

JOURNALISTICA

Nr. 1 · 2025

Tidsskrift for forskning i journalistik

20
25

JOURNALISTICA

2025

VOL. 19 · NR. 1 · 2025

JOURNALISTICA

Journalistica 2025

Journalistica
Vol. 19 · nr. 1 · 2025
© 2025 forfatterne &
Journalistica

Ansvarshavende redaktør
for JOURNALISTICA:
Eva Mayerhöffer

Redaktører for
temanummer:
Heidi Kurvinen
Emil Eiby Seidenfaden

Redaktører for Methods
Section:
Lene Heiselberg
Miriam Kroman Brems
Cecilia Arregui Olivera

Redaktør for
boganmeldelser:
Aske Kammer

Interne redaktører:
Eva Mayerhöffer
Mette Bengtsson

Omslag:
Stefan Urup Kaplan
Tim Ramsland

Grafisk tilrettelæggelse:
Stefan Urup Kaplan
Tim Ramsland
Leif Pedersen

Tidsskriftet er sat med
Univers og Utopia

ISBN 978-87-971376-3-5
ISSN Online 1904-7967
ISSN Print 1901-6220

Alle rettigheder
forbeholdes. Fotografisk,
mekanisk eller anden
gengivelse af denne bog
eller dele deraf er forbudt
uden forlagets skriftlige
tilladelse ifølge gældende
dansk lov om ophavsret.
Institutioner, der har
indgået aftale med
Copydan, kan kopiere
inden for de rammer, der
er nævnt i aftalen.

www.journalistica.dk

Content

PREFACE

EVA MAYERHÖFFER

Editorial preface

7

SPECIAL ISSUE

HEIDI KURVINEN

EMIL EIBY SEIDENFADEN

People and networks in the history of Nordic journalism

9

SATU SORVALI

REETTA HÄNNINEN

Outside the networks:

Aurora Olin's and Saima Grönstrand's struggles as female editors in the turn-of-the-20th-century Finnish press

22

JIMMY ENGREN

JOHAN JARLBRINK

A local newspaper as mediator in transatlantic networks during the late nineteenth century:

Isidor Kjellberg and Östgöten

46

AARON ACKERLEY

Editorial control, the division of responsibilities, and journalistic autonomy:

Historical newsrooms in Britain, Norway and Sweden

71

EVA ÅSÉN EKSTRAND

Kvinnliga journalister i Spanska inbördeskriget:

En fallstudie

94

CECILIA AARE

Människosyn och berättarteknik i svenska socialreportage:

Fem 1900-talsreportrar och deras kontext

121

HANNE JØRNDROP

IDA WILLIG

MARK BLACH-ØRSTEN

METTE BENGTSOON

Hurra for kvinden!

Kvinder i navnestoffet gennem 100 år

145

ARTICLES

ESTER APPELGREN
FRANCESCA MORINI
AMANDA MAYA

Visualizing national and international deaths with data during the
COVID-19 pandemic 172

MAARIT JAAKOLA
JENNY WIIK

No panic pragmatism:
Nordic journalism educators' preparedness to teach artificial intelligence
(AI) in 2024 198

MAGNUS DANIELSON

The (far-) right kind of feeling:
How representations of emotional experiences perform discourses in
Swedish right-wing alternative news media 225

METHODS SECTION

JULIE MÜNTER LASSEN

Screenshots as data and documentation 249

PETER BUSCH NICOLAISEN

Dialing in with participants 255

ALEXANDRA SCHWINGES

Qualitative reconstruction interviews to study journalistic practice 261

STEFFEN MOESTRUP

Ethnographic reporting: immersion as journalistic practice and
pedagogy 267

BOOK REVIEWS

RASMUS RØNLEV

Den engagerade reportern: Svenska sociala reportage 1910-2010
Af Cecilia Aare. Makadam, 2023. 307 s. 273

HENRIK G. BASTIANSEN

Journalistikkens danske historie: Journalister, redaktører og nyhedsmedier
fra 1830'erne til nutiden
Av Lars Kabel. Samfundslitteratur, 2024. 343 s. 279

Editorial preface

EVA MAYERHÖFFER

Roskilde University

2025 has been an eventful year for Journalistica. We have – with funding from Dagspressens Fond – introduced an award for the best Danish master thesis in Journalism, and we have received funding from Independent Research Fund Denmark (DFF) that will help secure and strengthen the journal’s editorial activities in 2026-2029.

The grant from DFF is not only an important step in the further consolidation and professionalization of Journalistica’s work, but also an acknowledgment of the efforts we have invested in broadening Journalistica’s geographic scope, readership and portfolio, as well as in improving our editorial operations, over the past five years.

The 2025 issue of Journalistica includes a special section with a media-historical focus on “People and networks in the history of Nordic journalism”. The two guest editors, Heidi Kurvinen and Emil Eiby Seidenfaden, will introduce the section and its six articles in full detail on the following pages.

Moreover, this year’s issue contains three articles in the open section. The article “Visualizing national and international deaths with data during the COVID-19 pandemic”, written by Ester Appelgren, Francesca Morini and Amanda Maya, combines Journalism Studies with Visualization Research to analyze how journalistic visualizations about the COVID-19 pandemic differed in representing national and international deaths, e.g. by distracting audiences from national death counts.

In the article “No-panic pragmatism: Nordic journalism educators’ preparedness to teach artificial intelligence (AI) in 2024”, Maarit Jaakkola and Jenny Wiik argue – with point of departure in a survey conducted across Nordic journalism education institutions – for the need of journalism education institutions to take a more active role in supporting educators through formal training in AI and the provision of clear AI guidelines, and to expand the curriculum on AI literacy to go beyond practical newsroom applications to include critical analysis and ethical considerations.

In the article “The (far-) right kind of feeling: How descriptions of emotional experience perform discourses in Swedish right-wing alternative news media”, Magnus Danielson analyses how Swedish

far-right media discursively legitimize and delegitimize different emotional experiences, and in this process frame what and who is worthy of emotional attention.

The issue also contains four method briefs: Julie Münster Lassen presents “Screenshots as data and documentation”, Peter Busch Nicolaisen “Dialing in with participants”, Alexandra Schwinges “Qualitative reconstruction interviews to study journalistic practice” and Steffen Moestrup “Ethnographic reporting: immersion as journalistic practice and pedagogy”.

The issue closes with two excellent “inter-Scandinavian” book reviews of recent media-historical monographs. Rasmus Rønlev reviews Cecilia Aare’s 2024 book on Swedish social reportages in a historical perspective, and Henrik G. Bastiansen reviews Lars Kabel’s book on Danish journalism history from the 1830’s to today.

Thank you to all our contributors, guest editors, reviewers, and readers. A special thanks to Lene Heiselberg, Miriam Kroman Brems and Cecilia Arregui Olivera for their work with the methods briefs, to Aske Kammer for organizing the book review section, to Christina Pontoppidan, Mette Bengtsson and Miriam Kroman Brems for their help with our funding applications, to Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk, Maarit Jaakola, Ester Appelgren, Lene Heiselberg, Cecilia Arregui Olivera, Aske Kammer and Miriam Kroman Brems for assisting with the assessment and selection of the master thesis award recipients, to the entire editorial group for helping to distribute candy, pens and flyers at our conference booth at NordMedia 2025 in Odense – and last but not least to our journal manager Leif Hemming Pedersen for organizing the journal’s proofreading, layout and communication activities.

Finally, a big welcome to our new editorial group member Christina Pontoppidan from University of Southern Denmark.

God læselyst!

On behalf of the Journalistica group of editors,

Eva Mayerhöffer, editor-in-chief

EVA MAYERHÖFFER

Associate professor

Department of Communication and Arts

Roskilde University

evamay@ruc.dk

People and networks in the history of Nordic journalism

Introduction to special issue

HEIDI KURVINEN

University of Bergen

EMIL EIBY SEIDENFADEN

University of Copenhagen

Traditional press historians have concentrated primarily on the structure of the institution and its major forces as well as on the importance of protecting content, instead of addressing the issue of production in terms of labor and newswriters. They have done so under ideological conditions that have generated a top-down history of the press that privileged property and ownership at the expense of an understanding of newswriting.

With these words, Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen (1995, p. ix) defined the US field of media history in the introduction to the edited volume *Newswriters: Toward a history of the rank and file*. The editors called for a critical media history in which newswriters and their daily labour were placed at the centre. The book can be viewed as the main contribution of the 1990s labour-centred approach to journalism history (Hardt, 1990; Im, 1997, Brennen, 2001). Yet, it did not have much impact in the Nordic region. Even if the 1990s witnessed a more analytical approach to past media sources and media history as a particular research field emerged, research on Nordic journalism history focused more on institutional perspectives and was stuck within national borders (Bruhn Jensen, 1996–2016; Bastiansen & Dahl, 2003, Gustafsson, Rydén, 2000).

This does not mean that newswriters were totally forgotten. For example, Martin Eide (2000) published an extensive volume on the development of the role of an editor in Norwegian press history. Around the same time, the Swedish scholarship on women journalists flourished, producing several PhD dissertations and compilation books on women journalists and their work (e.g. Ney, 1999; Lundgren, 2002; Lönnroth, 2008). This scholarship was mostly done by media scholars and previous journalists, whereas in historical

scholarship the work of journalists and the result of this work – meaning media texts – have rarely been addressed simultaneously.

Digitisation of newspapers and magazines has multiplied historical scholarship that uses print media sources during the 2000s even if many of the scholars applying digital archives may not define their work as media or journalism history (Kurvinen, 2018; Kurvinen, 2024). Simultaneously, new historiographical, methodological and theoretical trends and perspectives have come to the fore in the scholarly field of media history. These include but are not limited to scholarship on transnational, intermedial and cultural historical perspectives (e.g., Cronqvist, Jarlbrink & Lundell, 2014, pp. 5–7; Cronqvist & Hilgert, 2017; Pedersen, Cronqvist & Holgersson, 2023, pp. 10–11), digital methods regarding the exploration of journalism history (Bunout, Ehrmann & Clavert, 2022; Lundell et al., 2023), and an increased emphasis on knowledge transfer between professional spheres (Ziemer, 2023). The focus on entangled media histories has been particularly prominent, bringing forth not only transnational but transmedial aspects of media history in the Nordic region and beyond (Cronqvist & Hilgert, 2017).

Recently, a new emphasis on the significance of newswriters, i.e. journalists and other newsroom personnel, has also emerged in Nordic region, as has criticism of “media-centrism” (Lundell, 2008; Cronqvist & Hilgert, 2017, p. 132; Kurvinen, 2018). This special issue stems from this scholarship and starts from the premise that media history in general and journalism history in particular may thrive from an approach that cuts across traditional dividing lines, such as media genres, national borders and professional organisations. By employing open-ended and innovative approaches to historical research on journalism, a deeper understanding of the actors behind journalism (journalists, editors and other newswriters), their networks, formal and informal practices, their legitimisation efforts and their products will inevitably follow. It will also allow us to explore how these may be understood as part of broader societal processes. As Marie Cronqvist and Christopher Hilgert (2017, p. 136) have argued, “studying media and communication is essential to understanding history”.

In the following introduction, we first discuss our understanding of the fields of Journalism Studies and History and their current approaches to journalistic agency. Second, we discuss some of the methodological challenges that researchers of individuals and their networks in journalism history may face. In the third and final section, we introduce the special issue and the ways in which the contributions have tackled these issues.

The question of agency in Journalism Studies and in History

Both Journalism Studies and History are traditionally considered fields in which the use of theory is subjugated to empirically-steered research questions. Within Journalism Studies, this has often materialised as a pragmatist-participatory approach towards theory whereas historians have traditionally adhered to a devout empiricism in defining their relationship with theory (Ahva & Steensen, 2019; Pedersen, Cronqvist & Holgersson, 2023, pp. 13–14).

These relationships are in reality more complex than this simplification, but they partly explain the different approaches to media history applied in these two fields: whereas journalism scholars often draw on first-hand knowledge of professional journalism and its craft practices, historians are left to make their interpretations based on media texts possibly enriched with archival material. Resulting from this, the fact of journalistic agency is often a self-given approach in Journalism Studies (almost being the *raison d'être* of the field) in which ethnographic data collection and interviews are commonly used methods, and social relations between editors, journalists and their sources take centre stage in interpretations. On the contrary, historians discussing media sources have been more inclined to focusing on media content without reflecting on the agency of newsmen. Often, this happens as part of the process of pursuing research which was not genuine media history in the first instance, because it studied primarily a non-media problem, using media sources.

In media-historical scholarship institutional histories and biographical approaches to media personalities, such as star reporters or influential editor-in-chiefs, have often played leading roles (Kurvinen, 2018, p. 317, 322, Batikha, Munk, Seidenfaden, 2023). Rank-and-file journalists have received more attention in feminist scholarship that has identified women's role in journalism history in general, even if this scholarship too has tended to identify the prominent personalities in media, the so-called "first women" (Kurvinen, 2020). On the contrary, male journalists who have not possessed any 'star quality' have often been left as anonymised members of the critical mass or they have represented the unquestionable norm of a (male) journalist (Kurvinen, 2018, p. 317; on the female bias in gender analysis of journalism in general, see Jain, 2022, p. 69).

That said, there have been some calls for more agency-oriented approaches in journalism history. An illustrative example is an article published by the Finnish historian and former culture journalist Patrick Bruun in 1983 (pp. 50–51). He called for press historians to consider editorial work and craft practices when interpreting

journalism content and pointed out that a knowledge of individual journalists and editorial networks would inevitably deepen analysis of journalism content. Likewise, Eide (2000, pp. 13–14) emphasised the importance of the editor's role in understanding the role of the media in fostering freedom of speech and democracy. One of us editors, Heidi Kurvinen (2018, p. 312), has argued that the history of the media does not exist without the people who produced the content and made it consumable to the newspaper and magazine readers as well as television watchers and radio listeners. This means that newsrooms and wider media companies as institutions and the meanings they produce require actors who, on the one hand, keep the institutions functioning and, on the other hand, produce content. Media scholars Maija Töyry, Laura Saarenmaa and Nanna Särkkä (2011, p. 34) have similarly pointed out that media texts “are not neutral material resources, but always from some perspective, produced by some principles – and produced by someone”.

