Author byline (Culture Coverage)

AUTHOR
Maarit Jaakkola

KEYWORDS
cultural coverage, cultural journalism, authorship, freelancers, outsourced production

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIABLE
This variable describes the employment basis that the writers of the articles represent. It distinguishes between staff writers, representing in-house newsroom production, and freelancer-based writers, representing outsourced production. It also examines the shares of non-signed and news agency material, as well as material produced by the audience, whenever it is placed on culture pages. These are the major production instances for cultural coverage. Tracing their development across time delivers information on the strategic and economic shifts, reflected in the use of non-specialized writers (journalists from other departments and outsourced production).

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION
As debates on the state of cultural journalism and the anatomy of cultural coverage are often centered around the volume of reviews, this variable delivers more detailed information about the production structures of the articles. Commissioning freelancers is specifically characteristic of cultural coverage; in cultural journalism, external authors are used more than in any other form of journalism. Through the variable, it can be examined to which extent the freelancer networks are being used for cultural coverage. Another prevalent question for cultural coverage is the extent of news agency material, or “churnalism” (Kristensen, 2018), which strengthens the ties of cultural coverage to cultural industry and, as an indication of less critical distance, is regarded as non-preferable.

REFERENCES/COMBINATION WITH OTHER METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
In coding the variable, the author name indicated in the byline is recorded. The variable typically needs background research for determining individual authors’ employment contracts, which may also vary from time to time. For distinguishing between specialized staff journalists, general staff journalists, and freelancer journalists, the researcher may utilize newsroom superiors as informants, as well as the authors themselves. When cross-tabulated with other variables, the variable provides useful information on how freelancer production has developed in time with regard to cultural forms, genres, and gender.

SAMPLE OPERATIONALIZATION
The author byline is operationalized as follows: see Table 1

Table 1. Operationalization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialized staff journalist</td>
<td>Cultural journalist: salary-based staff journalist in the culture department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## EXAMPLE STUDY
Jaakkola (2015)

### INFORMATION ABOUT JAAKKOLA, 2015

**Author:** Maarit Jaakkola  
**Research question/research interest:** Representation of the author bylines according to the work contract of the journalists on culture pages of daily newspapers across time, to expose the production structure  
**Object of analysis:** Articles/text items on culture pages of five major daily newspapers in Finland 1978–2008 (Aamulehti, Helsingin Sanomat, Kaleva, Savon Sanomat, Turun Sanomat)  

### INFO ABOUT VARIABLE

**Variable name/definition:** Author  
**Unit of analysis:** Article  
**Values:** 1 = specialized staff journalist, 2= general staff journalist, 3 = freelancer journalist, 4 = newsroom signature, 5 = news agency, 6 = member of the audience, 7 = not recognizable  
**Scale:** nominal  
**Intercoder reliability:** Cohen’s kappa > 0.76 (two coders)

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### REFERENCES

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General staff journalist</td>
<td>Other journalist: salary-based staff journalist in a department other than culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelancer journalist</td>
<td>Outsourced production: writer separately commissioned for the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsroom signature</td>
<td>Byline referring to the newspaper in question, leaving the writer anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News agency</td>
<td>Name of the news agency (AFP, AP, Reuters, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of audience</td>
<td>A reader, non-journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not recognizable</td>
<td>Producer of the text unknown, not signed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>