Shame and Pride in the Delegitimization and Relegitimization of Air Travel

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Abstract

This article is about the delegitimization and relegitimization of global air travel as a common-sense practice. Based on social semiotics, multimodal critical discourse studies and Ahmed's (2014) approach to affect and emotion, the study systematically explores how affective subjectivities are construed through the use of shaming practices by climate activists on Instagram and how the aviation industry addresses shaming practices by relegitimizing flying. Thus, the focus of the analysis is on how shame and pride are evoked to answer why the global elite should not fly globally, or, conversely, why they should continue to do so. The results reveal that the discursive delegitimization and relegitimization strategies of climate activists and the aviation industry are based on the same moral assumption that CO_2 emissions are bad for the environment and that they both use affect as a key component of their strategies. However, whereas climate activists conduct their flight shaming by pointing to the negative effects of the frequent-flyer lifestyle of social media influencers, the discourse of the aviation industry is entrenched in the negative effects of flying as a starting point for its formation of a proud air traveller identity.

Key words: *affective practice, affective subjectivities, flight shame, legitimation theory, multimodal critical discourse analysis*

1. Introduction

The international elite that flies internationally on an annual basis constitutes around 3% of the global population (Peeters et al., 2006; Wolrath Söderberg & Wormbs, 2019). This paper delves into discourses that disrupt the common-sense status of such privileged air travel. Currently, green discourses together with heightened climate awareness are invoked when climate activists criticize the aviation industry as a morally shameful industry due to its massive CO_2 emissions (Gössling, 2019; Gössling & Peeters, 2007) and also when aviation actors try to restore the image of themselves as being part of a sustainable and morally 'proud' industry. At times of fundamental social change, the urge to delegitimize and relegitimize social practices

increases, which is pertinent to flying in particular, a practice which until recently has been the common-sense choice for global travel. According to van Leeuwen (2008), common-sense practices are deeply ideological, yet they are practiced with little or no reflection but we simply engage in them without questioning why we do so. Thus, the increase in the de- and relegitimization of global air mobility is an indicator of social change and ideological disruption. Against this backdrop, the critical objective of the present study is to explore how ongoing social change is refracted when emotions of shame and pride materialize and circulate between climate activists' delegitimization of global air travel and its relegitimization by the aviation industry.

Perhaps more in Scandinavia than elsewhere in the world, discursive appeals to shame have taken center stage when the frequent-flyer lifestyles of social media influencers are monitored and delegitimized. Tellingly, the originally Swedish term *flygskam* has gone global (New York Times, 2019), and flight shaming activism on social media is part of a scapegoat ecology in which the environmental impact of 'egregious individual actions' is emphasized in favor of systemic challenges and structures (Schmitt, 2019, p. 154). In her seminal work on the politics of emotions, Ahmed (2014) explains that shaming involves accusations from a certain moral standpoint about the actions of others as wrongdoing, whereas the emotion of being ashamed involves acknowledging the morality that underpins such accusations.

Recent tourism studies (Barr et al., 2010; Tiller & Schott, 2013; Young et al., 2014) show how individuals are morally caught between a rock and a hard place. The self-identity of individuals as being critically aware of the environmental impact of flying, together with a willingness to take environmental responsibility, conflicts with lifestyles that depend on flying and global mobility. This kind of attitude-behavior gap is not unique regarding the question of whether to fly or not, but it pertains to a fundamental consumerist conflict between environmental anxiety and positive attitudes towards green products on the one hand and, on the other hand, consumer behaviors that are associated with shame due to being detrimental to the environment (Atkinson & Kim, 2015). This conflict is evident when the aviation industry communicates with its potential customers. Over the last couple of years, the aviation industry has aligned with 'symbolic corporate environmentalism' (Bowen, 2014) by greenwashing itself as a sustainable industry that takes its environmental responsibility seriously (Gössling & Peeters, 2007). For example, Swedavia, the main airport operator in Sweden, targeted a goal of zero CO_2 emissions for operations at Stockholm Arlanda Airport by 2020.[1] Also, major airlines and travel agencies operating in the Scandinavian market, such as Scandinavian Airlines, Tui, Apollo, Finnair and Lufthansa, are attempting to reduce the burden of shamefulness by highlighting 'sustainability,' 'environment and sustainability,' 'sustainability products' and 'mindful travel/carbon offset projects' on their websites. According to Gössling and Peeters (2007, p. 413), the aviation industry, in consort with its lobbying organizations, actively works on discursive strategies and even 'considerable misrepresentation of data' to convey the idea that it is a '"green," economically and socially important industry'. Thus, sensations of guilt, shame and pride are circulated by both actors who delegitimize flying and those actors who relegitimize it (see Hales & Caton, 2017).

With conceptual inspiration from affective-discursive studies (Fleig & von Scheve, 2020; Wetherell, 2012), this article assumes affect as being neither 'in'

nor 'outside of' the individual and the social, but as circulating between different contexts, bodies, and objects (Ahmed, 2014). Thus, bringing activist and aviation industry discourse together is key to capturing how the disruption of global air travel is accomplished through the circulation of affective subjectivities. To explore this, a framework to analyze affect as a multimodal discourse has been applied (Westberg, 2021a). The framework distinguishes between subject formation and the technique of strategic perspectivation combined with the concept of affordance as a methodological starting point. These concepts allow us to unpack the ways in which social media activists and the aviation industry construe affective counter subjectivities when disrupting the common-sense status of air travel. Departing from a definition of discourse as the recontextualization of social practice, the semiotic analysis is about how the use of (de)legitimating strategies (van Leeuwen, 2008) regulates shameful and pride subjectivities. In more detail, we analyze and discuss the delegitimizing force of shame in posts on the Swedish Instagram site *Aningslösainfluencers* [Naïve Influencers] on which various kinds of frequent-flyer influencers (fashion profiles, gamers, reality TV stars, etc.) are multimodally delegitimized as shameful. In addition, we strategically put the shaming practice of *Aningslösainfluencers* in perspective by considering how the Scandinavian aviation industry attempts to restore a proud air traveler identity through its communication with potential customers.

