

Published in: *Journalism* 13(6) 783–801 (2011)

DOI: 10.1177/1464884911431382

## From aesthetes to reporters

### The paradigm shift in arts journalism in Finland

#### ABSTRACT:

The crisis of cultural journalism has recently been a topical issue in many countries. In Finland, too, it has been claimed that arts pages, previously dominated by aesthetically-oriented critics, have been shrinking and become more news-oriented and entertaining. In the article, we will explore the change of structures, values and ideals of arts reporting as friction between two opposing paradigms, the aesthetic and the journalistic, and analyse how the changes are reflected in the contents of the cultural pages and in the self-image of arts journalists. The research data of this case study consists of the arts pages of the biggest national newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, and of various internal planning documents related to its management. In addition to a longitudinal content analysis, we also employed theme interviews with and observation of cultural journalists. The results show a change of paradigm in arts journalism, with the consequence that the previously autonomous department has become an inseparable part of the news organization, increasingly adapted to meet the challenges of news journalism.

#### KEYWORDS:

cultural journalism, arts criticism, arts pages, journalism culture, professionalism, Finland

**Heikki Hellman**

University of Tampere, Finland

Heikki Hellman is Dr. Soc. Sc. and Dean of the School of Communication, Media and Theatre, University of Tampere, Finland. In 1989–2005 he worked as the Culture Editor of *Helsingin Sanomat*, published in Helsinki, Finland, and in 2008–2009, as a Visiting Professor in Journalism at the University of Tampere.

Address: School of Communication, Media and Theatre, Kalevantie 4, FI-33014  
University of Tampere, Finland. [email: heikki.hellman@uta.fi]

**Maarit Jaakkola**

University of Tampere, Finland

Maarit Jaakkola is Lic. Soc. Sc. and University Lecturer in journalism at the School of Communication, Media and Theatre, University of Tampere, Finland. She has given courses on journalistic practice, media criticism and media education.

Address: School of Communication, Media and Theatre, Kalevantie 4, FI-33014  
University of Tampere, Finland. [email: maarit.jaakkola@uta.fi]

**Corresponding author:**

Heikki Hellman, University of Tampere, Finland  
Email: heikki.hellman@uta.fi

Recent changes in journalism have generally been conceptualized as a fundamental 'crisis of journalism'. Indeed, as a result of economic, technological, institutional and cultural shifts, 'journalism as it is, is coming to an end' (Deuze, 2007: 141). Several studies (e.g. Bromley, 1997; Deuze, 2007; Fenton, 2010; Schudson, 2003; Sparks and Tulloch, 2000) have shown that competition between the media has increased and news organizations have become more business-oriented. The change has coincided with the rise of the online news media which, together with the fragmentation of the audience and decreasing readership of printed newspapers, has forced the publishers to look for more efficient ways of news production. This, in turn, has fostered multi-skilling and job rotation in newsrooms and an increasing convergence of news organizations.

In this article, we will examine how these pressures may affect a specialized journalistic branch, cultural journalism. Interestingly, studies of journalism have often analysed foreign correspondents, business journalists, general newsroom values, etc., but arts journalists have only seldom made their way to academic research, with few exceptions (see e.g. Bech-Karlsen, 1991; Forde, 2003; Golin and Cardoso, 2009; Harries and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007; Hovden and Knapskog, 2008; Jones, 2002; Klein, 2005; Kristensen, 2010; Kristensen and From, 2011; Reus et al., 1995). This in itself may be evidence of the distinctive nature of cultural journalism: it has not been studied since it has been considered an 'unrepresentative case' of journalism. For us, it is this specific character of arts journalism that makes it worth examination.

Parallel to the general debate on the crisis of journalism, the arts pages, too, have been under a lively professional and public controversy. In the United States, it has been observed that the majority of newspapers are running fewer articles about arts and culture than they used to. Stories are becoming shorter and a larger share of them is assigned to freelancers or wire services than before (Tyndall, 2004). In Germany, the balance between the various journalistic genres has changed radically since the 1980s with the pieces of news having increasingly replaced events reporting, background stories and commentaries in the arts pages (Reus and Harden, 2005). In the United States, France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, popular music has conquered an ever growing share of the culture sections (Kristensen, 2010; Larsen, 2008; Schmutz et al., 2010).

Our focus is on Finland, where it has been claimed that arts pages, which previously concentrated on high culture and were dominated by aesthetically-oriented writers, have been shrinking and become more news- and entertainment-oriented, and that arts criticism in newspapers has suffered a breakdown in both its standards and coverage. Tuva Korsström (2009), the previous culture editor of *Hufvudstadsbladet*, Finland's major Swedish-speaking daily, declared recently that the critical analysis of cultural journalism has surrendered to the dominance of newspaper format and design. Besides, Matti Apunen (2009), the editor-in-chief of *Aamulehti*, Finland's second largest daily, criticized cultural journalism for having changed into 'a compliant subdivision of the arts sector, providing it with a review service'.

A common denominator of this 'deterioration thesis' (Bech-Karlsen, 1991; Lund, 2005) is not only the shrinkage of arts coverage but, in addition, the concern of the lack of critical approach and general debate on arts pages. In our study, we interpret this 'crisis talk' as reflecting a collision between two fundamental paradigms of cultural journalism, a clash between *aesthetic* and *journalistic* approaches and values. In the Nordic countries, it has been observed that the professional self-definition and work practices of cultural journalists have traditionally leaned on the aesthetic paradigm, according to which a journalist/critic is a representative of the artistic field in the newspaper rather than a

representative of the journalistic field in the arts (Hovden and Knapskog, 2008; Hurri, 1993; Kristensen and From, 2011). We suggest that the journalistic paradigm has become dominant and converged arts reporting journalists towards the general newsroom values and general occupational ideology of journalism.

This article illuminates this controversy around the 'dual' nature of cultural journalism by analysing how the conflict of interest between the two paradigms is reflected on the arts pages and in the self-definition of Finnish cultural journalists. As Mark Deuze (2005) has suggested, journalism can be seen as an occupational ideology which is reproduced in the routine-based organization of newswork through internal communication, where reporters and editors constantly repeat and refine certain ways of doing things. Ideology refers here to 'a collection of values, strategies and codes characterizing professional journalism and shared most widely by its members' (2005: 445). We argue that the traditional values of cultural journalism have differed from the consensual value basis of general journalism. Now the division between them appears to be blurring.

