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# Editorial preface

**EVA MAYERHÖFFER**  
Roskilde University

We are happy to introduce the 2024 issue of Journalistica.

This year's issue includes a special section on "News Media and Elections in the Nordic Countries", zooming in on the role of the media in the latest national elections in Sweden and Denmark in 2022. The two guest editors will introduce the section and its articles in full detail on the following pages.

The 2024 issue also includes four open-themed articles. In the Danish-language article "Hvad er vinklen: En kortlægning og diskussion af vinkelbegrebets flertydighed i danske journalistiske lærebøger [What's the angle? A mapping and discussion of the ambiguity of the term 'angle' in Danish journalism textbooks]", **Christina Pontoppidan** identifies four different definitions of a news angle that, taken together, capture the versatility of journalistic activities and reflections in working out the angle of a story. The article suggests embracing rather than working against the ambiguity of the term and derives a new, broad definition of angle.

The article "The role of news content on Danish broadcasters' streaming services: A longitudinal content analysis of two video-on-demand services", written by **Lucia Cores-Sarría**, **Mads Møller Tommerup Andersen** and **Lene Heiselberg**, investigates the curation and platformization of news on the video-on-demand services of two Danish broadcasters, DRTV and TV 2 Play. The authors argue that both BVOD services follow a positive trend in their treatment of news, which may give them a competitive edge against other streaming services that focus on other genres than news.

The Danish-language article "Ekspertkilder i dansk klimajournalistik: 'Partseksperter' og aktivisme i klimajournalistikken [Expert sources in Danish climate journalism: 'Partisan sources' and activism in climate journalism]", by **Kresten Roland Johansen** and **Jakob Dybro Johansen**, shows that climate journalism largely gives voice and authority to "experts with an agenda", above all think tank representatives, which appear in the role of expert without having to legitimize their own status as an expert through new knowledge. Finally, the Danish-language article "Den journalistiske professions

rolle i organisationers interne kommunikation [The journalistic profession's role in organizations internal communication]", by **Helle Tougaard** and **Vibeke Thøis Madsen**, examines how journalists that work with internal communication in organizations can apply (or fail to apply) their journalistic self-perception and skills in the role of internal communicator.

The 2024 issue furthermore includes two method briefs that further consolidate the successful introduction of the Journalistica Methods Sections. **Miriam Kroman Brems** and **Cecilia Arregui Olivera** present an integrated guide to thematic analysis, and **Franческа Moroni** discusses how Value-Sensitive Design, a method from Human-Computer-Interaction, can be fruitfully applied in journalism studies. Many of your method briefs are also unfolded through podcasts, which can now be easily accessed through the journal website: <https://tidsskrift.dk/journalistica/podcast>.

Finally, the 2024 edition includes two book reviews: **Henrik Bødker** reviews the book *Journalistic Autonomy: The Genealogy of a Concept* (2022) by Henrik Örnebring and Michael Karlsson, while **Ulrika Hedman** reviews the Danish-language book *Nyhedsjournalistens Metoder* [The Methods of the News Journalist] (2024), edited by Mads Kæmsgaard Eberholst and Maria Bendix Wittchen.

2024 has also seen some changes in Journalistica's editorial group. A big thanks to Tina Askanius, who has supported the journal as Nordic associate editor since its relaunch as a Nordic-oriented journal in 2019. Tina will now step down from this role to focus on her work with the Nordic Journal of Media Studies. At the same time, Journalistica has welcomed Miriam Kroman Brems and Cecilia Arregui Olivera from Aarhus University as new members of the editorial group. Moreover, Journalistica is excited to welcome its first Finnish editorial member, as Maarit Jaakola from Gothenburg University will join the group in the new year. And finally, Leif Hemming Pedersen will continue to support the journal's daily organization in a new role as journal manager.

Last but not least, Journalistica will go on Christmas holidays with very good news and exciting plans for the next year. The Danish Dagspressens Fond has granted Journalistica financial support to create an award for the best master thesis in journalism studies in each academic year. In a first step, the award can be sought by journalism students from Danish educational institutions. The award recipients will not only receive a cash prize but also be given the opportunity to re-work their master thesis into a short article published by Journalistica. With the award, Journalistica hopes to make the many timely and relevant research findings "hidden" in master theses more accessible to the public, journalism research, and the news media industry.



A big thanks to all our contributors, readers, and reviewers. A special thanks to Lene, Miriam and Cecilia for their work with the methods brief, to Steffen for his work with the Journalistica podcast, and to Aske for organizing the book reviews.

God læselyst!

On behalf of the Journalistica group of editors,

Eva Mayerhöffer, editor-in-chief

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# News media and elections in the Nordic countries

## Introduction to special issue

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This special issue was inspired by the fact that across the Nordic countries, new parties, new political issues and a recent pandemic had been the order of the day in the most recent national elections that took place in Sweden and Denmark in 2022. Both election campaigns were also conducted in the shadow of Russia's war on Ukraine. In both countries some of the same issues such as climate change, crime, energy and immigration policies played significant roles in the public debate and in the election campaigns. Likewise, in both countries, the interaction between legacy news media, alternative media and social media, as well as the interaction between the media agenda, the public agenda and the political agenda have been heavily debated. Against this background, we invited scholars to send in articles that focus on the role of journalistic news media in recent elections.

We accepted four articles that are jointly published in this special issue of *Journalistica*, two from Sweden and two from Denmark. The four articles together focus on four different and timely aspects of elections coverage: the role of alternative news media, the role of social media, political parties' relation to news media elections coverage and the role of the news media in the battle for issue ownership between political parties.

Thus, the article by **Johansson & Strömbäck** focus on how, in contemporary media environments, mainstream news media have become increasingly challenged by so-called political alternative media. The article compares election news coverage in political alternative media with mainstream news media, drawing theoretically on theories related to mediatization and structural bias on the one hand, and politicization and political bias on the other. Empirically,

the article investigates how election coverage in left- and right-wing political alternative and mainstream media differ in relation to traditional news media and to each other. The findings of the article suggest that alternative political media *do* function as an alternative to mainstream news media, but also to each other. In this way they offer a more politicized coverage of election campaigns.

The article by **Severin-Nielsen** addresses another recurring question in political campaigns, namely the role of social media. The focus of the article is to shed further light on politicians' campaign practices in a hybrid communication environment, and whether the introduction of social media has introduced new dynamics into election campaigns. The study does so through a case study of Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen (Social Democratic party) and opposition party leader Alex Vanopslagh's (Liberal Alliance party) social media campaigns and online news presence during the 2022 national election. The study finds that Frederiksen was more visible in the news during the election than Vanopslagh, but that social media was central in both campaigns. However, Vanopslagh received exposure on a broader set of social media and to a greater extent capitalized on the platform affordances, than Frederiksen.

The study by **Brolin and Nord** changes the focus from media to political parties. Thus, the study explores the perspectives of political parties regarding news media coverage in election campaigns. By analyzing official post-election analyses produced by Swedish political parties from 2010 to 2022, the study offers a novel approach to the study of political party views of news media. The findings largely support the arguments proposed by mediatization literature, highlighting the significance of media in party communication. Parties display eagerness to attract positive media attention while expressing regret over inadequate or negative publicity. More surprisingly, there is a lack of references to media bias in the reports, suggesting that the hostile media effect is not a major concern among Swedish parties.

The final article by **Blach-Ørsten and Eberholst** focus on the role of news media in the political parties' battle for ownership of the most salient issues in an election campaign. In multi-party systems like the Nordic countries, battle for issue ownership is especially fierce. The study contributes to election research by exploring party-issue linkage as an indicator of issue ownership for both political parties and political leaders in the two most recent national Danish national elections. Based on a large-scale content analysis of leading Danish news media, and using descriptive statistics, they find a clear shift in media salience of political issues from 2019 to 2022. This shift leads to changes in party-issue linkage for both political parties and specific political leaders, especially regarding the most salient issues

of the elections like climate and the environment and health and eldercare.

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# Alternative election news coverage?

## Comparing election news in political alternative and mainstream media during the 2022 Swedish election campaign

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### Abstract

In contemporary media environments, mainstream news media have become increasingly challenged by political alternative media. Even though research on how political alternative media cover politics and society has increased, there is still limited research comparing how political alternative media and mainstream news media cover key political events, such as election campaigns. To fill this gap, the purpose of this study is to compare election news coverage in political alternative and mainstream news media, drawing theoretically on theories related to mediatization and structural bias on the one hand, and politicization and political bias on the other. Empirically, the overarching research question is how election coverage in left- and right-wing political alternative and mainstream media differs. Findings suggest that political alternative media do function as an alternative to mainstream news media in that they offer more politicized coverage of election campaigns. However, left-wing, and right-wing political alternative media also constitute alternatives to each other in how the election campaigns are covered.

### KEYWORDS

political alternative media, election news coverage, politicization, political bias, mediatization, structural bias

## Introduction

During the last decade, mainstream news media have become increasingly challenged by what is variously referred to as political alternative media or (hyper)partisan media (Bauer et al., 2022; Brems, 2023; Newman et al., 2018; Rae, 2021). Although difficult to define precisely (Bauer et al., 2022; Rauch, 2016), in brief, political alternative media refer to media that have political agendas and that “represent a proclaimed and/or (self-) perceived corrective, opposing the overall tendency of public discourse emanating from what is perceived as the dominant mainstream media” (Holt et al., 2019, p. 862). As such correctives, they may seek to complement and to challenge mainstream news media, in terms of what they cover and how they cover it (Holt et al., 2019). They are also often critical toward mainstream news media (Cushion et al., 2021; Figenschou & Ihlebaek, 2021; Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019). At the same time, research suggests that they may adapt to some conventions and forms of traditional news as means to gain journalistic legitimacy (Ekman & Widholm, 2022; Nygaard, 2019). Thus, an important aspect of political alternative media is that they challenge the boundaries separating political alternative media from mainstream media (Carlson, 2017; Mayerhöffer, 2021; Nygaard, 2020, 2021).

At the same time, neither mainstream news media nor political alternative media are monoliths. There may be important differences not only between mainstream news media and political alternative media, but also between different media within each type. For example, research has shown significant differences between tabloids and broadsheets and between public service and commercial news (Aalberg & Curran, 2012; de Vreese et al., 2017), and with respect to political alternative media, a key difference is between those leaning to the left and the right, as well as between those who are more or less opposed to the mainstream (Cushion, 2024; Freudenthaler & Wessler, 2022; Klawier et al., 2022; McDowell-Naylor et al., 2023).

Due to the increasing prominence of political alternative media, in recent years, research on how political alternative media cover politics and society has increased significantly (e.g., Buyens & Van Aelst, 2022; Klawier et al., 2022; Mayerhöffer, 2021; McDowell-Naylor et al., 2023; Müller & Freudenthaler, 2022). With some exceptions, there is however still limited knowledge about how mainstream news media and political alternative media cover the key political event that election campaigns constitute (but see e.g., McDowell-Naylor et al., 2022).

To help remedy this, the purpose of this exploratory study is to compare the election coverage in political alternative and

mainstream news media. Theoretically, we will draw on theories related to mediatization and structural bias on the one hand and politicization and political bias on the other. Empirically, the overarching research question we will investigate is how the election coverage in left- and right-wing political alternative and mainstream media differ, while analytically, we will analyze whether their election coverage is better explained by theories related to mediatization and structural bias or politicization and political bias. Empirically, we will focus on the media coverage of the 2022 Swedish election campaign in left-wing alternative media (*ETC*), right-wing alternative media (*Nyheter Idag*), national morning newspapers (*Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*), and national tabloids (*Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*).

### **Conceptualizing political alternative media: a relation approach**

As noted above, a defining feature of alternative media in general is that they represent a “corrective” (Holt et al., 2019, p. 862) of mainstream news media in a given context. Political alternative media, in turn, constitute a subset of alternative media, and can be defined by being driven by some kind of political or ideological values and agendas (Strömbäck, 2023). Sometimes these are also labeled (hyper)partisan media (e.g., Freudenthaler & Wessler, 2022; Rae, 2021).

Political alternative media hence need to be understood *in relation to* mainstream news media (Brems, 2023; Freudenthaler & Wessler, 2022; Holt et al., 2019; Mayerhöffer, 2021; von Nordheim et al., 2019; Nygaard, 2021), where their degree of alternativeness and the extent to which they are driven by political values and agendas differ. Rather than conceptualizing mainstream and political alternative media as two distinct types of media, they should hence be conceptualized as located at different spaces on a spectrum (c.f. Brems, 2023; Holt et al., 2019; Klawier et al., 2022; Müller & Freudenthaler, 2022). Thus, some political alternative media might mainly seek to complement mainstream news media, for example by focusing on issues deemed under-covered by mainstream news media, whereas others are hostile to and seek to undermine trust in and use of mainstream news media (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019; Holt, 2020). Similarly, some political alternative media might largely follow journalistic norms and values such as seeking to provide verified, truthful, and impartial information (Johansson, 2019; Kovach, & Rosenstiel, 2021), while others are more strongly guided by political goals, such as supporting a certain political party, agenda, or narrative. Benkler, Faris and Roberts (2018) thus distinguish between media guided by “reality-check dynamics” versus

“propaganda feedback loops” (see also Strömbäck et al., 2022). In the US case, they also found a right-wing media ecology dominated by propaganda feedback loops, that is distinct from “the rest” – including mainstream *and* left-wing alternative media – that are largely guided by reality-check dynamics.

Still, in some cases even political alternative media that are hostile toward mainstream news media may seek to adapt to some forms and conventions of traditional news media as means to gain journalistic legitimacy (Ekman & Widholm, 2022; Heft et al., 2019; Mayerhöffer, 2021; Nygaard, 2019). For example, they might mimic the traditional news media composition of news, the inverted pyramid with the most important information coming first. Further, the presentation of information is often made to look like in mainstream news media, and claims might be backed up with the use of news sources, although selected and cherry-picked to support a certain narrative. Some political alternative media may also present information as factual, even if it has not been verified and may be false and misleading (Boberg et al., 2020; Ekman & Widholm, 2022; Strömbäck, 2023; Wagnsson, 2022). On the surface they may thus follow the journalistic norm in that news should be impartial and free from value-laden terms, even though the actual content is skewed in a certain direction (Ekman & Widholm, 2022; Nygaard, 2021; for the similar strategies of fake news, see Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Tandoc, 2019).

In terms of extant research on how political alternative media cover politics, previous research has investigated aspects such as source and topic diversity (Buyens & Van Aelst, 2021; Freudenthaler & Wessler, 2022); frame repertoires (Klawier et al., 2022), and the coverage of specific issues such as immigration (Nygaard, 2019; von Nordheim et al., 2019). Other studies have focused on the news agenda in different political alternative media compared to political parties they have ties to and to mainstream news media (Brems, 2023), and how political alternative media position themselves against and criticize mainstream news media (Figenschou & Ihlebaek, 2019; Mayerhöffer, 2021). In the Swedish case, one important study is Holt (2016), who compared the content in right-wing immigration-critical alternative media and mainstream news media with respect to what subject areas they cover (e.g., politics, business), the use of sources (e.g., at least two sources), the focus and framing (e.g., thematic, or episodic framing), and the journalistic style (e.g., descriptive or interpretive journalistic style). One finding was that the coverage in mainstream and political alternative media in many respects was quite similar, but also that the tonality was much more negative in the political alternative media (see also Holt, 2020). A common finding in this and other studies is



that political alternative media tend to be highly reliant on the news coverage in mainstream news media, which often forms the basis for follow-ups and re-framings in the alternative media (Brems, 2023; Holt, 2016; Nygaard, 2019; von Nordheim et al., 2019).

Another common finding is that the boundaries between mainstream and political alternative media are not always clear-cut, that the degree to which political alternative media differ from mainstream media varies, and that one strategy political alternative media employ for gaining legitimacy is by emulating traditional journalistic conventions and forms (Brems, 2023). On a more fine-grained level, by for example extensively covering crime when committed by immigrants but not when committed by natives, right-wing alternative media can appear as reporting in a quite descriptive style while still pushing a clear political narrative that immigrants are criminals (Klawier et al., 2022, p. 1388). Thereby, political alternative media may “create an appearance of objectivity” (Nygaard, 2019, p. 1159).

While research on how political alternative media cover politics and society has expanded significantly in recent years, thus far there is however only limited research on how they cover the key political event that election campaigns constitute, how the coverage of election campaigns differs between mainstream and political alternative media, and that include political alternative media from both the left and the right. One exception is McDowell-Naylor et al. (2022), who investigated the role of political alternative media in the 2019 UK election. In contrast to the present study, it did however not present a systematic comparison of the content in political alternative and mainstream news media. The extent to which the election coverage differs *between* and *within* mainstream and political alternative media thus largely remains unclear.

## **Between politicization and mediatization: key dimensions of election news**

How the media cover politics is always important, given that their coverage might exert significant influence on what issues people think are the most important (*agenda-setting*) (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020), the standards by which people judge political alternatives (*priming*) (Balmas & Sheaffer, 2010), and how people understand and perceive issues, events, and actors (*framing*) (Lecheler & De Vreese, 2019). How the media cover politics also have effects on people’s knowledge (Aalberg & Curran, 2012; Shehata & Strömbäck, 2021) and (mis)perceptions (Garrett et al., 2016; Hmielowski et al.,

2014; Strömbäck et al., 2022). Thereby, the news media may also influence how people vote.

All this matters greatly during election campaigns, given that the stakes then are so high. Not surprisingly, there is therefore extensive research on the mainstream news media's election news coverage. In this line of research, two key concepts are *politicization* and *political bias* on the one hand and *mediatization* and *structural bias* on the other (D'Alessio, 2012; Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019; Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2011; Strömbäck & Kaid, 2008; van Aelst et al., 2008). A common denominator for these theoretical perspectives is criticism that mainstream news media do not provide objective and impartial accounts of reality, as they should according to theories about journalistic objectivity (Johansson, 2019; Kovach, & Rosenstiel, 2021; Schudson, 1981), but rather news that is biased and deviates from reality. This is however where consensus ends.

According to theories emphasizing politicization and political bias, a key explanation for how mainstream news media cover politics and society is ideological and political biases among those who own the media or cover the news, i.e., journalists (Lichter, 2017). Most often, this kind of criticism comes from the political right, accusing mainstream news media for liberal or leftist bias (Domke et al., 1999; Liminga & Strömbäck, 2023; Watts et al., 1999). The underlying reason provided for the alleged leftist or liberal bias are surveys showing that journalists in general tend to be more liberal or leaning to the left politically than people in general, and this is assumed to be reflected in how mainstream news media cover the news (Grose-close & Milyo, 2005). In a structural sense, the argument is similar when news media are accused of rightist or conservative bias, although this criticism points toward the fact that most mainstream news media are commercial businesses, assumed or actual ideological and political biases among those who own the news media, and the notion that the news media is influenced by corporate and hence right leaning and conservative interests (c.f. Bagdikian, 2000).

According to theories emphasizing mediatization and structural bias, the news media coverage is instead mainly explained by the fact that mainstream news media are complex and commercial organizations which have developed certain trans-organizational routines and procedures for discovering, valuing, selecting, producing, and finally covering the news (Cook, 2005; Hofstetter, 1976; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). As such, they need to compete for audience attention and revenues from audience consumption, as well as for advertising revenue (Hamilton, 2004). This creates incentives for mainstream news media to keep down costs, while simultaneously maximizing the prospect of being successful in the competition for audience attention (Hamilton, 2004), and to balance that with

professional journalistic norms and values which emphasize the importance that the news provides people with verified, impartial and truthful accounts of reality (Asp, 2011; D'Alessio, 2012; Johansson, 2019; Niven, 2002). From this, and the media dependency on media formats, follows a certain news media logic, referring to the news values and storytelling techniques developed by mainstream news media to take advantage of their formats (print, audio, audiovisual) and their need for journalistic legitimacy and competitiveness in the struggle for audience attention and revenues (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014). In the words of Hofstetter (1976, p. 34), structural biases thus occur “when some things are selected to be reported rather than other things because of the character of the medium or because of the incentives that apply to commercial news programming”.

Importantly, thus far research in countries where the news media are politically independent – including Sweden – provide limited if any evidence that the election coverage in mainstream news media is politically biased (Asp, 2011; D'Alessio, 2012; Johansson, 2022; Lichter, 2017; Niven, 2002; see also Hassell, 2020). In stark contrast, there is ample evidence suggesting that mainstream election news coverage is shaped by structural biases and news media logic, although the degree to which this is the case differs between countries and media outlets within countries (Dunaway & Lawrence, 2015; Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019, 2023; Strömbäck & Kaid, 2008).

Two caveats should be noted though. First, in ever-changing media environments it cannot be taken for granted that historical patterns continue to hold. The fact that previous research suggests limited or no political bias does not preclude that such biases may evolve. Second, previous research has not taken political alternative media into account, and it can be expected that their election coverage differs both from the election news coverage in mainstream news media and from each other's. Empirically, the key question then is how the election coverage in left- and right-wing political alternative and mainstream media differ. Based on this, the theoretical and analytical question is whether their election coverage is better explained by theories related to mediatization and structural bias or politicization and political bias.

## **Research design, methodology and data**

This study focuses on election news coverage in Sweden. In brief, Sweden constitutes a prototypical case of the democratic corporatist model of media and politics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Strömbäck et al., 2008) and a media welfare state (Syvertsen et al., 2014), with strong public service broadcasting and historically widespread

newspaper readership. At the national level, the Swedish news media system is dominated by two public service TV news shows (Rapport and Aktuellt), one commercial TV news show (TV4), one public service radio news show (Ekot), two quality morning newspapers (Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet), and two tabloids (Aftonbladet and Expressen). Regarding the newspapers, on the editorial pages Dagens Nyheter and Expressen are independently liberal, Aftonbladet social democratic, and Svenska Dagbladet independently conservative. In their news coverage, they all claim to be independent and impartial. Importantly, systematic content analyses based on the Swedish Media Election Studies (SMES) and other studies have found that there is no systematic political bias in their election news coverage (Asp & Bjerling, 2014; Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019; Nord & Strömbäck, 2018). Hence, a recurring finding is that while some party or parties always get more beneficial coverage in a specific election campaign than others, what party or parties get more beneficial news coverage differ between election campaigns.

Over the last decade, political alternative media have however become more prominent, and research suggests that the Swedish alternative media ecology is more developed than in many other countries. This holds in particular for right-wing alternative media (Heft et al., 2020; Newman et al., 2018). This combination makes Sweden an interesting case to study.

Empirically, in this study we will use data from the 2022 Swedish Media Election Study (SMES). The SMES builds on quantitative content analyses and has been conducted for every national election going back to 1979 (Asp & Bjerling, 2014).

The SMES cover the last four weeks of election campaigns, which in 2022 translates into the period August 16–September 11, 2022. The selection of news media in SMES focuses on national morning newspapers, tabloid newspapers and TV and radio news on traditional platforms (paper editions and broadcast news). In this article we chose to limit the scope to comparisons between traditional newspapers and political alternative media (online). Admittedly, in a media ecology where mainstream media also focus on online reporting, the choice to analyze traditional platforms for mainstream media could be questioned. However, a recent study comparing online and offline election news during the last two weeks of the campaign found no significant differences in the coverage along the dimensions analyzed in this article, even if the number of articles online was greater (Johansson & Strömbäck, 2023).

Political alternative media was for the first time included in the SMES in the 2022 election campaign. Dagens Nyheter (DN) and Svenska Dagbladet (SvD) represent national morning newspapers

while Aftonbladet and Expressen are national tabloids. With respect to political alternative media, Dagens ETC was selected as a leading left-wing political alternative media, while Nyheter Idag was selected as a leading right-wing political alternative media (Johansson & Strömbäck, 2023; Newman et al., 2023).

For all media, the selection of news articles was based on the following criteria: 1) news stories in the main section of the newspaper, 2) signed by journalists, 3) placed on pages with the headline “politics” or equivalent (i.e., articles in the cultural or sports sections were excluded), 4) where headline, picture or preamble refers to domestic politicians or political institutions, and 5) deals with national politics (e.g., articles dealing with local or regional politics were excluded). Even if the main focus was on election stories, news about issues relevant to the election campaign was included in the sample even if no explicit reference was made to the campaign. In general, the sample strategy was to include stories if they in some way could be seen as relevant – even implicit – to the election campaign, like stories on energy, migration, health care or climate change. However, only a few articles (less than 10) fall under this “implicitly” criterion. Only articles with more than 10 lines were included. For online outlets (e.g., political alternative media), the third, fourth, and fifth criteria were used to select relevant news articles using keywords (see appendix).

All articles were coded by a single coder, instructed by the PIs of SMES, and the reliability was determined by the same coder re-coding a sample consisting of 120 articles (approximately 8 percent of the whole sample) after the entire sample was coded. The intra-coder agreement (Holsti’s Formula) ranged between 0.93 and 0.98. Compared with inter-coder reliability test, intra-coder tests are considered as a weaker form of reliability and is sometimes referred to as “stability reliability” (Neuendorf, 2002).

### **The news agenda, framing, journalistic style, and actor treatment**

In the empirical analyses and comparisons between the different media, we will focus on four aspects: *the news agenda*, *framing*, *journalistic style*, and *actor treatment*. For the news agenda and actor treatment variables, the unit of analysis is the number of issues and actor appearances, while for the framing and journalistic style variables, the unit of analysis is full articles.

The *news agenda* was coded using a predefined set of categories. The variable consists of 26 categories of political issues (economy, health care, energy etc.) and other news content categories measuring ideology, the government issue, political scandals, opinion polls and categories focusing on game-aspects of the election campaign.

Only categories related to political issues were considered in the present analysis. It was possible to code 5 different issues for each news story (for details, see Johansson & Strömbäck, 2023). Analytically, a closeness between issue ownership of politically close political parties and the issue agendas in the media can be interpreted as a sign of politicization and political bias.

The *framing* theme is analyzed by using variables capturing *issue frame*, *strategic game frame*, and *scandal frame* in the news reporting (Nord & Strömbäck, 2018; Strömbäck, 2004). *Issue frame* includes news stories focusing on issues and issue positions, on real-life conditions with relevance for issue positions, and on what has happened or what someone has said and done to the extent that it deals with or is depicted as relevant for the political issues. *Strategic game frame* includes news stories that frame politics as a game, personality contest, as strategy, and as personal relationships between political actors not related to issue positions (Aalberg et al., 2012, 2017; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). News stories that focus on the tactics or strategy of political campaigning, how they campaign, on the images of politicians, on political power as a goal, and on politicians as individuals rather than as spokespersons for certain policies, count as strategic game frame. The same applies for horse race coverage. Scandal frames include news stories where something is framed as a political scandal, and these alleged scandals may be about private moral, financial, or power scandals, or scandalous utterances made by politicians, so called talk scandals (Ekström & Johansson, 2007, 2019). Analytically and following previous research, the framing of politics as a strategic game and as scandals can be interpreted as signs of mediatization (Nord & Strömbäck, 2018; Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2011).

*Journalistic style* is measured by two variables. The first focuses on whether the articles are dominated by a *descriptive* versus *interpretive* journalistic style. The journalistic style was coded as descriptive when an article is dominated by telling what happened in a rather straightforward, descriptive style and focuses on known facts, whereas it was coded as interpretive when an article is dominated by analyzing, evaluating, interpreting, or explaining a situation while also describing aspects of it. Particular attention was paid to the dominant storyline, and whether it builds on a journalistic interpretation (Salgado & Strömbäck, 2012, 2017). The variable capturing *value-laden terms* refer to overt commentary and terms used by the journalist that are clearly subjective or carry connotations that cannot be considered neutral, for example, whether something is good or bad, true, or false, without support from verifiable facts. Similar to the framing of politics, an interpretive journalistic style and use of value-laden terms can be interpreted as signs of mediatization

(Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2011; Strömbäck & Nord, 2018), as traditional journalistic norms suggests that journalists should report in an impartial and neutral way (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021).

*Actor treatment* builds on three different variables: *acting actor*, which refers to the political actor who is doing/saying something in the article, the *addressed actor* which captures the political actor someone is talking about or referring to in the news story, and the *evaluation of addressed actor*, which measures how the addressed actor is evaluated – positive, negative, or neutral. The list of acting/addressed actor includes all political parties and party leaders in parliament alongside other actors, although we here will only consider political parties/party leaders. It is possible to code 5 acting actors and 10 addressed actors since every acting actor can address two actors in the codebook. As for the evaluation, it is possible to give an evaluation to every addressed actor (10 totally for each article).

## Results

Turning to the results, one of the most important aspects of the media's election news coverage is the news agenda, referring to what issues are most salient in the news. As been shown by previous research, the news agenda influences both what issues people think are the most important (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2021) and the standards by which people compare and evaluate the political alternatives (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010). The political parties thus struggle between them to influence the media agenda and to get the issues which they own – i.e., issues that the voters associate with the parties and which the parties have a reputation for competence – into the media spotlight (Green & Hobolt, 2008; Walgrave et al., 2009). For example, the Swedish parties to the right typically want the debate to focus on issues such as crime and migration, and the parties to the left on welfare issues such as schools and health care but also climate change. In 2022, the media agenda was however influenced by the downstream effects of the Russian war against Ukraine, such as high energy prices and inflation (Bolin et al., 2022). This can be seen in Table 1, showing the ten most prominent issues on different media's agendas.

	Political alternative media		Tabloids		Morning newspapers	
	ETC	Nyheter Idag	Aftonbladet	Expressen	DN	SvD
Crime	7	13	18	22	10	20
Economy	8	8	19	10	15	11
Energy	9	29	12	8	10	10
Migration	12	24	8	15	8	9
Environment	19	4	5	7	8	5
Health care	2	2	8	5	9	6
Defense	1	3	7	3	4	9
School	6	2	1	7	6	8
Social welfare	1	5	8	5	5	2
Foreign policy	0	1	3	2	4	4
Other issues	35	9	11	16	21	16
In total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Articles	255	132	410	361	613	445

Table 1: The issue agenda in the news coverage of the Swedish General Election 2022 (percent).

Note: Chi square tests of the issue agendas show significant differences (<.001) between all media outlets.

Source: Swedish Media Election Studies 2022

The results show that on an overall level, the most prominent issues in the mainstream news media were economy, crime, energy, and migration. This was also true for the right-wing Nyheter Idag, although they emphasized energy and migration much more than the mainstream news media. The most salient issue in the left-wing ETC, on the other hand, was the environment, followed by migration and energy. Migration was mainly framed as criticizing the



Sweden Democrats and other parties' policy on migration. ETC had also a larger share of "Other issues", as housing (8 percent) was one of the most salient issues in their coverage during the campaign. In the other media, this issue was almost invisible.

These results suggest both similarities and differences within as well as between the categories of political alternative and mainstream media. To make this analysis more systematic, Table 2 presents the similarity in the coverage of political issues during the 2022 election campaign using a matching index. The closer the coefficient is to 1, the more similar was the news coverage of political issues.

	Political alternative media		Tabloids		Morning newspapers	
	ETC	Nyheter Idag	Aftonbladet	Expressen	DN	SvD
ETC	X	.54	.53	.68	.71	.63
Nyheter Idag	.54	X	.61	.66	.59	.58
Aftonbladet	.53	.61	X	.73	.78	.79
Expressen	.68	.66	.73	X	.78	.84
DN	.71	.59	.78	.78	X	.79
SvD	.63	.58	.79	.84	.79	X

Table 2: Correlation between issue agendas in news coverage of the Swedish General Election 2022 (Matching index).

Note: The matching index  $(1 - (\sum d/2))$  is a measure that indicates how well two distributions match one another ( $d$  = difference in proportions; denominator = 2 makes the maximum value of the matching index = 1 and the minimum value = 0). Asp evaluates the matching index and argues it is more suitable for distributions with few observations (Asp, 1983).

Source: Swedish Media Election Studies 2022

The results show how political alternative media are alternative in two senses. First in relation to mainstream news media, where the matching coefficient is lower in comparison to the mainstream news media. ETC reached the highest agenda similarity to the morning newspaper DN (.71) and the lowest to the tabloid Aftonbladet (.53). Nyheter Idag shows even lower numbers of similarity, where the highest agenda resemblance was found in relation to the tabloid Expressen (.66). These figures should be compared to the comparisons between the morning newspapers and tabloids, where the agenda matching varied between .73 and .84. Second, the political alternative media are also alternative in relation to each other. The matching index between ETC and Nyheter Idag was one of the lowest (.54).

In other words, the political alternative media provided issue agendas differing both from mainstream news media and from each other, but the issue agenda in ETC was overall more similar – and less alternative – to the issue agenda in mainstream news media than the issue agenda in *Nyheter Idag*.

### **The framing of politics**

Another important aspect of how the media cover election campaigns is their framing of politics. In general, research has shown that the media framing of events, issues, actors, or processes can have significant effects on people's perceptions (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2019). In terms of the framing of politics, research shows that the framing of politics as a strategic game – in contrast to the framing of politics as issues – increases political cynicism and reduces substance-based political knowledge as well as media trust, and political interest (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Hopmann et al., 2015; Shehata, 2014; Zoizner, 2021). There is less research on the effects on scandal framing, but these are likely to be similar to the effects of strategic game framing (von Sikorski, 2018).

In terms of how Swedish mainstream media frame politics during election campaigns, previous research has found significant differences between media types, with commercial broadcasting and tabloids most prone to frame politics as a strategic game or as scandals, even if the framing of politics as a strategic game is common in all media (Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019; Nord & Strömbäck, 2018). The question here is whether the same holds true for the political alternative media.

The results in Table 3 shows that the framing of politics diverged significantly between political alternative media and mainstream news media. In particular, the results show the scandal frame being significantly more common in ETC (21 percent) and, in particular, *Nyheter Idag* (36 percent). In contrast, between 10-12 percent of the articles in the tabloids and 7-8 percent in the morning newspapers were dominated by a scandal frame. A more detailed analysis further shows that the political alternative media were more prone to highlight talk scandals (Ekström & Johansson, 2007, 2019), where utterances, gaffes and slip of tongues were scandalized.

	Political alternative media		Tabloids		Morning newspapers	
	ETC	Nyheter Idag	Aftonbladet	Expressen	DN	SvD
Issue frame	57	22	47	30	64	43
Strategic game frame	22	42	43	58	27	50
Scandal frame	21	36	10	12	8	7
In total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Articles	114	81	213	227	242	238

Table 3: Framing in news coverage of the Swedish General Election 2022 (Percent).

Note: Cramer's  $V$  comparing ETC vs Nyheter Idag = .35 \*\*\*, ETC vs Aftonbladet = .23 \*\*\*, ETC vs Expressen = .34 \*\*\*, ETC vs DN = .18\*\*\*, ETC vs SvD = .30\*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs Aftonbladet = .33 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs Expressen = .27 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs DN = .41 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs SvD = .38 \*\*\*, Aftonbladet vs Expressen = .18 \*\*\*, Aftonbladet vs DN = .18\*\*\*, Aftonbladet vs SvD = .08 \*\*\*, Expressen vs DN = .35\*\*\*, Expressen vs SvD = .15\*\*\*, DN vs SvD = .24\*\*\*: Articles where no frame could be detected are not included.

\*\*\* =  $p < .001$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \* =  $p < .05$

Source: Swedish Media Election Studies 2022

Beyond this, different patterns emerge when comparing the framing of politics as issues versus a strategic game in political alternative and mainstream media. To begin with, there are large differences between ETC and Nyheter Idag, where ETC was one of the outlets among all the investigated media that most often framed politics as issues (57 percent) whereas Nyheter Idag was the outlet most seldomly used this frame (22 percent). With respect to the mainstream media, there is – in contrast to the coverage of earlier election campaigns – no clear pattern that the strategic game frame is more common in the tabloids than in the morning newspapers (Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019; Nord & Strömbäck, 2018). Instead, the framing of politics as a strategic game was more common in the morning newspaper SvD than in the tabloid Aftonbladet, and vice versa with respect to the framing of politics as issues. There is thus no clear demarcation between political alternative media, tabloids, and morning newspapers. Instead, the framing of politics in ETC was more similar to the framing of politics in DN and Aftonbladet with a more frequent use of issue framing, while Nyheter Idag was more similar to SvD and Expressen with a more frequent use of strategic game framing.

### Descriptive versus interpretive election news coverage

Even if a large part of the news is about describing for example what has happened and who has said what, a significant part of news journalism also includes journalistic interpretations of why things have happened and what the consequences might be (Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001; Salgado & Strömbäck, 2012, 2017). Such interpretations may range from more neutral analysis to highly subjective commentary. While there are different measurements of an interpretive journalistic style (Salgado & Strömbäck, 2012), research suggests that an interpretive journalistic style over time has become more common in mainstream news media (Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001; Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019; Nord & Strömbäck, 2018). With respect to political alternative media, to our knowledge there is only one previous study, suggesting that an interpretive journalistic style is more common in Swedish right-wing political alternative media than in mainstream news media (Holt, 2016).

The key question then is the extent to which election news stories in political alternative and mainstream media during the 2022 Swedish election campaign were characterized by a descriptive versus an interpretive journalistic style. The results are presented in Table 4.

	Political alternative media		Tabloids		Morning newspapers	
	ETC	Nyheter Idag	Aftonbladet	Expressen	DN	SvD
Interpretive	46	36	45	44	22	28
Descriptive	54	64	55	56	78	72
In total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Articles	114	84	217	232	245	242

Table 4: Interpretive and descriptive approach in news coverage of the Swedish General Election 2022 (Percent).

Note: Cramer's V comparing ETC vs Nyheter Idag = .10 \*\*, ETC vs Aftonbladet = .04, ETC vs Expressen = .02, ETC vs DN = .24 \*\*\*, ETC vs SvD = .17 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs Aftonbladet = .09 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs Expressen = .07 \*\*, Nyheter Idag vs DN = .13 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs SvD = .07 \*\*, Aftonbladet vs Expressen = .01, Aftonbladet vs DN = .24 \*\*\*, Aftonbladet vs SvD = .18\*\*\*, Expressen vs DN = .23 \*\*\*, Expressen vs SvD = .16 \*\*\*, DN vs SvD = .06 \*\*\*. Articles where no frame could be detected are not included.

\*\*\* =  $p < .001$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \* =  $p < .05$

Source: Swedish Media Election Studies 2022

The results show a key difference between morning newspapers on the one hand and tabloids and political alternative media on the

other. The morning newspapers consistently have the largest share of articles characterized by a descriptive journalistic style, while the tabloids and the political alternative media are quite similar in terms of the share of articles with a descriptive versus an interpretive journalistic style. At the same time, there is a difference between ETC and Nyheter Idag, with the former having a larger share of articles with an interpretive journalistic style.

Important to reiterate however is that this variable taps into whether the articles *mainly* tell what happened in a rather descriptive, straightforward style and focusing on known facts as opposed to mainly analyzing, evaluating, interpreting, or explaining a situation while also describing aspects of it. Hence, a descriptive journalistic style does not preclude that an article may include some subjective assessment or interpretations. To tap into this, the SMES investigated the extent to which the articles overtly included value-laden terms that are clearly subjective or carry connotations that cannot be considered neutral. The results are displayed in Table 5.

	Political alternative media		Tabloids		Morning newspapers	
	ETC	Nyheter Idag	Aftonbladet	Expressen	DN	SvD
Value laden terms	64	70	62	59	38	45
No value laden terms	36	30	38	41	62	55
In total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Articles	114	84	217	232	245	242

Table 5: Value-terms in the news coverage of the Swedish General Election 2022 (Percent).

Note: Cramer's V comparing ETC vs Nyheter Idag = .06 \*, ETC vs Aftonbladet = .02, ETC vs Expressen = .04, ETC vs DN = .25 \*\*\*, ETC vs SvD = .18 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs Aftonbladet = .07, Nyheter Idag vs Expressen = .10 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs DN = .29 \*\*\*, Nyheter Idag vs SvD = .22 \*\*\*, Aftonbladet vs Expressen = .03, Aftonbladet vs DN = .25 \*\*\*, Aftonbladet vs SvD = .17 \*\*\*, Expressen vs DN = .22 \*\*\*, Expressen vs SvD = .15 \*\*\*, DN vs SvD = .07 \*\*\*. Articles where no frame could be detected are not included.

\*\*\* =  $p < .001$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \* =  $p < .05$

Source: Swedish Media Election Studies 2022

To some extent the results mirror the ones pertaining to the journalistic style, with the use of value-laden terms being lowest in the morning newspapers and higher in the tabloids and the political

alternative media. Worth noting is that the difference between the tabloids and the political alternative media is not significant. At the same time, value-laden terms were most common in *Nyheter Idag*, even though it had a lower share of articles characterized by an interpretive journalistic style than both ETC and the tabloids. This is a reminder that a descriptive journalistic style might still hide journalistic subjectivity (Nygaard, 2019).

### **Biased election coverage and actor treatment**

One of the most discussed aspects of how the media cover politics in general and election campaigns in particular pertains to the issue of political bias. A common phenomenon, known as the hostile media phenomenon (Hansen & Kim, 2011; Perloff, 2015), is that partisans tend to think that the media are biased against them in favor of the other side in a political conflict or campaign. In the SMES, the question of bias is addressed by an actor treatment index which summarizes the way an actor is treated in the news (for details, see appendix). Positive numbers indicate a positive treatment, negative numbers a negative treatment, and 0 that an actor gets an equal amount of visibility and positive criticism as negative criticism.

Important to note is that this measure focuses on how political actors were treated *in* the news and not *by* the news. It captures visibility, praise, and criticism in the news, but does not distinguish between praise and criticism coming from other political actors or from the journalists covering the news. A negative/positive actor treatment thus does not necessarily mean that the journalists covering the news were negative/positive toward a particular political actor; it might also mean that a particular political actor in that media received a lot of negative/positive criticism by other political actors. This said, journalists in the end select news and utterances praising or criticizing politicians which can lead to ideological bias in the news even if journalists themselves are not using value laden words.

With this caveat in mind, Table 6 shows the actor treatment of the two governmental coalitions and each of the political parties per investigated media.

	Political alternative media		Tabloids		Morning newspapers	
	ETC	Nyheter Idag	Aftonbladet	Expressen	DN	SvD
<b>Left wing Coalition</b>	+17	-10	+20	+15	+32	+29
Left Party	+27	+3	+12	+15	+19	+26
Social Democrats	+3	-17	+18	+11	+27	+26
Green Party	+22	+11	+27	+13	+49	+30
Centre Party	+24	-26	+28	+26	+50	+41
<b>Right wing Coalition</b>	-5	+21	+7	+12	+15	+15
Liberal party	+8	+13	+29	+16	+6	+29
Moderate party	+2	+21	+5	+20	+31	+17
Christian Democrats	+9	+36	+12	+29	+28	+19
Sweden Democrats	-17	+20	-3	0	-2	+5

Table 6: Treatment of governmental coalitions and political parties in the news coverage of the Swedish General Election 2022 (AT-index).

Note: The index is constructed by adding the number of times an actor says or does something in the news, based on the assumption that all politicians strive to be visible in the news during an election campaign. The number of times someone else is addressing the actor positively is then added and finally subtracted by how often the actor is addressed negatively. To make the index vary between fixed numbers (+100 and -100) and enable comparisons across media and actors, the number from the calculations is divided by the total number an actor is visible as actor or addressed and multiplied by 100 (see Asp 1983 for more detailed information).

Source: Swedish Media Election Studies 2022

One finding – consistent with previous research – is that positive actor treatments were more common than negative actor treatments (Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019, 2023). This is the case for all mainstream media except for the Sweden Democrats in *Aftonbladet* and *DN*, although the actor treatment index is close to zero. Another striking finding is how the actor treatment in the political alternative media clearly differed from each other and from mainstream media. This holds in particular for the right-wing *Nyheter Idag*, which gave a more favorable treatment to the right-wing coalition (+21) and less favorable treatment to the left-wing coalition (-10) than all other media. They also gave a much more positive treatment of the Sweden Democrats and the Christian Democrats compared with all the other media. In contrast, the actor treatment of the right-wing coalition was more negative in left-wing ETC than in all the other media. At the same time, the actor treatment of the left-wing coalition was less positive in ETC than in *DN*, *SvD* and *Aftonbladet*. The most important reason for this is because the Social Democrats received a less positive treatment (+3) in ETC than in any of the mainstream media. However, the general tendency to give the left-wing parties a more favorable treatment can mainly be explained by the extensive criticism toward the Sweden Democrats, which lowered the index for right-wing coalition.

Further comparing the ETC and *Nyheter Idag*, the results show how ETC gave the right-wing parties – and in particular the Sweden Democrats – a less favorable treatment than any of the mainstream news media. In contrast, *Nyheter Idag* gave all the left-wing parties a less favorable treatment compared with any of the mainstream news media. The contrast is particularly evident in the actor treatment of the Centre Party and the Sweden Democrats.

Taken together, these results thus show that the actor treatment in the left- and right-wing political alternative media differed sharply between them, but also that they differed in relation to the actor treatment in the mainstream media.

## Discussion and conclusions

Against the background of the increasing importance of political alternative media across Western democracies, this study set out to explore (1) how the coverage of the 2022 Swedish national election differed between left- and right-wing political alternative and mainstream media, and (2) whether their election coverage can be better explained by theories related to politicization and political bias or mediatization and structural bias. Based on the findings, the study offers five takeaways.

First, in several respects the election coverage in political alternative media diverged systematically from mainstream news media. More specifically, they differed in terms of the issue agenda, their



stronger focus on scandal frames, their more extensive use of value-laden terms in the news, and in the pattern where there is a linkage between their political leaning and how different political actors were treated.

Second, the political alternative media were also alternative in relation to each other, where the left- and right leaning alternative media focused on different political issues in their reporting and gave ideologically actors close to them a more beneficial treatment. At the same time, ideologically more distant opponents were generally treated less favorable.

Third, the political alternative media do not always differ from mainstream news media, and in some respects, they seem to use a mainstream style of reporting to gain journalistic legitimacy. This is suggested by the findings that the share of interpretative versus descriptive reporting was not systematically different when comparing political alternative media and mainstream media. The same tendency was found for the use of strategic game frames and issue frames, where there were differences between outlets, but not related to media type. Another sign of this is that Nyheter Idag, despite using a rather descriptive journalistic style, still was the media with the most widespread presence of clearly-value terms in their articles.

Fourth, in several cases there is a pattern where the differences are most pronounced between the left- and the right-wing political alternative media, with mainstream media in between. This holds in particular for the more political aspects of the election coverage, such as the actor treatment, suggesting that political alternative media offer a different kind of election coverage than mainstream news media. While this may not be particular surprising, it is a reminder that not all political alternative media are alike, and that there may be clear differences not only between political alternative and mainstream news media but also between different alternative media (Buyens & Van Aelst, 2022; Freudenthaler & Wessler, 2022; Klawier et al., 2022; McDowell-Naylor et al., 2023). Hence, too far-reaching generalizations about political alternative media should thus be avoided.

The question then is whether the differences found between political alternative media and mainstream news media can best be explained by theories related to politicization and political bias on the one hand and mediatization and structural bias on the other. Our answer and the fifth takeaway are that both theoretical perspectives have explanatory value, although to different degrees for different media types. The signs of politicization of election coverage and political bias is quite clearly connected to the political alternative media, where the issue agenda and actor treatment diverge,

both from mainstream news media and from each other. (see also Brems, 2023; Freudenthaler & Wessler, 2022; Müller & Freudenthaler, 2022). In other words, in political alternative media, there is a clearer linkage between issue ownership of nearby political parties, the issue agenda in the political alternative media, and the treatment of political actors than in mainstream news media. We find no other explanation for these patterns and differences than an expression of politically biased reporting. The election coverage in mainstream news media on the other hand is more similar across the different media, which indicates that the news coverage is better explained by factors related to mediatization and structural bias. Since there are quite systematic differences between how the election was covered in the tabloids and the morning newspapers, it strengthens the conclusion that mediatization and structural bias are the most reasonable explanations for how mainstream news media cover election campaigns. This conclusion is further strengthened by longitudinal studies showing how mainstream media over time tend to follow each other in how they cover election campaigns (Asp & Bjerling, 2014; Nord & Strömbäck, 2018; Johansson & Strömbäck, 2023). This is not to say that there are no signs of mediatization in the political alternative media. For example, the framing of politics as a strategic game was about as common in Nyheter Idag as in SvD and Expressen, and an interpretive style was about as common in the political alternative media as in the tabloids.