2. Affect as the Discursive Circulation of Subjectivites: An Analytical Framework

In order to contemplate the social force of affect in its own right – rather than to normatively evaluate discursive representations as a means of ideological manipulation (cf. Thurlow, 2016) – we approach it as a practice that entangles the individual with the collective via the articulation of affective subjectivities (Ahmed, 2014; Westberg, 2021a; Wetherell, 2012). As explained by Westberg (2021a), the stickiness of such affective subject formation hinges on both ideological recognition and intersubjective engagement. This accentuates the relevance of considering how affect materializes at the intersection between different social belongings and the situated use of semiotic resources. Thus, our unpacking of affective subjectivities relies on the technique of strategic perspectivation in tandem with the concept of affordance. Affective subject formation is a relational phenomenon, and strategic perspectivation refers to a technique for establishing intersubjectivity as the basis of affective interpretation. Such an intersubjective basis can be accomplished through different research designs (e.g. ethnography and interactional analysis; Westberg, 2021a), and here we rely on the interdiscursivity between climate activists and the aviation industry to contemplate the stickiness of flight shame.

In the context of the present study, the relationality of affective subject formation needs to be approached from the perspective of legitimation theory. The (de/re)legitimization of a social practice rarely achieves the status of 'final' discursive legitimacy (Westberg, 2017). Rather, there is often an ongoing dialogue about the acceptance and rejection of legitimacy (Mackay, 2015). Thus, when climate activists question the common-sense practice of

flying, they reject legitimacy and demand a redefinition of global air travel. Correspondingly, the aviation industry strives to restore the legitimate status of flying through relegitimization. In this study, we focus on these interdiscursive processes to establish a reliable basis for affective interpretation. Although we do not claim there is a direct cause-and-effect movement between these two processes that we can analytically grasp in our data (see below), we do claim that there is an ongoing circulation of flight shame versus the need and pride of air travel in many societies today. We analyze a number of semiotic instances of this affective-discursive circulation in a Swedish context.

When the aviation industry defends flying and when climate activists criticize it, they reproduce different regulatory discourses, and from the perspective of multimodal critical discourse studies (van Leeuwen, 2008), we focus on how such discourses evaluate, justify, and ascribe purposes to the practice of global flying by evoking shame and pride. As explained by Ahmed (2014), the social force of shame and pride lies in their moral and regulatory directiveness. By evoking a certain morality through discourse, it becomes possible to legitimize (parts of) a social practice as righteous and justifiable and, thus, as associated with pride. Accordingly, (de)legitimization can construe actions and practices as being shameful by representing them as deviating from certain ideals and moral standards, or conversely, imbue a practice with pride because it fulfills certain moral ideals (see further Ahmed, 2014, pp. 101–109). Briefly put, shame and pride are socially generative in that they can be mobilized through discourse by providing answers to 'why'-questions such as 'why should influencers not fly to Dubai several times a year?' and 'why should the public continue to fly despite the role of the aviation industry in the climate crisis?' Answers to such questions often draw directly on shame and pride, which will be illustrated by the analysis. To sum up, the focus of the analysis is on how shame and pride are evoked to answer why the global elite should not fly globally, or, conversely, why they should continue to do so.

On the level of semiosis, our analysis is guided by the concept of affordance (Kress, 2010; Machin, 2016), which refers here to the 'prompt of a semiotic material that enables certain affective actions and interpretations' (Westberg, 2021a, p. 27). Thus, we look in detail at how Instagram posts (image and writing) and a commercial prompt subjectivities of shame and pride through the multimodal realization of (de)legitimating strategies. In his legitimation framework, van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes between legitimization in reference to authority, moral evaluation, rationality and narratives and assumes the strategies to be pan-semiotic, i.e. possible to express through different semiotic materials (language, image etc. see below). All strategies further involve references to moral value systems, implying that the strategy known as moral evaluation is to be understood as a form of moral evaluation with no overt reference to an authority, a rational argument or a narrative (Fairclough, 2003, p. 199). As we shall see, moral evaluation and instrumental rationalization are used by climate activists to shame social-media influencers, as well as by the aviation industry in its attempt to restore flying as a legitimate practice worth being proud of. Whereas moral (de)legitimization answers 'why' questions through evaluations and in reference to certain value systems, rationalization downplays the role of morality by providing

(de)legitimatizing references to the goals, uses and purposes of practices and actions.

The multimodal enactment of these (de)legitimization strategies is key to the analysis and will be illustrated as it unfolds. The basic theoretical assumption upon which the analysis rests is that semiotic modes, i.e., more elaborate systems of meaning-making such as speech, writing or image, are combined in the texts (Kress, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020; Ledin & Machin, 2018; van Leeuwen, 2005). A key concept is semiotic resources: 'the actions and artefacts we use to communicate' (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 3). Regarding the data analyzed here, the main semiotic resources are the lexicogrammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) – words and their syntactic combinations – of the written and spoken (de)legitimizations along with the composition, salience and sounds of the commercials and social media texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020; Ledin & Machin, 2018; van Leeuwen, 1999).