Newsworkers do not only adjust to prevailing working conditions and craft practices, but they can use their agency to change them. (Hardt & Brennen, 1995, p. 10; Kurvinen, 2018, p. 320.) A prominent example of this is the trade union work that aimed to improve gender equality within the profession in Western newsrooms from the 1960s onwards. While the status of women in newsrooms has improved, prevailing notions of news values have occasionally been challenged. This happened when *Aftonbladet*'s women journalists produced and delivered an internal document to their co-workers problematising the male-dominated newsroom culture in 1978. The document – later published in book-form as *Dokumentet – och vad hände sen?* (1979) – presented Swedish women's experiences of working in a male dominated newsroom, but it also promoted women's perspective in journalism (Kurvinen, 2018, p. 320; Kurvinen, 2019, p. 1123, 1127). The example clearly shows the importance of what we may call agentic acts in the development of journalism as a profession and as a product.

Pauliina Penttilä's (2021; see also Kurvinen, 2022, p. 134) model of the performative nature of professional journalism offers one way to further develop the empirical observation. According to Penttilä, journalists may choose between sufficient, ideal and dynamic repetition of the prevailing understandings of what consist of good journalism in a particular newsroom. While sufficient and ideal repetition maintain and support professional norms, dynamic repetition destabilises craft practices and ideas of good journalism.

Penttilä's model indicate that journalists possess or adopt different levels of agency while working in newsrooms. Hence, journalism can be viewed as a social structure that influences the daily work of

journalists but is simultaneously inherently dependent on their agency (e.g. Ryfe, 2009, p. 673).

However, previous scholarship points to the ambiguousness of individual agency. For example, Marja-Liisa Honkasalo, Kaisa Ketokivi and Anna Leppo (2014, p. 366) emphasise that agency in people's lived experiences is always defined by the situation in which the agentic act is being performed. Scholars have become increasingly interested in "relational agency", which points to the interpersonal relations between people that influence the agency of each of the parties (Maares, Banjac & Nölleke, 2023, pp. 1614–1616). Newswork in general can be viewed as inherently defined by interpersonal relations, not only within newsrooms but also when it comes to the subjects of the news – interviewees and reported entities – and the audience of the product and their valuations. It is also worth remembering that journalists are not the only ones whose work count in journalism. News work may also be approached from the operational perspective as Allie Kosterich and Paul Ziek (2020, pp. 318–321) have suggested. By considering the agency of technologists, marketing, and printers, we may gain a more complete journalism history.

The discussions on agency overlap in many ways with theoretisations of journalists' *autonomy*. Journalists may practice autonomy on an individual level, in their daily work. However, their autonomy is restricted by the institutional setting, which consists of the newsroom culture and craft practices. In daily practice, high levels of autonomy corresponds, for example, with journalists' opportunity to decide the framing of their news story and the sources used. Hence, the autonomy of journalists is an essential part of press freedom and gives credibility for journalists' work as professionals (e.g., Sjøvaag, 2013; Gajardo & Mellado, 2025).

This human-centered approach to journalism has recently been complicated by the material turn, which has encouraged scholars to discuss the role of technology in journalism. Also, new ways of doing journalism, such as using AI, have challenged individual agency of journalists. While the agency of journalists has been complemented with the agency of non-human actors, the question of agency has, nevertheless, remained as central (Domingo, 2015; Primo & Zago, 2015; Sánchez & Pan, 2025, p. 171; Thäsler-Kordonouri & Koliska, 2025).

Where and how to find agency in the history of journalism?

Despite the evidence of the role played by individual agency, the role of editors and journalists has often been neglected in journalism history. Partly, this can be explained by the source material

available: often, the only historical documents left in newsrooms are the final products, i.e. the paper issues or the programs – and sometimes even those are not preserved. This means that scholars need to be creative when searching for traces of journalists' agency. As an example, media scholar Sharon Maxwell Magnus (2025) used oral history interviews with previous women's magazine editors to reveal new insights into women's magazines as arenas for discussion of feminism. She also applied her own experience as a former women's magazine editor when analysing the sources as part of the institutional frame of three women's magazines in the UK.

As exemplified by Maxwell Magnus, one way of gaining a sharper understanding of which sources may be relevant is to reflect on who to consider one's key agents. This can be done, for example, by reflecting on the three overlapping and mutually constitutive "research paths" recently proposed by Josef Batikha, Hannibal Munk and Emil Eiby Seidenfaden (2023). These are the *conditions*, the *narratives* and the *products* of news media in media history. By conditions is meant the norms, institutions and infrastructure that underpin a given news media landscape, such as censorship or public service laws, media businesses, trade unions organisations or "publicist clubs". These conditions are defined and built by the surrounding society in collaboration with media actors themselves. The sources can be accessed publicly (laws, regulations), in the archives of semi-official institutions such as Press Courts or in the archives of trade unions and their magazines. By *narratives* is meant the stories, mythologies and legitimacies that journalists, editors and publicists have produced to justify and consolidate themselves. The sources here are memoirs, "manifestoes" for new outlets, nomination texts for awards, monuments, exhibitions and the like, in line with what Patrik Lundell has examined in his appropriation of the phrase "the medium is the message" (Lundell, 2008) and what Ida Willig's research has demonstrated with regards to the nomination texts for the Danish Cavling Award (Willig, 2020). Finally, *products* refers to a classic source base, namely the outlets and issues themselves as they have been published and – recently – digitised for the benefit and enjoyment of media scholars and historians alike.

The three paths overlap in most research. For example, national journalist-unions have in some countries sponsored their own history projects during which oral histories have been gathered from trade union activists. Furthermore, the products of news work do not only reveal what was "in the air" in the societal discussion of its time but also include traces of journalists' agency (Kurvinen, 2024). Even if the manner of publishing by one's own name is a relatively new practice in all Nordic countries, the personal portraits of journalists and columnists have appeared in newspapers and magazines

at least from the mid-20th century onwards. These texts often focus on prominent journalists who have had a star quality in their own time, but often they reveal details of the everyday work at newsrooms as well as hierarchies between different news topics. Likewise, journalism textbooks and contemporary registers of journalists alongside journalists' memoirs offer valuable information on the craft practices, allowing the scholar to contextualise the journalistic agency that can be identified in other sources. (Kurvinen 2018, pp. 317–318.)

The point here is that this triangle of research paths can be used to investigate the role of individuals and their networks in journalism-history across media conditions, narratives and products. Indeed, all three paths are represented in this special issue. While some of our authors have dug into memoirs released by reporters and writers, others have accessed the outlets themselves to map the development of a specific genre of news content.

The use of newspaper sources has become particularly convenient after the digital turn, but the extent of digitised press material differs between Nordic countries, as does the availability of their usage. This is a result of the varied digitisation policies of national libraries. Whereas in Finland, the digitisation of media material proceeds systematically from the oldest volumes to the newer ones, including both minor publications and major news outlets (Kurvinen, 2023), in Denmark and Sweden the selection is skewed towards certain newspapers that have been selected to digitisation based on different criteria¹. Hence, certain newspapers are available in digital form in their entirety, while others are still waiting to be digitised. So far, the digital media collections are most widespread in Norway as well as in the joint digital media archive of Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands (Bastiansen, 2023).

Although digitisation has opened opportunities for new kinds of research questions and methods, it has paradoxically limited some aspects of research. This is because copyrights limit access to digital material. Even if researchers may gain wider access to copyright secured parts of the digitised collections at least in Finland and Norway, the access is granted only for research institutions of one's own country. This has fostered nation-based research and made transnational approaches difficult despite the widely shared critique of methodological nationalism. The copyright-free press material has already initiated innovative ways of tracing the 19th century text reuse across national borders in the Nordic region and beyond (e.g., Paju, Rantala & Salmi, 2023; Lundell et al., 2023), but data collection of the newspaper and magazine texts published in the 20th century most of the time requires a research visit to the premises of different national libraries in Nordic countries. Likewise, the interest in

distant reading of the material has dispelled the agency of news-workers. Thus, we are particularly delighted that many of the articles in this special issue show that the individual-agency perspective and digital methods are not mutually exclusive.

The special issue: People and networks in the history of Nordic journalism

The idea for this special issue emerged in the aftermath of the symposium titled “Actor-driven approaches to the history of journalism”, organized by Dr. Emil Eiby Seidenfaden and Dr. Emil Stjernholm at the University of Copenhagen in April 2024. The symposium derived from the realisation that Nordic journalism history did not include much discussion of individual agency, even though individuals and their networks undoubtedly shape media history in multiple ways. To foster a broad selection of participants and scholarly creativity, the definition of agency was left open as is also the case in this special issue. As a result, the contributions do not share a singular idea of what agency is nor do they problematise the concept explicitly.

Nevertheless, all the contributions enrich the discussion of agency and an actor-driven approach in journalism history. What connects all the articles is that the agency of individuals is viewed as relational. **Satu Sorvali** and **Reetta Hänninen** apply an intersectional approach to show how the viability of two early women’s periodicals in Finland was a result of various factors that shaped the lives of their creators, Aurora Olin and Saima Grönstrand. **Jimmy Engren** and **Johan Jarlbrink** combine micro and macro perspectives in journalism history showing how a biographical approach may deepen the analysis made by distant reading of media material. The authors convincingly point out how one editor, Isidor Kjellberg, and his paper functioned as a node in a transatlantic network connecting Swedish emigrants in the new world in America to Swedish readers in the old country.

The interplay between craft practices, ideals of journalism and the agency of individual journalists takes centre stage in the articles by **Aaron Ackerley**, **Eva Åsén Ekstrand** and **Cecilia Aare**. While Ackerley sketches a theoretical framework for approaching journalists’ autonomy in newsrooms, Ekstrand and Aare focus on output and later memoir-like material to analyse journalists as part of wider societies and the ideational currencies of their times. The interplay between media systems, craft practices and the agency of individual journalists runs as an undercurrent in all these articles.

Sometimes, individuals – and their agency – are hiding in journalism content. The article by **Hanne Jørndrup**, **Ida Willig**, **Mark Blach-Ørsten** and **Mette Bengtsson** is an excellent reminder of this.

The authors reveal how a changing media landscape has influenced the manner in which biographical announcements and obituaries have been published in Danish newspapers during the past 100 years. They ask what the gender composition of these non-news items in the newspapers has been across a century and show that the longer the texts have become the more gender has affected their content. More specifically, women are portrayed as mothers, spouses and children of their fathers more often in modern journalism than was the case previously when the non-news material took up less space.

Media historical research has traditionally been done in two fields and the contributors to this special issue, as well, are both historians and media scholars. Even if a close dialogue between all contributions is not always visible in a special issue format, we hope that the result will foster future collaboration between contributors as well as, in a wider sense, a shared interest between media scholars and historians. As guest editors we are grateful that *Journalistica* agreed to our proposal.

Finally, in a time when scholars more often feel pressured enough to decline requests to peer review, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the peer-reviewers whose valuable comments helped the authors to polish their arguments and scholarly foundations. Academic publishing is dependent on this behind-the-scenes work, which challenges the authors to improve their work even more.

We wish you a pleasant reading.

NOTES

¹ About the digitisation policies in Denmark and Sweden, see Digitalisering af aviserne. Det Kgl. Bibliotek, <https://www.kb.dk/find-materiale/samlinger/avissamlingen/digitalisering-af-aviserne>; Svenska tidningar – frågor och svar: Genomförda digitiseringsprojekt. Kungliga Biblioteket, <https://feedback.blogg.kb.se/forums/topic/genomforda-digitaliseringsprojekt/>; About the database in Sweden: <https://feedback.blogg.kb.se/forums/topic/about-the-database/>.

REFERENCES

- Ahva, L. & Steensen, S. (2019). Journalism Theory. In K. Wahl-Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (eds.), *The Handbook of Journalism Studies* (pp. 38–54), Second Edition. Routledge.
- Bastiansen, H. (2023). *Når fortiden blir digital: Medier, kilder og historie i digitaliseringens tid*. Universitetsforlaget.