In essence, then, our findings suggest that political alternative media do function as an alternative to mainstream news media in that they offer more politicized coverage of election campaigns. Interestingly, our findings largely reflect those of other studies comparing the news coverage in mainstream news media and political alternative media (e.g., Brems, 2023; Freudenthaler & Wessler, 2022; Heft et al., 2024; Klawier et al., 2022), which suggests that differences between mainstream news media and political alternative media pertain both to election campaigns and more routine political periods. That said, more systematic research on both differences and similarities between how different political alternative media and different types of mainstream news media cover politics and society is clearly needed.

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# Electoral campaigning in a hybrid media environment

## A case study of two Danish party leaders' social media campaigns and online news presence during the 2022 parliamentary elections

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### Abstract

In the current hybrid media environment, politicians have manifold opportunities to be in contact with voters during elections. Legacy news media still constitute an important campaign tool for politicians, but a range of social media have gained ground in electoral campaigning over the last decades as well. Against this backdrop, the aim of this study is to shed further light on politicians' campaign practices in a hybrid communication environment, and whether the introduction of social media have introduced new dynamics into election campaigns. The study does so through a case study of Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and opposition party leader Alex Vanopslagh's social media campaigns and online news presence during the 2022 national election. The study finds that Frederiksen was more in the news during the election than Vanopslagh, but that social media was central in both campaigns. However, Vanopslagh was on a broader set of social media and to a greater extent capitalised on the platform affordances than Frederiksen.

### KEYWORDS

political communication, election campaigns, hybrid media system, social media, parliamentary election

## Introduction

Over the last decades, it has become more complex for politicians to plan election campaigns, because voters can be reached through many different channels in the current hybrid media environment (Chadwick, 2017). In politics, one of the most profound changes is the emergence of a still growing number of social media, counting platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. These media have given politicians new opportunities to reach voters directly, without journalists as intermediaries, and try to impact their vote decision-making during election times (for overviews, see Bruns et al., 2018; Jungherr et al., 2020). Politicians have seized on this opportunity, and studies find that social media have become an integral part of politicians' election campaigns in many countries over the last decade (see e.g. Bruns et al., 2018; Jungherr et al., 2020; Lilleker et al., 2015). Concurrently, politicians still perceive legacy news media a crucial campaign tool (see e.g. Lilleker et al., 2015; Magin et al., 2017).

Within the Nordic context, we have some knowledge of how the changing political communication landscape impact the campaign dynamics. Among other things, it has given political challengers with poor opportunities to be in legacy media new means to reach voters during elections and can make the battle for attention and votes more equal (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2017; Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014). Furthermore, politicians experience greater freedom to define their own political agendas on social media and can opt out of legacy media (Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013). Finally, it has paved the way for more personalized campaign communication, where politicians can promote more individual causes, independent from their parties, and give insights into them as persons (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Enli & Moe, 2013).

However, to get further insights into these new dynamics, it is important to examine politicians' cross-media campaign practices and not just campaign communication on single platforms (e.g., Bode & Vraga, 2018; Enli & Moe, 2013). A newer vein of studies has provided valuable insights into politicians' cross-media communication during elections from different perspectives, but they are mostly quantitative and report findings on the aggregate level (for an overview, see Severin-Nielsen, 2023). By comparison, there are fewer in-depth case studies of single politicians' election campaigns across media (for exceptions, e.g., Casero-Ripollés et al., 2016; Fisher et al., 2018; Mendes & Dikwal-Bot, 2022; Ridge-Newman, 2020). Such an in-depth qualitative perspective is important to gain a deeper understanding of the role social media fill in politicians' campaigns, how

it impacts the broader campaign dynamics, and interplays with legacy news media.

The current article adds to the limited qualitative literature through a case study of Danish Prime Minister (PM) Mette Frederiksen (The Social Democratic Party) and opposition party leader Alex Vanopslagh's (Liberal Alliance – LA) cross-media campaigns during the 2022 parliamentary election. These politicians were selected because they are good illustrative examples of different approaches to campaigning in a hybrid media environment. Frederiksen, on the one hand, was the PM in power and received much coverage in the news media during the election (Lange, 2022). At the same time, it is well known that she uses Facebook and Instagram actively for political communication as well (Bohr, 2021). Vanopslagh, on the other hand, was the leader of a small opposition party, which had only three mandates in the parliament. He was less present in legacy news media during the election but was active on multiple social media, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. Especially his and LA's success on TikTok received much attention during the election (Fallentin et al., 2022). I selected party leaders as the focal point of the study rather than parties because campaigns have been personified in the digital age. An implication of this is that party leaders often function as the faces of the party in the public (e.g., Filimonov et al., 2016; Van Aelst et al., 2012).

In the article, I examine the following three research questions: RQ1) *What are the different social media platforms used for in Vanopslagh and Frederiksen's election campaigns?*, RQ2) *How are Frederiksen and Vanopslagh's social media campaigns related to their presence in legacy news media?*, and RQ3) *What are the similarities and differences between the campaigns, and what can explain the differences?*

## **Campaign dynamics in a social media age: The Nordic literature**

Over the years, many scholars have been concerned with how the introduction of social media in politicians' election campaigns impacts the campaign dynamics. In general, the studies find that social media do not alter politicians' campaign practices drastically (Enli & Moe, 2013; Jungherr et al., 2020). Previously, legacy news media, such as tv, newspapers, and radio, was the main outlets for politicians to get their campaign communication out widely, and politicians within the Nordic context continue to perceive legacy media as important campaign tools in the social media age (Guðmundsson, 2016, 2019; Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016; Larsson & Skogerbø, 2018; Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013).

Since journalists control the access to legacy media, politicians cannot choose whether they are present in these media during elections or not. They can increase the likelihood of getting coverage by adjusting their campaign communication to fit journalistic news criteria and speak into the current media agenda (Strömbäck, 2008; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). Despite such efforts, research has shown that politicians have unequal access to legacy news media. While politicians in powerful positions have easy access to the news media, it is often more difficult for politicians with lower status to obtain presence here (e.g., Hopmann et al., 2011; van Dalen, 2012).

Although social media have not revolutionised the way politicians campaign, the new media have brought about some new dynamics (Enli & Moe, 2013; Jungherr et al., 2020). The most important change is that social media have given politicians a platform to disseminate their campaign communication directly to voters without relying on journalists. In the early days of social media, this possibility was particularly exploited by younger, lesser-known politicians with poor legacy media access, because it gave them alternative ways to disseminate their campaign communication. Some scholars argued that this contributed to equalize politicians' opportunities during elections (Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Larsson & Skogerbo, 2018; Blach-Ørsten et al., 2017; Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013). As social media have become more established campaign tools, however, they are increasingly adopted and used by high status politicians as well (Guðmundsson, 2016, 2019; Linaa Jensen et al., 2015) – especially during the heat of elections (Sandberg & Öhberg, 2017). Scholars have attributed this a process of normalisation, where the power balance returns to the way it was before the new media emerged (Sandberg & Öhberg, 2017). Still, research finds that politicians with lower status more quickly adopt new social media platforms, like when SnapChat emerged in 2011, because they seek all opportunities to get competitive advantages over established politicians (Guðmundsson, 2019).

In the Danish case, only very few politicians deselect social media as a campaign tool altogether. In 2020, only three of the 179 MPs (< 2 %) did not have a public page on neither Facebook nor Twitter or Instagram<sup>1</sup>. Political reasons for deselecting social media can for instance be lack of technical competencies, that they have good access to legacy media and therefore find social media less relevant, or because they prioritize non-mediated, personal meetings with citizens (Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016; Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013).

A second new dynamic is that the power balance between politicians and journalists has tipped more towards politicians. With social media, politicians can opt to bypass journalists and their critical

questions and instead set their own agenda on social media (Skovsgaard & van Dalen, 2013). Political issues play an important role in vote decision-making processes today, and, according to the issue competition literature, politicians and political parties will try to secure votes by “emphasis[ing] issues that are advantageous to themselves, while [...] ignor[ing] those that are disadvantageous” (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010, p. 257). Social media has given politicians a platform to set their own agenda, but as emphasized by Green-Pedersen & Mortensen (2010), politicians from government and opposition parties have different prerequisites for their political communication. While politicians in opposition are free to address the issues advantageous to the party, politicians in government are often held accountable for societal problems and must address all kinds of issues to avoid accusations of: “being in trouble and unable to deliver the expected policy solutions” (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010, p. 262). Furthermore, social media have given politicians a tool to impact the legacy media agenda – especially on platforms like Twitter, where journalists are highly present (for an overview, see Jungherr, 2016).

A third new dynamic is that politicians can use their social media for more personalized campaign communication, where they can promote their own candidacy and show a more personal and private side of themselves during the election to appear more authentic politically. Scholars have argued that it reinforces already ongoing personalization trends in politics (Enli, 2015; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Enli & Moe, 2013; Skogerbø & Larsson, 2021). Despite the more personalized communication climate on social media, the existing Nordic literature on the topic find that politicians still mainly promote party-political agendas on social media (Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016; Van Dalen et al., 2016), but with a personal twist to fit with the social media genre (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). Especially party leaders, who are the politicians under scrutinization in this article, use their social media platforms to promote their parties (e.g., Filimonev et al., 2016). The effects of politicians’ social media communication during elections remain more debatable (Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016; Blach-Ørsten et al., 2017).

Based on the literature review, I expect that Frederiksen and Vanopslagh both use social media actively during the 2022 election, but that Vanopslagh is more proactive in his use of the platforms, given his poorer access to legacy media. Furthermore, I expect that Frederiksen to a greater extent than Vanopslagh uses her social media to address critiques of her and the government during the election, because she as the PM in power is held more accountable for current societal problems.

Finally, politicians can use different strategies when communicating across multiple media. To conceptualise these different strategies, I draw on two concepts from the broader cross-media literature, that is, *a diversification strategy* and *a transmedia storytelling strategy* (Ibrus & Scolari, 2012). The concepts were not developed in a political context, but I still find them useful to describe different overall approaches politicians can take to communication across multiple media. Politicians, who adopt a diversification strategy, use the different media in their campaigns for diverse purposes and often do so to capitalise on the affordances of each of the media concerned. By contrast, they deploy a transmedia storytelling strategy, when the different media are used for similar purposes with the aim of conveying a common narrative across media. The concepts are mainly relevant to describe the social media part of Vanopslagh and Frederiksen's campaigns since they are in control of the published content hereon.

### **The Danish study context and the 2022 election**

The study was conducted in Denmark during the 2022 parliamentary election. The election was announced by the PM the day after the reopening of the parliament after the summer break, that is, on October 5, 2022. The election was on November 1, except for citizens on The Faroe Island.

The Danish parliament consists of 179 members most of which are organised in political parties. Prior to the election, the parliament was comprised of ten parties: the governing party The Social Democratic Party, the supporting parties The Social Liberal Party, Green Left, and The Red/Green Alliance, and the opposition parties The Liberal Party, The Conservative People's Party, LA, The Alternative, The Danish People's Party, and New Right (for Danish party names, see Table A1 in Appendix 1).

Danish elections are held with an interval of four years, but the PM can decide to call an election earlier, for example if the PM deem the political situation favourable for his/her party or difficulties in the government's parliamentary situation (The Danish Parliament, 2023a, 2023b). The latter was the case in the 2022 election, where one of the supporting parties, The Social Liberal Party, demanded an election. If the PM did not meet the demand, they would supposedly have withdrawn their support to the government after the reopening of the parliament and force them to resign (Wind, 2022).

The background to the demand for an election was the government's decision to put down Danish mink during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid mutations of the disease. However, it later came

out that they did not have the proper legal basis for the decision; an incident that is often referred to as *The Mink Scandal* in Danish media. Following this, the PM's role in the decision and whether she knew it was illegal has been discussed heavily and has also been scrutinised by a commission. Based on the commission's report, The Social Liberal Party decided not to vote for an impeachment against the PM but instead demanded an election (Wind, 2022).

For a comprehensive account of the Danish election system, see Blach-Ørsten et al. (2017).

## Methods and data

The aim of this article is to provide an in-depth qualitative perspective on the new campaign dynamics at play in the current hybrid media environment. To obtain this aim, a case study of the Danish PM and opposition party leader Vanopslagh's campaigns was conducted during the 2022 parliamentary election.

I used two data sources for the purpose of the case study: i) Data on their social media use during the election and ii) Data on their presence in online legacy news media. Data on Frederiksen and Vanopslagh's social media use is comprised of posts from their public social media accounts from the announcement of the election on October 5 up to and including the election day, November 1. For Frederiksen, this included her Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/mettefrederiksen.dk](http://www.facebook.com/mettefrederiksen.dk)) and Instagram account (@mette) ( $n = 53$  Facebook posts; 55 Instagram posts). For Vanopslagh, data was collected from his Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/AlexLiberalAlliance](http://www.facebook.com/AlexLiberalAlliance)), Instagram account (@alexvanopslagh), and Twitter profile (@AlexVanopslagh), and from the party's TikTok profile (@liberalalliance\_)<sup>2</sup> ( $n = 54$  Facebook posts; 33 Instagram posts; 33 tweets; 71 TikTok posts<sup>3</sup>). I decided to collect this part of the data manually to be able to include the visual elements in their social media posts, such as pictures or videos, in the analysis as well (on the importance of the visuals on social media, e.g., Farkas & Bene, 2021).

Second, I obtained data on their presence in online legacy news media during the election through the collection of news articles from six Danish news media. More specifically, news articles were collected from the political online sections of DR, TV 2, Politiken, Berlingske, Ekstra Bladet, and Jyllands-Posten (see URLs in Table A2 in Appendix 1). The data thus does not offer a complete overview of Frederiksen and Vanopslagh's news presence, but it covers some of the most influential and read online news media in Denmark (Schröder et al., 2022, p. 46). Additionally, the online news media

refer to key news stories and events in other legacy media, such as articles about televised election debates among party leaders. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the data can serve as a proxy for the party leaders' broader presence and the main themes discussed in relation to their person in legacy news media during the election.

The articles were collected via an automated web-scraper in Python 3.0 with the permission of the media companies. The scraper was developed for the research project and was set up to check if new articles had been added to the news sites every 2 hours. If new articles were detected, information on the title, publication date, article hyperlink, the presence of a paywall (yes or no), and article text was added to the dataset. Afterwards, data was cleaned to minimise the number of duplicates and irrelevant articles in the dataset prior to the analysis. Finally, two variables were added to the dataset through a simple dictionary method, that is: i) A dummy variable indicating whether one or more Danish parliamentary members (MPs) were mentioned in the article (yes or no)<sup>4</sup> and ii) A string variable listing the MPs mentioned in the article. Since we did not have much article text from paywalled articles, the variables only contain reliable information for non-paywall articles. Thus, it was decided to only include non-paywall articles that either mentions Frederiksen ( $n=666$  articles) or Vanopslagh ( $n=142$  articles). The omission of articles behind a paywall may cause me to overlook some themes discussed in relation to the party leaders and can impact the scalability of the results. As a validity check, I examined the headlines of the paywalled articles and found that many of them contained more in-depth content for paying customers, such as political analyses of the election by commentators or experts, interviews with politicians and the like, but the free-to-read articles still covered key election themes and events. Furthermore, all content is freely available on the public service media DR 1 and TV 2 and can cover potential blind spots in data from other media, especially since the news media cross-reference each other's content as mentioned earlier. Taken together, I believe the most important themes have been covered by this methodological approach.

The analytical approach was inspired by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I started by familiarising myself with the data through multiple readings of the material. Afterwards, I coded the documents inductively. The coding was visualised on a timeline from the start to the end of the election to be able to detect similarities and differences in how the case politicians used different social media, how it was related to mentions of them in legacy media, and developments over the course of the campaign. The social media posts were coded individually, while the newspaper articles were



coded together for each day of the election to get an overview of the main issues, which the politicians were mentioned in relation to that day (for a visualisation of the coding procedure, see Table A3 in Appendix 1). After the first coding round, some codes were merged to form broader themes in Frederiksen and Vanopslagh's social media campaigns and their online news presence. This part of the coding was informed by the literature review, and the code "Personal and private updates" was for instance inspired by the personalization literature. In the final stages of the analysis, I used the concepts of diversification vs. transmedia storytelling to analyze the overall strategy, the party leaders utilized in their campaigns across different social media. For end code lists, see Table A4 and A5 in Appendix 1.

The analysis was conducted in two steps. The first step answers RQ1 and RQ2 and is an analysis of respectively Frederiksen and Vanopslagh's online news presence and social media campaigns. Each of these analyses begin with a quantitative content analysis of their presence on social media and in legacy media during the election to provide initial overviews of their communication during the election. Following this, I conduct a qualitative analysis of the overall strategic approach (i.e., a transmedia storytelling or diversification strategy) and underlying themes in Frederiksen and Vanopslagh's social media campaigns, and how their communication on social media is related to mentions of them in legacy media during the election. In the second step, which answers RQ3, I analyse similarities and differences in their campaigns and discuss possible explanations with the paper's literature review as the offset. This part of the analysis is presented in the concluding discussion.

## Results

### Frederiksen's campaign

Frederiksen had a high presence both in the news and on social media during the election (for a full overview, see Appendix 2). As displayed in Figure 1, Frederiksen received much attention in online legacy media throughout the entire election campaign. In the figure, the blue line is the number of political news articles published over the course of the election, while the orange line is the number of articles mentioning Frederiksen at least once. She was more present in the news in the beginning and end of the election, however, there were also published more articles during these periods.

In legacy media, Frederiksen was frequently mentioned in relation to political events, such the opening debate in the parliament or televised party leader debates, and political analyses of the

election because of her position as PM. Additionally, she received coverage when The Social Democratic Party proposed new policy, such as their plan for how to improve wages and work conditions in the Danish public sector on October 25. Third, she was present in online legacy news, when she responded to other parties' political statements or policy proposals during the election, for example when she refused The Liberal Party's proposal to sell parts of Ørsted A/S on October 7, that is, Denmark's largest energy company with the state as majority owner. Fourth, she received coverage when she and/or the government was criticised in the media.

Regarding the latter, Frederiksen particularly received critique on three areas. In the beginning of the election, the Mink Scandal and Frederiksen's role in it received some coverage in legacy media. This was especially the case during the opening debate in the parliament, where other parties asked Frederiksen to elaborate on the matter and her role in it. Frederiksen did not respond directly to the critique in the online news articles, I have analysed. However, several articles cite Frederiksen's response to her political opponents during the opening debate, where she declared that it was the right decision to close the Danish mink industry but admitted that mistakes were made in the effectuation of the decision, with reference to the missing legal basis for the decision. Second, Frederiksen and the government were criticised for not having done enough about quality problems in the Danish health and eldercare system, among other things due to problematic work conditions in the sector.

This was particularly debated in legacy media during two periods of the election, that is, i) when the news came out that the number of temporary workers in the healthcare system increased under Frederiksen's government on October 10 and ii) after the tv documentary "Outcry from the old people's home" was sent on TV 2 on October 20. The documentary provided examples of severe quality problems in Danish eldercare, and since a documentary two years earlier had revealed similar problems, the media questioned whether Frederiksen and the government had done enough to solve the problems over the last two years. Frederiksen responded to the critique in the online legacy news in both cases. In the first case, she referred to a coming proposal from the Social Democratic Party that would improve the working conditions and wages for healthcare workers. In the second case, she acknowledged that the government had not succeeded in solving the issues in the eldercare system but also stressed that: "what we see in this documentary is some people that do not treat other people properly, and no elder law can solve that" (Lorensen & Frost, 2022).

Lastly, Frederiksen and the government was criticised in the wake of a book publication on October 13. The book was authored by the

former head of the Danish Intelligence Service, Lars Findsen. He was exempted from service in 2020, and, in the book, he accuses the government of having political motives for doing so. In the Danish public, this is often referred to as *the FE case*. Frederiksen did comment on the case in online legacy media but merely referred to her professional secrecy and that it was a case for the Danish system of justice.

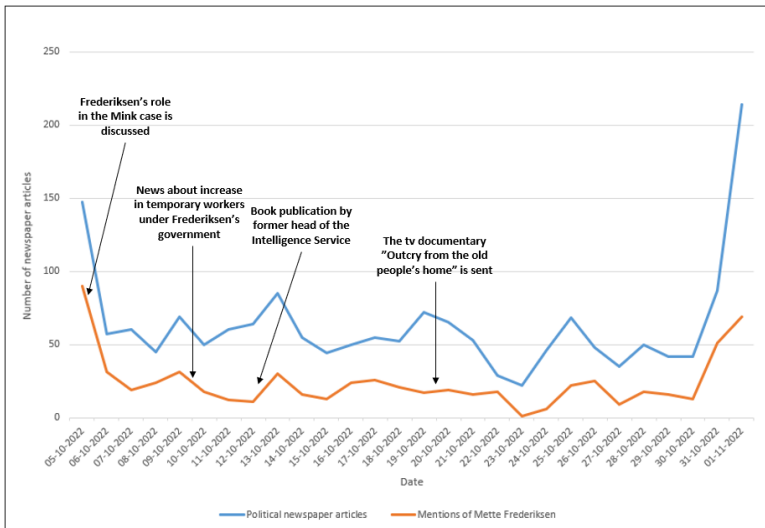


Figure 1: Number of political newspaper articles and mentions of Mette Frederiksen per day

Even though Frederiksen received much coverage in online legacy media during the election, she used the social media Facebook and Instagram actively in her election campaign as well. On average, she posted between one and three updates on each of these platforms during an election day, as displayed in Figure 2. However, she posted updates more frequently on the first and last election days.

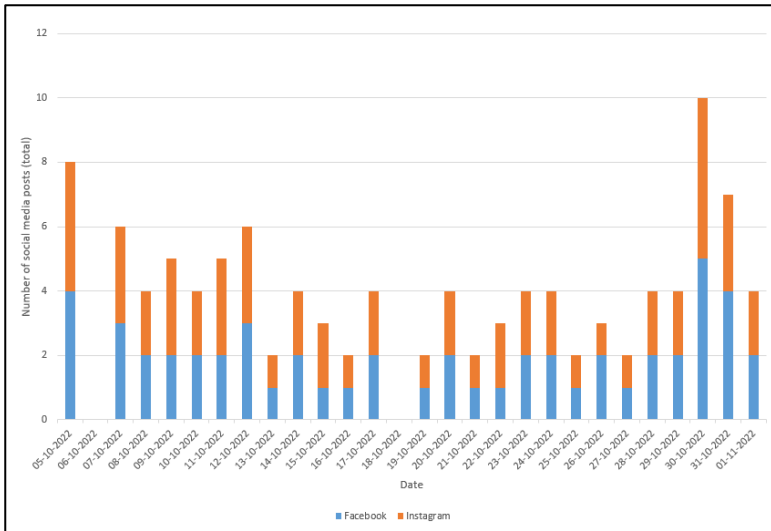


Figure 2: Number of social media posts per day (Mette Frederiksen)

Overall, she utilised a transmedia storytelling strategy on her social media platforms, in that she posted the same content on Facebook and Instagram during the election. The only differences between her Facebook and Instagram were that i) Live question sessions with voters were only hosted on Facebook and ii) A series of shorter videos from face-to-face meetings with voters during the election were only uploaded to Instagram. Apart from these smaller differences, the content was similar across her social media, and she conveyed the same overall narrative.

One of The Social Democratic Party's election campaign slogans, "Safely through uncertain times", captures the overall narrative in Frederiksen's social media campaign well. A lot of Frederiksen's social media communication during the election is centered around the current polycrisis situation in Europe, with the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis, and the rising inflation, and her party's solutions to these challenges; or at the least how to alleviate the consequences for Danes' private finances. The first post uploaded to her social media after the announcement of the election introduces this narrative in her election campaign<sup>5</sup>. The post is a video, where Frederiksen sits behind a desk, there are clips to Danes in different age groups, and solemn piano music is playing in the background. Talking directly to the Danes, Frederiksen begins by saying: "I understand if you are worried about the future"<sup>6</sup> (October 5, 2022). She continues to elaborate on the polycrisis situation in Europe and concludes the video by saying that the Danes ought to vote for the party, which

they believe can steer Denmark “safely through uncertain times” (October 5).

According to Frederiksen, a key element in solving the challenges is broad interparty collaboration, and she uses the polycrisis narrative as a steppingstone to appeal for collaboration across the political left- and right-wing in Danish politics after the election. As an example of this, Frederiksen writes on her social media on the day of the announcement of the election: “The election campaign is underway. This of course means that the political differences are drawn up. But when the election campaign is over, we must find solutions for the Danes together. And we must go safely through uncertain times” (October 5). This should be seen in the context that Frederiksen and The Social Democratic Party went to the polls on a broad government across the political middle after an election (Ritzau, 2022).

Within the overall polycrisis narrative, Frederiksen’s social media campaign can be divided into five broader themes, that is: i) Election campaign updates, ii) Welfare updates, iii) International updates, iv) Climate updates, and v) Personal and private updates. The first theme is comprised of posts, where Frederiksen updates her followers on ongoing campaign activities, such as which Danish cities she will be visiting during the day or participation in televised events, and her reflections about the election. The second theme is posts concerning the Danish welfare state, its present challenges, and how to solve them. As mentioned, Frederiksen and the government is criticised for not having done enough about the problems in the healthcare and eldercare system in legacy media, and Frederiksen direct special attention to these two welfare areas in her social media campaign as well. For example, she writes the following on social media on October 20: “Except inflation in Europe and the rising prices, the challenges in our healthcare system and eldercare system are some of the most important issues right now. That is why we have made a master plan that goes over it all”. The quote is extracted from a longer post, where she reflects upon problems in Danish eldercare in the wake of the documentary “Outcry from the old people’s home”. The post reflects that she is aware of the critique of the government’s work in the media, and she addresses the critique explicitly in the post by writing: “I know some will think: These problems are not new. Why have you not solved them? We have started, but it is not enough. That is the honest answer”. This shows that Frederiksen not only uses social media to bypass the media and set her own agenda but also responds to critiques of her and the government in legacy media.

A third theme in Frederiksen’s social media is updates about her participation in international meetings as Danish head of state,

such as when she participated in a European Council meeting on October 7 to discuss the European crises with other heads of state. A fourth theme is updates where she addresses the climate crisis and initiatives to support the green transition. A final theme is updates concerning Frederiksen's personal traits and private life. Throughout the campaign, we learn that Frederiksen attends spinning in the morning (posts on October 14 and 30), loves animals (October 19), and enjoys a Sunday walk in the woods with her husband (October 23). These posts contribute to make Frederiksen appear more relatable to ordinary Danes. Additionally, the portrait of her as an animal and nature enthusiast also supports her party's profile as a party engaged in the green transition.

There are some overlaps between Frederiksen's online news presence and her social media campaign, in that she utilizes her social media platforms to distribute news about policy proposals and political announcements from her party. When it comes to negative press stories, however, the picture is more mixed. Frederiksen uses her social media to respond to the critique of the government's work regarding problems in the health- and eldercare system like she does in traditional media. However, the Mink Scandal and the FE case are not mentioned with one word on her social media, and she tries to set another agenda instead.

### **Vanopslagh's campaign**

Vanopslagh was not very present in online legacy news during the election, while social media played a profound role in his election campaign (for a full overview, see Appendix 3). As displayed in Figure 3, he received no or very limited attention in the news media on average. However, there are some fluctuations in his presence in online legacy news media during the election campaign, and he is more present on October 10-12, again on October 18-19, around October 22 and during the last days of the election.

The first two spikes in his online news presence are due to two negative press stories related to him and LA. The first concerns Vanopslagh's personal housing conditions. After his election to the parliament in 2019, he moved address from Copenhagen, where the parliament is located, to West Denmark. By doing so, he got free accommodation in Copenhagen and additional payment for double housekeeping by the parliament. In the media, he has previously been accused of moving address for his own financial gain, and the issue got renewed attention during the election in connection with his repayment of the funds. Vanopslagh has acknowledged the mistake in legacy media and explained that it was due to his insufficient knowledge of the housing rules in the parliament. The second story

concerned the party’s attitude towards an older policy proposal by New Right, which gained new attention during the election when the Danish right-wing parties hosted a joint press conference. New Right’s suggestion was to give Danes in older homes the right to de-select home carers with a headscarf, and Vanopslagh initially expressed LA’s support to the proposal. However, Vanopslagh later withdrew the party’s support, and the media framed it as an attitudinal U-turn by the party. On October 22, the increase in Vanopslagh’s online news presence was because of the news that his party stood well in the most recent opinion polls. During the last days of the election, he was mentioned in broader articles about the election and its outcome.

In addition to these spikes in his presence, he did receive *some* coverage over the course of the election. Like Frederiksen, he was mentioned in relation to political events and political analyses, and when he presented new policy on behalf of LA or responded to other parties’ political statements. He also received some coverage because of his and LA’s success with the social media TikTok. However, his general exposure was much lower than Frederiksen’s.

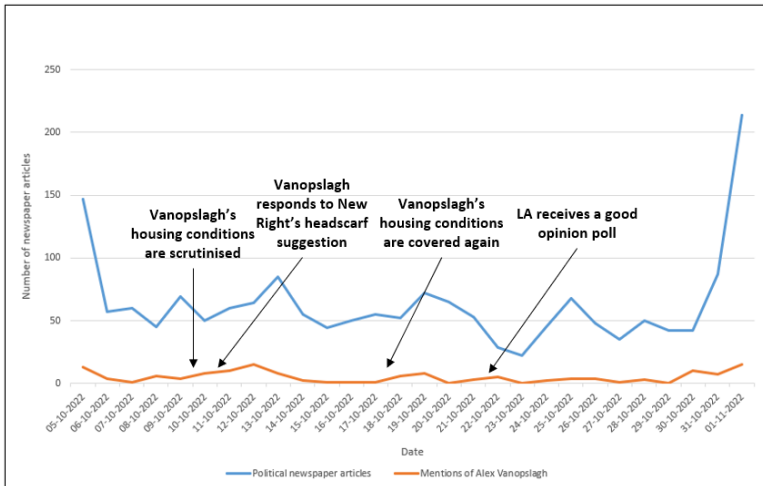


Figure 3: Number of political newspaper articles and mentions of Alex Vanopslagh per day

Social media played a profound role in Vanopslagh’s 2022 election campaign. As shown in Figure 4, Facebook and TikTok were the platforms used most actively in his campaign<sup>7</sup>. He used TikTok even more towards the end of the campaign, perhaps because he and LA had success using the platform early in the campaign among younger citizens. His use of Instagram and Twitter was somewhat

more sporadic, in that he some days posted several updates on these platforms, while he did not post anything other days.

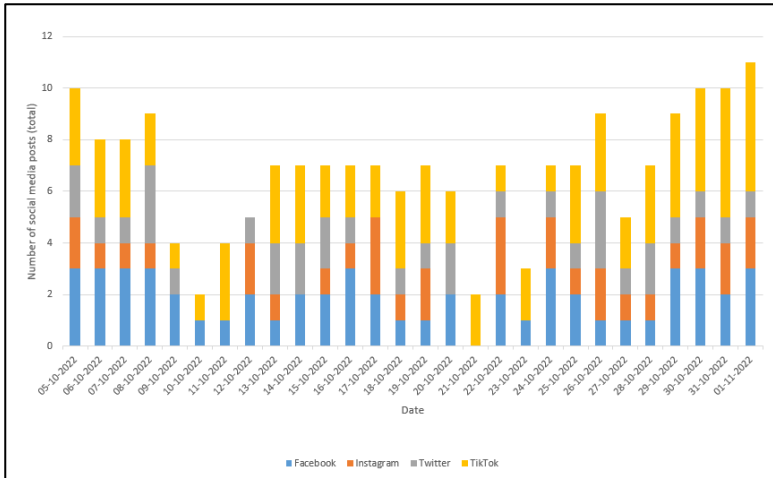


Figure 4: Number of social media posts per day (Alex Vanopslagh)

Vanopslagh utilised a combined transmedia storytelling and diversification strategy in his social media campaign. The transmedia storytelling strategy was expressed in a common narrative across his social media. Unlike Frederiksen, who mainly focused on her party's own policy, Vanopslagh's narrative on social media was built around a critique of the PM and the government. This critique is comprised of two aspects. The first aspect is a general critique that Frederiksen has abused the power as PM. Here, he uses the Mink Scandal as the prime example of the said abuse. The second aspect is connected to the first and regards Frederiksen's election campaign narrative. According to Vanopslagh, Frederiksen adopted the polycrisis narrative to instil fear into the Danes and thereby shift the focus away from her alleged abuse of the power. As an example of this, he writes the following in a Facebook post on October 5: "The government is de facto overthrown and forced to announce an election (...). The [PM] of course wants the election to be about something entirely different. About that the Danes ought to be afraid and seek security in the mother of the country's arms", the mother of the country being Frederiksen. He uses the abuse of power narrative as a steppingstone to depict LA as a party that offers the opposite of the government: transparency, the rule of law, hope, optimism, and a fundamental believe that the Danes are capable of much themselves without state interference. As he writes later in the post referred above: "[LA] will not cultivate Judgment Day rhetoric (...) to make



the voters scared. (...) I am and will continue to be incurably hopeful on Denmark and the Danes' behalf".

Even though Vanopslagh conveys a common narrative across his social media, he also draws in part on a diversification strategy. This is expressed in some variations in the content uploaded to his social media platforms during the election. Facebook is his broadest platform, used to share many kinds of content from election campaign updates to requests for donations to LA's election campaign, promotion of classical liberal political causes (such as lower taxes, increased liberty of choice in the Danish welfare state, and less bureaucracy), and more personal and private updates with a humoristic tone. There are some resemblances between the content on his Facebook and the Instagram and Twitter profiles, however, with some nuances.

Generally, the content on Instagram is lighter and less political than on Facebook, and the platform is mostly used to share continuous campaign updates, humoristic videos, and personal anecdotes. The content on Twitter is more political like Facebook but is used more to comment on the everyday issues brought up over the course of the campaign; perhaps with the aim of being cited in legacy media. An example of such a political issue is the previously mentioned FE case. Vanopslagh try to capitalise on Findsen's book publication to support the abuse of power narrative in his campaign and spent much time dissecting the case on his Twitter. For example, on the day of Findsen's book publication, he writes the following on Twitter: "It seems as if the government top wanted to get rid of Lars Findsen at any cost (...)" (October 13).

The posts on TikTok adheres to the overall narrative as well, but the specific content on the platform is more unique and appears to be a separate track in his social media campaign. The platform is comprised of a combination of i) political content, for example shorter clips of Vanopslagh's speeches in the parliament or televised debates, ii) shorter humoristic videos with a political element, and iii) more personal content around Vanopslagh's person. The main user group on TikTok is younger citizens (The Danish Ministry of Culture, 2021a), and a profound difference to the other platforms is that the content is much more centred around issues of interest to the young, such as free choice in youth education, possible solutions to the climate crisis, and low youth well-being. His dissemination of the issues is supported by a playful and humoristic communicative style, which mirrors other content the young meets on the platform.

Like Frederiksen, there is a moderate overlap between mentions of Vanopslagh in the news and his social media campaign. Vanopslagh uses his social media profiles to share news of policy

proposals, political announcements, and good opinion polls to LA, but unlike Frederiksen he completely refrains from commenting on negative press stories on social media. Instead, he tries to set another political agenda on his online platforms.

## Concluding discussion

In this article, I presented the results from a case study of two Danish party leaders' social media campaigns and online news presence during the 2022 national election. As expected, the study found that the PM in power was more present in online legacy news during the election than opposition party leader Vanopslagh. Both party leaders used social media actively in their campaigns, but Vanopslagh was on a broader set of social media than Frederiksen.

Both party leaders utilised a transmedia storytelling strategy in their social media campaigns but adopted different narratives. Frederiksen, on the one hand, adopted a *polycrisis narrative* and focused on the European crises, and how to get Denmark safely through them in her campaign. Vanopslagh, on the other hand, used an *abuse of power narrative* and centred his campaign around a critique of the PM and the government for abusing their power with the Mink Scandal as the most profound example. Vanopslagh also, in part, drew on a diversification strategy in his social media campaign, in that he utilised the platforms for different purposes within the overall narrative. Especially TikTok was a separate track in his campaign, used to communicate to the young generation.

In online legacy media, Frederiksen and Vanopslagh were both mentioned i) in relation to political events and political analyses during the election, ii) when they presented new policy on behalf of their parties or responded to other parties' proposals, and iii) negative press stories concerning themselves or their party. For Frederiksen, the negative press stories included the Mink Scandal, the FE case, and critiques of the government for not having done enough to solve issues in the health- and eldercare systems. For Vanopslagh, the main negative press story regarded his personal housing conditions and that he, according to the media, wrongfully received state funds for double housekeeping.

The party leaders used their social media profiles to share positive news with their followers. When it came to negative press stories, however, Vanopslagh refrained from commenting on them on social media. For Frederiksen, the picture was more mixed. She did not touch upon the Mink Scandal or the FE case but did respond to the critique of the government in relation to the problems in Danish health- and eldercare on social media. That she replies to some

issues, which are unfavourable to her party, is perhaps due her current position as PM and that she is held more accountable for societal problems – especially on a Social Democratic core area like welfare.

Thus, there were both similarities and differences between the party leaders' campaigns. An important similarity is that social media played a profound role in both campaigns, even though they had different prerequisites in terms of news exposure during the election. This supports findings in the previous literature that social media are increasingly used by both major and minor candidates and points towards a process of normalization. However, an important difference is that Vanopslagh used a broader set of social media and to a greater extent capitalised on each of their affordances than Frederiksen. Based on existing research, a likely explanation to this is that he experienced poorer access to legacy media and needed alternate ways to disseminate political messages on behalf of himself and the party.

However, it is also important to consider that their parties have different voter bases, and that they may prioritise different campaign tools for this reason. Whereas LA's voter base are young citizens, the average Social Democratic voter is older comparatively speaking (Hansen, 2021). From existing research, we know that citizens have different media habits depending on their age (The Danish Ministry of Culture, 2021b). While middle-aged and older citizens mainly use legacy media for news consumption, social media is a larger news source for the young (Schröder et al., 2022). In addition to this, there are also differences regarding the social media they use. Middle-aged and older citizens are on Facebook and to some extent Instagram, while TikTok is a popular platform among the young (The Danish Ministry of Culture, 2021a). Thus, the reason that social media play a profound role in Vanopslagh's campaign is likely also related to the party's young voter base and that it is an important mean to reach this base.

Another important reason for differences in the party leaders' campaigns regards their parties' parliamentary positions and election goals. Vanopslagh and LA aimed for more mandates in the parliament after an election and were likely, at least to some extent, vote-seeking in their campaign with a concept from Strom (1990). To achieve this goal, they tried to capitalise on the widespread public critique of the PM and the government by adopting the abuse of power narrative on social media. By comparison, Frederiksen's concerns were wider. The Danish Social Democratic Party has traditionally been an office-seeking party (Larsen et al., 2020), and the 2022 election was no exception. However, to remain in power at the 2022 election, they needed new government partners, since The Social

Liberal Party had announced that they would not support a Social Democratic one-party government again. This is likely part of the reason why Frederiksen adopted the polycrisis narrative in her social media campaign: Because it gave her a stepping-stone to appeal to broad collaboration.

The current study has some strengths that are worth mentioning. First, the small-N design enabled me to cover a large part of the case politicians' campaigns during the election, whereas previous research tends to analyse data from one or few media outlets. Second, I utilised a qualitative methodological approach to gain in-depth knowledge of new campaign dynamics at play in a hybrid media environment and the interplays between legacy media and social media. However, the study also has its limitations. First, the external validity of the findings is relatively low, given that it is based on analyses of two election campaigns. However, I expect the findings to be generalisable to major and minor candidates like Frederiksen and Vanopslagh. Second, the article only covers parts of the legacy media content published and does not provide an all-encompassing overview of Vanopslagh and Frederiksen's legacy media presence during the election. However, the study included content from some of the most influential and used legacy media in Denmark, and it is not expected to deviate markedly from other legacy media content, at least in the national news press. Future research is encouraged to include a broader set of legacy news media in the analysis, including outlets like tv and radio, as well as regional, and local news media to broaden the findings.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The figures originate from a pre-study to my PhD dissertation, where I did a quantitative content analysis of Danish parliamentarians' presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in 2020.

<sup>2</sup> It was decided to collect TikTok posts from the party's profile because this is where posts about Vanopslagh were shared and not on his personal profile. Only posts featuring Vanopslagh were included in the dataset.

<sup>3</sup> The TikTok data was collected from a personal device and did not involve the use of any Aalborg University hardware.

<sup>4</sup> The dictionary considered that politicians sometimes are mentioned by middle name and other times only by last name in the media.

<sup>5</sup> The video can be accessed here: <https://www.facebook.com/mette-frederiksen.dk/videos/646504900340275/> (latest accessed on May 26, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> All quotes are translated from Danish to English by the author.

<sup>7</sup> The average number of posts per day on Vanopslagh's social media profiles were as follows: 1.9 posts on Facebook, 1.2 posts on Instagram, 1.2 posts on Twitter, and 2.5 posts on TikTok related to Vanopslagh.

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# Views from the other side

## Party perceptions on news media in Swedish election campaigns 2010-2022

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### Abstract

The study explores the perspectives of political parties regarding news media coverage in election campaigns. By analyzing official post-election analyses produced by Swedish political parties from 2010 to 2022, the study offers a novel approach to the study of political party views of news media. The findings largely support the arguments proposed by mediatization literature, highlighting the significance of media in party communication. Parties display eagerness to attract positive media attention while expressing regret over inadequate or negative publicity. More surprisingly, there is a lack of references to media bias in the reports, suggesting that the hostile media effect is not a major concern among Swedish parties. Despite criticisms related to irrelevant reporting and perceived negative coverage, party perceptions towards the media remains predominantly neutral. The study contributes to the understanding of the complex relationship between political parties and news media in the context of election campaigns.

### KEYWORDS

election campaigns, news media, mediatization, hostile media effects, Sweden

## Looking back to go forward

News media coverage of elections has been a distinctive feature of political communication studies for long time in the Nordic countries and has been approached from diverging perspectives, not at least in national content analyses (e.g. Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019 and 2023; Blach-Örsten & Eberholst, 2022). At the same time, less is known about the perceptions on news media and elections from the main counterpart of news media in election campaigns, namely the political parties. Even if sporadic emotional reactions from party representatives on this topic certainly are common – especially soon after electoral defeats – there is a lack of more systematic observations on party perceptions of news media performances during election campaigns.

This study intends to fill this gap by analyzing political party perceptions of news media performances during four national elections campaigns in Sweden 2010–2022. The study is based on the official post-election analyses produced by the political parties after every election. Sweden is an interesting case to study as political parties are relatively transparent and accessible, regularly produce official post-election campaign analyses and make them public.

Party comments in post-election analyses are normally expressed by leading representatives of the party in an early post-election stage. The most prominent and exclusive documentation of party post-election reflections is probably when the party appoint a joint task force of prominent party representatives with the special mission to investigate and analyse party activities during the campaign, to shed new light on successes and failures and to come up with recommendations and road maps for future election campaigns. These documents offer internally sanctioned party analyzes of possible explanations for the electoral outcome, and normally also reflect upon the role of news media during the election campaign.

Such political party perceptions of news media performances are interesting to study for several reasons. First, there is a general belief in political communication studies – confirmed in several observations of late election campaigns – that news media has gained importance in political opinion processes over time (Bennett & Entman, 2001; Esaiasson & Håkansson, 2002; Davis, 2019; Taras & Davis, 2022). This change has often been characterized as a process of mediatization where news media have become more central and decisive for peoples' understanding of politics and consequently with greater potential power to influence voter behavior (Mazzolini & Schulz, 1999; Asp, 2014). Second, and given the assumed importance of news media, the debate about media bias in political reporting has raised questions around news media potentials to

influence the outcome of elections, (Wolfsfeld, 2011; Kreiss & McGregor, 2022).

If the common experience is that news media have become more influential in setting the political agenda, framing political issues, and determining party popularity on public opinion by more or less partisan reporting, it is plausible to believe that news media performance and activities are regular topics in the post-election evaluations, and to some extent also an integrated part in general discussions about reasons for party successes or failures. The basic assumption here would be that news media will be more positively described in post-election analyses if campaign activities have been successful and gained substantial media coverage, if the party agenda has been mirrored by the media agenda, and if the party and party leader has been portrayed in a favorable way. Correspondingly, less media coverage without focus on party salient issues and perspectives can be assumed to result in more negative evaluations of news media performance during the election campaign.

However, such patterns are most likely to appear if the ideas of mediatization and media bias are commonly acknowledged by the parties and integrated in their evaluation schemes. If not, successful parties may claim that their skills in using direct or digital communications have made them less dependent on news media performances, while less successful parties focus on internal miscalculations when discussing the electoral defeat. Consequently, post-election analyses serve as a useful tool for understanding to what extent party perceptions of mediatization and media bias in terms of hostile media effects are relevant in the evaluations of election campaigns,

Knowledge about how political parties most often interpret electoral developments in relation to their perceptions of the news media is limited. By systematically investigating official party documents in terms of post-election evaluations in Sweden 2010-2022, the intention of this article is to contribute to our understanding of how political parties look upon the role of news media in electoral contexts, to what extent such views are influenced by news media performances and, finally, to what degree the theoretical concepts of mediatization of politics and hostile media effects are acknowledged by the political parties.

The comparison of post-election analyses from Swedish political parties offers an excellent opportunity to investigate to what extent such references to media influence and mediatization of politics as well as hostile media effects appear in the party documents, as well as observing the most prominent themes when news media are portrayed positively, negatively or neutrally. The findings largely support the arguments proposed by mediatization literature,

highlighting the significance of media in party communication. Parties display eagerness to attract positive media attention while expressing regret over inadequate or negative publicity. More surprisingly, there is a lack of references to media bias in the reports, suggesting that the hostile media effect is not a major concern among Swedish parties. Despite criticisms related to irrelevant reporting and perceived negative coverage, party perceptions towards the media remains predominantly neutral.

The next section in the article discusses theoretical points of departure – mediatization and hostile media effects – for examining relations between political parties and news media. Then follows a section of the study, methods, and material. The result section displays data and illustrative themes from the post-election analysis and is followed by a discussion section answering the research questions in the study and analyzing the relevance of mediatization and hostile media effect theories in understanding party perceptions of media performance.

### **Theories of influential and partisan media**

The traditional perspectives on media-and-politics-relations during election campaigns in liberal democracies have been an adversary and conflict-oriented model, and an exchange model based on mutual interdependence between media and parties where media offer politicians access to an audience and politicians offer journalists information (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995). However, mediatization theory suggests that both media content and political actors are today mainly guided by media logic (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Esser & Strömbäck, 2014). By systematically examining political parties' perceptions of news media performance and importance over time it is possible to determine to what extent mediatization theory in this dimension is valid in a long-term perspective. This study thus contributes to the understanding of mediatization theory by exploring political party perspectives on news media power and the most prominent themes in party evaluations related to news media influence.

Parallely, leading news media have been associated with the idea of objective reporting based on professional journalistic norms and routines (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014; Schudson, 2018). However, there is a widespread belief that news media do not manage to balance different political viewpoints properly and thus offer the public articles and news features that are slanted, either ideologically biased, directly favoring specific political parties or candidates in content or structurally biased, indirectly favoring parties or candidates

in the ways news are framed (Cushion & Thomas, 2018). This study contributes to the understanding of hostile media effect theory by exploring political party perspectives on news media partisanship and the most prominent themes in party evaluations related to news media bias.

### **Mediatization**

Mediatization is a theoretical concept used to analyze critically the interrelation between changes in media and communications on one hand, and changes in culture and society on the other. (Couldry & Hepp, 2013: 197). Mediatization refers to social change processes in which media have become increasingly influential in, and deeply integrated into, different spheres of society and where society becomes dependent on media and the media logic (Hjarvard, 2008; Strömbäck, 2008; Mazzoleni, 2008; Asp, 2014). In this article, mediatization is analyzed in line with an institutionalist tradition where media are perceived as independent institutions with their own set of rules and where mediatization refers to the adaptation to these institutionalized roles (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Lundby 2014).