### **The self-identity of cultural journalists**

As a result of professionalization, journalism tends to become uniform and commonly shared, at least in elective democracies (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). This means that journalists, whether they live in the United States, Japan, Germany or Finland, share similar values in their daily work although they may apply these in a variety of ways. Deuze (2005: 447) names five discursively constructed ideal-typical values which constitute the dominant occupational ideology of journalism and give journalists legitimacy to what they do:

1. *Public service*: journalists serve the audience as watchdogs, collecting and disseminating information;
2. *Objectivity*: journalists are impartial, neutral, objective and fair;
3. *Autonomy*: journalists are autonomous, free and independent in their work;
4. *Immediacy*: journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed;
5. *Ethics*: journalists have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy.

According to earlier research, these characteristics are not entirely applicable to cultural journalists. The arts journalists do agree that they serve the public while disseminating information about arts and making choices and judgments on behalf of the public. Immediacy and ethics, too, are respected by cultural journalists although the novelty of information is not always as pressing as in ordinary newswork since arts reporting is identified with 'soft news', not requiring similar instantaneity. The value of neutrality, then, is often in apparent contradiction with the working practices of arts journalists since opinionated criticism and the capacity to make subjective judgments appears to be an ideological cornerstone of cultural journalism. Similarly, the autonomy of cultural journalists can be questioned since they tend to have close ties with the artistic fields they cover. (Harries and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007; Hovden and Knapskog, 2008; Kristensen and From, 2011; Reus et al., 1995.)

Indeed, one of the main characteristics of arts journalism has always been a certain 'cultural elitism', perhaps explained by the fact that cultural journalists tend to have higher education and more cultural capital than other journalists (Reus et al., 1995; Hovden and Knapskog, 2008). Gemma Harries and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (2007), analysing the self-image of arts journalists in the United Kingdom, identified a distinctive professional and cultural role, which they call *arts exceptionalism*. This exceptionalism consists of three aspects: First, the arts reporters construct themselves as specialists,

more extensively qualified than conventional news reporters. Second, they also celebrate arts journalism as something qualitatively different from and more important than the conventional news agenda. Third, arts reporters emphasize their special responsibility by seeing themselves as 'crusaders' for the public appreciation of the arts and writing to a peer audience, a public of equals.

A specific feature of arts journalism can also be found in its newsroom power structure. Harries and Wahl-Jorgensen (2007: 624) distinguish between three different sub-professions: (a) arts editors, (b) arts reporters, and (c) freelance critics. In particular, freelancers are central in arts journalism although their position is highly ambivalent. On the one hand, they are free from the newsroom routines but, on the other, they are often fully dependent on the commissions of editors. In fact, they do not necessarily define themselves as journalists because of the lack of structure and routine in their work (see, also, Forde, 2003). Bourdieu (1993) calls critics 'cultural intermediaries' who operate somewhere between the two fields, arts and journalism. In Finland, they are typically either academically educated 'expert-critics' or 'artist-critics' whose experience is drawn from practicing the arts. Freelancers, in particular, remain somewhat alien to the ideals and values of general journalism, whereas arts editors and reporters can be expected to share part of its ideology.

On the basis of these anomalies in their ideology, status and working practices, arts journalists can be considered a unique case, 'journalists with a difference' (Forde, 2003: 113). Their self-understanding is contradictory, as the two opposite identities, that of a conventional news reporter and that of aesthetically inspired reviewer, are constantly present in their work.

## **Two paradigms of cultural journalism**

Finland is a highly developed newspaper culture, with a very large number of newspaper readers and minimal educational differences in reading habits (Elvestad and Blekesaune, 2008). Although newspapers' circulation has steadily fallen Finland has suffered only minor losses, with an average decrease of 11 percent for the ten largest newspapers since 1999 (Nordicom, 2010). As to contents, a recent long-term analysis showed that the Finnish readers have been provided with newspapers that are increasingly professional with the topics covered having become more uniform (Picard, 2003).

In a small country (5.3 million inhabitants) with a separate main language (Finnish) and a strongly normative policy of bilingualism, arts pages have served as an important forum of cultural, social and political debate, value conflicts and symbolic struggles. However, the institution of the cultural page did not develop until after World War II. The full-time staffers were employed mainly during the 1950s and 1960s, and the arts pages of newspapers experienced a slow but continuous growth until the mid-1980s (Hurri, 1993; Keränen, 1984).

At least four features of Finnish cultural journalism can be discerned on the basis of previous research (Hurri, 1993):

1. *Constancy*: the emphases on different artistic disciplines on arts pages have changed only minimally between 1945 and 1985;
2. *Homogeneity*: the newspapers share a common concept of culture and cultural journalism, concentrating on professionally produced arts and high culture;
3. *Broad coverage*: although two thirds of articles dealt with the four 'major' arts, i.e. literature, music, theatre and visual arts, the arts pages did not neglect the 'minor' arts, either;

4. *Generic diversity*: the Finnish culture pages have provided a broad set of various journalistic genres, e.g. news, reporting, commentary and criticism.

The dual nature of cultural journalism is best illustrated in the broad coverage of the arts and balancing between news and commentary. In fact, these two traits have been legitimized with the journalistic value of public service, suggesting that the arts pages provide a full and as balanced as possible coverage of the cultural field. For example, in its own advertisement in October 1978, *Helsingin Sanomat*, Finland's largest broadsheet newspaper, claimed to be a 'rapid and diverse cultural newspaper' which 'reports cultural issues every day with expertise', 'covering events in arts and sciences, reviewing premieres, concerts, newly published books and art exhibitions' and 'providing you with a background against which you can reflect your own opinions'.<sup>1</sup>

This balancing between two essentially different duties – previewing and reviewing – characterizes the arts pages in other Nordic countries, too (see Bech-Karlsen, 1991; Kristensen, 2010). It appears that there is in cultural journalism an internal tension between two poles, one leaning on an aesthetic, evaluative, opinion-based and educational approach on the arts and the other on an informative, fact-based communication about the arts and standard news values. The dimensions of these two opposite traditions, the aesthetic paradigm and the journalistic paradigm, are depicted in detail in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Two paradigms of cultural journalism

Dimension	Aesthetic paradigm	Journalistic paradigm
<i>Professional identity</i>	Reviewer, critic	Journalist, reporter
<i>Goal of action</i>	Promotion of the quality of arts	Promotion of democracy
<i>Role of audience</i>	Men-of-letters, segmented audience	Citizen, customer, universal audience
<i>Means of thought</i>	Emotion and experience	Common sense
<i>System of reference</i>	Aesthetics	Politics
<i>Writer's position</i>	Expert position: subjectivity based on epistemic authority	Outsider position: objectivity as strategic ritual
<i>Position of sources</i>	Undisclosed	Exposed
<i>Relation to object</i>	Predefined, disciplined	Open, problem-oriented
<i>Relation to genres</i>	Monogeneric	Polygeneric
<i>Relation to methods</i>	Methodical monism	Methodical pluralism
<i>Time concept</i>	Retrospective	Proactive