- Bastiansen, H. G. & Dahl, H. F. (2019). *Norsk mediehistorie*. Third Edition. Universitetsforlaget.
- Batikha, J. P., Munk, H. & Seidenfaden, E. E. (2023). Hvem skriver om dem, der skriver nyhederne, *Temp – Tidsskrift for Historie*, 14:27, 150–169.
- Bechmann Pedersen, S., Cronqvist, M. & Holgersson, U. (2023). Introduction: Expanding media, expanding histories. In S. Bechmann Pedersen, S. Cronqvist & U. Holgersson (eds.), *Expanding media histories: Cultural and material perspectives* (pp. 9–23). Kriterium.
- Brennen, B. (2002). *For the Record: An Oral History of Rochester, New York, Newswriters*. Fordham University Press.
- Bruhn J. K. (ed.) *Dansk mediehistorie* vol. 1-IV, (2016) Fourth edition. (First edition 1996), Samfundslitteratur.
- Bruun P. (1983). Redaktioner och pressanalys. In P. Bruun & O. Mustelin (eds.), *Presshistoriska och andra studier tillägnade Torsten Steinby på 75 årsdagen den 25 augusti 1983* (pp. 49–56). Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland.
- Bunout, E., Ehrmann, M. & Clavert, F. (eds.) (2023). *Digitised Newspapers – A New Eldorado for Historians?: Reflections on Tools, Methods and Epistemology*. De Gruyter.
- Cronqvist, M. & Hilgert, C. (2017). Entangled Media Histories: The value of Transnational and Transmedial Approaches in Media Historiography. *Media History*, 23(1), 130–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2016.1270745>
- Cronqvist, M., Jarlbrink, J. & Lundell, P. (2014). Inledning. In M. Cronqvist, J. Jarlbrink & P. Lundell (eds.), *Mediehistoriska vändningar* (pp. 5–18). Lunds Universitet.
- Domingo, D. (2015). Research that empowers responsibility: Reconciling human agency with materiality. *Journalism*, 16(1), 69–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884914545738>
- Eide, M. (2000). *Den redigerende makt: Redaktörrollens norske historie*. IJ-forlaget.
- Gajardo, C. & Mellado, C. (2024). “Journalists are just employees”: Examining Journalistic Autonomy from an Audience Perspective. *Journalism Studies*, 26(2), 200–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2416062>
- Gustafsson, K. E. & Rydén, P. (2000–2003). *Den svenska pressens historia* vol. I–IV. Ekerlid.
- Hardt, H. (1990). Newswriters, Technology, and Journalism History. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 7(4), 346–365.
- Hardt, H. & Brennen, B. (1995). *Newswriters: Toward a History of the Rank and File*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Honkasalo, M-L., Ketokivi, K. & Leppo, A. (2014). Moniselitteinen ja hämärä toimijuus. *Sosiologia*, 4, 365–372.
<https://journal.fi/sosiologia/article/view/124142>
- Im, Y.-H. (1997). Towards a Labour-Process History of Newswriters. *Javnost – The Public*, 4(1), 31–48,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.1997.11008639>
- Jain, K. (2022). Analysing the role of gender in the newsroom. In S. Ghose & S. Sharma (eds.), *A Textbook of Interview Journalism and Television Anchoring* (pp. 69–75). Dominant.
- Kosterich, A. & Ziek, P. (2020). Media operations: A reorientation of newswriter categorization. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 17(3–4), 317–331, <https://doi.org/10.1080/16522354.2020.1768723>
- Kurvinen, H. (2024). *Feminism in Finnish Print Media, 1968–1985*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kurvinen, H. (2023). Mediahistorian näkökulma tarpeen digitaalisten lehtiarkistojen käytössä. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, 3, 298–308.
- Kurvinen, H. (2022). Gendering the history of foreign correspondents: The case of Helsingin Sanomat's Maija-Liisa Heini. *Mediehistorisk Tidsskrift*, 1–2, 132–144,
<http://medietidsskrift.no/content/uploads/2022/09/MHT-2022-37-38-Kurvinen-IDO.pdf>
- Kurvinen, H. (2020). Nordic women Journalists. In K. Ross et al. (eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media and Communication*. Wiley.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119429128.iegmc26>
- Kurvinen, H. (2019). Women's non-unionised activism at Swedish newsrooms, 1961–1989. *Women's History Review*, 28:7, 1115–1135.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2019.1616884>
- Kurvinen, H. (2018). Toimittajat ja toimitusprosessit mediatekstien takana. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, 3, 310–322.
- Lundell, P. (2008). The Medium is the Message: A Media history of the Press. *Media History*, 14(1), 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13688800701880382>
- Lundell, P., Salmi, H., Edoff, E., Marjanen, J., Paju, P. & Rantala, H. (eds.) (2023) *Information Flows across the Baltic Sea: Towards a Computational Approach to Media History*. Mediehistorisk Arkiv.
- Lundgren, K. (2002). *Solister i mångfalden: Signaturerna Bang, Maud och Attis samt andra kvinnliga dagspressjournalister med utgångspunkt i 1930-talet*. JMK.
- Lönnroth, A. (ed.) (2008). *Empati och engagemang: En kvinnolinje i svensk journalistik*. Tusculum förlag.
- Maares, P., Banjac, S. & Nölleke, D. (2023). Newsrooms as Sites of Community and Identity: Exploring the Importance of Material

- Place for Journalistic Work. *Journalism Studies*, 24(13), 1611–1628, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2241074>
- Maxwell Magnus, S. (2025). *Feminism, UK Women's Magazines and the Women who Created Them, 1975–1992: Glossy Cover or Cultural Shift?* Routledge.
- Ney, B. (1999). *Reporter i rörelse. Lotten Ekman i dagspressen vid förra sekelskiftet*. Doxa.
- Paju, P., Rantala, H. & Salmi, H. (2023). Towards an Ontology and Epistemology of Text Reuse. In E. Bunout, M. Ehrmann & F. Clavert (eds.), *Digitised Newspapers – A New Eldorado for Historians?: Reflections on Tools, Methods and Epistemology* (pp. 253–274). De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110729214-012>
- Penttilä, P. (2021). *Toisto journalismin kentällä: Etnografiseen aineistoon perustuva mallinnus journalismiprofession kentän sisäisestä dynamiikasta*. Tampere University.
- Primo, A. & Zago, G. (2015). Who And What Do Journalism? *Digital Journalism*, 3(1), 38–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.927987>
- Ryfe, D. M. (2009). Structure, agency, and change in an American newsroom. *Journalism*, 10(5), 665–683. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884909106538>
- Sánchez, Á. V. & López Pan, F. (2025). Beyond Journalism About Journalism?: Assessing the Impact of Metajournalistic Discourse on Journalism Studies. *Journalism Studies*, 26(2), 161–180, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2414349>
- Sjøvaag, H. (2013). Journalistic Autonomy Between Structure, Agency and Institution. *Nordicom Review*, 34, 155–166.
- Thäsler-Kordonouri, S., & Koliska, M. (2025). Journalistic Agency and Power in the Era of Artificial Intelligence. *Journalism Practice*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2480238>
- Töyry, M., Saarenmaa, L. & Särkkä, N. (2011). Monitieteisyyden haaste aikakauslehtitutkimuksessa. Kohti konsepti- ja tutkimustietoisuutta. *Media & viestintä*, 34:3, 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.23983/mv.62904>
- Ziemer, H. (2023). *Journalists and Knowledge Practices: Histories of Observing the Everyday in the Newspaper Age*. Routledge.
- Willig, I. (2020). Ideals of Journalism: The Historical Consecration of Media Capital in Prize Awards and the case of the Danish Cavling award 1945–2016. *Media History*, 26(4), 489–507. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2019.1608169>

HEIDI KURVINEN

Associate Professor

Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion

University of Bergen

heidi.kurvinen@uib.no

EMIL EIBY SEIDENFADEN

Research Coordinator, PhD

SAXO institute

University of Copenhagen

ees@hum.ku.dk

Outside the networks

Aurora Olin’s and Saima Grönstrand’s struggles as female editors in the turn-of-the-20th-century Finnish press

SATU SORVALI

University of Turku

REETTA HÄNNINEN

University of Helsinki

Abstract

In this article, we examine Aurora Olin (1855–1924) and Saima Grönstrand (1863–1932) through the lenses of journal editing, journalistic networks, and their biographies. They were among the first women journalists in the Finnish press, and their women’s journals were some of the earliest produced outside the suffragette movement by a private person. Not only did they not establish their own journals, *Kodin-Ystävä* (Home’s friend) and *Kalevatar* (Woman of Kalevala), but also took sole responsibility for the editorial work and, to a very large extent, the production of content for the journals. These women serve as excellent examples of how challenging it was to establish and publish periodicals at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, especially for women who had sole responsibility for finances, editing, and content creation. Both women had the education and the opportunities – nevertheless, the lack of wealth and networks made it hard to succeed.

KEYWORDS

Grand Duchy of Finland, editors, journalism, magazines, networks, press

Introduction

I wanted to have my own peculiar magazine, where I could express all my ideals, all the feelings and wishes of my heart to my people. And how happy I was when my first issue saw the light of day! I received compassion and kindness, even envy and hatred on the other hand. I came to see what people are really like.

(*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Dec 1905, pp. 4–6, own translation).

So wrote Aurora Olin as she ended her seven-year-old magazine and her two-decade-long career as a writer for the press in 1905.

In this article, we examine Aurora Olin (1855–1924) and Saima Grönstrand (1863–1932) through the lenses of their magazine editing, journalistic networks, and their biographies. They were among the first women journalists in the Finnish press, established their own magazines, took sole responsibility for the editorial work, and, to a very large extent, the production of content. *Kodin-Ystävä* (Home-Friend) and *Kalevatar* (Maiden of Kalevala) were some of the earliest women's magazines in Finland produced outside the suffragette movement by a private person. They were also among the first periodicals to focus explicitly on women of the working class and lower rural social strata. This article sheds light on these two female editors who have been largely neglected in previous press history. It demonstrates how various factors influenced publishing practices and determined which publications succeeded and which did not.

Olin and Grönstrand serve as excellent examples of the challenges faced in establishing and publishing periodicals at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly for women who bore sole responsibility for finances, editing, and content creation. We explore the identities of these women, their qualifications, and the opportunities they had to manage their magazines. What conditions surrounded their editorial work? What content did their magazines feature, and who were the intended readers? What networks, if any, did Grönstrand and Olin have with fellow editors and authors?

We apply a press-historical perspective when examining the magazines' content and the women's editorial roles and an intersectional lens when examining Olin's and Grönstrand's biographies. There is no single, clear-cut definition of intersectionality, but according to sociologists Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, it is an analytical tool that helps make sense of the complexity of the world, people and experiences by focusing on the intersections of the factors that shape people's lives (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p.1–4). In this article we are applying intersectionality by considering gender-related intersections such as marital status, family situation, social

class and place of residence. This way we gain insight into how different social intersections shaped individuals' opportunities to work as journalists, establish publications, and manage them. Factors such as living environment and life choices played a significant role in this context.

The history of magazines, and especially women's magazines, has been sparsely studied in Finland, although they have been widely used as sources, for example for sociology and gender history (Turunen, 2014, p.38–39). In the multi-volume *Suomen lehdistön historia* (The History of the Finnish Press) a few chapters were dedicated to women's periodicals (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp. 134–137, 221–223; Malmberg, 1991), but *Kodin-Ystävä* and *Kalevatar* received only a few lines of mention (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, p. 136, 161).

The research gap in women's magazines has since been addressed by media scholar Maija Töyry with her doctoral dissertation on early Finnish women's magazines (2005), media historian Henriikka Zilliacus-Tikkanen (2005, 2007) with her research on the first Finnish female journalists, and ethnologist Arja Turunen with her research articles on early Finnish women's magazines (2014, 2024). Zilliacus-Tikkanen compiled information from various directories on 80 Finnish female journalists active before 1900. Among them, Grönstrand was briefly mentioned, whereas Olin was absent from the list (2005, pp. 174–182). Töyry and Turunen have not addressed Olin or Grönstrand or their magazines in their studies. The early women who have written for the press have also been featured in historian Pirjo Munck's doctoral dissertation (2016) on the early stages of professional organization among journalists, as well as in historian Eeva Kotioja's doctoral dissertation (2018), which focused on Adelaïde Ehrnrooth, an early influencer in the suffragette movement. In her 2019 doctoral dissertation, historian Reetta Hänninen studied female journalists' entry into Finland's largest newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, and their workplace experiences, noting they also worked broadly as magazine journalists and even editors-in-chief.

We originally came across Olin and Grönstrand while researching other topics and became interested in them because of their exceptional nature. The digitization of newspapers enabled searching for information about the women across large data sets¹. This recent technological possibility may partly explain the previous marginalization of Olin and Grönstrand in research, but only partly. Their obscurity may also partly be because *Kodin-Ystävä* and *Kalevatar* were not regarded as women's magazines or were seen as having insignificant content compared to the publications of the suffragette movement.

The term “women’s magazine” is challenging when applied to Finnish magazines from the 1880s to the 1930s because they have been difficult to categorize based on their content and because they differ from their Anglo-American counterparts, for example, by resembling general-interest magazines (Turunen, 2014, pp. 52–53). In this study, we define a women’s magazine as a magazine that is edited by women, implicitly or explicitly aimed at women, and written mostly by women (see also Töyry, 2005, p. 26).

The first periodicals considered “Finnish” in the territory of Finland, then part of Sweden, were published in the 1770s (Tommila, 1988, pp. 48–58). From the late 18th century until the latter part of the 19th century, most of the Finnish periodicals were written in Swedish until the linguistic balance shifted in favour of Finnish in the 1880s. The first Finnish magazine aimed at women, *Om konsten att rätt behaga*, was published in 1782. A few other women’s magazines were published in the 19th century, but the actual women’s press emerged only at the end of the 19th century with the publications of the suffragette movement (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp. 136–137, 161; Turunen, 2014, pp. 43–45; Turunen, 2024, pp. 88–89).

The history of women’s magazines is not only a history of changing societies and representations of women, but also of broader developments in journalism and publishing (Turunen, 2024, p. 85). The Finnish press was rapidly growing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, offering numerous opportunities for writers to publish their texts. (Tommila & Salokangas, 1998, pp. 77–78.) By the end of the 19th century, there were about three hundred publications in the Grand Duchy of Finland, of which one-third were newspapers and the rest magazines and other publications. Two-thirds of the publications were in Finnish and one-third in Swedish (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, p. 123).

Unfortunately, the circulation data for the Finnish press of the period is not precise. However, it can be concluded that most magazines had a circulation of only a few hundred, at most a couple of thousand copies. The magazines with the largest readerships were primarily illustrated magazines and certain religious publications. Among women’s magazines, *Koti ja Yhteiskunta* (Home and Society) had the highest circulation, exceeding three thousand copies. It was founded in 1889 by the Finnish Women’s Association (Suomen Naisyhdistys) (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp. 127–129).

Although journalism was slowly becoming a more professionalized field, this trend seemed to apply mostly to newspapers. Editing a magazine was still largely regarded as a vocational calling, driven by the desire to bring one’s own opinions and ideology into the public sphere, and pursued alongside other work (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp. 155–162; Munck, 2016, *passim.*, esp. pp. 51–56, 85–87;

Kinnunen, 2024) In the early stages of magazine publishing, it was common for periodicals to be founded by individuals who were also responsible for the content. Most publications were established by men who were writers, newspaper journalists, teachers, or clergymen, but book publishers also engaged in magazine production (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp. 155–157). It was only with the advent of the 20th century that some magazines began to transform into profit-oriented enterprises employing multiple salaried journalists (Uino, 1991, pp. 47–48).