In the context of politics, mediatization has been defined as a long-term process through which the importance of the media and their spill-over effects on political processes, institutions, organizations, and actors have increased (Mazzoleni, 2008; Strömbäck, 2008). Political communication studies have also indicated that contemporary political party campaigning is increasingly mediatized and that political institutions adapt to the news media logic (Cook, 2005; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014; Davis, 2019; Author, 2022).

Mediatization also appears in several analytical dimensions (Asp, 1986; Mazzoleni & Schultz, 1999; Strömbäck, 2008; Asp & Bjerling, 2014). In one of these dimensions, political actors or organizations are assumed to increasingly adhere to news media logics to influence the political agenda and reach citizens and possible voters through news media channels and platforms. Mediatization at this organizational level may be defined as a reaction of political organizations following their perception that media and mediated communication gain importance in their environment and implies change in organizational structure and behavior (Donges & Jarren, 2014).

Empirical work firmly rooted in the mediatization concept is still relatively scarce (Hepp et al., 2015, Bolin 2023). Some empirical frameworks have been elaborated (Landerer, 2013; Esser & Strömbäck, 2014) but there is a great need for further empirical research on the extent to which politics in its different facets has gradually become mediatized (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). However, one

study of political party organizations argues that the dimensions of mediatization on an organizational level could be studied empirically by examining explicit indicators such as perceptions (growing importance and relevance of media), structure (increase of staff or experts working with communication) and behavior (increase of media activities, diversification of communication channels) (Donges & Jarren, 2014: 189–191).

Even if empirical data do confirm that political actors today actually take news media into account when they plan election campaign activities and package political messages (Asp & Bjerling, 2014; Author, 2022), the adaption processes of political actors do not need to be conform and static. Given the fact that political party responses to mediatization are assumed to be multiple and flexible it is interesting to examine party perceptions of, and reactions on, news media influence in post-election analyses and the thematic contexts in which they most often appear.

The perceived importance and relevance of news media may be used as indicators of party 'reactions' to mediatization and improve the understanding of why political parties portray news media in terms of positively, negatively, or neutrally evaluations. Perceptions are of course not always based on reality but oftentimes it may be the "presumed" influence of the media that induces political actors to act in a forward-looking manner (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014: 11).

### **The hostile media effect**

The hostile media effect is best illustrated when opposing partisans, representing diverging opinion on a topic, claim that the same news item is unfairly biased against their own point of view and are favoring political opponents. The hostile media effect may appear despite the fact media content is balanced if the topic covered is perceived as very important for the partisans. The hostile media effect thus illustrates the subjective character of information processing and how partisan audiences easily perceive information as contrasting their own positions. Previous research show that the hostile media effect is more evident among politically engaged segments of people with strong opinions on an issue (Vallone et al., 1985; Schmitt et al., 2004).

The hostile media effect has primarily been examined among citizens, and not among political elite groups. However, there are reasons to assume that also politicians will find media content biased when issues that are important for them are covered. One reason is that politicians' perceptions of journalism, compared to citizens, are more driven by political engagement and sense of self-esteem and by self-interests and strategic considerations, where media

coverage may be used as a factor for explaining electoral defeats (Matthes et al., 2019; Soontjens et al., 2021) or as one study puts it: 'Media criticism might help to shield the candidate in the minds of voters against further negative coverage they encounter' (Domke et al., 1999: 39).

In the few studies among political elites, the hostile media effect seems to have been more articulated among politicians to the far right (Matthes et al., 2019). A recent study of politicians in Belgium (Soontjens et al., 2021) showed that political elites seemed to be quite frustrated with the media and especially their influence on politics. There was a general tendency to perceive news as biased against the own party and politicians who got most media coverage was the most critical. The findings indicated that politicians were not only driven by strategic considerations but also by genuine perceptions of media bias (Soonetjens et al., 2021: 999).

A Norwegian study (Kolltveit et al., 2022) that compared the hostile media effect among politicians, journalists, and citizen indicated small differences among the three categories, but general perceptions of media as sensation-oriented and conflict-oriented were associated with higher hostile media effects than in groups who emphasized the societal role of media. Results also showed that overall, the hostile media effect was not very articulated in Norway, but politicians were slightly more critical to the media than other groups, and in line with previous research politicians to the right were most critical and claimed that media were biased against their own parties. The Norwegian study mainly analyzed local politicians' perceptions of news media.

As the existence of possible hostile media effects among politicians are less explored it is highly relevant to analyze whether such perceptions of news media performance appear in the post-election analyses and in different thematic contexts. This contributes to the understanding of possible mechanisms that may trigger party accusations of partisanship in news media.

To sum up, it is reasonable to assume that party perceptions of news media during election campaigns are formed by the possible strength and influence of news media and the possible bias in news reporting. The combination of these two dimensions on party perception of news media performance can be summarized as follows (fig. 1):



	Low degree of Mediatization	High degree of mediatization
High degree of media bias	Mostly neutral	Mostly negative
Low degree of media bias	Mostly positive	Mostly neutral

Figure 5: Model for exploring political party perceptions of news media performance.

As illustrated in the figure above, party criticism of news media during election campaigns are expected to be most articulated in cases where news media are perceived both as powerful and central in political communication processes and as partisan in election campaign coverage. In election contexts where news media both are perceived as less powerful and non-partisan media criticism is less likely to be expressed. In cases where media are perceived as powerful and non-partisan or less powerful and partisan media perceptions can be expected to be mostly neutral.

In this study, the official post-election analyses documents provided by political parties during the period 2010–2022 are used to compare party perceptions of news media performances and to shed new light on the debate of the validity of the theoretical concepts of mediatization and hostile media effects by testing them against robust empirical data, consistent over time but produced under varying media and politics-relations.

## The study, data, and method

### The study

The objective of the study is to explore Swedish political party perceptions of news media performances in post-elections analyses during the latest four elections campaigns 2010–2022. The following research questions are raised:

*RQ1:* How are news media performances perceived in party post-election analyses 2010-2022?

*RQ2:* To what extent do the parties' perceptions of the news media in post-election analyses express ideas about mediatization?

*RQ3:* To what extent do the parties' perceptions of the news media in post-election analyses express ideas about hostile media effects?

## **Data**

To examine party perceptions of the media in election campaigns, we have collected and analyzed official post-election analyses prepared by political parties following each general election (2010, 2014, 2018, and 2022). These post-election analyses serve as reports that scrutinize and evaluate party activities during the campaign. Their aim is to provide fresh insights into the party's accomplishments and shortcomings, as well as to propose recommendations and strategies for future electoral campaigns. Consequently, these documents offer internally endorsed party assessments regarding potential explanations for the electoral results, while also reflecting on the role of news media throughout the election campaign.

To the best of our knowledge, despite the relatively wide availability of parties' post-election analyses as strategically sanctioned documents by party leadership, there is a lack of systematic research that has comprehensively analyzed their content (but, see Bjereld et al., 2018). Therefore, this study can also be regarded as innovative in this regard.

Although parties have been increasingly disclosing their post-election analysis reports to the public, this has not consistently been the practice. As a result, our sample of reports is not exhaustive. In this paper, we analyze 20 reports from the past four elections held between 2010 and 2022, encompassing seven of the eight parties represented in the Swedish parliament. The Sweden Democrats are excluded from the analysis as they have not made any reports publicly available. As previous research indicates that far right parties tend to be more critical of traditional media compared to other parties (Matthes et al., 2019; Bolin et al., 2022), we need to be cautious not to draw conclusions about party families not represented in the study.

On average, the reports consist of approximately 20,000 words, although there is considerable variation, ranging from around 6,000 words to nearly 40,000 words. In total, there are 316 coded statements of instances of media in the reports corresponding to about 16 instances per report. Despite longer reports generally containing a greater number of media instances, the correlation between the two is relatively weak, suggesting that shorter reports tend to

allocate relatively more attention to the media (see appendix, table A1 for a complete list of the analyzed reports).

## Method

The analysis of the post-election analysis reports was facilitated by the use of Taguette, an open-source qualitative analysis software (Rampin & Rampin 2021). The coding process comprised three steps. Firstly, each occurrence of the search term "medi\*" was identified. Since our focus was on traditional media, any instances relating to social media were excluded. Moreover, occurrences of "medi\*" in headlines or table of contents were also disregarded. Additionally, instances that were unrelated to media, such as "median," "mediocre," "medicine," etc., were removed.

In the second step, the remaining instances of "medi\*" were categorized into two distinct groups: "description" and "future". The "description" category encompassed instances where the media was mentioned in relation to describing the election and campaign. This category was further divided into three subcategories based on whether the instance described something positive, neutral, or negative from the party's perspective. We also identified a fourth theme with instances that represented statements that discussed how the party might or should act in future endeavors. These statements can be either explicit recommendations regarding what actions the party should take in future endeavors or somewhat implicit suggestions on areas that could be enhanced. Nearly all of these statements revolve around different strategies to garner heightened and favorable media coverage. As this category is not related to the research questions, we do not include it in the qualitative analysis.

In the third step, we conducted an inductive process to identify recurring themes within each sub-category, aiming to obtain a more detailed assessment of the most significant perceptions about media in election campaigns. This step is closely linked to the research questions of the study by identifying to what extent and in what way parties perceive the media to be important and biased in any direction. As revealed in the empirical analysis, a distinction is made here regarding the extent to which positive/negative publicity can be attributed to the party's actions or if the media can be credited or blamed. This approach follows a bottom-up methodology where instances of medi\* were read multiple times before assigning them to different themes. The most prevalent themes identified are presented in the result section. Some themes are accompanied by illustrative quotes from the reports. Throughout these steps, discussions took place within the research group to challenge interpretations and validate the preliminary categorization (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## Results

Before we turn to the qualitative analysis, we note some overall patterns in the analyzed data (see appendix, table A2). The most prevalent type of statement concerning the media is neutral. Negative statements are somewhat more common than positive statements. There are some variations both over time and among parties. Regarding the temporal aspect, apart from a growing trend of more positive instances of media in the reports, no linear patterns can be observed. It is also worth noting that left-leaning parties tend to have relatively more negative statements than right-leaning parties. While we exercise caution in drawing far-reaching conclusions based on this finding, it is noteworthy that existing research generally suggests that right-wing parties are more skeptical toward the media than their left-wing counterparts (Matthes et al., 2019).

In the following section, we present the findings derived from the qualitative analysis conducted on the post-election analysis reports. The analysis is structured around three primary categories, as outlined in the methodology section: positive, negative and neutral. Within each category, we delve into various themes identified through an inductive thematic approach, as described in the data and method section. Table 1 provides an overview of the most recurrent themes identified, accompanied by concise descriptions elucidating the essence of each theme. Furthermore, the table illustrates the frequency of occurrence of the different themes within the analyzed material. However, it is important to exercise caution when interpreting the exact numbers, as they solely indicate the frequency of occurrence and do not denote the significance and clarity of each instance. Therefore, while we argue that, all else being equal, higher numbers indicate a greater prominence of specific themes in the post-election analysis reports, our primary interpretation of the data is based on the qualitative analysis, which we will now proceed to discuss.

Theme	Description	Occurrences
<b><i>Positive</i></b>		
Successful campaign events and political announcements	Positive media responses because of well-planned campaign events or the introduction of new policies	27
Party leader effects	Party leaders draw attention to the party and generate positive response in the media	17
Positive media image	General statements of much and/or positive publicity	12
<b><i>Negative</i></b>		
Disappointment or criticism of the media agenda	Skepticism about what or who the media focuses on.	29
Negative media image	General statements of little and/or negative publicity	25
Political failures and scandals	Misconduct among representatives or internal disagreements within the party that generated negative publicity	19
Failed campaign events and political announcements	Actions by the party that did not generate positive attention by media or where the party failed to do things that might have led to positive media attention.	18
<b><i>Neutral</i></b>		
On media	Descriptions on the role of media and how it has developed	38
Campaign and organization	Descriptions about how campaigns are planned and conducted	33

Neutral statements on the media agenda	Descriptions of what issues were high respectively absent from the media agenda	27
<b>Future</b>	Recommendations regarding actions and strategies to garner heightened and favorable media coverage.	28

Table 7: Most recurrent identified themes

### Positive statements

The positive statements that have been identified in the reports are predominantly those describing how the party itself has successfully generated media coverage through various means. There are three recurring themes that commonly emerge. The most prominent theme revolves around *successful campaign events and political announcements*. These statements illustrate instances where parties have received positive media responses because of well-planned campaign events or the introduction of new policies. For instance, the Left Party's 2014 report provides an illustrative example wherein the party's "demand to halt profits in the welfare sector" garnered increasing media attention, subsequently leading to a surge in support in the opinion polls. Another example is how the Moderates' post-election analysis from the same year reveals that the "emphasis on the Swedish diaspora garnered media attention at both the national and international levels". Yet another prominent political move that generated favorable publicity was when Ebba Busch, the leader of the Christian Democrats, used a traditional Swedish falukorv sausage as a visual aid during a party leader debate in the 2022 campaign. By showcasing the rising price of the falukorv, she aimed to symbolize the escalating inflation and highlight the negative implications for Sweden. "The falukorv received significant media coverage", the post-election analysis report succinctly summarized.

A second reoccurring theme is favorable mentions of *party leader effects*. This theme includes statements where it is suggested that party leaders skillfully draw attention to the party and generate what is perceived as a positive response in the media. This can be exemplified with how the Centre Party 2018 report simply states that "media's interest in the leader [Annie Lööf] of the party was high" or more elaborated as in how the Liberals report from the 2022 election summarized how their newly elected leader Johan Pehrson:

In the media, came to be portrayed as easygoing, humorous, and down-to-earth, symbolized by the fact that he was often served hot dogs during campaign visits. He became known as "the guy at the grill."

Another relatively common theme is instances of general statements of a *positive media image*. This may be instances of how the post-election reports simply cite how various media monitors report that the party has gained a lot and/or positive publicity or how the party received the media attention they rightfully deserved. The Liberals report for the 2018 election, for instance, observed that the party's relatively poor electoral performance could not be attributed to the "quantitative media impact" or the party being "invisible".

### **Negative statements**

Whereas the positive statements primarily are related to alleged successful party behavior, among the most prominent negative statements we find both those that are regarded as party failures and those that explicitly or implicitly blame the media and thereby partially express ideas about hostile media effects. The ones where media gets the blame are somewhat more frequent.

The most frequent theme identified is parties' *disappointment or criticism of the media agenda*. Basically, this theme includes various instances of how parties are skeptical about what and who the media focuses on. Several instances focus on how media instead of reporting on parties' policies and priorities rather emphasize game-theory and party tactics. In the Left Party's 2010 post-election analysis, it is observed, for instance, that "the substance of politics was overshadowed" and that the party could not do much "as media interest largely focused on the major parties in both blocs". An argument that resonates with the Christian Democrats' 2022 analysis:

The election campaign primarily revolved around game theory regarding the question of government formation, with few other statements, proposals, or attacks gaining prolonged visibility in the news feeds.

This theme also includes several instances of how media reported on "wrong issues". The Moderates report of 2014, for example, decries how the media agenda favored the Sweden Democrats when the debate almost exclusively dealt with the magnitude of the immigration although "a majority of voters support the current migration policy and do not want to restrict immigration in the manner advocated by the Sweden Democrats". And the Left Party analysis of 2022 concludes that:

There is a clear discrepancy between the issues perceived as most important by voters and those that have received the most media coverage. Healthcare, which was the top priority for voters, ranks sixth in media reporting and received less than half the media attention that the energy issue received.

The Greens' report of 2022, in turn, warned that the media agenda could have unintended consequences:

The polarization between urban and rural areas was another issue that received significant media attention. There is a need to scrutinize the image that has been portrayed. It is a problematic image, and it fosters a decrease in trust in society, an increase in "us-versus-them" sentiments, and ultimately benefits the influence of the far-right.

A second theme that was almost as common was instances of general statements of a *negative media image*. The Christian Democrat 2018 report, almost gleefully, observed how "anyone who followed the party's media coverage was painfully aware that it was largely a matter of when, rather than if, the party would be ousted from the parliament."

There are also instances of how the post-election reports, in contrast to the *positive media image* theme, cite how various media monitors report that the party has gained little and/or negative publicity. As expressed, for instance, by the Left Party 2010 report where it is concluded that "a well-executed election campaign is not enough [...], especially considering that we do not receive much free coverage in the media".

However, negative statements are not solely reserved for explicit or implicit media criticism that would indicate a hostile media effect. A number of instances can be referred to as *failed campaign events and political announcements* which are actions by the party that did not generate the anticipated positive attention by media or where the party failed to do things that might have led to positive media attention. The Centre Party report of 2022 describes a mismatch in how the party, rather than adhering to the concerns and everyday problems of the citizens instead "responded to questions that few voters and media outlets were asking" and the Christian Democrats' report the very same year acknowledged that the party was disadvantaged by the media logic's focus on the larger parties, but the situation "was exacerbated by their own choice to focus on issues where the party lacked a marketable differentiation from neighboring parties".



An additional related, but distinct, theme can be referred to *political failures and scandals*. This theme includes instances of misconduct among representatives that attracted negative media attention. The Christian Democrat analysis of 2018 for instance reports on how some of their MPs had made incorrect travel expense claims that created a negative media image. Other reports indicate how internal disagreements within the party have been unable to be kept away from the media, thereby generating negative publicity. In the Left Party 2022 post-election analysis report, it is for example described how “prominent party representatives demonstrated their support for the Kurds [...] by displaying a PKK flag” and how “this sparked a public discussion about whether the Left Party supports the PKK” although it was not part of the agreed-upon election strategy.<sup>8</sup> The Liberal Party’s 2022 report provides a more general discussion on party behavior and how the liberals consistently fail to maintain internal disagreements within the party.

The party is perceived to lack the ability to resolve conflicts. We are also unable to keep internal conflicts contained or sustainably unite all parts of the party in a common direction. Too often, engagement is channeled into taking positions in various internal debates and conflicts, which also spills over into the media portrayal and the public perception of the party.

### **Neutral statements**

The most common instances of medi\* are those that are categorized as *neutral*. This category includes several rather divergent themes. One relatively common theme refers to instances where media is mentioned in passing or in a way that does not refer to the overall question of the paper. These instances are, hence, disregarded.

The theme with most instances, we refer to as *on media*. This theme includes statements that more generally describe and discuss the role of media and how it has developed. It might for instance be descriptions of how “the media has a tendency to focus on the major parties in the final stages of an election campaign” as stated in the Centre Party report of 2018 or how “the significance of party leaders in the choice of party has gradually increased as election campaigns have become increasingly mediated” as the Liberals conclude the same year. More generally, it can be concluded that the relatively frequent occurrences of such statements lend some support for the mediatization theory and how parties become increasingly conscious of the news media’s needs and adapt to a media logic.

The Social Democrats’ 2014 report is perhaps the best illustration of this development in how it devotes considerable space to

describe the development of news media and amongst other things highlight the central role of media:

From the 1960s onwards, broad commercial mass media increasingly took over that role [as agenda setters]. By making their own priorities, guided by the logic of the mass media, by examining what voters themselves wanted to prioritize, and by highlighting conflicts between and within parties in ways they had not done before, the mass media became more powerful as agenda setters. The competition among parties for media coverage largely revolved around influencing the priorities of the mainstream mass media, just as businesses, interest groups, and others sought to influence them to bring attention to their specific issues in the public debate. To a large extent, this still holds true today. Mass media remains the most important factor. However, the agenda is now shaped in a more complex interplay among actors, where social media, networks, and online platforms have come to play an increasingly significant role. To understand the agenda in an election campaign, all these factors—parties' own priorities, voters' priorities, mass media priorities, as well as the influence of social media—must be taken into account.

The second most frequent theme among the neutral statements can be referred to as *campaign and organization* which are references to how the party has planned and conducted its election campaign. Within this theme there are various descriptions of how the organization handle questions from the media, statements of how parties' budget for media issues are smaller than for other parties and general statements that media strategies had been developed. In some instances, some more elaboration on this later point is presented. In the post-election analysis reports of 2022, for example, we learn that:

The Centre Party strategy for paid media prioritized reach and visibility, in other words, breadth over depth. The goal was to reach as many voters as possible on as many occasions as possible and to remind them that the Center Party existed as a liberal centrist alternative.

Whereas the Moderates "communication strategy for the election can be summarized with the motto 'media impact, personal influence'".

Finally, a third theme identified among the neutral statements refers to *neutral statements on the media agenda*. Most of these instances are descriptions of what issues were high respectively absent from the media agenda without explicit or implicit references to who may or may not be favored by this. In the Social Democrats 2018 report it is, for example, concluded that:

The media coverage of serious crime, particularly gang-related murders, peaked during the fall and winter of 2017-2018, and so did the voters' prioritization of crime as a political issue.

In a similar vein, the Greens' report of 2022 in a neutral way described how public opinion and the media agenda aligned about a month prior to the election:

In August, the voters' most important issues were unsurprisingly healthcare, law and order, education, and immigration. However, there was also an increase in concerns regarding personal finances and energy policy. These were issues that had a significant impact on people's everyday lives and received substantial media coverage, not just during the election period.

### **Conclusions: General acceptance of influential news media**

The examination of news media coverage in elections has long been a prominent field of study. However, there has been limited attention devoted to understanding the news media perspectives of political parties, who play a crucial role in the electoral process alongside the news media. Although sporadic reactions from party representatives on this subject are not uncommon, there remains a gap in systematic observations regarding party perceptions of news media performances throughout election campaigns. To address this gap, the present study conducted a comprehensive analysis of political party perceptions by examining the official post-election analyses produced by Swedish political parties after each election from 2010 to 2022.

The analysis largely supports the arguments put forth by the mediatization literature. Most of the post-election analysis reports that were analyzed contained explicit or implicit statements about the significance of the media. Political parties perceived news media as important, party organizational structures were transformed, and party behavior changed. Parties demonstrated eagerness to attract positive media attention and expressed regret over receiving insufficient or negative publicity. More specifically, the analysis indicates that parties strategically seek positive media publicity. Planned campaign activities and political statements aim extensively to attract positive media attention. Simultaneously, political leaders emerge as crucial tools for the same purpose.

However, while the influence of mediatization theory is evident, the overall assessment does not indicate any extensive partisan

hostility towards the media. The majority of references to the media in the reports are neutral statements. And although negative statements are slightly more prevalent than positive ones, not all of them explicitly blame the media for poor or hostile performance. Parties do offer criticisms of the media, such as concerns about the reporting of irrelevant issues or a perception of inadequate or overly negative coverage of their party. However, there are very few references to media coverage being used as an explanatory factor for electoral defeats. In fact, we find a surprising lack of references of a partisan media bias in the reports and hence conclude that it does not seem to be perceived as a great problem among those Swedish parties included in the analysis. Even though there is generally relatively little negative criticism, it is worth noting that parties also very rarely consider themselves positively favored by the media. Instances where the media is mentioned positively in the reports instead revolve around the party believing they have done something deserving of positive publicity.

Returning to the theoretical discussion and the framing of party perceptions of news media as a two-dimensional concept, we can therefore conclude that Swedish parties generally perceive news media to be both influential and central in their communication. Simultaneously, we also observe a relative absence of perceptions regarding the existence of media bias. Party perceptions towards the media, hence, tends to be predominantly neutral. The result is thus in line with our suggested model for anticipating party perceptions of news media performances where these perceptions were to be mostly neutral in contexts with higher degree of mediatization and lower degree of hostile media effects.

In conclusion, it is important to consider our findings as preliminary and a result of certain limitations. The study was conducted over a relatively limited time period, primarily capturing party perceptions of news media during that specific timeframe. We also did not have access to all the post-election analyses conducted during this period. However, since we analyzed a majority of them and covered seven out of eight parties, there are good reasons to believe they are representative of the entire population. It is worth noting, though, that we were unable to include the post-election analyses of the Sweden Democrats. Previous research has suggested that both far right parties in general (Matthes et al., 2019) and the Sweden Democrats specifically (Bolin et al., 2022) tend to be more critical of traditional media compared to other parties. Therefore, the results of this study may not necessarily reflect the viewpoints within this particular party. So even though our results should primarily be interpreted as an attempt to paint a general picture of Swedish parties' perceptions of news media, it cannot be overlooked that there might

be time- or party-specific variations that have not been identified. Therefore, we encourage further research that includes a longer time span and all political parties.

It is also important to note that we have not explicitly compared party perceptions of traditional news media with their perceptions of social media, nor have we tested the argument within the 'end of mediatization' debate (Schultz, 2004) regarding how new media may make parties more independent from news media. Therefore, while we argue that the analyzed data provides relatively strong support for the conclusion that parties attribute significant importance to news media and that media logic appears to be significant in their actions, this conclusion should be made with the reservation that we do not make any claims regarding the relative significance compared to other components of the total media eco system, for example, social media.

## NOTES

<sup>8</sup> PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) is the Kurdistan Workers' Party, a party that is designated as a terrorist organization by for example the United States, the EU and Sweden.

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# Exploring party-issue linkages as an indicator of issue ownership in election news coverage

## A study of two Danish national elections

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### Abstract

Research on issue ownership has placed political parties at the centre of studies. Recent research argues that this focus should be expanded. First, researchers have found that the salience of different political issues is affected by events exogenous to political parties, such as real-world events and societal trends. Second, researchers have pointed to the news media as an additional arena for issue ownership competition and maintenance, making the concept of party–issue linkages in election coverage an additional topic of study. This article contributes to election research by exploring party–issue linkage as an indicator of issue ownership for both political parties and political leaders in the two most recent national Danish elections. Both elections were affected by societal trends and real-world events. Based on large-scale content analysis and using descriptive statistics, we find a clear shift in media saliences from 2019 to 2022. We also find changes in party–issue linkage for both political parties and specific political leaders, especially regarding the most salient issues of the elections.

### KEYWORDS

elections, issue salience, issue competition, news media, agenda setting

## Introduction

Despite the continued focus on the professionalisation of political campaigns (Mykkänen et al., 2022) and so-called designer politics (Scammell, 2016), recent research suggests that controlling the issues that dominate the agenda is, in many ways, beyond the control of politicians and political parties (Gilardi et al., 2022). Factors external to national politics, such as global societal trends or real-world events, can upset even the most carefully planned political campaign (Dennison, 2019). In their study of changing issue salience in 28 European countries, Dennison and Kriesi (2023, p. 497) concluded that “electoral outcomes partially reflect societal trends and events over which parties have only limited control”. Indeed, outside events and crises have played leading roles in recent Danish national elections. In the 2011 election, the ongoing international economic crisis, beginning in 2008, influenced the election agenda (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2012; Stubager et al., 2013), while in the 2015 summer election, the issue of refugees and migration rose in importance (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2016) on the back of the escalating European refugee crisis that began in the spring of that year. Later analysis even named the refugee/migration issue a game changer in the campaign (Hansen & Stubager, 2017). Finally, in 2019, it was the ongoing international climate crisis that pushed the issue of climate and the environment to become one of the defining issues of the campaign (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2020; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020; Hansen & Stubager, 2021). The most recent national election, which took place in 2022, added more external events and crises to the political agenda, most notably, the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Blach-Ørsten & Eberholst, 2023; Hansen & Stubager, 2024).

In this article, we focus on the media saliences of different political issues, as well as on party–issue linkages and party–leader linkage in the news media, as indicators of both issue ownership and issue competition. We investigate the shifts in the 2022 election compared to the 2019 election, both of which occurred in volatile times. Since legacy news media still dominate the political information landscape in Denmark (Blach-Ørsten & Mayerhöffer, 2021), we understand issue salience as ‘media salience’, that is, the amount of attention news media gives to specific issues (Moniz & Wlezien, 2020). Regarding issue ownership and issue competition, we build on recent studies that argue that political parties compete in the news media regarding engaging in popular issues, causing so-called issue overlap, and even try to ‘steal’ issues from one another (Schwarzbözl et al., 2020; Merz, 2016; Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2015; Spoon et al., 2014). This is especially the case in multi-party

systems such as Denmark, where many parties challenge each other's ownership of the popular issues (Aalberg & Jenssen, 2007).

Based on large-scale content analysis of news outlets (N = 1411) and four weeks of election coverage (news items) from both 2019 (N = 54,090) and 2022 (N = 48,623), this article contributes to election studies in several ways. First, while election studies often only focus on a single election, this article compares the two most recent consecutive elections. Second, the article does not focus on the relationship between the party agenda and media agenda as is often the case. Instead, the focus is on the media saliences of different issues and the party–issue linkage (Schwarzbözl et al., 2020; Merz, 2016) across two elections. This focus allows us to investigate changes in both issue salience and the news media's party–issue linkage which in theory indicate changes in issue ownership and issue competition for both parties and party leaders.

### **Agenda setting, media salience and issue ownership**

While international studies often debate the decreasing power of legacy news media to set the political agenda (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008), studies with a focus on the Nordic countries find little evidence to suggest that legacy news media have become less important as agenda-setters (Djerf-Pierre & Shehata, 2017; Johansson & Strömbäck, 2019). Larger studies of news use in the same countries also show that legacy news media still dominate as information sources, even though younger news users also favour using social media (e.g., Schröder, Blach-Ørsten & Eberholst, 2023). Studies focusing on political knowledge in the modern high-choice media environment also find that using traditional or online news media correlates better with political knowledge than consuming a diet of social media (Castro et al., 2022). Finally, studies of hybrid media election campaigns in Denmark find that while it has become the new normal for many politicians to be active on X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook, few are very active and manage to capture many followers and much attention (Jensen & Schwartz, 2020). Summing up studies on the general relationship between politics and the mass media, Van Aelst and Walgrave (2016) confirm the influence of news media on politics. However, they also highlight that this influence is contingent on the specific issue at stake in the media coverage and whether political parties feel ownership of the issues at stake as well as whether the parties are in government or opposition. In other words, it matters which issues the news media focus on and which political parties feel ownership of these issues. The prominence of political issues is typically addressed as a question of salience.

Moniz and Wlezien (2020) distinguish between the *personal* salience of an issue, which is the degree to which an individual engages with that issue, and the prominence or visibility of issues in the news media or on the agenda of political parties, which they name *media* or *political* salience. Since this article focuses on the news media, we use the term ‘media salience’ in the rest of the text.

Issue ownership, on the other hand, refers to the fact that political parties, in the minds of voters, are associated with specific issues and thus considered to be more competent to deal with these issues than other parties (Petrocik, 1996; Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2015). Issue ownership can be explored from at least three perspectives: first, as related to party communications and the party agenda; second, as related to voters’ considerations of which party is more competent to handle a given issue, also labelled the associative dimension of issue ownership (Walgrave, Lefevere & Tresch, 2012); and third, as related to issue salience in the media coverage (Walgrave & De Swert, 2007; Merz, 2016; Tresch & Feddersen, 2019), a line of inquiry also labelled wave-riding theory (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1994; Dennison & Kriesi, 2023). This article’s focus is on issue salience in the news media, which is linked to the notion of news media coverage as an indicator of issue ownership, a relationship described by Merz (2016) as party–issue linkage. Walgrave et al. (2009, p. 157) state that “(...) appearing in the media to talk about an issue is one way parties use to claim and maintain issues (...)”, and Merz (2016, p. 437) similarly observes that “party–issue linkages in media coverage are one of the main sources of issue ownership”.

Originally, issue ownership was conceived of as stable and based on political parties’ historical origins, which are related to social class. Recent research debates whether this largely remains the case or whether issue ownership should be conceptualised as more dynamic and evolving over time (Walgrave et al.; 2009; Spoon et al., 2014; Seeberg, 2017). An argument supporting the latter position suggests that issue ownership is more dynamic and evolving in multi-party systems such as those of the Nordic countries, where many parties compete for the ownership of popular issues (Aalberg & Jenssen, 2007). Regarding issue competition in multi-party systems, Green-Pedersen and Mortensen (2015) state that issue competition may play different roles for diverse types of parties. Investigating the party agenda in a Danish context, they argue that mainstream parties need to maintain support from many voters and may thus need to be more flexible regarding issue competition and the changing saliences of different issues. Niche parties, which focus on a small number of particular issues related to their identities, are thus likely to be unaffected by issue competition from election to election. Thus, a ‘green party’ will always focus on climate and

environmental issues even if other parties shift their agendas (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2015). In sum, the more parties there are, the more party competition there is, and the more dynamic the battle for issue ownership.

Indeed, recent studies show that political parties and politicians compete for ownership of different issues in the news media, but that competition is particularly intense for ownership of the most media-salient issues (Gilardi et al., 2022). Merz (2016) highlights the significance of media salience, as he observes that parties emphasise different issues from election to election to “ride the wave of public opinion”, that is, to emphasise in their communications those issues that have high media salience (Merz, 2016, p. 441; Dennison & Kriesi, 2023, p. 486). Indeed, wave-riding theory argues that candidates will address the issues that voters find most important with both media salience and voter surveys being used as measures of importance (Burdina, 2014; Dennison & Kriesi, 2023). In other words, parties do not just focus on the issues they own. If other issues become more salient in the news media or public opinion surveys, they seek to own these other issues as well. Hence, if an issue originally owned by one party becomes increasingly salient in the news media, it will become interesting or necessary for other parties, especially mainstream parties, to compete for ownership of it. A case in point in Denmark is the issue of refugees and migration, which was originally owned by the right-wing Danish People’s Party but for which many parties, including the Social Democrats, have since competed for ownership (Green-Pedersen, 2006; Meret, 2021). Adding to this dynamic is the fact that issue salience is often determined by factors beyond the control of political parties (Gilardi et al., 2021), especially in volatile times when outside events affect the agenda. The focus of this article is exclusively on the media agenda. The aim is to investigate, using descriptive statistics, changes in the media saliences of different political issues from one election as well as changes to party–issue linkage and party–leader issue linkage.

## **Background to the 2019 and 2022 election campaigns**

The political system in Denmark is a parliamentary democracy. Elections to the Danish Parliament are based on proportional representation and held at least every four years, but it is within the power of the prime minister to call elections sooner if they so wish (Kristensen & Blach-Ørsten, 2020). The lack of fixed election dates makes the Danish system stand out in a Nordic context, and this fact is often mentioned to explain, at least in part, the constant attention to opinion polls in Danish media and the political parties’ constant

focus on being in permanent campaign mode (Kristensen & Blach-Ørsten, 2015). Denmark practises negative parliamentarism: the government does not need to have a majority in the parliament, but there must not be a majority against it either. Historically, Danish governments have often been minority governments (Kristensen & Blach-Ørsten, 2020). Another characteristic of the Danish political system is that it is truly a multi-party system, with a high number of political parties, a development that stems from both established parties splitting into new ones (Binderkrantz & Carlsen, 2002) and new parties being added to the mix (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020, 2023).

The Danish media system can be labelled a 'Nordic media welfare state' (Syvertsen et al., 2014), and as a media system, it falls under Hallin and Mancini's (2004) grouping of a 'democratic corporatist model'. Media use in Denmark still favours public service radio and television as well as the online news sites of the major broadsheet and tabloid newspapers (Schrøder, Blach-Ørsten & Eberholst, 2023). These characteristics jointly make Denmark an interesting case of study. With 14 parties running in the 2022 election and 13 in 2019, Denmark had more parties seeking election than both Sweden<sup>9</sup> and Norway<sup>10</sup> in their most recent elections. The number of political parties makes Denmark a special case for the study of issue competition since many of the parties will have to compete for ownership of the same issues. In this article, we focus on the 11 parties that stood for election in both the 2019 and 2022 national Danish elections, as some of the parties running in 2019 did not run in 2022, and 2022 also saw the creation of three new parties. The parties running in both 2019 and 2022 were the Social Democrats, the Liberal Party, the Danish People's Party, the Conservatives, the Christian Democrats, the New Right, the Alternative, the Red-Green Alliance, the Social Liberal Party, the Liberal Alliance, and the Green Left/Socialist People's Party (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020, 2023). Traditionally, the Social Democrats, the Liberal Party, and the Conservatives have been the large mainstream political parties in Denmark, with the niche parties the Alternative, the Red-Green Alliance, and the Green Left/Socialist People's Party making up the opposition to the left and the niche parties the New Right, the Liberal Alliance, and the Danish People's Party making up the opposition to the right.

For the sake of simplicity, Danish politics is usually divided into two blocs (Green-Pedersen, 2020), known as the 'red bloc' and 'blue bloc'. The Social Democrats and opposition to the left make up the 'red bloc' with the Social Liberal Party sometimes joining this bloc and sometimes not. The Conservatives and the Liberal Party together with the opposition to the right make up the 'blue bloc' with the Social Liberal Party sometimes joining this bloc and sometimes not (Green-Pedersen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020). The sorting of

Danish politics into two blocs is consistent with an analysis of voter behaviour, suggesting that just eight percent of the voters shift between blocs in national elections. It is also a common metaphor used by journalists, commentators, and politicians alike (Thomsen & Thomsen, 2023).

In 2019, the national election was a race between Mette Frederiksen (the Social Democrats and the red bloc) and Lars Løkke Rasmussen (the Liberal Party and the blue bloc). However, in 2022, three candidates ran for the position of prime minister: Mette Frederiksen (the Social Democrats), Jakob Ellemann-Jensen (the Liberal Party), and Søren Pape Poulsen (the Conservatives). The 2019 and 2022 election campaigns both ran for four weeks and are thus considered 'long' in Danish election campaign history<sup>11</sup>. The 2019 election also overlapped, although not completely, with the 2019 European Parliament (EP) election. This affected both elections, with the EU being a focus in the national election and the issues of both climate and the environment as well as refugees and migration being issues in both election campaigns (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020; Blach-Ørsten et al., 2020).

## Research questions

Politicians compete for ownership of different issues in the news media, but they especially compete for ownership of the most salient issues. The association of parties with different issues in news media coverage is called party–issue linkage. Party–issue linkage is a central source of issue ownership and thus a central component of issue competition and can occur when a party is mentioned in connection with an issue or when a party politician is quoted in connection with an issue. Merz (2016, p. 438) states that “a party–issue linkage can be a quote from a party’s politician or a whole interview in regard to a specific issue, or the mentioning of a party’s issue position, or any other coverage that ties a party to an issue”. An important caveat to this approach is the fact the news media do not give equal access to all parties or party leaders or place the same focus on all issues (Merz, 2016). Previous studies have shown the media to both favour the top candidates (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2020) and the sitting government, the so-called incumbency bonus (Hopmann, De Vreese & Albæk, 2011).

Based on the above, we ask the following three research questions (RQs).

**RQ1:** Related to the question of media salience, we ask *how the media salience of different political issues can be compared in the 2022 and 2019 elections.*

**RQ2:** Related to the issue of party–issue linkage, we ask first, regarding parties, *how party–issue linkage in the media in 2022 can be compared to that in the 2019 election*; and second

**RQ3:** Related to the issue of party–issue linkage with a focus on individual politicians, *how party leader–issue linkages in the media in 2022 can be compared to those in 2019*.

## Methodology

In this article, we investigate the differences between the 2022 and 2019 national elections using large-scale content analysis of Danish election coverage. We use the Infomedia database for our study. We sample 1411 outlets and a collection of nine political issues, each of which is made up of search strings that were developed in an iterative process together with Infomedia for previous studies (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2020). In total, our automated content analysis consists of four weeks of media election coverage (news items) in both 2019 (N = 54,090) and 2022 (N = 48,623). Our sample includes 1411 content providers that make one or more mentions of the national elections. Our media sample mirrors the digitalised high-choice media environment that characterises today’s Danish media system. The 1411 outlets thus include a broad number of online and offline media ranging from legacy news media, magazines, and local news media to online news sites as well as public service television and radio, specialised news sites, special interest organisations, and other relevant homepages. This inclusive approach helps to ensure that the sample include interviews and statements politicians have given to media other than mainstream news outlets.

The study in this article presents unique, historical comparative data on the two elections. We were precluded from accessing larger and smaller news media owned by Berlingske news media, as they do not allow access beyond a three-year period. Consequently, our historical study does not include *Berlingske* (one of the three leading national newspapers) or *B.T.* (one of the two leading tabloids). Our historical focus also affects the number of political parties included in the analysis: as we focus on the 11 political parties that stood for election in both 2019 and 2022, we exclude, for the 2019 election, the Klaus Riskær Pedersen Party and the Hard Line Party and, for the 2022 election, the Danish Democrats, the Independent Greens, and the Moderates (the last of which became one of the three government parties following the election).

Our analysis focuses on nine political issues that have been selected based on previous studies of the political, public, and news media agendas in Denmark (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2020):



- *Health and elder care*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, hospitals, hospital reforms, health personnel, care for the elderly, chronic disease, and local and regional health and elder care.
- *Climate and the environment*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, global warming, CO<sub>2</sub>, the circular economy, the green transition, pollution, climate policy, and climate quotas.
- *Schools and daycare*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, schools, kindergartens, and childcare.
- *Finance and the economy*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, the national budget, GNP, national economics, finance, and tax.
- *The European Union (EU)*, which includes a focus, on amongst other things, European politics and institutions.
- *Defence*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, defence politics, defence budgets, the military, and the navy.
- *Refugees and migration*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, migration, migration policies, migration status, and immigration law.
- *Pensions*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, retirement, early retirement, pension, and pension systems.
- *Culture, sport, and leisure*, which includes a focus on, amongst other things, free time, sports, theatre, culture, and children's theatre.

An automated content analysis was run through the Infomedia database in a specialised dashboard that, through proprietary search strings, was set up to identify political parties, party leaders, and the selected issues. It distinguishes between mentions and quotes. A *mention* refers to the proximity between words, such as a party, a politician, and an issue, while *quotes* are direct quotes in the text made by a named politician. Each issue was identified using search strings that were developed by the authors and Infomedia in an iterative process beginning with the 2019 election. The search for issues was run on headlines as well as text, including transcribed audio, and for a news item to be included in the analysis, a search word connected to one of the nine issues had to be mentioned in the headings or at least four times elsewhere in the news item. As the search strings are proprietary, they cannot be published widely; however, they were all built up using several keywords that define and exclude content. An example of a search string is included as Appendix A. Researchers can contact the authors for further information on search strings and the sample. One news item can contain references to several issues, mentions, and quotes.

Different issues within issue ownership have historically been linked to different political blocs and parties (Damsbo-Svendensen & Seeberg, 2024). Thus, looking at the study's nine issues from a bloc perspective, those of health and eldercare, climate and the environment, schools and daycare, pensions, and culture, sport, and leisure have traditionally been focused on by the red bloc, while defence, finance and the economy, the EU, and refugees and migration have traditionally been focused on by the blue bloc. However, in recent elections, issue competition has increased around several of the issues. Although the issue of health and eldercare has traditionally been linked to the red bloc and the Social Democrats, the blue bloc has challenged this ownership since the 2000s; in the same period, the Social Democrats have challenged the blue bloc's ownership of the issue of refugees and migration (Damsbo-Svendensen & Seeberg, 2024). The climate issue has also been challenged by the blue bloc, especially immediately after the 2019 'climate' election. A survey of voters' understanding of the issue ownership of the top issues in the 2022 election placed the red bloc as owner of health, climate, and schools and daycare while giving the blue bloc a slightly dominant ownership of issues such as finance and defence. At the same time, voters seemed to believe that both blocs would be competent at handling concerns about refugees and migration (Damsbo-Svendensen & Seeberg, 2024).

Other studies of the public or political agendas have focused on more or different issues than those we have included here in our study of the news media agenda. Thus, surveys of the public agenda in the 2019 national election included 16 different political issues (Holstein, 2019), while Green-Pedersen's (2006) study of long-term change in Danish party politics was based on the creation of 24 issues to analyse the political agenda from 1953 to 2003. Our list of issues does not include a separate focus on law and order. However, many law and order-related issues in Denmark have focused on refugees and migration, and we have included search words with a focus on immigration law and other laws relevant to this question.

The overall capacity of the news media agenda to manage issues has been frequently questioned in relation to issue competition. If more issues become relevant, how will the agenda of the news media adapt? Here, the answers seem to be that there is some capacity to expand the agenda, (McCombs & Zhu, 1995; Edy & Meirick, 2018). Previous studies of the news media agenda in Denmark (Blach-Ørsten & Willig, 2016) suggest that of the ten top stories, only around half resonate with the audience. This finding suggests that while the news media agenda may, in theory, have a huge issue capacity, the audience's attention span does not. In sum, our nine political issues seek to represent an updated list of the relevant issues of our time

while at the same time taking into consideration the more limited agenda of the news audience.

## Analysis

Previous studies and reports have looked at the 2019 (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2020; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020; Stubager & Hansen, 2021) and 2022 national elections (Blach-Ørsten & Eberholst, 2023; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2023; Hansen & Stubager, 2024) and addressed the most prominent political issues and, in some cases, their media saliences. However, no study has compared party–issue and party–leader issue linkage in news media across the two elections as we do here. In the 2019 national election, which ran almost concurrently with the 2019 EP elections, the issues of the EU as well as climate and the environment took first and second place in media salience, with 27% and 21% of the media coverage, respectively. These issues were followed closely by those of schools and daycare (17%) and refugees and migration and health and elder care (both 11%). In 2022, the top five issues were health and elder care (27%), climate and the environment (25%), schools and daycare (13%), defence (10%), and finance and the economy (7%).

The salience of specific issues is often determined by events outside the control of political parties. The 2022 election campaign, for example, was particularly affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which put issues such as finance and the economy and defence on the public agenda in new ways (Schjørring, 2022). At the same time, an escalating crisis in the Danish public health sector, including a mass shooting by an untreated psychiatric patient, pushed the issue of health and elder care to the top of the voters' agenda (Schjørring, 2022). The Danish news media also broke two major scandals during the election, one regarding Danish defence and the other regarding elder care. Both stories had clear impacts on the media and political agenda in the days following their publication in terms of reach, as both were covered extensively in the news media, and of demand for political action, as politicians were forced to address both the scandals and solutions to them (Blach-Ørsten & Eberholst, 2023).

As shown by RQ1 and depicted in Figure 1, we have focused on the differences in the media saliences of the political issues in the two elections. Figure 1 shows these differences, most of which seem clearly related to the circumstances surrounding the two elections. Thus, in 2022, three issues gained in media salience compared to 2019: health and elder care, climate and the environment, and defence. Leading the change is a 16% increase in media salience for the

issue of health and elder care in 2022. At the same time, issues that were popular in 2019, such as the EU and refugees and migration, fell considerably in 2022. This trend is easily explained regarding the EU, as there was no concurrent EP election in 2022. However, the decline in the issue of refugees and migration indicates a policy change in Denmark, as this issue has played an increasingly decisive role in Danish politics since the 1990s (Green-Pedersen & Krogstrup, 2008; Dambo-Svendsen & Seeberg, 2024). The continued attention to the issue of climate and the environment is also important. Historically, the salience of this issue has varied greatly. It entered the agenda in the 1960s but never figured permanently among the top issues (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2020); however, this changed in 2019 and seems to be changing still, as the issue gained four percent in media salience in 2022 despite competition from outside events and a focus on health and elder care topping the media agenda.

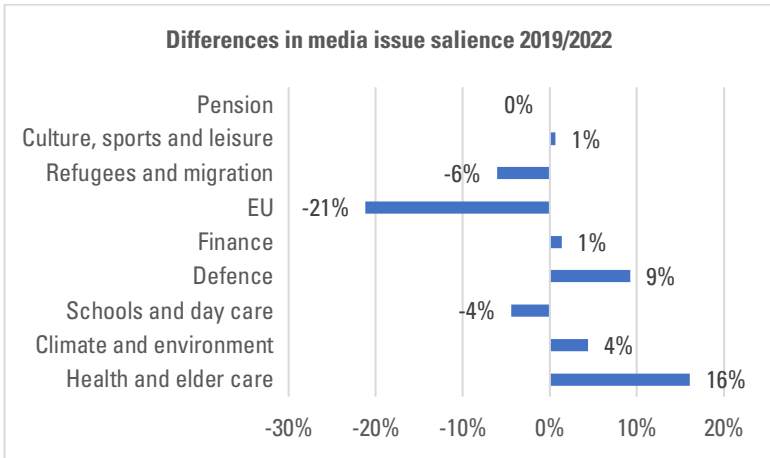


Figure 6: Differences in Media Issue Salience 2019/2022.

Note: Media issue salience shifts in the 2019/2022 elections. Positive values indicate that the issue is more salient in 2022 than in 2019. Based on 58,052 news articles from Danish news media: 33,324 in 2019 and 24,818 in 2022.