According to the aesthetic paradigm, opinionated criticism is the core of cultural journalism and its journalistic process is governed by a distinctive concept of meaningfulness. The higher a cultural product is valued, the higher its news value. A cultural journalist, or a critic, is a specialist in his/her field of art and needs a sufficient amount of cultural capital in order to gain legitimacy. His/her articles relate to the general art discourse, and he/she plays a role of an expert instructor who is able to interpret

artistic products for the readers. In cultural journalism, sources of information are seldom explicitly disclosed. Instead, art criticism is 'self-referential', with a critic melting his/her experience and judgments into a coherent analysis, the critic's monologue. Criticism is reactive by its nature, i.e. it comments on things that have already taken place.

The journalistic paradigm, then, reflects the general values of the ideology of journalism. It aims to address its readers as large audiences and in everyday settings. The journalist is expected to report the various events and issues impartially and informatively. The information is collected from external sources and, following a strategic ritual of objectivity (Tuchman, 1978), the reporter closes him/herself to the background by subscribing the expressions of opinions to his/her sources or by separating facts and opinions to different types of articles. According to the journalistic paradigm, reporting should be proactive and anticipatory, while, at the same time, journalist is *not* specialized but is able to cover any issue and any event with his journalistic competences.

In terms of journalistic work process, the difference between the two paradigms is best demonstrated in the choice of journalistic genres and methods as well as in the position of the journalist, which is a result of these choices. To a large extent, the aesthetic paradigm is tied to one journalistic genre and its method only: the review. In opposition, the journalistic paradigm celebrates the use of various approaches and methods.

The requirement of universalism in newspapers has always forced cultural journalism to balance between its two paradigmatic traits. Hurri (1993) noticed that criteria typical of the journalistic paradigm, such as timeliness, immediacy and diversity, were not introduced into the culture sections until the 1970s and that it was already during the 1980s that news-oriented journalism started to replace the aesthetic approach. However, as Jaakkola (2005: 135) has noted, as late as the early 2000s, the journalistic paradigm was still secondary, or even alien, to the newsroom culture of the arts reporters at *Helsingin Sanomat*.

The cultural department has – – neither in terms of its organization nor its cultural capacity sufficient tools for immediate, news-oriented reacting, which, admittedly, is not required every day in the cultural field. The deadline does not allow immediate covering of events that take place in the evening, and the formalistic, slow-paced daytime work does not favour the news orientation. Indeed, in the cultural department, a piece of news is often a 'necessary evil', a surprise, a by-product of another project.

In other words, earlier research suggests that the alleged shift of paradigms is still on its way (see also Kristensen, 2010; Knapskog & Larsen, 2008).

### **Case study design**

In order to trace the transition of its ideology, we approach the cultural newsroom employing Edgar H. Schein's (2004) model which distinguishes three levels in the organizational culture: artefacts, values, and assumptions. Conscious of the difficulties assigned to differing values and assumptions from each other (Martin, 1992), we make use of the three-level-concept by analysing the change of the organizational culture of arts journalists in the levels of structural preconditions, normative practices and symbolic meaning. With artefacts we refer to structural circumstances and visible manifestations of cultural journalism, such as the occupational titles of arts journalists, organization of work and amount of space devoted to culture. With values we refer to consciously expressed norms and ideals about cultural journalism, and with assumptions to socialized, unconscious ways of doing things, not necessarily correlated with the espoused values.

Cultural journalism is understood here as a cultural construction reproduced by the professional community of cultural journalists within an organization.

We have chosen to approach the issue with a case study, focusing on *Helsingin Sanomat*, published in Helsinki with a daily circulation of 398,000 (2009). *Helsingin Sanomat* is undeniably the most influential print news medium in the country with personnel of about 300 staff journalists, a comprehensive online service and a local radio station. Traditionally, *Helsingin Sanomat* was known as a family-owned newspaper, controlled by the family Erkko. By 1999, however, their Sanoma Corporation became a listed company, which introduced new expectations of profitability to the newspaper organization. Today, Sanoma Corporation is Finland's leading media firm, controlling dozens of newspapers and magazines, book publishers and television channels in several European countries. *Helsingin Sanomat*, then, has been widely criticized for its 'monopoly' position as a national news forum. Its culture section, in particular, has a superior editorial strength, the most acknowledged reviewers and the broadest arts coverage in Finland and has, thus, been claimed to have too much power in the field of culture (Hurri, 1993; Klemola, 1981; Luukka, 2007).

Typical of a case study, we combine multiple sources of evidence, applying both quantitative and qualitative methods. To find out structural changes, we carried out a content analysis of the arts pages over a period of 30 years. The sample covered the *Helsingin Sanomat* arts pages for a two-week period in 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008.<sup>2</sup> The unit of analysis was the individual article and the variables coded included the length of the article, article type and author/source status. Indications of a shift from the aesthetic towards the journalistic paradigm would be a fall in the average length of the articles, a decrease in the length and share of reviews, an increased variety of article types and a declining share of articles written by freelancers.

To discover the evolvments at the socio-cultural level, 15 cultural journalists of *Helsingin Sanomat*, including the culture editor, were interviewed in 2004. The thematic interviews focused on the writers' identity and their conception of the alleged change in the department's working practices. In addition to the interviews, to contextualize the statements, we also applied participative observation in the summer of 2004 and had access to the various strategic planning documents of the culture department. The observation at the news desk and at editorial meetings enabled us to verify if the interviewees really acted as they claimed and to compare the values with the assumptions. The documented material, mostly written and collected by the culture editor, made possible to reconstruct some conversations run in the community and to understand the decisions made in the past.

The results of the content analysis helped us to describe the change of cultural journalism over a longer period of time and independently of personal accounts, whereas the thematic interviews, the observation of journalists and the examination of documents supported our analysis of value transition and changing axioms by providing us with a subjective perception by the agents involved. While our content analysis was based on rather a limited sample, it hardly provided more than suggestive results of the changes in the contents, sources and approaches in arts reporting. With interviews, observation and documentary analysis we aimed at a triangulation of these shifts, in order to gain a deeper understanding of them in the organizational context. Interviews can never be taken at face value, and the internal memoranda may not necessarily provide a coherent image of how the culture section actually works, but they served as an inroad to the expressed values and immanent axioms.