The field of press publishing and journalism was male-dominated in the Nordic countries and elsewhere. The few women in the field were expected to write for either columns intended for women or women's magazines (Johannesson, 2001, pp. 232–234; Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp. 160–161; Samuelsson, 2014, pp. 19–21; Sorvali, 2023b, pp. 54–55; Stenberg, 2014, pp. 50–53; Turunen, 2014, pp. 46–49. See also Töyry, 2005, pp. 54–55, 82–86). There were a few exceptions such as the prominent upper-class Finnish women Adelaide Ehrnrooth and Fredrika Runeberg. Ehrnrooth began her career in newspapers in the 1860s and concluded it as the editor-in-chief of a women's association journal at the turn of the 20th century. Runeberg also worked as an acting editor-in-chief on the newspaper *Helsingfors Morgonblad* next to her husband, the poet J. L. Runeberg (Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2005, pp. 51–70; Kotioja, 2018, *passim*). Maria Ramstedt was the first female editor-in-chief in Finland, serving from 1889 to 1894. She took on the role after inheriting the newspaper *Savonlinna* following her husband's passing (Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2005, p. 109).

Unfortunately, very few archives of the 19th-century Finnish newspapers and magazines have survived to this day. It would have been interesting to see what kind of correspondence Olin and Grönstrand had – or if they had – with other journalists and editors. The surviving material is very fragmentary. Only six letters from Aurora Olin have survived in the Finnish archives and from Saima Grönstrand, sources are even scarcer, and most of the surviving letters are requests to various contemporaries for money.

The National Library of Finland has digitized both magazines, and we browsed through their entire publication period. In all, 77 issues of *Kodin-Ystävä* and 17 issues of *Kalevatar* were examined in terms of layout, content, and information about the contributors. In addition, we searched the National Library's digital service for the names of Olin and Grönstrand, the pseudonyms they used and the names of their magazines. The material collected was approached through press history and biography perspectives.

Aurora Olin and the beginning of her public writing

Aurora Eugenia Olin (née Vanhanen) was born in 1855 in the eastern Finnish city of Vyborg to a bookkeeper father and a housemaid mother (parish records of Vyborg Cathedral Church). Olin described her childhood as cramped both mentally and physically, with a family living from hand to mouth and lacking affection or encouragement. Olin said she longed for something beyond mundane tasks, but her interests went unappreciated at home. Seeking escape, she became a private tutor in the countryside, where she met and married Karl (Kaarlo) Wilhelm Olin in 1882 (parish records of Vyborg Cathedral Church; *Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Apr 1899, pp. 4–8).

When they had a son in 1883, Olin focused all her “extinguished dreams” on that child, but when he suddenly died a few years later, it seemed that Olin would also bury her ideals and her aspirations “away from narrow materialism”. This did not happen, as she decided to pursue her dreams by starting to write for newspapers and participating in organizational activities (*Uusi Suometar*, 14 Aug 1883, p. 1; *Wiipurin Sanomat*, 11 May 1886, p. 1; *Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Apr 1899, pp. 4–8).

According to her own words, Olin started writing for newspapers in 1887 (*Uusi Suometar*, 5 Jan 1901, p. 6), but in this study, the first references to Olin’s writings were found from 1890, when she contributed to the regional newspaper in Vyborg, *Wiipurin Sanomat*. Olin wrote about, for example, temperance, age differences in marriages, self-development, the power of mothers-in-law over daughters-in-law, care of the poor, and prostitution (*Wiipurin Sanomat*, 4 Feb 1890, p. 3; 3 May 1890, p. 3; 15 Jul 1890, p. 3; 5 Aug 1890, p. 3; 10 Dec 1890, p. 3; 17 Jan 1891, p. 4). Newspapers and magazines in the late 19th century were not able to pay contributors substantial fees, and most often they paid nothing at all (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, p. 163; Leino-Kaukiainen, 1988, pp. 577–578). Olin’s motive for writing, therefore, could not have been financial; rather, as she expressed it, she longed for intellectual engagement and wanted to make her ideology public.

It would be interesting to know how Olin became a regular contributor, but unfortunately there is no information on this. It is possible Olin knew the editor-in-chief of *Wiipurin Sanomat* at the time, Matti Kurikka, from her association activities. Networking through associations, particularly within the suffragette movement and the magazines they founded, provided most Finnish women in the late 19th century with a pathway into journalism and opportunities to contribute to the press (Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2005, pp. 155–157). For example, the noblewoman Adelaïde Ehrnrooth became acquainted with the editor-in-chief of the national newspaper *Helsingfors*

Dagblad in the 1860s through a women's association, which enabled her to publish her opinion pieces in the newspaper (Kotioja, 2018, p. 81). As Kotioja points out, women's lifestyles and power were shaped not only by wealth and intellectual capabilities but also by their networks (2018, p. 31).

In April 1891, Olin sent her article for publication to the well-known and influential upper-class woman Alexandra Gripenberg, the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Koti ja Yhteiskunta*. Olin also asked if Gripenberg would accept her as a permanent contributor and described her background with *Wiipurin Sanomat* (SKS, Alexandra Gripenberg's archive, 310:79:1). The text on clothing care was published in the next issue of *Koti ja Yhteiskunta* (*Koti ja Yhteiskunta*, 15 May 1891, pp. 5–6). Olin got a few texts published in the following years (*Koti ja Yhteiskunta*, 15 Dec 1891, pp. 2–3; 15 Feb 1893, p. 5; 15 Jul 1894, p. 11).

In addition to writing for the press, in the 1890s Aurora Olin acted as the chairperson in a local sewing society, in the Finnish Women's Association's branch in Vyborg and the Vyborg Servants' Association (*Wuoksi*, 9 Jan 1892, p. 2; *Wiborgsbladet*, 24 Nov 1893, p. 3; *Nya Pressen*, 17 May 1894, p. 2; *Talven kukka: palvelijattarien albumi*, 1 Jan 1902, p. 13). She also handled "women's affairs" in her county clerk husband's office, likely involving employment services (*Wiipurin Sanomat*, 28 Feb 1894, p. 1; 30 Aug 1894, p. 1).

One of Olin's finest moments of social influence was her visit to Helsinki in 1894 to attend the tenth anniversary of the Finnish Women's Association, where she was able to deliver a speech (*Nya Pressen*, 17 May 1894, p. 2). On this occasion, Olin had the opportunity to become acquainted with people in the suffragettes' movement, such as the editorial board of *Koti ja Yhteiskunta*. The networking was unsuccessful, as no correspondence with women in the movement can be found in the remaining archives, apart from a few letters which were not very personal.

Olin's letter to Gripenberg in late 1897 reveals that the Olin couple struggled financially. Aurora Olin had hoped to find work for both intellectual and financial reasons, but there were few opportunities for a married woman. As mentioned earlier, writing for the press was typically unpaid. When she had applied for a job, she had been told that, since she had a husband, he should support her (SKS, Alexandra Gripenberg's archive. 310:79:2). It seems that Olin did not find paid employment, but she found a way to satisfy her intellectual appetite.

Establishing *Kodin-Ystävä*

In January 1899, the birth of a new Finnish-language magazine, *Kodin-Ystävä*, was covered in the high-circulation national press (*Nya Pressen*, 3 Jan 1899, p. 2; *Uusi Suometar*, 3 Jan 1899, p. 2; *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 3 Jan 1899, p. 4). The publishers of the magazine were said to be “county clerk C. V. Olin and his wife Aurora Olin”.

In her 1899 letters to Emma Åkerman, the chair of the Vyborg Women’s Association, and Alexandra Gripenberg, Olin mentioned that she had applied for permission to establish a magazine already in the summer of 1898. Finnish publications were closely monitored by Russian authorities and an independent agency, the Press Supervisory Authority (Painoasiain ylihallitus) granted permits to establish newspapers and magazines. Olin’s first application had been rejected because, by law, a married woman could not be held responsible for a publication. The problem had been solved by putting her husband, Kaarlo, nominally editor-in-chief (NL, Åkerman-Voipio family archive, 266.53; SKS, Alexandra Gripenberg archive, 310:79:3). *Wiipurin Sanomat* explained the anomaly to its readers (*Wiipurin Sanomat*, 5 Jan 1899, p. 3), perhaps at Aurora Olin’s request, but the greater audience probably mistook Kaarlo Olin for the editor-in-chief. This may also explain why *Kodin-Ystävä* and Aurora Olin have been left out of previous research on women’s periodicals.

It must be acknowledged that Kaarlo Olin’s role in founding and managing *Kodin-Ystävä* was decisive. Without his consent and flexibility, the magazine could not have been launched, nor could its operations have been secured. Successful women in public debate often had the respect and support of male family members (Kotioja, 2018, pp. 31, 218–219), as was the case with Olin. Even though Aurora Olin addressed issues related to marriage in her magazine, she did not disclose details about her own marriage.

As the new magazine was launched, *Wiipurin Sanomat* published a flattering introduction to it, encouraging its readers to subscribe (*Wiipurin Sanomat*, 15 Jan 1899, p. 3). It is possible that Olin herself was behind the article, or that it was written by Julius Anselm Lyly, then editor-in-chief of the newspaper, chairman of the Vyborg Workers’ Association and an acquaintance of Olin’s in both newspaper and association circles (Sainio, 1997). Despite this, the article did not go unnoticed by Emma Åkerman, Olin’s fellow member of the Women’s Association, who suspected the praise of *Kodin-Ystävä* was dishonest. She doubted Olin’s abilities as a journalist and editor and pointed out that *Kodin-Ystävä* was by no means the only magazine in Finland devoted to women’s issues. *Koti ja Yhteiskunta* had been published for more than a decade and could not even be compared to a minor publication like *Kodin-Ystävä* (*Wiipuri*, 31 Jan

1899, pp. 1–2). Clearly something had happened between these women and Olin had not forgiven Åkerman's "degrading outburst" even years later (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Dec 1905, pp. 4–6).

Kodin-Ystävä had no contributors at the start (SKS, Alexandra Gripenberg's archive, 310:79:3). In April 1899, Olin asked Hilda Käkikoski, an activist of the Finnish Women's Association, to send articles to *Kodin-Ystävä* (SKS, Hilda Käkikoski's archive, 326:99:1), but these articles were never seen in *Kodin-Ystävä*, at least not with Käkikoski's name or with her well-known pseudonyms. It is difficult to say, in the absence of archival material, whether Olin had approached other societal influencers, authors or journalists to write for the magazine, but at least the statement of the influential Åkerman on *Kodin-Ystävä* certainly did not help her acquire contributors.

An expert- and well-known pool of contributors was regarded as a key indicator of a high-quality publication, and it was customary for both newspapers and magazines to publish advertisements that introduced the writers contributing to the publication. Publications provided contributors with a platform to articulate their views, popularize scientific research findings, and publish literary works. It has been estimated that in the Finnish press of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the number of contributors amounted to a couple of hundred (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp. 162–164).

Aurora Olin described the early years of *Kodin-Ystävä* as very stressful. She had to write almost the entire content of the magazine herself, using different pseudonyms. Olin was also burdened by the ever-increasing debt she had to take on to print the magazine. But she was determined to succeed (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Dec 1905, No.12, pp. 4–6).

Kodin-Ystävä's content, contributors and target audience

The eight-page *Kodin-Ystävä* was published in Vyborg monthly, and it could be ordered in rural areas through agents and purchased in Vyborg's bookshops. Most of the articles in *Kodin-Ystävä* were about sobriety, women's empowerment, and the need for gender equality, chastity, domesticity, and child-rearing. A typical issue featured a polemical editorial, written by Olin, other concise opinion pieces, poems, aphorisms, short stories, and advertisements. The texts reflected the magazine's agenda, took a strong stand on social issues and appealed strongly to the reader's emotions. In this sense, previous research's characterisation that *Kodin-Ystävä* did not publish political statements (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, p. 136) seems misleading.

Aurora Olin contributed to the magazine with a wide repertoire, from pithy opinion pieces to romantic short stories and emotional poems. The similarities between *Kodin-Ystävä* and *Koti ja Yhteiskunta* are quite evident from the names of the magazines to the layout, tone and content. Olin seemingly aimed to shape *Kodin-Ystävä* into a version of *Koti ja Yhteiskunta* for women from the lower social classes by incorporating poetry and short stories along with its factual content. Many of Olin's writings reflect a direct tone and a straightforward expression of irritation, which was highly unusual for women within the public emotional and discursive culture of the time, at least in Finland (Sorvali, 2023b). The look of *Kodin-Ystävä* was quite modest as the typefaces and layout were monotonous and there were no photographs, only decorative vignettes. This could be due to both a lack of expertise and financial constraints, or it may have been a deliberate stylistic choice.

Most of the articles, signed with pseudonyms or initials, were written by women, as indicated by both the topics and the pen names, while male contributors were few and mostly submitted poetry. Apart from a few texts, well-known journalists or authors were notably absent.

Browsing through *Kodin-Ystävä* reveals the steady growth of Olin's confidence over the years. From early 1903 onwards, she dared to appoint herself editor-in-chief (see, e.g., *Wiipuri*, 13 Jan 1903, p. 1). And while at the beginning she filled her magazine with different pseudonyms, from 1904 onwards she signed her writings, sometimes with her full name and sometimes with her initials – A. O. (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Feb 1904, p. 8).

Kodin-Ystävä was hardly written about or quoted in other papers, with only a few exceptions. For example, some of Aurora's editorials were published in certain newspapers in western Finland, whose male editors she is not known to have had any connection with (*Raahen Lehti*, 21 May 1904, p. 1; *Oulun Ilmoituslehti*, 22 May 1904, p. 2; *Oulun Ilmoituslehti*, 25 Dec 1904, p. 1; *Kokkola*, 24 Feb 1903, p. 3; *Kokkola*, 31 Aug 1904, p. 3). These articles were not the most typical of *Kodin-Ystävä*, promoting temperance, chastity and women's issues, but appealing to a wider readership and quite moderate in their themes and sentiments. This shows that *Kodin-Ystävä* spread across the country and was also read by men, at least to some extent.

The content of the *Kodin-Ystävä* subscription notices remained more or less the same throughout the entire period of publication. In the beginning, the magazine promised to work "for the benefit of the home and woman, especially the woman of the common people, to awaken in a woman a greater sense of self-consciousness" (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Jan 1899, p. 1; 15 Jan 1900, p. 1; 15 Jan 1901, p. 1). Olin, an educated civil servant's wife and herself middle class,

targeted *Kodin-Ystävä* especially at women from the lower social class in rural areas. Most of the time, however, her editorials and other texts were directed at educated middle- and upper-class women, and on the rare occasions when she addressed “the common people”, the working and uneducated class, directly, her rhetoric was often condescending. Olin reprimanded her potential readers on several occasions. She wrote, for example, about how few women in rural areas read the newspapers, suggesting that the obstacles to reading, such as lack of time or money, were not real (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Jan 1899, p. 8). According to Olin, the working class was uninterested in self-education and preferred to read trivial, low-quality material: “If there is the least bit scientific or educational – there’s not enough time! [...] Let’s put a romance novel or a rubbish story in the hands of many, and we’ll have time!” (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Jul 1902, p.1–2.) When the magazine made such claims, it certainly did not encourage less affluent women to read it.