The overall capacity of the media agenda to manage an infinite number of political issues is frequently questioned in relation to the study of issue competition (McCombs & Zhu, 1995; Edy & Meirick, 2018). While international research seems to suggest that there is capacity to expand the agenda, Figure 1 indicates that as more attention is given to some issues, less attention is given to others. Indeed, three issues (refugees and migration, the EU, and schools and day-care) received much less attention in 2022 than in 2019, while three others (defence, health and elder care, and climate and the

environment) received more attention. It is also notable that the overall number of news articles decreased from 2019 to 2022, indicating that the agenda did not expand. Two issues (finance and culture and sport and leisure) increased by one percent in 2022, but that is too small a change to be considered a difference. Rather, these topics, along with the issue of pensions, seem to be stable, most likely because there was no change in the related issue competition.

Turning to RQ2, the party–issue linkage in news media coverage is central to our understanding of issue ownership and issue competition (Merz, 2016). Looking at Figure 2 and the question of the differences in party–issue linkage in the 2022 and 2019 elections, we find a clear shift in the numbers of mentions in the news media coverage of some of the issues to which each party is linked. We also find a good deal of issue overlap, where parties were linked to the same issue in 2022, especially regarding the top issue of health and elder care. This issue was increasingly linked to all the parties in the media coverage, both niche and mainstream. At the same time, the niche and mainstream parties to the centre right (blue bloc), such as the Liberal Party, the Liberal Alliance, and the Danish People’s Party, were being more linked to the issue of climate and the environment than in the 2019 election. This indicates that not only were almost all the parties linked to the top issue of health and elder care, but the parties in the blue bloc were also increasingly linked to the originally ‘red-bloc’ issue of climate and the environment – an issue to which they were not similarly linked in the 2019 election. These changes may be associated with the news media’s focus on the issue of climate and the environment. However, they might also be because the political parties in the blue bloc more actively focused on this issue in their 2022 election campaign. Indeed, right-wing parties, such as the Danish People’s Party, have tried to include a more frequent focus on climate, acknowledging that the lack of this focus was one of the reasons that they did not do well in the 2019 election (Redder, 2019).

At the same time, both the niche and mainstream parties on the centre left (red bloc), such as the Social Democrats, the Social Liberal Party, the Green Left, and the Red–Green Alliance, are all increasingly linked to the defence issue in the news media coverage. This is, of course, due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the massive political and media focus that followed it. However, being linked to the issue of defence, which is traditionally associated with right-wing parties and the blue bloc, has not been without challenges, especially for the Red–Green Alliance. The party has argued that Denmark should leave NATO and the military be defunded; however, during the campaign, it had to take a more positive view

of the military due to the invasion of Ukraine, which did not go over well with all the party's voters (Kjeldsen & Richter, 2022). From a bloc perspective, this also indicates that both blocs were affected by the changes in issue salience and party–issue linkage: the blue bloc was more often linked to the issue of climate and the environment, an issue traditionally owned by the red bloc, while the red bloc has more often been linked to the issue of the defence, an issue traditionally owned by the blue bloc.

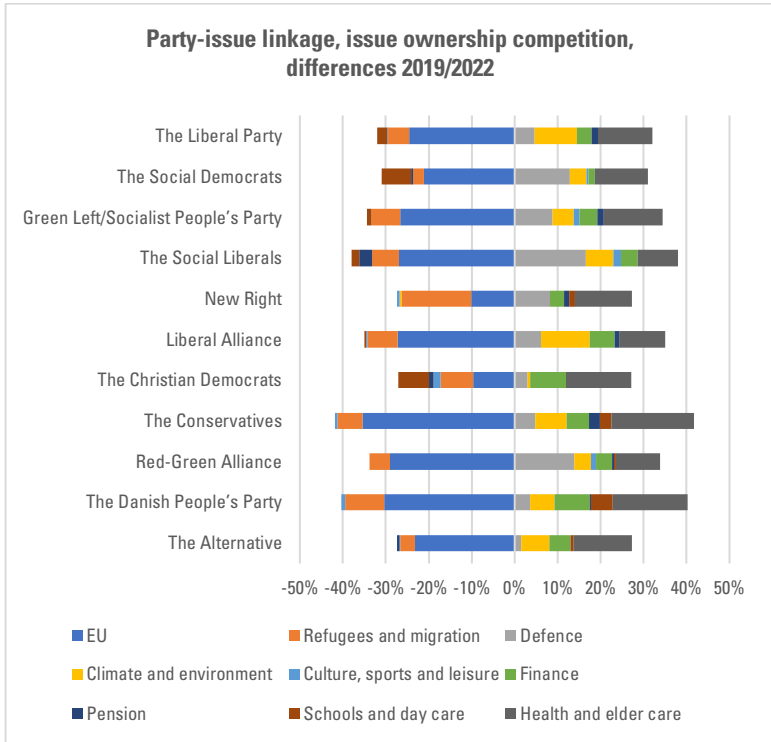


Figure 7: Party-Issue Linkage, Issue Ownership, and Issue Competition (Mentions), Differences 2019/2022.

Note: Based on 109,436 mentions of the party in connection with the issue: 66,146 in 2019 and 43,290 in 2022. One news item can generate several mentions of one or several parties. Positive values indicate an increase in mentions; negative values indicate a decrease.

As in Figure 1, we see that the shift in issues came at the cost of issues that dominated the agenda in 2019. Two issues namely, the EU and refugees and migration, both of which played a major role in 2019, were much less visible on the agenda in 2022. The importance of this

shift can be seen from the fact that the two niche parties most linked to the issue of refugees and migration in 2022, the New Right and the Danish People's Party, were instead linked to other issues, such as health and elder care, defence, and climate and the environment. For the Danish People's Party, there was a nine percent drop in mentions related to the issue of 'refugees and migration', while the New Right saw an even decline of 16%. Indeed, the leader of the New Right later blamed the lack of focus on this issue on the media agenda, saying that it was difficult for her to talk about immigration if the issue she was asked to address was the mental well-being of young people (Bruhn, 2022).

In our final RQ, we focus on the party leaders and the linkages that the news media make between different party leaders and different issues. We call these 'party-leader issue linkages', and as mentioned above, we see them as a central component of both issue ownership and issue competition. We focus solely on the party leaders, who traditionally attract the most media attention, especially those running as candidates for the post of prime minister. In 2019, two candidates ran for prime minister, the leaders of the Liberal Party and the Social Democrats. In 2022, the leader of the Conservatives also ran for the position, raising the number of candidates to three. Looking at the three candidates in Figure 3, the leaders of both the Liberal Party and the Social Democrats were linked increasingly to three of the same issues: defence, climate and the environment, and health and elder care. In contrast, the leader of the Conservative Party was increasingly linked to just one very traditional Conservative issue: defence.

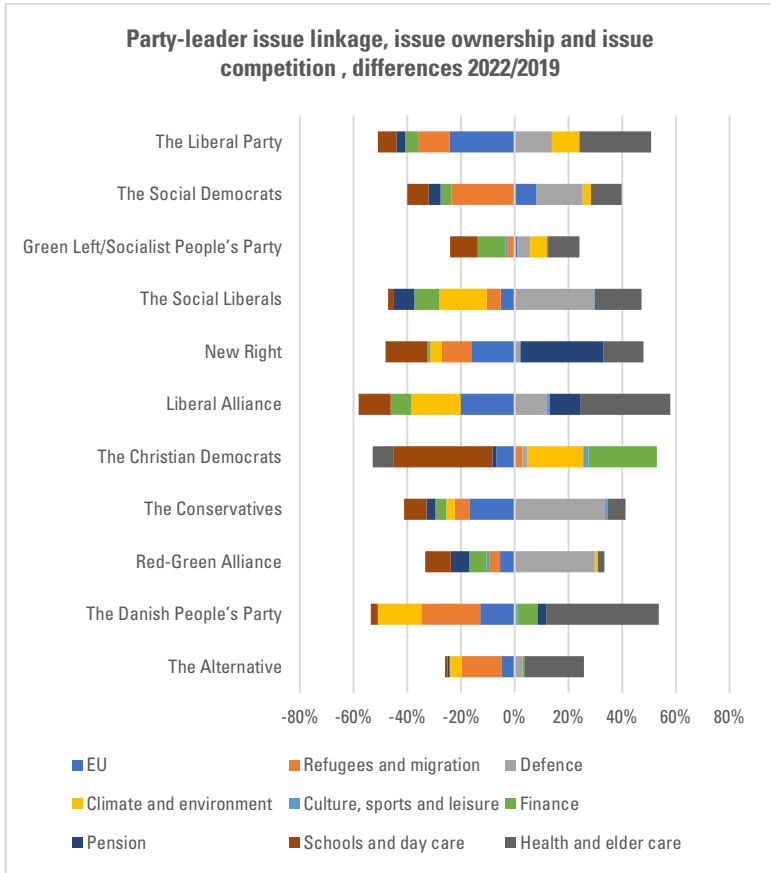


Figure 8: Party-Leader Issue Linkage, Issue Ownership, and Issue Competition (Quotes) 2019/2022.

Note: Based on 15,180 quotes from party leaders in news items related to issues: 9085 in 2019 and 6095 in 2022. One news item can generate several quotes.

Eight of the 11 party leaders were quoted between 11% and 42% more in relation to the issue of health and elder care in 2022 than in 2019, with the leading centre-right parties the Danish People's Party (42% more) and Liberal Alliance (34% more) having by far the biggest increases. Only three party leaders did not display the tendency to be linked increasingly to the issue of health and elder care: those of the Conservatives, the Red-Green Alliance, and the Christian Democrats. At the same time, six party leaders were quoted between 12% and 34% more in 2022 on the issue of defence than in 2019. Here, the leaders of the Conservatives (34%), the Social Liberal Party



(30%), and the Red–Green Alliance (30%) were responsible for the biggest increases.

Mirroring both Figure 1 and Figure 2, in Figure 3, we see how being increasingly linked to some issues led to party leaders being linked less to others. In 2022, this was particularly the case for the former ‘top’ issue of refugees and migration. While this issue originated in the blue bloc, especially with the Danish People’s Party, it developed into a mainstream issue during the first two decades of the 2000s. However, in 2022, nine of 11 party leaders were quoted between three percent and 24% less on this issue than in 2019. The leader of the Social Democrats saw the highest drop in linkage to this issue in 2022 compared to 2019 (24%), followed by the leader of the Danish People’s Party (22%).

## Discussion and conclusion

Like all elections, the 2022 national Danish election had its share of winners and losers. Of the 11 parties on which we focus in this historical analysis, the Liberal Party, the Social Liberal Party, the Conservatives, the Red–Green Alliance, the Christian Democrats, and the Danish People’s Party all lost seats in Folketing in the 2022 election, with the Liberal Party taking the hardest hit (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2023). On the other hand, the Social Democrats, the Liberal Alliance, the Green Left/Socialist People’s Party, the New Right, and the Alternative all gained in the 2022 election (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2023). Not all gains or losses can be explained by media salience or party–issue linkage in the news media coverage. For instance, the fact that three candidates ran for the position of prime minister split the media attention between the candidates, but not equally. Mette Frederiksen, the Social Democrats, who also enjoyed the traditional incumbency bonus, attracted by far the most media attention across all news media platforms (31%). The two other candidates, Jacob Ellemann-Jensen, the Liberal Party, (11%) and Søren Pape Poulsen, the Conservatives, (12%), attracted less than half the same amount of attention in total. Both Ellemann-Jensen and Pape Poulsen also struggled throughout their campaigns, with Pape Poulsen followed into the election by a series of political scandals (Blach-Ørsten & Eberholst, 2023). However, a recent study of issue ownership and the 2022 election based on voter surveys suggests that the Social Democrats had a strong election due to issue ownership of the issues named health and elder care and climate and the environment in the current study (Damsbo-Svendsen & Seeberg, 2024, p. 327).

Regarding issue competition, it is interesting how the two niche parties to the right, namely, the Danish People’s Party and the New

Right, were affected by the shifting media agenda and shifts in party–issue linkages. Both parties had previously focused particularly on the issue of refugees and migration, but in the 2022 campaign, the Danish People’s Party was instead linked to the top issue of health and elder care, most likely because elder care has traditionally been another top issue of which the party can claim (co)-ownership. The New Right was not similarly linked to any of the top issues of the 2022 campaign but to the much lower-ranking issue of pensions, which was not otherwise one of their top owned issues. Despite achieving an acceptable result in the election, the leader of the New Right was criticised for not placing more focus on the issue of refugees and migration (Bruhn, 2022). This, in turn, led to internal upheaval within the party, which is presently fragmented: the leader has switched to another party, and its survival as a political party is an open question. At the same time, it is worth noting that looking only at party–issue linkage in the news media shows that the issue of climate and the environment has become part of the issue competition between both blocs, as has the issue of defence.

To sum up, this article has investigated the question of party–issue linkage in the news media as an indicator of both issue ownership and issue competition. Party–issue linkage is recognised as an important additional variable of issue ownership. During an election, particularly, when issue competition is high, party–issue linkage may help political parties to claim or maintain ownership of the most salient political issues. We have focused on a unique historical comparison of two consecutive national elections: the 2019 and 2022 national Danish elections.

Regarding our RQ1, we find a clear shift in the media saliences of different political issues from 2019 to 2022, caused to no small extent by events external to the political parties. This adds evidence to the mounting research suggesting that outside events and societal trends influence national elections in a way that is beyond the control of both parties and party leaders (Dennison & Kriesi, 2023). It may also add to the influence of the news media if the outside event is seen as breaking news, such as the sabotage of gas pipes in the Baltic Sea during the election campaign, in which case the coverage could crowd out other issues from the media agenda. The shifts also show a lower focus on the question of refugees and migration and a larger one on health and elder care, in particular, which was also pushed onto the news media agenda due to outside events, such as the Fields shooting,

However, the issue of climate and the environment, which was high on the agenda in 2019, still had a high salience in 2022, indicating that it had earned a more ‘stable’ place on the election agenda than previously (see also Damsbo-Svendsen & Seeberg, 2024). The

study of media salience also shows that while the news media agenda may theoretically have the capacity to accommodate an increasing number of issues, its capacity is more limited in practice, as three issues (refugees and migration, the EU, and schools and daycare) received less attention in 2022 than in 2019, while three others (defence, health and elder care, and climate and the environment) received more attention. The EU may have been among the issues that received less attention because no EP election was running concurrently in 2022. However, right-wing parties did campaign on the issue of refugees and migration and parties in the red bloc campaigned on the issue of schools and daycare, but apparently with little effect on the news media coverage.

Regarding RQ2 and party–issue linkage in the news media coverage, we find a good deal of issue competition and issue overlap in 2022, especially regarding the top issue of health and elder care. This issue is increasingly linked to all political parties, both niche and mainstream. This indicates that most parties recognised the importance of the issue for both voters and the media agenda and tried to ride the wave of its success by being linked to it in the news media (Burdina, 2014). At the same time, we find that the niche and mainstream parties of the centre-right (blue bloc), in particular, such as the Liberal Party, the Liberal Alliance, and the Danish People’s Party, were also more linked to the climate and the environment issue than in 2019, again indicating the wave-riding of popular issues. In the red bloc, likewise, we find that both niche and mainstream parties, such as the Social Democrats, the Social Liberal Party, the Green Left, and the Red–Green Alliance, were increasingly linked to the issue of defence. From a bloc perspective, this could indicate that the blocs are trying to ‘steal’ these issues from each other. Thus, in 2022, the blue bloc was more actively linked to the issue of climate and the environment, an issue traditionally owned by the red bloc, while the red bloc was more actively linked to the issue of defence, an issue traditionally owned by the blue bloc. In sum, RQ2 thus supports investigating the news media agenda as an indicator of issue competition, the stealing of issues from other parties, and the tendency for parties to ride the wave of issues that attract the most media salience.

Turning to RQ3, the same shift in party–issue linkage as found in RQ2 can be found in the quotes of the party leaders. Looking at all 11 party leaders, eight were quoted between 11% and 42% more in relation to the issue of health and elder care in 2022 than in 2019 with the leading centre-right parties the Danish People’s Party and the Liberal Alliance seeing by far the biggest increase. Only three party leaders stand out from the tendency of being quoted more on the issue of health and elder care: those of the Conservatives, the

Red–Green Alliance, and the Christian Democrats. This makes this issue the best example of how the media salience and party–issue linkage of a specific issue can result in both issue competition and issue overlap. It also indicates that party leaders are indeed well aware of the popular issues at stake in a campaign even though they and their parties do not necessarily own them, further indicating that party leaders might attempt to ride the wave of popular issues.

Overall, the three RQs suggest that media salience and party–issue linkage can be seen as important indicators in the struggle for issue ownership in a multi-party system such as the Danish one, where both niche and mainstream parties, as well as the two blocs, all compete for ownership of the most salient issues. The study also suggests that for parties, being linked to the most salient political issues is one of many elements in a successful election campaign. It also suggests that not being linked to the top salient issues or having the party’s most ‘owned’ issue lose salience may have a negative effect on a political campaign.

It is useful to compare our results to those of a recent study that investigated the salience of political issues in the 2022 election from the voters’ point of view. Damsbo-Svendsen and Seeberg (2024, p. 310) found that three issues topped the voters’ agenda in the 2022 election: climate, health, and finance. These results mirror the news media agenda presented in this study regarding two of three issues, showing that in the news media coverage, the issue of defence was more salient than that of finance. Further research could focus more on the relationship between all three agendas in the traditional understanding of agenda-setting studies: the voters’ agenda, the media agenda, and the political agenda. This could help highlight not only which issues are present on all three agendas but also differences in issue salience across the three. Future research could also look further at the role of social trends and outside events as challenges for political parties. What is the cost of riding the wave of a popular issue brought to the agenda by a societal trend? Does it make parties more legitimate in the minds of the audience, or less?

Still, an important caveat to consider when looking at the results presented in this study is that our focus represents only one side of the question of issue competition due to its focus on news media coverage. Thus, we have not included a survey of media users’ understanding of the changing media agenda. The study is also limited by its focus on nine issues, as the parties also ran on other issues that have not been included in this study or have been collapsed into ‘bigger’ issues. Thus, this study may not have captured some of the nuances of the different political parties’ party agendas in the two elections under study.

## NOTES

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/udland/uanset-hvem-der-ender-med-statsministerposten-har-sverigedemokraterna-skrevet>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nrk.no/valg/2021/resultat/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ft.dk/da/folkestyret/valg-og-afstemninger/tal-og-fakta-om-valg-og-afstemninger#1ECC9517FACB4120B7854B2DEA0A287B>

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# Hvad er vinklen?

## En kortlægning og diskussion af vinkelbegrebets flertydighed i danske journalistiske lærebøger

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### Abstract

Blandt journalister er der en erkendelse af, at fagtermen 'vinkel' er præget af flertydighed. Flertydigheden udfordrer den, der skal tilægge sig den journalistiske fagterminologi – og dermed faglighed. Forfatteren kortlægger vinkelbegrebets betydninger ved at nærlæse passager, hvor begrebet optræder, i 30 nyere danske lærebøger i journalistik. Hun finder fire forskellige definitioner: Vinkel i betydningen fokus, synsvinkel, påstand og budskab. Forfatteren klarlægger definitionernes forskellige forståelsesrammer og viser, hvordan de hver især indfanger centrale journalistfaglige kompetencer i det praktiske arbejde med at vinkle en historie. Det leder til påstanden om, at det er mere produktivt at fastholde begrebets flertydighed end at begrænse den. Med afsæt i Wittgensteins sprogspilsteori argumenteres for, at de eksisterende definitioner hver for sig giver et brugbart svar på, hvad en vinkel er, og tilsammen indfanger den alsidighed af aktiviteter og refleksioner, der indgår i en systematisk journalistisk vinklingspraksis. Det omsættes til en ny, mere rummelig definition på vinkelbegrebet.

### KEYWORDS

vinkel, fagterm, flertydighed, journalistiske lærebøger, fokus, synsvinkel, påstand, budskab, sprogspil

## Indledning: Vinklen – journalistisk nøglebegreb, uklar fagterm

Hvad er vinklen? Fra de allerførste dage på journaliststudiet konfronteres den studerende med det spørgsmål, der er en integreret del af den erfarne journalists praktiske arbejde med at afgøre nyhedsværdien af aktuelle begivenheder og bearbejde dem til sammenhængende journalistiske historier. I fagets lærebøger læser den studerende, at vinklen er “journalistens allervigtigste arbejdsredskab”, at vinkling er “selve kernen i det journalistiske håndværk” og “udslagsgivende i al journalistik” (Bjerre & Hvid, 2015, s. 47; Frederiksen, 2012, s. 130; Larsen & Frederiksen, 2014, s. 230). Det vil med andre ord hurtigt stå klart for den journaliststuderende, at evnen til at vinkle en journalistisk historie er en central journalistisk kompetence.

Er det klart, at vinklen er definerende for det journalistiske håndværk, er det til gengæld mindre klart, hvordan begrebet skal defineres. Meilby (1996, s. 110) konstaterer i første udgave af lærebogsklassikeren *Journalistikkens grundtrin*: “Begrebet vinkling er ikke krystalkart”. Den opfattelse bekræftes efterfølgende af Hvid i lærebogen *Skriv!* (2008, s. 98), der pointerer, at “Skribenter – især journalister – taler ofte om tekstens vinkel, men spørger man dem om hvad en vinkel er, får man normalt meget tøvende og upræcise svar”, og af Schmidt, der i sit opslag om ‘vinkel’ i *Medie- og Kommunikationsleksikon* (2013) konstaterer, at ”begrebet har været brugt uden større stringens, og der er desuden sket en glidende ændring af begrebet.” Der er altså en erkendelse af, at det journalistiske vinkelbegreb har været under forvandling og stadig er til forhandling.

Vinkelbegrebets uklarhed er symptomatisk for den journalistiske begrebsbrug mere generelt. Kramhøft (2000, s. 29) konstaterer, at “Journalistikken har dårligt nok et entydigt fælles begrebsapparat at støtte sig til.” Den manglende entydighed i begrebsbrugen kan ses i sammenhæng med den tavse viden, som flere danske forskere har påvist præger journalistfaget (Gravengaard, 2010; Gravengaard & Rimestad, 2016; Jensen, 2013; Schultz, 2007). En indforstået brug af fagets begreber kan imidlertid tænkes at påvirke pædagogikken og den faglige socialisering negativt ud fra en betragtning om, at “Fagtermer og begreber hjælper med at lukke feltet op og invitere den lærende ind” (Jørgensen & Rienecker, 2019, s. 129). Ifølge Gravengaard og Rimestad (2015, s. 119) indebærer den professionelle journalistiske socialisering “at tænke med og inden for de begreber, kollegerne anvender, og at tale på bestemte måder.” Men hvordan tænker og taler man klart om vinkling, hvis det er uklart, hvad begrebet vinkel dækker over? Gravengaard og Rimestad (2015, s. 124) observerer således, hvordan de erfarne journalisters indforståede brug af historiebegrebet gør det “svært for journalistpraktikanter at få

ordentlig greb om at forstå, hvad en god historie egentlig er.” For at et fagligt nøglebegreb faktisk kan fungere som nøgle til faget, må man forstå, hvad begrebet betyder, og hvordan det bruges.

De senere år har der været flere bestræbelser i dansk journalistikforskning på at afklare betydningen af journalistiske begreber og udtryk. Det gælder fx “fairness”, “en god historie”, “public service”, “journalistiske forklaringer”, “objektivitet” og “nyhedsværdier” (Jønch-Clausen & Lyngbye, 2007; Gravengaard, 2010; Mouritsen, 2006; Svith, 2010; Wien, 2005; Willig, 2011). Begrebsafklaringen muliggør en reflekteret praksis, hvor journalister forholder sig bevidst til deres “retoriske praksis” (Gravengaard, 2010, s. 22) – og kan dermed bidrage til den pædagogiske og akademiske udvikling af det danske journalistfag.

Fagtermen ‘vinkel’ har ikke påkaldt sig samme opmærksomhed i dansk journalistikforskning. Begrebet har ganske vist været opslagsord i *Medie- og Kommunikationsleksikon* siden 2013, men der har ikke været et samlet forsøg på at skabe overblik over begrebets betydninger i en dansk kontekst. Denne teoretiske underbelysning sammenholdt med begrebets centrale status og erkendte uklarhed begrunder en mere systematisk begrebsafklaring.

Artiklen her bidrager til afklaringen ved at kortlægge vinkelbegrebets brug og betydninger i danske journalistiske lærebøger. Kortlægningen viser, at begrebet defineres på fire forskellige måder – som henholdsvis *fokus*, *synsvinkel*, *påstand* og *budskab*. Flertydigheden forstærkes af, at det forekommer vanskeligt for den enkelte lærebogsforfatter at fastholde begrebet i én af de fire betydninger. Dermed tegnes et billede af en flydende fagterm, hvis betydning forskyder sig alt afhængig af, *hvilken* lærebog man slår op i, og *hvor* i lærebogen man slår op. Kortlægningen af vinkelbegrebets betydninger er som udgangspunkt deskriptiv, men den rejser et spørgsmål af mere normativ karakter: Hvordan skal man som fagfællesskab forholde sig til den kortlagte flertydighed? Skal man forsøge at begrænse begrebets flertydighed, eller omvendt omfavne den? Det spørgsmål adresseres i artiklens diskuterende del, der munder ud i en præskriptivt anvisende definition på vinkelbegrebet.

## **Kortlægning af vinkelbegrebets betydninger i 30 nyere danske journalistiske lærebøger**

Begrebsanalysen følger sig til rækken af studier, der bruger lærebogen som indgang til at kortlægge journalistfaglige tendenser (se fx Brennen, 2000; Isager, 2015; Jensen, 2013; Mari, 2015 og 2014; Parks, 2019a og 2019b; Steensen, 2011; Steiner, 1992; Sumpter, 2009). Styrken ved lære-bogen som analyseobjekt er, at den afspejler fagets

institutionaliserede viden. Som pædagogisk indføring i såvel praktiske journalistiske arbejdsprocesser som refleksioner over professionens identitet, roller og normer tjener lærebogen på en gang som refleksion af og socialisering ind i den journalistiske faglighed: “As sources of authority, they highlighted what was the professional state-of-the-art for their era, and have actively molded new generations of professionals” (Mari, 2015, s. 687-688). Dertil kommer, at der knytter sig en genremæssig forventning til lærebogen om, at forfatteren forholder sig reflekteret til fagets begreber: “Da lærebogen netop er en indføring i et felt, skal fagtermerne typisk defineres, afgrænses og introduceres – og måske diskuteres i forhold til andre(s) definitioner, afgrænsninger.” (Jørgensen & Rienecker, 2019, s. 129). Den journalistiske lærebog kan altså give et autoritativt indblik i etablerede journalistiske forståelser og diskussioner af vinkelbegrebets betydning.

Kortlægningen af vinkelbegrebets betydning er foretaget i nyere danske journalistiske lærebøger. Valget af ‘nyere’ lærebøger er begrundet i Schmidts (2013) konstatering af, at “(d)en skriftlige definition af begrebet er af nyere dato”. “Af nyere dato” er i denne sammenhæng fortolket som bøger udkommet eller genoptrykt i perioden 2000 til 2021. En enkelt titel, *Journalistikkens grundtrin*, der over årene er udgivet i forskellige udgaver af forskellige forfattere, er inkluderet i fire forskellige udgaver. Fokus på ‘danske’ lærebøger er begrundet i ønsket om at indfange begrebets særligt danske betydninger, hvilket betyder, at oversatte bøger er fravalgt. En ‘journalistisk lærebog’ er i denne sammenhæng operationelt defineret som *en grundlæggende og sammenhængende indføring i journalistik, der tager sigte på tilegnelsen af journalistiske færdigheder*. Med ‘grundlæggende indføring’ sigtes til bøger, der er målrettet en fagligt uindviet, for hvem den journalistiske forståelse af begrebet vinkel endnu ikke kan forudsættes fuldt ud bekendt. Det betyder, at forskningsbaserede lærebøger, der har et mere analyserende, diskuterende eller debatterende sigte, ikke er indlemmet i korpus. Med ‘sammenhængende indføring’ sigtes til bøger, der er skrevet af en enkelt eller få forfattere i fællesskab, hvilket betyder, at antologier er fravalgt. ‘Tilegnelsen af journalistiske færdigheder’ er begrundet i et ønske om at indsnævre fokus til de betydninger, der relaterer sig til vinklen som et praktisk journalistisk arbejdsredskab. Lærebogsforfatterenes faglige autoritet kan enten ligge i, at de har institutionel tilknytning til en journalistisk uddannelse, eller at de skriver med erfaringens vægt, som fx journalisterne Kurt Strand og Nils Thorsen, der er, hvad Gravengaard og Rimestad (2015, s. 62) omtaler som, “*professionelle veteraner*”.

I alt 30 lærebøger er inkluderet i korpus. Bøgerne er fremfundet ved hjælp af kædesøgning – dels med afsæt i et forhåndskendskab

til journalistiske lærebøger, dels med afsæt i søgning i lærebogsforlagernes kataloger over journalistiske udgivelser. Listen med lærebøger er efterfølgende blevet gennemgået og suppleret af undervisere i journalistiske håndværksfag ved de tre danske journalistuddannelser. De fremfundne lærebøger dækker forskellige *modaliteter* (lyd, billede, tekst), *medier* (net, print, tv, podcast), *genrer* (nyhedsjournalistik, portræt, fortællende journalistik), *metoder* (interviewteknik, skriveproces, research) og *tilgange* til det journalistiske håndværk (etik, konstruktiv journalistik). Se bilag for en oversigt over de analyserede lærebøger.

Kortlægningen af vinkelbegrebets betydninger er baseret på nærlæsning af alle afsnit, hvor begrebet optræder. For at indfange alle forekomster af begrebet er søgt på *\*vink\**. Derved indfanges begrebets substantiviske former (*vinkel* og afledningen *vinkling*), verbale former (*vinkle*, *vinkl*, *vinkler*, *vinklet*, *vinklede* og *vinkles*), adjektiviske former (*vinklet* og *vinklede*), såvel som ordsammensætninger som fx *'synsvinkel'*, *'skarpvinkel'*, *'indfaldsvinkel'*, *'arbejdsvinkel'*, *'vinkelark'*, *'vinkelsætning'* og *'vinkelbudskab'*. Jeg har foretaget to gennemlæsninger af materialet. Første nærlæsning var eksplorativ med det formål at opnå fortrolighed med datamaterialet og få et indledende indtryk af variationen i de journalistiske lærebogsforfatters forståelse af begrebet og indfange overordnede tendenser i sprogbugen. I anden gennemlæsning indsnævrede jeg fokus til passager, hvor lærebogsforfatterne definerer begrebets betydning som generel journalistisk fagterm.

I det følgende præsenterer jeg de væsentligste resultater af de to gennemlæsninger med fokus på at indkredse og illustrere begrebets flertydighed. Først udpeger jeg nogle mere generelle tendenser i brugen af begrebet *vinkel*, som første gennemlæsning afslørede; dernæst præsenterer jeg de fire begrebsdefinitioner, som anden gennemlæsning afslørede.

## **Ikke-journalistfaglig brug af vinkelbegrebet og journalistfaglige særbetydninger**

Den første eksplorative nærlæsning afslørede to tendenser i lærebogsforfatternes brug af vinkelbegrebet, som kan siges at bidrage til fagtermens flertydighed. Det gælder dels *ikke-journalistfaglig brug* af begrebet, dels *journalistfaglige særbetydninger*.

Den ikke-journalistfaglige brug af begrebet omfatter passager, hvor begrebet benyttes i betydninger, der ikke beskriver det journalistiske håndværk eller er reserveret journalistfaglig sprogbrug. Denne brug af begrebet kan illustreres med passager som: "Man kan anskue uddannelsen af journalister fra mange forskellige vinkler,

herunder hvor uddannelsen foregår.” Og: “En dag flytter man så om på møbler og billeder, og ens stue forandrer sig. Man ser den med nye øjne, fra nye vinkler.” (Gravengaard & Rimestad, 2015, s. 20; Tverskov & Tverskov, 2004, s. 15). Her bliver ordet brugt i løsere lægmandsbetydning. Også dette mere filosofisk tonede udsagn illustrerer den ikke-journalistfaglige brug af begrebet: “Sandheden kan være uoverskuelig. Og der kan anlægges forskellige vinkler på den.” (Bjerg, 2009, s. 91). Denne brug af vinkelbegrebet knytter sig ikke til bearbejdningen af en journalistisk historie, men udtrykker en almen erkendelsesteoretisk pointe. Her nærmer vinkelbegrebets betydning sig betydningen af begrebet *framing* – et begreb, journalistikken deler med en række andre humanistiske og samfundsvidenskabelige fag, og som i lighed med vinkelbegrebet “ofte defineres på en lemfældig måde, hvor meget overlades til læserens og forskerens udtalte forståelse.” (Entman, 2015, s. 116). I denne brug af begrebet vinkel synes der at være en afsmitning fra den forskningsbaserede tilgang til journalistikken, hvor der kan ses en tendens til at sætte lighedstegn mellem begreberne ‘vinkel’ og ‘framing’ (se fx Slothuus, 2010). Der kan altså i lærebørgernes brug af vinkelbegrebet spores en sproglig afsmitning fra såvel hverdags sproget som fra en mere akademisk forståelse af begrebet.

Vinkelbegrebets flertydighed er imidlertid ikke udelukkende et resultat af sproglig afsmitning udefra – den kommer også indefra. Den eksplorative læsning afslørede, at begrebet bruges i journalistfaglige særbetydninger relateret til fotojournalistik og fortællende journalistik. Foto-tekniske særbetydninger afspejler sig i ordsammensætninger som “vidvinkel”, “vinkelret”, “kameravinkler” og “billedvinkel” (se fx Frederiksen, 2012; Munk, 2018), og i et udsagn som: “LCD-skærmen lægger nærmest op til, at kameraet skal væk fra kroppen og ud i vinkler” (Frederiksen, 2012, s. 209). Her forstås begrebet i snæver fysisk forstand som et kameras indstilling eller placering. Fortælletekniske særbetydninger af begrebet optræder i ordsmensætningen “fortællelevinkel” (Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 189) og i en særlig litterært inspireret betydning af ordet “synsvinkel”. Kinch-Jensen (2001, s. 99) og Poulsen (2013, s. 38) skelner således begge eksplicit mellem vinkel og synsvinkel, hvor ‘vinkel’ er det generelle journalistiske begreb, mens ‘synsvinkel’ har en snævrere fortælleteknisk betydning. Kinch-Jensen indkredser forskellen således: “Vinklen er først og fremmest svaret på spørgsmålet ‘hvilken historie?’ – synsvinklen først og fremmest svaret på spørgsmålet ‘hvem fortæller?’.”

Fælles for de foto- og fortælletekniske særbetydninger af vinkelbegrebet er, at de dækker formidlingsmæssige greb i den journalistiske historie, ikke hele den journalistiske historie. Grebene skal nok hver for sig understøtte historiens vinkel, men de er ikke



identiske med den. Det betyder, at det i modsætning til det journalistiske credo om én historie, én vinkel, er muligt – og ofte også tilrådeligt – at skifte kameravinkel, fortælle-vinkel og synsvinkel inden for samme historie for at skabe en levende fremstilling. “Én vinkel, flere synsvinkler” lyder en opskrift på fortælle-mæssig variation fx hos Kinch-Jensen (2001, s. 103). Muligheden for at have flere fortælle- og synsvinkler bekræftes i *Journalistikkens grundtrin*: “Fra afsnit til afsnit kan fortælle-vinkel og -form skifte.” (Schmidt, 2011, s. 185; Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 189). Og i *Interview for journalister* lyder det: “De fleste historier indeholder som udgangspunkt mange synsvinkler og ofte også mange muligheder for spring i tid og sted.” (Strand, 2016, s. 60). Vinkelbegrebets journalistfaglige sær betydninger er altså nok særlige for journalistikken, men da de er relateret til særlige dele af det journalistiske håndværk, får begrebet en særligt snæver betydning. Som det vil fremgå i næste del af analysen, er der eksempler på, at forfattere, der ikke har en specifikt fortællende tilgang til journalistik, forstår ordet ‘synsvinkel’ i en mere generel journalistisk betydning.

Kortlægningen viser altså i første omgang, at de danske lærebogsforfattere nogle steder bruger vinkelbegrebet i en bredere ikke-journalistfaglig betydning, mens de andre steder bruger begrebet til at beskrive særlige dele af det journalistiske håndværk. Her stopper begrebets flertydighed imidlertid ikke. Det primære mål har været at kortlægge lærebørgernes forskellige definitioner af vinkelbegrebet som en generel journalistisk fagterm. Her afslører nærlæsningen, at lærebogsforfatterne fastsætter begrebets betydning på fire forskellige måder – nemlig som fokus, synsvinkel, påstand og budskab. Figur 1 giver et indledende overblik over de forskellige spor i vinkelbegrebets flertydighed, som nærlæsningen har afsløret:



Figur 1: Kortlægning af vinkelbegrebets flertydige brug og betydninger i 30 nyere danske journalistiske lærebøger. Det sorte spor markerer artiklens primære fokus.

Resten af artiklen fokuserer på de fire definitioner af begrebet vinkel som generel journalistisk fagterm.

### Fire definitioner af vinkelbegrebets betydning som generel journalistisk fagterm

Når lærebogsforfatterne indkredser betydningen af begrebet vinkel som generel journalistisk fagterm, sker det mere eller mindre eksplicit, ligesom definitionen kan gælde de substantiviske former vinkel eller vinkling eller verbet at vinkle.<sup>12</sup> 'Definition' skal derfor i denne sammenhæng forstås bredt som alle passager, hvor lærebogsforfatterne metakommunikativt forklarer, afgrænser eller på anden måde fastsætter den journalistiske forståelse en vinkel, vinkling eller det at vinkle.

I det følgende præsenterer jeg de fire definitioner og deres repræsentation i de analyserede lærebøger. Jeg viser, hvordan de fire definitioner trækker på forskellige forståelsesrammer, der betoner forskellige journalistfaglige kompetencer i det praktiske arbejde med at vinkle en historie. Jeg knytter definitionerne til normer for god journalistik, og giver eksempler på, hvordan definitionerne afspejler sig i den journalistiske sprogbrug.

## Vinkel i betydningen fokus: Det udsnit af emnet, journalisten dækker med sin historie

Vinkel i betydningen fokus finder vi tydeligst i to lærebøger forfattet af Bjerg. I *Den gode journalist* (2009, s. 100) hedder det: "At vinkle er at tage et udsnit af den relevante virkelighed og fokusere på den, vel vidende at man kunne have taget andre." Og i *Som man spørger* (2015, s. 63) lyder det helt enkelt: "Fokus betyder det samme som vinkel." Tverskov og Tverskov (2004, s. 151) abonnerer ligeledes på denne forståelse i *Sådan gør journalister*, når de i bogens afsluttende liste med "journalistiske fagudtryk" forklarer ordet "vinkle" således: "Når journalisten træffer et valg hvor han eller hun fokuserer på bestemte informationer og pointer. Der kan f.eks. være tale om et bestemt aspekt ved en begivenhed, en interessant person eller fokus på den lokale eller nationale betydning." Også Meilbys udgave af *Journalistikkens grundtrin* kan placeres i denne betydningskategori, om end han ikke bruger ordet "fokus" i sin definition: "Vinkling er afgrænsning af historien til et overkommeligt udsnit af emnets virkelighed." (1996, s. 112, se også s. 110 og 269). Endelig gengiver Hvid (2008, s. 98) – om end fra et kritisk ståsted – denne forståelse som et af de svar, man typisk får fra journalister, når man spørger dem, hvad en vinkel er.

Fokusdefinitionen betoner, at bearbejdningen af enhver journalistisk historie indebærer *afgrænsning*. En vinklet historie repræsenterer "et udsnit", som det hedder i to af de citerede definitioner. Det faglige mål med afgrænsningen er at gøre det valgte udsnit af emnet "overkommeligt", som det hedder i Meilbys definition. Dette krav om overkommelighed kan både knyttes til journalisten, der rent praktisk skal kunne overkomme at producere historien inden for rammerne af den tildelte plads og tid, og til modtageren, der kognitivt skal kunne overkomme mængden af informationer. Vinkel i betydningen fokus indfanger dermed centrale formidlingsmæssige kompetencer i at sortere informationer fra og kompleksitetsreducere: Jo snævrere fokus, desto nemmere at formidle og forstå. "Journalistik er forenkling", som Bjerg tilbagevendende pointerer (2009, s. 97 og 104).

Denne forståelse af ordet vinkel kan kobles til *Den Danske Ordbogs* definition af begrebet vinkel som "geometrisk figur der dannes (og begrænses) af to rette linjer, vinklens ben, som udgår fra samme punkt". Vinklen inden for denne geometriske forståelsesramme er det, der befinder sig mellem to linjer, hvor det gælder, at jo mindre afstand, der er mellem de to linjer, desto spidsere er vinklen. I journalistisk sprogbrug afspejler den geometriske betydning sig i formuleringer som, at vinklen skal være "spids" eller "skarp" (May, 2020,

s. 116). Jo spidsere eller skarpere vinklen er, desto mere har journalisten formålet at vælge fra og afgrænse den journalistiske historie.

Med den journalistiske afgrænsning følger ifølge Bjerg et etisk ansvar. For hvis det at vinkle er ensbetydende med at fokusere på noget bestemt frem for noget andet, så følger der en faglig forpligtelse til at overveje, hvilket udsnit af emnet man vælger at placere i modtagerens opmærksomhedsfelt. En historie vinklet på stormens skader på huse og havne og kyststrækninger vil udelade informationer om, at blæsevejret sender billig, grøn strøm fra vindmøller ud i elnettet; en historie vinklet på regeringens indre modsætninger lader eksempler på regeringens funktionsdygtige samarbejde ude af syne. Den journalistiske dækning af et emne er aldrig dækkende, men repræsenterer altid blot en "partiel" sandhed (Bjerg, 2009, s. 100) – og det er den etiske journalist bevidst om og tager ansvar for. Vinkel i betydningen fokus indfanger altså en essentiel facet af den journalistiske faglighed – både når det kommer til arbejdet med at afgrænse historier og det professionelle ansvar, der følger med at fokusere på et udsnit af et emnes virkelighed frem for andre mulige udsnit.

Ifølge Hvid (2008, s. 98) er fokusforståelsen imidlertid et eksempel på et af de "upræcise og ubrugelige" svar, journalister giver på spørgsmålet om, hvad en vinkel er. Han indvender, at fokus kun præciserer "hvad teksten belyser – altså tekstens emne. Vinklen formulerer i stedet den sammenhæng eller det mønster som kommer til syne i synsfeltet." Problemet med fokusbetydningen er, at den alene fortæller, at journalisten skal vælge et udsnit af et emnes virkelighed, men at den ikke rummer nogen anvisning på, hvad journalisten skal gøre med dette udsnit. Det at afgrænse udgør altså nok en essentiel del af den journalistiske vinklingsaktivitet, men vinklen kan ikke reduceres til aktiviteten at afgrænse. Vinklen involverer også andre former for systematisk journalistisk bearbejdning – herunder valg af synsvinkel, som er den anden af de fire definitioner af vinkelbegrebet, der optræder i lærebøgerne.

### **Vinkel i betydningen synsvinkel: Det perspektiv, journalisten ser sin historie fra**

Schmidt og Mørk indkredser vinkel i betydningen synsvinkel som den historisk udbredte: "Tidligere var det almindeligt at bruge begrebet som *journalistens valg af synsvinkel*, det vil sige, gennem hvis øjne journalisten valgte at se historien, fx direktørens, lønmodtagerens eller forbrugerens." (2021, s. 70; cf. Schmidt, 2011, s. 81). Synsvinkelbetydningen kan altså ses som et tidligt betydningshistorisk lag i vinkelbegrebets journalistiske udviklingshistorie. Det bekræftes af, at der i et af de ældre værker i korpus – Kramhøfts *Journalistik med omtanke* fra 2000 – er spor af denne forståelse: "hvilken vinkel på historien, der er mest egnet, dvs. bl.a. hvilket subjekt det er mest

interessant at se historien ud fra” (s. 97). Hvid (2008, s. 98) gengiver denne forståelse som det andet udbredte, men “ubrøgelige og upræcise” svar, journalister giver, når man spørger dem, hvad en vinkel er. Når det giver mening at forfølge synsvinkel som et bud på, hvad der definerer vinkel som generel journalistisk fagterm, er det altså fordi, vi kan tage de tre forfatteres udsagn som udtryk for, at denne forståelse har været og stadig til en vis grad er udbredt blandt journalister.

Hvor fokusforståelsen indkredser journalistens valg af, *hvad og hvor meget* der skal dækkes i historien, der indkredser synsvinkelforståelsen journalistens valg af, *hvorfra* historien skal dækkes. Man fokuserer *på*, men ser *fra*. Denne forståelse kan relateres til *Den Danske Ordbogs* to afledte betydninger af ordet vinkel som henholdsvis “(skæv) retning eller position hvorfra noget betragtes eller rammes” og ”måde hvorpå man forholder sig til eller belyser en sag, fx ved at fremhæve noget og lade noget andet træde i baggrunden.” Her er forståelsesrammen perspektivisk: Det fysiske eller mentale sted, man betragter sit emne fra, har betydning for, hvad man ser, og hvordan man forstår det, man ser. Det vil fx have afgørende betydning, om demonstrationen betragtes fra taget eller fra gaden, eller om den dækkes fra demonstranternes, moddemonstranternes, naboernes, politikernes eller politiets perspektiv.<sup>13</sup>

Synsvinkeldefinitionen betoner, at en journalistisk vinklet historie altid rummer en særlig forståelse eller fortolkningsramme – et subjektivt og interessebestemt syn på det udsnit af virkeligheden, journalisten dækker med sin historie. Synsvinklen er dermed typisk *nogens*. Det ser vi hos Thorsen (2008, s. 107), hvor synsvinklen dækker en interviewpersons syn på verden: “Jeg er – kan man sige – trådt så tæt på den interviewede, at jeg har overtaget hans synsvinkel på verden og derfor mistet journalistens.” Og hos Kramhøft (2000, s. 234), der synes at sætte lighedstegn mellem synsvinkler og kilder: “Her vælter vi os ikke alene i kilder (synsvinkler), men også i emner og journalistiske genrer.” Synsvinklen kan også mere overordnet være udtryk for en gruppes ideologiske orientering. Det ser vi hos Mogensen (2000, s. 160): “Sovjetisk journalistik så klart og åbent virkeligheden fra en marxistisk-leninistisk synsvinkel”, og hos Bjerg (2009, s. 56), der beskriver, hvordan Radioavisen ”i stort som småt lå under for den officielle amerikanske synsvinkel på Vietnamkrigen og blindt gengav den som sandheden.” Inden for rammerne af synsvinkeldefinitionen vil spørgsmålet ‘hvad er vinklen?’ derfor i mange tilfælde kunne erstattes med ‘*hvis* er vinklen?’.

Synsvinkelforståelsen aktualiserer dermed en central journalistisk norm om *upartiskhed*. Den journalistfaglige troværdighed ligger netop i at undgå bias og kildeafsmitning og tilstræbe neutralitet og balance i valget af kilder og perspektiv. Som det hedder i Bjerre

og Hvids *Forelsket i vinklen* (2015, s. 101): “Gør dig umage for at forstå, hvordan sagen må se ud fra andre synsvinkler.” Synsvinkelforståelsen kan tydeliggøre, at en væsentlig del af journalistens arbejde med at vinkle en historie består i at danne sig et overblik over mulige perspektiver på historiens emne for at kunne foretage et reflekteret valg af, hvilket perspektiv der skal prioriteres.

Synsvinkeldefinitionens relevans for det praktiske arbejde med at vinkle en historie afspejler sig i den journalistiske sprogbrug. Når journalister fx taler om at formidle historien fra den danske, lokale eller menneskelige vinkel, henviser de til et særligt perspektiv på historien – og bruger dermed ordet vinkel i betydningen synsvinkel. Selv Hvid, der som nævnt ovenfor er kritisk over for synsvinkelforståelsen, har i praksis selv svært ved at undgå denne brug af ordet. Det fremgår fx af denne passage hos Bjerre og Hvid (2015, s. 67), hvor vinkel og synsvinkel synes at blive brugt synonymt: “Vi har jo hele tiden adgang til vores egen synsvinkel [...] Mens det er knap så let at forstå, hvordan verden kan se ud set fra en helt anden vinkel.” Noget kunne altså tyde på, at det sproglige overlap mellem ordene ‘synsvinkel’ og ‘vinkel’ gør det fristende at bruge de to ord i flæng.

