal style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guest</th>
<th>Attended to the Independence Day Reception</th>
<th>Invited / date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2004 &amp; 2005</td>
<td>date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2015 &amp; 2017</td>
<td>date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2016 &amp; 2017</td>
<td>invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>invited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Guests interviewed, sorted by the year the guest has taken a part to the reception\textsuperscript{26}

By interviewing designers, my aim was to understand how it feels to get an opportunity to design to this specific event, to what extent media influences their work and what it means for a designer to design for the event. Furthermore, I wanted to get a deeper understanding of inspiration and messages behind the dresses as well as to know the designers’ opinion in national identity in Independence Day Reception dresses. These aspects helped me to understand the relationship between the media, the dresses and the audience, the role the of dresses as communication tools and how the national identity can be linked to the dresses.

To contact designers, I commented a discussion about dresses designed to the Independence Day Reception at Naisyrittäjät (Female entrepreneurs) Facebook group. Designers in the Facebook group had left comments of their own designs on the discussion so

\textsuperscript{25} For now on when using the word Skype, I mean both Skype and Facebook Messenger’s video call.

\textsuperscript{26} Based on the interviews.
that other members of the group could spot their designs on television on the Independence Day evening. I got responses from two designers. One designer from the same Facebook group I had contacted earlier. Four other designers were contacted by email without getting replies, except from one who apologized not having time this time. One designer was contacted by Instagram, but she cancelled the interview at the last minute.

In the end, I interviewed three designers. (Table 2) Because all the designers were different compared to each other with various amount of experience, diverse backgrounds, visions, thoughts, opinions and viewpoints to design to Independence Day Reception, I found the material from these three interviews wide, comprehensive and inspiring. Therefore, I decided to focus only on these three designers and the material got by interviewing them. All the designers are Finnish and were interviewed in Finland during my short holiday there in January 2018. I interviewed all the designers face-to-face at their ateliers/studios, one in Nastola, two in Helsinki. In addition the location was easy for the busy designers, I assume that in their own ateliers/studios the designers were able to be more relaxed and feel more comfortable without fear of outsiders hearing the conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer</th>
<th>When designed to Independence Day Reception</th>
<th>How many dresses designed in total to the reception(s)</th>
<th>How many dresses in 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Since 2009</td>
<td>Several</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Since 2015</td>
<td>Several</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Designers interviewed, sorted by the year when designed to the Independence Day Reception for the first time

All the interviews were conducted in Finnish since it is a mother language of me and each of the interviewees. I assume that using the mother language of all the participants made it easier for interviewees to share their thoughts, as well as to avoid misunderstandings between the interviewer and the interviewee. All the interviewees were aware of attending to this master’s thesis and informed of the aim of the study. The interviews with guests and designers were recorded with my mobile phone with permission of the interviewees and then transcribed as text.

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27 Based on the interviews.
The interviews proved to be the most important and inspiring method for this study, because of the interesting and versatile discussions with the interviewees that gave me a lot of new viewpoints and ideas for this study in addition to comprehensive answers to the questions asked.

**Visual culture studies**

In this study, visual culture studies was used to answer the research questions: How and what kind of messages are sent through the dresses? To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses?

In visual culture studies, fashion is studied via photographs and illustrations as well as via engravings and paintings.\(^2^8\) It is possible only by looking a photograph and analysing the clothes people are wearing in it to read and learn a lot of the time when the photograph was taken: the social statuses, economy and culture, as well as about the moment when or the event where the photograph was taken, et cetera.

Visual culture studies is an important part of the methodology of this study, which is largely based on a photograph and video materials. However, a specific photograph or how it can be interpreted are not studied, but the dresses on the photographs and videos are; what the dresses signify and what kind of cultural meaning they have. I studied the photographs and videos from the Independence Day Reception throughout the decades, however, by focusing more on the last two decades when the hype around the dresses in the media has increased significantly.

**Archival studies**

In addition to interviews and visual culture studies, archival studies is used in this study. The latter two methods are supporting each other as I used visual culture studies also to study the archival materials such as old photographs and videos from the receptions. Media archives were utilised to look for the answers to the following research questions: How have dresses become such a big part of the media coverage of the Independence Day Receptions? What is the

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relationship between the media, the dresses and the audience? How and what kind of messages are sent through the dresses? To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses?

Yuniya Kawamura, Japanese Fashion Theorist, describes in her book *Doing Research in Fashion and Dress: An Introduction to Qualitative Methods* that archival records can include “text on paper one in electronic formats, photographs, motion pictures, videos, sound recordings.” 29 In this study, in addition to photographs and videos from the Independence Day Reception, also text and sound archives were analysed.

The online archive of Helsingin Sanomat, 30 HS Aikakone (HS Time machine), offers digital facsimiles of almost all the newspapers from 1904-1997. In this study, the archive was utilised to examine and go through old Helsingin Sanomat newspapers published around the Independence Day Reception in 1919-1997. The old newspapers were studied through to find out how the reporting of the Independence Day and the dresses have changed over the years in Finland’s largest subscription newspaper. 31 The aim of using the online archive of Helsingin Sanomat was to study how the changing amount of attention for the reception dresses in Helsingin Sanomat has influenced to the growth of the Independence Day Reception to a Finland’s biggest dress party. Furthermore, I utilized the archive to find out when the Independence Day Reception has been aired on the radio and television.

All the digital facsimiles of old newspapers at the online archive of Helsingin Sanomat are presented in black and white. Therefore, I was not able to be see when the pictures from the Independence Day were started to be printed in colour. To find that out, I contacted Markku Kuusela, a researcher from Päivälehden Museo (Daily Paper’s Museum), by email getting a comprehensive and informative answer.

Elävä Arkisto (Living Archives) of Yle offers a comprehensive selection of television and radio records, video clips and pictures from earlier decades whereas more current material can be found in Yle Areena. 32 In this study, the Yle living archives were utilized to study old radio and television broadcasts to find out how dresses are shown and commented on radio and on television. By listening to the old radio records, I studied how dresses were

29 Kawamura, 104.
32 Yle Areena is Finland’s biggest online television that includes radio and television records, live broadcasts and online clips of different broadcasts and events.
mentioned and described before the audience was able to see the dresses in television, and by watching old black and white television records to find out how the dresses have been described before colour television. In this way, I was able to analyse how commenting has changed when the audience has been able to see dresses and further the colours and materials of the dresses by themselves. The living archives of Yle gave also a comprehensive look for the history of the reception.

The Independence Day reception television broadcasts from the 2010s can be watched in Yle Areena. Furthermore, Yle Areena contains several video clips, pictures and interviews from the receptions as well as material from other programs. Yle Areena airs the Independence Day Reception live, what makes it possible for the audience to watch without television and/or living abroad. In this study, I used Yle Areena to watch the latest broadcasts of the Independence Day Reception and to study how the dresses are commented on those. Furthermore, how the dresses have grown their visibility through the television and online television was studied by using the archival material as a source in this study.

In addition to Yle Areena, other online platforms, such as newspaper’s and tabloid’s online pages as well as social media were used as a source to study the latest decades. Online newspapers were utilised to find out how much and what kind of attention the dresses nowadays get from the press. Furthermore, other online platforms and social media channels were utilised to find out how the reception dresses are represented and discussed in the contemporary media. How different media platforms, especially digital and social media platforms, are showing the dresses and what kind of relationship the media and the dresses have, were also studied (see (Fashion) Media Discourse).

All the archival material used in this study are public, can be found in a digital form and are acceptable via the Internet. However, to get an access to the online archive of Helsingin Sanomat, the subscription for paid digital service is required.

(Fashion) media discourse

In this study, the media discourse analysis was utilised to examine how the dresses are presented in the media, spoken and written, and how dress discourses and photographs of the dresses spread through various media platforms, especially on digital and social media. Furthermore, the media’s role as a communication platform between the guest and/or the designer and the audience was studied.
Anna O’Keeffe describes media discourse in her article Media and discourse analysis in the book The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis (2013, p. 467-480) by following: “Media discourse refers to interactions that take place through a broadcast platform, whether spoken or written, in which the discourse is oriented to a non-present reader, listener or viewer. […] [M]edia discourse is a public, manufactured, on-record, form of interaction.” Furthermore, Agnes Rocamora defines fashion media discourse in her book Fashioning the City: Paris, Fashion and the Media: “Fashion media discourse is a particular instance of fashion discourse. As such, it runs across various texts. It is, for instance, articulated in a set of different magazines, but also in the form of fashion features, fashion spreads, newspaper fashion reports or fashion advertisements.” Rocamora adds referring to Foucault that discourses as well as their statements ‘breed and multiply’ on the fashion press becoming a part of the ‘fashion media discourse’.

Even though the dresses at the Independence Day Reception are not discussed that much in printed fashion magazines, they are discussed in other media: in print, radio, television and in different online media platforms and channels of the social media. The ‘breed and multiply’ does not only mean through the fashion press but through all the media. For example, when a picture from the Independence Day Reception becomes posted in the media or even when the dress is seen on television it might be commented immediately for example on Twitter and then shared and commented further in other social media platforms wherefrom it can be lifted again to the newspaper and thus create new comments and discourses. Due to the Internet, the social media and the developed information technology the discourses and statements can spread nowadays in seconds via online and social media platforms creating massive discourses.

Theoretical framework

This study is about finding out how the Independence Day Reception has become ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ and especially how the media has influenced that. Furthermore, the study examined what kind of meanings can be found behind the dresses, how the guests and designers communicate with the audience through the dresses and how Finnishness can be linked to the

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dresses. Communication and relationship between different actors have a big role in this study; First the relationship between the media and the dresses and the media and the audience are studied, second, the communication between the dresses and the audience, and finally the influence of Finnishness on the dresses.

_Dresses as communication_

This study examined the meaning of the dresses at the Independence Day Reception, how the dresses communicate with the audience, what the dresses symbolise and what kind of messages the dresses send. The different ways how the national identity and Finnishness can be presented through dresses were also analysed. Furthermore, the media as a communication tool and how the dresses are part of the media communication during the Independence Day celebrations were studied.

Fashion can be a part of communication in various ways. According to French theorist Roland Barthes, fashion can be defined or conceptualized in three main ways: first, the vestimentary code that is also known as a real code that is about the garment itself, second the terminological code, known also as a spoken language, and finally the rhetorical code or ‘written-clothing and ‘image clothing’ that concerns how fashion is told in magazine spreads in words and images. In this study, these three ways are easily recognizable: first, the dresses on the Independence Day Reception, second, the spoken comments given during the reception by the commentators and third, what is written in the media before, during and after the reception.

Barthes describes semiology in his book The Fashion System as following: “Semiology […] describes a garment which from beginning to end remains imaginary, or if one prefers, purely intellection; it leads us to recognize not practices but images.” A designer creates a story for the dress when designing it and /or a wearer, the guest, when wearing it. Whereas a viewer creates its own imaginary story around the dress when seeing and looking at it. The designer’s and/or the guest’s messages and meanings in the dress and viewer’s

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interpretation may differ. According to theorist Malcolm Barnard, the interpretation of the message can change depending on the receiver and his/her cultural background, “sex, age, class and so on”.37

Clothes are always sending messages, telling something through signs. Kawamura describes in her book Doing Research in Fashion and Dress: An Introduction to Qualitative Methods Barthes’ aspect to clothes as signs: “clothes are not themselves immediately signs but rather, they become subject to the signs of the world of fashion; that is to say that the cultural world of talking and writing about clothes gives the clothes themselves a social meaning.”38 Also, theorist Malcolm Barnard explains in his book Fashion as Communication who is sending the messages, where the message can be located and how it can be interpreted.39 In this study, the dresses are strongly located in a cultural context and them as a communication will be broadly discussed.

According to Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist and semiotician, the sign is comprised of two elements: signifier and signified.40 For him the relation between these two parts of the sign is arbitrary, i.e. an individual cannot choose what the signifier is signifying. As Barnard explains it: “there is no natural connection between the signifier […] and the signified,” for example between female sex and the pink colour.41 Barthes, influenced by Saussure, states that sign, signifier and signified are all related to each other: if the signifier changes, changes the signified, and thus the sign. A signifier is something material, such as a garment, a detail, an image or written words, whereas a signified describes something cultural or conventional that is associated with the signifier.42

The signifier does not vary that much whereas the signified can change between context and individuals.43 According to Barthers, there is always “probability” for signified and thus it cannot be proved.44 For example, for people from different cultures, the details and other signifiers may represent and signify different things. And as aforementioned, the designer’s,

36 Malcolm Barnard, Fashion as communication (London and New York: 2002), 76.
37 Ibid, 86.
38 Kawamura, 85.
39 Barnard, 73, 80, 86.
40 Barnard 81, & Kawamura, 83.
41 Barnard, 88 & Kawamura, 83.
42 Jobling, 135 & Kawamura, 83-84.
43 Kawamura, 83.
44 Barthes, 233.
the guest’s and the viewer’s interpretations of what the dress is representing may be diverse because of, for example, different imagination or cultural background. Like Kawamura states: “You cannot simply study dress because dress is situated within a cultural context and the two are inseparable.”45 When studying fashion, it is good to remember that fashion is not only a multidisciplinary field but also, like Barnard also mentions, a cultural phenomenon.46

The cultural impacts of the dresses are discussed in this study through theories mentioned above. The messages behind the dresses are strongly linked to cultural aspects as people from different cultures read the signs differently basing on the culture’s habits and their own background and experiences. Furthermore, since the Independence Day Reception is a national event celebrating Finland’s independence, the Finnish culture is strongly present also in dresses. Moreover, the dresses are a part of the creation of the culture when represented and discussed in the media.

Presentation of the self

At the Independence Day Reception, especially on the red-carpet, the guests are visible and under a few million people’s, fashion critics’ and media’s gaze. In this study, the ways the dresses are seen at the Independence Day Reception by the media, the audience, a guest and a designer were examined.