3. Data

In order to empirically grasp how shame and pride circulate and materialize in the contemporary relegitimization and delegitimization of global air travel and to reflect on the social force of affective meaning making, the dataset is two-fold. Firstly, we investigate shaming as it appears in social media. In Sweden, the Instagram site *Aningslösa Influencers*[2] (henceforth referred to as "AI") has gained influence and had a substantial impact on both traditional and social media in 2018 and 2019. The main purpose of the site is to name and shame social media influencers who have frequent-flyer lifestyles. In an interview with a journalist from a leading daily newspaper in Sweden, the people behind the account declared that:

> 'our goal is to make social media influencers reflect on how their air travel affects the climate and how they influence other people to fly when they leave posts. Another goal is to make their followers and partners realize the significant climate impact of the influencers' lifestyles'

> (Aftonbladet, 2019)

The site is run anonymously by two individuals who describe themselves as people with no political or organizational affiliations (Dagens Nyheter, 2019). It is public and accessible to everyone, with or without an Instagram account, and is therefore regarded as open and public data. In addition, the posts that AI recontextualizes are published on open sites accessible to everyone. However, the design and affordances of Instagram blur the public-private demarcation (see Sveningsson Elm, 2009, p. 76). Thus, comments related to posts made by individuals have been excluded from the analysis. The reach of the site in Sweden is unquestionable: in March 2020, it had around 53,000 followers. By comparison, in June 2021, one of Sweden's most famous influencers, Isabella Löwengrip, who is also criticized by AI, had 423,000 followers.

AI only posts stories. A story is a feature in Instagram that allows images and video content to be posted in a slideshow format. There are currently 14 stories on AI, comprising approximately 600 slideshow pictures. The majority of the posts name and shame social media influencers. Representational

patterns are analyzed in the dataset as a whole, but the more detailed qualitative analysis is limited to the two most recently posted stories (posted in April and March 2019). Together, these two stories comprise approximately 120 slide show pictures, of which 24 are shown as examples in Figures 1 and 2.

A parallel text corpus was collected to explore how the circulation of shame materializes when the aviation industry in Sweden positions itself and its potential customers in relation to delegitimization discourses. A dataset was established of media texts produced for the Swedish market by the aviation actors Apollo, Swedavia, SAS, Tui, Finnair, KLM and Braflyg. The corpus comprises texts about 'Sustainable flying' (or similar) published on the internet, in newspaper ads, TV ads and YouTube clips and ads on digital billboards in Stockholm. In the dataset, shame is often implied through the huge emphasis placed on the sustainability strategies that have already been implemented by the aviation industry, and that will be further developed in the future. However, in several texts, shame is explicitly stated and responded to. The analysis presented here focuses on one of these multimodal texts, a 2.5-minute video entitled *Nu tar vi nästa steg för positiv turism* [Now we are taking the next step towards positive tourism], published by Tui in April 2019 on YouTube. The commercial was broadcast but has now been removed from YouTube, probably because it was considered misleading after a complaint was made to the Swedish Advertising Ombudsman, a self-regulatory organization funded by the advertising industry in Sweden. The Advertising Ombudsman concluded that Tui was not able to show to what extent it was climate compensating, which is promised in the commercial.[3] This decision by the Advertising Ombudsman has little effect on the commercial's affective potential but stresses the fact that the aviation industry faces a number of communicative challenges in light of the climate crisis.

Tui Sweden is a part of Tui Nordic which, in turn, is a part of the global Tui Group conglomerate, a multinational travel and tourism company, headquartered in Hannover, Germany. Tui describes itself as the leading tourism group in Scandinavia and globally, encompassing '1,600 travel agencies and leading online portals, six airlines with approximately 150 aircraft, over 400 hotels, 18 cruise liners and many incoming agencies in all major vacation destinations around the globe.'[4] Tui Nordic claims to hold 20% of the Scandinavian travel market and it offers air travel from 'more than 44 airports' in Scandinavia and has over 1.5 billion customers annually.[5] On the website of the Tui Group, 'global responsibility for economic, environmental and social sustainability' is highlighted as being characteristic of its corporate culture, which 'is reflected in more than 20 years of commitment to sustainable tourism.'[6] These ideals and values are saliently present in the commercial we analyzed.

4. Delegitimizing Global Air Travel via Shaming

The analysis departs from the assumption that shame is a resource that can be mobilized for social purposes via discursive meaning-making (see Sedgwick, 2003; Westberg, 2021b). In line with this, Ahmed (2014) – with reference to the treatment of indigenous people – explains that entering the emotive realm of shame involves acknowledging your actions as wrongdoings and thereby aligning with a certain moral collective: feeling ashamed means

recognizing and reconciling yourself to the fact that you have 'committed "acts and omissions", which have caused pain, hurt and loss for indigenous others' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 101). When someone experiences shame, they have done something that they recognize as being wrong and unjust from a certain moral standpoint – i.e. delegitimized – in the eyes of someone else. Thus, mobilizing shame to delegitimize flying hinges on recontextualizing (parts of) a practice as a wrongdoing and as 'injustices committed against others' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 102) and in this case against the environment. The analysis below focuses on how AI construes flying as shameful when responding to the question 'why should we not fly?' using different semiotic resources and, thereby, carving out the contours of a collective that takes the moral stance not to fly.

With a few exceptions, Instagram posts by AI have a specific multimodal design. At the center of each post, an influencer's post about travel is recontextualized. This visual recontextualization is compositionally placed in the background and is slightly skewed. At the forefront of the posts, a set of colored banners with white lettering overlaps the recontextualized influencer's post. Typically, the banners specify the destination of the influencer's journey and evaluate the journey as morally reprehensible with reference to the CO_2 emissions it causes. This pattern is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. In what follows, we refer to the individual pictures in the figures as figure number and picture number, e.g. Figure 1: 1.