Synsvinkeldefinitionen rummer altså både vigtige faglige opmærksomhedspunkter i forhold til det praktiske arbejde med at vinkle en historie og afspejler sig i den journalistiske sprogbrug. Men hvad retfærdiggør så den udbredte enighed blandt lærebogsforfattere om, at vinkel (i dag) adskiller sig fra synsvinkel? Hvid (2008, s. 98) formulerer en kritik, der rammer både fokus og synsvinkel: “Fokus og synsvinkel fortæller hvad man ser på. Vinklen artikulerer hvad man opdager der hvor man ser.” Det at afgrænse et bestemt udsnit af virkeligheden, som man vælger at se fra en bestemt synsvinkel, adskiller sig altså fra at *artikulere* en bestemt vinkel. Hverken fokus eller synsvinkel fanger dermed det, som de to næste definitioner indfanger – nemlig journalistens sproglige formulering af den vinkel, der styrer researchen og formidlingen af historien.

### **Vinkel i betydningen påstand: Det journalisten dokumenterer med sin historie**

Vinkel i betydningen påstand er den definition af vinkelbegrebet, der er mest udbredt i de analyserede lærebøger. Hvor Meilby i første udgave af *Journalistikkens grundtrin*, som vi så, definerede vinkel som fokus, der definerer de senere udgaver af lærebogsklassikeren forfattet af Schmidt vinkel som påstand. I 4. udgave, der er forfattet i samarbejde med Mørk, lyder det med reference til begrebets journalistiske udviklingshistorie: “I dag dækker begrebet den påstand, journalisten vælger som sit fokus.” (Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 70; cf. Schmidt, 2011, s. 81). Også Hvid, der er en af de lærebogsforfattere, der har beskæftiget sig mest indgående med at beskrive vinkel som

journalistisk arbejdsredskab, fastsætter i sine bøger begrebet i betydningen påstand (Hvid, 2008; Bjerre & Hvid, 2015). I *Forelsket i vinklen* finder vi dette generaliserende udsagn om vinkelbegrebets betydning: “En journalistisk vinkel defineres i de journalistiske lærebøger som den påstand om virkeligheden, som journalisten fremsætter og giver modtageren belæg for.” (Bjerre & Hvid, 2015, s. 18). At denne definition faktisk er den aktuelt mest udbredte bekræftes af, at det er denne definition, der optræder i et af de nyeste værker i korpus, lærebogen *Grib Journalistikken* (Bjerre & Kvam, 2020, s. 18 og 27). Det er endvidere denne forståelse af begrebet, der er kanoniseret i *Medie- og Kommunikationsleksikon* i opslaget om vinkel (Schmidt, 2013). Endelig kan denne forståelse også findes i lærebøgerne *Skarpt skåret* (Larsen & Frederiksen, 2014, s. 45), *De levende billeders dramaturgi* (Larsen, 2003, s. 73) og i *Journalistik med om-tanke*, hvor Kramhøft ud over at fastsætte vinkel i betydningen synsvinkel også definerer vinkel i betydningen påstand (Kramhøft, 2000, s. 208). Både i forhold til udbredelse, aktualitet og kanonisering har denne definition af vinkelbegrebet altså en særlig prominens.

Denne betydning af vinkelbegrebet udspringer af en argumentationsteoretisk forståelsesramme. Ordene påstand og belæg er danske oversættelser af to af de elementer, der indgår i logikeren Toulmins indflydelsesrige argumentationsmodel, nemlig ‘claim’ og ‘data’ (Toulmin, 1958). Flere af lærebøgerne henviser da også til Toulmins argumentmodel og det vokabular, der knytter sig til Jørgensen og Onsbergs (2023) danske oversættelse af modellens elementer – ‘påstand’, ‘belæg’, ‘hjemmel’, ‘gendrivelse’, ‘styrkemærke’ og ‘rygdækning’ – eller mere generelt til argumentationsteoretisk tænkning (Bjerre & Kvam, 2020, s. 25 ff.; Hvid, 2008, s. 89 ff.; Kramhøft, 2000, s. 210 ff.; Larsen, 2003, s. 95; Larsen & Frederiksen, 2014, s. 42; Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 89 ff.).

Denne forståelse af vinkelbegrebet accentuerer, at vinklen skal kunne *dokumenteres*. Schmidt og Mørk (2021, s. 70) fremfører således, at “Hvis researchen viser, at der ikke er belæg for påstanden i vinklen, så må journalisten tilbage til grundresearchen og justere eller starte forfra på formuleringen af vinklen.” Hvor de to forudgående definitioner har fokus på, hvor meget og hvorfra journalisten dækker sin historie, der har denne forståelse fokus på, hvad der er dækning for – “vinklen skal holde”, som det hedder i den journalistiske sprogbrug (se fx Larsen, 2003, s. 79). Denne forståelse af vinkel betoner dermed centrale journalistiske kompetencer forbundet med grundig research og forventningen om, at journalistiske historier er sande og velunderbyggede.

Det er kendetegnende for denne forståelse af vinkelbegrebet, at vinklen har en sproglig udformning. Vinklen er en sætning, der bliver nedfældet på et skrive- eller vinkelark (Bjerre & Kvam, 2020, kap.

2; Hvid; 2008, s. 68 ff.; Larsen & Frederiksen, 2014, s. 230; Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 46). Først som en provisorisk "arbejdsvinkel", der fungerer som journalistisk styringsredskab i research- og ideudviklingsfasen (Bjerre & Hvid, 2015, s. 18 ff.). Og siden, når journalisten har skaffet belæg for arbejdsvinklen, som historiens udtrykte påstand: "Efter at du har lavet din grundresearch og er sikker på at historien holder og kan komme hjem, så er det allervigtigste at få formuleret din vinkel knivskarpt: en enkel og kontant *påstand* som indeholder nyheden i en klar og præcis formulering." (Larsen, 2003, s. 174). Den sproglige artikulering gør vinklen håndgribelig – påstanden er det, journalisten arbejder ud fra og bearbejder til det punkt, hvor researchen viser, at den holder.

At fastsætte vinkel som påstand synes imidlertid at skabe problemer for den journalistiske sprogbrug. For hvis "påstanden er vinklen", som Hvid (2008, s. 98) fremfører, så forekommer det sprogligt gentagende at tale om "vinklens påstand", en formulering, der går igen i flere af de lærebøger, der abonnerer på påstandsdefinitionen (Bjerre & Kvam, 2020, s. 25; Hvid og Bjerre, 2015, s. 46; Larsen, 2003, s. 157). Her ville det være mere sprogligt præcist og økonomisk bare at tale om påstand. Noget lignende gælder formuleringen "påstanden i vinklen" (Bjerre & Kvam, 2020, s. 150; Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 70). Formuleringerne indikerer, at påstanden er en egenskab ved vinklen, der altså må være noget andet og mere end blot påstanden. Men hvad? Hvad tilføjer ordet vinkel? Dertil kommer, at en historie ofte vil indeholde flere påstande, hvilket gør det svært at opretholde vinkel i den entalsform, som definitionerne ellers lægger op til. Det ser vi fx i denne passage: "Grundmodellen i argumentanalysen er, at journalisten tager de centrale *påstande* i sin vinkel og undersøger, om der er *belæg* for dem" (Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 89, originale kursiveringer).

Også på andre måder forekommer det vanskeligt for lærebogsforfatterne at opretholde en konsekvent sprogbrug, når vinkel forstås som påstand. Flere af de forfattere, der definerer vinklen som historiens påstand, bruger også vinklen i en bredere betydning af, hvad historien "handler om", dvs. dens fokus. Det fremgår fx af denne passage: "Hvis vinklen i en historie handler om studerendes præstationsangst, skal alle kilder tage udgangspunkt i det fokus." (Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 71). Endelig er det betegnende, at opskriften på en vinkelsætning lyder 'jeg vil fortælle', ikke 'jeg vil påstå', som definitionen ellers lægger op til (Bjerre & Kvam, 2020, s. 18; Larsen & Frederiksen, 2014, s. 230; Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 80). Den journalistiske sprogbrug indikerer altså, at påstandsdefinitionen trods dens udbredelse er for snæver til at indfange betydningen af fagtermen vinkel.



## Vinkel i betydningen budskab: Det journalisten kommunikerer til modtageren med sin historie

Vinkel i betydningen budskab optræder i to af de analyserede lærebøger. I Tverskov og Tverskovs *Sådan gør journalister* fra 2004 finder læseren – ud over den tidligere omtalte definition af vinkel i betydningen fokus – også denne længere betydningsindkredsning (s. 24):

AT VINKLE og dermed afgrænse historien svarer til at analysere, vurdere, prioritere, sortere og strukturere sit materiale. Journalisten leder efter essensen, budskabet. Finder det udsagn som er dækkende for materialet, og formulerer det enkelt og markant. At finde et materiales hovedbudskab er at lede efter det læseren skal blive opmærksom på.

I Larsens *Skriv breve end du tror* fra 2018 (s. 34) lyder det kortere: “Budskabet er din vinkel på stoffet. Tekstens essens eller pointe. Budskab og vinkel er det samme.”

Der er flere ligheder mellem denne betydning og påstandsdefinitionen. Vinkel i betydningen budskab har ligesom påstand et sprogligt aftryk. Vinklen er i Tverskov og Tverskovs betydningsindkredsning ovenfor et “udsagn”, og hos Larsen er det en “vinkel-sætning” (s. 10). I lighed med påstandsbetydningen understreger denne sprogliggørelse vinklen som journalistisk arbejdsredskab: “Vinkel-sætningen er dit værktøj til at tænke med. Det hjælper dig med at gøre dine tanker synlige og formulere dit budskab så klart og præcist som muligt for dig selv.” (Larsen, 2018, s. 35). Ligheden afspejler sig også i de to lærebøgers sprogbrug, hvor ordet påstand synes at optræde synonymt med budskab. Hos Larsen (s. 35) hedder det fx: “Din vinkel er dit budskab eller din påstand om et bestemt emne.” Hos Tverskov og Tverskov (s. 24) lyder det: “Hovedbudskabet er ofte en påstand der kræver en forklaring, en konklusion eller konsekvens.” Og i Bjerre og Kvams *Grib journalistikken* (s. 25): “Hovedbudskabet er vinklens påstand.” Det sproglige overlap bliver yderligere understreget af, at Hvid, der definerer vinkel som påstand, i sit skriveark bruger termerne “hovedbudskab” og “underbudskaber” og ikke – som ellers ville være mere sprogligt konsekvent – hovedpåstand og underpåstande (Hvid, 2008, s. 69). Sprogligt kan der altså spores en tendens i de lærebøger, der indkredser vinkel som enten påstand eller budskab, til at bruge de to ord synonymt. En oplagt forklaring på dette sproglige overlap er, at budskabet ofte har karakter af en påstand. Et udsagn som ‘Det bliver dyrere at være husejer’ er på en gang et budskab og en påstand, der kan søges belæg for.

Forskellen mellem påstand og budskab stikker dog dybere end et sprogligt valg mellem to synonyme begreber. Forskydningen fra påstand til budskab rummer en teoretisk forskydning, der har

praktiske konsekvenser for, hvad journalisten fokuserer på i sit arbejde med vinklen. For hvor termen 'påstand' trækker på argumentationsteori, der udspringer termen 'budskab' af en kommunikationsteoretisk forståelsesramme. Som det hedder i *Medie- og kommunikationsleksikon* under opslaget 'budskab': "Budskab er et af kernebegreberne inden for almen kommunikationsteori og optræder i en lang række kommunikationsmodeller som betegnelse for det, der kommunikeres fra afsender til modtager under kommunikationsprocessen." (Frandsen, 2013).

Med termen budskab sættes modtageren i centrum. Hos Tverskov og Tverskov (s. 22) lyder det, at "Journalisten er i modtagerens tjeneste. Vælger og vinkler og bruger et sprog som passer til målgruppen", der ledsages af opfordringer til at formulere budskabet "på modtagerens betingelser" og være "solidarisk med målgruppen". Hos Larsen afspejler modtagertænkningen sig i opfordringen til at "tage læseren i hånden og vise, at dit budskab er relevant for ham" (s. 109), og i en formulering som: "Jo bedre du kender din læser, jo mere præcist kan du skrive, så det giver mening for ham. Du kan skabe identifikation, så han genkender, forstår og oplever dit budskab." (s. 29; cf. s. 34). Hvor vinkel i betydningen påstand betoner vinklens sandhedsværdi, der betoner budskabsforståelsen vinklens interesseværdi; historien skal ikke bare holde, men også holde modtageren fast. Det er modtageren, der er pejlemærket for, om vinklen giver mening, skaber identifikation, genkendelse, forståelse og oplevelse, som Larsen fremhæver. Det er også modtagertænkningen, der giver anledning til tekstinterne anbefalinger om at formulere og placere budskabet tydeligt og tidligt. Larsen (s. 34) pointerer, at "din tekst bliver nemmere at læse og forstå, jo skarpere dit budskab er vinklet"; og om overskriften, manchetten og indledningen lyder det (s. 106), at: "Alle tre peger ind i vinklen, så budskabet er tydeligt."<sup>14</sup>

Som med de tre andre definitioner peger denne forståelse af begrebet vinkel på en central facet af det journalistiske håndværk. Det er en central journalistisk kompetence at kunne formulere et budskab, der skaber sammenhæng – både udadtil mellem historien og modtagerens horisont og indadtil i det journalistiske produkt fra indledning til afslutning. 'Hvad er budskabet?' kan oversættes til 'Hvad skal modtageren tage med sig?', eller 'Hvad kan modtageren bruge historien til?'. Dermed accentueres journalistens rolle som en formidler og fortolker, der har et fagligt blik for *relevans*.

Budskabsforståelsens indlejrede modtagertænkning er en styrke ved denne definition. Man kan således forestille sig, at det netop er denne modtagertænkning, som ikke ligger i påstandsbegrebet, der ansporer fortalere for påstandsbetydningen til at veksle mellem ordene påstand og budskab. Sagt anderledes: Når Hvid i sit vinkelark

benytter begreberne “hovedbudskab” og “underbudskaber” i stedet for hovedpåstand og underpåstande, så er det måske for at sikre den journalistiske opmærksomhed på modtageren, så vinklen ikke bare beviser et forhold i virkeligheden, men også overbeviser læseren om, at det er vigtigt.

Budskabsbetydningen rammes imidlertid af nogle af de samme sproglige problemer, som rammer påstandsdefinitionen. Det afspejler sig i den sætning, som blev citeret ovenfor: “Og din tekst bliver nemmere at læse og forstå, jo skarpere dit budskab er vinklet.” (Larsen, 2018, s. 34). Her er vinklen ikke identisk med budskabet, men betegner en egenskab ved budskabet, der “er vinklet”. Det rejser spørgsmålet, hvad vinklen så er, hvis den ikke, som Larsens begrebsdefinition lægger op til, er det “samme som” budskabet? Tilsvarende gælder det, at det sammensatte substantiv “vinkelbudskab” afspejler den samme form for sproglig gentagelse, som vi så i forbindelse med påstandsbetydningen (Larsen, 2018, s. 124). Også her bliver det uklart, hvad ordet vinkel bidrager med i forhold til den teoretisk set mere præcise term budskab. Ordet vinkel forekommer at være en unødvendig sproglig omvej, når man slet og ret kunne tale om tekstens budskab. Endelig er ordsammensætningerne “hovedbudskab” og “underbudskaber” udtryk for, at budskab både kan referere til tekstens overordnede budskab og budskaber, der optræder mere lokalt i teksten og fx styrer et afsnits fokus. Det ser vi i denne anbefaling: “Da netlæsere i endnu højere grad end avislæsere skimmer, kan det være en god ide at lade den første sætning i hvert afsnit indeholde budskabet for det tekststykke.” (Tverskov & Tverskov, 2004, s. 41). Den sproglige variation rummer en betydningsudvidelse, der dels afstedkommer sproglig flertydighed, dels kolliderer med det journalistiske credo om én historie, én vinkel.

### **De fire definitioner opsummeret: Forskellige forståelsesrammer og styrker**

Den begrebsanalytiske kortlægning har vist, at der ikke er nogen betydningsmæssig fællesnævner, når journalister bruger udtryk som *skarpvinkling*, *den danske vinkel*, *vinkelsætning* og *vinkelbudskab*. De forskellige udtryk kan føres tilbage til forskellige definitioner af vinkelbegrebet som en journalistisk fagterm, der kan betyde henholdsvis fokus, synsvinkel, påstand og budskab. Definitionerne repræsenterer forskellige forståelsesrammer, der hver især indfanger centrale opmærksomhedspunkter i det praktiske journalistfaglige arbejde med at vinkle en historie, der ideelt set både er *afgrænset*, *upartisk*, *dokumenteret* og *relevant*.

Analysen har også vist, at fokus- og synsvinkelforståelsen, der repræsenterer de tidligste betydningshistoriske lag i det journalistiske vinkelbegrebs historie, har det til fælles, at de kan føres tilbage til

etablerede ordbogsbetydninger. Det synes at gøre dem til de sprogligt mest gnidningsfri løsninger. I påstands- og budskabsforståelsen er begrebets oprindelige sproglige udgangspunkt forladt, og vinkelbegrebet er oversat til begreber hentet fra henholdsvis argumentations- og kommunikationsteori. Denne oversættelse resulterer flere steder i gentagelse og dobbelttydighed i den journalistiske sprogbrug. Oversættelsen af vinkelbegrebet til påstand eller budskab har omvendt den faglige styrke, at vinklen får et sprogligt aftryk i form af en vinkelsætning, der gør det tydeligt, hvordan vinklen fungerer som et konkret journalistisk arbejdsredskab.

De fire definitioner og deres repræsentanter kan opsummeres således:

	Fokus	Synsvinkel	Påstand	Budskab
Forståelsesramme	Geometrisk	Perspektivisk	Argumentations-teoretisk	Kommunikations-teoretisk
Journalistfagligt fokus i det praktiske arbejde med at vinkle en historie	Er vinklen afgrænset?	Er vinklen upartisk?	Er vinklen dokumenteret?	Er vinklen relevant?
Repræsentanter for definitionen	Bjerg (2009) Bjerg (2015) Meilby (1996) Tverskov & Tverskov (2004)	Kramhøft (2000)	Bjerre & Hvid (2015) Bjerre & Kvam (2020) Hvid (2008) Kramhøft (2000) Larsen (2003) Larsen & Frederiksen (2014) Schmidt (2011) Schmidt & Mørk (2021)	Larsen (2018) Tverskov & Tverskov (2004)

Tabel 1: De fire definitioner af vinkelbegrebet, der optræder i 30 nyere danske journalistiske lærebøger.

Selv om analysen ikke har haft et diakront sigte, tegner der sig alligevel nogle forskelle i forståelsen og brugen af begrebet mellem de tidlige og de senere lærebøger. Det er tydeligt, at de senere værker er mere eksplicit definerende og diskuterende i deres forståelse af vinkelbegrebet end de tidlige værker. Det er således sigende for begrebets journalistiske udviklingshistorie, at der i to af de tidlige værker, Tverskov og Tverskovs *Sådan gør journalister* fra 2004 og Kramhøfts *Journalistik med omtanke* fra 2000, optræder flere forskellige definitioner af begrebet. Analysen afslører dog, at også de senere lærebogsforfattere – trods deres begrebsafklarende bestræbelser – har svært ved at opretholde en entydig sprogbrug omkring vinkelbegrebet.

## Diskussion: Problematisk fagterm eller produktivt sprogspil?

Spørgsmålet er nu, hvordan man fra journalistisk hold mere normativt skal forholde sig til den deskriptive påvisning af vinkelbegrebets flertydighed? Her er der umiddelbart to veje at gå: At forsøge at bekæmpe begrebets flertydighed, eller at omfavne den.

Det er umiddelbart fristende at problematisere vinkelbegrebets flertydighed ud fra en betragtning om, at "Det er ikke sproglig variation, men konsekvens, præcision og gentagelse der er vigtigt for den der skal lære nyt." (Jørgensen & Rienecker, 2019, s. 130). Det taler for, at man fra journalistisk hold kanoniserer én af de fire betydninger af vinkelbegrebet og arbejder for at bruge begrebet konsekvent i denne ene betydning – sådan som det allerede er forsøgt med påstands betydningen (Schmidt, 2013).

Denne vej risikerer imidlertid at skabe flere problemer, end den løser. Som analysen viser, er det svært for lærebogsforfatterne at opretholde en konsekvent sprogbrug, hvor de kun opererer med vinkelbegrebet i én af de fire betydninger. Det gælder også de lærebogsforfattere, der er mest tydelige fortalere for den kanoniserede påstandsdefinition. Analysen peger dermed på, at ingen af de fire definitioner indfanger den alsidighed, der kendetegner de journalistiske lærebogsforfatters faktiske sprogbrug. En løsning, hvor man reducerer begrebets betydningsrigdom, vil derfor ikke indlemme den studerende i det sproglige fællesskab, eftersom den tilstræbte entydighed ikke vil modsvare den mangfoldige brug af begrebet, som man ud fra analysen kan forvente, at den studerende vil erfare i mødet med fagets undervisere og udøvere. For hvis den professionelle journalistiske socialisering, som Gravengaard og Rimestad (2015, s. 119) påpeger, indebærer "at tænke med og inden for de begreber, kollegerne anvender, og at tale på bestemte måder", så nytter det ikke, at den studerende kun kender én betydning af begrebet vinkel. For at kunne tale fagsproget må den studerende have kendskab til de forskellige måder, vinkelbegrebet defineres og bruges på. Ligesom man først med rette kan hævde at være flydende på et fremmedsprog, når man mestrer synonymerne, må man for at forstå vinkelbegrebets fulde fagterminologiske betydning være fortrolig med dets flertydighed.

Et andet problem med at bekæmpe vinkelbegrebets flertydighed er, at man risikerer at overse væsentlige aspekter af den journalistiske vinklingspraksis. Som analysen har vist, indfanger hver af de fire betydninger centrale faglige opmærksomhedspunkter i det praktiske arbejde med at vinkle en historie. Indsnævrer man begrebets betydningsmuligheder, risikerer man dermed at indsnævre det praktiske journalistiske refleksionsrum og tabe vigtige vinklingsaktiviteter af syne.

At vælge én af de fire definitioner forekommer dermed unødvendigt begrænsende. Jeg skal derfor argumentere for det produktive i at forfølge den anden vej, hvor man omfavner vinkelbegrebets flertydighed. Det sker med den dobbelte begrundelse, at begrebets betydningforskelle på én gang afspejler nuancerne i den journalistiske sprogbrug og alsidigheden i den journalistiske vinklingspraksis. Fastholdelsen af begrebets flertydighed bliver med andre ord en indgang til at forstå vinkling som et flersidigt fagligt fænomen.

Jeg henter støtte for at vælge flertydighedens vej i Wittgensteins sene sprogfilosofiske værk *Filosofiske undersøgelser*, hvor han introducerer begrebet *sprogspil* (Wittgenstein, 1971, § 7). Wittgensteins sprogspilsteori hviler på en sprogfilosofisk præmis om, at ords betydning er bestemt af deres praktiske brug. Sprogbrugen er derfor nøglen til at forstå et ords betydning, mens en definition højst kan tjene som et eksempel på ordets brug og betydning. Forfølger vi den tanke, er de fire definitioner af vinkelbegrebet ikke gensidigt udelukkende, men forskellige eksempler på, hvordan begrebet anvendes i det journalistiske sprogspil. De er, hvad Wittgenstein kalder, “*træk i sprogspillet*” (§ 22). Sprogspilsteorien tillader os altså at operere med en pluralistisk forståelse af vinkelbegrebet, hvor de fire definitioner er *betydningsmuligheder*, der hver for sig repræsenterer et brugbart svar på, hvad en vinkel er. De indgår i en familie af betydning med indbyrdes “familieligheder” (§ 67) og forskelle, som til sammen indfanger begrebets journalistiske smidighed og betydningsrigdom.<sup>15</sup>

En særlig styrke ved sprogspilstilgangen i en journalistisk kontekst er, at den betoner sprogets forankring i praksis. Som Wittgenstein (§ 23) skriver: “Ordet ‘sprogspil’ skal her fremhæve, at det at tale et sprog er en del af en aktivitet eller livsform.” At fokusere på sprogbrug er altså ensbetydende med at fokusere på *sprog i brug* – på de aktiviteter, hvormed sproget er “sammenvævet” (§ 7). At ordet ‘vinkel’ bliver brugt i forskellige betydninger indikerer dermed, at ordet er *brugbart* i forbindelse med forskellige aktiviteter. I en sprogspilsoptik er de fire betydninger forskellige måder at beskrive, hvad man *gør*, når man vinkler som journalist: Man vælger et fokus, fastlægger en synsvinkel, dokumenterer en påstand, og kommunikerer et budskab til modtageren. Hvis vinkelbegrebet skal kunne rumme *alt* det, man *gør*, når man som journalist vinkler en historie, må det nødvendigvis være flertydigt.

Sprogspilsteorien tjener altså ikke alene som en mulig forklaring på vinkelbegrebets flertydighed, idet det bliver klart, at flerheden af betydninger afspejler flerheden af vinklingsaktiviteter. Den anviser også en farbar vej til at omfavne flertydigheden, idet hver af de fire betydninger udpeger et fagligt opmærksomhedspunkt i arbejdet med at vinkle en journalistisk historie. Med afsæt i sprogspilsteorien

bliver det dermed muligt at opstille en model for det journalistiske vinkelsprogspil, der integrerer vinkelbegrebets forskellige betydninger og brug. Modellen viser, hvordan vinkelbegrebet bruges i fire forskellige betydninger, der hver for sig anviser en aktivitet og faglig refleksion i arbejdet med at vinkle en historie:



Figur 2: Betydninger og brug af fagtermen vinkel i det journalistiske vinkelsprogspil.

I modellen anviser hver af de fire betydninger et journalistisk refleksionsrum, der sætter journalisten i stand til at arbejde systematisk med forskellige aspekter af vinkling. Hvert af de fire refleksionsrum er styret af en norm for journalistisk troværdighed og god formidling: Afgrænsning, upartiskhed, dokumentation og relevans. Hvert refleksionsrum udgør dermed et begrænset mulighedsrum i arbejdet med at vinkle en historie.

Et eksempel kan måske tjene til at klargøre modellens praktiske anvisende potentiale. Lad os forestille os en journalist, der skal producere en historie om de aktuelle udfordringer på fødegangene på danske hospitaler. Det systematiske arbejde med at vinkle historien vil indbefatte en række reflekterede valg fra journalistens side. Journalisten skal vælge et *fokus*: Skal hun vinkle historien på en enkelt fødegang, der kommer til at repræsentere situationen på de danske fødegange mere generelt, eller skal hun dække de danske fødegange mere bredt? Hvilke årsager (fx mere komplekse fødsler og personalemangel), effekter (fx stress, sygemeldinger og opsigelser), og mulige løsninger på problemerne (fx mulighed for at fastholde ældre jordemødre på afdelingerne, højere lønninger eller ændrede arbejdsforhold) ser journalisten som de væsentligste at formidle? Journalisten skal også fastlægge historiens *synsvinkel*: Skal historien fortælles fra den fødendes, jordemoderens, lederens eller

politikerens synsvinkel? Og hvis journalisten beslutter at fortælle historien fra en jordemoders synsvinkel, skal det da være en praktiserende jordemoder, en jordemoder, der er gået på nedsat tid, eller en jordemoder, der har valgt at opsiges sin stilling i hospitalsverden og har fået ansættelse på en privat klinik? Undervejs i processen formulerer journalisten en konkret *påstand*. Det kan fx være en påstand om, at flere jordemødre søger mod private klinikker, at forholdene på fødegangene resulterer i et højt antal sygemeldinger, eller at de fødende på danske hospitaler føler sig svigtet. Endelig vil journalisten skulle overveje, hvad der er et relevant *budskab*. Hvad vil mediets modtagere kunne relatere til og interessere sig for? Et budskab om politisk svigt?, om et arbejdsmarked i forandring?, om et velfærdssamfund, hvor centrale velfærdsydelse bliver undermineret?, eller om udsigten til en ubehagelig fødselsoplevelse? Alle valgene træffes med blik for mediets særlige profil og målgruppe. Det er således ikke tilfældigt, at man i Berlingskes Business-sektion finder en økonomisk vinklet historie “Analyse: Jordemødrenes løn halter efter sygeplejerskerne” (Kehlet, 2022, s. 4), mens man i Information finder en historie vinklet på jordemødrenes arbejdsbelastning “Undersøgelse: To ud af tre jordemødre har overvejet at forlade deres stillinger på fødegangene” (Høj, 2021, s. 7), og i B.T. finder en historie skrevet ud fra en enkelt jordemoders synsvinkel “Jordemoder mødte ind som den eneste” (Lauritzen, 2021, s. 7).

Når det er vigtigt at holde fast i begrebets betydningsmuligheder, er det altså fordi, de beskriver forskellige aktiviteter, der hver for sig og tilsammen sikrer, at vinklen er resultatet af en systematisk, alsidig og reflekteret vinklingsproces. Hvornår, hvordan og hvor meget de forskellige betydninger bringes ‘i spil’ vil variere fra historie til historie. Nogle gange vil synsvinklen være givet, andre gange vil journalisten have en bestemt påstand, hun ønsker at efterprøve, og atter andre gange vil journalisten opleve at skulle flere gange rundt i modellen, når researchen viser, at en arbejdsvinkel ikke lever op til en bestemt journalistisk norm. Nogle betydninger af vinkelbegrebet forekommer endvidere særligt relevante i forhold til bestemte genrer. Fx forekommer det umiddelbart mere oplagt at arbejde med historiens påstand i relation til nyhedsjournalistik end i relation til fortællende journalistik, hvor overvejelser over historiens bærende synsvinkel typisk vil være mere fremtrædende. Men skal nøglebegrebet vinkel fungere som en sproglig nøgle til journalistfaget, der sætter den studerende i stand til at tænke og tale fagligt kvalificeret om vinkling, må fagtermen omfatte hele sprogspillet, alle betydningerne og alle aktiviteterne. Et bud på en produktiv definition af vinkelbegrebet, der indfanger alsidigheden i den journalistiske sprogbrug og vinklingspraksis, kunne lyde:



*Vinklen er resultatet af en proces, hvor journalisten systematisk vælger et fokus, fastlægger en synsvinkel, begrundet en påstand og formidler et budskab til en modtager.*

## **Afrunding: En vinkel på journalistfaget**

Når redaktøren eller underviseren spørger: "Hvad er vinklen?", forventer hun et entydigt svar. Én historie, én vinkel. Men når vinklen som begreb selv er historien, bliver svaret flertydigt. Vinkelbegrebet har vist sig at være en flydende fagterm, hvis flertydighed afspejler sig i, at betydningen bliver fastsat forskelligt på tværs af lærebøger, og i at det kan være vanskeligt for den enkelte lærebogsforfatter at fastholde begrebet i én betydning.

I begrebets flertydighed er der spor af en større fortælling om journalistikkens rejse fra et håndværksfag præget af tavs viden til et universitetsfag, hvor der er et udtalt krav om klart definerede fagtermer. Som det lyder i en lærebogsklassiker om vidensproduktion i samfundsvidenskabernes: "Begrebsdannelse er en central aktivitet i udviklingen af et professionelt videnskabeligt sprog." (Andersen, 2019, s. 109). Men som analysen viser, er vinkelbegrebet ikke som udgangspunkt et veldefineret teoretisk begreb, men snarere en samlebetegnelse for en række praktiske journalistiske aktiviteter. Begrebsanalysen peger på et "pædagogisk dilemma" (Jensen, 2013, s. 167), der kan opstå, når man prøver at finde sine faglige ben mellem journalistisk håndværkstradition og akademisk præcision. Det kan populært sagt være svært at tilfredsstille både professionens og professorens krav. Her er der en faglig udfordring i at undgå, at man i bestræbelsen på at etablere sin position som et universitetsfag med veldefinerede teoretiske begreber bevæger sig for langt væk fra fagets praktiske udgangspunkt. For journalistiske begreber, der som vinkelbegrebet er født ud af en praktisk brugskontekst, ligger der en væsentlig opgave i at fastholde koblingen mellem fagbegreb og praktisk greb.

Sprogspilstankegangen anviser en mulig vej til at bygge bro mellem teori og praksis. Inden for rammerne af Wittgensteins sprogspilsteori vil sproglig flertydighed i mange tilfælde kunne forklares og forsvares som noget produktivt med henvisning til fagets alsidige praktiske aktiviteter. At fastholde betydningsrigdommen kan dermed ses som en fagpolitisk handling, der søger at fastholde fagets praktiske forankring i dets teoretiske konsolidering.

## NOTER

<sup>12</sup> Som de eneste i de analyserede lærebøger skelner Mørk og Schmidt mellem vinkel og vinkling. Det sker i den senest opdaterede udgave af *Journalistikkens grundtrin* fra 2021, hvor 'vinkel' bestemmes som "Journalistens valgte fokus: Jeg vil fortælle, at ...", mens 'vinkling' bestemmes som "Den arbejdsproces, der fører frem til, at man kan udvælge sit fokus, det vil sige vinkle sin historie." (Schmidt & Mørk, 2021, s. 70).

<sup>13</sup> Vinkel i betydningen synsvinkel forekommer at minde om det engelske 'angle', der i *Keywords in News and Journalism Studies* forklares som: "the chosen perspective, emphasis, bias and focus from which a news item is told" (Zelizer & Allan, 2010, s. 6).

<sup>14</sup> Denne mere tekstinterne forståelse af budskab trækker vinkelbegrebet i retning af det engelske ord "lead", der er i *Keywords in News and Journalism Studies* forklares som: "a news story's initial sentence or paragraph that summarizes its main point" (Zelizer & Allan, 2010, s. 67).

<sup>15</sup> Ideen om at betragte det journalistiske vinkelbegreb som et familiehedsbegreb er inspireret af Gabrielsen (2008, s. 76 ff.), der efter at have kortlagt diversiteten i det antikke retoriske argumentations- og vinklingsbegreb, topik, argumenterer for, at det må forstås som et familiehedsbegreb.

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# The role of news content on Danish broadcasters' streaming services

## A longitudinal content analysis of two video-on- demand services

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### **Abstract**

Amidst the shift from linear TV to streaming, public-service media face the challenge of reconciling commercial competition with their public obligation of informing society. This longitudinal content analysis investigates the curation and platformization of news on the front pages of the video-on-demand services of two Danish broadcasters, DRTV and TV 2 Play. Sampling four days annually from 2020 to 2022, we take a longitudinal approach to assess news curation (i.e., positioning and accessibility on the front page) and news platformization (i.e., video length, hard vs. soft news composition, and prevalence of streaming-first content). We did not find strong evidence of platformization overall. A main difference between the broadcasters was in terms of curation, with DRTV consistently prioritizing the news deck, while TV 2 exhibited a declining trend over time. This study contributes valuable insights into the treatment of news by broadcasters within the evolving context of streaming services.

### **KEYWORDS**

streaming, news content, platformization, curation, content analysis

## Introduction

The rapid increase of internet bandwidth has led to an unprecedented expansion of video streaming in the last decade, with estimates suggesting that it accounts for as much as 65% of global internet traffic (Gutelle, 2023). The dominance of linear television has been challenged by the fast rise of video streaming on social media and Video-on-Demand (VoD) services. With television audiences in Denmark undergoing a steady decline (DR 2023), television broadcasters have been forced to develop their own VoD services, broadcaster video-on-demand (BVoD), to compete with VoD natives with a strong international presence, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, or Disney+. The transition from linear TV to online TV poses a special challenge to public-service media institutions like DR, who must balance their need to keep up with the commercial competition with fulfilling their obligations as governmentally funded entities with a public profile.

One of the main roles of public-service media (PSM) in democratic societies is to provide objective and reliable information about societal affairs in the form of news (Van Aelst et al., 2017). Although public funding for public-service media is conditioned on the amount of news content they must provide on linear TV, their contracts do not specify how or whether these broadcasters should prioritize news content on their BVoD services (DR, 2023). On DR and TV 2, the two leading television news broadcasters in Denmark, news content has a privileged position on their flow television channels during primetime slots with a relatively high degree of viewership. However, on their BVoD services, news content is suddenly in more direct competition for space and visibility with all other content genres, raising a need for news curation and a concern for the visibility of news content. This concern over a potentially decreasing visibility, which could eventually result in greater news avoidance for Danish citizens, is what has motivated us to conduct this study since we have struggled to find existing studies that document and compare the visibility of news content on these BVoD services. The question is whether these BVoDs are curating news content in a way that ensures that it is still being consumed in the high-choice context of online platforms, for instance by using strategies that improve visibility and accessibility. In addition to the matter of curation, the transition from broadcast news to BVoD might affect the nature of the news content itself. This process is described as news platformization, where news content is influenced by the characteristics of the platform where it is published (Hase et al., 2023). A growing body of platformization research has examined third-party platform news publishing driven by a concern that external actors might

hold too much power, potentially favoring popular topics over topics of societal interest (Hartley et al., 2023; Hase et al., 2023, García-Perdomo, 2021). In contrast, less attention has been paid to what happens to news content when it is published on the organization's own digital platforms, even though BVoDs benefit from the same affordances as other streaming services – for instance, by closely monitoring what content is more popular among viewers. Motivated by these concerns and by filling a gap in the research literature on this topic, we ask whether news content on these two BVoDs is showing signs of platformization.

This work examines the matters of curation and platformization of news on BVoD in the national context of Denmark and its two main state-affiliated broadcasters, DR and TV 2. To investigate our research questions, the study conducts a case study of Denmark. Denmark makes an ideal case for studying the treatment of news in BVoDs because it is a highly digitalized country, where the BVoDs are used to a great extent (Newman et al., 2023). Thus, it can serve as a reference point for societies with a less developed digital transition. We analyze the front pages on DR and TV 2's VoD services, DRTV, and TV 2 Play. By sampling four days each year from January 2020 to January 2023 for both streaming services, we track the evolution over time of different dimensions about the prevalence and characteristics of news content featured on the front page of the two services. Importantly, while both DR and TV 2 have public-service obligations (although these do not explicitly apply to TV 2 Play), only DRTV is publicly funded while TV 2 Play is a state-owned but commercially funded service (Lassen, 2023). Thus, they offer a second layer of analysis in terms of comparing whether the treatment of news on BVoD services depends on the degree of public versus commercial funding.

In what follows, we present our research questions within the theoretical frameworks of content curation and news platformization, we contextualize the Danish BVoD market as the case under study, and we describe the methods employed. Following this, we present our findings, which take a longitudinal perspective by looking at changes over time. Lastly, we discuss the implications of our findings with a focus on the differences between the two BVoD services. As public-service media experience a decline in linear TV viewership and a simultaneous rise in audiences on their BVoD platforms, preserving their fundamental role as news providers becomes crucial.



## Content curation on VoD services

Video streaming refers to the transmission of video data over the Internet, digitally and in real-time, in a way that allows the receiver to watch the video content as it is being transmitted (Andersen & Lüders, 2021). While there are many types of streaming, this article is preoccupied with online TV, namely “[...] services that facilitate the viewing of editorially selected audiovisual content through internet-connected devices and infrastructure” (Johnson, 2019, p. 30), and more specifically on video-on-demand, a subset of online TV services that enable delayed watching of content, or self-scheduling.

One of the main ways in which VoD differs from traditional flow TV is in *content curation*, which is a term previously used about art and museums, where the curator is responsible for the selection and organization of content, writing headlines and content labels, and with power to, for instance, increase the visibility, discoverability, and prominence of some content over other kinds of content (Graham & Cook, 2010; Johnson, 2019; Smits & Nikdel, 2019; Bruun, 2020). Linear scheduling is arguably the defining characteristic that distinguishes flow TV from other media (Bruun, 2021), and in linear scheduling, broadcasters play an important curating role by selecting which content is presented on a given TV channel, in what order, and at what time, with some timeslots such as prime time receiving great attention. In contrast, VoD is characterized by libraries where all content is available at once (Lüders & Sundet, 2022; Lotz, 2018) and where the user selects and decides the order of viewing. It should be mentioned that there are no strict boundaries between the two and that there is a trend towards convergence, which Bruun (2021) also calls “trans-programming”, with the content being produced to fit both linear and online services. Furthermore, some VoD services such as those originating from legacy TV broadcasters often integrate live broadcasts from their linear TV channels within their BVoD service. Lassen (2023) argues that BVoD services are “reappropriating” linear scheduling, and the experience of liveness that results from it gives them a competitive advantage over other prominent VoD players.

The fact that VoD relies on content libraries instead of linear scheduling would suggest that content selection is completely at the discretion of the viewer. However, curation still plays a big role in the VoD context even if through different mechanisms. Content in VoD is accessed through “tiles”, which are clickable thumbnails with a picture and a title or even a short descriptive text. These tiles are organized horizontally in “decks”, typically sharing a thematic connection within a deck. Often VoDs will include a highlights deck on the top of the page, a “carousel” (or “hero board”), where the tiles

are comparatively bigger. Thus, the spatial organization of the interface necessarily creates a hierarchy of content. Bigger tiles and decks higher up on the page have greater visibility and are more likely to be clicked on than things further down (Van Esler, 2021), which will only be seen if the user scrolls down to them. Content that is not included directly on the front page is less likely to be selected because it requires an active effort by the user to use the search bar. A second layer of curation is introduced if the service uses personalization algorithms that automatically organize content based on the prior behavior of the viewer. While this is common in digitally native VoDs such as Netflix, where each front page will vary immensely from user to user, PSM BVoDs tend to have less personalization and often show the same front page regardless of the logged profile (Bruun & Bille, 2022).

To summarize, curation is not exclusive to linear TV but is extremely important to all VoDs; it just operates in perhaps a more invisible way. This has raised concerns about potential power imbalances due to a lack of consumer awareness of the platform's influence on their choices (Lüders & Sundet, 2022). In contrast with this line of research, which adopts a critical lens towards VoD curation, this study analyzes the other side of curation of news as a necessity for public-service media to continue fulfilling their societal obligations via their VoD services. Accordingly, we ask:

RQ1. How has the curation of news content evolved on the front pages of DR and TV 2's BVoD services in the period 2020-2022?

## **News platformization**

The transition of news from traditional media to online has spiked a growing interest in news platformization, namely whether news production is influenced by the platform where news is published. Platformization can happen at either the selection level (e.g., some topics get more published than others), adaptation level (offline content gets modified in a specific way for the online version), or production level (when journalists produce content natively to the platform) (Hase et al., 2023). Empirical research has mostly focused on third-party platform news publishing, what Nieborg and Poell (2018) call “platform-native strategy”. This focus has been driven by a concern regarding the power imbalance between the news organizations and their dependence on the platform, seen as an external actor with too much influence (Hartley et al., 2023). This is a view shared by journalists themselves, who report a concern about how the platform might affect the selection and production of news in a

way that is detrimental to journalistic values (García-Perdomo, 2021). For example, Tandoc and Maitra (2018) found that a 2014 change in Facebook's algorithm triggered an increase in the production of news videos over written news by media companies with Facebook presence, especially among broadcasters. Similarly, Mukerjee et al. (2023) found that audience metrics with news content had a significant impact on future news content, as news outlets prioritized content based on what was viral in the past.

Although less attention has been paid to what happens to news when they are published on the organization's own digital platforms, self-publishing media organizations online, including BVoDs, are likely to also be subject to the virality logic that characterizes third-party platforms. Virality is the "process which gives any information item (picture, video, text, or any other audiovisual textual artifact) the maximum exposure, relative to the potential audience, over a short duration, distributed by many nodes" (Nahon et al., 2011, as cited in Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2021, p. 4). Increasing exposure is certainly a goal of traditional media, but the capacity to track audience engagement metrics (e.g., time spent on the content, liking, commenting), in real-time and with vast datasets, is equally available for news outlets that publish on their own platforms as it is to third-party platforms.

A main concern in the platformization literature is that the prioritization of socially significant topics could be trumped by the pursuit of virality (Hartley et al., 2023; Hase et al., 2023; Nieborg & Poell, 2018), best captured by the distinction between hard and soft news (Reinemann et al., 2012). Hard news stories are prototypically those that cover topics of broad societal interest such as economy, politics, or science, while soft news stories lean more towards entertainment, focusing on topics such as celebrities, sports, and exemplar-based stories (Reinemann et al., 2012; Curran et al., 2010). However, as Reinemann et al. (2011) point out, the hard/soft distinction is not limited to the topic of the message itself and can be captured by other dimensions such as the focus, the reception, or the style employed to tell the story. For instance, news softening could happen for hard topics if they are presented with flashy stylistic aspects, such as fast editing or the use of emotional music. A main reason why journalists might be inclined to soften news is to increase their virality. In one of the few studies comparing across own-platform vs. third-party platform news, Lamot et al. (2022) found that softer news resulted in greater user engagement than harder news regardless of the platform (i.e., own site or Facebook). Interestingly, this was the case when softening was conceptualized both in terms of topic and style.

Although platformization in the form of softening is typically seen with concern, strategies to adapt news to the affordances of the online platform could also be positive, especially if they help news to compete with other more viral content. An example of this is the stylistic trend of shortening the length of messages. While TV news is typically presented in lengthy news bulletins, short standalone videos have become the norm on online platforms using a bite-sized entertainment strategy. For example, the maximum duration of YouTube Shorts is 60 seconds, and Instagram Reels is 90 seconds. For TikTok, one of the most popular video platforms, the average video length for accounts with a significant number of views (i.e., more than 25,000) is around 50 seconds (Ceci, 2024). Conversely, the average length of a news message on American network TV is estimated at around 2 minutes and 23 seconds (Pew Research Center, 2012). If BVoD news turned out to be on the shorter side, it could be considered a negative example of softening because shorter duration leaves less room for in-depth coverage of information. At the same time, it might help news messages be more competitive and receive more attention in a context where the attention span is short, and viewers are used to quickly switching content.

A last measure of news platformization in BVoDs that we consider here is the presence of native digital content, that is, the production of content for the platform instead of the simple reposting or adaptation of content originally produced for flow TV. The production of native digital news would indicate a positive effort by the news organizations to adapt to the affordances of the platform, making news content more competitive. In the context of third-party platform publishing, two content analyses by Vázquez-Herrero and colleagues (2021; 2022) found a growing trend among media and news organizations to adapt their content to the video-based platform TikTok. Up to 85.3% of the content from news profiles on TikTok was originally crafted for the platform (i.e., native-digital) (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). Non-traditional formats were prevalent instead of a more standard informative content (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2021, Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). Conversely, in a study by Hase et al. (2023) looking at cross-platform news publishing across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, the authors found that only 2.4% of all news posts in their dataset were produced natively for the platform, with the highest percentage found in TikTok (33% of the digital native content). While those studies have focused on third-party platforms, no research to our knowledge has studied the production of native content in a BVoD context.

To assess news platformization in BVoD along the dimensions introduced, we ask:

RQ2. How is news content on DRTV and TV 2 Play influenced by platformization, as indicated by softer news, shorter videos, and digital-native vs. flow-first content?

### **Presenting the case study: Two Danish BVoDs**

Among the three models that Hallin and Mancini (2004) suggest for categorizing and comparing media systems in various countries, Denmark adheres to the democratic corporatist model alongside other Nordic countries, characterized by a dynamic in which the state wields substantial influence over the media without media losing their autonomy. The Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) was founded in 1925 and has received state subsidies ever since. Currently, the Danish media market has two strong public television stations, the tax-funded DR and then TV 2, which was established in 1988 and is a commercial but state-owned operator. Both DR and TV 2 are popular among the general population and have a significant reach (DR, 2023). There are substantial differences between DR and TV 2 both in terms of the funding models and in terms of organizational structures. First, DR provides radio, television, and web services, while TV 2 only provides television and web services. DR operates 100% under public funding with its corresponding public-service obligations, while TV 2 has both a public-service division and a commercial division, the latter funded by a mix of subscriptions and advertisements (Bruun & Bille, 2022). Bruun and Bille (2022) further explain that TV 2's public-service division includes the main broadcast channel TV 2, and the commercial division includes the VoD service TV 2 Play.