Efrat Tseëlón explains a Canadian-Jewish academic and theorist Erving Goffman’s thoughts and theories of personal appearance and performance in his article, Ervin Goffmann: Social Science as an Art of Cultural Observation, in Thinking Through Fashion, A Guide to Key Theorists. According to Tseëlón, Goffman argues that to avoid embarrassment, humiliation, and shame, individual tries to influence the others’ impressions of him or her and the definition of the situation by presenting him- or herself in propitious light in presence of others.47 For these reasons people may try, instead of causing conflicts, to fit in.48 By standing out, individual may take a risk to embarrass oneself. At the Independence Day Reception, the guest can affect with her dress the way she will be seen in the media and in the eyes of the

45 Kawamura 46.  
46 Barnard, 33.  
48 Ibid., 152-153.
audience. She can either stand out with a stunning and/or extraordinary dress or try to fit in or hide from the gaze with more classic, inconspicuous dress.

To fit in or to stand out people can build a so-called frontstage that means the cover, the side of the self, shown to the others.\footnote{Erving Goffman, “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” in Sociology; Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life – Readings, 7th edition, ed. David M. Newman and Jodi O’Brien (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2008), 127-128.} According to Goffman, a person can play in two different stages, front- and backstage, which are equal with different expectations and audience.\footnote{Tseëlon, 153-154.} The backstage can be said to be the place where a person is preparing her/himself to the ‘performance’, to the frontstage.\footnote{Ibid., 154.} In the case of the Independence Day Reception, the personal life can be seen as a backstage and the red carpet moment at the reception as the frontstage. In this study, Goffman’s frontstage – backstage theory was applied to analyse and understand the meaning of the dress for the guest as well as factors that influence if the dress is noticed by the audience and the media or not. Furthermore, I studied how the division between the frontstage and the backstage can be developed in the media.

**National Identity**

A definition of national identity: “A sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, and language.”\footnote{English Oxford Living Dictionaries, "National identity,” accessed December 11, 2017, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/national_identity.} National identity and Finnishness in dresses were analysed in this study to answer the research question: To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses? According to Stephen Tierney, nationalism can be shared in two categories: ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism. The ethnic nationalism is a reactionary and more about common bloodlines or ethnicity in a certain group. A civic nationalism instead is almost the opposite. It is “a progressive, liberal and inclusive vision of a shared national identity” based on political values and does not care about ethnicity, race or other biological differences. National identities can be combinations of biological and cultural components or originate only from the biological factors or the cultural
factors. So the members can be identified to the same nation by sharing the same ethnic or cultural characteristics, for example.53

Literature review / Previous research

Any previous research about the fashion and the dresses at the Independence Day Reception was not found excluding a few University of Applied Sciences theses describing the design and production process of a specific dress made for the reception. Furthermore, Ilia Kalioujnov-Salminen’s master’s thesis about the Kaartin Soittokunta (The Guards Band) at the Independence Day Reception of President of the Republic Finland was found linking to the reception, but other ways the study has nothing in common with the topic of this study.54 Other studies related to the Independence Day Reception were not found.

Due to the lack of any previous researches about fashion, the dresses, their role and meaning at the Independence Day Reception the research gap was obvious. In this study, I decided to focus on how the Independence Day Reception has become Finland’s biggest dress party by focusing on the media’s influence, how the dresses are used as communication tools and in which ways Finnishness can be represented in the dresses. Literature and previous researches that can be related to my research topics such as celebrity culture, the media representation, Independence Day Reception, Finnish national identity, and fashion and national identity are presented in following.

Pamela Church Gibson gives a comprehensive overview of the relationship between celebrities and fashion in her book Fashion and Celebrity Culture. Since the celebrities are, especially nowadays, an important part of the guest list of the Independence Day Reception the Church Gibson’s book is relevant for this study. Even though this master’s thesis focuses on fashion only at the Independence Day Reception, the topics that can be related to the study were found. Church Gibson writes about the changes in the visual culture and the media, and how the celebrity culture is linked to the fashion during the changes. Church Gibson explains

how the fashion magazines changed the format “in this new era of celebrity” and began to use more celebrities in the articles and covers to draw buyers’ attention and thus make better sales.\(^{55}\) Church Gibson writes also how television created new stars and celebrities and how fashion has been seen on them in television.\(^{56}\) Furthermore, she talks about the intended significance behind the celebrities’ appearance in, for example, MTV Video Music Awards: “what, if any, was [the dress’] intended significance, were there deliberate historical or cultural references, and what might this outfit tell us about her image.”\(^{57}\) According to her book, the celebrities have had a big role in what comes to how the dresses are shown in the media. Ways how celebrities have influenced to and changed fashion are discussed throughout her book.

As mentioned earlier in this study, the Independence Day Reception has similarities to Academy Awards, the Oscars, in the significance of the dresses and media’s attention. The same kind of similarities appear also when comparing the reception and the Nobel Banquet, celebrated during the Nobel Day in Sweden each year on the 10\(^{th}\) of December.\(^{58}\) Hillevi Ganetz examines in her article *The Nobel celebrity-scientist: genius and personality* the connection between media and science, focusing on representations of the Nobel Banquet in media.\(^{59}\) She refers to Emanuel Levy (*All about Oscar: The History and Politics of the Academy Awards*, 2003) when comparing the Oscars and the Nobel Banquet: “[T]he banquet represents something that the country is proud of […], [b]oth events take up a large space in the TV schedule [and] are also more or less fashion shows at which women’s dresses are commented on in detail.”\(^{60}\) All the same aspects can be seen at the Independence Day Reception. Furthermore, Ganetz discusses “how TV has changed the Nobel Banquet into an award show” and the importance of the celebrities for the Nobel banquet. Television’s influence and the importance of the celebrity guests are also studied in this master’s thesis but in relation to Independence Day Reception.

Elizabeth Castaldo Lunden’s doctoral thesis in Fashion Studies at Stockholm University in 2018, *Oscar Night in Hollywood, Fashioning the Red-Carpet from the Roosevelt Hotel to International Media*, “investigates the red-carpet phenomenon from a historical

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\(^{56}\) Ibid., 139.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., 153–154.


\(^{59}\) Ibid., 235.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 239.
perspective, seeking to understand how the Academy Awards’ red-carpet became the most prominent fashion show in media culture”. Even though the Finnish Independence Day Reception cannot be directly compared to Academy Awards, Castaldo Lunden’s study discusses of the same topics that are studied in this thesis, such as media’s, especially television’s, influence on the visibility of the event and dresses.61

Helinä Hirvikorpi’s book Linnan juhlat kautta aikojen (Castle ball throughout the times) (2006), gives a comprehensive overview of the history of the Independence Day Reception. In the book, Hirvikorpi goes through the history of the Presidential Palace and the hosts and hostess of the Palace. In addition, she writes about the invitations, how the ball is organized and about the catering and entertainment in the Palace. Furthermore, Hirvikorpi explains two different standpoints: precious tradition and target of protesting, as well as presents different memories from the Palace. However, the most relevant for this study are the chapters about how fashion changes could be seen in the Palace and how media has made it possible to whole nation to be a part of this event. Muodon muutokset näkyvät Linnassa (Changes of fashion are visible in the Castle) chapter takes a quick look at different decades of fashion and to different materials used in dresses at the at the Independence Day Reception. Median välityksellä mukana koko kansa (The whole nation along via the media) chapter tells about the history of the different media: press, radio and television, at the Independence Day Reception, how it is to work as a journalist in the event, about publicity and identity as well as examples of how the Independence Day Reception has been mentioned in different Finnish literature, in fiction and biographies throughout the years.62

Finnish national identity and the Finnish national day, the Independence Day, have been studied by Heino Nyyssönen in his article “The Politics of Calendar: Independence Day in the Republic of Finland” in National Days book edited by David McCrone and Gayle McPherson. Nyyssönen goes through the history of the Finnish Independence Day, how the day is celebrated and how it was decided that the Independence Day will be held just on the 6th of December. He has based his study on several earlier studies of national holidays, their publicity and public history. Nyyssönen’s article gives a good comprehension on Finland’s Independence Day, how Finns are celebrating it and what the Independence Day means to Finnish people.63

62 Hirvikorpi.
63 Nyyssönen.
Jennifer Craik, Lise Skov and Klara Mattsson have all researched national fashion. Craik’s article *Is Australian Fashion and Dress Distinctively Australian?* discusses the actors that affect national fashion and what makes Australian fashion Australian, if it is authentic or just a mix of different styles that have turned out “Australian fashion”.

Skov studies in her article *Dreams of Small Nations in a Polycentric Fashion World* the relationship between designers and nation, how designers can be inspired by local culture and how that inspiration can be turned to international success.

“The new demand is that designers engage with their national culture and dress tradition, but in such a way that it can be attractive to outsiders.”


In her master’s thesis, Mattson discusses more the Finnish fashion, whereas this study focuses on the national identity and Finnishness in the dresses at the Independence Day Reception instead of the national fashion as such.

It is good to remember that the Independence Day Reception is a national event, where the goal is not to present or try to sell Finnish fashion to the world. The main focus is or at least should be, to celebrate Finland’s Independence Day and Finnishness. Catwalks on the world’s Fashion weeks where Finnish designers are looking for more publicity and presenting their collections, and where the idea of the Finnish fashion is shown and sold abroad, are different comparing to fashion presentation at the Independence Day Reception. Therefore, Finnishness may also be seen at the Independence Day Reception in a different way than on the catwalks, probably in more concrete and obvious way. Anyhow the same ideologies used as inspiration, like Finnish folklore and nature, may appear. On the other hand, the Independence Day Reception might be a good place for Finnish designers to show their work to 2,5 million Finnish people following the reception live from television.

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66 Ibid., 149.

67 Klara Mattsson, “Reporting on Finnish Fashion; Comprehending the Media Image of Contemporary Finnish Fashion Between the Years 2012-2016,” (Master’s Thesis, Department of Media Studies, Stockholm University, 2017).
Delimitations and Thesis Outline

In this master’s thesis, I chose to focus only on women’s appearance to delimit the study. In women’s evening clothing there are much more varieties and possibilities than in men’s evening clothing, which is mostly very strict: men are supposed to wear a dark suit or a white tie. However, at the Independence Day Reception, there are always a few male guests who want to stand out, stretch the dress code and bring their own identity to the appearance with details in an outfit. In addition to limiting the study to women’s appearances, the dress styles or how the fashion at the Independence Day Reception has changed over the years are not studied in this study. Even though the main point of this master’s thesis is not only to study specific dresses in detail, but to focus more on the whole phenomenon that is created over them, some of the dresses seen at the Independence Day Reception are used as examples.

In the *Press*-sub-chapter in *Dresses in the media*, I focus only on Finland’s biggest daily newspaper since the 1920s: Helsingin-Sanomat, founded in 1904, thirteen years before Finland’s independence. This allowed me to get a continuous picture of how the presentation of the Independence Day Reception dresses has changed in one paper during the different decades. Later in the chapter, when discussing the digital media, I use the online versions of other periodicals as well as material, especially in the *Dresses as a Tool of Communication* and the *Finnishness and National Identity in dresses* chapters.

Most of the materials used in this study are originally in Finnish since the Independence Day Reception is Finland’s national event. All the quotes, originally in Finnish, presented in this study are translated into English by me and the original quotes can be found in the appendix.

This master’s thesis aims to find the reasons why Finland’s Independence Day Reception is called ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ and meanings behind the dresses seen in the reception. The study includes three analytical chapters. The first chapter, *Dresses in the Media*, examines how the presentation of the dresses has changed in the media during the years along with the media’s development. Furthermore, the ways how the dresses are shown and discussed as well as which factors influence on which dresses are seen in the media are studied. In the first chapter the aim is to answer to the first set of research questions. The second chapter, *Dresses as a Tool of Communication*, examines how do the dresses communicate with the

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audience and how the guests and dress designers communicate with the audience through the dresses by aiming to answer to the second set of research questions. Finally, in the *Finnishness and National Identity in Dresses* chapter, the ways how Finnishness and Finnish national identity can be represented through the dresses at the Independence Day Reception are studied, aiming to answer to the last research question. All the research questions are presented earlier in *Research Aims and Research Questions* (see page 7). Each analytical chapter of this study contain a short introduction and conclusion. The final conclusion follows the chapters in the end of this master’s thesis.
2. Dresses in the Media

The aim of this chapter is to find answers to the first set of research questions: How have the dresses become such a big part of the media coverage of the Independence Day Receptions? What is the relationship between the media, the dresses, and the audience?

In this chapter, I study the role of the media as a booster of the Independence Day Reception’s impression as ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’. Media’s influence on dresses, how people see the dresses and how different media: radio, television, print, Internet and social media, have influenced the visibility of dresses at the Independence Day celebrations over the years are studied. Furthermore, the factors that affect which dresses are mentioned in the media are examined by focusing on the situation today.

I used archival research as my main method in the first part and interviews in the second. In the first part of this chapter, I study the media’s presence in the Palace and how the media has reported of the dresses at the reception during the different decades of Finland’s independence. I used Helsingin Sanomat’s archive to study radio’s and television’s airing times as well as how the Independence Day reception has been reported in Finland’s biggest newspaper in 1919–1997. Furthermore, I listened to the first radio broadcast and watched old television broadcasts of the Independence Day Reception. In the second part, I study what factors affect the amount of attention the dresses gain in the media and why by using the material I got from the interviews conducted for this study with the guests and the designers. Furthermore, the media discourse around the dresses in studied.

Development of the media and dress presentation at the Independence Day Reception

Press

The first media representatives, the press, got access to the Independence Day Reception in 1925. Before, some press representatives were invited to the Palace as guests. In 1919, the first year the reception was held, Helsingin Sanomat wrote a short article about the President’s

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69 Hirvikorpi, 119.
reception. (Figure 2) The article describes an hour-long coffee reception for 150 guests in the afternoon, focusing on who was invited and shortly mentioning the programme. At the end of the 1920s, extremely short articles only mentioning who was invited to the reception and what the programme at the Palace was like were published in Helsingin Sanomat. (Figure 3) Nothing about guests or appearances was mentioned until 1930: “Beautiful and colourful women’s evening gowns, foreign diplomats’ showy uniforms, officers’ decorative parade outfits, stars, crosses and bands of orders of honour gave glitter to the congregation.” In 1930 Helsingin Sanomat published also a picture from the Independence Day Reception for the first time. (Figure 4) Before that, according to Helinä Hirvikorpi, Suomen Kuvalehti had published eight pictures presenting women of high society already in 1925, the first year the media got access to the reception.