In ethnographic research, it is typical that a researcher tries to penetrate a community

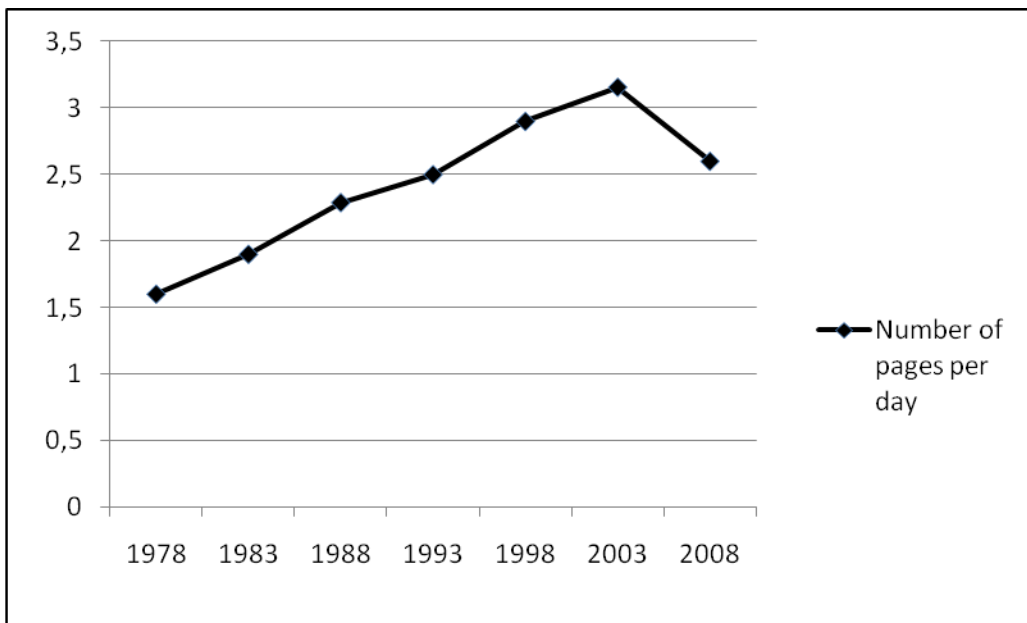


and its culture that he/she is unfamiliar with, in order to understand its identity, values and norms (see, e.g., Born, 2004). In this case, the setting is different: one of the authors was the culture editor of *Helsingin Sanomat* from 1989 till 2005 and, in that capacity, also one of the interviewed informants as well as the producer of most of the analysed documents. In spite of his controversial role, we claim that an internal observer with his personal minutes can provide information which otherwise would not be available for research. The credibility of results, then, is controlled by the other researcher, whose role has been that of an 'external' observer.

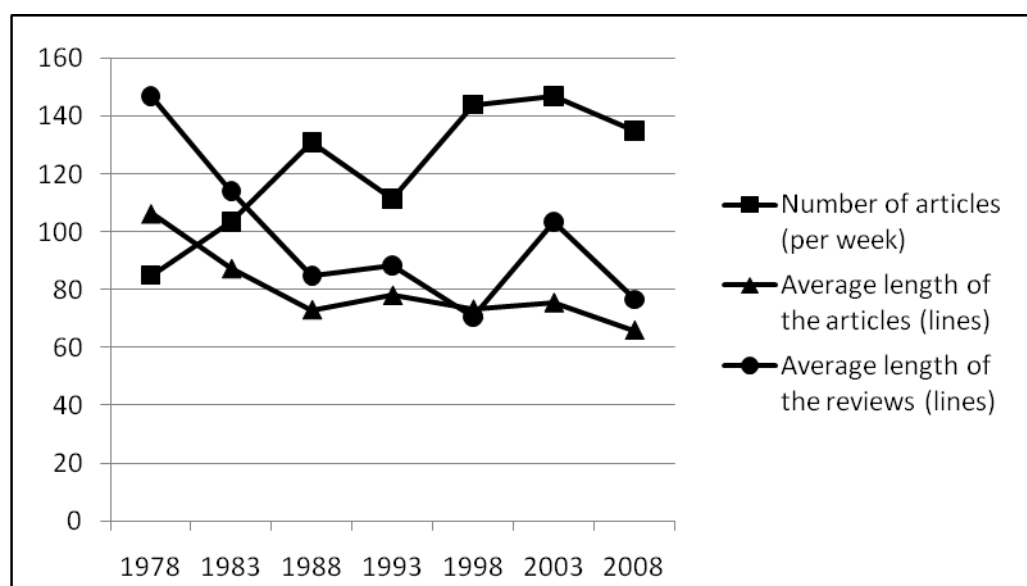
### The structural limits of arts pages

The distinctiveness of the culture section was not emphasized in *Helsingin Sanomat* until the latter half of the 1960s when it was developed into a flagship section of the paper by means of ambitious editing and impressive layout, particularly during weekends (Mervola, 1995; Tarkka, 1994). Although the daily average number of arts pages increased from one, in 1960, to one and a half, in 1980 (Hurri, 1993), proper expansion of the section did not start until the 1980s, as Figure 1 shows. With the continuing growth lasting until the early 2000s, *Helsingin Sanomat* published, in 2003, in an average 3.2 pages of culture per day. Figure 2, in turn, depicts that, in correlation with the number of pages, the number of articles, too, continued its growth until 2003, after which the figure decreased slightly. The average length of the articles has come down almost consistently during the research period, reflecting the increased pressures to create more reader-friendly arts coverage. As for reviews, the reduction is even more dramatic. Since the late 1980s, the majority of them have been short commentaries of 30 to 60 lines, illustrating the trend towards the journalistic paradigm.

**Figure 1.** The average number of arts pages in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1978–2008



**Figure 2.** The number and length of articles in the arts pages of *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1978–2008



### *Newspaper redesigns*

During the last two decades, newspaper redesigns have essentially affected the arts pages of *Helsingin Sanomat*. Perhaps the most fundamental reform took place in 1989, the year marking the hundredth anniversary of *Helsingin Sanomat*. The paper was divided into four parts, A, B, C and D, and the opening page of each section was standardized but, at the same time, given more strength. The culture section was placed in part C, together with foreign news and sports. On weekends, culture was allowed to open the part. This emphasized the status of culture in the offerings of the paper and increased its attractiveness to the reader (cf. Kristensen and From, 2011) while also introduced new working habits for the journalists (Pulkkinen, 2008).