On a policy level, both broadcasters have public-service obligations towards the Danish state that they are contractually obliged to fulfill. DR has many such obligations that include delivering Danish-language drama series, music, cultural content, content for children and young people, sports, content from all regions of the Danish nation, Danish film, and of course news. Their contract states that they must offer news content on TV, radio, internet, and other relevant platforms and adapted to all target groups to ensure the “[...] best distribution of news to the population” (Danish Ministry of Culture, 2022, p. 2). Regarding this, DR writes in their strategy paper from 2019 that news is a priority area for them (along with culture and children's content) and states that they have “[...] an ambition to make an attractive news offer on DRTV, which provides access to news, wherever and whenever you want” (DR, 2019, p. 16). By having this rather wide-ranging and unspecific goal for their VoD news content, they are perhaps trying not to promise too much while still

signaling that news is important to their institution. However, their contract does not describe to what extent DR should prioritize their news content on their VoD service or how visible it should be compared to other genres. We suspect that the absence of such requirements regarding news content on DRTV is probably due to a lack of political awareness about this issue, which indeed makes it even more important to study what they then have chosen to do on their own accord with this content area on DRTV.

TV 2 also has a list of public-service obligations that include sports, Danish-language drama series, cultural content, content for children and young people, Danish films, and news (Danish Ministry of Culture, 2018). As mentioned earlier, these obligations apply to TV 2's public-service division, including their main broadcast channel, but not TV 2 Play since this is included in their commercial division, which is probably why the contract does not describe any such obligations relating to TV 2 Play.

Denmark makes a strong case sample for the topic at hand because of the strength of its PSM, and because it is a highly digitalized society. According to the most recent Reuters Digital News Report, Denmark is one of the countries in the world with the highest trust in news media, and the number two country globally in terms of where citizens place the highest personal value on PSM, only behind Finland (Newman et al., 2023). Regarding digitalization, the number of viewers of streaming TV surpassed that of broadcast TV in 2022 (Schröder, Blach-Ørsten & Eberholst, 2023), suggesting that the TV streaming market is at an advanced stage compared to other national markets. Danish public-service media institutions are investing heavily in their streaming services, DRTV, and TV 2 Play, following a “digital-first” strategy (Bruun, 2021; Lassen, 2023; Lassen & Sørensen, 2023), and this seems to be a fruitful effort. Danes subscribe to four streaming services on average (Newman et al., 2023), and the number of minutes spent on streaming services daily shows that TV 2 Play tops the list with 12 minutes daily, followed by Netflix (10 minutes) and DRTV (9 minutes) (Olsen, 2023). These figures show that Danish BVoD services are just as popular as the major international services like Netflix. TV news consumption in Denmark has declined by more than 20% over the last decade but has stabilized in the last few years because of increased viewership related to COVID-19. Apart from this decline in audience interest in TV news, the shift to streaming comes with great challenges. Achieving news information seems to be an almost irrelevant motive for streaming audiences (Leiner & Neuendorf, 2022), and streamers spend less time on news content than flow TV viewers (Breunig et al., 2020).

The increasing trend toward digitalization within Danish broadcasting has sparked research examining the two main BVoD

services, DRTV and TV 2 Play. DRTV has undergone quick changes over 15 years in terms of both quantity and organization of content (Lassen & Sørensen, 2021). The number of videos on DRTV increased from 31 in 2005 to 1,400 in 2020, and its content curation was refined in 2019 when it adopted a horizontal row style (Lassen & Sørensen, 2021), following Netflix's visual strategy, which was the leading commercial service at the time (Andersen, 2020). A common thread in the Danish BVoD literature is the study of how broadcasters manage to differentiate themselves from other streaming services by drawing from strengths that were already present on their linear TV channels. For example, Bruun and Bille (2022) focus on the documentary genre, and how it has been curated on DRTV and TV 2 Play to receive greater visibility than on their corresponding linear TV channels. Importantly, news content has been pinpointed as playing a major role in making DRTV and TV 2 Play competitive because it is absent from the competing international streaming services (Lassen, 2023; Sørensen, 2023). Despite DR's recent claim of following a new strategy focused on the priority areas of news, culture, and children's content, a study by Lassen and Sørensen (2023) revealed that only news is effectively prioritized on DRTV. The news made up roughly 6.15% of the content on the BVoD service, and in line with Lassen's findings (Lassen, 2023), they found that news decks are consistently placed higher up on the front page and constantly updated – unlike the content on the bottom of the page, which rarely changes.

The difference in regulatory requirements between public-service television and commercial television is thought to lead to a different treatment of news, for example by featuring harder news topics in public service than in commercial television (Reinemann et al., 2012). Following this reasoning, there may be differences between the coverage of news between TV 2 Play, which is a state-owned but commercially funded service, and DRTV, which is fully publicly funded. At least one study has compared the two BVoD services, finding that DRTV has a bigger documentary catalog than TV 2 Play (Bruun & Bille, 2022), but no study to date has looked specifically at differences in their news offer. Our analysis takes a comparative approach, examining differences between DRTV and TV 2 Play regarding the research questions raised.

Lastly, VoDs have a short history compared to other types of media, so they are still in an experimental phase which results in changing models and formats, making them an ephemeral object of study that poses analytical challenges (Van Esler, 2021). The front page of a VoD is frequently updated, and this is especially true of news content on BVoD services (Lassen & Sørensen, 2023). Thus, a frozen picture at a given point in time will likely miss important nuances and

information. To address this, we adopt a longitudinal perspective on the analysis of news curation and platformization by looking at trends over three years, comparing differences across the two VVoDs under study.

## **Methodological considerations**

To conduct this study, we collected screenshots of the front pages of DRTV and TV 2 Play from January 2020 to January 2023, a method partially inspired by Johnson (2019). The goal was to be able to conduct a longitudinal content analysis of how these services' front pages evolve and to analyze developments within a specific genre like news content. Specifically, our focus is on the amount and characteristics of news content in terms of platformization, as well as its placement and priority on the VoD service's front page.

There is currently no systematic and reliable collection of streaming services by the Royal Danish Library. This is a major challenge for any researchers (current or future) interested in studying streaming services who either must collect their material (see also Kelly, 2022) or rely on open archives like The Internet Archive's Wayback Machine or the Danish Netarkivet. Neither of these harvest webpages inside logins or paywalls, which means that while they may have some samples of DRTV's front page, they cannot provide regular information about what the interface on TV 2 Play's front page looks like after logging in and therefore have been discarded for this study.

By collecting our sample and conducting a content analysis of these services' front pages, we can learn which types of content they repeatedly choose to give prominence, in this case news content. Content analysis can be used to systematically analyze any recurring themes, concepts, images, or words in a dataset (Krippendorff, 2013). However, doing content analysis of online content is particularly challenging because this is dynamic and often subject to regular changes (Riffe et al., 2019). A potential downside of our sampling method is the services' use of personalization, but we have bypassed this by using a clean browser (without saving cookies) and by using new profiles to collect a neutral version of the front page. In addition, other studies have stated that the use of personalization is still rare in DRTV and TV 2 Play (Bruun, 2020; Lassen & Sørensen, 2021). In the context of our study, we are interested in both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of content analysis. With this approach, we wish to analyze specific quantitative tendencies in their interfaces, while we also contribute with a qualitative interpretation of the



context around the numbers (e.g., by discussing the differences in the two organizations behind) to make sense of the quantitative results.

We have taken screenshots once every quarter on a random weekday in January, April, July, and October. The screenshots focused on the front page as the most important page for these services. Altogether, this amounts to 13 days sampled for each service or 26 samples of screenshots in total. This approach was inspired by Riffe et al. (2019), who specifically recommend using so-called “constructed weeks” by combining samples from different weekdays to create a statistically more effective sample. The explanation for why we have sampled 13 days is that our study prioritizes a longitudinal focus with fewer days over a long period and, additionally, that our handheld coding process makes coding just one single “day” quite time demanding. On each day, we evaluated all the decks on the front page to locate those dedicated exclusively to news content. In the few cases in our sample where there were two news decks in a day (e.g., a second deck dedicated to news about the national elections or the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to the news deck), the one higher up on the page was the one included for this specific analysis. We manually wrote the number of tiles and the news content in the carousel, the number and position of news decks on the front page, and the characteristics of the tiles in each news deck in terms of the different variables of interest (e.g., soft vs. hard news, length of the video, etc.). We have also focused on the first four to six tiles in each deck and not every single tile in the deck based on the assumption that these are the most important and receive the most exposure.

All news tiles in the sample were categorized as either soft or hard news through consensus coding between the three authors. Topics such as economy, public health, foreign affairs, and politics were coded as hard news, while topics such as sports, celebrities, and case-focused reports (e.g., an interview with an exemplar focusing on personal aspects of their experience) were coded as soft. Specifically, political and current affairs programs such as *Deadline* (DR) and *Besserwisserne* (TV 2) were coded as hard news while programs such as *Sportsmagasinet* (DR) and *Prins Harry taler ud: Eksklusivt interview* (TV 2) were coded as soft news.

Only one item in the news deck data and one item in the carousel data were discarded because they could not be categorized. The discarded item in the carousel was an episode of *Kernen* that treated both hard and soft topics, while the discarded item in the news deck was an item with an ambiguous title, and after searching online, we could not find any information about it to help us elucidate its topic.

To assess the prevalence of streaming-first content, the two authors of this paper who were familiar with Danish broadcasting consensus-coded all news items in the news deck and the carousel. When they were not sure about a specific item, they double-checked by searching for information about the content on the PSM's web pages and via the service Mediestream, which contains recordings of all Danish flow TV channels. Lastly, the length of the news video, which was less subject to interpretation as it was stated in the news tile by the platforms, was coded just by one coder. As a note, we found that TV 2 Play did not advertise video duration in its tiles in January 2020, so that sample is excluded for TV 2 Play.

## Results

### News curation in DRTV and TV 2 Play

Our first research question (RQ1) explores the curation of news content on the front pages of the BVoD services of DR and TV 2. Differences between the two broadcasters and changes over time were analyzed in two different elements on the front page, the news decks and the carousel.

As it has already been noted the spatial positioning of the decks within the vertical axis of the front page creates a hierarchy of content (Johnson, 2019; Lassen & Sørensen, 2023; Lüders & Sundet, 2022; Van Esler, 2021). Things higher up on the page receive greater visibility and attention than things further down, which require more scrolling. Across all years sampled, we found that the average position for the news deck was 4.46, that is, between the 4th and 5th position, with DRTV's news deck closer to the 4th (4.15) and TV 2 Play closer to the 5th (4.76). This is rather high up on the page considering that their front pages have many decks, ranging from 18-30 decks (22-23 on average). Thus, and in line with prior research (see Lassen & Sørensen, 2023), we found that news content tends to be prioritized and appear high up on DRTV. Interestingly, the differences between the two BVoDs become greater when we introduce the time factor in the analysis (see Fig. 1).

## POSITION OF THE NEWS DECK ON FRONT PAGE

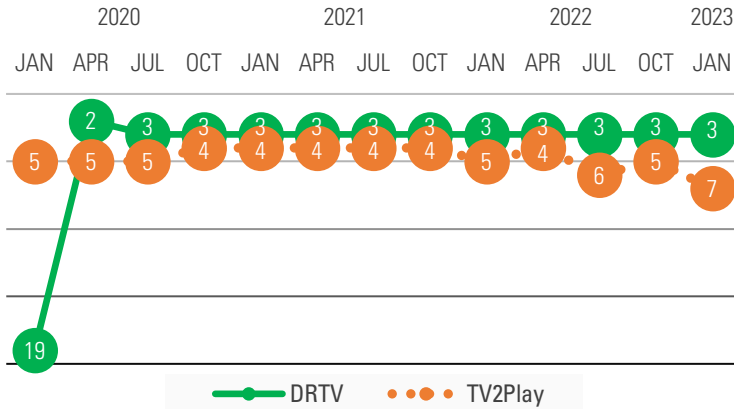


Figure 9: Position of the news deck on the front page over the years sampled

From January to April of 2020, coinciding with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the news deck of DRTV dramatically jumped up within the front page from the 19th to the 2nd position and since then it has kept the news deck on the 3rd position. Conversely, TV 2 Play’s news deck has been experiencing a slow decline in visibility over the last year, going down to a 7th position in January of 2023 from a high of 4th position within the entire sample (see Fig. 1).

Another area of interest is the carousel at the very top of the page, which will usually be one of the first things that audiences see, so it has great potential for impacting the visibility of news content. The total number of tiles within the carousels sampled was 211, of which only 22 (12.3%) were news, and the figure below illustrates how much news content the two BVoD services had in their carousels in the sampled period.

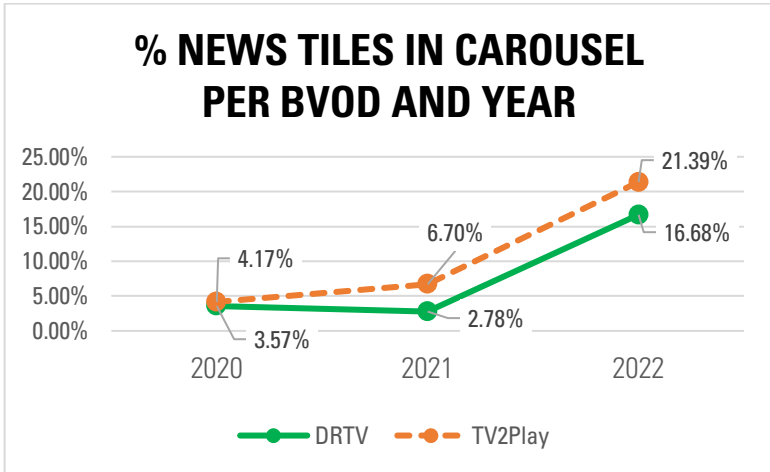


Figure 10: Percent of total news in the carousel

When considering the trend over time, as shown in Fig. 2, we see that both BVoD services show a steep increase in news in the carousel in 2022 compared to the two previous years. Additionally, in all three years sampled TV 2 Play presented more news content in their carousel than DRTV, and at the same time, the two services seem to follow a similar trend with rather small amounts of news content in the carousel in 2020 and 2021.

To sum up, both BVoDs seem to rely on active curation for promoting the accessibility and visibility of news content but they follow different strategies. DRTV prioritizes the news deck by positioning it high up on the front page, while TV 2 Play is increasingly placing it further down on the front page. Conversely, TV 2 Play relies more than DRTV on the carousel to give prominence to specific news items.

### News platformization in DRTV and TV 2 Play

Our second research question (RQ2) looked at whether there are signs of platformization of news on the BVoD services, as indicated by three dimensions: the percentage of soft news in terms of topic, the amount of digital native or streaming-first content, and the length of the videos.

#### Hard vs. Soft news

Starting with the news deck analysis, out of the 144 tiles across all news decks, 120 (83%) were hard news, with some differences across the two broadcasters. For DRTV, 91.1% were hard news, while this was only the case for 73.8% of the news tiles in TV 2 Play. When looking at the trend over time, we see that the difference between the

two BVoDs has narrowed over time, with the proportion of hard news in TV 2 Play surpassing that of DRTV in 2022 (see Fig. 3).

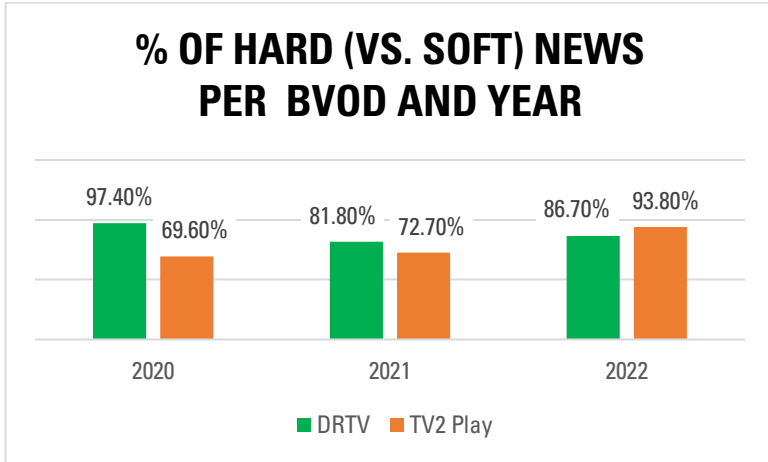


Figure 11: Percent of hard vs. soft news in the news decks

The carousel data offers a slightly different picture. There was more soft news across both BVoDs in their carousels (31.8% soft vs. 40.9% hard news) than in their news decks (83% hard news). Breaking that down by broadcaster, DRTV's carousels showcased more hard news (55%) than TV 2 Play (30.7%). It should be noted that for TV 2 Play more than one-third of the carousel tiles (38.4%) were an ad for TV 2 Play's dedicated news channel, falling outside the hard/soft category.

#### Streaming-first content

Following other studies (Hase et al., 2023; Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2021), we looked at the presence of digital native or streaming-first content as a measure of platformization. A greater percentage of streaming-first in contrast with news content reposted from flow TV would indicate more platformization. For the news deck, only 16.1% of the news tiles were identified as streaming-first content across both BVoD services and all years sampled. Furthermore, the percentages were nearly the same when comparing DRTV (16.5%) to TV 2 Play (15.6%). When considering change over time, we see that both BVoD services increased their share of streaming-first content in 2022 compared to the preceding year (see Fig. 4). This might be indicative of a potential commitment towards adapting their news content to the platform in the future. Taking a closer look at the characteristics of the streaming-first content, we see that on DRTV, all but one streaming-first tile were their "Explainer" videos, the

other one being a sports highlight. Explainer news videos are designed to teach the viewer about a specific topic, and this is often done through compelling storytelling and visuals. Interestingly, even though the Explainer format was developed for the BVoD first, it later started airing on flow TV, in line with the trans-programming trend between different media (Bruun, 2021). Conversely, streaming-first content in TV 2 Play was more varied, including a mix of formats including Explainers, news highlights, and documentaries. However, 50% of TV 2 Play's streaming-first content was represented by their program *Kernen*, which is a streaming news program at TV 2 Play. Each episode focuses on a protagonist who is experiencing something that is of interest to the general public, so this can be both hard and soft news depending on the case story.

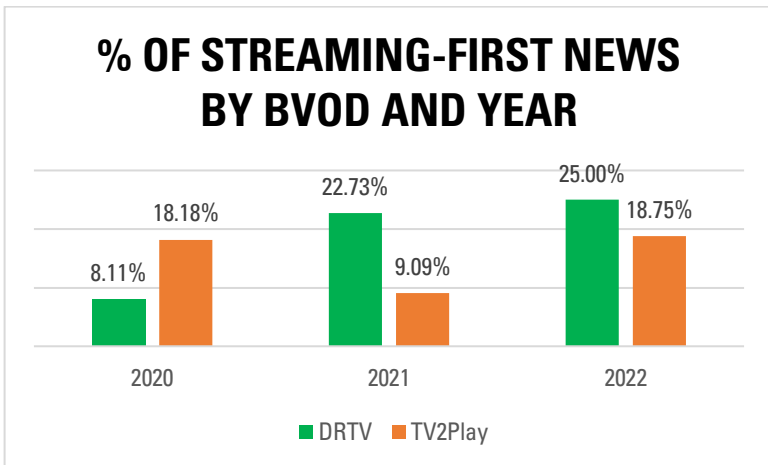


Figure 12: Percent of streaming-first news in the news decks

### Length of news videos

As it has been pointed out, the duration of news videos can be indicative of platformization because video-based online platforms tend to use shorter videos than news on flow TV. As can be seen in Table 1, there is a considerable spread in the duration of news videos. As can be seen in Table 1, the minimum length is 2 minutes, and the maximum is 360 minutes – a 6-hour news special on DRTV in 2022 covering the Tour de France. This wide range results in a noticeable difference between the mean (34.22 min) and the median (25 min). To analyze differences between the two BVODs over time we focus on the median because the mean is skewed by videos that have extremely long durations.

TV	Year	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.
DRTV	2020	41.6	29	5	125
	2021	26.2	22.5	6	123
	2022	57.0	27	5	360
TV 2 Play	2020	25.4	19	6	117
	2021	21.4	21.5	2	52
	2022	40.0	29.5	14	140

Table 8: Descriptive information regarding the duration of video messages by BVoD and year, in minutes.

When comparing DRTV to TV 2 Play, the median duration of their videos is very similar: 24 minutes for TV 2 Play, and slightly longer for DRTV at 27 minutes and a half. Regarding change over time, videos tended to get longer in the last two years of the sample, for both BVoDs (see Fig. 5). Along the same lines, we see that the minimum length for TV 2 Play jumped to 14 minutes in 2022, more than doubling the minimum duration of previous years.

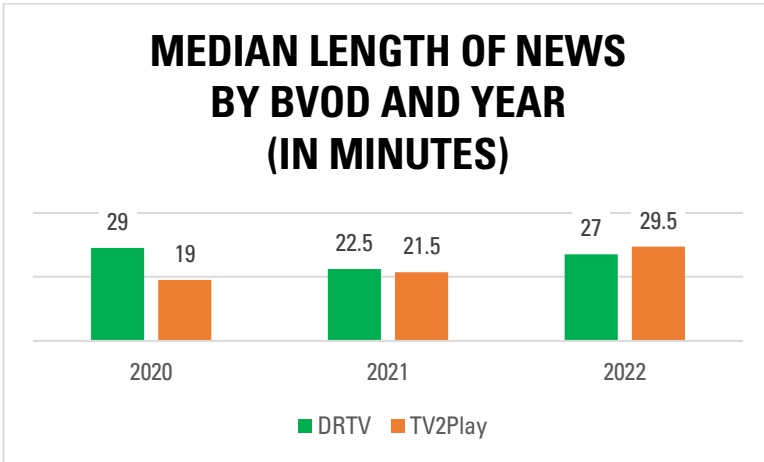


Figure 13: Median length of news in minutes

To summarize, the platformization measures used here do not indicate strong signs of platformization for any of the two BVoDs. An important and positive finding is that hard news is more represented than soft news, which is the case for both BVoDs. That said, the percentage of soft news goes up in the carousel compared to the news deck, suggesting that those managing the front page might follow the virality logic more when it comes to the use of the prime

location on the front page. Regarding the production of digital native, or streaming-first content, we see that this kind of content is still not that commonly used by these BVoDs, but there has been a small increase over the years sampled. This could reflect a growing awareness by the two broadcasters of the need to adapt to the platform instead of exclusively recycling their flow TV content.

## Discussion and conclusion

We have presented a longitudinal analysis of news curation on the front pages of the video-on-demand services of Denmark's main broadcasters: DRTV and TV 2 Play. Our findings suggest that these BVoD services do actively rely on curation to give prominence to news content, and based on the measures examined here (i.e., hard vs. soft news, length of video, and amount of digital native content) it seems like BVoD services in the Danish market have not yet embraced widespread platformization. However, there is ongoing experimentation by these broadcasters, so it is still unclear what these strategies will entail in the future. For instance, TV 2 Play only began providing video length information relatively recently, and its minimum video duration has increased rather than decreased over time, which is against the generalized trend of shortening videos on online platforms. Additionally, we observe some reversal of the influence of broadcast on BVoD services, where streaming-first content like DRTV's Explainer videos is now being broadcasted on DR's linear TV channel. This observation reinforces the growing trend among content producers to embrace trans-programming (Bruun, 2021) and could point to a future where instead of BVoD services diverging dramatically from linear TV, we may see other new ways of combining these two forms of distribution.

Based on the analysis presented, we find some important commonalities between DRTV and TV 2 Play in how they treat news content on their front pages. They both actively use curation to promote news by including it in their carousels and by positioning the news deck in a prominent position. However, as we have illustrated in Figure 2, both BVoDs had as little as 2-6% news content in their carousels in 2020 and 2021, which could be seen as quite troubling numbers when you consider how news production and consumption were in some ways boosted during the pandemic in 2020/2021. These low numbers can be interpreted as a sign of how other genres were preferred by these public-service institutions in their carousels and how this direct competition between genres for space in the carousel can sometimes be detrimental to the visibility of news content. Interestingly, these numbers then changed in 2022, when news



content in the carousel started gaining prominence on both services, denoting a positive trend regarding visibility. Another positive finding is that hard news (i.e., public affairs topics of broader societal interest) dominates the news content in both services. This dispels any immediate concerns regarding a potential softening of news, which would be one of the worrying aspects of platformization. They also show similar trends regarding the length of the videos and their production of digital native content. Both BVODs showcase news video content with a median duration ranging from 20 to 30 minutes. The most obvious would be to compare this length with the length of news videos in SVOD services, however, the main SVODs such as Netflix and Disney+ do not carry news and current affairs programs. If third-party video platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which provide lots of news content, are used as a comparison instead, it seems that their news content is significantly shorter compared to DRTV and TV 2 Play's news content. Upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that most tiles on these BVOD services contain full news programs containing multiple stories, such as a news bulletin and usually not stand-alone news stories. If third-party platforms are once again used as a comparison in need of more appropriate options, this does not indicate widespread platformization on these BVODs. Their production of digital native content is also remarkably similar (15-16% of all news content). While these numbers might not seem high, they are in fact way higher than what could be expected based on the research contributions about third-party video platforms. For example, Hase et al. (2023) found that only 2.4% of the content published across four different social media platforms was originally produced for the platform instead of reposted from the media's own websites. Since we see that the presence of this content has increased in the most recent year sampled for both BVOD services, it could be indicative of a growing effort to adapt news content to what is needed for the platform.

There are also some differences in the treatment of news between the two broadcasters that might derive from their different funding models. On the one hand, TV 2 Play uses the privileged positions in the carousel to showcase specific news items more frequently than DRTV. However, soft topics are more common in the carousel than in the news deck, and this is especially the case for TV 2 Play. Compared to the carousel, the news deck on both services seems to regularly ensure that a wider variety of news content is accessible to the viewer. Coinciding with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, DRTV consistently held the news deck at the third position on the front page – a prominent placement with only one other deck separating it from the carousel. In contrast, TV 2 Play has gradually positioned

the news deck deeper within the page over the years, diminishing the likelihood that users will encounter it. Additionally, DRTV showcases a greater amount of hard news overall than TV 2 Play, in both the carousel and the news deck.

In summary, there might be a stronger commitment on DRTV to give preferential treatment to news compared to TV 2 Play, which is something they have explicitly stated in DR's most recent strategic plan (Danish Ministry of Culture (2022)). This is also in line with the notion that public media tend to prioritize news more than commercial ones (Reinemann et al., 2012), as DRTV is fully publicly funded, while TV 2 Play is fully commercially funded. As a counterpoint, besides the positioning of the news deck, we see that other indicators such as the amount of news in the carousel or the percentage of hard news may be improving for TV 2 Play. Overall, both BVoD services seem to be following a positive trend in their treatment of news. This could be driven by a wish to fulfill their public role in informing society but could also indicate that they believe that news content, characterized by immediacy and liveliness (Lassen, 2023), gives them a competitive edge against the other streaming services that focus on all other genres but not news.

Like other studies, this study comes with some limitations. We cannot definitively claim that platformization is or is not happening on these services without a comparative analysis with traditional broadcasting. Such a comparison could be challenging because it would depend on which exact linear flow channels you choose to compare with since both VoD services are a melting pot of many different channels with different percentages of news content and different proportions of soft and hard news. Additionally, our examination has focused mostly on quantitative aspects, leaving room for future research to explore deeper qualitative differences. An interesting line of research would be to compare the storytelling strategies between traditional broadcast news and those featured as streaming-first content, to see if journalistic models are being influenced by the online medium (Cores-Sarría et al., 2024, in review). While our study has provided a content analysis with quantitative insights about news on these BVoD services, it would be valuable for future researchers to study audiences' experiences of BVoD news content as well as study the intentions of the industry people at DR and TV 2 who manage these services. Such studies might also further investigate the difficult prioritization and competition between news content and other genres such as fiction, entertainment, reality shows, and sports, which all compete for space and attention within the same interface.

Our study has contributed by studying the curation, visibility, and degree of platformization of news content on DRTV and TV 2 Play

and has thereby delivered valuable insights about how these broadcasters prioritize and adapt their important societal role as news providers on their BVoD services. This study has documented several different aspects of how Danish public-service media treat news content on BVoD services and found both troubling numbers and recent tendencies towards improvement. To do this, we have also developed and contributed with a new approach that has combined terms from two different research fields – journalism research and video streaming research – which can hopefully benefit and inspire others who have an interest in studying TV news content in a streaming era. These findings contribute with important nuances that can have implications for both practitioners and policymakers and which are not only relevant in a Danish context but can hopefully also serve as a basis of comparison for other nations' providers of television news content. Because Denmark is at the digital forefront, the selected case can inform future trends for public-service media BVoD services in national contexts with lower levels of digitalization than the Danish media market. We hope that our study will have a significant impact by providing vital information and, at the same time, we still encourage other researchers to conduct similar studies and to continue to investigate how the growing use of VoD services may affect the visibility of television news and potential news avoidance. News on BVoD services is currently in a state of transition, and its trajectory in an evolving digital landscape warrants further investigation.

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# Ekspertkilder i dansk klimajournalistik

## ”Partseksperter” og aktivisme i klimajournalistikken

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### Abstract

Klimaområdet nævnes ofte som et eksempel på ‘post-normal science’ – et stærkt politiseret felt, hvor forskning, holdninger og værdier i mange tilfælde er viklet ind i hinanden. I forlængelse heraf er begrebet post-normal science communication blevet anvendt til at indikere, at den journalistiske objektivitetsnorm udfordres og gradvist erstattes af en mere aktivistisk tilgang. Nyere forskning peger dog på, at journalistisk aktivisme generelt ikke accepteres som norm af klimajournalister. Men ser vi alligevel en glidning i den journalistiske praksis i retning af aktivisme i kildevalg og måden kilderne bruges på? Det undersøger denne artikel via en kvantitativ indholdsanalyse af 200 artikler fra fire specialiserede klimamedier og -redaktioner. Analysen viser, at privatansatte ikke-forskere anvendes hyppigt som ekspertkilder. Næsten fire ud af 10 privatansatte ekspertkilder kommer fra tænketanke. Heraf er CONCITO den med afstand mest brugte kilde. Disse “partseksperter” optræder oftest i rollen som ekspert uden at skulle legitimere egen status som ekspert gennem ny viden. Samlet set peger analysen på, at klimajournalistikken i vid udstrækning giver stemme og autoritet til partseksperter, og at både offentligt ansatte forskere og privatansatte ikke-forskere ofte bruges i handlingsanvisende funktioner, altså forskellige former for journalistisk aktivisme. Det peger på en mulig diskrepans mellem klimajournalisters rolleopfattelse og journalistiske praksis.

### KEYWORDS

klimajournalistik, partseksperter, tænketanke, aktivisme, handlingsanvisninger

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## Introduktion

Klima fylder meget – og stadig mere – i det danske mediebillede. En søgning på ordet klima i Infomedias database hen over en 12 måneders periode fra oktober 2022 til oktober 2023 giver cirka 100.000 hits. En tilsvarende søgning 10 år tidligere giver knap 40.000 hits. Brüggemann beskriver det som et generelt træk ved medieudviklingen fra sporadisk dækning til rutinemæssig dækning af klimaforandringer (Brüggemann, 2017). Weldingh finder en kontinuerlig stigning i mængden af klimajournalistik i syv af de største danske dagblade i perioden 2018 til 2021 og konstaterer, at det er en mediedagsorden, der har bidt sig fast (Weldingh, 2023). Samtidig ved vi, at danskerne primært får deres viden om klima fra nyhedsmedier – og kun i begrænset omfang fra sociale medier og alternative kilder (Schrøder et al., 2020).

Klimajournalistikken er fyldt med professionelle kilder, som optræder i forskellige roller og funktioner – herunder som ekspertkilder (Eskjær, 2019; Weldingh, 2023). Klimaeksperter – medieret af journalister – spiller en vigtig rolle for forståelse, engagement og handlinger hos såvel borgere som politikere og øvrige beslutningstagere (Willig et al., 2022; Areia et al., 2019; Sundblad et al., 2009).

Nyere medieforskning har kvalitativt undersøgt klimaforskeres og klimajournalisters rolleopfattelse i klimajournalistikken og kvalitetssikringen af den offentlige klimadebat (Nicolaisen, 2023). Et centralt spørgsmål i forskningen handler om aktivisme: “Activism is shown to be a recurring theme in the discussion of the roles of climate scientists and climate journalists” (Nicolaisen, 2022, p.1).

Aktivisme-begrebet kan imidlertid dække over mange forskellige ting. Bro (1998, 2004, 2012) skelner analytisk mellem passiv og aktiv journalistik. Aktiv journalistik promoverer mulige løsninger på problemstillinger. I den mindst aktivistiske udgave af aktiv journalistik er journalisten “proaktivt neutral” og præsenterer mulige handlinger og løsninger, og i den mest aktivistiske form laves kampagnejournalistik, hvor journalisten selv bidrager aktivt til at gennemføre bestemte løsninger – og dermed bliver aktør i den sag, man dækker.

Aktivisme kan imidlertid også handle om, hvilke kilder journalisten lader komme til orde i ekspertrollen og dermed giver legitimitet og autoritet. Der kan fx være tale om partseksperter, som i kraft af deres ansættelse repræsenterer bestemte særinteresser og derfor må forventes at promovere bestemte løsninger og handlinger.

Megen forskning peger på, at journalistisk aktivisme – i forskellige afskygninger – generelt ikke accepteres som norm – hverken af journalister i almindelighed (Skovsgaard et al., 2018) eller af specialiserede klimajournalister (Nicolaisen, 2022; Ytterstad, 2011; Duarte & Eide, 2018). Det hænger sammen med, at normen om neutralitet og

tilstræbt objektivitet fortsat er dominerende blandt danske journalister (Skovsgaard et al., 2018). Men spørgsmålet er, om vi alligevel ser en glidning i den journalistiske praksis i retning af aktivisme – forstået som aktiv, handlingsanvisende journalistik og journalistisk accept og brug af partskilder i rollen som ekspert. Det vil vi forsøge at kaste lys over i denne artikel.

## **Klimaområdet som *post-normal science***

Klimaområdet nævnes ofte som et eksempel på *post-normal science*. Post-normal science er et begreb, som blev udviklet af Funtowicz & Ravetz for mere end 30 år siden, og omhandler forskningsfelter med fire distinkte karakteristika: “one where facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high and decisions urgent” (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993, p.744). Begrebet blev udviklet blandt andet som et modsvar på den klassiske videnskabelige dikotomi mellem facts og værdier og i anerkendelse af, at videnskaben alene ikke kan levere alle svarene på post-normale problemstillinger. I stedet bør man, i deres optik, diskutere videnskabelige problemstillinger og løsninger i en bredere offentlighed med deltagelse af ikke-videnskabelige aktører. Man kan anskue det som et forsøg på at demokratisere videnskabelige problemstillinger. I den forstand er der på samme tid tale om et analytisk og normativt begreb.

Klimaområdet er netop karakteriseret ved, at der hersker usikkerhed; at der er meget på spil; og at der er brug for hurtig politisk handling. Det er samtidig et område, hvor mange aktører søger at gøre deres indflydelse gældende. Derfor regnes klimaområdet af mange for et prototypisk eksempel på et *post-normal science field* (Nicolaisen, 2023, p.26), selv om man naturligvis også vil kunne finde de nævnte karakteristika på andre forskningsfelter end klimaområdet. Det skal understreges, at klimaforskningen historisk set ikke altid ubetinget har omfavnet og anerkendt faglige uenigheder og usikkerheder (Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter, 2020). Det ændrer dog ikke ved, at klimaområdet har de nævnte karakteristika.

Samtidig har klimaområdet været kendetegnet ved, at man i udtalt grad søger videnskabelige svar og løsninger på udfordringerne: “When we want to assess the climate’s current state and predict how it will fare in the future, we turn to science” (Nicolaisen, 2023, p.131).

## **Post-normal science communication**

I slipstrømmen på Funtowicz & Ravetz’ konceptualisering af post-normal science har Brüggemann med flere udviklet begrebet *post-normal science communication* (Nicolaisen, 2023, p.27).

Ifølge Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter medfører post-normal science nye rolleopfattelser hos forskere og journalister – ikke mindst på grund af politiseringen af forskningsfeltet: “Science has become politicized and mediatized and scientists are drawn into political conflicts as experts who serve political purposes” (Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter, 2020, p.8).

Megen eksisterende forskning i rolleopfattelser peger imidlertid på, at journalister mener, at de skal undlade at være handlingsanvisende: “The general picture emerging from the studies is that journalists think they ought to refrain from being prescriptive in their reporting” (Nicolaisen, 2022, p.8). Det understøttes af Skovsgaard et al., som i to større undersøgelser af journalisters idealer og rolleopfattelser finder, at danske journalister ikke ser det som et selvstændigt mål at stræbe efter at påvirke politik (Skovsgaard et al., 2018).

Men politiseringen af klimaområdet udfordrer denne rolleopfattelse: “We argue that scientists and journalists are drawn into the world of advocacy because politicians and lobbyists use scientific knowledge for political causes” (Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter, 2020, p.10).

Nicolaisen udlægger Brüggemann et al.’s analyse derhen, at “climate journalism might move away from the detached reporting employed in ‘normal journalism’ towards a style where the journalist takes a clear stance or even engages in advocacy for specific political purposes” (Nicolaisen, 2022, p.2). Journalister forventes traditionelt ikke at agere som part eller aktør – hverken når man spørger journalisterne selv, eller når man spørger borgerne og kilderne. Men politiseringen af klimaområdet mudrer tilsyneladende billedet.

## Kilder i klimajournalistikken

Klimajournalistik trækker imidlertid ikke kun på forskerkilder. Som læser møder man en bred palet af professionelle kilder med forskellige dagsordener (Eskjær, 2019). Sådan har det ikke altid været. Schäfer og Painter (2020) peger på, at der er sket et skift fra overvejende brug af forskerkilder til en bredere palet af elitekilder: “Elite sources have been, and still are, important, but their composition has shifted from scientists to a broader range of stakeholders. Correspondingly, there seems to be a strong and rising influence of stakeholder PR on climate journalism” (Schäfer & Painter, 2020, p.1). Klimakilderne er i dag, ifølge Schäfer og Painter (2020), typisk forskere, politikere, NGO-repræsentanter og folk fra virksomheder samt nyhedsbureauer og PR-agencies. Weldingh finder, at de mest frekvente klimakilder er erhvervsfolk, politikere, forskere og repræsentanter fra interesseorganisationer – i nævnte rækkefølge

(Weldingh, 2023). Denne udvikling afspejler dog ikke nødvendigvis et ønske fra offentlighedens side. I en nylig undersøgelse af danskerne opfattelse af klimajournalistikken finder Willig et al., at danskerne generelt ønsker sig flere ekspertkilder og færre politiske holdninger (Willig et al., 2022).

De professionelle kilder optræder i sagens natur ikke alle og altid som eksperter. At repræsentanter fra tænketanke, interesseorganisationer og virksomheder overhovedet optræder som ekspertkilder, kan måske overraske al den stund, at de efter klassisk journalistisk målestok betragtes som partskilder eller – måske mere rammende – som partseksperter. Imidlertid finder både Blach-Ørsten & Kristensen (2016) og Laursen & Trapp (2021), at disse aktører indimellem bruges som ekspertkilder.

Laursen & Trapp (2021) peger i den forbindelse på, at kilder fra tænketanke oftest bruges som ekspertkilder i forbindelse med lancering af deres egne undersøgelser, analyser og forskning. Det samme gælder i nogen grad kilder fra interesseorganisationer. Laursen & Trapp forklarer det med, at disse aktører har et større behov end uafhængige forskerkilder for at legitimere deres viden overfor journalister: “Interest groups and think tanks must strive to earn credibility due to ideological commitments” (Laursen & Trapp, 2021, p.1).

En konsekvens af klimajournalistikens påståede komplekse og mangfoldige kildebrug er, at det kan være svært både for journalister og borgere at afgøre, hvem der er autoritative stemmer: “With fewer gatekeepers, and the growing influence of digital and social media, identifying whose voices are authoritative in making sense of complex climate science proves an increasing challenge. An increasing array of news sources are vying for their particular perspective to be established including scientists, government, industry, environmental NGOs, individual citizens and, more recently, celebrities” (Anderson, 2017, p.1).

Laursen & Trapp konkluderer i samme ånd: “Journalists and consumers of news stories alike need, more than ever, to sharpen their critical skills in order to distinguish between expert and advocate sources” (Laursen & Trapp, 2021, p.16). Med andre ord: Det er en vanskelig opgave at skelne mellem eksperter og interessenter – ikke mindst fordi kilderne ofte er begge dele på én gang.

På klimaområdet ved vi fra et tysk forskningsprojekt, at journalister forventer, at klimaeksperter leverer handlingsanvisninger. På spørgsmålet, om ekspertkilder skal forholde sig kritisk til beslutninger og komme med handlingsforslag, svarer de tyske klimajournalister klart bekræftende: “Journalisten erwarten von Experten stärker, als diese es für richtig halten, dass sich die Experten nicht nur zu Sachfragen äußern, sondern auch Entscheidungen kritisieren und

Handlungsvorschläge machen” (Peters & Heinrichs, 2005, p.99). På en skala fra minus tre til tre ligger klimajournalisternes score på 2,05 på spørgsmålet, om man forventer handlingsanvisninger fra eksperter. Klimaeksperter skal altså i disse journalisters optik agere, kritisere og være handlingsanvisende.

## Hypoteser og forskningsspørgsmål

Danske klimajournalister peger ifølge Nicolaisen (2022) på, at det – på trods af alle disse udfordringer – er både klimaforskningens og klimajournalistikens opgave at formidle ny viden med troværdige kilder uden at forfalde til aktivisme (fx i form af konkrete politiske anbefalinger). Og derigennem bidrage til en oplyst offentlig klimadebat. Nicolaisen finder altså ikke et normbrud eller radikalt forandrede rolleopfattelser – hverken hos klimajournalisterne eller hos klimaforskerne – og konkluderer, at “neither of the three actors want climate scientists and climate journalists to act as advocates.” (Nicolaisen, 2022, p.1).

Men hvordan ser billedet ud i klimajournalistikken, når vi zoomer ind på den daglige praksis hos nogle af de mest specialiserede klimaredaktioner? Hvem bruges som ekspertkilder, og i hvilke roller og funktioner bruges de? Er journalisternes kildebrug i overensstemmelse med en rolleopfattelse, som taler imod aktivisme?

Med afsæt i 1) Funtowicz & Ravetz (1993), der peger på klimaområdet som et særligt politiseret felt med mange professionelle interesser; med afsæt i 2) Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter (2020), der peger på, at klimajournalistikken er et område, hvor advocacy og lobbyisme spiller en større og større rolle; og med afsæt i 3) Blach-Ørsten & Kristensen (2016), Laursen & Trapp (2021) og Johansen & Johansen (2022), som finder, at tænketanke, interessegrupper og private virksomheder hyppigt bruges som ekspertkilder, forventer vi, at **klimajournalistik anvender flere kilder med særinteresser end offentligt ansatte forskerkilder i rollen som eksperter (H1).**

Med afsæt i Laursen & Trapp (2021), som finder, at særligt tænketankeksperter har et større behov end universitetsansatte forskere for at legitimere deres ekspertrolle overfor journalister, forventer vi, at **tænketankeksperter på klimaområdet oftere end offentligt ansatte forskerkilder udtaler sig om egne analyser og undersøgelser (H2)** og derigennem opnår legitimitet hos journalisterne.

Med afsæt i 1) Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter (2020), der peger på, at klimajournalistikken er et område, hvor advocacy og lobbyisme spiller en større og større rolle; og med afsæt i 2) Peters & Heinrichs (2005), som finder, at klimajournalister mener, at klimaeksperter skal være handlingsanvisende, forventer vi, at **ekspertkilder**

### hyppigere bruges i handlingsanvisende funktioner i klimajournalistikken end i journalistik generelt (H3).

Artiklens formål er at teste disse hypoteser og derigennem bidrage til at belyse, om der er overensstemmelse eller diskrepans mellem klimajournalisters rolleopfattelse og deres daglige journalistiske praksis.

## Begrebsdefinitioner

I megen nyere medieforskning anvendes et bredt ekspertbegreb. Arnoldi argumenterede allerede i 2005 for, at ekspertbegrebet ikke kun kan defineres gennem profession, men også kan defineres gennem den rolle, som kilden spiller i nyhedshistorien (Arnoldi, 2005). Heri ligger en anerkendelse af den definitionsmagt, som medierne også på dette område besidder.

Vi har valgt en bred definition af ekspertbegrebet, hvor der hverken er krav om teoretisk, forskningsbaseret viden eller om uafhængighed af særinteresser:

Ekspert er kilder, som kan siges at være udvalgt i kraft af profession og professionel (teoretisk og/eller erfaringsbaseret) viden, og som optræder i rollen som ekspert.

Definitionen ligger i forlængelse af Albæk et al's (2009, p.90) ekspertbegreb, som omfatter alle, "der tillægges en ekspertrolle i en nyhedsartikel, dvs. optræder som en person med særlig viden på et givet felt". Definitionen er derudover inspireret af Laursen & Trapp (2021, p.2), som argumenterer for, at den klassiske forståelse af eksperter som uafhængige og videnskabeligt funderede er under forandring i medierne: "Boundaries between experts and advocates are evidently becoming increasingly blurred in the news media". Laursen & Trapp (2021) nævner mediers brug af eksperter fra tænketanke og interesseorganisationer som konkrete eksempler på denne udvikling.

Om kilden optræder i rollen som ekspert, ses bl.a. ud fra de sproglige styrkemarkører, som journalisten og/eller kilden anvender, fx *konstaterer*, *vurderer*, *slår fast*, *skønner*. Det ses også ud fra, hvordan kilden præsenteres for læseren, fx som *ekspert*, *forsker*, *professor*, *økonom*, *analytiker*, *specialist* etc. I modsætning til, hvis journalisten præsenterer kilden som fx *aktivist*, *part* eller som *repræsentant for bestemte særinteresser*. Endelig ses det ud fra, om kilden kan siges at være udvalgt i kraft af profession og professionel viden – og altså ikke i kraft af fx at være part, erfaringskilde eller case. Dette udgangspunkt gør det muligt at kortlægge mediernes brug af ekspertkilder i

bred forstand og dermed blive klogere også på den gruppe af ekspertkilder, som ikke er forskere ansat ved undervisnings- og forskningsinstitutioner.

Undersøgelsen differentierer eksperterne på følgende tre dimensioner:

1. **Tilhørsforhold.** Er eksperterne offentligt eller privatansatte? Er eksperterne forskere eller ikke-forskere? I hvilken udstrækning kommer de fra tænketanke, organisationer og private virksomheder? Og hvilke vidensområder repræsenterer de? Dette undersøges via LinkedIn-opslag og googling af alle ekspertkilder. Eksperternes faglighed operationaliseres i seks vidensområder: sundhedsvidenskab, naturvidenskab, humaniora, samfundsvidenskab, teknologi og landbrugsvidenskab. Det følger klassificeringerne i OECDs Frascati-manual (OECD, 2007).
2. **Ekspertens rolle i det journalistiske produkt.** Her tages udgangspunkt i en let modificeret version af Peters' definition af ekspertroller (Peters, 2014): Den offentlige ekspert, som udtaler sig om hændelser (ikke-videnskabelige problemer, fx klimaforandringer, økonomi, pandemier, eller kommenterer på andres forskning), og lærerrollen, hvor eksperthen populariserer sin egen forskning/egne undersøgelser (formidling af resultater, opdagelser, teorier). Denne version flugter med operationaliseringen hos Albæk, Togeby & Christiansen (2004).
3. **Ekspertens funktion som autoritet i det journalistiske produkt.**

Albæk, Togeby & Christiansen (2004) taler om den klassiske ekspertrolle, hvor man leverer faktuel viden, fagligt baserede vurderinger og korrektioner til påstande. Der kan imidlertid være stor forskel på at levere faktuel viden/information og vurderinger. Faktuel viden kan efterprøves. Vurderinger kan være mere eller mindre fagligt baserede og mere eller mindre spekulative. Og der kan herske stor uenighed om vurderinger blandt fagpersoner.