This style was also noted in the labour press. Hilja Pärssinen, a representative of the labour movement and later a journalist, wrote in *Eteenpäin* magazine that publications such as *Koti ja Yhteiskunta* and *Kodin-Ystävä* were not genuinely on the side of socialism, but represented an old-fashioned point of view firmly attached to prejudice (*Eteenpäin: kalenteri kansalle*, 1 Jan 1904, p. 53).

Olin defended herself and said that the purpose of the publication was not to insult, but to honestly and sincerely point out various grievances that should be resolved for the good of all concerned (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Oct 1904, pp. 1–2). It is relevant to consider whether Olin understood “the common woman” she addressed well enough to be able to write to her. Olin never mentioned her mother’s background as a housemaid or the influence it might have had on her. She may have seen it as shameful, as she focused instead on her own experiences of hiring and guiding servants, often highlighting their incompetence. Her marriage was a step up in the social hierarchy and it seems she wished to emphasize her status as part of the educated class, avoiding ties to the working class her mother came from. While her mother could have offered connections to working-class women, which would have been valuable for gaining subscribers and readers, Olin seems to have preferred keeping her distance, engaging with them only through her magazine.

It must be stated that, in the late 19th century, the lower social classes in rural areas might still have been suspicious of books and newspapers, not only for religious reasons but also due to social factors (Mikkola, 2005, pp. 16–23, 29). The reason *Kodin-Ystävä* was not popular among the reading working class was not that they did not want to educate themselves, but because of the content of magazines such as *Kodin-Ystävä* in general; women’s issues seemed

distant, the content was considered dry, one-sided or depressing, or simply the value of the magazines was not understood (see also *Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Oct 1901, pp. 6–7).

By the end of 1904, the intended readership of the magazine had expanded, as *Kodin-Ystävä* was now said to be aimed at “everyone, rich and poor, men and women, old and young, high and low” (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 23 Dec 1904, p. 1). The target group of the magazine remained, therefore, unclear. Aurora Olin herself may not have had any idea who ultimately subscribed to and read her magazine.

The tough journey of *Kodin-Ystävä* and its final closure

The lack of contributors and subscribers overshadowed *Kodin-Ystävä* throughout its existence. Already in October 1899, Aurora Olin reported that the magazine was under the threat of closure because of too few articles (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Oct 1899, p. 6). Later, even a small fee was offered as a token if the writings were “more advanced”. For the others, it was enough to be honoured if they made it into the magazine (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Jun 1902, p. 7). In August 1905, the year of *Kodin-Ystävä*’s closure, Olin appealed for a last time to the readers: “It is truly a wonder that such a small number of Finland’s youth attempt to assist in writing for newspapers and magazines” (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Aug 1905, No.7–8, p. 3). In fact, the constant complaint about the lack of contributors might have only worsened the situation, as readers could assume that if there were no or few contributors, there must be something wrong with the publication.

When letters were received, they were often unsuitable for publication. Like many editors of her time (Uino, 1991, p. 48; Sorvali, 2023a), Olin faced challenges with articles that either required extensive editing or were entirely unsuitable for the magazine. (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Aug 1900, p. 11). Olin explained that she could not print a piece of writing if it had no content, but “just a bunch of catch-phrases stuck together”. Others were too religious for *Kodin-Ystävä*’s style or just “outbursts of emotion”. She also insisted that the writing had to have a clear structure and context, for a successful magazine had to be skilfully edited, vary in content, and entertain (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Aug 1905, p. 3). Her demands for a quality magazine align with the views of contemporary newspaper editors regarding the stressful and time-consuming selection and editing work required for texts sent by readers (Sorvali, 2023a). Olin was no different from other editors in this respect.

According to press historian Pirkko Leino-Kaukiainen (1992, pp. 159–162), all journalists and editors working in the field of magazines were self-taught. Guidance and peer support provided by

others were undoubtedly important for many (see, for example, Kotioja, 2018, pp. 218–219). Olin had had the opportunity to learn through her editorial connections with *Wiipurin Sanomat* in the 1890s. However, she appears to have been excluded from such support due to a lack of networks, especially after the newspaper's editor-in-chief, J. A. Lyly, died in exile in 1903 (Sainio, 1997).

In the last year of *Kodin-Ystävä*, competitors entered the market: a magazine for middle-class mothers, *Emäntälehti* (Mistress magazine), and one for servants, *Palvelijatar* (Servant woman), for working-class women.

In the final issue of *Kodin-Ystävä* in December 1905, Aurora Olin explained that, from a financial standpoint, publishing the magazine had always somehow been possible, even though it had been challenging. However, the mental toll was more difficult to bear. Now, feeling mentally exhausted, she was faced with the tough decision to put an end to her seven-year-long work career: "Although it seems very difficult. It feels like parting with someone who has become very dear to me. Just as I struggled with myself when I established the magazine, so I have struggled with myself now as I finish it" (*Kodin-Ystävä*, 15 Dec 1905, No.12, pp. 4–6).

After her journalist career, Aurora Olin became an entrepreneur, offering skin, hair, and nail care treatments (*Östra Finland*, 18 Sep 1906, p. 1; *Karjala*, 24 Mar 1909, p. 2). Although Olin was a passionate writer, she appears to have stopped publishing after 1905, at least under her own name or a known pseudonym. The reasons remain unclear, possibly financial, personal, or health-related. In a 1915 letter to Maikki Friberg, editor of *Naisten Ääni* (Women's Voice), she mentioned sending an opinion piece to the magazine in 1914, asking if it could be presented at an international women's congress (NA, Maikki Friberg archive). The piece was not published, and it is uncertain if this was the only text she wrote for the press after 1905 or if there were others. If there were, she no longer wished to be identified as their author. Aurora Olin died at the age of 68 in 1924 after suffering a long period of health issues. The obituary mentioned Olin's association activities, but also her work as a journalist and as the sole editor of *Kodin-Ystävä*. (*Karjala*, 9 May 1924, p. 2).

Saima Grönstrand, an aspiring author

Saima Grönstrand (1863–1932) was primarily a short-story writer and translator. Most of her literary work was published in newspapers, although she did publish a collection of short stories, *Kerkkiä*, in 1892 (Grönstrand, 1892). She intended to continue publishing her

collections and to become a “real novelist” as she put it (NA, WSOY archives, Saima Grönstrand to W. Söderström, 19 Oct 1894). However, her propositions were rejected, and she continued to publish merely in the newspapers. Additionally, she managed to get her journalistic articles into several newspapers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Altogether, Saima Grönstrand is an illustrative example of a writer who had to make her living in the challenging field of writing (Hänninen, 2017).

The life history of Saima Grönstrand is based on fragmentary, sometimes almost non-existent sources (Hänninen, 2017). Some events can be extracted from her literary work, as her short stories often revolve around the life of a young woman aspiring to prosperity – but with little success (see, for example, *Prinsessa*, *Päivälehti*, 6 Nov 1898 issue B and 8 Nov 1898). These texts enrich the otherwise scarce sources; nevertheless, it is significant to keep in mind that fictional texts must be treated with a good amount of caution.

Saima Grönstrand was born in central Finland, in the rural parish of Viitasaari near the town of Jyväskylä. She was the firstborn, and over the next 18 years there were six more children, five of whom lived to adulthood (Hänninen, 2017). Their father, Johan Grönstrand, was a merchant and could provide Saima and her siblings with a financially secure childhood. In the short stories about her childhood, Saima Grönstrand often refers to the artefacts and habits of a middle-class family in late 19th-century Finland. She mentions the grand piano, dollhouse coffee sets, house plants, chandeliers, plays the children acted in, and how the local society came to see the children perform (see, for example, *Kalevatar*, 15 Jan 1895; *Päivälehti*, 16 Apr 1899).

The family spoke both Swedish and Finnish, which was not unusual for middle-class families at the time. The parents seemed to cherish Fennomanian ideas of raising the status of Finnish culture and the Finnish language, as they chose to enrol 10-year-old Saima in the Finnish School for Girls in Jyväskylä. The school was the first to provide education for girls in Finnish. In 1880, Saima Grönstrand graduated at the age of 17 (National Library of Finland, Topelius archives, coll. 244.22; Saima Grönstrand to Z. Topelius, 18 Nov 1896; School years, see *Jyväskylän tyttökoulu ja tyttölyseo 1864–1964*, p. 94).

There are very few sources regarding the following years. Saima Grönstrand probably spent time at home with her parents and younger siblings, as it was expected that a girl would help at home, learn to keep house, and take care of her sisters and brothers. (Häggman, 1994.) Her first known writing was published in 1887 in the Young Fennomanian magazine *Valvoja* (Pappilan tyttäret, *Valvoja*, 6–7/1887). However, it is possible that there were even earlier

writings, as it is nearly impossible to track down her writings from the large volume of digitized newspaper and magazine material due to false positive matches in databases. Saima Grönstrand published under the name “Saima” or “S. G.”, and these acronyms also refer to other common words in Finnish and thus yield approximately 15,000 matches in total when searched in the database of the Finnish National Library between the years 1880 and 1887.

Nonetheless, it is certain that by the end of the decade, she wrote for the leading provincial newspaper *Keski-Suomi*. It was run by Eero Erkko, who later became a prominent figure in the Young Finn Party and its paper *Päivälehti*. In 1888, *Keski-Suomi* published her report on a visit to one of the most prominent writers of the time: novelist, journalist and political figure Zachris Topelius (*Keski-Suomi*, 24 Oct 1888). It can be argued that Saima Grönstrand had the means to form a connection with nationwide literary circles, at least to some extent. In 1890, Saima Grönstrand had her short story published in *Päivälehti*, just months after Eero Erkko and other Young Fennomans had founded the newspaper. It seems that her provincial contacts helped her as she became the most productive literary freelancer for *Päivälehti*, with 74 published short stories between 1890 and 1904 (Rytönen, 1946, p. 74).

At the same time, the Grönstrand family faced a setback as the debts of the father Johan Grönstrand drove his business to bankruptcy in 1884. The process was slow, as the assets were put on sale as late as 1890 (*Nya Pressen*, 15 Oct 1884; *Keski-Suomi*, 27 Sep 1890). The family seemed to have some wealth, as Saima Grönstrand's younger sister Aina was sent to a merchant school in the capital, Helsinki (*Pohjalainen*, 2 Jun 1891). Still, the bankruptcy process had an effect, as the family moved further away from the centre of the Viitasaari parish. The father seemed to continue a small business and sold bagels near the rural road leading to Viitasaari. The decline of the Grönstrand family's wealth quickened when Johan Grönstrand died in November 1893 after a long and consuming illness. After his passing, the sale of the family property continued (*Suomalainen*, 25 Jul 1892; *Keski-Suomi*, 11 Nov 1893).

Only a month after her father's death, Saima Grönstrand was imprisoned for unpaid debts. In December 1893, she spent ten days in the county prison of Katajanokka in Helsinki (Hänninen, 2017). Even though the conditions were harsh, she took the stand of a writer and made observations on the women prisoners and their circumstances. She utilized her experience in at least two fictional and non-fictional writings (*Päivälehti*, 26 Sep 1894; *Nuori Suomi*, 1896).

Given the strict norms imposed on women at the time, one might assume that a conviction would have harmed her social standing (see, for example, Vares, 2005). However, it seems that Saima

Grönstrand emerged from imprisonment without severe damage to her reputation. She continued to publish her stories in *Päivälehti*, and in 1894, newspapers all over Finland announced the forthcoming magazine *Kalevatar*, published by the “well-known writer Saima Grönstrand”. The newspapers described the forthcoming magazine: “It will be edited in the same vein as the Swedish *Idun* – a practical magazine for the home” (*Päivälehti*, 27 Oct 1894.) The name of the magazine was adopted from *Kalevala*, the national epic of Finland, indicating that the magazine would be published in Finnish. The magazine’s lifespan was short, barely a year, yet it was a remarkable attempt to bring something new to the Finnish audience.

***Kalevatar*: Amusement and advice**

“*Kalevatar* wants to be free, outside all parties and groups. It takes its subjects from wherever it finds something useful, pleasant, and good, its only aim being to please its readers. If it can shorten a long evening with its stories, give a housewife some advice on the secrets of cooking or a daughter some new instructions on sewing, it will be pleased” (*Kalevatar*, 0/1894).

In her first leading article, Saima Grönstrand stated the aims of the new magazine. It was supposed to serve not only articles on housekeeping, sewing, knitting, and gardening, amusing little stories, poems, sketches and puzzles, or educational essays on outstanding women, science and society, but also advice to the readers. Grönstrand emphasized the struggle that women in rural areas experienced when it came to housekeeping:

“In cities, one learns so much from others, has the opportunity to see and hear from friends about such and such, about the type of food or the materials used in the home and clothing that can be made with so little effort and from such inexpensive materials. It will be years before such information reaches the country with the travelling and school-going daughters” (*Kalevatar*, 0/1894).

The influence of the Swedish magazine *Idun*, which the newspapers mentioned, is obvious.² *Idun* started in 1887 and continued until 1963. Due to the scarcity of sources, it is challenging to trace the extent of Grönstrand’s networks and explore whether she had any connections with the editors of *Idun*. She did not need direct contacts in Sweden, only access to the magazine. Coming from a bilingual home, reading Swedish was not an obstacle for her.

Typical of the era, several elements were the same: aesthetics (such as the fonts and mastheads), the subjects, poems, puzzles etc. However, there were also some differences. While *Idun* served its readers news about the royal family, especially the crown princess, *Kalevatar* was more practical. The latter magazine had hands-on

advice for its readers and recipes such as boiled pike or lung stew. Judging from the content of the magazines, *Idun* was aimed at middle- and upper-middle-class women, whereas the readers of *Kalevatar* were more of the middle- or lower-middle-class women (*Idun*, volumes 1894, 1895).