Importantly, this renewal forced the culture section to share the same grammar of layout as the rest of the paper, whereas earlier it had had liberties of its own. It also encouraged it to employ a more varied journalistic tool pack than before. At the same time, the special nature of the section was signalled by introducing separate ‘thematic’ pages, published on a regular basis, for book reviews, art reviews and record reviews. While the philosophy of the culture section was tuned towards the standard newsroom values and general readership, the thematic review pages were addressed to special-interest audiences. This exemplifies how the journalistic culture of the late 1980s tried to negotiate with the dual nature of the arts pages.

The redesign of 1995 included a major organizational reform and resulted in an expansion of the editorial staff and provision of the culture section. The film critics and TV reviewers of *Helsingin Sanomat*, working earlier in a separate department, joined now the culture department, thus encouraging the arts pages to broaden their popular arts coverage. Daily listing duties, too, were dramatically increased. Both changes aimed at increasing the service function and popular appeal of the arts pages. Similar changes took place in other Nordic countries at about the same time (Kristensen, 2010; Larsen, 2008).

In 2000, a set of new standard content elements were applied, which converged the

culture section further towards the general journalistic culture of *Helsingin Sanomat*. It was now, if not earlier, that the journalistic trend to split articles into several smaller pieces – one providing for the main story, another for the background story, and yet another for commentary – was adopted as the ‘house style’ of the paper. In 2005, the culture section was given a permanent place as the opener of the part C which was redesigned as a ‘softer’ features section, including persons, obituaries, listings and letters-to-the-editor, too. The latest redesign in November 2009 emphasized the feature character of the arts pages by highlighting the use of photographs and drawings in the layout. These adjustments appear to have consolidated the new journalistically-oriented values of arts reporting in *Helsingin Sanomat* and improved the position of the arts pages in the ranking of the organization.

### *Development project*

The journalistic management of *Helsingin Sanomat* had been speaking up for the shrinking of arts coverage already since the late 1990s. In the spring of 2004, the editor-in-chief initiated a development project that identified three problem areas considered to require reforms: (1) The *concept of the arts pages* was too formalistic and its provision too broad and unfocused; (2) The *working process* of the section was poorly organized, with too weak a news-orientation and the interests of the critics dominating the coverage too much; (3) The *newsroom hierarchy* of the culture department was too decentralized, allowing semi-independent decision-making by the specialized arts reporters.

As a result of the development project, the new concept of the arts pages was gradually introduced between 2005 and 2009. The number of arts pages was reduced slightly, as was shown above. The thematically specialized pages for book, gallery and record reviews, too, were given up. As the new culture editor since 2006 argued for the change:

Now it’s like everything is mixed up in one big tub. – – There are so many things happening, and as the rivalry for space on the arts pages got more intense, it turned out to be impossible to maintain protectorates for some of the arts only. This is a more fair and journalistic way of organizing things. (Pietiläinen, 2006: 4)

The arts coverage broke consciously away from the earlier philosophy of ‘full service’. The weekday provision was directed towards news orientation, whereas the weekend issues were tuned to provide ambitious features, larger interviews, commentaries and reviews.

The exceptional organization of the culture department was a result of its historical development, with new specialists having been recruited along with the rise in importance of new forms of arts. Demonstrating the autonomy of the department, it even had a separate editor-in-chief until 1982. Alongside the culture editor, it had since 1995 no less than three sub-editors, with slightly unclear responsibilities and lax division of labour. In 2006, a new organization, similar to other departments of the paper, was introduced, together with a culture editor and one sub-editor. In addition, a centralized editorial decision-making, as far as reviews are concerned, was applied.

Furthermore, staff journalists, about 25 in number, were more intensively engaged in the editorial routines of the culture newsroom, sharing the weekly shifts at the news desk, producing online news. Strict borderlines between the arts, created by specialization during the past decades, were relieved, and journalists were encouraged to cover the fields they were not that familiar with. Eventually, this undermined their specialized knowledge of the arts but aimed at improving their general journalistic skills, reflecting a general tendency in newsrooms to decrease the autonomy and specialization of individual

journalists (Meier, 2007; Nikunen, 2011; Phillips, 2010). Indeed, some of the journalists had thought that the earlier division of labour favoured highly specialized, experienced reporter-critics who had privileges the younger reporters could only dream of:

Most of the staff critics do not have to work in the news desk. – – The fact that there are different job profiles is one of the big problems and difficult to fix. – – For the spirit of the working community it would be more equal if all had similar profiles. – – But it's a kind of a historical relic here. (Culture reporter)

Partly, the shift in values is due to new recruits and the change of generation in the organization of the cultural department. By the early 2000s, most of the 'first generation' specialists, hired in the 1960s or 1970s, were able to retire. As journalistic competence had been favoured already in the recruitments of the 1980s and 1990s, the balance of expertise had gradually changed to favour newsroom skills. In other words, the shift from the aesthetic to the journalistic paradigm has also been a 'natural' one, with the substitutes 'automatically' representing new professional identity. On the other hand, this transition decreased the role of 'star critics' on the arts pages. For example, when the main film critic and reporter of *Helsingin Sanomat* retired in 2005, the paper decided not to recruit a replacement but employ a whole pool of critics, which, it was assumed, would better reflect the differentiated taste cultures.

The transition has also affected the role of freelancers. As Table 2 shows, in the sample of 2008 the freelancers provided no more than 25 percent of the articles on the arts pages while ten years earlier their provision had been 42 percent. At the same time, the staff journalists of the cultural department have provided an increasing share of the articles published. In 1983, almost three out of four opening articles of the arts pages were written by freelancers or experts outside the organization but, in 2008, not more than one in seven. Together with increased centralization of decision-making in the newsroom, this is a clear indication of the change towards the generalistic values of the journalistic paradigm at the cost of the aesthetic paradigm.

**Table 2.** Breakdown of culture articles by author/source in *Helsingin Sanomat* (%)

Author/source	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008	Average
Staff reporter/critic	24,1	31,9	27,1	30,6	25,0	30,6	37,6	29,8
HS (author not specified)	7,6	7,7	5,3	19,4	14,9	31,6	25,8	17,0
News agency	0,6	0,5	5,3	12,6	7,6	10,5	3,7	6,2
Freelancer	24,1	20,3	27,1	37,4	42,0	24,8	25,1	29,1
No byline*	43,5	39,6	35,1	0,0	10,4	2,4	7,7	17,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>N</i>	170	207	262	223	288	294	271	1,715

\* Until the 1990's, small pieces of news were not routinely bylined.

