Meedia raamid keeruliste ühiskondlike nähtuste kajastamisel päevalehtedes: ühiskondliku kokkuleppe käsitlemine ajalehtedes Eesti Päevaleht ja Postimees

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Description: There are several essential tasks to implement social functions in addition to the informative function of mass media; for example creating publicity, framing social activity or intellectual environment of society or offering ground to criticise independently and profoundly society or the government. On the other hand, society itself limits media through its values and beliefs by reflecting the attitudes transmitted to the auditorium as a result of media framing. A process of recurrent representation forms frames with same themes, aspects and sources being highlighted more than the others, resulting in construction a one-sided, even simplified vision. Therefore, the treatment of such complicated social phenomena like social/public agreement, which concerns different subjects on different stages, consists of main and subdocuments as well as includes different social groups, in mass media may result in suppressing public debate between concerned parties due to simplified frames of media. The purpose of current research is to examine how the nation-wide Estonian daily newspapers – Eesti Päevaleht and Postimees framed social/public agreement during the period of 2001 to 2004. The author aims to find an answer to the question of how the daily newspapers presented the phenomenon of social/public agreement as a talking-point; how the daily newspapers contextualised the agreement and what subject matters were made news-worthy in the process of representation. The author chose integrated textual analysis to conduct the research. The sample consists of 147 articles concerning social/public agreement published in Eesti Päevaleht and Postimees during the period of 23.02.2001 – 22.11.2004. Empiric analysis showed that major nation-wide Estonian daily newspapers presented the subject matter of social/public agreement as a talking-point mainly in year 2003, emphasizing the importance of the subject matter especially during that year by
preoccupying the public attention through measures such as reference on the front page, recurrent presentation of key-words in essential parts of the article, placement within the issue etc. The subject matter was mainly expressed in feature articles, less in special topic news stories. The authors of feature articles were mainly journalists and politicians, whereby several politicians were introduced rather as opinion leaders than politicians. Different politicians were most frequently quoted and paraphrased as spokespersons. The analysis of photographs presented along with the piece of writing, showed that while in Eesti Päevaleht entrepreneurs were most frequently imaged in connection with the subject matter of social/public agreement, in Postimees the photos of coalition politicians were most frequently used. One of the conclusion of current research is that the major Estonian daily newspapers presented the subject matter of social/public agreement as a talking-point mainly in year 2003 by contextualizing politicians (several of which were presented as opinion leaders) and experts as important parties of the agreement. The analysis identified two differences while forming the topic: while Eesti Päevaleht positioned the subject matter of social/public agreement as primary or secondary, Postimees positioned the subject matter mainly as secondary or insignificant. The second difference applied to the selection of photo materials used to illustrate the subject matter: while in Eesti Päevaleht photographs of entrepreneurs were dominant, in Postimees the photos of politicians were most frequently used. Several additional subject matters and various concerned parties emerged in connection with the representation of social/public agreement. While in 2001 the economic growth was raised as the main goal of social/public agreement, in 2002 economic aspects were receded into background and a need for public and social discussion emerged in turn. Politicians and citizens were represented as concerned parties. In 2003, four issues emerged in the process of representation, the central issue being the content and text related matters of social/public agreement. Politicians were presented as concerned parties and journalists, politicians and persons connected with the development of the agreement were presented as spokespersons. The second important issue appeared to be the treatment of social/public agreement as a mechanism guaranteeing the continuance of the Estonian state and government. Politicians and citizens were presented as concerned parties, experts were presented as spokespersons. The third issue dealt with contradictions between the authors of social/public agreement and the critics. Politicians, among them Estonian President Rüütel, were presented as concerned parties; journalists, politicians and initiators of the agreement were presented as spokespersons. The fourth issue was the deadline of social/public agreement. Journalists, politicians and authors of the agreement were presented as spokespersons. In all the articles concerning the deadline of the agreement president Rüütel was presented as the concerned party. The main statement in 2004 was that of Estonia should change course towards becoming a knowledge based society for it is possible to reduce social inequality only through high quality education. Citizens and the government were represented as concerned parties. The largest number of articles with negatively toned headings was published in 2003. It also became obvious that the authors’ attitude towards the agreement changed in 2003, becoming more critical than it had been in the years of 2001 and 2002. The second conclusion of current research is that the noticeable accentuation of the phenomenon of social/public
agreement in 2003 lead to changes in subject matters connected to the agreement. Instead of continuing the analytical discussion that began in 2002, it appeared that the spokespersons concentrated mainly on defining single aspects of the agreement. The analytical discussion was suddenly left out of the debate of public sphere. The analysis also showed that with every covered issue, politicians were always presented as concerned parties, being at the same time one of the most prominent group of spokespersons. Proceeding form the above mentioned the general conclusion of current Bachelor’s thesis is that Estonian nation-wide daily newspapers attached value and newsworthiness in representing the social/public agreement to single aspects of the agreement, and receded the analytical discussion to the background, by framing the subject matters of the agreement through the point of view and purposes (approaching elections, Euro referendum etc) of political elite. Since only one group’s – politicians – reality was constructed, it is possible to conclude that we are dealing with “public sphere constructed by media (Schultz 1997). The author concludes by stating that Estonian daily newspapers did not implement the functions of public forum (Bourdieu 2003), because instead of including as many groups as possible into the discussion, single concerned groups competed in defining their messages.

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