Recontextualized posts prototypically represent certain aspects of global air travel, most often a setting from the destination (Figure 1: 1–6, 8–12; Figure 2: 2–4, 6–8). In terms of denotation and connotation, i.e. what the pictures depict and the values and ideas the depictions convey (van Leeuwen, 2001), we see that the denotatively depicted settings connote ideas and values associated with global air travel, privilege and luxurious vacations abroad. Even though none of the pictures are as canonical as, say, depictions of the 'Pisa push' in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2014), they are more or less recognizable as positive tourist imaginations of holiday destinations (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011). For example, the posts depict outdoor environments bathed in the light of a warm sunset (Figure 1: 1, 3, 6, 8–10, 12; Figure 2: 2–4, 6–8); blue skies, poolside areas and palm trees (Figure 1: 9, 12, Figure 2: 2); travelers with baggage at airports (Figure 1: 5, Figure 2: 11); a person wearing an attractive outfit inside an airplane (Figure 2: 12); hotel rooms and hallways (Figure 1: 2, 4); exotic flowers (Figure 1: 3); and vibrant city streets (Figure 2: 7). Semiotically, these depictions operate as metonyms: individual elements represent the 'whole' practice of global air travel (see van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 34). When AI recontextualizes these posts, elements expressing facts and evaluations about CO_2 emissions are added to the original representation, primarily by means of the colored banners. These additions delegitimize the influencers' lifestyles depicted and connoted through the recontextualized imagery as shameful.
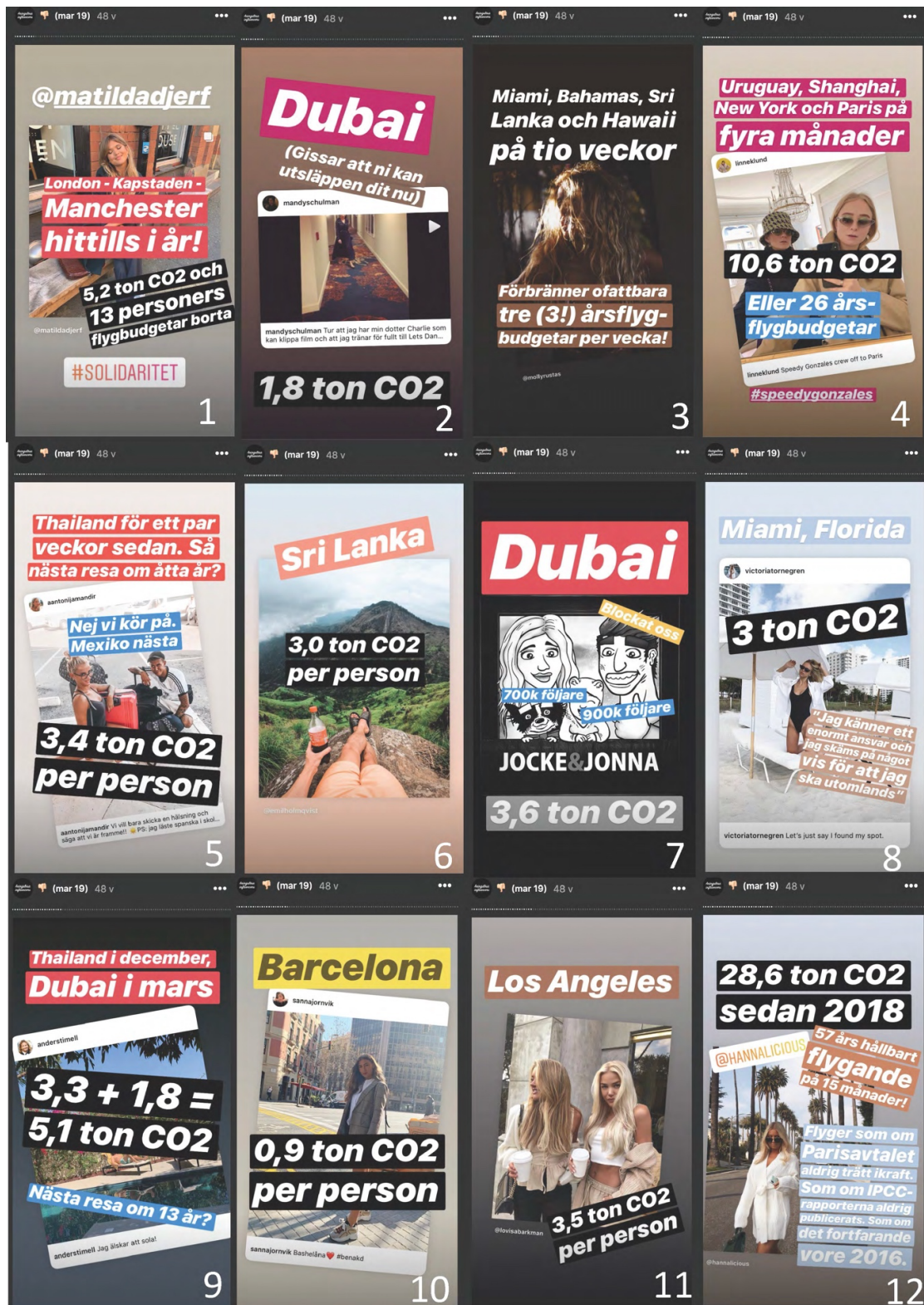
Figure 1. Aningslösa Influencers, examples from Insta story from March 2019