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72 Literal translation: Finland’s picture magazine.

73 Hirvikorpi, 118.
Figure 2 (on the left). Short description of the first Independence Day Reception in Helsingin Sanomat in 1919.

Figure 3 (up in the middle). An article of the Independence Day Reception in Helsingin Sanomat in 1927.

Figure 4 (down on the right). The first picture published from the Independence Day Reception in Helsingin Sanomat in 1930.

In 1947 three pictures from the guests at the Independence Day Reception broke through to the front cover of the Helsingin Sanomat, otherwise, the dresses were not described.
Ten years later, in 1957, there was a page full of pictures of glamour at the Palace and later in the same number the dresses of female guests were described in detail in the article *Loistoa ja eleganssia illalla linnan suurella vastaanotolla* (Glamour and elegance at the Castle’s big reception) in Helsingin Sanomat on page 18.77 Thus reporting from the Independence Day Reception changed a lot during the decade from 1947–1957. Instead of shortly mentioning the programme of the reception and the representatives of different industries and work fields invited, the reception has got more space in the paper telling in more precise about the event. Furthermore, the focus changed to who joined the reception with whom and what the ladies wore. In 1967 some of the female guests’ dresses were described in Helsingin Sanomat, whereas in 1977 the dresses were not described at all. In 1977 the article about the Independence Day Reception was more formal in general than during the past two decades. Helina Hirvikorpi stresses in her book *Linnan juhlat kautta aikojen* (Castle ball throughout the times) how the 1970s was a radical decade and elite’s festivities were thus not wanted to highlight.78 At that time the press freedom was not developed yet.79 In 1987, the dresses and evening elegance were described as a dialogue of the President Mauno Koivisto and his wife on the next day after the reception. The dialogue discusses the fashion in the Palace but also the meaning of the dresses for women and how people are speculating weeks before the reception what each guest is going to wear. In 1997 the dresses were mentioned together with who has been invited and what has been served at the reception.

The pictures from the Independence Day Reception at the Helsingin Sanomat have been black and white always until the beginning of the 1990s. According to Markku Kuusela, a researcher from Päivälehden Museo (Daily Paper’s Museum), colour pictures started to show up in newspapers after the start of using the offset technique in the printing press, which happened in 1978 in Helsingin Sanomat. Nevertheless, the first colour picture of the Independence Day Reception, the smallest of the reception pictures published in Helsingin Sanomat on that year, was published in 1992. Since 1993, pictures of the Independence Day Reception have been published in colours.80

78 Hirvikorpi, 126.
79 Ibid., 122.
80 Markku Kuusela, Päivälehden Museo. Email conversation April 5 – April 15, 2018.
The dresses of the Independence Day Reception have also been largely discussed in tabloids like Ilta-Sanomat and Iltalehti, in addition to daily newspapers. Tabloid papers make the best sales of the year on the next day after Independence Day, and thus it can be said that the reception has become the most important event for the commercial media. For instance, tabloid Ilta-Sanomat is writing about the Independence Day Reception a couple of days before the reception, speculating who has been invited, what the guests are wearing and what can be expected. Furthermore, during a couple of days after the reception, the reception, what happened, who attended with who are discussed and the fashion and the dresses at the Palace presented and commented.

Radio

I have to apologize those listeners who may wait some kind of description of women’s dresses, that I am definitely not able to do. I can only say that all possible colours in every, either alone or in different combinations are represented here. And then I have paid some attention, tonight a dress that leaves shoulders or at least other shoulder bare seems to be in fashion. More I do not dare to begin to tell about women’s evening gowns, instead I will continue.

In 1949 the first radio broadcast of the Independence Day’s evening festivities from the Presidential Palace was aired. On the 28 minutes and 49 seconds broadcast, aired later in the same evening, the commentator mostly commented on men’s appearance, especially diplomats’ uniforms that at that time were beautifully detailed. However, the First Lady Alli Paasikivi’s and President Paasikivi’s daughter architect Annikki Paasikivi’s dresses were mentioned as well as an overview of the evening gown fashion seen in the Palace. The First Lady was wearing a yellow silk gown whereas Annikki was wearing a dark blue velvet dress. Generally speaking, women were wearing long evening gowns and dresses revealing at least another shoulder were in fashion in Independence Day Reception in 1949. Since, a short compilation broadcast or

83 Ibid.
the whole reception has been heard on the radio annually with a few exceptions. Nowadays the whole reception is aired live on the radio by Yle.

Television

Finland’s absolutely the most common way to celebrate independency is to sit in front of the television at home and comment women’s evening gowns.

Regular television activity started in Finland in 1958 but the Independence Day Reception was already aired in 1957 for the first time. Thus the reception has been a part of the television programme of Yle since the beginning of the start of the television activity. According to television programme lists at Helsingin Sanomat, the Independence Day Reception has been aired on the Independence Day since 1959 until 1968. During these years the reception was aired live. According to Hirvikorpi the programme about the reception was also aired in 1958. During the years 1969-1976 there was no television broadcast from the Presidential Palace at all, excluding a short review in television news since, as aforementioned, elite’s festivities were not wanted to be highlighted on that time. According to television programme lists at Helsingin Sanomat, in 1977-1979 the record from the Independence Day Reception was aired on the next day. Since 1980 the reception has been aired live in every year the reception has been held.

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84 According to the radio programme guides in Helsingin Sanomat in 1949–1997, there has not been radio broadcasts from the Independence Day reception in 1951, 1953–1954, 1972, 1978, 1979, 1981 or in 1985. In 1952, 1974 there was no Reception held at all, and in 1972 and 1981 the reception was held in Finlandia Hall instead of the Presidential Palace and hosted by Prime Minister and the deputy of the Prime Minister. That may have affected to the reporting from the reception. / President of the Republic of Finland, “Presidentinlinnan itsenäisyspäivän vastaanottojen historiaa,” accessed February 26, 2018, http://www.presidentti.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=354548&nodeid=50012&culture=fi-FI.


88 Hirvikorpi, 126.

89 Ibid.
In television record from 1959, the dresses of the female guests were not commented or described. The oldest live record from the Independence Day remained in the Yle Archives is from 1967 when Finland was celebrating its 50th Independence Day. The evening dress fashion is hard to see and analyse from the black and white record that is filming mostly the crowd but on that year women’s dresses and the fashion of the time were already described and discussed in general level by Kyllikki Stenros, one of the commentators: “Tonight's evening dress glamour is orders of honour, trails, luxurious furs, real pearls, family jewellery, rings, and medallions.” Long sleeves and discreet necklines beside open cleavages, deep necklines, open backs and tanned shoulders were all in fashion as well as uneven hemlines and classical black evening dresses. In addition to glamorous evening gowns, there were also a few folk dresses worn at the reception. Stenros also mentions how dresses were from Paris, other European big fashion cities, greatest fashion salons in Helsinki or from friends’ small design boutiques.

In 1980s colour television had become more common in households and thus also the Independence Day Receptions has been shown in colours ever since. Colour television enabled the viewer to see better which colours and materials are in fashion in the evening dresses at the reception. The viewer was not anymore dependent on the commentators’ descriptions of the colours and details in dresses but can see the dresses and fashion of the time as a whole by her/himself. However, during the first colour broadcasts, the commentators were also describing the colours of the dresses since some viewers may have watched the program still from the black and white television.

Nowadays, the television broadcast shows guests entering the reception along the red carpet and shaking hands with the president. Commentators tell who is entering and a fashion commentator gives comments of the dresses. After all the guests have arrived, television reporters interview some of the guests and may pay attention to the guests’ appearance, especially female guests’ if they have heard an interesting story behind the dress. At the same

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91 Juhana Säilynoja, "Linnan juhlista tuli Suomen tärkein mediatapahduma."
93 Juhana Säilynoja, "Linnan juhlista tuli Suomen tärkein mediatapahduma."
time, the broadcast follows what is happening in coffee tables and other rooms, and in the end at the dance floor. From dresses’ aspect, the most important parts are the handshaking on the red-carpet and the interviews. On the next day, Yle shows a Paluu Linnan juhliin (Comeback to the Castle ball) broadcast, where, in 2017, dresses were commented by style journalist Sami Sykkö and one of the guests was fashion designer Katri Niskanen.95

Digital Media

At that time the pictures did not spread the same way on the Internet. Like, I did not have that kind of thought that now I put this picture to Instagram or Facebook and look if someone comments it. [---] It was anyways still that kind of time of the paper journals. There could have been [a picture of my dress] somewhere but there was just no possibility to follow.96

In the 21st century, Internet has brought the phenomenon of the Independence Day Reception and the dresses in the event even closer to people. Since the reporting of the reception begun on the Internet, the audience has been able to get much more information about the reception and the dresses. The people have been able to read other cities’ newspapers online versions, watch the Independence Day Reception from online television and follow the reportage through several websites, whenever and wherever, even from abroad. Since, the development of the digital media has kept growing and the reporting of the dresses along it.

The Internet has allowed tabloids to publish more articles and faster online and thus the people are able to get more information of the event and further of the dresses in there, in real-time, before, during and after the Reception. In addition to newspapers and tabloids also women’s magazines such as Anna have been writing about the styles at the Independence Day Reception at least in their online page and in 2012 fashion magazine Elle was commenting the dresses in real-time on their Facebook page.97 Furthermore, since 2002, the readers of the tabloid Iltalehti have been able to vote for the ‘Queen of the Palace’, the most stunning and best dressed female guest, online.98 Furthermore, other online media channels such as Ilta-Sanomat,
Helsingin Sanomat, local newspapers, Yle and MTV have their own votings for the Queen. In 2017 Yle took the voting for the queen for the next level. Yle released a mobile app in which people watching the Independence Day Reception can vote by sharing hearts, giving likes, for the dress or dresses they like in real-time. The voting was on until nine o’clock in the morning and the results were updated constantly in real-time. In total the dresses gathered over 107 000 likes. These kinds of votings for the Queen engage the viewer at home to pay attention to the dresses and appearances especially when voting live via the mobile app. Furthermore, it encourages the viewers to judge and comment the dresses.

In 2014 and 2015 Yle aired separate dress broadcasts in Yle Areena where fashion and style professionals were commenting on the dresses. Yle has also gathered clips of the most interesting dresses to Yle Areena since 2014. Moreover in 2017 MTV aired a live broadcast from the Presidential Palace on their online page focusing on interviewing guests having a big focus on female guests’ appearance.

In addition to massive television, radio and online attention that the dresses at the Independence Day get today, the social media has changed the way how the dresses are seen and how they are in the connection with the audience. In addition to bloggers who write about the Independence Day fashion, the normal people are commenting, liking and sharing their opinions and photos about the dresses in different social media channels such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. This has a big influence on how the dresses are seen among the audience. For example, since 2010 it has been possible to follow Twitter tweets, other people’s comments, with a hashtag #linnanjuhlat in real-time from television screen by using Teletext when watching the reception. Via social media, people are able to share their thoughts on the dresses with each other.

Before, it was reporters job to produce content to the media: newspapers, radio, and television, wherefrom the audience was able to read and see the news. The audience’s commenting of the dresses happened privately when watching the Independence Day Reception.

99 Ville Vedenpää, “Linnan juhlien parasta pukua voi äänestää uudella tavalla.”
102 Finnish media company.
broadcast from television or seeing pictures of the dresses on the newspaper on the next day. Nowadays, hence the Internet and especially social media, everyone has a possibility to produce content to the media. This has made the commenting of the dresses public. Anyone is able to start writing a blog, share comments on Twitter, post pictures of the dresses seen at the reception on Instagram or Facebook, doing own dress broadcast and commenting the dresses on YouTube or discussing the dresses on a podcast. Even though the digital media has brought a lot of new possibilities to follow the Independence Day Reception and to engage with the dresses, the traditional media has not disappeared, instead, for instance, the television broadcast has got over 2 million viewers almost in every year in the 21st century and grown the viewer numbers every year during the past 4 years.104

The discourse around the Independence Day Reception dresses lives longer than ever, especially in digital media channels: media houses’ online platforms and social media, are filled with pictures of the Independence Day Reception dresses before, during and after the reception. The audience is able to leave a comment to online articles and as aforementioned, the live television broadcast from the Independence Day Reception is also nowadays enriched with audience’s tweets. Furthermore, the audience, guests, designers and the media houses are sharing photos of the dresses that the others the are liking, commenting and sharing further. Using hashtags in the social media, the dresses can reach a wider audience and thus spread even more. Even people who are not watching the Independence Day Reception cannot avoid seeing the dresses and the fashion at the reception if they are following the Finnish media at all during the Independence Day hype.

The development of information technology

In addition, the development of the media, the development of information technology has had a significant influence on how the dresses have been seen and how the dresses have reached the audience. The development from the black and white television to

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colour television in 1970-1980s which made it possible for the audience to see the dresses in colours by themselves, and, for instance, the smartphones at 2010s that allowed audience to follow the media, see Independence Day dresses and take part to the discussion no matter of where and when. I argue that 1980s and millennium, especially when turning to 2010s, have thus been, together with the development of the media and changes in the guest list (see The Dresses Presented and Discussed in the Media), a kind of milestones for major changes in dress presentation and how the audience has been able to see the dresses and take part in the dress discourse. Furthermore, reporters’ cameras have developed from heavy flash equipment and film spools to digital cameras that allow picture sending directly from the Palace. Digital equipment have enabled real-time reportage from the reception. 

The Dresses Presented and Discussed in the Media

The media has a big influence in what is being shown for the audience from the Independence Day and what is not. The media is the most interested in people who the audience is interested in. Furthermore, the media wants to write stories that get the readers’ attention and ’clicks’ for the media platform, which means money for the media house. The events and dresses seen in the media can be called, in Goffman’s terms, the frontstage and what is really happening at the reception, the backstage. Media has the power to choose how the Independence Day Reception and the dresses are shown and seen; which dresses have taken to the frontstage. Camera angles, who has been taken into a shot, who has been commented, interviewed and/or photographed, and of who the newspapers and different online platforms are talking about affect the impression the media creates of the reception for the audience. Thus, what is seen in the media is not the whole truth of the event.