### New values, old assumptions

Two types of articles appear to dominate the arts pages. One is the news story, the characteristic genre of the journalistic paradigm, and the other is the review, the cornerstone of the aesthetic paradigm. In fact, the share of the pieces of news changed

only slightly, as Table 3 shows. Their average share over the research period is 39 percent, while the average share of reviews is 32 percent. Reflecting the opposite and interdependent character of these two genres, their variation seems to correlate negatively, i.e. when the share of the news increases, the share of the reviews tends to fall, and vice versa.

**Table 3.** Breakdown of culture articles by genre in *Helsingin Sanomat* (%)

Article genre	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008	Average
News item	40,6	33,3	34,3	36,0	42,4	45,9	37,3	38,5
Review	31,2	32,9	36,3	35,1	30,6	25,9	30,6	31,8
Other commentary	16,5	19,8	15,3	14,4	10,7	8,2	16,2	14,4
Profile, interview	0,6	2,4	5,7	9,9	6,9	8,2	5,9	5,7
Feature story	1,2	3,4	1,9	3,6	5,9	5,4	3,0	3,5
Other*	10,0	8,2	6,5	0,9	3,5	6,5	7,0	6,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>N</i>	170	207	262	223	288	294	271	1,715

\* Includes listings, events promotion and various info boxes.

In particular, the role of the review as an opening article has become marginalized. In 1983 and 1988 no less than 50 percent of the opening stories were reviews but, since the 1990s, this pole position has been assigned to feature articles, interviews and news stories, i.e. to more 'journalistic' genres. In 2008, one half of the opening articles represented the news genre. This is explained by the present culture editor:

My identity is journalistic, news-oriented. What we try is to operate a little less than before on the conditions of the cultural field and little more on the conditions of journalism. Similar to the other sections of the paper, we are in the search of the news. All in all, our aim is to provide a diverse image of culture, respect the role of high culture and traditional arts reviews but, at the same time, to demonstrate new phenomena. (Pietiläinen, 2006: 4)

The gradually increased ambition to approach the general newsroom values is also illustrated in the multitude of journalistic genres employed on the arts pages. The article type variety, as measured by the Relative Entropy Index ( $H_{rel}$ ), grew almost consistently from 0.73 points in 1978 to 0.84 points in 2008.<sup>3</sup> This depicts a consistent tendency to broaden the journalistic repertoire of arts reporting. In addition to pieces of news and reviews, also profiles and interviews, feature stories and commentaries were increasingly used, reflecting an ongoing change in the ideology of cultural journalism.

Although the aesthetic and the journalistic paradigm are here presented as opposites, in the everyday life of the culture department their values are mixed and employed side by side. Typically, cultural journalists favour balancing between paradigms. Moreover, it is often admitted that the arts pages would not be arts pages if the reviews were dropped out:

I couldn't imagine the arts pages without the reviews. However, it would be possible to design a culture section without the news, depending on the readership of the paper. The world is full of newspapers with the arts pages

focusing solely on opinionated writing. You know, long commentaries, well-informed critics, et cetera. (Culture editor)

In this thinking, reviews serve as the 'hard core' of the arts pages while cultural journalism also requires newsroom skills, thus combining two opposite competencies. What is at stake in the value transition of cultural journalism is the gradual shift of focus towards the journalistic paradigm, which, in the case of *Helsingin Sanomat*, appeared to take place as a deliberate 'development project' initiated by the editor-in-chief.

Because the journalistic paradigm has not been unanimously accepted by the culture department, the requirement to provide more news items has caused contradictions between the strategic and operative management of the paper. The operative management of the culture department felt that increased news coverage would compromise the space allotted to reviews. The strategic management of the paper, in turn, considered that fixed formats such as thematic review pages prevented journalists to react flexibly to upcoming events and served their limited readership 'too well'.

### *Readiness to change*

The cultural journalists themselves acknowledged their own lack of curiosity in seeking news items and deemed it a problem. In an internal seminar in April 2004, the staff journalists of the culture department created lists of their strengths and weaknesses, with the weaknesses including rigidity of news work, vagueness of news values and major gaps in news coverage. For example, it was noticed that specialized reporters do not always recognize news items or that they tended to 'protect' their own fields from bad news. In general, the staff writers agreed that a more proactive approach to issues should be espoused. The expressed values appeared to coincide with the pressures to adopt the journalistic paradigm.

At the same time, the cultural journalists felt that, as a result of the various redesigns, the arts pages had already converged towards the 'general journalistic goals' of *Helsingin Sanomat*, invigorating its contacts with the journalists from other departments, too.

The attitude towards the culture section has changed dramatically. I remember when arts reporters were considered snobs and eccentrics. I don't know if it's good or bad but we have been normalized. Earlier, we used to be a section that provides sophisticated but snobbish reviews, you know --. But now we have started to write in a more reader-friendly way -- and that I find extremely positive. We can't isolate and write some abracadabra that no one understands. (Theatre critic and reporter)

However, signifying that the paradigm shift is not yet complete, the interviews underline that the arts pages should still focus on artists and artistic products, instead of, for example, cultural policy:

In the last instance, the only real news item in culture is that an artist has accomplished something worthwhile. In other words, an artist has done his job. And when he has completed something it is reasonable and fair to review it. (Literature editor)

The interviews suggest that reviewing is still considered the core duty of the arts pages:

It is often claimed that the news of the day make the topical issues of the day. But for us it is clear that it is the review of a motivating book, a theatre play, a gallery exhibition or a concert that provide the readers the topics of the day. (Culture sub-editor)

Our analysis shows that the confrontation of the aesthetic and the journalistic paradigm caused identity problems to the arts journalists of *Helsingin Sanomat*. On the one hand, the obligation of news orientation was acknowledged. On the other hand, the journalists were afraid that if the values promoted by the journalistic paradigm were completely acquired, something essential of cultural journalism would be missed. It is possible that this is an expression of a fundamental professional self-identity of arts journalists, resistant to change: the subjective assessment, needed in the valuation of works of art, is felt alien to news work.

