

English abstracts

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Journalists as cultural mediators

Legitimation of *Mad Men* as quality television in the Finnish press, 2008–2015

Earlier research suggests that the so-called “quality TV” series have contributed strongly to the legitimacy of television as a worthy field of aesthetic consumption. But how is the legitimacy of quality TV produced? Based on theories about the role of cultural mediators in cultural production, the article investigates how Finnish (cultural) journalists perceived the US TV series *Mad Men* and contributed to its cultural acceptance by serving as gatekeepers, marketers and reviewers. The analysis is based on a systematic sample of seven newspapers and one magazine from 2008 to 2015, including all articles which either focused on *Mad Men* or mentioned it in passing (N = 353). Using both quantitative and qualitative content analysis, the article demonstrates how journalists employed conventions of various journalistic genres – not only criticism – in addressing quality aspects *internal* (aesthetic markers) and aspects *external* (culture industry markers) to the series, thus legitimizing the cultural value of the series.

Key words: Cultural journalism, cultural legitimation, cultural mediators, Finland, *Mad Men*, quality television

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Blocking as a barrier to public political debate

The present study examined the role of blocking in political debates of social media. Blocking restricts specific social media users from following and participating in ongoing debates. The significance of social media for contemporary democracy has been considered diversely in Finland and other Nordic countries over the past 10 years. Blocking, however, has not been under closer examination. According to an analysis of 225 tweets and direct messages collected from Twitter, blocking is a common phenomenon in Finnish political debates. The research material was analyzed with software-assisted content analysis tools. 95 respondents mentioned at least one political blocker. Most often mentioned politicians were Mikael Jungner (Social democratic party) and Ville Niinistö (Green party). In addition, interviews were conducted with Mr. Jungner and Mr. Niinistö. It is observed that blocking is a growing problem in public political debate. The theoretical framework of the study is based on Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action and deliberative democracy.

Key words: Blocking, social media, political communication, deliberative democracy