During the Mauno Koivisto’s and Martti Ahtisaari’s presidencies, 1982-1994 and 1994-2000, the guest list was still more or less the same from year to year. Tarja Halonen, during her presidency from 2000-2012, started to invite more entertainers to the reception. The guest list became more relaxed and the diversity of the guests at the Independence Day

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105 Hirvikorpi, 122.
106 Ibid., 124.
Reception grew. Present President of the Republic of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, has invited also normal Finnish workers to the Independence Day Reception since he started to host the receptions in 2012. For example, in 2012 Niinistö invited many entrepreneurs and in 2017 two commendable young guests from every county of Finland were invited.

It was obvious that this kind of normal citizens are maybe not, like, under the biggest attention.

Because I’m not any dignitary, no one knew that I was attending [to the reception] and did not know to be interested. [...] Well media loves well-known people. [...] Like said, they are not interested anybody else than socialites or them who have been anyway in the publicity.

Nowadays more un-known representatives from different fields, municipalities, all over to Finland, people that President have met during the year, have also been invited to the Independence Day Reception. However, the commentators on the television live broadcast and the other media such as newspapers are still the most interested to report of more famous people and celebrities such as members of the parliament, athletes, and artists since most of the times the audience is the most interested in people they recognize. The more unknown guests mostly stay unnoticed, they are probably introduced in “handshaking” when they enter the Palace but otherwise left in peace.

The way how the media make the difference between more famous and more un-known guests can be seen in the way the media pay attention to them and report on their dresses. For example, if a more un-known guest either have a beautiful dress or break the dress code, it is possibly not even noticed in the media. According to the dress code, women should wear a long evening gown and shoes that do not reveal toes, such as festive court shoes. Furthermore, a handbag should be a small purse that is carried in a hand and hair should be up on a coiffure.

For instance, in 2017 Annikki Aaltonen’s, who was invited after getting the Tobelius-price from the Helsinki Society for Animal Protection, appearance was not according to the dress code or, in my opinion, making honour for the event. Neither was her escort’s look

108 Hirvikorpi, 122.
111 Guest interviewee 3 / Appendix G2.
112 Guest interviewee 4 / Appendix G3.
113 Hirvikorpi, 124.
including white pants and gold-black patterned tunic with nude flat ankle boots (Figure 5). Their appearances were not commented at all in the media, whereas, for instance, former Formula 1 driver Mika Häkkinen’s wife Marketa’s appearance was commented inter alia at Iltalehti’s article of flops in the Palace as following: “Snow queen kind of appearance was restless, and especially a big, fluffy purse got eyebrows to rise. […] Fur as a material is anyhow a questionable choice. Beautiful Marketa’s coiffure was neither really this season.”114 (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Annikki Aaltonen, right in the middle, and her escort, on the left115
Figure 6. Mika Häkkinen and wife Marketa116

All articles found about dress code and etiquette fails and mistakes from different years includes mostly only celebrities, other notables such as members of Parliament or their

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115 Photo / Still picture of the Independence Day Reception 2017 television broadcast of Yle.
partners with a few exceptions. Like one of the guest interviewees said: “Maybe it would have had to be some like super much more ostentatious dress so that only with that I would have made it to the headlines without any other merits.”

Two of the guest interviewees told that it is easy to avoid cameras and the media in the Palace if wanted so. There is a special space to where the media are allowed to enter and any medium is not allowed to take guests from the other rooms. If a guest wants in front of the cameras she needs to go to that space and get in contact with cameras and reporters. The media have also agreed on the interviews with many of the guests, especially with the most popular ones, beforehand. Only television cameras airing the events and atmosphere from the Palace are the only ones allowed to enter the other rooms of the Palace. However, they are not allowed to interview the guests but to comment the event and the dresses, especially from the red-carpet.

If we are talking about PR, we are talking about Sanni or we are talking about Antti Tuisku or Jenni Vartiainen. Like, “well, could you tag us to a couple of pictures so I give you 20 percent off from the work.” Then we can be sure that we are going to get coverage.

Who is wearing the dress has a significant meaning for the designers since as mentioned above the most popular and media-known guests will take the biggest media attention on the Independence Day Reception nevertheless what they are wearing. For instance, the most famous celebrities can bring a lot of visibility for the designer’s dress since the media, television, and newspapers, are the most interested in writing about them in order to gain a bigger audience and thus to make a better profit.

Social media has nowadays an important role in how the dresses spread online and increase their audience. Designers promote their designs in their social media channels and webpages to gain audience for their work. Furthermore, if a celebrity with a big fan base posts a picture of her look mentioning the designer of the dress, the audience that the dress and the designer reaches increases significantly from the designer’s own promotion. For instance, Alma’s appearance (see page 50 in the chapter Dresses as a tool of communication) was largely discussed in press and online in 2017. She was picked for many Queen of the Palace votings and the designer of her outfit, Mert Otsamo, was mentioned as well as the origin of the

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117 Guest interviewee 4 / Appendix G4.
118 Guest interviewees 4 and 6.
119 Sanni, Antti Tuisku and Jenni Vartiainen are popular Finnish pop artists.
120 Designer interviewee 2, appendix D1.
jewellery. Alma, posted pictures of her look on her Instagram page @cyberalma, with 106 000 followers in April 2018, mentioning everyone who has been part of her look. The picture set has gained 17345 likes.121 Furthermore, designer Mert Otsamo and stylist of the look Minttu Vesala, posted pictures of Alma’s look on their Instagram pages @mertotsamofficial and @superminttu, gaining both over a thousand likes for their posts.

On the second year I was probably not mentioned, but on the first year yes, when I came in, because I had a dress designed by [a designer], so at least there. And then the dress was more in the papers during the following days. […] There were […] really beautiful dresses that did not really get attention in there and that is a pity. Then only the designer’s dresses, even though those would not even be the most amazing ones but only because it is a designer’s, come up. Or then there is the same people more or less from year to year in the papers’ [pages] even though there is a lot of them who are not that famous that I would then highlight from there.122

The media do not pick [the dresses], even commentators may not pick them if you have not somehow succeeded to do homework really well and to get like “please please please it is this dress and here and this is how you recognize it and like if you just could in any way to mention it,” but that is also quite unlikely that it will undoubtedly work out.123

In addition to the most well-known guests gaining more attention in the media than more unknown guests, designer’s dresses gain often more attention than non-designer dresses. This is mostly because of the designer’s own promotion and work behind the media visibility. As the designer interviewed for this thesis, quoted above, further mentioned that the dresses are seen in the Independence Day Reception approximately only 3-5 seconds during the red-carpet. If a designer wants the dress and his/her name mentioned or to get more visibility, he/she needs to work for it.

Announcing self before the Palace ball that you may have some sneak peak, […] because nowadays the papers also catch [for example] certain hashtags on Instagram. I know that this year there was a person who was dreaming to do someday [a dress] to the Castle ball [, posted a picture to Instagram] and one magazine spotted [the picture and reported] that this kind of is coming.124

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121 Amount of the followers and likes in the April 6th, 2018.
122 Guest interviewee 5 / Appendix G5.
123 Designer interviewee 1 / Appendix D2.
124 Designer interviewee 1 / Appendix D3.
Many designers post photos of dresses in making, finished dresses or the details of the dresses, before the Independence Day using hashtags related to the event such as #linnanjuhlat and #linnanjuhlat2017, like Mert Otsamo (@mertotsamoofficial) did in November 21st, 2017 (Figure 7). This allows and grows speculation of who is wearing whose design among the audience and the media and enables the audience to engage more with dresses by liking and commenting the post. Furthermore, media houses utilize the social media and hashtags when looking for new stories.

Figure 7. Mert Otsamo’s sneak peek picture of the dress designed for the Independence Day Reception 2017, posted on Instagram on November 21, 2017125

In addition to share pictures on Instagram and other social media channels, designers need to find media houses’ contact information to send press releases, be in contact with newspapers, magazines, radio channels, and television commentators to get media

attention for their dresses. Furthermore, they need to send pictures of finished dresses or dresses in progress to ensure better visibility. “No-one will do it for you that suddenly, no but your name will not be mentioned in there. No-one will magically dig that out, you need to report that yourself.” The visibility of the dress and especially an information of whose design it is, is important for a designer in order to turn the possibility to design to the Independence Day Reception into new opportunities, new work possibilities and further to a cash flow.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to study the following research questions: How have the dresses become such a big part of the media coverage of the Independence Day Receptions? What is the relationship between the media, the dresses and the audience?

The reporting from the Independence Day Reception and about the dresses seen in there has been growing since the media got access to the reception for the first time in 1925. The first photo from the reception and the first description of the dresses were published in Helsingin Sanomat in 1930. The dresses started to get more space in Helsingin Sanomat around the same time when the first radio broadcast was aired in 1949. In the radio broadcast, the fashion at the reception was mentioned shortly in general level. The interest towards to dresses at the reception was growing. The first television broadcast in 1957 enabled the audience to see the dresses moving for the first time. At the beginning of the television era, the dresses were not commented that much by the reporters. Instead of the comments and opinions of the reporters, the audience was able to create their own authentic interpretations of the dresses. In the first live television broadcast remained at the YLE’s archive, from 1967, the dresses are described in detail to inform the audience, watching from the black and white television, about the colours and materials. Where the evening gowns seen at the Palace were from, is also reported.

The first significant change in how the dresses are seen by the audience happened in the 1980s when the colour televisions found their way to people’s homes. At the same time, the elite’s festivities were again in the media after the 1970s more formal reporting. The audience was now able to see the dresses and make interpretations without basing it on reporter’s comments. However, the reporting of dresses did not decrease but perhaps changed

126 Designer interviewee 1 / Appendix D4.
from reporters describing colours of the dresses to sharing opinions and stories behind the dresses instead. The second significant change was the Internet at the beginning of the millennium, which enabled the audience to follow the hype around the Independence Day and take part in the dress discourse from wherever. The articles and reports from the Independence Day Reception were now online. The amount of the information that one person in the audience was able to follow increased enormously and he/she became able to read not only his/her own local newspaper but the online versions of any other newspapers as well. Furthermore, the smartphones and social media in the 2010s have increased the dress discourse further. The audience has been able to follow and take part in the dress discourse in real-time wherever and whenever. The reporting of the dresses is no longer only journalists’ and reporters’ job; whoever has a possibility to start a discourse and/or comment and share the pictures, stories, and articles about the dresses via several Internet and social media channels.

The development of the media, how the dresses conquer space in the media and how the audience sees the dresses go along with the development of information technology, since, the development of the media would not be possible without the development of the information technology. I argue that when the audience has been able to see the dresses better and further being able to engage more with the dresses through Queen of the Caste-votings, take part on dress discourse and to create the content themselves, the interest towards the reception and the dresses has grown.

The audience is interested in the guests’ appearances, who nailed the look and who failed. Furthermore, the audience has always been the most interested in people they recognise, and the media to write text that interests the audience. The change in the guest list at the beginning of the millennium offered thus a lot of new interesting material for the media to write about. Due to change in the guest list and online reporting, also the amount of the dresses seen in the media started to grow. Since the audience is the most interested in the guests’ they recognize, the celebrities and other well-known guests and their dresses are the most presented in the articles. They work as a hook to get the audience’s attention and further to make the audience buy the newspaper or click the article, and thus to bring profit to the media house. Furthermore, the media is interested in stories behind the dresses that can be transformed into the attractive titles to gain the audience’s attention and make more profit for the media house. For the designers, the stories behind the dresses are therefore also an important way to gain media’s attention for their dresses; when the dress has a good story to tell, media publishes it more likely which brings more coverage for the designer and thus creates new work possibilities
and cash flow. That is a win-win situation for the designer and the media. To get attention for the dress, and the audience to know the name of the designer of the dress, the designer needs to do a lot of work him/herself by contacting media houses and being active on social media.

I argue, basing on the arguments above, that the development of the information technology and media together with the change in the guest list have influenced significantly in how the dresses are represented and how the dress discourse has grown in the media.
3. Dresses as a tool of communication

Fashion and clothing are communication forms just as spoken words or written texts. The way how fashion and clothing differ from the latter is that they are ways of nonverbal communication. They send signs that the receiver reads and analyses. Like Roland Barthes states: “[When] we look at image-clothing, we read a described garment”. People can express themselves, show their identity, differentiate themselves from others or show belonging to the same group through fashion and the way they dress.

The aim of this chapter is to find answers to the second set of the research questions: How do the dresses communicate with the audience? What do the dresses signify and how the messages are sent through dresses?

In this chapter, I use interviews as my main method and discuss my findings together with the aforementioned theories. As my material, in addition to interviews, I use online newspaper articles to find pictures and study how the stories behind the dresses are told in the media. I focus on the vestimentary code of the dress, the code of the dress itself. I study the meaning of the dress as a signifier and as a communication tool between the guest and/or the designer and the audience. First, I examine who are the senders of the messages behind the dresses and what factors affect how the messages behind the Independence Day Reception dresses are born. Second, I study what the dresses at the Independence Day may signify, what are the messages and stories behind the dresses or the whole appearances and how the signs in the dresses can be interpreted by showing a few examples. Moreover, I examine how the messages are delivered as well as what may influence the way they are received and interpreted.

Messages through dresses

Who is behind the messages? Is it a guest who is wearing the dress, a designer or someone else? In the case of the Independence Day Reception, the dresses may have several senders. It might be thought first, that it is the guest who wants to express something with what she is wearing.

127 Barnard, 33.
128 Jobling, 132.
129 Barnard, 32 & 61.
130 Jobling, 134.
but it can also be the designer especially if the dress is designed specifically for this event. In addition to the guest and the designer, other authorities can affect the dress as well, such as someone who in the first place set the dress code for the event or political and/or religious authorities. Furthermore, even a relative such as a mother of the guest can influence the message. She might have, for instance, criticized the dresses at the Independence Day Reception ten years ago by telling her opinions how people should dress up for the Palace, and thus affect the dress. Malcolm Barnard terms these as externals that can have a meaning to the dress. From the sender possibilities mentioned above, I will focus more on the guest and the designer, which, according to Barnard, are the most plausible candidates for senders and which I think have the strongest dominance as senders in what comes to messages delivered through dresses at the Independence Day Reception.