This element of advice was essential in *Kalevatar*. However, contrary to the conventions of the time, the editor did not take the role of an authority. She even admitted that her knowledge was limited and that she needed the help of the readers. In the fifth issue of *Kalevatar*, Grönstrand presented a completely new approach to guiding the readers: several women had sent her questions regarding housekeeping and various other things, and she asked for answers from other readers. The questions were numbered and printed in the magazine, and the answers were published in the next issue. The first questions dealt with how to prepare a newly purchased cauldron, where to buy a certain type of loom and how to cure a squint-eyed child. All readers received answers in the next issue, and new questions were published (*Kalevatar*, 4/1895).

This cycle of questioning and answering created a completely new way of participating. According to our knowledge, it took several decades before any other magazine adapted the method of readers discussing among themselves without the editor visibly involved. There are no mentions of this kind of approach in the 19th-century Finnish press in previous studies, as they demonstrate the relationship between the editors and the readers as formal, or at best, “sisterly”; however, in most cases, the relationship was more hierarchical (Töyry, 2005, pp. 155, 162, 203).

Kalevatar did not have a long lifespan. At the beginning, the magazine was published twice a month, but halfway through 1895, the rate of publication started to slow down. In the last issue of the year, Grönstrand regretted the delays and explained how starting a magazine alone without any financial and other support was difficult, and she felt “like a shoeless horse pulling a heavy load up a steep, slippery hill”. But she had strong faith that next year would be even better (*Kalevatar*, 18–19/1895). However, the last issue of *Kalevatar* was published in January 1896.

Lacking networks – and lacking sources

Networking was essential for personal and professional success in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Maarit Leskelä-Kärki (2006) has demonstrated how the writing sisters of the Krohn family – Helmi, Aino, and Aune – leveraged their familial networks, as their father, brothers and husbands were integral members of Finnish intellectual circles. In journalism, strong connections with

journalistic, literary and political networks were crucial. These connections not only enhanced the content of newspapers but also provided economic stability, as trusted associates guaranteed each other's bank drafts. This mutual confidence and willingness to take financial risks sustained publications like *Päivälehti* (Jensen-Eriksen, Mainio & Hänninen, 2019, pp. 115–117).

Her contemporaries knew Saima Grönstrand as a short story writer (Suomen naisyhdistys, 1896, p. 65). Nevertheless, previous studies have indicated that Saima Grönstrand lacked relevant networks or at least was not as well connected as many of her contemporaries (Hänninen, 2017). Unmarried and with no financial or other help from her family, she did not have a natural support system, as did, for example, the Krohn sisters. While it is clear that she knew prominent individuals, as evidenced by her correspondence with notable Finnish figures, the surviving letters primarily consist of requests for financial assistance, however. Even though it can be argued that she had a connection with literary circles, she did not regularly exchange letters with influential literary figures. In her letters, Grönstrand describes her dire circumstances, hunger and even a lack of writing paper. These letters reveal a power dynamic rather than an equal relationship, with Grönstrand diminishing herself and pleading in a subservient manner (see for example NA, WSOY archives, Saima Grönstrand to W. Söderström, 11 Sep 1894 and 9 May 1898).

In these letters, she also explains the reasons behind the rapid failure of *Kalevatar*. In an appeal to the politician Leo Mechelin in October 1895, she recounted how she managed to publish the magazine with the support of 900 subscribers and advertisements. Although 1895 began promisingly, her illness and other adversities led to financial difficulties. Facing foreclosure, she requested a loan of 200 marks, promising to repay it at the beginning of the following year when orders would resume (NA, Leo Mechelin archives, Saima Grönstrand to Leo Mechelin, 14 Oct 1895).

Conclusion

This article contributes new knowledge about the press of the late 19th and early 20th centuries by examining two (women's) magazines and (female) editors who have remained largely overlooked in previous research. These magazines are worthy of scholarly attention not only because they were among the first to emerge outside the suffragette movement, but also because they were among the first publications explicitly aimed at working-class women and women from the lower social strata in rural areas. This article also

sheds light on the conditions and constraints within which female editors and magazine founders of the period had to operate by examining them from a holistic, intersectional perspective, which means in this case looking at the women from the perspective of gender, class, marital and family situation and place of residence.

As late as 1915, female writers in the press discussed women's underrepresentation in Finnish journalism compared to the UK and Sweden, citing lack of confidence, perseverance, skills, and financial stability as key obstacles (Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2005, pp. 157–161). While Olin and Grönstrand had encountered and addressed most of these challenges, networks also played a crucial role in women's willingness and opportunities to work in the industry, as we have demonstrated in this article.

Both Olin and Grönstrand were intellectual, resilient and determined; they had the education and the opportunities. Nevertheless, the lack of wealth and networks made it difficult to succeed. This is the key aspect that distinguished Olin and Grönstrand from other female press writers such as Adelaïde Ehrnrooth and Alexandra Gripenberg.

This is particularly evident in the case of Saima Grönstrand, who was unmarried and lacked both familial wealth and social networks. The networks she established herself appear, based on the limited available sources, to have been rather tenuous. Furthermore, she referred to health issues at the time of discontinuing *Kalevatar*, which further complicated the solitary nature of her work.

Olin's networks within Vyborg's association activities provided crucial support to *Kodin-Ystävä* during its early years, possibly complemented by connections through her civil servant husband. However, these networks alone were insufficient. To gain more contributors to the magazine, especially well-known contributors, Olin should have established connections with the well-educated middle- and upper-class women of the time who appeared in public literature. In the absence of sources, it is difficult to determine whether Olin made attempts to involve them or whether they declined to contribute because they did not know Olin, her reputation or *Kodin-Ystävä* or simply did not value *Kodin-Ystävä* as a magazine. For instance, the women of the Finnish Women's Association and its Vyborg branch did not participate in *Kodin-Ystävä*. Olin should have also had connections with the target readers of *Kodin-Ystävä*, the "women of the common people" to be able to write for them. Olin's mother or the housemaids she hired could have served as links, but instead, she wanted to distance herself from them.

Both women were free from childcare obligations, which allowed them more time for writing. Like working middle- and upper-class women in general, women journalists of the era were often

unmarried, just like Grönstrand. Most of those who were married had husbands working in the newspaper industry (Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2005, p.165). Olin was an exception in this regard, as her husband was not active in the press in any way. His mental and financial support, however, proved essential for the magazine's publication.

Earlier research does not mention the legal aspects regarding the establishment of newspapers or magazines by married women. This raises the question of whether early married female journalists should be reconsidered from this perspective. Was Kaarlo Olin, nominally placed in charge of the magazine, a complete exception, or were there perhaps more similar cases in which the wife took primary responsibility for the publication, if not even entirely? Kaarlo Olin's nominal appointment as editor-in-chief may have contributed to one of the earliest Finnish women's magazines being largely overlooked in previous research on the women's press.

Kodin-Ystävä and *Kalevatar* are interesting material from the perspectives of gender, press and labour history. They both address the middle class and "women of the common people", but in different ways. While *Kodin-Ystävä* strongly expressed the opinions and ideology of its editor and provoked criticism from the labour movement, apolitical *Kalevatar* appears to have avoided similar reactions. Aurora Olin's motivation for writing and publishing was ideological, whereas Saima Grönstrand aimed to publish entertaining and useful content for women. *Kalevatar* was more successful in activating and engaging readers through its question-and-answer column. It did not demand structured and ideological opinion pieces from its readers; it was closer to the daily lives of its readers and did not criticize them. The short lifespan of magazines was a defining characteristic of the Finnish press at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It has been estimated that up to two-thirds of Finnish magazines ceased publication before 1917 (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1992, pp.124–126). In this sense, both *Kodin-Ystävä* and *Kalevatar* were typical publications of the era.

The intense workload and demands on an editor were not tied to gender; it was an integral part of journalism at the turn of the century for both men and women alike. Research on Olin and Grönstrand has shown that these women applied journalistic quality standards and work processes similar to other editors of their time.

In our article, we suggest that research on late 19th-century female journalists would benefit from an intersectional perspective. We highlight the contradictions arising from the differing social backgrounds of a magazine's target readers and its editors, as well as how marital status constrained women's opportunities –

marriage prevented them from establishing newspapers and magazines, while singlehood limited their access to networks and financial support.

The biographies of those behind *Kodin-Ystävä* and *Kalevatar* illustrate the emergence of modern Finnish journalism, the professionalization of journalists, and the societal conditions at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in which gender, social background, networks, and peer validation played a central role.

NOTES

¹ Digitized newspapers and magazines, National Library of Finland:

Eteenpäin: kalenteri kansalle
Helsingin Sanomat
Hufvudstadsbladet
Kalevatar
Karjala
Keski-Suomi
Kodin-Ystävä
Kokkola
Koti ja Yhteiskunta
Nuori Suomi
Nya Pressen
Oulun Ilmoituslehti
Pohjalainen
Päivälehti
Raahen Lehti
Suomalainen
Talven kukka: palvelijattarien albumi
Uusi Suometar
Valvoja
Wiborgsbladet
Wiipurin Sanomat
Wuoksi
Östra Finland

² See *Idun* from the digitized collections of the Gothenburg University Library: <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/37659>.

DATABASES USED

Gothenburg University Publications Electronic Archive.

<https://gupea.ub.gu.se>

Parish registers, lists of baptised, married and deceased, HisKi-database. Genealogical Society of Finland.

<https://hiski.genealogia.fi/hiski/29ql2m?en>

Sainio, Venla: Lyly, Julius. National Biography online publication.

Studia Biographica 4. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1997.

ARCHIVES USED

Finnish Literature Society (SKS)

- Alexandra Gripenberg archive
- Hilda Käkikoski archive

National Archives of Finland (NA)

- Maikki Friberg archive
- Leo Mechelin archive
- WSOY archive

National Library of Finland (NL)

- Topelius Archive
- Åkerman-Voipio family archive

REFERENCES

Collins, P. H. & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality* (1st ed.). Polity Press.

Häggman, K. (1994). *Perheen vuosisata. Perheen ihanne ja sivistyneistön elämäntapa 1800-luvun Suomessa*. Historiallisia tutkimuksia 179.

Hänninen, R. (2019.) *Kevyt ja pirteä kynä? Naisten ensimmäinen aalto Helsingin Sanomien toimituksessa sotien välisenä aikana*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Helsinki. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-5393-7>

Hänninen, R. (2017). Sitten minulta loppui raha ja paperi. *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 115(2), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.54331/haik.140387>

Jensen-Eriksen, N., Mainio, A. & Hänninen, R. (2019). *Suomen suurin. Helsingin Sanomat 1889–2019*. Siltala.

Johannesson, E. (2001). Med det nya på väg (1858–1880). In K. E. Gustafsson, P. Rydén, E. Johannesson & B. Petersson (eds.). *Den svenska pressens historia: 2, Åren då allting hände (1840–1897)* Ekerlid, 232–234.

Kotioja, E. (2018). *Uskallus puhua. Sukupiiri ja sosiaalinen pääoma Adelaïde Ehrnroothin yhteiskunnallisen toiminnan mahdollistajina*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Helsinki. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-4436-2>

- Leino-Kaukiainen, P. (1992). Monipuolistuva aikakauslehdistö 1880–1917. In P. Tommila (ed.). *Suomen lehdistön historia 10. Aikakauslehdistön kehityslinjat*. Kustannuskiila.
- Leskelä-Kärki, M. (2006). *Kirjoittaen maailmassa. Krohnin sisaret ja kirjallinen elämä*. SKS.
- Malmberg, R. (1991). Naistenlehdet ja kotien lehdet aikansa kuvastimina In P. Tommila (ed.). *Suomen lehdistön historia 8. Yleisaikakauslehdet*. Kustannuskiila, 191–291.
- Mikkola, K. (2005). Uutuuksien pyhyys ja pahuus. In P. Laaksonen, S. Knuuttila & U. Pietilä (eds.). *Kansanetiikkaa. Käsityksiä hyvästä ja pahasta*. SKS.
- Munck, P. (2016). *Valistajista ammattimieheksi toimittajien ammattilaistumisen pitkä tie 1771–1921*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Helsinki. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-1983-4>
- Rytönen, A. (1946). *Päivälehden historia II*. Sanoma Oy.
- Salokangas, R. & Tommila, P. (1998). *Sanomia kaikille: Suomen lehdistön historia*. Edita.
- Samuelsson, L. (2014). Dagny. En tidskrift för den nya dagens kvinna. In A. Nordenstam (ed.). *Nya röster. Svenska kvinnotidskrifter under 150 år*. Gidlund.
- Sorvali, S. (2023a). Selecting and editing of readers' letters in the late 19th-century Finnish press. *Media History*, 29(4), 442–457. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2023.2265406>
- Sorvali, S. (2023b). Sapenpurkua ja sanasotia: 1800-luvun lopun suomalaislehdistön ärtynyt tunne- ja keskustelukulttuuri. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Turku. <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-29-9497-7>
- Stenberg, L. (2014). Tidskriften Framåt. Två åsiktsriktningar möts i unika debatter. In A. Nordenstam (ed.). *Nya Röster. Svenska kvinnotidskrifter under 150 år*. Gidlund.
- Suomen naisyhdistys. (1896). *Biograafisia tietoja Suomen naisista eri työaloilla*. Suomen naisyhdistys.
- Tommila, P. (1998). Suomen sanomalehdistön alkuvaiheet. In L. Landgren, P. Leino-Kaukiainen & P. Tommila (eds.). *Suomen lehdistön historia 1. Sanomalehdistön vaiheet vuoteen 1905*. Kustannuskiila.
- Turunen, A. (2024). Parisian fashion or functional style? Finnish women's magazines and the ideal dress of the modern woman of the 1920s and 1930s. In J. Kortti & H. Kurvinen (eds.). *Mediated Ideologies: Nordic Views on the History of the Press and Media Cultures*. Vernon Press.
- Turunen, A. (2014). Naistenlehdet Suomessa 1880-luvulta 1930-luvulle. *Media & viestintä*, 37(2), 38–56.

