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THE ROLE OF ENTERTAINING MEDIA IN ELECTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF THE FINNISH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN 2006

The article considers the role of entertaining media in elections by analysing the Finnish presidential elections in 2006. The empirical analysis is based on 14 thematic interviews of candidates, campaign managers and media personnel and on a survey of 1049 voters undertaken by TNS Gallup. The objective of the analysis is to find out the meanings of entertaining media in campaigns and voting behaviour – the ways in which “the cultural and political citizenships” overlap in elections. On the basis of the empirical analysis the meaning of entertaining media cannot be considered significant in the 2006 elections: its role was mainly in complementing candidate images and producing variety to campaigns. Interviewees even saw that the meaning of entertaining media had diminished compared to earlier elections because of its poor novelty value today. However, the analysis shows that it is difficult to make any further generalizations about the meaning of entertaining media in political publicity because it is empirically such a complex issue. The discussions on “the cultural dimensions of political citizenship” are also always coloured by “the myth of the good citizen”. Therefore, the relations between entertaining media and political publicity should have been analysed in a particular context of social conjuncture and media structure.

Janne Matikainen

SOCIAL MEDIA – WHAT KIND OF SOCIABILITY?

Social media has become a very famous concept. At the same time it is a quite undefined concept. In general, social media refers to web services that receive most of their content from users. Well-known examples of social media are *Wikipedia*, *Facebook*, *YouTube* and blogs. In this article social media is considered from a social psychological point of view. The aim is to study the nature of ‘the social’ in social media on four levels. First, on the intrapsychological level the attention is focused on the motives for participation in social media. The second level concentrates on communication and interaction between individuals. An important research area on this level is computer-mediated communication (CMC). In the third level, the focal point is on the relationships between groups. The fourth level is ideological and also relates to crowds. There are two essential conclusions in this article. The different levels and theories emphasize social identity. Motivation and the identification of groups, communities and crowds are based on social identity. Secondly, sociability is quite individualistic in nature. All in all, the concept of social media is problematic and maybe too broad. This is the reason for the finding that the general conclusions of the social nature of social media are ambiguous.

PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF EVOLUTION AND THE RISE OF THE EVOLUTIONARY DISCOURSE IN FINLAND

In this paper I analyse the heated public debate that was generated in the Finnish media after Science, the journal, had carried an article on the public acceptance of evolution in Europe and the United States. Finns did not rate among the top performers in this survey which was regarded as unusual in a secular high tech nation. The explanations the media offered referred to the declining standards of public education and the rise of anti-science movements in Finland. By using two Finnish quality dailies as material I show that the claim of the declining public understanding of science in the debate was based on rather thin and ambivalent data in the light of comparative international surveys. Based on frame analysis and critical discourse analysis I argue that the leading discourse of the debate was based on the deficit model of public understanding of science and antagonistic reader positioning. The debate was not only about public understanding of evolutionary theory but became a metonymy of the cultural status of science. Finally I draw from the critical paradigm of science communication and interpret the debate in three socio-cultural contexts: the national image, science wars and the public legitimization of evolutionary psychology.

Pekka Aula

TOWARDS NET-BASED REPUTATIONS: VIEWS ON ORGANIZATIONAL ONLINE COMMUNICATION AS A REPUTATION BUILDER OF ORGANIZATIONS

The concepts of reputation and reputation management have recently gained a lot of attention among organisation researchers. Organisational online communication has also been a popular subject of academic studies. The article discusses the conceptual and empirical connections between an organization's reputation management and online communication. On one hand, the article focuses on the theory-driven examination of the structural dimensions of reputation, and, on the other, it investigates organisational communication professionals' views about the potential that online communication has to reputation and its management. The article presents salient points from an empirical, quantitative study of communication professionals' beliefs and attitudes. First, the conceptual framework is presented after which the professionals' views are studied against propositions constructed from the framework. The study shows that online communication has strong potential in reputation management but the possible impact is relative within certain limits. The article concludes with a model of "e-reputation" stating that organisational reputation should be approached as a complex multifaceted organisational phenomenon instead of a one-dimensional holistic entity both at academic and practical levels of examination.