When looking at the dresses worn at the Independence Day Reception, the main sender is mostly the guest. The dress can show her style, identity and perhaps values and cultural background. The theme that came most through when interviewing the guests was that they wanted to show the respect for the event and to Independent Finland with their dress more than their own identity or desires. However, showing own personality and style as well as feeling confident in the dress, were important. Such as the following thoughts and comments came up:

In my opinion, at [the Independence Day Reception] it is important in particular to respect Finland by wearing a dress that respects Finland and that the wearer wears with proud and dignity. [...] I wanted a dress where I feel good in, where I feel confident in [...] because the uncomfortability could be visible outwards.

In my opinion maybe the most important thing is that the dress just looks like the wearer, where the wearer feels good in and that the wearer thinks that [the dress] is amazing and fitting. That I think is maybe the most important. [...] I had a little pregnancy belly and I wanted that to be visible, that it did not need to be hidden. Furthermore, I wanted [the dress] to somehow look like me, like usually I like a little tighter [dresses] but I did not want it to be too open or to be too bright in colours.

In my opinion the dress can also that kind of that anyway shows my persona [...] that I can be me myself in it. [...] I do not want, in any circumstances, to be a queen of the castle. I prefer to be a

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131 Barnard, 31.
132 Ibid., 73.
133 Ibid.
134 Guest interviewee 7 / Appendix G6.
135 Guest interviewee 5 / Appendix G7.
kind of the maid of the castle. So anyway, the youngfulness needs to be visible in [the dress]. [---] That for real, there is not any long trail [in the dress] because I think the sportivity needs to be visible as well.\textsuperscript{136}

If the dress is designed by a designer, it may combine his or her, and the guest’s ideas, thoughts and visions and thus have two senders. According to two designers interviewed for this thesis, the biggest inspiration always comes from the client, from the guest. The third designer interviewed had got a carte blanche and looked for the inspiration from 100-years old Finland.

My biggest inspiration comes from the person herself because of the person’s persona, her colours, appearance, that is actually always the biggest starting point.\textsuperscript{137}

No, it is totally customer oriented. Usually I ask reference pictures. For example, now with [the client], she made a Pinterest fold where was like forty reference pictures from which picked up a couple of themes and then we started to talk to which direction we should go.\textsuperscript{138}

Even if the inspiration to the dress comes from the guest, the designer’s own feelings, thoughts, desires and beliefs can most likely reflect to and be expressed in some way in the dress and in the guest’s whole appearance.\textsuperscript{139} In addition to bringing the guest’s hopes, ideas and messages to the dress, designers’ handprint, their thoughts, values and ideologies are also included in the dress and the messages it sends. The designers interviewed for this study mentioned the following aspects:

Well, of course if the client wants like a traditional dress, then it would probably be done, but for me it is important that my characteristic handprint is visible in the dress. [---] [Furthermore], I would like to boost the master level work and handcraft guild.\textsuperscript{140}

Well in fact in all my work there can be some kind of recycling theme seen.\textsuperscript{141}

Also, that it does not harm the nature either, so sustainable consumption. […] Specifically, that there are good, high quality materials that are made well so that [the dress] will really last in use. [---] With my dresses, I would like to express that you can be a really womanly, polished, feminine

\textsuperscript{136} Guest interviewee 6 / Appendix G8.
\textsuperscript{137} Designer interviewee 1 / Appendix D5.
\textsuperscript{138} Designer interviewee 2 / Appendix D6.
\textsuperscript{139} Barnard, 74.
\textsuperscript{140} Designer interviewee 2 / Appendix D7.
\textsuperscript{141} Designer interviewee 3 / Appendix D8.
and still really seriously taken, that it does not take anything from you. Often at least in the business world people are afraid to be feminine only because they are afraid to lose the authority or dignity and meaning of [their] words somehow. But this is what I fight against all the time.142

On the other hand, even though the designer had been able to design whatever he or she likes, the message that the dress delivers cannot only consist of designer’s intentions nor deliver the message exactly the way he or she wants.143 When wearing the dress, the guest always affects, only with her presence and being, the message the dress delivers. According to Barnard, the messages can be located inside the dress to its colours, shapes and textures, or outside the dress, for instance, in the guest.144 A viewer interprets the messages not only from the dress but the combination of the dress and the wearer.

To understand how the message can be located to the guest, it is good to think about how the message can change if the wearer changes. For example, if a celebrity, known about a strong, individual style outside the reception, wears a showy and extraordinary evening gown at the Independence Day Reception extending the dress code, it can be interpreted just as her showing her own identity. Whereas a guest known about conservative thoughts and business-like way of dress would wear the same dress, that could be taken as fishing attention. For instance, even though Finnish artist Alma and her sister Anna (discussed more in detail later in this chapter on page 50) stood out from the crawl with their unique appearances (Figure 12) at the Independence Day reception in 2017, they were not criticized by the media. From Alma, the outfit that breaks the dress code and shows her identity was expected, and her way of dress was speculated in the media already before the reception. Instead, media focused more about Alma’s career, how sisters entered to the reception in neon yellow safety jackets and how Finnishness was represented in their outfits.145 I assume the acceptation by the audience and the media would have been different if any other of the guests would have worn the same.146

142 Designer interviewee 1 / Appendix D9.
143 Barnard, 74.
144 Ibid., 73.
Furthermore, if a celebrity wears the dress, the dress gains more attention in the media, as studied in the *Dresses in the Media* chapter, and thus the message behind the dress will be delivered more certainly to the audience.

According to Kawamura, “Fashion can convey a message about the social status or the occupation of its owner or about their worldviews and beliefs, among other things.” These aspects, excluding the social status, can also be seen in the fashion of the Independence Day Reception. The dress can be a way to speak out for some current political issues, opinions and beliefs, and show the guest’s ideologies and background. For example, at the Independence Day Reception in 2017, the national human rights organization, Seta’s, chairperson Viima Lampinen was wearing glitter in the colours of the trans flag on her cheek and temple. (Figure 8) According to Helsingin Sanomat and Ilta-Sanomat, the glitter was a statement on behalf of trans persons, and it was meant to arise conversation about renewing the trans law. With this detail in her appearance Lampinen was showing her/his own identity as asexual and why she/he has been invited, representing the organization and making a political statement.

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147 Kawamura, 83.


Furthermore, the occupation of the guest can be seen through the dress. According to one of my designer interviewees, for example, athletes such as gymnasts and figure skaters can be recognized from the handshaking line by their dresses, that many times consist halterneck neckline, sequins and beautifully falling material; the same details they are used to in their training and competition outfits. (Figures 9, 10) The gymnasts and figure skaters may choose these details unconsciously or on purpose to feel more comfortable in the dress. This phenomenon can be recognized when watching old television broadcasts. However, it does not mean that every gymnast or figure skater would dress that way.

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150 Photo / Kaupinnen, “Setan Viima Lampisen glittereissä kimalsi translippu – “Minusta se oli hyvä keskustelunavaaja.”

151 Designer interviewee 1.
In 2017 Alma, Finnish singer and songwriter, together with her sister Anna who is known as Alma’s doubler and DJ, entered to the Independence Day Reception being loyal for their own style. Alma is known for their neon yellow hair and unique, distinguishable, personal style consisting mostly of black vintage clothes, heavy metal shirts, caps and crazy sunglasses.\(^{154}\) For Independence Day Reception Alma and Anna dressed on the suits designed


By wearing a suit instead of the dress and having her yellow hair open Alma brought her own identity bravely and strongly into her appearance. In addition to her appearance being faithful to her own style, it also reminded of the event celebrated. Both Alma and Anna were carrying Finnish symbol, the coat of arms of Finland, in their backs but also in their jewellery.\footnote{MTV, “Tekeekö Alma etikettivirheen? Saapuu Linnan juhliin yhdessä kaksioissiskonsa kanssa,” accessed February 19, 2018, https://www.mtv.fi/viihde/seurapiirit/artikkelit/tekeeko-alma-etikettivirheen-saapuu-linnan-juhliin-yhdessa-kaksoissiskonsa-kansa/6685970#gs.sh9vp_0.} Alma had chosen the Finnish lion as a detail on her outfit to clean up its reputation...

In addition to identity, values, ideologies, organization, political opinions and willingness to be seen, the dress can signify for example national identity that will be discussed more in detail in the following chapter: \textit{Finnishness and National Identity in Dresses.}

Like Barnard mentions: “the wearer’s and spectator’s intentions often differ,” and thus the way how the message will be delivered and received.\footnote{Barnard, 76.} Just as the original messages sent through the dresses are influenced by the sender’s, guest’s and/or designer’s, values, ideologies, cultural background, gender, age and so on, the same factors influence to the way how the audience will receive the message and interpret it. Therefore, different people with different backgrounds receive the messages differently. For instance, for some people, blue colour at the Independence Day may signify the blue from the Finnish flag or thousands of lakes, but for people from a different country, it may, for example, signify tranquillity. Furthermore, also the wearer’s background can affect how colours are interpreted by the audience. Compare a Finnish person versus a Spanish person wearing a blue dress.

Even though the dresses can communicate straight to the audience, in most of the cases at the Independence Day Reception the interpretation is influenced by someone else’s comments and thoughts. Like studied in the \textit{Dresses in the Media} chapter, the dresses are largely presented and discussed in the media during the Independence Day Reception hype. When the dress is shown in the media, there is also text or voice beside the picture to describe the dress. Hence, the dress loses its place as a communicator to a written or spoken language. As Roland Barthes states in his book \textit{The Fashion System}: “The meaning of an image is never certain. […] The image freezes an endless number of possibilities; words determine a single certainty.”\footnote{Barthes, 13.} The words do not leave space for imagination or possibility to create own story around the garment.

The audience has no access to the Palace, only through the media. When watching the Independence Day Reception, the television reporters are commenting the dresses, and the
camera is following and zooming into certain guests and details. Furthermore, the headlines, picture captions and other texts next to the pictures of the dresses in newspapers, social media and online media platforms reveal already something about the dresses. Therefore, it is almost impossible for the viewer to create an authentic interpretation of the dresses. However, the written-clothing had an important role in describing the colours and materials of the dresses, for example, before the time of colour papers, and spoken when listening to the radio broadcasts or watching the black and white television broadcasts of the Independence Day Reception before colour television.

The interpretation of the image-clothing can vary depending on the person looking at the dress or a picture of it, whereas the interpretation of the written clothing, is more fixed. The written clothing especially next to the picture of the dress it is referring can be seen as the fact. However, it is just one person’s, for instance, journalist’s, interpretation of the garment, or a text basing on the designer’s press release and thus influenced by designer’s original message behind the dress.

In addition to the influence of the media and the audience’s background, the event can affect itself significantly the messages the dress is delivering and how the audience interprets them. As mentioned above, culture affects a lot how messages and meanings behind the dresses are interpreted. The same meaning might not be available in other cultures than where it was originally created. I assume that the change in meanings will also happen if changing the location. If a dress, designed specifically to Finland’s Independence Day Reception, would be later worn in an international or even in another national event, the original messages of the dress would more possibly change or be interpreted in a different way. For example, in Nobel Gala in Sweden or in Academy Awards in Hollywood, a blue colour in a dress would lose its meaning or interpretation as a colour of Finland. However, the blue colour could be seen as a signifier for Finnishness if the dress was worn by a Finnish guest.

Conclusion

As mentioned in the *Dresses in the Media* chapter, the audience is engaged to watch the dresses and encouraged to comment and criticise them through the Queen of the Palace votings et cetera. In this chapter, the relationship between the dresses and the audience was studied on the

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Barnard, 80.
deeper level; how the audience sees the dresses and interprets the messages behind them. My aim was to find an answer to the second set of the research questions: How do the dresses communicate with the audience? What do the dresses signify and how are the messages sent through dresses? The answers to the research questions are linked to each other and partly overlapping.

The way how the dresses communicate with the audience during the Independence Day Reception hype is actually about guests’ and designers’ communication to the audience through the dresses. The background, cultural background, values, sex, age et cetera affect not only how the messages are constructed by the sender, a guest and/or a designer, but also affects how the audience sees the dresses and interprets different signals in them. Everyone looking at the dresses sees and interprets the messages behind them differently. Therefore, the guest’s and/or designer’s original message does neither always remain the same for the audience. Nevertheless, most of the times the original stories and messages behind the dresses are told in the media where the audience sees the dresses. The guest’s and/or designer’s original messages, as well as reporters’ and commentators’ interpretations made during the Independence Day Reception broadcast or in the media, may influence on how the dresses are seen. Hence, the dresses as a communication tool and the media are strongly linked to each other in questions of how do the dresses communicate with the audience and how they perform as a tool of communication.

The media (studied in the previous chapter Dresses in the media) have a strong effect on what the audience sees from the reception; it has the power to decide who is filmed or photographed, and who and what has been written about in papers. These factors guide the audience’s interpretation of the dresses. Furthermore, a person wearing the dress affects how the audience sees the dress and how it is discussed in the media. The guest’s identity, personal style and how she is used to be seen outside the Independence Day Reception affects the way her appearance at the reception is seen and adopted.

Moreover, the event itself affects how the dresses are seen. Because it is Finland’s Independence Day Reception, the audience is watching the reception and dresses through “Independence Day goggles,” and therefore perhaps sees more messages related to Finland and Finnishness (see the following chapter: Finnishness and National Identity in Dresses).

As studied in this chapter, the dress is not only a garment to cover the body with, instead, as mentioned above, the dress is a communication tool between the guest and/or the designer and the audience as well as a tool to show the guest's own personality at the
Independence Day reception. Furthermore, with an evening dress appropriate for the reception, the guest shows her respect to the event and to Independent Finland. By wearing an evening gown instead of for example a cocktail dress or jeans and t-shirt, the guest maintains the dignity of the reception and expresses respect for the Independent fatherland.