- Töyry, M. (2005). *Varhaiset naistenlehdet ja naisten elämän ristiriidat: Neuvotteluja lukijasopimuksesta*. Dissertation. University of Helsinki.
- Uino, A. (1991). Autonomian ajan kuvalehdistö. In A. Uino, R. Malmberg, P. Leino-Kaukiainen, V. Kallio (eds.). *Suomen lehdistön historia 8. Yleisaikakauslehdet*. Kustannuskiila, 11–78.
- Vares, V. (2005). Helmi Krohn 1871–1913. *Naisen velvollisuusetiikka ja yksilön ratkaisu*. Yliopistopaino.
- Zilliacus-Tikkanen, H. (2007). Vem var redaktör för “Om konsten at rätt behaga”. In Halonen, I. K., Ruoho, I., Savolainen, T., Zilliacus-Tikkanen, H. (eds.), *Välittämisen tilassa: feminististä mediatutkimusta synnyttämässä*. Minerva.
- Zilliacus-Tikkanen, H. (2005). *När könet började skriva. Kvinnor i finländsk press 1771–1900*. Finska vetenskaps-societeten.

SATU SORVALI

Postdoctoral researcher
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
University of Turku
satu.p.sorvali@utu.fi

REETTA HÄNNINEN

Senior Researcher
Department of Philosophy, History and Art Studies
University of Helsinki
reetta.hanninen@helsinki.fi

A local newspaper as mediator in transatlantic networks during the late nineteenth century

Isidor Kjellberg and Östgöten

JIMMY ENGREN

Örebro University

JOHAN JARLBRINK

Umeå University

Abstract

As mass migration from Sweden to the USA took off in the late 1860s, texts started to flow between Swedish and Swedish-American newspapers. A network of interconnected papers was established, based on cut-and-paste journalism and journalists moving between the countries. By combining digital text mining and network analysis with a biographical approach, this article examines the role of one specific editor and his paper within the transatlantic exchange system. The analysis shows that Isidor Kjellberg (1841–1895) and his newspaper *Östgöten* acted as a guide, giving advice and updates on American conditions to Swedes who wanted to migrate. Kjellberg also used the Swedish-American press as an ally in his campaigns for political reform, workers' rights, and equality, but he also incorporated the methods of American new journalism in his own reporting. The result was not American journalism according to the standard news paradigm, but a hybrid serving his own political agenda.

KEYWORDS

americanization, computational methods, cut-and-paste journalism, immigrant press, partisan press

Introduction

In March 1875, the Swedish-American newspaper *Nordstjernan*, published in New York, reflected upon the strange fact that the same people who were seen as hopeless nobodies in their birth countries often flourished once they migrated and settled down in the USA. “The old countries are still ruled by the old saying: stay where you are.” To prosper and succeed, people had to leave the old world behind (*Nordstjernan*, 3 March 1875).

From the late 1860s to the 1920s, more than 1.3 million Swedes emigrated to the USA. Like immigrants from many other countries, Swedish newcomers started newspapers wherever their communities were large enough. The Swedish-language press played a key role in building and shaping the Swedish immigrant community, creating an ethnic public sphere by providing news from Sweden and educating the immigrants about their new country (Björk, 2000; Beijbom, 1987; Williams, 1991).

Editors in Sweden read these Swedish-American newspapers and republished items for their local readers. Meanwhile, editors of Swedish-American newspapers subscribed to Swedish papers and reprinted news for their Swedish-speaking readership. Thus, the textual traffic bridging the Atlantic Ocean created a network of newspapers connecting the two countries.

If we examine the reuse of border-crossing texts in the nineteenth-century Swedish and Swedish-American press, one Swedish paper emerges as central: *Östgöten*, established in 1872. People passing by the editorial office in central Linköping in the 1890s would see a miniature replica of the Statue of Liberty above the main entrance, and the Star-Spangled Banner flying over the building (Hellström, 2010, p. 46). The editor, Isidor Kjellberg (1841–1895), was a well-known critic of Swedish conservatism and American society represented his ideal of freedom, democracy, and equal opportunities. He had seen it first hand, and the reflection in *Nordstjernan* in 1875 expressed many of his own ideas. He had cut and published this article in his own paper by April of the same year (*Östgöten*, 7 April 1875) and it was reprinted again in at least five other Swedish papers within a month (cluster 12744661).¹

By combining digital text mining and network analysis with a biographical approach, our aim in this article is to examine this individual actor and his political and journalistic role in the networks connecting newspapers across the Atlantic during the late nineteenth century. What were the characteristics of the political journalism that Kjellberg developed at the intersection between his American experiences and his political struggles in Sweden? We combine a quantitative analysis of *Östgöten's* position within the

transatlantic exchange network with a qualitative analysis of recurring themes in the textual traffic of which *Östgöten* was part. Which Swedish-American newspapers did *Östgöten* borrow from, and which Swedish-American papers reprinted texts from *Östgöten*? What kinds of texts did he share and how did he use them? Apart from sharing texts written by others, Kjellberg also developed his own brand of political journalism, inspired by the new journalism introduced in the American press during the late nineteenth century. How did he incorporate American new journalism into a Swedish context?

Cut-and-paste journalism and transnational histories

Before newspapers had the financial resources to hire reporters and correspondents, and before the widespread use of the telegraph and news agencies, editors largely relied on other newspapers as sources (Garvey, 2012; Jarlbrink 2015). No copyright restrictions existed to prohibit copy-and-paste journalism; the Berne convention of 1886, protecting literary works, made an exception for news (Hofmeyr & Peterson, 2019). Original content was produced as well, but the newspapers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries are usually patchworks of texts taken from other newspapers, documents from authorities, private firms and letter-writing individuals, poems, and stories from books, etc.

The scale of this text reuse has been revealed in several studies, based on digitized newspapers and software to detect repeated passages (Cordell, 2015; Düring et al., 2023; Salmi et al., 2020). The resulting databases make it possible to study the movement of texts in space and time, how newspapers were connected, and how they were linked to technologies of transportation and communication. The method can also be used to locate individual newspapers and actors within the larger networks, and what role they played in relation to other papers and other actors.

There is, however, a kind of methodological nationalism built into many of these projects: it is difficult to detect text reuse across languages on a large scale. Most cases of cross-border text reuse analysed in previous work are based on newspapers in the same language (Oiva et al., 2019; Lundell et al., 2023; Pigeon, 2016). Until the methods are improved, the analysis of cross-border text reuse is limited to individual case studies or monolingual databases (e.g. Van Remoortel, 2020).

A transnational development of special significance in the analysis of Kjellberg's journalism is the so-called Americanization of the European press starting in the late nineteenth century, what Høyer

and Pöttker (2005) refer to as “the diffusion of the news paradigm”. This process entails an adaptation of the norms, forms, and practices central to modern journalism, what was labelled “new journalism” at the time: a focus on news events and news values, techniques such as the interview and texts structured according to the inverted pyramid, and a professional ideal emphasizing objectivity and political autonomy (Høyer, 2005). In Swedish press history, Americanization is often associated with the new layout introduced on the front page of *Dagens Nyheter* in 1909 (Lundström, 2001).

Broersma (2010) is critical of the teleological narrative dominant in previous research (including Høyer & Pöttker, 2005), where American journalism is the yardstick used to characterize journalism elsewhere. American ideals were influential, but a focus on Americanization, as it is usually understood, will primarily acknowledge the characteristics of European traditions in negative terms. Broersma (2010, 2020) suggests that it makes more sense to examine how American norms, forms, and practices were perceived, incorporated, and adapted in European contexts, including the local hybrids.

One branch of American journalism that is often left out of national press histories is the American immigrant press of the nineteenth century, defined either as an “ethnic” (e.g. Meyrowitz Maguire, 1993; Björk, 2000; Beijbom, 1987) or a transnational (e.g. Hickerson & Gustafson, 2016; Blanck & Hjorthén, 2016) phenomenon. The “ethnic” analysis examines how groups align with or contrast themselves to the mainstream of the host society, while the “transnational” investigates immigrant populations as transnational communities (Faist, 2000; Hoerder, 2002) producing culturally diverse “hybrid media products” (Cunningham & Sinclair, 2001). Many of the immigrants publishing these papers carried ideas and ideals back to Europe.

In 1886, the renowned Swedish author August Strindberg reflected upon the impact of journalists returning from the USA, after he was treated harshly by one of them, who specialized in “revolver journalism” (pay, or we will print scandals about you): “In the future, we might see a study of how immigrants returning from American influenced Swedish cultural life” (Strindberg, 1996, pp. 134–135). The revolver journalist in question was probably Hugo Nisbeth, editor of the *California Scandinav* for a few years in the 1870s, who later established *Figaro* in Stockholm. Other returning journalists mentioned in previous research were correspondents reporting from the USA, such as Mauritz Rubenson, correspondent for *Göteborgs- och Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* in the 1860s, and Ernst Beckman, who wrote for *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* in the 1870s. Back in Sweden, Rubenson became one of the first reporters in the

Swedish press, and Beckman was an early adopter of the interview (Nilsson, 1975; Johannesson, 2001).

Isidor Kjellberg's work is covered in both Swedish histories of the press (Nilsson, 1975; Johannesson, 2001; Hellström, 2010) and histories of the Swedish-American press (Stephenson, 1929; Backlund, 1952; Beijbom, 2020). Still, much of his journalism, his networks, and his political activism falls outside national frameworks. Kjellberg can be understood as a go-between, bridging geographical spheres, but also an intermediary connecting different cultures.

A few studies have addressed transatlantic relations between Swedes in Sweden and Swedish migrants in the USA (Barton, 1994; Blanck, 2016). Recent research on identity formation, migration, and cultural relations has highlighted the importance of transnational networks and information exchange (Levitt & Nyberg-Sörensen, 2004; Hoerder, 2002; Manning, 2013; Blanck & Hjorthén, 2016). Go-betweens are key to such networks. Metcalf (2006, pp. 9–10) distinguishes three different kinds of go-betweens: travellers creating links by being physically present in other countries or cultures, transactional go-betweens facilitating contact by translating between cultures, and representational go-betweens active in explaining one culture to another by sharing knowledge and experiences. As pointed out by Raj (2016), a single individual can act in all three capacities, and the roles and actions are often intertwined and overlapping. We use the concept and its three dimensions here to examine Kjellberg's role as a mediator between the USA and Sweden, between Swedes in the new country and those staying behind, and between American journalism and journalism in Sweden. Where studies of "diffusion" are less specific about the ways in which new ideas and practices circulated, the concept of the go-between enables us to examine the actors and actions that carried, introduced, and adapted them.

Methods and data

Our quantitative analysis is primarily based on the output of the open-access database "Text reuse in the Swedish-language press, 1645–1918". It includes Swedish and Swedish-American newspapers, and papers published in Finland in the Swedish language. Almost every Swedish title from the second half of the nineteenth century is covered in the database (825 titles from 1850–1899, so it extends well beyond the best-known), but only 17 Swedish-American titles. The total number of Swedish-American periodicals is unknown, but is estimated at between 225 and 1,500, where the higher figure includes numerous short-lived newspapers, and papers

published after 1900 (Björk, 2000). Among the 17 titles represented in the database, we find the major papers published in Chicago, New York, and Minnesota. These newspapers are often mentioned as the most influential in Swedish-American press histories (Björk, 2000; Beijbom, 2020). The database also includes a few minor papers published in Texas, California, Massachusetts, Washington, and Michigan. The data is far from complete, but it allows us to trace the transatlantic text exchange between Sweden and important Swedish-American hubs in the USA. The exchange with Finland is not part of our analysis here, but the chains of reuse also include Finnish newspapers.

In the database, the first publication of a text and all its reprints are presented as a cluster with metadata identifying all the newspapers publishing the text, the dates and printing locations, the total number of reprints, and the number of days between the first printing and the last reprint. A cluster consists of segments of at least 300 characters matching one or more text segments in the dataset. Evaluations show that the algorithm used to cluster texts in the Swedish-language press (Basic Local Alignment Search Tool) performs better than alternative matching methods on digitized newspapers with plenty of errors generated by the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) (Vesanto et al. 2017). That said, it is not foolproof. Segments shorter than 300 characters are not matched at all. Text items spanning several columns or pages are often treated as separate segments, thus ending up in more than one text cluster. During post-processing, we filtered out duplicate clusters (where single texts appear in more than one cluster), based on identical starting and end dates. Our final dataset consisted of about 37,000 transatlantic text clusters starting in Swedish-American papers, and 260,000 clusters starting in Sweden, from 1856 to 1899.

In the analysis, we first traced Kjellberg's journey from Sweden to the USA, his journalistic contacts, and the political controversies he was involved in before returning to Sweden to start his new project, *Östgöten*. To gain an understanding of the role of *Östgöten* in the larger network of text reuse, we then identified the most important newspapers in the transatlantic exchanges by performing a quantitative analysis. Based on these calculations, we zoomed in on *Östgöten* and its exchanges with Swedish-American papers. We followed this with a qualitative analysis of recurring themes in both the Swedish-American texts reprinted in *Östgöten* and texts from *Östgöten* reprinted across the Atlantic. Our focus is on Kjellberg's role as a go-between, on the one hand mediating Swedish-American experiences to a Swedish readership, and on the other hand supplying Swedish-American readers with news and views from Sweden. In this analysis, we refer to shared texts by the cluster IDs that make it

possible to find all the reprints in the database. The final part of the analysis examines how Kjellberg adapted an American style of journalism in a Swedish context, exemplified with his interviews and his use of headlines.

Becoming a newspaperman

Isidor Kjellberg was born in Stockholm in 1841. In his teens, he started training as a mechanic and a draftsman. He worked at several factories in and around Stockholm during the 1860s and was later hired by a leading engineering company in Motala, 40 kilometres from Linköping, where he would set up his newspaper in the 1870s. In the spring of 1869, he travelled to Britain to continue his apprenticeship but failed to secure a position. He soon continued his journey to the USA, where he was employed as a draftsman in Philadelphia (Hellström, 2010, pp. 18–22).