In conclusion, we can say that the arts journalists have approached the normative centre of the mainstream ideology of journalism and this way eventually gained a more respected status in the field of journalism. To a large extent, the paradigm shift has been carried out as a consequence of the generational change, with new recruits contributing to the accomplishment of the new journalistically-oriented values. Although it is evident that some of the interviewees exaggerate their readiness to espouse the journalistic paradigm, articulating a tendency of professional self-legitimation, it is obvious that, little by little, the expressed values will turn into internalized assumptions and work practices.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of our analysis, the cultural pages of *Helsingin Sanomat* demonstrate an increasing tendency of arts journalism to lean on the journalistic paradigm instead of the traditional aesthetic paradigm both at the level of organizational structures, explicitly argued values and implicit assumptions. Whereas the culture department used to be a relatively self-directed unit, differing in many ways from other sections, it has now been subordinated to the strategic management of the newspaper and the general standards of news journalism.

The content analysis confirmed that genres typical of the journalistic paradigm have increasingly gained ground, whereas the interviews illustrated the ambiguity typical of a transition period: new values were being accepted in the organization of work but old axioms still lurked deep in the minds of the journalists. Observation and documentary analysis confirmed that the new working practices have been introduced but are only partially accepted. In spite of the transition, the balance between the two paradigms, the aesthetic and the journalistic, is still respected as an ideal of 'good' cultural journalism.

The external push towards the values of news journalism, as promoted by the strategic management, brings about both positive and negative consequences. While the reformed cultural journalism, employing standard journalistic methods, such as interviews and feature stories, and news values, such as significance, scale and nearness, may invite new readers to take an interest in arts, it may also result in abandoning the traditional cultural news criterion of 'good quality'. This would question the distinctive basis of the traditional arts journalism and end up alienating the readership deeply engaged in arts and culture. Thus, gaining new readers can risk the established constituency. Moreover, targeting the general audience shows contempt for the fact that the audience demand in today's cultural scene is becoming increasingly specialized.

It is also possible that denying the weight of expertise causes a decline in the status of cultural journalists. Although their close ties to various cultural fields can be claimed to compromise their independence, it is also true that cutting these ties completely may risk their legitimacy both in the eyes of the art world and the eyes of the readers. After all, the source of the authority of reviewers lies in their engagement with the cultural field. In particular, the freelancers are increasingly dependent on the commissions of the culture

editors and subject to their requirements concerning even the angle of their articles. However, similar tendencies towards 'de-specialization' and decreased autonomy have been discovered in other fields of journalism, too.

These developments illustrated by our case study are parallel to the general decline of expertise and legitimacy of established institutions as promoted by broader socio-cultural transitions (Bauman, 1987). Marketization of the institutional media industry has caused general homogenization of the press towards the liberal model, typical of the Anglo-American media (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Traditional barriers between high culture and popular culture have been torn down (Danto, 1981). The distinguished taste of the cultural elite of yesterday is today replaced by cultural omnivorousness (Peterson and Kern, 1996). The fields of arts have expanded and diversified the legitimate ways of doing art and the artistic field, as many other specialized fields in society, is undergoing processes of professionalization and mediatization (Hjarvard, 2008; Kristensen and From, 2011).

Our analysis has been severely restricted while focusing on one country and one newspaper only. A case study, however, can deliver in-depth information about the underlying principles in cultural journalism as well as form the basis for following inquiries. Although our results cannot be generalized we claim that our observations are indicative of the pressures directed at arts journalists to change and to react to the crisis of journalism. There are signs that more 'economical' ways of producing journalism are under development, for example by co-producing and sharing content between several newspapers. A focal question is what happens to the public representation of arts if the artistic field is increasingly approached with emphasis on economic instead of cultural capital.

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors wish to thank the referees of *Journalism* for their helpful comments on the structure of the earlier version of this text.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> 'Helsingin Sanomat on kulttuurilehti' [Helsingin Sanomat is a cultural newspaper] (advertisement), *Helsingin Sanomat*, October 10, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> The sample weeks were 7 and 43. Altogether the sample included 98 newspaper issues and 1,715 articles.

<sup>3</sup> The Relative Entropy Index is a widely used measure of variety. It expresses how varied and balanced the distribution of content categories is. The higher the figure, the higher the variety. Relative entropy varies between 0 and 1, with 0 expressing minimum variety (all content in one category) and 1 expressing maximum variety (all categories equally large). To read more about the measure see, for example, Hellman (2001) and McDonald and Dimmick (2003).



## References

- Apunen M (2009) Kulttuurijournalismin muistolle [Cultural journalism in memoriam]. *Aamulehti*, 22 March: A 2.
- Bauman Z (1987) *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bech-Karlsen J (1991) *Kulturjournalistikk: Avkobling eller tillkobling?* [Cultural journalism: Attachment or detachment?]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Born G (2004) *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC*. London: Secker & Warburg.
- Bourdieu P (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Arts and Literature*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bromley M (1997) The End of Journalism? Changes in Workplace Practices in the Press and Broadcasting in the 1990s. In: Bromley M, O'Malley T (eds) *A Journalism Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Danto AC (1981) *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deuze M (2005) What Is Journalism? Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists Reconsidered. *Journalism* 6(4): 442–64.
- Deuze M (2007) *Media Work*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Elvestad E, Blekesaune A (2008) Newspaper Readers in Europe: A Multilevel Study of Individual and National Differences. *European Journal of Communication* 23(4): 425–47.
- Fenton N (2010) (ed) *New Media, Old News*. London: Sage.
- Forde E (2003) 'Journalists with a Difference': Producing Music Journalism. In: Cottle S (ed) *Media Organization and Production*. London: Sage, 113–30.
- Golin C, Cardoso E (2009) Cultural Journalists in Brazil: Academic Research, Visibility, Mediation and News Values. *Journalism* 10(1): 69–89.
- Hallin DC, Mancini P (2004) *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Harries G, Wahl-Jorgensen K (2007) The Culture of Arts Journalists: Elitists, Saviors, or Manic Depressives? *Journalism* 8(6): 619–39.
- Hellman H (2001) Diversity – An End in Itself? Developing a Multi-measure Methodology of Television Programme Variety Studies. *European Journal of Communication* 16(2), 181–208.
- Hjarvard S (2008) The Mediatization of Society: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change. *Nordicom Review* 29(2): 105–34.
- Hovden JF, Knapskog KA (2008) Kulturjournalistikken i det norske journalistiske feltet [Cultural journalism in the Norwegian journalistic field]. In: Knapskog K, Larsen LO (eds) *Kulturjournalistikk: Pressen og den kulturelle offentligheten*. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 51–77.
- Hurri M (1993) *Kulttuuriosasto: Symboliset taistelut, sukupolvikonflikti ja sananvapaus viiden pääkaupunkilehden kulttuuritoimituksissa 1945–80* [Culture section: Symbolic struggles, generation conflict and freedom of speech in five capital newspapers, 1945–1980]. Acta Universitatis Tamperensis ser. A vol. 389. Tampere: University of Tampere.