Figure 2. Aningslösa Influencers, examples from Insta story from April 2019

The banners foreground (1) the destination of the recontextualized journey; (2) the volume of CO₂ emissions in kilotons caused by the journey in question; and (3) some form of moral judgment. In particular, the latter two are of importance here since they delegitimize flying as being morally reprehensible, thereby positioning them as shameful. As captured by Figures 1 and 2, most of the posts include the amount of CO₂ in kilotons caused by the influencer's air

travel. These written additions express so-called 'effect-oriented rationalizations' (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 115). As such, they answer 'why not' questions by adding the negative effects and results to the represented practices or actions. When expressed in language alone, effect-oriented rationalization comprises three elements: the effectual action, the effect and a causal link (e.g. 'so that'). Together they construe the rational relationship between the action and its effect (e.g. 'You should stop eating meat so that your carbon footprint decreases'). However, being a semantic feature, the effect relationship can be expressed both explicitly and implicitly (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 126). In the cases examined, there are no explicit causal links. Instead, the effect of flying is visually "imprinted" or "branded" on the original representation. In terms of the semiotic conventions that develop when semiotic resources are put to use over time and space (canons of use; Ledin & Machin, 2018) it can be argued that the causality is realized in a multimodal way similar to the labels on packets of cigarettes that warn against the disastrous health effects of smoking. In a broader perspective, this also connects interdiscursively with how science is used, for instance, in food and nutrition packaging and advertising (cf. Chen & Eriksson, 2019), both to legitimize and delegitimize certain practices based on 'what we know from science'.

The delegitimization of the practice as shameful is also augmented in reference to value systems and moral concepts. The shameful effects of flying are expressed in overtly moralizing ways, for example, when flying is delegitimized using accusations such as *Förbränner ofattbara tre (3!) årsflygbudgetar per vecka!* [Burns an incredible three (3!) years' flight budget per week!] (Figure 1: 3). Arguably, the metonymically represented actions and settings in Figures 1 and 2 are delegitimized as being shameful, immoral and irrational.

In addition, a recurring way of shaming is through moral abstractions, i.e. by referring to flying 'in abstract ways that "moralize" them by distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values' (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 111). More precisely, AI delegitimizes the air travel of social media influencers as delusionary by representing it as a questionable reality:

(1) *som om vi hade 21 planeter* [as if we had 21 planets] (Figure 2: 7);
(2) *Som om Parisavtalet aldrig trätt i kraft. Som om IPCC-rapporterna aldrig publicerats. Som om det fortfarande vore 2016.* [As if the Paris Agreement had never entered into effect. As if the IPCC reports had never been published. As if it was still 2016.] (Figure 1: 12);
(3) *10.6 ton CO₂ Eller 26 årsflygbudgetar* [10.6 tonnes of CO_2 Or 26 annual flight budgets] (Figure 1: 4);
(4) *Motsvarar nästan 3 års hållbart flygande* [Equivalent to almost three years of sustainable travel] and *Motsvarar 3 års hållbart flygande* [Equivalent to three years of sustainable travel] (Figure 2: 2, 3).

The common denominator here is the recontextualization of global air travel as being morally out of touch with reality and as causing inconceivable environmental harm. Arguably, the abstractions delegitimize flying not only as being environmentally unsustainable, but also as being morally repugnant. Thus, implicitly, the delegitimization of social media influencers as both environmentally and morally shameful works its social force by carving out

the contours of a morally righteous collective that fulfills moral ideals by proudly disclaiming an alleged elite privilege to travel.

5. Relegitimizing Global Air Travel by Transforming Shame to Pride

The foregoing analysis of Instagram posts illustrates that flight shame is circulating on a societal level in Sweden and elsewhere, and this tendency affects the communicative strategies of the aviation and tourism industry. Generally speaking, and judging from our text corpus, the aviation industry relegitimizes flying by referring to environmentally-friendly products and compensatory measures. Typically, the question of shame is interdiscursively indexed, meaning that the commercial texts only imply flight shame but do not explicitly mention it. This is illustrated by a digital billboard ad by KLM at Stockholm Central Station (Figure 3).

Figure 3. KLM ad – © Gustav Westberg

The verbal resources of the ad – '*Om du verkligen måste*' [If you really must]*,* 'Fly Responsibly' – hint at shame as being the tip of an iceberg of moral values (cf. van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 46). The conditional [if] ('*Om')* clause suggests a potentially ashamed traveler, but also offers them a way out: by acting responsibly when flying with KLM, this shame can at least be reduced. Ahmed (2014, p. 109) presents pride as an emotion closely associated with shame: 'Shame and pride have a similar affective role in judging the success or failure of subjects to live up to ideals, though they make different judgments.' In other words, both the pride and shame of social groups connect to a type of performance in relation to certain ideals or values instigated by positive (pride) or negative (shame) incentives. Regarding flying and the climate crisis, these values and ideals revolve around sustainable reductions in CO_2 emissions by flying less or at least 'responsibly'. People who do not limit their flying or choose 'responsible' airlines are potentially filled with shame and positioned as morally ignorant and delusional. Yet the common affective origin of shame and pride offers a way of transforming the affective potential

of shame into pride through the strategic use of legitimization. Ahmed (2014), again, describes this as a two-stage process. Shame stems from the inability to live up to idealized values, and the first stage of the 'transference' from shame to pride is to accept and align with the moral framework that identifies specific acts (in this case, flying) as being wrong (Ahmed, 2014, pp. 109–110). In the second stage, actions of rejection and, importantly, changing a person's behavior in accordance with the moral framework, are key to transforming shame into pride (cf. Westberg, 2021b).