According to the guests interviewed for this master’s thesis, respecting the event was the most important aspect they wanted to signify with the dress. Furthermore, the own personality, and feeling confident in the dress were important. For designers, it was important that their handwork could be seen as well as their values as designers and individuals. In addition to interviewees' thoughts of what they want to express with the dress, the factors such as political statements, occupation, identity, loyalty to own style despite breaking the dress code, and national identity in dresses came up. These aspects in dresses are also represented in the media during the Independence Day Reception hype. Furthermore, the messages of sustainability, equality, historical events and success can be sent through dresses. These topics are further examined in the following chapter, *Finnishness and National Identity in Dresses.*
4. Finnishness and National Identity in Dresses

This chapter focuses more on the messages the dresses deliver and what they signify from the aspect of Finnishness and Finnish national identity. The aim of the chapter is to answer the question: To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses? In this chapter, different possibilities to show Finnish national identity and Finnishness in dresses at the Independence Day Reception are studied. To demonstrate, dresses from past few years are used as examples. The study is based on the interviews and online material.

Many times, when talking about nationality in dress, the first things that come to the mind are folk dresses. Jennifer Craik lists in her article *Is Australian Fashion and Dress Distinctively Australian* different examples of these kinds of associations such as “kimonos as Japanese, Aloha floral shirts as Hawaiian, […] ponchos as Tibetan [and] sombreros as Mexican.” These pieces of clothing are strongly linked to a particular nation or culture. Finnish folk dress is not probably that known internationally or recognized specifically as Finnish folk dress. There are a lot of similarities in comparing, for example, to Swedish or Norwegian folk dresses. In this chapter, I study how Finnish national identity and Finnishness can be represented in appearances at the Independence Day Reception, in addition to by wearing a folk dress. Like Lise Skov explains in her article Dreams of Small Nations in a Polycentric Fashion World, how designers take the inspiration from national symbols, lifestyle, traditions, art and craft. The same inspirations may appear in the dresses at the Independence Day Reception.

When interviewing the quests and asking if Finnishness was able to be seen in their dresses, five out of seven answered immediately yes, one said that probably as simple lines and later turned out that her dress was also made by a Finnish seamstress. Thus, everyone except one found something that could be linked to Finnishness. One of the guest interviewees had not thought about it, but instead, she only wanted to wear a dress that she feels comfortable in and is suitable for the occasion. Blue as a colour choice, simplicity in dresses’ forms and that the dress was Finnish design and/or made in Finland were all mentioned more than once. One of the guest interviewees encapsulated the meaning of Finnishness at the Independence Day Reception.

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163 During the past few years, meanings behind the dresses at Independence Day Reception have become more popular, and media has started to write more about the stories behind the dresses.

164 Craik, 410.

165 Skov, 148-149.
Reception well: “and of course considering the other style matters, so that there is nothing, or it would be weird to wear something too ethnic or something like that because it is after all Finland’s party and [me] as a Finnish person in there.”

For instance, in 2017 Finnishness appeared in the Independence Day Reception fashion most obviously in colours of the dresses. Many female guests trusted in blue, of which many different shades were seen at ‘Finland 100 years’ reception. However, the national identity or Finnishness in appearance does not only mean blue and white dresses or folk dress like mentioned above. It can be shown in other colours as well as in shapes, materials, details and the ways that probably are not that obvious like wearing a dress designed and made in Finland and thus supporting the Finnish craftsmanship.

The dress can signify historical events, things that are distinctive for Finland, Finnish values, ideologies et cetera. This does not, however, mean that guests would or even should be wearing war uniform inspired dresses, jewellery made of coffee beans or carrying a sauna whisk look-a-like bag, just to exaggerate. In addition to explicit and obvious signs, more abstract signs and messages may be hidden in the dresses as well.

Love to the Nature

In addition to many blue dresses, different shades of green were represented at the Independence Day Reception in 2017. Green can signify Finland’s beautiful nature and many forests. Finns enjoy nature over the year with four changing seasons that make nature and its colours variate a lot in addition to temperature and amount of the light. Nature is important to Finns and since 2013 the Finnish Nature Day has been celebrated annually in August.

The nature theme can be seen, in addition to the colour of the dress, in accessories and details of the appearance. First lady Jenni Haukio together with some guests used real flowers as details and accessories of the outfit at the Independence Day Reception in 2017.

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166 Guest interviewee 4 / Appendix G9.
167 Fran Weaver, "Finnish Nature Day celebrating Finland’s natural assets," This is Finland, accessed February 27, 2018, https://finland.fi/life-society/celebrating-finlands-natural-assets/.
Figure 13. President of the republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö and First Lady Jenni Haukio at the Independence Day Reception in 2017

In addition to colours of the dresses and flowers as accessories, Finland’s nature has also inspired material and model choices. For instance, in 2017, a member of Parliament Susanna Koski wore Marita Huurinainen’s design, a white evening gown made of Finnish reindeer leather (Figure 14). The pleats in the front of the dress represented snow drifts and the


laser cut pattern in the hem snowflakes. The material was chosen to respect Finnish cultural heritage and nature’s diversity and the whiteness in her accessories symbolized the purity of snow and nature. The necklace and bracelet, designed by Jouni Salo from Alexander Tillander, were made of Finnish mink, aquamarine, white gold and diamonds. The whole outfit was inspired by the Finnish nature, especially snow and water. The look of Koski was also criticized in the media since the fur accessories were not kept suitable for the reception of which hostess First lady Jenni Haukio is also known as an animal rights advocate.
Finnish Heritage and History

According to the late Finnish stylist and television personality Teri Niitti, “[t]o the party of Finland’s independence, there is not a better dress than a folk dress. It follows the etiquette as well as highlights Finland’s national identity.” Comparing to Norwegian Constitution Day when many people are wearing ‘bunads’, Norwegian folk costumes, in Finland there is no such tradition on the Independence Day. However, some Finnish folk dresses can be seen at the Independence Day Reception beside glamorous, Hollywood inspired evening dresses. (Figure

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15) The Finnish folk dress suits Independence Day Reception by its festivity and tradition. It is an evening dress that respects the Finnish cultural heritage and brings thus Finnishness, Finnish folk traditions and craftsmanship to the Independence Day celebrations in the Presidential Palace.

![Image](image_url)

Figure 15. Pauliina Hakala wearing Finnish folk dress

In addition to national identity, the folk dress may tell a lot about the wearer. Originally the dress addressed wearer’s marital status, religion, wealth and where the wearer was from. The dresses and their colours and details vary depending on from which part of Finland the dress is from and most likely the wearer as well. However, it is not determinate that

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the dress should represent the heritage of the wearer.\textsuperscript{178} Nowadays there are over 400 different variations of Finnish folk dresses available of which the favourite may be chosen only by the penchant for a certain dress.\textsuperscript{179}

Like Jennifer Craik mentions in her article about Australian fashion and national dress: “[the national dresses] are not worn as everyday dress in contemporary societies.”\textsuperscript{180} Nowadays the Finnish national dress or the folk dress does not enjoy the folk’s popularity that much. The folk dress is easily perceived as older people’s dress among young generations.\textsuperscript{181} Finnish folk dresses are nowadays mainly used as festive dresses in special occasions and as performing outfits of folk dance groups and folk musician groups.\textsuperscript{182}

According to Lise Skov, “Historically, the central aspect of folk dress has been its dependence on locally available resources in terms of materials, processing, and craftsmanship.”\textsuperscript{183} These aspects are also a part of the development of Finnish folk dress or folk dress that was first made at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. It was a time of national romanticism and Finns wanted to show its uniqueness and cohesion as a nation as well as Finnish traditions.\textsuperscript{184} Finnish folk dresses are renewed versions of traditional festive outfits that were used by peasants in 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{185}

In addition to Finland’s folk dress, also traditional Sámi costumes can be seen at the reception. However, to have the right to wear the Sámi costume, the wearer should have the Sámi ancestry.\textsuperscript{186} Sámi people are very proud of their traditional clothes. The Sámi folk dress

\textsuperscript{180} Craik, 411.
\textsuperscript{183} Skov, 149.
\textsuperscript{184} Folklore Suomifinland, "Suomalaiset kansallispuvut."
and its different parts can tell from which area the wearer is from and about the wearer’s family and even her/his marital status. A non-Sámi person wearing a Sámi dress may offend the original Sámi people and Sámi culture; it can be taken as an insult towards their cultural heritage.

In addition to folk dresses, the Lotta Svärd uniform is strongly connected to Finland’s history and independence. (Figure 16) A couple of these uniforms are annually seen also at the Independence Day Reception on former Lottas. The model of the Lotta Svärd uniform was accepted in 1922 and already then full of symbols. The uniform was made of grey cotton or wool fabric, and the hem was supposed to be exactly 25 centimetres from the ground. The whole outfit included a Lotta pin, a white collar and cuffs and a division band as well as black or grey socks and flat black shoes. Shining and white collar and cuffs represented the Christian ideal of the outside and inside purity, whereas the white armband, used in festive occasions, the connection to the White Guards. The uniform signified the wearer’s commitment to White Finland’s patriotism and represented the equality between the members of the Lotta Svärd organisation. Every member regardless of the position in the organisation was wearing the same kind of the dress.

Wearing the Lotta Svärd uniform is strictly regulated still today. Only a person who has been a member in Lotta Svärd organisation is allowed to wear the uniform, except if the person is playing a role as a Lotta in a play or presenting Lotta Svärd. However, the festive uniform made of wool fabric is allowed to be worn only by a former Lotta Svärd member.

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Therefore, the Lotta Svärd uniform can be seen at the Independence Day Reception only on elderly women, the former Lottas.

![Image of the first lady Jenni Haukio wearing a long evening gown (on right), a Lotta Svärd uniform on Maija Kitinoja in front and a folk costume on lady behind her.]

Figure 16. The first lady Jenni Haukio wearing a long evening gown (on right), a Lotta Svärd uniform on Maija Kitinoja in front and a folk costume on lady behind her.

There are things that should not be worn [at the Independence Day Reception]. One is red. It is not that long time yet from when we were under the authority of the Russian Empire. Red is the colour that is not worn in there.

The history and wartime can be seen during the Independence Day Reception not only as Lotta Svärd costume but as an inspiration for contemporary evening gowns. For a designer interviewed for this thesis, quoted above, the red colour symbolises the authority of

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193 Designer Interviewee 3 / Appendix D10.
the Russian Empire and therefore is not, in her opinion, suitable for Finland’s Independence Day Reception. During the Civil War Russia was donating ordnances for the Red guard, showed an example and encouraged them to revolution, whereas Germany was helping the White guard. However, another designer told that she had got the inspiration for the red dress for Finland’s 100th Independence Day Reception about her client’s background in healthcare and value of caring people. They chose ‘because I love this country’ as a theme, and wanted to show the burning care and love towards to country only by the red colour. This is also a good example of how signifiers may signify different things for different people, that was studied earlier in the *Dresses as a Tool of Communication* chapter.

In 2017, Satu Taiveaho, a formal Member of the Parliament, was wearing a blue dress decorated with golden printed feathers. In the dress, designed by Anne-Mari Pahkala, several symbolic meanings that can be linked to Finnishness and Finnish national identity were joined together to an evening gown. In addition to blue colour, Satu Taiveaho explained other messages of the dress in the MTV3 ’s interview from the Independence Day Reception. She tells how she wanted to give respect to war children and war orphans. Pahkala designed the idea to the dress as feathers that symbolise little birds that have fled away from the nest. During the Second World War, almost 80 000 children were evacuated to Sweden, Norway and Denmark. With her dress, Taiveaho brought this piece of Finnish history to the Palace. In addition to respecting war children and war orphans, Taiveaho spoke out of environmental issues through her dress. She told that she wanted to represent Finnish nature through the material choice of the dress; the dress was made of plastic waste collected from the seafloor of the oceans.

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194 Designer Interviewee 3.
196 Designer Interviewee 1.
197 The most watched commercial television channel in Finland.
200 MTV Katsomo, “Linnan juhlat – Antti Kaikkonen, Satu Taiveaho ja kotkalainen Liisi Laitela Linnan juhlissa.”
Finnish ideologies

Even more, than some that kind of classic nationalistic Finnishness, those ideologies that there is in Finland. Just like the amount of recycling dresses has grown, so I think it is wonderful that way.201

As a guest interviewed for this thesis mentions in the quote above, also dresses inspired by Finnish ideologies can nowadays be seen at the Independence Day Reception beside the dresses representing more nationalistic Finnishness. Ways how two Finnish identities, sustainability and equality, can be represented in the dresses at the Independence Day Reception, are studied in following.

According to Iltalehti, in 2009 ecological fashion was one of the biggest trends in the Presidential Palace. While the sustainability has become more popular in fashion in general, also ecological and sustainable dress choices have become annually more and more a part of the dress glamour at Independence Day Reception. For instance, in 2016, recycling materials in the dresses were popular; dresses made of old tablecloths, fair carpets, hamburger papers as well as from plastic bottles, were represented at the reception.202

Satu Taiveaho, mentioned above, is not the only one who has been wearing ocean’s plastic waste. In 2016 and 2017 Emma Kari, a member of the Parliament was celebrating the Independence in dresses also made of the fabric produced of plastic bottles collected from the ocean. Both of her dresses combine the sustainability and nature themes. In addition to latter shown through the sustainable material choice, the pattern of the dress designed by Anne-Mari Pahkala and Caterina Montagn, in 2016, was inspired by the icy ocean (Figure 17).203 By wearing a dress made of sustainable materials, Kari also presented the ideology of the Green League that she is representing as a politician.204

201 Guest interviewee 4 / Appendix G10.
The other feature of Finland is known, is equality. At the Independence Day Reception, different social classes represented in the Presidential Palace, are blurred. Everyone invited to the reception are supposed to follow the same dress code no matter the social status. That puts all the guests to the same level in this occasion and makes them equal. However, that may also be one of the reasons why some people think that the Independence Day is only elite’s or highest social classes’ dress party.

Even though the social classes are blurred the gender roles can still be strongly seen. According to the dress code, women should wear long dresses and men a white tie or a black suit. If a woman differs from this dress code and wears a black suit instead of a long evening gown, it might be criticized directly by media and etiquette professionals. However, it

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is not forbidden for women not to wear a dress, and therefore there are suits seen on women every year at the Independence Day Reception. Hence, I think that equality is seen in the fashion at the Independence Day Reception, if not in a certain dress, but in overall fashion. Since the dress code is, especially nowadays, more a recommendation than a dogmatic demand, equality can also be seen at the reception as a right to be oneself.