- Jaakkola M (2005) *Vainuaako opaskoira uutisen? Helsingin Sanomien kulttuuriosaston uutiskulttuurin etnografista tarkastelua organisaatioteoreettisesta näkökulmasta* [Does the guide dog scent the news? An ethnographic analysis of the newsroom culture of the Helsingin Sanomat cultural department]. Master's thesis in mass communication. Tampere: University of Tampere.
- Jones S (ed) (2002) *Popular Music and the Press*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Keränen E (1984) *Muuttuva työnkuva: Toimitustyön differentioitumiskehitys Suomen sanomalehdistössä* [Work in transition: Differentiation of newswork in the Finnish press]. Publication Series of the Project on the History of Finland's Press 24. Helsinki: SSLH.
- Klein B (2005) Dancing About Architecture: Popular Music Criticism and the Negotiation of Authority. *Popular Communication* 3(1): 1–20.
- Klemola P (1981) *Helsingin Sanomat – sananvapauden monopoli* [Helsingin Sanomat – the monopoly of free speech]. Helsinki: Otava.
- Knapskog K, Larsen LO (eds) *Kulturjournalistikk: Pressen og den kulturelle offentligheten* [Cultural journalism: The press and the cultural public sphere]. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press.
- Korsström T (2009) Kultursidan – en plats för tanken? [Culture page – a site for thought?]. *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 1 March. Available at: <http://www.hbl.fi/text/kultur/2009/3/1/d24150.php>
- Kristensen NN (2010) The Historical Transformation of Cultural Journalism. *Northern Lights* 8(1): 69–92.
- Kristensen NN, From U (2011) *Kulturjournalistik: Journalistik om kultur* [Cultural journalism: Journalism on culture]. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.
- Larsen LO (2008) Forskyvninger: Kulturdekningen i norske dagsaviser 1964–2005 [Displacements: Cultural coverage in Norwegian newspapers, 1964–2005]. In: Knapskog K, Larsen LO (eds) *Kulturjournalistikk: Pressen og den kulturelle offentligheten*. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 283–329.
- Lund CW (2005) *Kritikk og kommers* [Criticism and commerce]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Luukka T (2007) Taidemaailmassa eniten valtaa on HS:llä ja opetusministeriöllä [Helsingin Sanomat and Ministry of Education most powerful in the art world]. *Helsingin Sanomat*, 15 March: C 1.
- Martin J (1992) *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- McDonald DG, Dimmick J (2003) The Conceptualization and Measurement of Diversity. *Communication Research* 30(1), 60–79.
- Meier K (2007) Innovations in Central European Newsrooms: Overview and Case Study. *Journalism Practice* 1(1), 4–19.
- Mervola P (1995) *Kirja, kirjavampi, sanomalehti: Ulkoasukierre ja suomalaisten sanomalehtien ulkoasu 1771–1994* [The appearance spiral and the outward appearance of newspapers in Finland, 1771–1994]. Bibliotheca Historica 1/Jyväskylä Studies in Communication 1. Helsinki and Jyväskylä: Historical Society of Finland and University of Jyväskylä.
- Nikunen K (2011) *Enemmän vähemmällä: Laman ja teknologisen murroksen vaikutukset suomalaisissa toimituksissa 2009–2010* [More with less: Impact of economic recession and technological change on Finnish newsrooms]. Tampere: Journalism Research and

Development Centre and School of Communication, Media and Theatre. Available at: [http://tampub.uta.fi/E/enemman\\_vahemmalla\\_2011.pdf](http://tampub.uta.fi/E/enemman_vahemmalla_2011.pdf)

Nordicom (2010) Newspaper Circulation Drops in the Nordic Countries. *Nordic Media Policy Newsletter* (2): 17–18.

Peterson R, Kern RM (1996) Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore. *American Sociological Review* 61(5): 900–907.

Phillips A (2010) Old Sources, New Bottles. In: Fenton N (ed) *New Media, Old News: Journalism & Democracy in the Digital Age*. London: Sage, 87–101.

Pietiläinen J (2006) Andyn leegot ja muita kulttuurijuttuja: Helsingin Sanomien kulttuuritoimituksessa etsitään uutista ja uutta näkökulmaa [The Helsingin Sanomat culture department in search for news and new perspectives]. *MediaHesa* (4): 3–4.

Picard R (2003) Media Economics, Content and Diversity: Primary Results from a Finnish Study. In: Hovi-Wasastjerna P (ed) *Media Culture Research Programme*. Publication Series A 38. Helsinki: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 107–20.

Pulkkinen H (2008) *Uutisten arkkitehtuuri: Sanomalehden ulkoasun rakenteiden järjestys ja jousto* [The architecture of news: Order and flexibility of newspaper design structures]. Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities 88. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.

Reus G, Harden L (2005) Politische "Kultur": Eine Längsschnittanalyse des Zeitungsfeuilletons von 1983 bis 2003 [Political 'Culture': A longitudinal analysis of culture pages, 1983–2003]. *Publizistik* 50(2): 153–72.

Reus G, Schneider B, and Schönbach K (1995) Paradiesvögel in der Medienlandschaft? Kulturjournalisten – wer sie sind, was sie tun und wie sie denken [Birds of paradise in media landscape? Cultural journalists – who they are, what they do and how they think]. In: Becker P, Edler A, and Schneider B (eds) *Zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst: Festgabe für Richard Jakob*. Mainz: Schott, 307–27.

Schein EH (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schmutz V, van Venrooij A, Janssen S, and Verboord M (2010) Change and Continuity in Newspaper Coverage of Popular Music since 1955: Evidence from the United States, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. *Popular Music and Society* 33(4), 501–15.

Schudson M (2003) *The Sociology of News*. New York: Norton.

Sparks C, Tulloch J (2000) *Tabloid Tales: Global Debates over Media Standards*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Tarkka P (1994 [1984]) Kun kulttuuriosasto kasvoi isoksi [When culture department grew big]. In: Tarkka P (ed) *Lause lauseesta: Arvosteluja ja kirjoituksia 1984–1994*. Helsinki: Otava, 24–30.

Tuchman G (1978) *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

Tyndall A (2004) The Dailies: Old Formats, New Challenges. In: Szántó A, Levy D, and Tyndall A (eds) *Reporting the Arts II: News Coverage of Arts and Culture in America*. New York: National Arts Journalism Program, Columbia University, 24–35.