Even though many of the texts in our corpus draw on this two-stage process, it explicitly manifests itself in a Tui commercial (now removed from YouTube, as mentioned above). In this commercial, pride subjectivity is articulated as a reaction to the articulation of a shameful subjectivity. The analysis of the relegitimization strategies revolves around the following statement, which appears almost halfway through the commercial: *'Därför kommer vi inte sluta flyga'* [this is why we will not stop flying] (1:06). This statement relates to previous statements in traditional media, on social media and in the political arena that Tui and other actors in the aviation industry (e.g. social media influencers with frequent flyer lifestyles) should stop flying. However, Tui will 'not stop flying'. To this end, the commercial deploys a number of strategies to relegitimize the continued practice of flying and to restore a proud subjectivity to the global elite who fly internationally; most of them are abstract moral legitimizations, and some of them are instrumental rationalizations through which it is claimed that continued flying is rational (van Leeuwen, 2008, pp. 109–115). All this relegitimization is preceded by the rejection of shame – *'Vi tror nämligen inte på skam'* [Actually, we don't believe in shame] (0:29) – which is directly followed by an expressed belief in a key component of the transformation of (flying) shame into something else: *'vi tror på att agera'* [we believe in action] (0:31).

The commercial is structured as a narrative projection characterized by a few changing scenes with no obvious chronology (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 138). Rather than solving a narrative complication, the narrative projections utilize simulation and shifting scenes to render potentialities, 'a possibility that we (as customers) are supposed to take a stance on' (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 149). There is an orientation phase (Figure 4) in the Tui commercial, a simulation comprising an array of scenes and a final re-orientation and return to the starting point. In the Tui case, the customer is enticed to take a stance in favor of air travel, without feeling ashamed and potentially also feeling proud.

The orientation and re-orientation of the commercial are constituted by canonical images of vacations in the sun: we see a turquoise ocean from above and can both see and hear small waves breaking. Similar to the recontextualized influencer posts in Figures 1 and 2, the turquoise ocean metonymically connotes the destination of the 'whole' practice of global leisure travel. In the orientation stage, this setting is overlapped by three subsequent written sentences, of which two are legitimizations (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Orientation[7]

In the English translation, the written sentences read:

Today, your vacation with us contributes to a better world.
The goal is that it will also contribute to a better climate.
We are now taking the next step towards positive tourism.

These statements do not address flying directly, but the first sentence is an obvious means-oriented rationalization for taking a vacation (presumably by air): going on vacation with Tui is legitimized as a means of contributing to a '*bättre värld*' [better world]. The second sentence is a goal-oriented rationalization: the goal of taking a vacation is that '*den även ska bidra till ett*

bättre klimat' [it will also contribute to a better climate]. In brief, travel is framed as being legitimate and rational because the goal, rather paradoxically, is to improve the climate.

During the commercial, there is an accompanying voiceover which, in relation to the visuals of the different scenes, provides legitimizing answers to why air travel should continue. It is a low-pitched male voice that adds a type of legitimization using personal authority (van Leeuwen, 2008): we should continue to travel by air because an authoritative voice says we should. More precisely, it can be argued that the voice connotes documentary objectivity and an omniscient narrator (van Leeuwen, 1999), but also the majestic touch that a low pitched and typically male voice can give to movie trailers, for example. The first speech act is a question: 'does a company that takes people on vacation all over the world even dare to talk about the environment?', which is directly answered: '*ja, vi vågar*' [yes, we dare] followed by '*vi tror nämligen inte på skam – vi tror på att agera*' [actually, we don't believe in shame – we believe in action]. When shame is mentioned, a scene takes place that is different from the other scenes (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Multimodal personal authority

Rather than representing an element of global air travel, we see an extreme close up of an eye. The scene suggests a representational meaning potential such as 'open your eyes to the truth' or 'make eye contact and do not be ashamed' when daring to proudly talk about the environment in relation to air travel. Thus, the personal authority and trustworthiness of the voiceover is visually augmented.

After the orientation, the commercial moves into the simulation stage, comprising 44 separate scenes with no chronology. From a multimodal perspective, the legitimization potential of standalone images (or scenes, as is the case in the commercial) is often low, albeit possible (Westberg, 2017). This is also the case with the simulation stage of Tui's commercial: several practices

with positive connotations are represented, but the main legitimization work is conducted when the scenes are multimodally associated with the voiceover. In Table 1, the main visual scenes of the simulation stage are juxtaposed with the wording of the voiceover.

Visual scene	Voiceover
7. Five people doing yoga on a beach in front of a calm ocean in a pink sunset	[…] *att agera* [in action]
	vi tror på [we believe in]
8. Shiny aircraft inside a hangar illuminated by numerous spotlights	*att utveckla, förnya och tänka nytt* [developing, renewing and thinking in new ways]
9. A black hotel doorman in a white suit talking to an elderly white couple in a hall with stone pillars, facing palm trees outside	*vi tror på kraften i att resa och* [we believe in the power of travel and]
10. The same elderly couple walking down an avenue of palm trees	*möta andra* [meeting other people]
11. Sunlight breaking through palm leaves	*då kan vi också* [then we can also]
12. A person preparing a coconut drink	*hjälpa andra att* [help other people]
13. Full frontal view of an Asian-looking woman selling food in a market stall	*bygga upp och investera i arbete, miljö* [shape and invest in their work, the environment]
14. Two women sitting in a boat (with other tourists), one leaning her head against the other one's shoulder	*och infrastruktur på plats* [and local infrastructure]
	vi tror på [we believe in]
15. A man with a girl sitting on his lap in a jungle setting. The girl has a butterfly on her middle finger	*kraften i att värna om hela kedjan* [the power of caring for the entire chain]
16. A woman in a cleaning apron polishes some glass doors	*vi tror på att alla har rätt till bra arbetsvillkor* [we believe that everyone has the right to good working conditions]
17. Three children with wet hair sitting on a bench on a tropical beach facing the ocean and blue skies	*att barn ska få vara barn* [that children should be allowed to be children]
18. Two women (in a bikini and a bathing suit, respectively) in a swimming pool in front of a blue ocean and blue skies	*vi tror på att alla behöver* [we believe that everyone needs]
19. A sleeping woman turning around in a bed	*avkoppling* [relaxation]
20. A family having dinner outside on a patio with the horizon as a background	*och tid tillsammans* [and time together]