Finns as People

[T]his year when it was 100-years celebration so I wanted that it would be visible in the dress, what Finnishness or the culture brings to my mind: kind of like Sibelius and that kind of classicality and elegance, that kind of modesty. So, I do not want the dress to be any lace or flashy. […] [instead] really like elegantly beautiful because that is what comes to my mind of Finland.  

In the Independence Day Reception dresses, Finnish national identity can also appear as a reflection of Finnish personality. Finns are humble, hard-working people, known for Sisu, which means perseverance, not giving up. The modesty and other characteristics, which one of the guests interviewed for this study mentioned in a quote above, most likely remain from Finns’ past and history. Poverty and war times taught Finns to work hard and survive, not taking things for granted. These traits have always survived to the next generations. Modesty and simplicity that can be said to be the cornerstone of the Finnish design can originate from Finnish history. The simple style and “less is more” thinking has found its way also to the Finnish fashion scene.

On the other hand, as Nowfashion described Finnish fashion in the article The future of Finnish fashion, in June 2017, Finns are ”[s]hy by nature but not shy by design.” In addition to humble simplicity, Finns are ready for challenges and do not give up. A good example is Marimekko, a Finnish design house founded in 1951 by Armi Ratia. Ratia started Marimekko’s story by bringing colour and joyfulness to the greyness after the Second World War by showing colourful and bold prints in clothing and fabrics.

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206 Guest interviewee 6 / Appendix G11.
At the Independence Day Reception, both styles, the more simple but elegant dresses as well as bold and brave dresses with strong colours, extraordinary cuts and unusual materials, are represented.

In addition to Finnish personality traits, the dresses can speak out for Finnishness as questioning who the Finns are. In 2017 Anne-Mari Pahkala designed a dress, which questions the present Finnishness: “Who are the Finns in 2017?”, for Emma Kari. The dress was made by Afghan seamstress, to Finland as an asylum seeker arrived, Mustafa Ghafori. Pahkala mentioned in Anna magazine’s article in 2017 that “[p]eople arrived [to Finland] as asylum seekers are part of our society and that is, in [her] opinion, richness.” By revealing the meaning behind the dress Pahkala and Kari made a statement regarding the current political issues.

What Finland Is Known About

A dress can also signify the features how Finland is seen in the world and what for Finns are famous and successful.

In 2014 Outi Pyy, known as trashionista, recycle fashion designer, designed a dress out of coffee capsules in collaboration with Nespresso (Figure 18). The dress included approximately 14 000 sequins cut out of 4000 coffee capsules of production surplus. Several people worked with the dress for approximately 150 hours in Helsinki, Finland, where the dress was made. Thus, the dress is a masterpiece of Finnish handwork and know-how. For me, what was not mentioned in the media or Pyy’s website about the dress, the dress signifies the Finnish culture and coffee consumption since the main material of the dress is coffee capsules and Finland is known about the biggest coffee consumer in the world per person. The dress was criticised in media about the ethicalness of the material choice and if the dress was just a part of Nespresso’s marketing strategy.


Rovio’s chief of marketing officer Peter Vesterbacka’s wife Teija Vesterbacka’s dress at the Independence Day Reception raised conversation in 2011. Vesterbackas were invited to the reception because of the success of the Angry Birds video game, what they wanted to bring out with Teija’s dress (Figure 19). Finnish company Rovio’s video game Angry Birds, succeeded and played worldwide, is known about colourful birds and pigs. Like the game, also Vesterbacka’s dress, inspired by the game’s red bird (Figure 20), achieved

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international attention in addition to being discussed in national media. The dress, designed by Katri Niskanen, was noted inter alia in fashion news website Fashionista, Fashion Telegraph UK, Los Angeles Times, Daily Mail, and TechCrunch technology blog.\textsuperscript{215} The dress was described as glamorous and elegant despite the inspiration of the dress.\textsuperscript{216} Even though, the dress was also criticised and discussed if it was suitable for the formal Independence Day Reception or more just a branding trick.\textsuperscript{217} In addition to obviously representing Angry Birds and Rovio, I argue that the dress also signified Finland’s success in the world.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure19.png}
\caption{Westerbacka’s Angry Bird inspired dress\textsuperscript{218}}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure20.png}
\caption{Red Bird character from Angry Birds video game\textsuperscript{219}}
\end{figure}


Both dresses, Nespresso and Angry Birds, even though criticised in the media as a part of company’s marketing strategy or as branding trick, signify the actors why Finland is nowadays internationally known. When worn at the reception the dresses were a good reminder of these aspects for Finnish people on the Independence Day. Even though the history and the wartime are still strongly present at the Independence Day celebrations, the Westerbacka’s dress is also a good reminder of the times and work after the war and rough start of the independence, the times when Finland has lifted itself to one of the most successful welfare states.

Finnish Craftsmanship and Design

As mentioned above the heritage of the Finnish craftmanship and handcraft is visible in folk dresses, but it can also be represented in modern evening gowns, for instance in the Neito dress (Figure 21). Neito is made of dress shirts and combines the blue colour, recycling theme and Finnish handcraft, all linking to the Finnish National identity, to a dress for Finland 100 reception. According to the designer Paula Malleus from Remake EcoDesign in Iltalehti’s interview, the twine of the dress was inspired by birchbark that relates to Finnishness in an ordinary way, and “the dress shirts bring in mind the work and industriousness that is often linked to Finnishness”.220 The dress was done in collaboration with SPR Kontti, Finland’s Red Cross’ recycling warehouse. The material used in the dress, the dress shirts, was from Kontti and made as a dress in Remakes’ atelier in Helsinki supporting local craftsmanship.221


Many dresses seen at the Independence Day Reception represents Finnish craftsmanship. Several of the dresses are designed by Finnish designer and also made in Finland. In addition to dress designers, many Finnish jewellery designers were mentioned in the broadcast of Finland 100-years Independence Day Reception. Wearing a Finnish designer’s dress/jewellery and or the dress/jewellery made in Finland the guest supports and respects the Finnish work.

According to Lise Skov, fashion designers cannot nowadays, in general, dress the nation so much, this because of the fast fashion brands has taken over, but instead, they can represent it. At the Independence Day Reception, the fast fashion has not taken over, rather, the amount of the designer dresses has been growing. At the reception, the designers are

222 Photo / Milja Haaksluoto, “Onko tässä Linnan juhlien erikoisin kierrätyspuku? Myös nämä ekoluomukset muistetaan!”
223 Skov, 138.
dressing the guests and at the same time representing the nation for itself. Outside of the reception the designers may represent Finland and Finnish design in Fashion weeks all over the world by selling their collections internationally in different countries. At the Independence Day Reception, they are representing Finnish fashion and Finnish fashion for a national audience. Skov mentions: “The new demand is that designers engage with their national culture and dress tradition, but in such a way that it can be attractive to outsiders.” Even though the Independence Day Reception is a national event and the dresses do not need to talk to the whole world, the engagement between national culture and dress tradition needs to be attractive to the national audience, which might be, in this case, even harsher than the international.

To answer Skov’s question: “What do fashion designers produce that is significant for the nation?”, the designers can represent Finnish cultural heritage, history, traditions, ideologies, success and other aspects mentioned earlier in this chapter. They can show and represent these aspects for the international audience abroad and remind Finnish audience of their own heritage and achievements through dresses at Independence Day Reception.

Every year, there are new designers, who get their dresses to the reception. For a Finnish designer, getting an opportunity to design to Independence Day Reception is an honour, since the reception is the biggest and most respected national event, with the biggest audience. When asking from the designers interviewed for this master’s thesis how it feels and what it means to get an opportunity to design to Independence Day Reception, the answers were the following:

That it is really the biggest place where to a Finnish designer can get his/her dresses, that, well it is a great honour, it is really awesome thing.

[It felt] unbelievable. That has been my dream since I was four which means forty years.

It is a certain kind of merit, that is a certain kind of, that kind of creates, a guarantee that you are a certain level maker.

224 Skov, 149.
225 Ibid., 150.
226 Designer interviewee 1 / Appendix D11.
227 Designer interviewee 3 / Appendix D12.
228 Designer interviewee 2 / Appendix D13.
According to the designer interviewees, to design to the Independence Day Reception may permit an increasing amount of orders of the evening and wedding dresses, nevertheless, most often it offers an opportunity to design to the reception again in the future. However, in order to get new work opportunities, the designer needs to make sure that the dress reaches the audience and that he/she is also mentioned. The dress needs to be seen in the reception and mentioned by commentators and/or afterwards in the media together with the designer’s name. The relationship between the designers and the media was discussed more in detail earlier in the latter part of the *Dresses in the Media* chapter.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to find out to what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses at the Independence Day Reception. Finnish national identity and Finnishness at the reception do not only mean wearing a folk dress but can, instead, be represented in several ways, as studied in this chapter. The chapter showed examples of in which different ways Finnishness can be represented at the Independence Day Reception through dresses.

The way how Finnishness and Finnish national identity are represented in dresses can be more obvious: through colours or pictures, or hidden behind the stories and inspiration. In this chapter, I examined six categories linked to Finnishness and Finnish national identity that can be represented through the dresses at the reception: Finnish heritage and history, Finnish ideologies, Finns as people, what Finland is known about and Finnish craftsmanship and design. These being just examples studied in this master’s thesis. Finnish heritage can be represented through folk dresses and Sámi costumes, which both also represent different areas of Finland. Furthermore, the Sámi costumes represent a National minority of Finland, Sámi people. The history of Finland can be represented, for example, through Lotta Svärd uniform or by colour and pattern choices in contemporary evening gowns.

In this study, two of Finland’s ideologies were studied: sustainability and equality, both current topics not only in Finland but internationally. Sustainability is mostly presented through material choices, whereas equality can be represented in details of the dresses and appearances. Furthermore, the equality can also be seen in the dress code, which is the same nevertheless the guest’s social status, and as a right to become to the reception as being oneself, although still respecting the event. As mentioned, sustainability and equality are current topics,
and bringing them to the Palace in the form of the dress, which is most likely mentioned in the media, may grow the discourse around the topic.

In addition to the colour of the dress, the form of the dress can reflect Finnishness, more precisely to Finns’ personalities. Simple lines can represent humble and shy personalities that are many times linked to Finnish people, whereas strong colours, bold prints and more brave forms - the Finnish sisu. Both, the simplicity and bravery in dresses, may originate from Finland’s past and at the same time respect the history and who the Finns are. Answering to the question “who the Finns are”, the dress can also reflect political issues. Like in an example dress used in this study: the media was writing about the sewer of the dress, who had originally come to Finland as an asylum seeker.

In addition to remind Finns of who they are, it is important to also remind them of what they are known about. As mentioned earlier in this study, the war times are still strongly present in Finland’s Independence Day celebrations. By representing things that have made Finland internationally known and helped a poor country to grow to a successful welfare state, the dresses can bring these aspects into the celebrations and thus remind people of how Finland has got this far. I used the dress made of coffee capsules, reflecting the biggest coffee consumption in the world per capita, that Finland is known about, and the dress inspired by Angry Birds, reflecting international success.

Finnish craftsmanship can be presented in the dresses for instance by pattern making techniques used in the dresses, such as basket weave. However, the Finnish craftsmanship is mostly represented in the dresses as Finnish design and ‘made in Finland’. For a Finnish designer, to get an opportunity to design to the Independence Day Reception is an honour. By choosing a dress designed and made by a Finn, a guest supports the local labour.

Finnishness can influence the dresses in numerous ways, either as a conscious message by the guest or designer or unconsciously: evolving in audience’s interpretation. Through the dresses, the guests and the designers can remind Finns of Finland’s history, heritage, culture, success and know-how, among other things, on the Independence Day. In this manner, I argue that the dresses have an important role at the Independence Day Reception, not only as covering the guests’ bodies but especially representing the issues linked to Finland, Finnish culture and Finnishness on Finland’s most important national day and event.

However, not all the dresses at the Independence Day Reception represent Finnishness and national identity. With the dress, the guest can make a statement or express
things that are important to her. However, the dress can also be just a dress that the guest thought was beautiful and suitable for the event and wanted to wear without any other significances or hidden messages. For most of the guests interviewed for this study it is important that the dress represents Finnishness in some way, but most of all, according to all guests interviewed, the dress needs to be suitable for the occasion and respect independent Finland.
Final Conclusion

In this master’s thesis, the aim was to study the role of dresses at Finland’s Independence Day Reception by focusing on how the reception has become ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ and meanings behind the dresses. Communication was found as a connecting theme for all three chapters and worked as a red threat throughout the study. The combination of methods and materials was used to get more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the role of the dresses. The interviews had a big role in forming the research in the beginning and in studying how people, guests and designers, emphasize the role and importance of the dresses at the Independence Day, what kind of significance the dresses have for them. Whereas, the archival material was used to understand how the dress representation has developed from the first reception held in 1919 until 2017. Visual culture studies was in an important role when studying the meanings and messages behind the dresses and media discourse to understand the media’s importance for the dresses presentation and how the Independence Day Reception has become the ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’.

To fulfil the aim, I focused in the first chapter, Dresses in the Media, on the influence of the media on increasing audience of the dresses, and the relationship between the media and the dresses at the reception. Two research questions, the first set of research questions, were leading my research: How have the dresses become such a big part of the media coverage of the Independence Day Receptions? What is the relationship between the media and the dresses? Media’s development along with the development of information technology has changed the way the dresses are presented and discussed in the media as well as the role of dresses. Furthermore, it has changed the way how the audience sees the dresses and takes part in the dress discourse. During the development from the first black and white pictures seen in the press in 1920s and 1930s to Finns’ tradition of celebrating the Independence Day by watching the reception broadcast from television and commenting the dresses to how the dresses are taking over all the media during the Independence Day Reception hype today, the role of the audience has changed from a passive reader to participating viewer and further to an active producer. The Internet has made it possible for all Finnish people as well as foreigners to follow the reception and take part to the dress discourse despite where they are. For instance, for me, a Finn living abroad, it has been important to be able to continue the same traditions no matter where I have lived or been during the Independence Day: lightening two candles to the window, watching the Independence Day and commenting the dresses.
Even though anyone is nowadays able to produce content through the internet and social media regardless of where they are, the representatives of the media houses, who are attending to the reception and sharing material from the reception, have still most power to decide how and which dresses are presented to the audience from the reception. In addition to media representatives, the dresses can be presented already before the reception as well as after in social media by the guests and designers. Since the audience is the most interested in reading about people they recognize, the changes in the guest list to a more relaxed direction at the beginning of the 2000s, gave the media more material to write about and thus increased the amount of the presentation of the dresses in the media. At the same time when more celebrities, artists, athletes and actors, were started to be invited to the reception the media got online expanding the audience, the reporting from the reception and media and dress discourse enormously.

