

English abstracts

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A Short Step away from Patriotism

Debate over the Revelations on Military Intelligence in Helsingin Sanomat

A few days before Christmas 2017, Helsingin Sanomat (HS) published a news story based on leaked documents about The Finnish Defence Intelligence Agency. An intense but brief public controversy, eliciting hundreds of comments to the HS digital platform, prompted the disclosure. On Twitter, the disclosure was the most discussed topic for several days. The content analysis of those comments shows that the majority of commentators on social media criticised HS for publishing the news story. According to most strict views, journalists had committed treason and thus jeopardised national security. Remarkable few voices stood out to defend the paper and journalists responsible for the disclosure. Discourse analysis conducted in the article renders a sociological interpretation of the discussion. The findings suggest that the differences of opinion were dependent on two factors: the discursive positions of commentators in relation to Finnish policy networks, and discussants' differing views on the role of security and individual freedoms in democracy. As a whole, the analysis provides some insights on how media–state relations develop in the conditions of a hybrid media system.

Key words: Information disclosure, intelligence law, online discussion, hybrid media, relationship between state and media

Eliisa Vainikka & Auli Harju

Anonymous online forums as counter-publics

Peer support and social criticism of marginalized users

This article looks into anonymously used online discussion through counter-public theories. Two sets of empirical studies are used as material for the analysis; the first one is a study of the discussion forum Suomi24, the second a study of online discussions from the imageboard Ylilauta. These two forums both have a large anonymous user-base and a relatively free, even harsh culture of debate. Both forums include users who are in some way marginalized from public discussions. This article aims to examine both empirically and theoretically, the peer-support and social criticism found in these two forums. Through peer support, discussion among peers and communities of mind, the forums open a venue of social criticism also for those who do not get their voices heard in the public. However, finding a like-minded community may also enable mistrust, polarization and antagonism. We look into these public discussions of both private and public issues through the concepts of intimate citizenship and counter-public.

Key words: Digital media, user profiles, young people, participatory cultures

Altti Näsi

Foreign news filled with hope

A methodological comparative approach to Finnish and American news articles

This article presents a new method to measure the relative breadth of news frames. The method has been inspired by area studies – an approach which combines and integrates viewpoints of different disciplines to understand complex realities of distant regions in a holistic manner. The purpose is to understand ways in and extent to which journalists combine and integrate diverse perspectives to explain complex realities in foreign news. I apply my method to a comparison of Finnish and American news articles focusing on South Africa and Brazil. My research demonstrates that Finnish and American journalists have excelled in their efforts to combine frames with different positive and negative dimensions to illustrate the complex character of realities in the Global South. My research also demonstrates that the frames were sponsored mostly by Southern sources, including underprivileged citizens. Thus, my work challenges researchers' claims that Western news on the Global South is one-sided and narrow. I attribute these surprising findings at least partly to my method. With this article I participate in the discussion concerning the future of journalism while arguing that the journalists have great capacity to cover the so-called developing world in a multifaceted manner. My paper also sheds light to the fruitfulness of cross-national comparative research.

Key words: Frame analysis, foreign news, cross-national comparative research, Global South, area studies