Blom et al. (2021) definerer i den forbindelse to idealtypiske ekspertfunktioner: den faktuelle ekspert og den spekulative ekspert. Indimellem går ekspertkilder dog skridtet videre og kommer med anbefalinger, efterlysninger, opfordringer og løsningsforslag.

Vi supplerer derfor Bloms operationalisering med en tredje idealtipe: den handlingsanvisende ekspert. De tre autoritetsfunktioner, som ekspertkilden kan optræde i, er således: beskrivende (levere faktuel viden), vurderende (levere vurderinger, spekulationer, udlægninger, fortolkninger) og handlingsanvisende (i form af anbefalinger, efterlysninger, opfordringer, løsninger). Nærværende analyse

operationaliserer ekspertens funktion i disse tre idealtypiske autoritetsfunktioner.

I mange tilfælde vil en ekspert optræde i flere af disse tre funktioner i samme citat. Ekspertvurderinger kommer fx ofte enten i forlængelse af en beskrivelse eller før. Dette tages der højde for i kodningen.

## Design og metode

Undersøgelsen er gennemført som en kvantitativ indholdsanalyse af 200 klimaartikler. Vi har valgt at kode landsdækkende online medier med særligt fokus på klimastoffet. Det kan være medier, der udelukkende beskæftiger sig med klimastof, eller medier, der arbejder med klimastof som særskilt, eksplicit stofområde. Af de medier, der opfylder disse kriterier, har vi af praktiske grunde afgrænset undersøgelsen til Informations klimasektion; Klimamonitor, som er et uafhængigt digitalt nyhedsmedie, der ejes af Politiken, og som giver dig “de bedste og vigtigste indspark om hvordan vi skal omstille til en klimavenlig verden”; Børsen Bæredygtig, som med egne ord dækker virksomhedernes stigende samfundsansvar, klimaomstilling og grønne iderigdom; og Altinget Klima, som er et af Altingets nichemedier, og som “leverer politiske nyheder om klima fra Danmarks største politiske redaktion.”

Der er tale om et snævert fokuseret medievalg. Valget er inspireret af Brüggemann og Engesser, som peger på, at det kan være nyttigt analytisk at skelne mellem klimajournalister, som rutinemæssigt skriver om klimastof, og nyhedsjournalister som, antageligt uden særlig indsigt, indimellem skriver om klimastof (Brüggemann og Engesser, 2014, p.405). De finder, at specialiserede klimajournalister i højere grad ser deres rolle som analyserende, fortolkende, undersøgende og benyttende videnskabelige kilder – sammenlignet med øvrige journalister (Brüggemann og Engesser, 2014, p.418 og p.420). De udfordringer og problemstillinger i forhold til kildevalg og inddragelse af videnskabelige kilder, vi måtte finde på de specialiserede klimaredaktioner, har vi ikke grund til at tro, er væsentlig mindre i den øvrige og typisk mindre specialiserede klimajournalistik herhjemme. Der er i den forstand tale om en “kritisk case”. Ved kritisk case forstås en case, som giver mulighed for deduktioner af typen: Hvis det gælder for denne case, så gælder det også for de fleste (eller alle) andre cases (Flyvbjerg, 2010, p.474-475).

Det er udelukkende journalistiske artikler, som er kodet. Altså er debatindlæg, analyser fra fagfolk, klummer, ledere og lignende sorteret fra. Ritzau-artikler og andet bureaustof er også sorteret fra, da vi udelukkende ønsker at analysere artikler, som de udvalgte medier



selv har produceret. Artikler, hvor der indgår mindst én ekspertkilde, er blevet kodet.

Klimajournalistik defineres som alt, hvad de fire medier selv kategoriserer som klimajournalistik, altså alt hvad de offentliggør under disse sektioner. Det dækker i praksis over en bred vifte af emner som fx energi, bæredygtighed, aktivisme, klimabelastning, forbrug, omstilling, investering, udvikling og klimapolitik i mange afskygninger.

Vi analyserer 50 artikler fra hvert af de fire medier publiceret i perioden 1. januar 2023 til 16. juni 2023. Artiklerne er fundet via daglig overvågning og høst fra de fire mediers hjemmesider. Samtlige artikler, som lever op til projektets kriterier, er høstet fortløbende. Mange artikler er i denne proces sorteret fra, da de ikke gør brug af ekspertkilder. Metoden, *consecutive day sampling*, er valgt frem for *simpel tilfældig udvælgelse* og frem for *konstruerede uger*, fordi der er tale om en lav frekvens af artikler, som lever op til udvælgelseskriterierne. De fire udvalgte medier udgav således i analyseperioden hver især i gennemsnit færre end tre ugentlige artikler, som lever op til projektets kriterier. Et *tilfældigt casevalg* ville derfor have skullet strække sig over en meget lang tidsperiode.

Flere forskere har tidligere peget på en risiko for generaliseringsbias ved *consecutive day sampling* (Riffe et al., 1993; Lacy et al., 2001; Andersen & Larsen, 2016). Ved at kode flere end 20 fortløbende uger eliminerer vi imidlertid mulig bias fra oversampling af bestemte ugedage (som man risikerer ved metoden *simpel tilfældig udvælgelse*) og begrænser problematikken med bias fra tidsbundne tematikker i mediernes dækning.

Den eksisterende forskning giver ingen klare retningslinjer for, hvor mange artikler man bør kode, ligesom forskningen heller ikke er entydig i anbefalingerne af, hvor mange konstruerede uger – eller uger i det hele taget – som man bør kode (Riffe et al, 1993; Douglas & Caburnay, 2011). 20 fortløbende ugers dækning er betydeligt mere end de gængse anbefalinger, som typisk ligger mellem en og seks konstruerede uger. På den anden side resulterer 20 analyserede artikler i en begrænset dataindsamling, men dog ikke mindre end den, som Douglas & Caburnay (2011) anvender i *How Much Is Enough? New Recommendations for Using Constructed Week Sampling in Newspaper Content Analysis of Health Stories*. Deres anbefaling svarer til cirka 50 artikler fra hvert af deres fire udvalgte medier – ganske vist i konstruerede uger og på sundhedsområdet.

200 artikler er et pragmatisk valg, som indebærer, at der knytter sig en statistisk usikkerhed på plus minus 4-7 procentpoint til hovedresultaterne. Det er acceptabelt i forhold til at kunne drage overordnede konklusioner. Resultater og konklusioner skal læses med forbehold for denne usikkerhed.

Artiklerne er kodet for en række baggrundsoplysninger, som kan identificere den enkelte artikel, herunder dato, medie, rubrik og journalist. Med henblik på at besvare forskningsspørgsmålene er der kodet for ekspertens navn, ansættelse, køn, ekspertens rolle, eksperttype, vidensområde, uddannelse og funktion.

Artiklens forfattere har hver især kodet halvdelen af artiklerne. Forfatterne har på et tidligere stadie gennemført en interkoderreliabilitetstest på de medtagne variable med tilfredsstillende resultat (Krippendorffs alpha: 0,73-1).

## Resultater

### Hypotese 1: Klimajournalistik anvender flere kilder med særinteresser end offentligt ansatte forskerkilder i rollen som eksperter.

Eksperttype operationaliseres på to dimensioner: forsker/ikke-forsker og offentligt ansat/privatansat.

Ekspertkilder	%	n
Offentlig ansat forsker	55	165
Offentlig ansat ikke-forsker	2	6
Privatansat forsker	2	6
Privatansat ikke-forsker	41	121
	100	298

Tabel 9: Typer af ekspertkilder

Vi finder, at offentligt ansatte forskere på klimaredaktionerne udgør lidt mere end halvdelen af ekspertkilderne (55%), mens privatansatte ikke-forskere udgør 41 procent (tabel 1). 4 ud af 10 ekspertkilder er således ikke valgt på baggrund af forskningsmeritter.

De privatansatte ekspertkilder kommer stort set alle fra enten tænketanke, virksomheder, organisationer eller fagforeninger. Virksomhederne leverer typisk rådgivning og konsulentbistand. Det kan være advokathuse, revisionshuse og forskellige former for analysevirksomheder. Organisationer kan være nødhjælpsorganisationer, miljøorganisationer, brancheorganisationer og paraplyorganisationer.

<b>Private aktører som ekspertkilder</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>
Tænketank	38	48
Konsulent/rådgivning	30	38
Organisation	24	30
Andet	5	6
Fagforening	3	4
	100	126

Tabel 10: Tilhørsforhold for privatansatte ekspertkilder

Som det fremgår af tabel 2, kommer næsten fire ud af ti privatansatte ekspertkilder fra tænketanke. Lad os kaste et nærmere blik på tænketankseksperterne:

<b>Tænketankseksperters vidensområder</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>
Økonomer	47	23
Statskundskabere	15	7
Øvrige fra samfundsvidenskab	17	8
Naturvidenskab	10	5
Tekniske videnskaber	10	5
	99	48

Tabel 11: Tænketankseksperters vidensområde

Som det fremgår af tabel 3, har knap 80 procent af tænketankseksperterne en samfundsvidenskabelig baggrund, og den store majoritet er økonomer. De resterende 20 procent fordeler sig vidensmæssigt mellem naturvidenskab og de tekniske videnskaber. Det er velkendt, at ekspertkilder med en samfundsvidenskabelig baggrund udgør cirka halvdelen af alle de ekspertkilder, som danske journalister i almindelighed vælger. Albæk, Togeby & Christiansen (2004) dokumenterede, at det var tilfældet tilbage i 2001; Wien (2014) bekræftede, at det også så sådan ud i 2014; og Johansen & Johansen (2022) fandt, at det fortsat var tilfældet i 2022. Men tænketankene ser ud til, i endnu højere grad end andre aktører, at levere samfundsvidenskabelig ekspertise. Det skal dog bemærkes, at der her er tale om små tal, som kun kan give et fingerpeg om fordelingen på populationsniveau.

Tænketanken CONCITO er den med afstand mest brugte kilde på redaktionerne blandt de private aktører. Herefter følger Rådet for Grøn Omstilling (tidligere Det Økologiske Råd). I begge tilfælde er der tale om aktører med en tydelig grøn dagsorden. Det er med

andre ord ekspertkilder, som bærer flere kasketter, og som i sagens natur ikke er uafhængige.

At privatansatte ikke-forskere ofte anvendes som ekspertkilder i klimajournalistikken bekræftes af data i tabel 1. At der er tale om forskellige former for parter med ekspertise – partseksperter – udfoldes i tabel 2 og tabel 3. Dog ikke i et sådant omfang, at flertallet af eksperter er kilder, som i kraft af deres ansættelse repræsenterer særinteresser. Hypotese 1 bekræftes dermed ikke.

### **Hypotese 2: Tænk tanks eksperter i klimajournalistik udtaler sig oftere end offentligt ansatte forskerkilder om egne analyser og undersøgelser.**

Lad os kaste et nærmere blik på, hvilke roller tænketanks-eksperterne castes i:

<b>Ekspertkilders roller</b>	<b>Tænk tanks-ekspert (%)</b>	<b>Off. Ansat forsker (%)</b>	<b>Forskel (%-point)</b>
Offentlig ekspert	77	63	14*
Lærerrollen	23	37	14*
	100	100	

Tabel 12: Ekspertkilders roller.

Signifikante forskelle ( $p < 0,05$ ) mellem tænketanks-eksperter og offentligt ansatte forskerkilders roller i artiklerne er markeret med \*.

Det viser sig (tabel 4), at tre ud af fire tænketanks-eksperter optræder i rollen som offentlig ekspert (77%), altså i en vurderende og kommenterende rolle, hvor man ikke præsenterer egne resultater eller egen ny forskning. Hos de offentligt ansatte forskerkilder optræder 63 procent i rollen som offentlig ekspert. Ekspertkilder fra tænketanke tager således sjældnere (23%) afsæt i egne analyser og undersøgelser end de offentligt ansatte forskerkilder (37%).

Da der er tale om små faktiske tal, er forskellen kun akkurat statistisk signifikant, men det er tilstrækkeligt til, at vi ikke kan bekræfte hypotese 2.

### **Hypotese 3: Ekspertkilder bruges hyppigere i handlingsanvisende funktioner i klimajournalistikken end i journalistik generelt.**

Ekspertkilder bruges af journalister i tre forskellige autoritetsfunktioner: En beskrivende funktion, hvor eksperten leverer faktuel viden; en vurderende funktion, hvor eksperten vurderer, spekulerer, fortolker og forklarer; og en handlingsanvisende funktion, hvor eksperten opfordrer til, anbefaler eller advarer mod bestemte løsninger og handlinger.

En handlingsanvisning kan fx være en anbefaling til politikere om, hvordan en bestemt afgift bør strikkes sammen, hvor man skal placere solceller, eller hvordan kommuner bør kommunikere til borgerne om affaldssortering. Det kan også være en opfordring til Europas togselskaber om at gøre det mere attraktivt at køre med tog ved at investere i nyt materiel og bedre service, eller det kan være et råd til den enkelte borger om at flyve mindre, spise mindre kød og skære ned på forbruget.

Med afsæt i Peters & Heinrichs (2005), der finder, at klimajournalister mener, at klimaekspertes skal være politisk handlingsanvisende, forventer vi, at ekspertkilder hyppigere bliver brugt i handlingsanvisende funktioner i klimajournalistikken end i journalistik generelt.

<b>Ekspertkilders funktion</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>
Faktuel viden	81	162
Vurderinger	98	196
Handlingsanvisninger	53	105
		200

Tabel 13: Ekspertkilders funktion.

\*Bemærk, at andelen summerer til mere end 100 procent. Det skyldes, at mange af artiklerne omfatter to eller tre ekspertfunktioner. I disse tilfælde har vi kodet alle relevante ekspertfunktioner for den enkelte artikel og herefter beregnet andelen i forhold til antallet af artikler. Ekspertfunktionerne i tabellen er opgjort på artikelniveau (ikke på kilde niveau), da fokus her er på journalistens anvendelse af ekspertkilder til at udfylde bestemte funktioner i den konkrete artikel.

Det ses af tabel 5, at i stort set alle klimaartikler (98%) castes eksperter til at bidrage med vurderinger. Når vi ser på handlingsanvisende eksperter, finder vi dem i cirka halvdelen (53%) af artiklerne. Hovedparten af handlingsanvisningerne er rettet mod det politiske niveau. Det handler i mange tilfælde om CO<sub>2</sub>, bæredygtighed, energikilder, transport og landbrug. Frekvente ekspertkilder her er Klimarådet, CONCITO, Rådet for Grøn Omstilling og universitetsansatte forskere – altså en blanding af ekspertkilder med og uden deklarerede særinteresser.

Vi ved fra anden forskning, at handlingsanvisninger fra ekspertkilder er mindre frekvente i dagbladsjournalistikken. Johansen & Johansen (2022) finder handlingsanvisninger fra ekspertkilder i cirka hver femte dagbladsartikel. Der er her tale om en analyse af artikler fra de tre største danske dagblade, hvorfor man ikke uden videre kan sammenligne resultaterne af de to undersøgelser 1:1. Ikke desto mindre tyder den store observerede forskel på, at ekspertkilder i

handlingsanvisende funktioner har en overhyppighed i klimajournalistikken. Hypotese tre bekræftes derfor med de nævnte forbehold.

## Diskussion

Overordnet finder vi, at ekspertkilder i klimajournalistik repræsenterer et bredt spektrum af interesser, ansættelsesforhold og fagligheder. Cirka halvdelen er privatansatte ikke-forskere. De ikke-forskende privatansatte ekspertkilder kommer især fra tænketanke og herudover fra virksomheder, der leverer rådgivning og konsulentbistand, og fra interesseorganisationer. Fælles for disse aktører er, at de varetager bestemte interesser som fx medlemmers interesser, økonomiske interesser eller den grønne dagsorden.

Samlet set illustrerer denne mangfoldige brug af eksperter, at mange klimajournalister ikke ser uafhængighed og forskerstatus som afgørende principper for ekspertudvælgelse. Det indikerer også, at mange interessenter "byder sig til" og ønsker at bidrage til den offentlige meningsdannelse på klimaområdet. Det understøtter Schäfer og Painters (2020) pointe om, at der på klimaområdet er sket et skifte fra overvejende brug af forskerkilder til en bredere palet af elitekilder, og at disse elitekilder blandt andet er NGO-repræsentanter og folk fra virksomheder. Det flugter med Funtowicz & Ravetz (1993), der peger på klimaområdet som et politiseret felt med mange professionelle interessenter, og det flugter med Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter (2020), der peger på, at klimajournalistikken er et område, hvor advocacy og lobbyisme spiller en vigtig rolle. Dog ikke i en sådan grad, at flertallet af ekspertkilder på klimaområdet er privatansatte kilder med særinteresser.

Nyere forskning peger på, at tænketanke refereres hyppigere i danske dagblade – også relativt i forhold til de tungeste interesseorganisationer: "I perioden 2006 til 2015 er tænketanke altså ikke alene blevet refereret hyppigere i de landsdækkende dagblade; de har også i stigende grad kunnet konkurrere med sværvægterne iblandt danske interesseorganisationer" (Kelstrup, 2016, p.14). Vores kortlægning viser ikke blot, at tænketanke også på klimaområdet er blevet en væsentlig aktør, men også at tænketankene i mange tilfælde bruges i en ekspertrolle. Det flugter med tidligere resultater hos Blach-Ørsten & Kristensen (2016) og Laursen & Trapp (2021).

Laursen & Trapp (2021) forklarer delvist journalisters brug af tænketanke som eksperter med henvisning til, at det meget ofte (i tre ud af fire tilfælde i deres undersøgelse) sker, når tænketanke præsenterer ny forskning eller nye undersøgelser, altså i en lærerrolle som formidler af egne resultater. Ved at præsentere ny viden legitimeres

tænketankenes ekspertstatus. Vores undersøgelse viser imidlertid, at tænketankeksperter på klimaområdet tre ud af fire gange bruges i rollen som offentlig ekspert, altså uden at præsentere egne nye resultater. Det er således ikke nødvendigt at præsentere nye resultater på klimaområdet, for at komme i kildebetragtning som tænketankes-ekspert. Samtidig finder vi, at tænketankeksperterne (23%) sjældnere end de offentligt ansatte forskerkilder (37%) udtaler sig om egne nye resultater i en lærerrolle.

Resultatet står i kontrast til Laursen & Trapps forskning (2021), som dog ikke har undersøgt klimaområdet specifikt. En mulig forklaring er derfor, at klimaområdet skiller sig ud, når det handler om tænketankes adgang til at optræde som ekspertstemmer. Vores resultater tyder på, at klimajournalister ofte accepterer at bruge parts-eksperter i ekspertroller uden behov for at retfærdiggøre dette valg, hvilket understøtter Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walters (2020) pointe om, at journalister trækkes ind i et politiseret felt, hvor aktivisme er en del af spillet og bredt accepteret.

I stort set alle klimaartikler (98%) castes eksperter til at bidrage med vurderinger. Analysen afspejler dels, at journalister i artikler, hvor der optræder eksperter, altid prioriterer at give læseren sammenhæng og forståelse af nutiden og begrundede forventninger til fremtiden, og dels at journalister nærmest per automatik giver disse vurderinger og spekulationer autoritet ved at lægge dem i munden på eksperter. Albæk har tidligere beskrevet, hvordan journalistikken udvikler sig fra midten af det 20. århundrede til at blive mere fortolkende og forklarende: "Journalists gradually adopted a more interpretive style of reporting; they described both what had happened and explained why it had happened" (Albæk, 2011, p.336). Udviklingen omtales ofte som "the interpretive turn i journalism", hvor man bevæger sig ud over "descriptive, objective, and fact-focused reporting" (Verkest, 2023, p.3). Vores analyse bekræfter denne udvikling.

Når vi ser på handlingsanvisende eksperter, finder vi, at i cirka halvdelen (53%) af klimaartiklerne med ekspertkilder leverer en ekspert handlingsanvisninger. Ekspertkilder bliver således hyppigt brugt i handlingsanvisende funktioner i klimajournalistikken – og betydeligt hyppigere end i journalistik generelt. Flertallet af disse handlingsanvisninger er rettet mod det politiske niveau. Resultaterne understøtter Peters & Heinrichs (2005), som i en tysk kontekst finder, at klimaeksperter i journalisternes optik skal agere, kritisere og være politisk handlingsanvisende.

Det understøtter også påstandene fra blandt andre Brüggemann, Lörcher & Walter (2020) om, at klimaområdet er stærkt politiseret, og illustrerer, at mange ekspertkilder bærer flere kasketter og bruger deres faglige ekspertise til at advokere for bestemte løsninger. Vores

resultater tyder på, at mange klimajournalister i praksis accepterer og måske endda tilskynder denne mulige form for aktivisme hos deres ekspertkilder.

Omvendt så understøtter resultatet ikke Nicolaisens nylige undersøgelser af danske klimaforskeres, klimajournalisters og borgernes "role perceptions". Nicolaisen konkluderer, at "neither of the three actors want climate scientists and climate journalists to act as advocates." (Nicolaisen, 2022, p.667). Når han spørger klimajournalister, finder han stærk konsensus om, at klimaforskere ikke skal advokere for bestemte løsninger, og at klimajournalister først og fremmest skal beskrive virkeligheden.

Vores resultater peger derfor på en mulig diskrepans mellem klimajournalisters rolleopfattelser og deres praksis. Klimajournalistikken ser ud til gennem omfattende brug af handlingsanvisninger at påvirke politiske beslutningsprocesser, pege på løsninger og forsøge at fremprovokere handling. Samtidig smelter særinteresser og ekspertise ofte sammen i kildevalg på klimaområdet.

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# Den journalistiske professions rolle i organisationers interne kommunikation

## Bringer medarbejderperspektivet i spil og udfordrer de eksisterende rammer

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### Abstract

Artiklen undersøger, hvordan journalister, der skifter til intern kommunikation, oplever, at de kan anvende (eller fejle i at anvende) deres journalistiske selvopfattelse og færdigheder i rollen som intern kommunikatør. Artiklen bygger på to studier, et kvalitativt interviewstudie med 12 journalister, som arbejder med intern kommunikation, og en kvantitativ undersøgelse med 137 respondenter. Undersøgelsen viser, at kommunikatører med en journalistisk baggrund har en opfattelse af, at de er gode til at bringe medarbejderperspektivet i spil, stille kritiske spørgsmål og skrive velfortalte historier, mens respondenterne har delte meninger om, hvorvidt de oplever, at de har frihed til at fortælle de historier, som de ønsker. Undersøgelsen peger desuden på, at flere organisationer har fået øjnene op for betydningen af transparent og troværdig intern kommunikation, men at der stadig er lang vej i forhold til at give slip på den interne kommunikation og tillade, at mere kritiske historier ser dagens lys.

### KEYWORDS

profession, journalistik, autonomi, altruisme, esoterisk viden, intern kommunikation, transparens

## Introduktion

Der bliver længere og længere mellem traditionelle job indenfor journalistik. Både de store bladhuse og de landsdækkende nyhedskanaler DR og TV2 har i det seneste års tid nedlagt adskillige journalistiske stillinger som led i den ene sparerunde efter den anden. Journalister må derfor i stigende grad se sig om efter beskæftigelse andre steder, og kommunikationsfeltet er og har i mange år været et oplagt sted at søge hen. Journalister har således især påtaget sig opgaver af journalistisk karakter, såsom at udforme kundemagasiner, medlemsblade og personaleblade samt håndtere pressen (Kester & Prenger, 2021; Koch, Viererbl, & Schulz-Knappe, 2021; Macnamara, 2016; Serazio, 2021), mens intern kommunikation i mindre grad har været et område, som journalister har fået øje på (Koch & Obermaier, 2014; Madsen & Andersen, 2023). Dette er på trods af, at uddannede journalister netop her kan gøre en forskel med deres professionelle selvforståelse og journalistiske tilgang, fordi de kan bidrage med at tilføre transparens, autenticitet og troværdighed til organisationers interne kommunikation (Madsen & Andersen, 2023).

Kommunikationsforskningen peger nemlig på, at organisationers interne kommunikation er i færd med at flytte sig fra et taktisk til et mere strategisk niveau (Dahlman & Heide, 2021; Ruck, 2015), da intern kommunikation ikke længere kun er et spørgsmål om at informere og påvirke medarbejderne til at forstå organisationens mål og værdier (Aggerholm et al., 2020; Men & Bowen, 2017). I stedet skal medarbejderne involveres, så de tager ejerskab, hjælper med at løse udfordringer og bliver selvledende (Dahlman & Heide, 2021; Ruck, 2015; Simonsson, 2022). Ikke mindst under og efter Covid19-pandemien har mange organisationer fået øjnene op for vigtigheden af troværdig, autentisk og transparent intern kommunikation (Ruck & Men, 2021; Men & Vercic, 2021), fordi intern kommunikation kan skabe tillid, bygge relationer og påvirke medarbejdernes engagement (Kang & Sung, 2017; Men, 2014; Neill & Bowen, 2021).

Uddannede journalister deler traditionelt set en række fælles professionelle værdier, der hænger tæt sammen med journalistikkens rolle og funktion i et demokratisk samfund (McNair, 2009; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001; 2021). De opfatter en udstrakt grad af autonomi, rollen som den uafhængige og objektive vagthund, der holder øje med magthaverne, og forpligtelsen til at være loyal overfor offentligheden og behandle alle lige som en central kerne i deres professionelle selvforståelse (Anderson & Schudson, 2019; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; 2011; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018). Derfor har journalister, der har forladt journalistikken til fordel for kommunikation, ofte måttet finde sig i at blive betegnet som vendekåber, forrædere og desertører (Kester & Prenger, 2021). Journalisters fjendtlighed overfor

kommunikatører og særligt PR-folk daterer sig mindst 100 år tilbage ifølge DeLorme og Fedler (2003) og er i høj grad præget af stereotyper og fordomme. Som f.eks. når journalister bruger kommunikatører til at opnå den information, de har brug for at passe deres arbejde, og alligevel beskylder kommunikatørerne for at være uetiske og manipulerende. DeLorme og Fedler (2003) konkluderer, at journalister historisk set aldrig har brudt sig om kommunikationsbranchens promovning af særinteresser og forsøg på at få gratis omtale. Omvendt har reaktionen fra PR-ansatte været at hævde, at journalister har en snæver og selvretfærdig opfattelse af deres eget arbejde, og at de overser, hvor vigtig etisk adfærd er i PR og kommunikation (DeLorme & Fedler, 2003). I en analyse udelukkende baseret på tyske forhold viser Schönhausen og Meissner, at udviklingen i PR i Tyskland i anden halvdel af det 19. århundrede netop var en reaktion på, at journalistikken blev stadig mere partisk. De peger på, at for mange samfundsaktører og organisationer blev barriererne for at komme ind på den offentlige arena stadig vanskeligere, og i og med at massemediernes betydning samtidig voksede, blev presset på disse aktører for at legitimere deres interesser øget (Schönhausen & Meissner, 2016), hvorfor svaret blev flere PR-ansatte.

Spørgsmålet er, om det set i det lys kan give mening at ændre synsvinklen og i stedet betragte journalisters skifte som et skridt mod "the bright side" for organisationers interne kommunikation? Kan de professionelle normer og værdier, som journalister bringer med sig, være nyttige i intern kommunikation, ikke mindst i en tid, hvor der bliver stillet større krav om, at den interne kommunikation skal være autentisk og transparent? Hidtil har hovedparten af den forskning, der findes i journalisters skifte fra journalistik til kommunikation i en organisation, koncentreret sig om årsagerne til og muligheder for rollekonflikter ved et sådant skifte (Koch, Viererbl & Schulz-Knappe, 2021; Viererbl & Koch, 2021), mens forskning i journalisters virke i intern kommunikation er mindre belyst (Madsen & Andersen, 2024). Den eksisterende forskning har primært handlet om, hvordan journalister siden Anden Verdenskrig har redigeret og professionaliseret organisationers medarbejdermagasiner (Ruck, 2015), hvorimod denne artikel undersøger, hvordan journalister, der skifter til intern kommunikation, oplever, at de kan anvende (eller fejle i at anvende) deres journalistiske selvopfattelse og færdigheder i rollen som intern kommunikatør. Først er der et teoretisk afsnit, hvor der gøres rede for professionsbegrebet, og hvorvidt journalistik kan karakteriseres som en profession. Herefter fremhæves tre professionsmarkører, der kendetegner den journalistiske profession, autonomi, altruisme og esoterisk viden, og som danner baggrund for artiklens undersøgelsesdesign. Så beskrives undersøgelsesdesignet for artiklens to studier, et kvalitativt interviewstudie og en

kvantitativ spørgeskemaundersøgelse. Derefter præsenteres resultaterne fra undersøgelsen, en diskussion, en konklusion og forslag til fremtidig forskning.

## **Teoretisk baggrund**

### **Professionsbegrebet**

Begrebet professionsforståelse er omdiskuteret i litteraturen, og professionsforskere er ikke enige om, hvordan man definerer begrebet profession, eller hvilke beskæftigelsesområder der kan kaldes en profession. Oprindeligt blev professionsbegrebet brugt om klassiske fagområder som medicin, jura og teologi og tog afsæt i sociologen Max Webers analyser af det tyske embedsmandsstyre og den magt, professioner besad (Weber, 2018). Den forståelse blev videreudviklet af blandt andre Talcott Parsons, der betragtede professioner som det kit, der får et moderne samfund til at hænge sammen (Parsons, 1954, nyudgivet i 2010). Parsons kom til at danne skole for den retning indenfor professionsforskningen, der fokuserer på at definere professioner ved hjælp af en række markører som objektivitet og uafhængighed, ligebehandling, specialisering indenfor et bestemt felt, professionel autoritet og troværdighed, etiske retningslinjer og et virke til et fælles bedste (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1964; Deuze, 2005; Greenwood, 1957). En anden tradition indenfor professionsforskning står Andrew Abbott (1988) for. Han betegner professioner som “exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases”, og med begrebet “jurisdiction” fokuserer han i højere grad på professioners magt eller myndighed på et område end på særlige professionskarakteristika. Abbott argumenterer for, at et område kan opnå status som profession ved at tilkæmpe sig jurisdiktion over det, idet han definerer “jurisdiction” som udøverens “ret til, autoritet over og viden om et specifikt fagområde” (1988, s. 20).

I en moderne kontekst argumenterer professionsforskere for, at i takt med samfundsudviklingen, hvor stadig flere erhverv professionaliseres, må professionsbegrebet opfattes som stadig mere flydende, idet det anvendes af adskillige erhvervsgrupper. Ørnebring (2019) forstår det moderne professionsbegreb som “at udøvere af en bestemt praksis deler og efterlever en række fælles regler og normer” (2019, s. 105). Andre som Staugaard (2017) lægger vægt på, at en profession stadig i større eller mindre grad er kendetegnet af en række professionsmarkører som eneret til at udøve professionen, selvstændighed i udøvelsen, specialiseret viden, abstraktion og vurdering som forudsætning for udøvelsen, uddannelse på et relativt højt niveau og en særlig altruistisk arbejdsmoral, der indebærer et ønske



om at arbejde for et fælles bedste og behandle alle lige (Staugaard, 2017). Med denne moderne tilgang til professionsbegrebet som afsæt ser vi i næste afsnit nærmere på journalistikkens professionsforståelse.

### **Journalistikken som profession**

Hvorvidt journalistikken kan betragtes som en profession, har gennem det 20. århundrede givet anledning til diskussion blandt forskere. Kimball (1965) konkluderer f.eks. i sin bog *Art, Craft or Profession?*, at journalistik indeholder elementer af både kunst, håndværk og profession, uden at passe fuldstændig ind i nogen af kategorierne. Tunstall (1971) er optaget af, hvordan journalistisk arbejde bliver udført, og hvordan journalister selv opfatter deres rolle og ansvar, samt hvorvidt de bekender sig til professionsmarkører som objektivitet og altruisme, uden at tage direkte stilling til, hvorvidt journalistik er en profession eller ej. Reich (2012) peger på, at journalistikken kun lever op til nogle af de professionelle markører, idet den f.eks. mangler specialiseret teoretisk viden, og derfor ikke kan betragtes som en egentlig profession, mens Witschge og Nygren nøjes med at betragte journalistikken som en semi-profession (2009). Modsat argumenterer bl.a. Hallin og Mancini (2004, 2011) og Davis (2010) for, at journalistik kan betegnes som en profession i moderne forstand. Ganske vist kan journalister hverken påberåbe sig eneret til at udøve professionen eller hævde at oppebære en særlig viden i kraft af en specialiseret uddannelse. Men den omfattende forskning i journalisters professionelle selvforståelse illustrerer, at journalistikken i stedet deler og efterlever en række normer, værdier og praksisser, den som profession benytter sig af for at adskille sig fra andre professioner og med disse normer, værdier og praksisser kan journalister hævdes at have tilkæmpet sig jurisdiktion over uvildig nyhedsformidling (Abbott, 1988).

For journalister udmønter disse normer, værdier og praksisser sig for det første i en fælles forståelse af, hvad der udgør den gode historie og hvordan dens nyhedsværdi lever op til de klassiske nyhedskriterier væsentlighed, aktualitet, konflikt, identifikation og sensation (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Vestergaard, 2021) og i en udstrakt grad af frihed til selv at tilrettelægge og vælge historier, samt i en objektiv og uafhængig tilgang til indsamling, redigering og formidling af stoffet (Anderson & Schudson, 2019). En forståelse, der er udviklet gennem dels uddannelse (Nygren & Stigbrand, 2014) dels erfaring, som kendetegner og kvalificerer professionen (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018, Örnebring, 2019). For det andet værner journalister nidkært om rollen som vagthund på demokratiets vegne (Jahng, Eckert & Metzger-Riftkin, 2023) og opfatter

forpligtelsen til at arbejde for et fælles bedste som en central del af journalisters selvforståelse. Vigtigheden af denne del af professionsforståelsen bliver understreget i enhver grundlæggende indføring i journalistik (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, 2011). Kovach og Rosenstiel (2001, 2021) påpeger således, at loyalitet overfor borgerne og rollen som den uafhængige og objektive vagthund, der holder øje med magthaverne, hører til de vigtigste principper i journalistikken, mens McNair (2009) argumenterer for, at demokrati og journalistik er så tæt forbundne, at demokratiet ikke kan eksistere uden journalistikken.

Et er idealer, noget andet virkelighed. Både et stigende kommercielt pres, der bl.a. udmønter sig i en intens konkurrence om at komme først med det sidste (Herzog, 2019), eksterne aktører, der ønsker politisk og økonomisk indflydelse (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Tunstall, 1971), og den stadig større skare af professionelle kilder, der forsøger at påvirke journalisters arbejde (Blach-Ørsten, 2013; Hanusch, Banjac & Maares, 2019) bidrager til at udfordre og underminere den journalistiske integritet og de professionelle idealer (Kimball, 1965; Tunstall, 1971). Flere studier peger således på, at journalister mere eller mindre frivilligt parkerer deres uafhængighed og objektivitet for at komme først med den gode historie (Koch, Obermaier & Riesmeyer, 2017; Hanusch, Banjac & Maares, 2019).

### **Tre professionsmarkører**

I forhold til at undersøge hvordan journalisters professionsforståelse kan påvirke arbejdet med intern kommunikation, vil artiklen tage udgangspunkt i tre professionsmarkører, som - uanset om man bekender sig til Parsons tradition eller følger Abbotts idé om jurisdiktion - grundlæggende kan siges at kendetegne en moderne profession, nemlig autonomi, altruisme og esoterisk viden (Bottery, 1996; Eraut, 1994), og det følgende afsnit vil derfor gøre rede for, hvordan disse markører kommer til udtryk i forhold til professionen som journalist og i rollen som intern kommunikator.

*Autonomi* betyder, at journalister oplever, at de er uafhængige i deres job. De kan selv vælge og vinkle deres historier, som de vil (Anderson & Schudson, 2019; Deuze, 2005; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021; Waldenström et al., 2019). En uafhængighed, der især opleves som problematisk at miste, når journalister rykker ind i kommunikationsfaget, og dermed skifter til "the dark side" (Kester & Prenger, 2021). Et studie af redaktører af medarbejdermagasiner (Koch et al., 2018) fandt således frem til, at redaktørerne havde tre forskellige selvopfattelser, nemlig at være næsten journalister, at være ledelsens stemme eller at være en hybrid af begge dele. Journalisters autonomi bliver således udfordret, når

de som interne kommunikatører oplever, at deres primære rolle er at videregive information fra ledelsen, fremfor selv at opdrive og finde historier.

*Altruisme* handler for journalister om at arbejde for et fælles bedste (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Waldenström et al., 2019) ved at præsentere historier på en objektiv og etisk forsvarlig måde, behandle alle lige (Anderson & Schudson, 2019; Deuze, 2005; Mellado, 2021) samt agere som samfundets vagthund (Deuze, 2005; Jahng, Eckert & Metzger-Riftkin, 2023). I en organisationsammenhæng vil det således være et spørgsmål om at bringe medarbejdernes perspektiver og spørgsmål frem i lyset samt stille kritiske spørgsmål til ledelsen i en tro på, at de som kommunikatører gennem deres kritiske journalistik kan være med til at skabe en bedre organisation fremfor bare at være et talerør for ledelsen.

Endelig er *esoterisk viden* eller journalistisk håndværk et spørgsmål om, at journalister har en særlig viden om og forståelse for, hvordan man finder og producerer historier på baggrund af research og interviews, har blik for den gode historie og evner at vinkle på modtagerens perspektiv (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Mellado, 2021). En viden, som springer ud af deres uddannelse og erfaring fra arbejdet som journalist. I en organisationsammenhæng kommer det til udtryk som en oplevelse af at mestre et journalistisk håndværk, der giver en anden tilgang til kommunikationsarbejdet end medarbejdere med en anden uddannelsesbaggrund.

På baggrund af litteraturstudiet kan man argumentere for, at journalister har tilkæmpet sig en ret til at kunne kalde sig en profession, og artiklen vil undersøge, hvordan uddannede journalister kan bruge denne professionsforståelse i intern kommunikation med udgangspunkt i tre professionsmarkører, samt undersøge om de oplever, at de kan gøre en forskel i forhold til at skabe intern kommunikation, der er autentisk og transparent, eller om de organisatoriske rammer strammer. Artiklen tilstræber således at besvare følgende forskningsspørgsmål:

**RQ: Hvordan opfatter uddannede journalister, at de i kraft af deres journalistiske professionsbaggrund kan bidrage til intern kommunikation?**

## Undersøgellesdesign og metode

For at undersøge hvordan uddannede journalister oplever, at de kan bruge deres journalistiske profession i jobbet som intern kommunikatør, har vi gennemført to studier. Et kvalitativt interviewstudie i

januar 2022 med 12 journalister, der arbejder med intern kommunikation, og en opfølgende kvantitativ undersøgelse i december 2022, der tester en række antagelser, hypoteser og formodninger, der opstod i det kvalitative studie, om hvorvidt uddannede journalister i intern kommunikation har udstrakte frihedsgrader eller er begrænset af den organisatoriske virkelighed, og derfor ikke i tilstrækkelig grad kan benytte deres journalistiske viden og kunnen.

### **Det kvalitative studie**

Ved hjælp af personlige netværk, sneboldmetoden og det faglige sociale netværk LinkedIn fandt vi frem til og udvalgte 12 interviewpersoner med en journalistisk uddannelse, der arbejdede med intern kommunikation. Fem arbejdede for en privat virksomhed, fem var ansat i en offentlig organisation, mens to havde en NGO som arbejdsplads. Arbejdspladserne havde mellem 45 og 106.000 medarbejdere. De tre havde under 200 medarbejdere, tre havde mellem 200 og 5.000, mens de sidste seks havde mere end 10.000 medarbejdere. Respondenterne og organisationerne var således ikke repræsentative, og undersøgelsen kunne således kun give et indtryk af, hvordan de 12 interviewpersoner oplevede, at de kunne bruge deres journalistiske baggrund i intern kommunikation i deres organisationer. Interviewpersonerne fordelte sig ligeligt med seks mænd og seks kvinder, de var mellem 31 og 58 år, og de havde arbejdet indenfor kommunikationsområdet mellem 1,5 og 22 år. Geografisk var der også en spredning blandt interviewpersonerne, idet syv arbejdede i forskellige dele af Jylland, mens fem var ansat i organisationer med adresse i hovedstadsområdet. Interviewpersonerne angav en række forskellige grunde til, at de havde valgt at arbejde med kommunikation, såsom vanskeligheder med at finde et traditionelt journalistisk job, behovet for mere familievenlige arbejdstider og et ønske om at blive i en bestemt del af landet. Et par stykker havde valgt kommunikation af interesse.

De 12 interviews blev gennemført ved hjælp af en semistruktureret spørgeguide med 32 spørgsmål, der var opdelt i fem emneområder: personlig baggrund, den interne kommunikation i organisationen, interviewpersonens rolle som kommunikatør, det praktiske arbejde, hvor de brugte deres journalistiske baggrund, og deres journalistiske selvforståelse i arbejdet som kommunikatør i forhold til de tre professionsmarkører: autonomi, altruisme og esoterisk viden.

### **Den kvantitative undersøgelse**

På baggrund af udsagnene i det kvalitative studie undersøgte vi, om vi kunne finde de samme resultater blandt et bredere udsnit af kommunikationsansatte med journalistisk baggrund. Den kvalitative

undersøgelse dannede dermed baggrund for en kvantitativ opfølgning for at undersøge, om konklusionerne kunne bekræftes i en større skala. Et spørgeskema blev udsendt gennem en faglig organisation for mediefolk til godt 3000 personer, der var ansat indenfor kommunikationsområdet. Undersøgelsen blev indledt med en kort introduktionstekst, der lød sådan:

I forbindelse med et forskningsprojekt, hvor vi undersøger, hvordan journalistiske arbejdsmetoder bliver brugt i arbejdet med intern kommunikation i en organisation, gennemfører vi en undersøgelse blandt kommunikatører.

Spørgeskemaet indledte med syv baggrundsspørgsmål. Først spørgsmål om køn, alder og uddannelsesbaggrund for at adskille de journalistisk uddannede fra respondenter med anden uddannelsesbaggrund. Så blev respondenterne spurgt om, hvor mange år de havde arbejdet med kommunikation, hvilken type kommunikation de primært arbejdede med, hvilken type organisation de var ansat i, og hvorvidt de havde erfaring fra et nyhedsmedie eller ej. Herefter fulgte 16 udsagn, hvor respondenterne kunne erklære sig helt uenig, overvejende enig, hverken-eller, overvejende enig eller helt enig. De første fem udsagn drejede sig om deres opfattelse af organisationens interne kommunikation. Herefter fulgte 11 udsagn, hvor respondenterne skulle tage stilling til deres oplevelse af frihed i såvel tilrettelæggelse som udførsel af deres arbejde, deres loyalitet overfor medarbejderne som målgruppe samt hvordan de anvendte deres uddannelse i og erfaring med journalistiske arbejdsmetoder. Disse udsagn var et ønske om at indkredse, om respondenterne kunne genkende de tre professionsmarkører autonomi, altruisme og esoterisk viden i deres daglige virke. Endelig kunne respondenterne svare på et afsluttende fritekst-spørgsmål: "Har du yderligere kommentarer eller tanker, som du vil dele i forhold til at arbejde med intern kommunikation i en organisation?"

Den kvantitative undersøgelse gav i alt 137 svar og knap 40 kommentarer i fritekst. 178 begyndte at svare på spørgeskemaet, nogle faldt fra undervejs, mens 137 gennemførte hele spørgeskemaundersøgelsen. Den lave svarprocent kan være et udtryk for, at den faglige organisation kun havde få kommunikatører med en journalistisk baggrund, men da vi ikke kender uddannelsesbaggrunden for samtlige 3000, som fik tilsendt spørgeskemaet, ved vi ikke med sikkerhed, hvorfor svarprocenten er så lille. Uanset hvad betyder den lille svarprocent, at resultatet ikke kan siges hverken at være repræsentativt eller validt i sig selv. Men sammenholdt med den kvalitative undersøgelse kan det give en indikation af, hvorvidt respondenterne støttede resultaterne af den kvalitative undersøgelse, eller om der tegnede sig et andet billede. Svarene i spørgeskemaet fordelte sig på to

tredjedele kvinder og en tredjedel mænd i alderen fra 20 år til 60 plus. Fordelingen på antal år med beskæftigelse indenfor kommunikation var nogenlunde ligelig på mellem 1-3 år, mellem 4-9 år, mellem 10-19 år og fra 20 år eller mere. Blandt alle respondenter angav 88 respondenter at have en journalistisk uddannelse, mens de øvrige var uddannet i kommunikationsstudier bl.a. på DMJX eller RUC. Blandt de journalistisk uddannede arbejdede næsten halvdelen indenfor det offentlige, mens det gjaldt seks ud af ti blandt samtlige respondenter. Vi var desuden interesserede i, om respondenterne havde erfaring fra et nyhedsmedie, hvilket var tilfældet for 85 pct. af de journalistisk uddannede, og lidt færre – ca. 65 pct. – af den samlede population. I forhold til at be- eller afkræfte konklusionerne fra den kvalitative undersøgelse har vi anvendt svar fra såvel de 88 respondenter med en journalistisk uddannelse som fra samtlige 137 deltagere i undersøgelsen.

## Resultater

Afsnittet med resultater fokuserer primært på den kvantitative undersøgelse, og hvordan resultaterne fra denne adskiller sig fra eller er sammenlignelige med resultaterne fra den kvalitative undersøgelse. De fleste af de 12 interviewede journalister oplevede, at de havde en stor grad af frihed inden for de organisatoriske rammer, at de bevidst arbejdede for at bringe medarbejderperspektivet i spil, og at de kunne bruge deres journalistiske baggrund. (Se i øvrigt Madsen og Andersen, 2023). Disse konklusioner kunne være et udtryk for, at der var tale om 12 ekstreme tilfælde eller cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006), og derfor var det interessant at sammenligne konklusionerne med resultaterne fra den kvantitative undersøgelse. I det følgende sammendrages de væsentligste resultater fra den kvantitative undersøgelse i relation til den kvalitative undersøgelse.

### Intern kommunikation er sjældent den primære opgave

I organisationer fylder intern kommunikation som selvstændig disciplin sjældent så meget som ekstern kommunikation (e.g., Dahlmann & Heide, 2021), og det understregede undersøgelsen. Kun fire pct. af respondenterne svarede, at de udelukkende beskæftigede sig med intern kommunikation, mens andre fire pct. satte kryds ved kategorien “overvejende intern kommunikation”. Blandt de journalistisk uddannede var det endnu færre, idet kun knap tre pct. arbejdede udelukkende med intern kommunikation, mens lige så få havde valgt kategorien “Overvejende intern kommunikation”. Undersøgelsen viste, at næsten halvdelen – uanset uddannelse –

vurderede deres daglige arbejde som at være en blanding af interne og eksterne opgaver.

Som nævnt i indledningen spiller intern kommunikation en større rolle i organisationer efter Covid 19-pandemien, hvilket undersøgelsen i høj grad bekræftede, idet næsten 70 pct. var overvejende eller helt enige i udsagnet. En lige så stor del af alle adspurgte mente, at ledelsen i deres organisation bestræbte sig på, at kommunikation til medarbejderne skulle være autentisk, troværdig og transparent. Samtidig svarede to ud af tre, at de var overvejende eller helt enige i, at "ledelsen anvender den interne kommunikation som et strategisk værktøj". En respondent skrev endvidere:

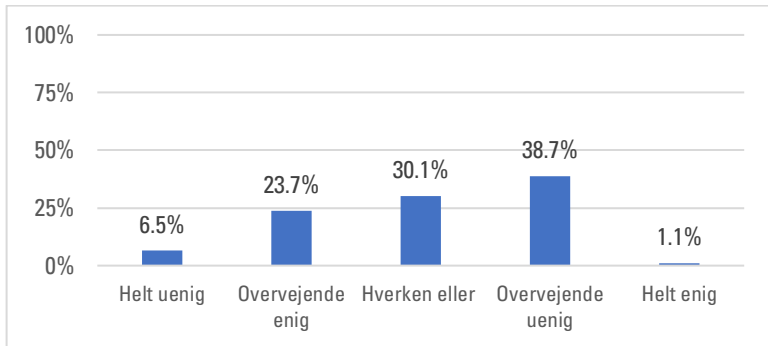
Ledere og organisationer kan og bør tage intern kommunikation endnu mere seriøst som løftestang for den udøvende ledelse i organisationen. Ledelse understøttes eminent af veludført kommunikationsarbejde før, under og efter alt fra forandringer, besparelser samt større og mindre beslutninger, etc. Alle kan skrive og tale, men ikke alle formår at kommunikere godt og hensigtsmæssigt.