In addition to using celebrities as a hook to potential readers, viewers, and listeners, the media is looking for interesting stories to get audience’s attention to make a better profit, whereas designers are creating interesting stories and selling those to media to get attention for their designs and thus new orders and cash flow. The commercial aspects are thus strongly present in the presentation of the Independence Day Reception dresses. Furthermore, the media encourages the audience nowadays to participate and comment the dresses via ”Queen of the castle” votings, which increases the dress discourse and is thus economically beneficial for the media house.

In the second chapter, Dresses as a Tool of Communication, I was studying the role of the dresses from the perspective of dresses delivering messages and answering the second set of research questions: How do the dresses communicate with the audience? How and what kind of messages are sent through the dresses? When studying how do the dresses communicate with the audience, I found that the dresses do not communicate themselves, but work more as communication tools between the guests and/or designers and the audience. The dress carries the message which the sender, in the most cases the guest and/or designer, wants to send out, and which the audience reads and interprets when seeing the dress. How the messages are delivered and interpreted depends on the sender’s and the receiver’s cultural background, sex, age and class. Therefore, signifiers signify different things to different people. Furthermore, the person wearing the dress and how she is known influences how the messages are interpreted. Hence, the guest’s identity outside the reception affects how the audience sees the dress and adopts the messages. The dress can tell a lot about the guest, her identity, values,
beliefs, occupation and culture. Furthermore, the dress may represent the reason why the guest is invited, stand for political opinions as well as represent the designer’s ideas and values.

How the audience sees and interprets the dresses depends a lot on how the dresses are presented in the media. For instance, in 1967, in the first live television broadcast remained at the archive of Yle, the dresses were already described in detail. This helped the audience to imagine the colours and materials, but at the same time decreased the possibility to do own authentic interpretation of the dresses. It is almost impossible for the audience nowadays to create their own interpretations that are not influenced by any other. The audience sees the dresses through the media that often already offer a description of the dresses based on the reporter’s or commentator’s interpretation or a story heard beforehand from the guest or designer. From the aspect of the dresses as a tool of communication, the media’s role is thus essential. The other example where the importance of the media occurs is when a certain, maybe not so obvious, message is wanted to deliver to the audience. For instance, to get the audience know about the sustainability of the dress, the sustainable aspects such as material needs to be mentioned in the media, unless the raw material of the dress is left obvious for the audience to see.

In the last chapter, Finnishness and National Identity, I studied Finnishness and national identity in the dresses by focusing on if it is important to represent these aspects in the dresses at the event on the Independence Day and if so in which ways those can be represented. This was studied by answering my final research question: To what extent does Finnishness influence the dresses? Sustainability, together with other possible factors studied in this study, can be represented at the Independence Day through dresses. In this study, I found especially important to study the messages that reflect Finnish national identity and Finnishness, since this study is about the dresses at Finland’s Independence Day reception. As studied at the chapter *Dresses as a tool of communication*, the culture and occasion influence the way the audience interprets the dresses. At the Independence Day, blue colour can be seen as a colour of Finland, Finnish lakes and as a connection to Finnish flag, whereas at some other event the blue colour loses these interpretations and probably evokes others. According to the guests interviewed for this study, the Finnishness in dresses is seen important, but the most important is that the dress is suitable for the event and thus respects the independence of Finland. The dresses have a significant role in showing respect for the event and independent fatherland as well as reminding Finns of Finnishness, the rough history and how Finland has grown to a successful welfare state and what Finland is today. The latter is possible through the messages delivered

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via dresses with the help of the media. Furthermore, the dresses can celebrate Finnish craftsmanship if they are design and/or made in Finland. However, not all the dresses deliver messages or highlighting Finnishness. Some of the dresses seen at the reception might, however, only be dresses without any specific messages, probably carrying a meaning that only the wearer, the guest, knows.

The aim of the thesis, to study the role of dresses at the Independence Day Reception by focusing on how the reception has become ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ and meanings behind the dresses, was reached. However, more topics to study to get a more comprehensive overview of the dresses' role was raised during the research. The title as ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ is a result of how the dresses are presented in the media, how media engages the audience to pay attention to the dresses, how people communicate and send messages through dresses and how those are again presented in media. The meanings of the dresses are several. In this study, I focused on their role in delivering messages. Since there are no previous studies made of the dresses and their role at the Independence Day Reception, the possibilities for further research are broad. For this study, I decided to delimit my research to women’s dresses and focus on studying how the reception has become the ‘Finland’s biggest dress party’ and the messages behind the dresses. In further researches, men’s fashion, changes in the dress code, different trends and how political events have influenced the fashion at the reception throughout the years, could be studied. Furthermore, I delimited the study by leaving Finnish fashion, in general as a concept, outside the research. In further research, the influence of Finnish fashion and current international fashion trends to the reception fashion could be studied.
References

Transcribed interviews

2 guests, attended the reception with own invitation
5 guests, attended the reception as a date
3 designers

Online references


Periodical references


Literature references


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**Figure references**


Appendix

Quotes from the guest interviews

G1: “Silloin varmaa oli ehkä seki ettei silloin niiku tavallaan esimerkiks niiku kuvat ei ne ei samal taval levinny niiku internetissä et ei mul oo semmost niiku ajatusta et mä nyt laitan tän kuvan niiku Instagramiin tai Facebookkiin ja katon et kommentoiks joku. [---] Se oli kuitenki vähä semmost niiku paperilehtien aikaa. Ihan hyvin saatto olla jossain [kuva minun mekostani] mut siis ei vaa ollu mitää mahollisuuksii seuraar.”

G2: “Se nyt oli tietytisti ihan selvä juttu, että ni että tota tällaset rivikansalaiset ei oo ehkä niikun, niikun totanoinniin, kaikkein suurimman huomion kohteena.”

G3: "Koska en oo mikään merkkihenkilö, niin kukaan ei tiennyt mun osallistumisesta [Itsenaisyyspäivän vastaanotolle] eikä osannut olla kiinnostunut. [---] Mediahan rakastaa niiku tunnettuja henkilöitä. [---] Kuten sanottu eihän niitä kiinnosta niiku muut ku pintaliitäjät tai jotka niiku julkisuudessa on muutenken ollu.”

G4: "Ehkä ois siin pitäny olla joku niiku super paljo räväkämpi ja näyttävämpi puku et pelkästään sen avulla ois päässy jotenki otsikoihin ni ilman mitää muita merittejä.”

G5: "Tokana vuonna varmaan ei ainakaan mainittu, ekan vuonna mainittiin just siin ku tuli sisää, koska oli [suunnittelijan] suunnittelema puku, ni siin ainakii. Ja sitte oli enemmän just niiku lehdisessä niiku seuraavin päivinä niiku se mekko sit niiku esillä. [---] Siel oli [...] niiku tosi hienoi pukuui, jotka jää ni vähälle huomiolle siel et jotenki ihan harmi, että et sit vaa, vaan niiku nousee ne kenel on sit jonku tietyt sit suunnittelijan puku, vaikka ehkä ne ei olis ehkä niit umpeimpii silti mut vaan ku ne on suunnittelijoit. Tai sit ne samat niiku samat ihmiset ehkä siel aika vuodet toisee niiku lehtien niiku [sivuilla] vaik siel on niiku niin paljo semmosii, ketkä ei oo nii tunnettua ni ni sitte ketä mä nostaisin sielt.”

G6: "Mun mielest siis tossa juhlassa on just nimenomaa tärkeetä se, että kunnioitetaa Suomee, siis sille niiku niiku että puetaan semmonen mekko mikä niikun kunnioittaa Suomee ja mikä niiku se mekon kantaja kantaa niiku ylpeydellä ja niiku arvokkuudella. [---] [H]alus sellasen mekon missä on hyvä olla, mis on itsevarma olla, […] koska sit jos ois epämuukava olla ni se näkyis ulospäin.”

G7: “Mun mielest on just ehkä tärkeint se et se puku on niiku just oman näkösessä ja semmonen missä itel on hyvä olla ja ittesä mielest se on niiku näyttävä ja niikki sopiva ja semmonen ni se on niiku tärkeint ehkä. [---] Mul oli jo pieni raskausmaha siin ni mä..."
halusin et se saa niikku näkyy et sitä ei tarvii niikku peitellä ja mä halusin et se on niikku jotenki niikku mun näköinen niikku mä tykkään yleensä semmosest vähä niikku just tiukemmast mut mä en halun et se ois liian niikku avonainen sit kuitenkaa mistää ja ei mikää liian räväkkä niikku väreiltää.”

G8: “Mun mielest se pukuki saa olla semmonen mikä tuo kumminksi sitä mun persoonaa esille […] ja sit semmonen et mä saan olla oma itteni. [...] Mä en haluu missää nimes olla mikää linnan niikku kuningatar et mieluummin sit semmonen linnan neito et kuitenki se nuorekkeus siin pitää näkyy. [...] Et ihan oikeest siin ei oo mitää pitkää laahust niikku mun mielest siin pitää se liikunnallisuusksi näkyy.”

G9: “Ja tietysti myös muut tyyliiseikat huomioiden ettei siel nyt oo mitää, tai siis ois outoo laittaa jotain liian etnistä tai jotain ku kuitenki niikku Suomen juhla ja suomalaisena henkilöä siellä.”

G10: “Enemmänki niikku ehkä viel enemmän ku jotain semmost klassista nationalistista suomalaisuutta ni niikku niit ideologioita mitä Suomessa on, et ku on just paljo kierrätyspuvut lisääntyny mi niikku sitä kautta on hienoo.”

G11: “Just tää ku oli 100-vuotis juhla ni mä halusin et siin näkyis niikku puvus. Se, mikä mul tulee suomalaisuudest mieleee on semmonen vähä niikku, tai kulttuurista semmonen sibelius ja semmonen klassillisuus ja tyylikkyys ni semmonen niikku vähäeleisyys. Et mä en haluu et se on mitää pitsii ja prameet […] [vaan] tosi sillee tyylikkään kaunis, koska se tulee mulle Suomest mieleee.”

Quotes from the designer interviews

D1: “Sit jos puhuttaan pr:stä, ni puhutaan niikku sannista tai puhutaan anti tuiskusta tai jenni vartiaisesta. Et no joo ’voit sä tägää mejät parin kuvaan ni mä annan sulle tost 20 pinnaa alee tost työst.’ Sitte näkyvyydet on niikku oikeest tiedossa et ne tulee sieltä.”

D2: “Media ei poimi [mekkoja], juontajatkaan ei välttämät poimi ellet sä oo jotenki onnistunu tosi hyvin tekee kotitöitä ja saamana et ’pliis pliis pliis pliis se on tämä puku ja tässä ja tästä tunnistat ja et jos vain kykenet mitenkään mainitsemaan,’ mutta seki on aika epätodennäköstä et se välttämät onnistuu.”

D3: ”Et huutelee itse ennen linnanjuhlia et sul on ehkä jotain sneak peak osastoa, et heeii et mä oon tekemässä jotain tämmöst, koska lehedet nykyään myös tarttuu semmossii et ahaa instagramissa tiedyt hästägit tartutaan. Et mä tiedän tänä vuon siel oli ihminen, joka
haaveili tekeväsä joskus linnan juhliin ja yks lehti oli bongannu sen et tämmöstä on tulossa.”

D4: ”Kukaan ei tee sitä sun puolest, et yhtäkki ei vaan sun nimee ei vaan sanota siel. Sitä ei maagisesti kaiva kukaan esiin, sun pitää itse ilmottaa.”

D5: “Mulla suuri inspiraatio lähtee siitä ihmisestä itsestään, et koska se ihmisen persoona, hänen niikun värityksensä, olemuksensa ni se on oikeestaa aina se suurin lähtökohta.”


D7: “No, siis toki jos asiakas haluu sellasen niiku perinteisen puvun niin kyl sitä varmaan niikun tehtäs, mutta mul on niiku tärkee et se mun omaleiman kädensjällki näkyy siinä puvussa. [---] [Lisaaksi] mä haluaisin, että mestaritason työn järkeä ja sitä käsityöläisammattikuntaa niiku boostata.”

D8: “No mul oikeestaa kaikessa näkyy jonkunnäkösen kierrätysteema.”

D9: “Et myös se, et se ei myöskään silloin rasita luontoa et se kestiä kulutus. […] Nimenomaan se, et ne on laadukkaat, hyvät materiaalit jotka on tehty hyvin et se kestiä oikeesti sitä käyttöö. […] Mitä mä haluisin myös mun puvuilla tuoda ilmi et sä voit olla se todella todella naisellinen, viimeisteltä, ää, feminininen tyyppi ja siltä sä oot niiku todella vakavasti otettava et se ei syö sualta mitään pois et kun usein ainakin business maailmassa törmää siihen et ihmiset pelkää olla naisellisia ihan vaan sen takia et pelätään et se syö jotenki sitä arvovaltaa tai arvokuutta ja sun sanojen merkitystä jotenki mut tää on se mitä vastaan mä taistelen sit koko ajan.”

D10: “Et on olemassa asioit mitä sinne ei laiteta. Yks on punanen. Siit venäjän vallast ei oo viel niin kauheen kauaa mut et punanen on yks väri mitä sinne ei laiteta.”

D11: ”Se on oikeestaa se isoin paikka mihin suomalainen suunnittelija voi pukujaan saada, et onhan se se on mielestön kunnia se on tosi upee juttu.”

D12: ”[Se tuntu] epäuskoselta. Se on ollu mun haave neljävuotiaast lähtien eli neljäkymmentä vuotta.”
D13: ”Se on tietylnlainen meriitti, se on tietylnlainen semmonen, takuu et sä oot tietyn tason tekijä.”