Table 1. Simulation stage of the Tui commercial: scenes 7-20 and corresponding voiceover

Scenes 7–20 (with the exception of Scene 8, see below) represent an 'ideal' vacation in a hot country (cf. Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011). In other words, the visual scenes represent a number of social practices, some of them more intuitively associated with vacations that require Swedes to travel by air (e.g., relaxing by the pool; eating dinner outside) and some of them less so (e.g., the woman cleaning windows). This is followed by the aforementioned key statement '*därför kommer vi inte sluta flyga*' [this is why we will not stop flying], which explicitly construes the multimodal ensembles given in Table 1 as relegitimizations of flying, without shame. Importantly, the voiceover adds an abstract moral relegitimization to the depicted practices. Using such forms of relegitimization, even the very abstract aspects of flying are associated with discourses of moral values (see above and van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 111.) More precisely, Tui 'will not stop flying' because, for example, it '*tror på kraften i att resa och möta andra*' [believes in the power of travel and meeting other people] (9–10); '*vi tror på att alla har rätt till bra arbetsvillkor*' [that everybody has the right to good working conditions] (16); and '*att barn ska få vara barn*' [that children should be allowed to be children] (17). All these are beliefs in the practices of high moral value. Through the multimodal composition of the commercial, these practices are visually associated with practices that are more or less immediately recognizable as being part of an ideal, but also as being part of a socially and environmentally sustainable vacation that requires air travel (from Sweden).

Arguably, the commercial offers the opportunity to feel proud when vacationing in a responsible manner with Tui. Returning to Ahmed (2014), Tui initially recognizes that there are good reasons for feeling a sense of shame when traveling by air, but in contrast to the affective work by AI, the return to pride does not hinge on disclaiming the privilege of air travel. Rather, once the act of recognition has been accomplished by Tui, the process of rebuilding pride begins, and in this case, it starts with a number of 'ethically sound' practices, although only abstractly related to air travel.

An exception to the abstraction type of legitimization discussed above is found in Scene 8. An aircraft in a hangar is shown together with the voiceover '*vi tror på att utveckla, förnya och tänka nytt*' [we believe in developing, renewing and thinking in new ways]. In this way, the visual representation is actually anchoring (Barthes, 1977) the semiotic potential of the verbal message. Anchoring refers to the multimodal process of one mode of communication, usually language, anchoring the often more 'floating' semiotic potential of images. However, in this case, the visual representations anchor the meaning of the verbal legitimization: Tui not only believes in generally 'developing, renewing and thinking in new ways' – it relates to flying. Rather than a moral abstraction, this is a concrete moral evaluation: Tui will not stop flying because it believes in the good practice of developing, renewing and thinking in new ways about flying (rather than any practice of high moral value).

Two relegitimizations stand out in the rest of the commercial. Firstly, scene 26 shows a panoramic view of a green mountain sloping into a blue ocean, which is accompanied by the voiceover stating: '*vi tror inte på att jaga likes med att erbjuda enstaka symbolhandlingar*' [we don't believe in hunting for likes by offering isolated symbolic measures]. 'Likes', of course, interdiscursively refers to the social media practice of 'liking'. Again, this is an abstract, moral legitimization: flying is abstractly associated with performing

sustainable, long-term measures rather than just 'isolated symbolic' ones. Secondly, two prominent theoretical (rather than instrumental) rationalizations render the abstract '*enstaka symbolhandlingar*' [isolated symbolic measures] slightly more concrete. Scenes 39–43 contain a Tui aircraft along with a sunrise, families together, and a panoramic view of a hotel and pool areas. The scene with the aircraft is matched by the voiceover: '*vår egen flygplansflotta är en av världens renaste*' [our own fleet of aircraft is one of the cleanest in the world]. This is a theoretical, experiential rationalization (van Leeuwen, 2008, pp. 116–117), which means that it is based on what we already 'know'. In this case, it is already known that the aircraft fleet is (supposedly) clean, and this knowledge justifies flying with Tui. This is followed by a theoretical prediction (Scenes 40–43) that legitimizes air travel in relation to a future scenario: '*Därför börjar vi nu klimatkompensera alla resor med våra egna flyg och ditt boende på våra egna hotel så att du ska kunna välja ett alternativ som är både avkopplande, bekvämt och klimatkompenserat*' [That is why we are now starting to climate compensate for all flights with our own aircraft and for your stay at our own hotels so that you will be able to choose an option that is both relaxing, comfortable and climate compensated]. In other words, it is construed as rational to keep flying with Tui because, soon, you will be able to climate compensate. Again, if Tui's aircraft fleet is clean and if all its flights are climate compensated, other affective stances pave the way for the potential air traveler. Shame is construed as a non-issue, simply because both of Ahmed's (2014, pp. 109–110) two stages in the from-shame-to-pride process have now been accomplished: (1) recognizing that the way in which the previous practice of air travel was performed was wrong and (2) consequently, changing your behavior. And, in accordance with Ahmed's view, a new opportunity arises: a regained sense of pride for being an air traveler.