### **Stor forskel på oplevelsen af frihedsgrader**

I den kvalitative undersøgelse betragtede de uddannede journalister en udstrakt grad af frihed i såvel tilrettelæggelsen som i udførelsen af deres arbejde som afgørende for deres arbejdsglæde, og flere af de interviewede deltagere satte spørgsmålstegn ved den gængse opfattelse blandt nogle redaktionelt ansatte journalister om, at journalister, der har skiftet journalistikken ud med kommunikation, har solgt deres frihed. For at undersøge, i hvilken grad de journalistisk uddannede respondenter oplevede autonomi i deres hverdag som kommunikationsansatte, skulle respondenterne i den kvantitative undersøgelse derfor svare på, om de selv kunne bestemme, hvilke historier de ville bringe, om historierne skulle godkendes af en leder, og om de udelukkende skrev historier, der afspejlede ledelsens ønsker og behov.

Svarene viste, at der tilsyneladende er stor forskel fra organisation til organisation. For på udsagnet om, at de havde frihed til selv at vælge historier, erklærede knap 40 pct. af de journalistuddannede sig overvejende enige, mens 30 pct. valgte hverken eller, og næsten 25 pct. var overvejende uenige (se Figur 1). Samme billede tegnede sig på udsagnet om, hvorvidt de journalistuddannede oplevede, at den interne kommunikation udelukkende skulle afspejle ledelsens ønsker og behov. Knap 40 pct. var helt eller overvejende uenige i, at friheden var stækket, hvorimod 35 pct. oplevede det modsatte, og 25 pct. valgte hverken eller. Udsagnene gav anledning til en del kommentarer. En respondent udtrykte det således: "Vælger man at

arbejde med kommunikation (intern eller ekstern), har man ikke journalistisk frihed, selv om man bruger journalistiske redskaber i det daglige arbejde.” En anden pegede på, at den journalistiske frihed naturligvis er mindre som intern kommunikatør: “Det er pr. definition ikke objektiv kritisk journalistik at lave intern kommunikation.”



Figur 14: Jeg bestemmer selv, hvilke historier fra organisationen jeg vil bringe (Journalistisk uddannede respondenter).

I den kvalitative undersøgelse pegede et par af de interviewede med erfaring fra et nyhedsmedie på, at de oplevede, at deres journalistiske frihed ikke var mere begrænset som intern kommunikatør, end den var som redaktionel ansat. Den erfaring delte respondenterne i den kvantitative undersøgelse ikke ubetinget. 85 pct. af de journalistisk uddannede respondenter havde erfaring fra et nyhedsmedie, og kun godt 20 pct. ville erklære sig helt eller overvejende enige i antagelsen, mens 45 pct. var helt eller overvejende uenige. Igen tyder spredningen i svarene på, at der er stor forskel fra organisation til organisation, hvilket kommer til udtryk i følgende kommentar:

Jeg oplever virkelig ikke en ledelse, der er meget detailstyrende for mine historier. Selvfølgelig skal jeg – ligesom alle andre i en organisation, inklusive journalister – lave noget, der er produktivt for den organisation, vi arbejder i.

En anden respondent havde den modsatte oplevelse og ærgrede sig over at være ansat i en organisation, hvor ledelsen ikke har forstået værdien af transparent kommunikation:

Her bliver kommunikation stadig set som en stabsfunktion, hvor kanylemo-  
dellen lever i bedste velgående (...) Hvis det ikke lykkes mig at ændre min  
ledelses syn på, at alt, hvad vi gør, kommunikerer (...), så er jeg ikke ansat,  
når der er gået et år.

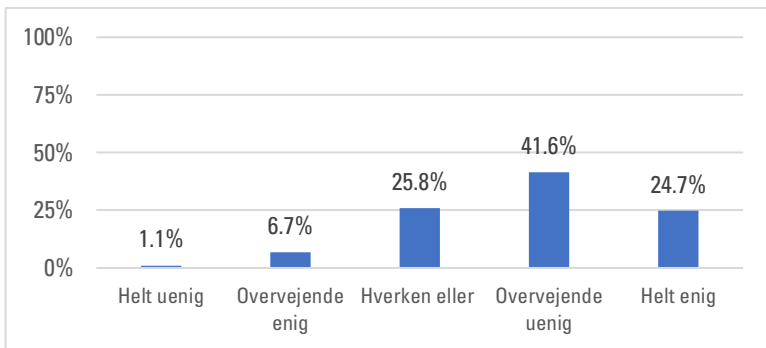


I det kvalitative studie viste flere udsagn, at der herskede større frihed i den interne kommunikation end i den eksterne. Den oplevelse kunne imidlertid ikke genfindes i den kvantitative undersøgelse, da langt de fleste respondenter afviste udsagnet. Hele 60 pct. valgte kategorien hverken eller, mens knap 20 pct. var overvejende uenige.

### Relevansen for medarbejderne bliver synlig

I det kvalitative studie var det tydeligt, at evnen til at få øje på den gode historie og gøre den relevant for medarbejderne, var nogle af de kompetencer, som journalistuddannede kommunikatører brugte som interne kommunikatører i en organisation. Samme opfattelse trådte frem i den kvantitative undersøgelse, idet to ud af tre af de journalistuddannede erklærede sig overvejende eller helt enige i udsagnet om, at de altid bestræbte sig på at finde medarbejdernes perspektiv i en historie (se Figur 2). Det samme var tilfældet på spørgsmålet, om medarbejderne bidrog med ideer til, hvilke historier kommunikationsafdelingen fortalte. En af respondenterne udtrykte det således:

Det er gennemgående for langt det meste af vores interne kommunikation, at vi skriver det fra medarbejdernes perspektiv og med medarbejderne som kilder. Selvfølgelig er der også ønsker fra ledelsen om, at bestemte emner skal kommunikeres om, men herefter er det vores vurdering, hvad der skal laves af indhold – og i den forbindelse, hvad der giver bedst mening fra et medarbejderperspektiv.



Figur 15: Jeg bestræber mig altid på at finde medarbejdernes perspektiv, når jeg skal fortælle en historie (Journalistisk uddannede respondenter).

At kommunikationsansatte med journalistisk baggrund stadig kunne bibeholde den del af deres selvforståelse, der handler om at agere på vegne af andre, hvilket i dette tilfælde vil sige

medarbejderne, viste både det kvalitative studie og den kvantitative undersøgelse. Flere af de interviewede i den kvalitative del oversatte denne forpligtelse til en pligt til at påtage sig rollen som medarbejdernes talerør. Et par stykker sammenlignede sågar deres arbejde med den interne kommunikation med arbejdet på en lokalredaktion, hvor opgaven i organisationen gik ud på at oplyse medarbejdere i stedet for borgere. I den kvantitative undersøgelse stod det også klart, at de kommunikationsansatte gerne påtog sig rollen som talerør. Hele ni ud af ti respondenter med journalistisk baggrund erklærede, at de ikke var bange for at stille kritiske spørgsmål til ledelsen på vegne af medarbejderne, og godt og vel halvdelen opfattede det som en del af deres rolle som intern kommunikatør at rådgive ledelsen om, hvornår og hvordan den skulle kommunikere med medarbejderne. En af respondenterne i den kvantitative undersøgelse forklarede sin egen rolle i organisationen på denne måde:

Jeg oplever et større ansvar for, at min kommunikation indeholder de nødvendige nuancer og er så sandfærdig, retvisende og informativ som overhovedet muligt, end da jeg arbejdede i dagbladsbranchen. Når budskabet sendes afsted på vegne af en offentlig organisation, skal de kunne tåle en helt anden granskning og sandhedsprøvning, end fx en avisartikel. Jeg kan ikke tillade mig at se bort fra væsentlige detaljer, blot fordi de ikke passer ind i min vinkel.

Der var ingen forskel på, om de adspurgte havde journalistisk baggrund eller ej, når de blev bedt om tage stilling til, om det var af afgørende betydning at kunne stå inde for organisationens værdier. Halvdelen af respondenterne – uanset uddannelsesmæssig baggrund – erklærede sig helt enige i, at det havde afgørende betydning for valg af arbejdsplads, at de kunne stå inde for organisationens værdier. Dertil kom godt 30 pct., der var overvejende enige, og kun tre respondenter, som gav udtryk for, at de var uenige eller overvejende uenige. Det giver dermed et klart indtryk af, at kommunikatører generelt har brug for at kunne stå inde for en organisations værdier for at kunne kommunikere på organisationens vegne både internt og eksternt.

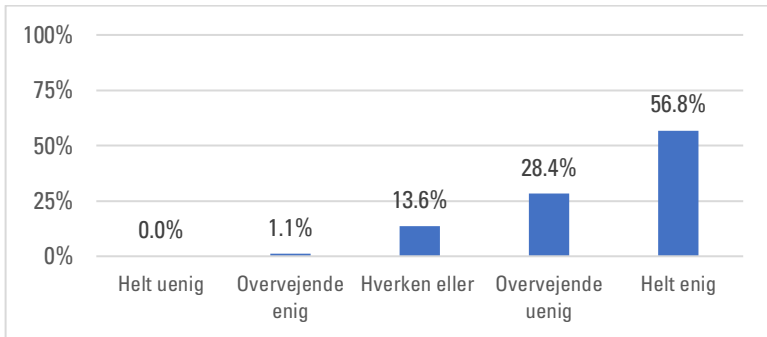
### **Flair for den gode historie**

Hvorvidt journalister kan siges at have en særlig viden, der kan kaldes esoterisk, kan som nævnt i det teoretiske afsnit diskuteres (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021). Der er dog næppe nogen tvivl om, hvis man skal tro respondenterne med journalistisk baggrund i den kvantitative undersøgelse, at de opfatter, at deres evne til at få øje på, vinkle og producere en historie hænger tæt

sammen med deres uddannelse og ikke mindst erfaring, og at disse journalistiske kompetencer er værdsatte i en organisatorisk sammenhæng: “Der er stor respekt omkring det journalistiske håndværk, og det fremhæves som vigtige kompetencer i rådgivningen og formidlingen”, skriver en respondent således.

Mere end otte ud af ti af de journalistuddannede er helt eller overvejende enige i udsagnet om, at de er i kraft af deres journalistiske uddannelse og erfaring er hurtigere end deres kolleger uden samme til at producere historier (se Figur 3). De er også helt eller overvejende enige i, at de altid tænker i nyhedskriterier som aktualitet, væsentlighed, identifikation og sensation (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001; Vestergaard, 2021), når de skal fortælle en historie. “Ja, jeg kan skrive nyheder hurtigere,” kommenterer en af respondenterne samtidig med, at vedkommende understreger, at kollegerne med andre faglige baggrunde til gengæld er bedre til andre opgaver som f.eks. videoproduktion og sociale medier.

Samme resultat illustrerer den kvalitative undersøgelse. For eksempel peger en interviewperson på, at vedkommende har en anden flair og forståelse for at vælge historier end kolleger uden journalistisk baggrund, mens en anden mener, at han som journalist især er god til at bruge de journalistiske kriterier og at finde og vinkle den gode historie.



Figur 16: Jeg er i kraft af min uddannelse og erfaring hurtigere end mine kollegaer uden en journalistisk uddannelse til at producere historier (Journalistisk uddannede respondenter).

## Diskussion

Den kvantitative undersøgelse understøtter på mange områder den kvalitative i forhold til, at journalistisk uddannede interne kommunikatører oplever, at de bringer medarbejderperspektivet på banen, er medarbejdernes talerør og er en kritisk stemme i forhold til ledelsen, samt at de besidder et håndværk, der gør dem hurtige til at finde

og eksekvere historier. Den store forskel imellem de to undersøgelser er særligt oplevelsen af, om det er muligt at bedrive uafhængigt journalistisk arbejde i organisationen, eller om der eksisterer organisatoriske begrænsninger. Respondenterne i den kvalitative undersøgelse mener, at det er muligt at bedrive uafhængigt journalistisk arbejde i en organisation, mens respondenterne i den kvantitative undersøgelse mere oplever, at der er organisatoriske begrænsninger. Denne forskel giver anledning til at diskutere den rolle, som intern kommunikation spiller i organisationer, og om uddannede journalister med fordel kan være med til udfordre rammerne for den interne kommunikation i både private og offentlige organisationer.

Flere interviewpersoner i den kvalitative undersøgelse kan nikke genkendende til, at den interne kommunikation er ved at ændre sig fra udelukkende at være information og ledelsens version af virkeligheden til at være mere transparent og troværdig (Ruck & Men, 2021; Men & Vercic, 2021). Den kvantitative undersøgelse peger på, at der er lang vej endnu i mange organisationer. Flere af respondenterne beskriver organisationens bånd som snærende, og de oplever ikke samme frihed til at udvælge historier, som interviewpersonerne gjorde i den kvalitative undersøgelse. Det tyder på, at der er stor forskel fra organisation til organisation. Hvor langt de fleste organisationer i den kvalitative undersøgelse tillader de interne kommunikatører relativt frie rammer til at skrive, hvad de vil, er det overordnede billede, at det ikke er tilfældet i de fleste organisationer i den kvantitative undersøgelse. Det kan på den ene side være et tegn på, at opfattelsen af intern kommunikation er ved at flytte sig, og at den tilstræber at blive mere autentisk og transparent (Ruck & Men, 2021; Men & Vercic, 2021), og at nogle organisationer fører an i den udvikling. En del af organisationerne i den kvalitative undersøgelse var således større organisationer, som havde mulighed for at bruge ressourcer på intern kommunikation, og Seiffert-Brockmann et al. (2024) har udviklet en hypotese om, at jo større en organisation er, og jo større status den har, des bedre er organisationens kommunikatører til at tackle etiske udfordringer. Organisationerne i den kvalitative undersøgelse kan således være på forkant med udviklingen i intern kommunikation, og de kan være med til at skubbe til forståelsen af den interne kommunikation og sætte et godt eksempel for andre organisationer. Forskellen på de to undersøgelser kan på den anden side også ses som et udtryk for, at der er forskel på organisationer. Nogle organisationer har et åbent kommunikationsmiljø, hvor troværdig og transparent intern kommunikation har plads, mens andre er mere lukkede (Lundholt og Uldall, 2018). Og det er netop i organisationer med et åbent kommunikationsmiljø, at uddannede journalister kan bringe deres profession i spil og være med til at skabe et bedre arbejdsmiljø.

Både i den kvalitative og den kvantitative undersøgelse opfatter de journalistuddannede kommunikatører deres evne til at se organisatoriske historier fra medarbejdernes perspektiv og stille de kritiske spørgsmål som nogle af deres spidskompetencer. På den måde kan de journalistuddannede kommunikatører gøre en forskel, og måske på sigt være med til at skubbe til organisationens snærende begrænsninger og skabe en større forståelse for, at ved at sætte den interne kommunikation fri, får organisationen skabt en vedkommende kommunikation, der kan opbygge tillid i organisationen mellem ledere og medarbejdere (Kang & Sung, 2017; Men, 2014; Neill & Bowen, 2021). Det kan få stor betydning, ikke mindst i en tid, hvor både medarbejdere og omverdenen stiller krav til organisationers ansvar og ageren på områder som f.eks. klima, bæredygtighed, ligestilling og diversitet.

Langt de fleste af respondenterne i den kvantitative undersøgelse arbejdede kun med intern kommunikation i en del af deres arbejdstid, hvilket indikerer, at selvom organisationer i forbindelse med Covid19-pandemien fik øjnene op for betydningen af intern kommunikation (Ruck & Men, 2021; Men & Vercic, 2021), er det stadig et område, som ikke for alvor bliver prioriteret. Både den kvalitative og den kvantitative undersøgelse viser, at uddannede journalister oplever, at de har noget at byde ind med i forhold til at bringe medarbejdernes stemmer på banen, stille de kritiske spørgsmål og sikre sig, at der er en overensstemmelse mellem det, medarbejderne læser om i den officielle interne kommunikation, og den hverdag de møder. Man kan derfor argumentere for, at uddannede journalister har muligheden for at skabe deres egne jobs ved at bringe deres professionsbaggrund i spil i intern kommunikation og udfordre rammerne for og omfanget af organisationers interne kommunikation.

## Konklusion

Et kvalitativt interviewstudie med 12 journalister, som arbejder med intern kommunikation, og en kvantitativ undersøgelse med 137 kommunikatører, hvor 88 havde en journalistisk uddannelse, peger på, at uddannede journalister i høj grad har en opfattelse af, at de er gode til at se organisationens historier fra medarbejdernes synsvinkel, stille kritiske spørgsmål og skrive velfortalte historier, mens der er delte meninger om, hvorvidt de oplever, at de har frihed til at fortælle de historier, som de ønsker. Der er stor forskel på, hvilken rolle intern kommunikation spiller i forskellige organisationer, og hvilke frihedsgrader den enkelte kommunikatør har i forhold til at give et troværdigt og genkendeligt billede af organisationen.

Resultaterne af undersøgelserne kan imidlertid tyde på, at der er et paradigmeskifte på vej, hvor intern kommunikation kommer til at spille en større rolle og vil tilstræbe at blive mere transparent og åben. Her peger undersøgelsen på, at uddannede journalister i kraft af deres journalistiske baggrund kan være med til at skubbe til opfattelsen af intern kommunikation og gøre den mere transparent og inddragende og måske ligefrem bidrage til at ændre et lukket kommunikationsmiljø til et mere åbent (Lundholt & Uldall, 2018). I forlængelse af det er der også forhold, som undersøgelsen ikke undersøger, og som fremtidig forskning med fordel kunne gribe fat i. For det første giver respondenterne udtryk for, at de er gode til at se historierne fra medarbejdernes synsvinkel, men er det virkelig tilfældet? Her kunne et studie passende kigge på de faktiske historier, som kommunikatører med en journalistisk baggrund skriver og altså se på, om der er en overensstemmelse mellem det, som de siger, og det, de gør. For det andet kunne det også være interessant at undersøge, om organisationer med mange kommunikatører med journalistisk baggrund er bedre til at fremhæve medarbejdernes perspektiv og være transparente end andre organisationer.

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# An integrated guide to thematic analysis

## Combining top-down and bottom-up approaches

### Journalistica: The Methods Section

In this section, Journalistica puts a spotlight on research methods used in journalism studies and/or journalism practice.

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### KEYWORDS:

thematic analysis, qualitative coding, qualitative interviews, index coding, journalism, qualitative data

## 1. Description of the method

Thematic coding is a popular approach in journalism studies for analyzing qualitative data that involves condensing and interpreting meaning by identifying patterns in data (Braun & Clarke 2006; Brooks & King 2014). Many existing guides for thematic analysis recommend first generating detailed codes that are subsequently subsumed under larger themes (Attride-Stirling 2011; Braun & Clarke 2006; Creswell 2014; Miles et al. 2014). Yet, as Deterding & Waters assert (2021), such pure bottom-up processes bear little resemblance with current research practices. Instead, they propose first sorting larger blocks of text into so-called indexes, which can be considered containers where you collect all text that refers to the same broad topic. Thereafter, fine-grained analytic codes are applied to all text in each index. However, despite its undeniable

strengths, their approach lacks transparency in the development of analytic codes and validation processes.

In this context, we develop an integrated guide to thematic analysis that combines the top-down approach of first indexing transcripts (*ibid.*) with the transparency, closeness to text, and careful validation of codes offered by bottom-up approaches. We use qualitative interviews to describe the method, but it can be applied to other forms of qualitative data, including news articles, social media material, or participant observation.

### **Step-by-step guide**

#### I. Index coding

First, read all interview transcripts and sort large text chunks into indexes. The indexes reflect the project's research questions (Deterding & Waters 2021) and may be derived from the interview-guide or reflective notes made during the interviewing and transcribing processes (often referred to as memos, see Miles et al. 2014). Index coding eases the data analysis by grouping all parts of the interviews/transcripts where participants talk about a given topic. Furthermore, reading the transcripts gives a first sense of the overall meaning of the data (e.g. Braun & Clarke 2006; Brooks & King 2014; Creswell 2014).

#### II. Applying analytical codes

Next, apply analytic codes. These fine-grained codes capture repeated concepts in the data and assign interpreted meaning to smaller bits of text to identify patterns (Miles et al. 2014). Ideas for analytic codes are developed during the indexing phase. Code indexes one at a time to avoid being overwhelmed by the amount of data and overlooking important patterns (Deterding & Waters 2021). For example, in a project about conflict reporting, all text assigned to an index called 'different understandings of peace journalism' was coded first. It contained all parts of the interviews in which respondents talked about this topic. Analytic codes like 'promoting peace' and 'giving voice to all parties' were applied to the text, reflecting different understandings of the concept that participants referred to.

#### III. Searching for negative cases

Collectively, the analytic codes must reflect all meanings in the data relevant to answering the research question(s) (Dahler-Larsen 2008; Miles et al. 2014). After applying analytic codes, re-read all text in the index searching for negative cases that point in the opposite direction of the identified patterns (see Miles et al. 2014; Silverman 2020).

This helps identify coherent patterns while faithfully reflecting the contradictions and complexities in the data (Deterding & Waters 2021; Schwartz-Shea 2013) and adds analytic insight by illuminating the limits of the dominant patterns (Dahler-Larsen 2008; Miles et al. 2014).

#### IV. Validating analytical codes

Validate analytic codes to verify that there is substantial data for supporting each code (Braun & Clarke 2006; Morse et al. 2002) and ensure that codes have been applied consistently across data (Creswell 2014). Do this using the criteria of internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Braun & Clarke 2006, citing Patton 1990): All text bits coded with the same analytic code should create meaningful cohesion and point in the same direction, and the meaning captured by each analytic code should be different from other analytic codes. If this is not the case, collapse or split analytic codes into separate codes.

#### V. Subsuming analytical codes under themes

Provide a final description of the meaning each analytic code captures before grouping them into themes (e.g. Braun & Clarke 2006; David & Sutton 2004). All codes within a theme must relate to that theme, be different from other themes, and contribute to answering the research question(s). Cross-read themes and analytic codes to check whether any analytic code would fit another theme better. If so, reassign it.

#### VI. Checking back with interviews

Finally, re-read all transcripts to ensure the analysis mirrors all relevant insights from each interview (Silverman 2020). This helps rule out that important meaning or alternative answers to the research question(s) have been overlooked. If so, adjust the analysis accordingly.

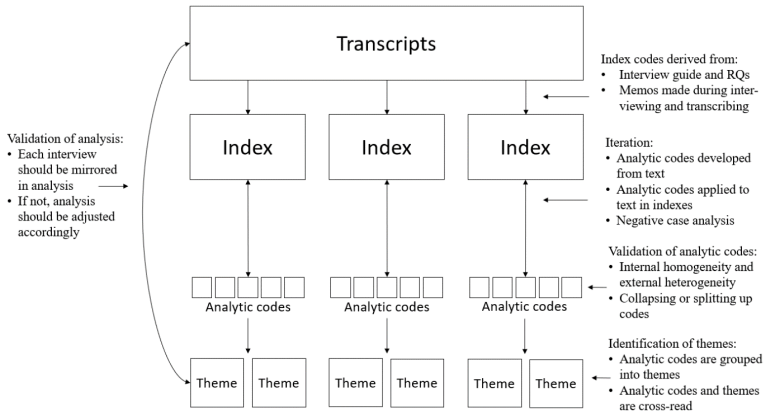


Figure 17: Integrated coding guide

## 2. Example of use

The proposed integrated guide has been used in two diverse research projects. The one takes a constructivist standpoint and explores different roles and practices related to peace journalism in the coverage of electoral conflict and terrorism in Kenya (Arregui 2023). Interview data with 35 journalists was coded on MaxQDA and combined with textual analysis of newspaper articles and participant observation. The other takes a news repertoires-approach and investigates why and how Danish alternative news users seek out and combine alternative and mainstream media (Brems 2024). Data from 25 interviews was analysed using NVivo and combined with insights from a large-N survey study. These examples illustrate that the approach travels well across studies set in varied contexts with different theoretical underpinnings, underscoring that a central advantage of thematic coding is that it is not tied to any specific theory (e.g. Braun & Clarke 2006).

## 3. Main advantages and challenges of using the method

Thematic analysis is an intricate and time-consuming method, and accounts for it are often unclear and sparse in academic publications (e.g. Dahler-Larsen 2008). This murkiness omits researchers' active role in interpreting data (Braun & Clarke 2006) and turns the analysis process into a 'black box' with raw data on one end and themes emerging on the other with no proper delineation of how these came into being. Our proposed integrated guide does not lead to different analytical results than would be obtained following prior

guides. Rather, by combining top-down and bottom-up approaches, we aim to integrate the best practices of each: 1) It offers clear validation steps that provide transparency in the process of analysis and its following presentation. 2) Beginning by indexing breaks the analysis into smaller parts and allows researchers to focus on analyzing a fraction of the data relevant to answering one research question at a time. 3) It allows to divide sections of the analytical work between researchers working on the same project and makes it easy for two coders to test inter-coder reliability on subparts of the data. 4) Indexing makes recoding of data later in the analysis process more manageable as it is not necessary to recode all data but just the subpart in the given index.

#### 4. Ethical considerations

The relationship between researcher and research participants is asymmetrical as the former has the power to define the topics of interest and interpret the meanings of the collected data (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014; Miller & Crabtree 2004). This is a fundamental term of qualitative research but places ethical responsibilities on the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher must protect the identity of participants if anonymity has been promised (David & Sutton 2004; Kvale & Brinkmann 2014) in accordance with the principle of striving to do no harm (Rubin & Rubin 2012). This may conflict with ideals of open research, e.g. if transcripts cannot be made publicly available because certain content would reveal participants' identities.

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# Value sensitive design

## Journalistica: The Methods Section

In this section, Journalistica puts a spotlight on research methods used in journalism studies and/or journalism practice.

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### KEYWORDS

Human-computer interaction, design, moral psychology, participatory design, value-oriented semi-structured interviews, value sketch, value-oriented prototype, epistemology of journalism, data journalism

## 1. Description of the method

Value sensitive design is a methodological approach for the design and understanding of technology: a set of qualitative methods that foregrounds the well-being of humans (Friedman & Hendry, 2019). For journalism scholars – often interested in conducting transdisciplinary and participatory research – this set of methods is useful to study the relation between journalism and technologies such as AI, machine learning, or social computing (e.g. social networks).

In Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), the creation and evaluation of computer systems and software are central objectives. These activities require problem-solving techniques and user-oriented methods to improve the usability, and human experience with technology. While usability is typically seen as a functional concern in technology design, value sensitive design aims to prioritize ethical, moral, and human values throughout the process (Friedman, 1996). Overall, value sensitive design bears similarities with qualitative approaches like action research (Stringer, 2007) and participatory design (Spinuzzi, 2005). Like these approaches, value sensitive design promotes close interaction between researchers and their subjects (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 1996; Morini et al., 2022) and enables the investigation of tacit and invisible aspects of human activity.

In the context of journalism, this translates to the study of how reporters work with technologies, formally and informally. Value sensitive design would enable journalism scholars to go beyond the

discourse on technology to break down the artifacts and the practices surrounding them. This has the potential to trace the evolution of ethical and moral values of journalism from their abstract ideas to their concrete manifestations in technological artifacts. For value sensitive design, concepts like democracy, privacy or respect are not exclusively abstract, but manifest themselves any time humans interact with everyday technologies. Researchers must work in tandem with potential users to understand the values involved in the usage of a particular technology (Friedman et al., 2002). Core to the approach are conceptual, empirical, and technical investigations (Friedman et al., 2008). Conceptual investigations are useful to discover what values are key in the creation of a technology. Empirical investigations translate values into prototypes and sketches. Technical investigations establish what human values are supported or hindered by existing technologies (ibid., p. 3).

Overall, value sensitive design comprises 17 methods. These methods should all be integrated within the research process (Friedman & Hendry, 2019, p. 64), however – for journalism scholars – some might be easier to implement than others. For instance, *value source analysis* is a diagramming task that helps in distinguishing what values are already explicitly supported by stakeholders and which ones should be added. *Value scenario* is a narrative technique that allows technical and human values to intertwine.

## 2. Example of use

Currently, there are few examples of studies in journalism using value sensitive design (e.g. Diakopoulos, 2012; Morini et al., 2022). Diakopoulos (2012) devised a hybrid method to generate new opportunities of innovation in journalism. Value sensitive design is used here to identify key human values in developing innovative forms of journalism through brainstorming and survey activities. Morini et al. (2022) used value sensitive design to run a conceptual investigation on how sensors – pieces of hardware capable of converting analogue input into digital information (Bui, 2014) – impact the journalistic practice. The authors set up *value-oriented semi-structured interviews* and *value-oriented scenarios* with journalists and scholars. The data collected from these activities has been analyzed using a *value-oriented coding manual* (Friedman & Hendry, 2019). During interviews, journalists were prompted to recall past and current experiences with sensors in relation to pre-identified ethical values, such as privacy (Morini et al., 2022, pp. 4–6). Then, the interviewees took part in building value-oriented scenarios. For each of these values, the authors were able to produce practical

considerations that account for ethical and moral risks. Other examples can be found across several domains, primarily HCI (e.g. Friedman et al., 2000), urban studies (Borning et al., 2008) and service research (Woelfer & Hendry, 2010).

### **3. Main advantages and challenges of using the method**

Value sensitive design is a methodological approach useful to embed human values in new technologies as well as evaluate existing ones. For journalism scholars, this approach could serve different purposes, especially in considering the role of existing technologies in journalism. It could help in understanding how the ethical and moral values of journalism are reflected by the use of certain technologies. Its deeply investigative and participatory intents combined with its imaginative methods poses an ideal setting to explore how journalists' moral and ethical values translate in their everyday practices.

More specifically, conceptual and technical investigations could be used inside and outside newsrooms, combining observational or hands-on approaches. For instance, they could assess the creation of AI-generated content, the usage of data-driven dashboards, and the technical pipelines to create news graphics or data visualizations for journalistic stories. Alternatively, empirical investigations could be used to experiment with new formats or production strategies that center human values in journalists' daily work.

The main challenge with this approach is to find reliable ways to interpret the empirical data produced through value-oriented methods. The data resulting from observation and co-design activities are mostly qualitative. Results could be difficult to understand and relate to previous research in a broad and abstract manner. A practical solution to this problem could be to combine value sensitive design with other methods that produce more generalized results.

### **4. Ethical considerations**

Within the domain of journalism research, the debate around the values and ethics of journalism occupies a prime position. This discussion centers on the assumptions that key values vary based on geographical and political contexts, with journalists adhering to different ideas of what journalism is and how it should be exercised. Value sensitive design methods should be carefully contextualized and tailored to fit local journalists' understanding of their practice and technical literacy, with due respect for their perspectives.

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# Journalistic Autonomy: The Genealogy of a Concept

By Henrik Örnebring and Michael Karlsson.  
The University of Missouri Press, 2022. 358  
pp.

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At the 2024 ICA conference on the Gold Coast in Australia, the Journalism Studies division celebrated its 20 years anniversary. What better time, then, to take stock of, or write the “family history” (p. 10) of one of the field’s central concepts, namely autonomy. It was therefore perhaps not entirely surprising that Örnebring and Karlsson’s book *Journalistic Autonomy: The Genealogy of a Concept* won the division’s Outstanding Book Award; and indeed, this is — despite an important omission that I will return to at the end — well deserved, also because the book reactivates the long-honoured practice of tracing the complex histories of key concepts. Regarding the concept in focus here, this is needed, the authors argue, because the autonomy of journalism is being reshaped by a range of simultaneous and overlapping processes that make established legitimizations of journalistic autonomy out of synch with key aspects of contemporary society. This point is developed in the concluding chapter, which draws together key insights from the preceding chapters each of which discusses autonomy in relation to institutions or processes often seen as having a complex or adversary relation to the autonomy of journalism; the chapters are consequently called autonomy and, respectively, the state, politics, the market, the workplace, audiences and technology.

The genealogy is therefore rather a series of parallel and inter-linked genealogies. While this in some sense may stand in the way of a broader picture, it is a very well-functioning heuristic device that helps to analytically break apart complexly intertwined processes developing over relatively great time spans. This means that the genealogies clearly are historical and somewhat critical, but it is arguably more difficult to see the manifestation of the author’s claim that (their) genealogies constitute a specific kind of writing — apart from the appearance of section titles like “Love me or leave

me” (p. 224). More broadly, the book is based on four propositions, which are that autonomy is “relational”, “requires a boundary” (linked to the idea of independence from), “implies agency” (independence to) and “must have a purpose” (linked to anticipation). These aspects are touched upon throughout the chapters and so are levels of autonomy, from the episodic to the programmatic and from the individual to the institutional. In their thinking of how journalism is related to its environments, the authors employ the metaphor of a membrane, which allows for some interesting reformulations of the constraining elements of traditional demarcations of autonomy in liberal democracies. As such, the book is clearly and unapologetically about the development of journalism across the North Atlantic or, as the authors write, “journalism as we know it” (p. 57).

Each of the chapters skilfully weaves together historical texts and empirical observations into interesting analytical points. While this is illuminating in an eclectically amusing way, it would, in places, have helped with a bit more transparency as to why certain (con)texts are singled out and others not, especially since the claim is to unearth the broader trajectory of thinking undergirding how journalists — then and now — legitimise themselves. So, when a Swedish scholar is introduced in Chapter One with the words that that he is “not widely known internationally is probably an understatement” one wonders why he merits attention and how his thinking has informed journalistic cultures. While this is not to say that the discussion of him is uninteresting (it is not) but that his place in the broader genealogy is unclear. In general, however, the chapter does reveal many nuances about the processes through which journalism wrestled itself (relatively) free from the state.

And so do the rest of the chapters on journalism’s relation to the market, sources, technology and more. As the book is based on secondary material there is as such nothing really new revealed. What is new and engaging is the way in which existing material is brought together, contextualised and analysed. A good example of this is the discussion of journalism’s “relational nature ... to its audience”, which positions a range of known texts (by, e.g., Gans) in relation to contemporary discussions of metrics. Yet, as hinted at above, such processes may be difficult to discuss fully within the applied structure as metrics concern both relations to the audience and/or the market. Yet, while the individual chapters (understandably) shy away from developing such interconnections, the concluding chapter is focused on an ambitious synthesis of issues raised in and in between the parallel genealogies.

In a smart and strategic move, Chapter Ten — “whither autonomy” — in fact turns against one of the key tenets of the book by



initially claiming “the impossibility of ‘independence from’” (p. 275), which largely has been the structuring idea of the book. What is argued is not only that journalism can never be fully autonomous, which is hardly a new insight, but that we need to focus more on the exclusionary impacts of over-focusing on independence-from thinking. This is linked to exclusions “imprinted ... on journalism” from the inceptions of ideas of autonomy in times with a much more restrictive liberal democracy where everybody not at the dominant centre was seen as propagating special interests. But this move beyond independence from is also a call for paying more attention to aspects of agency and purpose, i.e. a “value system that is *for* something,” (295; emphasis added), e.g. the “truth” that “human activity affects the speed and severity of climate change” (p. 296). What is or should be withering, is thus not autonomy but ingrained ways of thinking about it.

And, while I have been and remain very positive about this book, this brings me to my only, but major, concern, namely that despite talking about agency and purpose and invoking an example about climate change (almost the only time this is mentioned), the authors do not address fundamental relations between journalistic autonomy and climate change. While the authors draw on notions from biology (e.g., the membrane, agency, and anticipation) and throughout talk about “journalism and its environment” (p. 55), this only concerns social environments. What is neglected here is that journalism has been, and largely remains, deeply implicated in the development and maintenance of a system that is based on the exploitation of natural resources. Following the structure outlined above, the book thus really ought to have had a chapter entitled something like “autonomy and the natural environment.” The concluding arguments about agency and purpose could then have included discussions of how journalism, one the one hand, may help break down rather than perpetuate distinctions between the human and the more than human and, on the other, how it may disentangle itself from the extractivism upon which much of the economy still relies. Indeed, as the authors argue, the notions of autonomy undergirding the legitimisation of journalism is somewhat out of synch with contemporary concerns; I fully agree but lament that this argument is made without giving any thought to journalistic autonomy, liberal democracy, and climate change. While this neglect does not in itself diminish the quality of what is written in the book, it does call attention to the insularity of journalism studies or, in line with arguments of the book, what we might call the field’s exclusionary autonomy.

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# Nyhedsjournalistens metoder

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Under hösten har vi i Sverige kunnat ta del av flera diskussioner om landets olika journalistutbildningar. I olika journalistikforum på sociala medier och i debattartiklar har vi kunnat läsa att det är ett problem att den svenska journalistutbildningen *saknar forskningsknytning*, och att dagens journalister därför saknar konkreta verktyg att resonera om sådant som objektivitet, och samtidigt att journalistutbildningen närmast är *överteoretiserad* och att dagens journalister därför inte får tillräckliga praktiska färdigheter och yrkesverktyg med sig ut i arbetslivet. Jag misstänker att båda de här synsätten är giltiga – vilken utbildningsansvarig vill inte ge sina studenter mer av allt? Frågan är bara hur man ska göra det.

Därför är jag närmast löjligt förtjust i hur redaktörerna och deras medförfattare till nyutkomna *Nyhedsjournalistens metoder* tar sig an problemet. I boken varvas nämligen kapitel som fokuserar på olika praktiker (hur man får idéer, gör research, hittar källor, intervjuar, vinklar, dokumenterar och strukturerar sitt innehåll) med kapitel med ett tydligt teoretisk fokus (nyheternas roll i samhället och för demokratin, nyhetsvärdering, dagordningsteorin, medialisering, framing samt förtroendet för nyhetsmedierna). I vad som är tänkt som en introduktion till nyhetsjournalistik för såväl journaliststudenter som elever på gymnasiet och studenter på andra utbildningar, får läsaren alltså lite av allt med tydliga hänvisningar till var hon kan fördjupa sina kunskaper när hon vill det.

I det följande kommer jag först att kort att presentera bokens författare och sedan själva innehållet. Därefter kommer jag att diskutera vad jag uppfattar som några av bokens främsta styrkor, men också några brister och svagheter, och här kommer mitt huvudsakliga fokus att ligga på de teoretiska avsnitten. Avslutningsvis kanske jag vågar ta mig an frågan om detta är en kursbok som skulle fungera på svenska utbildningar?

**Mads Kæmsgaard Eberholst och Maria Bendix Wittchen** är de två som hållit ihop arbetet med boken. Båda undervisar och forskar i

olika former av journalistik, praktiskt och teoretiskt – och i hur man utbildar journalister, alltså den didaktiska praktiken. Båda är verk-samma vid Roskilde Universitet och Institut for Kommunikation og Humanistisk Videnskab. Där hittar vi också övriga författare: **Troels Søgård Henriksen**, som i huvudsak undervisar om journalistisk praktik, **Jannie Møller Hartley**, med ett forskningsfokus på digitala medier och hur algoritmer och AI påverkar nyhetsproduktionen, **Mark Blach-Ørsten**, som forskar kring medier och demokrati, samt **Aske Kammer**, med ett forskningsfokus på bland annat digital teknik och mediernas affärsmodeller. Det syns i både de praktiska och de teoretiska kapitlen i boken att de här sex kan sin sak; de vet hur nyhetsjournalistiken fungerar i det digitala medielandskapet och de är väl uppdaterade i forskningen kring den. Det faktum att de är kollegor på samma institution och i samma utbildningar är förmodligen anledningen till att boken också framstår som väl sammanhållen såväl stilistiskt som innehållsmässigt – den är väl anpassad till sitt syfte.

Efter en kort läsarvägledning i bokens första kapitel följer ett praktiskt kapitel om “Nyheten som genre”. Här ger Bendix Wittchen en av de bästa introduktioner till nyhetsjournalistik som jag läst på mycket länge. I min egen undervisningspraktik möter jag studenter som visserligen inte ska bli journalister men som i många fall heller inte alls tar del av nyheter; det här kapitlet skulle ge mina studenter (och förmodligen också många andra) en grundläggande och samtidigt nyanserad introduktion till nyhetsjournalistiken och hur man kan förstå den. Därefter följer ett teoretiskt kapitel om “Nyheten i samfundet”, där Blach-Ørsten tar avstamp i den första danska maktutredningen för att sedan göra en historisk tillbakablick över de tre olika epokerna i dansk presshistoria. Den historia översikten är inte bara intressant, utan ger också ett nödvändigt perspektiv till den digitala transformationen av hela medielandskapet och de delvis nya förutsättningarna för nyhetsjournalistiken.

Det florerar många myter, och numera även konspirationsteorier, om var journalister får sina nyheter ifrån. “Jag vet ingenting om tur, bara att ju mer jag tränar desto mer tur har jag”, sa en gång den svenske utförslegendaren Ingemar Stenmark i en intervju. Och precis så är det med nyhetsjournalistens idéer – de är många gånger resultatet av hårt och målinriktat förarbete och en förmåga att koppla det man vet till en vinkel. Søgård Henriksen gör en djupdykning i idéutvecklingens olika faser i kapitlet “Idéutvikling”, varefter Møller Hartley skriver om nyhetsvärdering från ett teoretiskt perspektiv i “Hvad blir til nyheder og hvorfor?”. Søgård Henriksen tar tillbaka stafettpinnen i ett kapitel om “Research og skriftlige kilder”, där läsaren får inte bara en lektion i konsten att läsa en årsberättelse utan också en översikt över sociala medier ur ett research-perspektiv,

OSINT-metoder (open source intelligence) och andra mer handfasta verktyg. Det följande teoretiska kapitlet om “Kampen om dagsordenen” (Blach-Ørsten) är oväntat kort – det här är ett område där det har hänt mycket i och med digitaliseringen och sociala medier, och jag hade gärna läst mer.

Så här långt in i läsningen är det lätt för läsaren att se en någorlunda tydlig koppling mellan varje praktiskt kapitel och det teoretiska som följer. Men här, i bokens mittersta del, blir kopplingen kanske mindre uppenbar. Och det är kanske inte så underligt? Journalistikforskningen fokuserar ju inte bara på journalistiska praktiker och normer, utan också på sådant som nyhetsjournalistikens roll i demokratin och frågan om publikens (eller medborgarnas) förtroende för den. Kæmgsgaard Eberholst skriver om källor, källkritik och källanalys i “Mundtlige kilder”, och avsnittet om vikten av att skydda sina källor framstår tyvärr som relevant. Därpå följer ett kapitel om “Pressens kritiske rolle i demokratiet” (Møller Hartley), där källorna återvänder i en mer teoretisk diskussion – här finns alltså fortfarande en tydlig röd tråd genom läsningen. Detsamma gäller det praktiska kapitlet om “Interview” (Kæmgsgaard Eberholst), som inte bara avhandlar intervjun som journalistisk genre utan också själva hantverket med förberedelserna och genomförandet, och det följande kapitlet om “Samfundets medialisering” (Kammer), där de medietränade intervjupersonerna ges stort utrymme samtidigt som medialiseringen som begrepp reds ut grundligt. Kapitlet om “Vinkling” och hur man egentligen gör för att hitta en vinkel (Bendix Wittchen) kopplas på liknande vis till forskningen om “Framing – Når journalistikken præges af kulturelle forforståelser” (Møller Hartley).

En av de viktigaste frågorna på en nyhetsredaktion är *Hvad är din dokumentation, kan du dokumentera din historie?* (i Danmark) och *Vad har du för källor? Vilka belägg har du?* (i Sverige). Det gäller att alltid kunna källhänvisa för varje faktapåstående, att kunna visa en noggrann dokumentation. I slutändan handlar det om att inte riskera publikens förtroende för nyhetsjournalistiken. Om detta skriver Bendix Wittchen i det praktiska kapitlet “Dokumentation” och Blach-Ørsten i det teoretiska “Troværdighed og tillid”. Boken avslutas så med ett kapitel som många nog hade trott skulle uppta en betydligt större del av utrymmet, nämligen skrivandet. Men eftersom alla de föregående kapitlen behandlar förberedelsearbetet inför skrivandet, så blir “Fra metode til nyhed” (Kæmgsgaard Eberholst) ett relativt koncentrerat avsnitt där ändå huvudpoängerna i det journalistiska skrivandet och nyhetstextens struktur lyfts fram.

Dessa 16 kapitel om nyhetsjournalistens metoder, hur fungerar de då som en introduktion till nyhetsjournalistiken som genre? Mycket väl, skulle jag säga. För att börja med själva strukturen: I Sverige pratar vi om *varannan vatten* som ett gott råd för den –

journalist eller forskare – som tänkt sig en utekväll på lokal. Författarna till *Nyhetsjournalistikens metoder* visar att vartannat-principen fungerar väl för en introduktion till nyhetsjournalistik. Läsaren får både praktisk kunskap och en fördjupad teoretisk förståelse för olika aspekter av journalistiken. Genom att använda *Nyhetsjournalistikens metoder* som en av de första kursböckerna på en journalistutbildning skickar man med sina studenter en förståelse för hur de mer teoretiskt inriktade kurserna senare i utbildningen kopplar till de praktiska. Jag skulle gärna se upplägget inom fler utbildnings- och ämnesområden. I boken är de praktiska kapitlen mer omfattande än de teoretiska, och så kanske det måste vara. Samtidigt särskiljs de teoretiska kapitlen från den praktiska genom en "etikett" i innehållsförteckningen, och jag förstår inte riktigt meningen med den. Är det för att läsaren lättare ska kunna hoppa över teorin, eller lättare hitta till den? Vad hade hänt om etiketten istället hade märkt ut praktiken?

En av bokens främsta styrkor är att den är uppdaterad – såväl praktik som teori tar sin utgångspunkt i det digitala, och sociala medier är inte "något annat". Kanske en självklarhet för de flesta, men många av oss bär ju också med oss kunskaper från ett inte lika digitalt medielandskap, och det slår igenom även i kurslitteratur – vi "börjar lite för långt tillbaka", helt enkelt. Jag uppskattar också att den journalistiska etiken får så stort utrymme i många av de praktiska kapitlen.

Vad hade jag gärna läst mer om? Jag saknar ett uttalat genusperspektiv i åtminstone något av kapitlen – vad spelar det för roll *vilka* grupper av människor som syns i medierna och vad man väljer att skriva om? Jag saknar också en diskussion om mediernas representativitet där också sådant som *ageism* och minoritetsgrupper ges plats. Med tanke på den mediekritiska debatt och de angrepp på nyhetsjournalistiken som vi ser just i bland annat USA och i Sverige (och förmodligen också i Danmark), hade jag gärna också sett en utvidgad diskussion om nyhetsjournalistikens roll i en tid av allt ökande desinformation, misinformation och propaganda, och vad den här debatten kanske betyder för nyhetsjournalistikens framtid. Men framför allt saknar jag ett teoretiskt avsnitt om journalisters normer och ideal och vilken betydelse dessa har för såväl praktiker som för nyhetsjournalistikens innehåll. Det finns små spår av detta här och var, till exempel i avsnittet "Journalisten som aktør" i det fjärde kapitlet, men det hade behövt fördjupas.

Avslutningsvis ska jag ge mig på frågan om detta är en kursbok som kan fungera också på svenska journalistutbildningar? Den är inte så enkel att besvara som man kanske kan tro. Svenska och danska nyhetsredaktioner och journalistiska praktiker är så pass lika att innehållsmässig vore det inga problem. Jag uppfattar boken som

väl strukturerad och språket som sakligt, ibland lättsamt, och framför allt lätt att förstå. Men för många svenskar är även den skrivna danskan i det närmaste obegriplig. Jag tror att *Nyhetsjournalistens metoder* nog kan fungera på utbildningar i Skåne, men skulle – tyvärr – inte rekommendera den längre norrut utan en översättning. För danska journalistik- och medieutbildningar ser jag den som självklar.

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