English abstracts

Heikki Hellman

Regional rulers of the press: Newspaper competition and concentration in relevant markets

When media policy research and communication policy talk about media concentration, the level of scrutiny is usually national. In economics and competition law, on the other hand, concentration and competition are usually considered only in relation to relevant markets. Since only a few newspapers in Finland spread significantly outside their home province, the concentration of the industry is examined here regionally. Theoretically, the article draws from media economics and research on the industry's geographic structure and competition. Empirically, it complements previous results on the concentration of newspapers in Finland by analyzing the development by province in the years 2010–2020. The variables used are the net sales and circulation of newspapers and their distribution by publisher. Established key figures are used as metrics. The results show that in most provinces of Finland, the leading newspaper has an almost complete monopoly. However, the development of regional concentration has been uneven during the review period, and dramatic changes have only occurred in a few provinces. Concentration should not be viewed exclusively as a negative phenomenon, but can also be seen as a way to preserve the diversity of the press.

Keywords: competition, concentration, Finland, media policy, newspaper industry, provinces

Veera Kangaspunta

Commenters as public participants – A study on users' understanding of online news commenting as public participation

The article examines users who comment on online news and their understanding of news commenting in the theoretical framework of public participation. The research material consists selected part of an open online survey (N = 1 221), addressed to Finnish users commenting on online news. Based on their background (age, gender, political view), the participants constitute a heterogeneous group, majority of whom found the survey via news article on public broadcasting company website Yle.fi. Based on a principal component analysis, four variables describing central user-originated issues of public participation were formulated: faith in the effectivity of online news comments, restraining of comments, quality of comments, and appreciation of commenting. By using grouping analysis, the participants were further divided to four user groups in relation to the central issues: cynic restrainers, cynic allowers, generally positive, and appreciative allowers. Closer examination of these user groups shows that users are not divided about the quality of comments. Instead, users' understanding differs distinctly on two issues: freedom of commenting versus restraining of comments and appreciation and faith in commenting versus cynicism. Background factors, especially political view, explain the differences. Consequently, the division of central user-originated issues of public participation seems to connect to the wider political polarization of online debates and societal discussions.

Keywords: online news; online news comments; public participation; user; survey

Erna Bodström

Competing arguments in asylum decisions made for Afghans who arrived to Finland in year 2015

The article examines competing arguments in asylum decisions made for citizens of Afghanistan, having arrived to Finland in 2015-16. The article views the decisions as argumentative administrative communication, and approaches them as a debate presenting competing arguments for and against granting asylum. Competing arguments refer to the conflicting and exclusive nature of the claims, as asylum can either be granted

or denied. The study asks, what kind of competing arguments of the asylum applicant and the Finnish Immigration Service are present in the decisions and how they are constructed. In the decisions the asylum applicants do not present their arguments directly but through various filtered stages. The data of the study consists of 29 negative asylum decisions made for citizens of Afghanistan in years 2016-17, and they are analysed using Toulmin's model of argumentation. The analysis shows how the arguments of the Service and the filtered arguments of the applicants are difficult to even compare, as they are built on very different bases. Based on the analysis, both arguments also seem incomplete. In the filtered arguments of the asylum applicants, this is visible in the warrants, and in the arguments of the Service in the backing. The concept of competing arguments therefore draws attention to how the power of administrative officials works through argumentation as well as its warrants and backing.

Jonna Leppäkumpu ja Anu Sivunen

The role of journalists' professional identity in work-life boundary management

The article examines Finnish journalists' perceptions of their professional identity and its role in their work-life boundary management. Boundary management is defined as an ongoing communicative process in which boundaries between work and life are negotiated in both work and private life interactions. We approach the research topic through qualitative research. The data consists of semi-structured interviews (N=32) with Finnish journalists and their close others from their professional and private lives. Thematic content analysis is used to structure the journalists' perceptions of their professional identity into two main themes: journalism as a way of life and journalism as a paid job. The findings show that the perceptions of professional identity both justified and challenged certain types of activities, thus both enabling and constraining the management of journalists' work-life boundaries. The findings of this study provide insights into how perceptions of identity are constructed and shaped through interaction and shed light on the importance of professional identity for the management of work-life boundaries. The knowledge generated by the study can be used to develop practices for reconciling work and life, especially in creative knowledge work where the boundaries between work and life can be blurred.