6. Conclusion

This article focuses on the circulation of shame and pride as it is materialized through the discursive delegitimization and relegitimization of air travel. We have shown how such processes materialize in multimodal texts – primarily activist social-media posts and commercial texts. More precisely, the article focuses on how flight shame can function as both a strategic tool to delegitimize the behavior of social media influencers and as a starting point for strategic measures in the interest of the aviation industry, which rejects flight shame, while introducing the possibility of flight pride.

The results allow us to conclude that the debate surrounding the climate crisis – at least in a Scandinavian context – is not only supported by hard science, measurable facts and modeled scenarios; it is also an arena for scapegoating, emotional appeals and affective practice. In line with the pathos concept in rhetoric theory, the debate has become a matter of strategically affording emotions through multimodal texts. Interestingly, moralization is used as a form of delegitimization strategy by social media activists such as AI, as well as a relegitimization strategy by large travel corporations such as Tui. AI uses this strategy to construe the privileged frequent-flyer lifestyle of social media influencers as delusional and shameful whereas Tui uses it to highlight a number of practices that offer air travelers the opportunity to proudly live up

to moral standards of sustainability and responsibility: good working conditions and infrastructure at the destinations to which it flies, for example (cf. scene 13–14 in Table 1). More precisely, Tui relegitimizes flying by abstractly relating it to other morally highly valued practices, thereby infusing the position of the global air traveler with pride.

Rationalization is also used as a strategy to invoke emotions of shame and pride. Whereas AI produces flight shame via instrumental, effect-oriented rationalizations that delegitimize flying in reference to its negative climate impact, Tui uses theoretical rationalizations to relegitimize air travel. It also uses experiential rationalization to establish a truth that defines its aircraft as "clean" and to relegitimize continued flying based on a prediction that travelers will be able to climate compensate. In sum, whereas AI construes a shameful subjectivity by highlighting the negative effects of flying, Tui, in turn, is entrenched in the negative effects of flying as a starting point for its formation of a proud subjectivity. The solution is to offer a sense of pride by showing that even though flying engenders environmental costs, these are lower because of Tui's 'clean' fleet of aircraft and the promise of future climate compensation (which, in turn, forced it to withdraw the commercial after the Swedish Advertising Ombudsman concluded that it was misleading).

Rather than treating shame and pride as dichotomies, the analysis affirms Ahmed's (2014) approach to these emotions as being entangled and dialogically construing affective subjectivities in the circulation between contexts and bodies. As the analysis has shown, the delegitimization and relegitimization practices of shame and pride are dialogic (even though on quite an abstract plane) in the sense that they depart from a common moral framework that identifies CO_2 emissions as being bad for the environment and environmental and social sustainability as occupying the moral high ground. These shared moral ideals clearly reveal themselves when Tui evokes personal authority to 'proudly' talk about the environment in relation to air travel, but also when Tui relegitimizes air travel in reference to the goal of environmental improvement. Although Tui explicitly rejects shame, Tui's relegitimization work indicates that flight shame has become entrenched in the company (cf. Ahmed, 2014, pp. 12–13). Put differently, the shared assumption of what is (un)just constitutes a common (and strategic) 'we'. From this position, the affective potentials of pride and shame are simultaneously accessible in a way that resolves the aforementioned attitude-behavior gap. However, Tui is neither using discourse strategically to reject its previous flying behavior nor to change its existing flying behavior (Ahmed, 2014, p. 109). Instead, flight shame is the intertextual presupposition (Fairclough, 2003) and common moral ground upon which the entire relegitimization strategy in the Tui commercial rests.

Judging from the affective turn in social sciences and discourse studies (e.g. Fleig & von Scheve, 2020; Milani & Richardson, 2020; Wetherell, 2012; Zietsma et al., 2019), affect and emotion are part of social life. In environmental communication in general, and in climate crisis-related communication in particular, affect and emotion would appear to matter more than ever. Our study sheds light on how affect can exert social force by being multimodally afforded through legitimation strategies in (social) media texts. In the field of multimodal critical discourse studies, the study of affect and emotions has partially been neglected in favor of analyzing and demystifying discriminatory and irrational argumentation (Westberg, 2021a, p. 23). With

respect to this, the present analysis is an attempt to grapple with ongoing social change by semiotically operationalizing what Ahmed (2014, pp. 12–13) calls the 'emotionality of texts'. Social semiotics and van Leeuwen's (2008) framework for legitimization analysis have provided us with useful multimodal tools to study how affect can be intertextually and semiotically enacted. Affective affordances of multimodal texts are constructs that are difficult to identify or to just 'read off', and we have shown how the lexicogrammatical resources of speech and writing combine with visual resources in the disruption of the common-sense status of privileged air travel. This, finally, points to the relevance of further investigating the performative role of emotions within environmental communication, and to contemplation of the diverse ideological work they can be mobilized to perform.

Notes

1. https://www.swedavia.com/arlanda/environment/?_ga=2.62197609.498603752.158 0282618-2002384008.1580282618
2. https://www.instagram.com/aningslosainfluencers/
3. https://reklamombudsmannen.org/beslut/enskilt-beslut/?caseid=1911-228
4. https://www.tuigroup.com/en-en/about-us/about-tui-group
5. https://www.tui.se/om-tui/om-foretaget/vart-kundlofte/
6. https://www.tuigroup.com/en-en/about-us/about-tui-group
7. The screenshots from the commercial are reproduced under the principles of fair dealing and fair use for the purpose of scholarly criticism.

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