Before Kjellberg crossed the Atlantic, he was already a published poet and had written short travel stories and plays (Hellström, 2010, p. 22). In 1869, his poems were printed in *Svenska Amerikanaren* (17 August 1869; 12 October 1869). Later that year, he signed a call for funds to raise a statue of the Swedish author August Blanche, published in *Svenska Amerikanaren* and co-signed by its editor, Herman Roos (11 November 1869). In January of 1870, he was contracted as a correspondent writing for the Swedish paper *Göteborgs-Posten* and made several journeys to Swedish settlements in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. In June of the same year, he took over as editor of *Svenska Monitoren*, published in St Paul, Minnesota (Beijbom, 2020). Within a year of leaving Europe, he had established contacts with editors on both sides of the Atlantic, he had his own paper, and he had travelled extensively. Very soon, he also gained enemies.

Already in his letters to *Göteborgs-Posten*, Kjellberg had exposed prominent actors in the Swedish-American community who were trying to exploit newly arrived immigrants. The “runners” were his main target, commissioners who offered land or work for a fee, without delivering on their promises (27 January 1870). Kjellberg’s second target were the Swedish-American priests, the “spiritual runners” (3 April 1870), who exploited newly arrived Swedes financially, but also promoted the Swedish state-church ideology that many Swedes in the USA had tried to escape. Kjellberg’s depictions were criticized in both Sweden and the USA. The editor of *Göteborgs-Posten* was concerned that these letters would drag his paper into Kjellberg’s American conflicts and censored some of the material (Bonnier, 1870, 17 February).

Early in 1871, Kjellberg moved to Chicago, where he set up a new paper together with the Norwegian socialist Marcus Thrane. The first issue of *Justitia*, published on 25 February, stated that the newspaper had been founded by “some liberal-minded and truth-loving men” who had found that “every Swedish newspaper published in this country is to a greater or lesser extent dependent on circumstances that prevent their respective editors from speaking freely and in strict accordance with justice”. Kjellberg became the editor, while the publisher was said to be “the public”.

Justitia was critical of the Swedish-American elite, and its primary targets were the clergy, conservative journalists, and emigration profiteers (Söderström, 1910). It was not a newspaper in the traditional sense, mostly printing sarcastic opinion pieces, political poems, lists of commissioners to avoid, and fictionalized accounts of prominent Swedish-Americans – those whom Kjellberg saw as notorious swindlers. One example is a text about the city of Göteborg, a Swedish town supposedly founded in Kansas by Mr Burger, but non-existent according to Kjellberg and only used by “runners” to sell worthless property to newcomers. In *Justitia* it was labelled the “City of Humbug”, and Kjellberg speculated about suitable candidates for official posts in the town: Mr Burger himself would be a worthy mayor, Charles Franklin, a commissioner recently sent to jail for fraud, would serve as the chief of police, former priest and known trickster Nils Anderson would be the minister, etc. (10 June 1871).

Eventually, the Scandinavian Emigrant Association, regularly smeared in *Justitia*, sued the paper for libel, demanding \$10,000 in damages. Kjellberg initiated fundraising efforts, but the Great Chicago Fire of October 1871 wiped out the paper and put an end to Kjellberg's journalistic career in the USA (Beijbom, 2020).

Kjellberg informed his colleagues in Chicago that he would “take *Justitia* with [him] and return to Sweden” (Beijbom, 2020, p. 76). His journalism in *Justitia* might suggest that he saw the USA as a land of swindlers, but that was far from the case. To him, it represented a land of opportunities, where immigrants could flourish regardless of their name or background, and they (i.e. white men) were free to vote in elections. Runners and conservative priests represented the antithesis of freedom, and this is what attracted Kjellberg's criticism. He would continue his battle against the enemies of progress, but from his new base in Linköping.

The transatlantic text flow in numbers

The transatlantic flow of news written in Swedish was already significant before Kjellberg started in journalism. Although still limited

in the 1850s, the reprinting increased during the following decades. Nevertheless, the text flow from Swedish to Swedish-American papers was more intense than traffic in the other direction. The growing intensity of cross-border text reuse over time seems to reflect the flow of Swedish immigrants to the USA, the expansion of the press in both countries, and the increasing fleet of vessels crossing the Atlantic.

Decade	From America to Sweden		From Sweden to America	
	Clusters	Average transfer time	Clusters	Average transfer time
1850s	59	20 years	540	37 days
1860s	969	49 days	5 769	38 days
1870s	5 953	35 days	33 221	34 days
1880s	13 894	46 days	84 320	30 days
1890s	16 372	37 days	123 879	26 days

Table 1: The total frequencies of transatlantic clusters per decade, and the average time in days between the first printing of a text and the first reprint across the Atlantic, calculated as median values.

As seen in Table 1, the text items published in Swedish-American papers during the 1850s were not reprinted in Sweden until an average of 20 years later, indicating that Swedish editors did not follow the Swedish-American press at the time. During the later decades, the time became shorter between the first printing and the first reprinting of the same text on the other side of the Atlantic. Many texts made the journey in four to seven weeks.

In these transatlantic chains of reuse, a small number of newspapers served as bridges connecting the Swedish and Swedish-American press. These were the papers that were first to republish items from the other side of the Atlantic. Editors with limited access to foreign sources could borrow from these well-connected domestic papers.

Judging by the figures in Table 2 (see below), *Östgöten*, under Isidor Kjellberg’s editorship, was the leading newspaper in Sweden for republishing texts from the Swedish-American press. It even surpassed major dailies in Stockholm and Gothenburg such as *Dagens Nyheter* and *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*. Table 2 also illustrates that Swedish-American newspapers often borrowed content from major Swedish newspapers based in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö.

So, *Östgöten*, which is not even in the top ten, was clearly more important for the spread of Swedish-American texts in Sweden than as a source for the Swedish-American press. One explanation is that

immigrant papers in the USA usually reprinted stories from across the home country (Björk, 2000, p. 271), and Östergötland, where *Östgöten* was published, was only one region among many. The total number of transatlantic clusters starting in *Östgöten* (including local editions from the first few years, *Linköpings-Östgöten* and *Norrköpings-Östgöten*) was 1903.

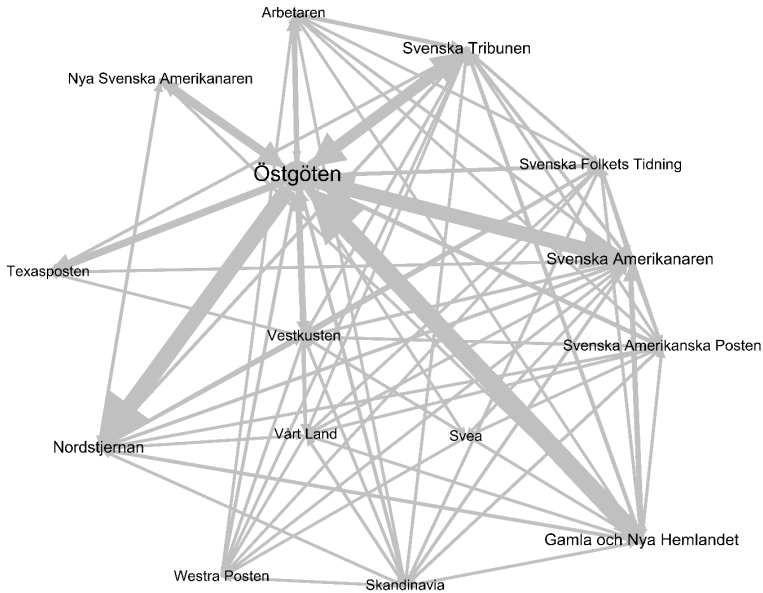
The Swedish papers first to publish Swedish-American texts	Number of clusters	The Swedish papers originally printing what was reprinted in the USA	Number of clusters
Östgöten (Linköping)	1 417	Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm)	17 261
Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning (Göteborg)	1 273	Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning (Göteborg)	13 903
Sydsvenska Dagbladet (Malmö)	1 193	Aftonbladet (Stockholm)	13 368
Smålandsposten (Växjö)	1 146	Sydsvenska Dagbladet (Malmö)	8 712
Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm)	1 054	Smålands-Posten (Växjö)	8 367
Göteborgs-Posten (Göteborg)	1 034	Norrköpings Tidningar (Norrköping)	7 224
Aftonbladet (Stockholm)	969	Göteborgs-Posten (Göteborg)	6 790
Nya Norrlänningen (Sundsvall)	955	Stockholms Dagblad (Stockholm)	6 037
Hallandsposten (Halmstad)	700	Svenska Dagbladet (Stockholm)	5 904
Göteborgs Aftonblad (Göteborg)	656	Nerikes Allehanda (Örebro)	5 830

Table 2: Top lists of the Swedish papers first to publish Swedish-American texts, and the Swedish papers originally printing the texts that were reprinted in Swedish-American papers, 1645–1899.

The Swedish-American papers first to publish Swedish texts	Number of clusters	The Swedish-American papers originally printing what was reprinted in Sweden	Number of clusters
Svenska Tribunen (Chicago)	45 568	Svenska Tribunen (Chicago)	9 774
Svenska Amerikanaren (Chicago)	44 361	Gamla och Nya Hemlandet (Chicago)	7 270
Nordstjernan (New York)	42 243	Svenska Amerikanaren (Chicago)	7 068
Gamla och Nya Hemlandet (Chicago)	35 817	Nordstjernan (New York)	4 480
Skandinavia (Worcester)	14 014	Skandinavia (Worcester)	2 056
Svenska Amerikanska Posten (Minneapolis)	12 686	Svenska Folkets Tidning (Minneapolis)	1 764
Svenska Folkets Tidning (Minneapolis)	9 980	Svenska Amerikanska Posten (Minneapolis)	1 391
Vestkusten (San Francisco)	5 600	Vestkusten (San Francisco)	1 058
Hemlandet: Det Gamla och Det Nya (Galesburg)	4 800	Nya Svenska Amerikanaren (Chicago)	643
Vårt Land (Jamestown)	4 257	Hemlandet: Det Gamla och Det Nya (Galesburg)	501

Table 3: Top lists of the Swedish-American papers first to publish Swedish texts, and the Swedish-American papers originally printing the texts that were reprinted in Swedish papers, 1645–1899.

Four Swedish-American papers published in Chicago and New York dominated the transatlantic flows in both directions – *Svenska Tribunen*, *Svenska Amerikanaren*, *Nordstjernan*, and *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet*. They were the first to publish 65 percent of the total incoming traffic from Sweden and accounted for 77 percent of the content reprinted in Swedish newspapers. These papers were also connected to *Östgöten* in various ways. Figure 1 illustrates the text loans between *Östgöten* and the Swedish-American newspapers.



Figur 1: Part of the transatlantic network of text reuse, 1859–1895, filtered to only show the Swedish-American newspapers reprinting texts from *Östgöten*, and Swedish-American papers used as sources by *Östgöten* (15 nodes, 120 edges). Altogether, 2907 cases of reuse are shown, excluding clusters where other Swedish newspapers served as bridges between *Östgöten* and the Swedish-American press. The arrows show the direction of text flow, from the source-paper to the reprinting paper.

The network shows that *Östgöten* had connections with newspapers across the USA. These connections were not always symmetrical, however. *Östgöten*'s main Swedish-American sources were the conservative *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet*, and the liberal *Svenska Amerikanaren* and *Svenska Tribunen*, all of them based in Chicago, where Kjellberg had most of his contacts. Still, *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet* was more important as a source for *Östgöten* than *Östgöten* was for *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet*. The opposite is true for *Nordstjernan* in New York, which frequently borrowed from *Östgöten* while being less important as a contributor to the Swedish paper. The ties with papers outside of Chicago and New York were weaker, but Figure 1 shows that Kjellberg's paper exchanged texts with *Texas Posten*, *Arbetaren* (Michigan), and *Vestkusten* (California), among others. It is often difficult to establish whether newspapers shared texts between them or reprinted them independently, but Figure 1 suggests that several Swedish-American papers were involved in the traffic. In the following, we examine recurring themes in the texts that were shared.

Östgöten in the transatlantic text flow

After Kjellberg's arrival in Sweden, he worked for a brief period at the liberal *Aftonbladet* in Stockholm, before founding *Östgöten* in 1872 in Linköping. In the first issue (24 December 1872), he declared that the paper would be a voice for the working classes (and also mentioned that Swedes in America could subscribe to it for \$7.50 per year). Later ads stated that the paper was politically independent, worked for progress in social, political, and religious matters, and was against bureaucracy, militarism, and religious constraints (*Östergötlands Allehanda*, 17 December 1879). Kjellberg started off with only one editorial assistant, but the paper soon became successful (with the largest circulation in the region), employing a handful of staff members by the mid-1890s (Hellström, 2010, pp. 60–61).

Östgöten not only reprinted items from Swedish-American papers, it also commented on these papers as sources. After speculations in Swedish newspapers about the US presidential election of 1884, *Östgöten* commented that most Swedish papers were ill-informed, mostly relying on reports in the German press. If the Swedish press had “made an effort to take note of what the Swedish-American newspapers have to say about it, it would have come to very different conclusions” (15 November 1884). For many years, *Östgöten* contained a standing section publishing items “Från Amerika”. As we have seen, however, *Östgöten* also served as a source for the Swedish-American press.

Apart from local news about accidents, crime, human interest stories, and local industries, which made up the bulk of the text re-use, Swedish-American papers often reprinted *Östgöten's* negative reports and comments about Swedish society, especially about the state church. For example, a story republished in *Svenska Folkets Tidning* and *Svenska Amerikanaren* in 1882 described a priest undertaking a clerical survey, to make sure that parishioners were true Lutherans, but who was instead interrogated by community members about the state church's view on Communion (clusters 30009532 & 30009525); a text about another priest, who called children taking Communion “sacramental dirty dogs”, spread to *Svenska Amerikanaren*, *Svenska Amerikanska Posten*, *Svenska Folkets Tidning*, and *Vestkusten* in 1890 (cluster 31160873). *Östgöten* was not always named as a source, but Kjellberg's message came across anyway: “Through the church, freedom of speech is restricted. It is said that there is religious freedom in Sweden, but it is indeed poorly managed” (cluster 101816742). Many Swedes left the country for religious reasons, and *Östgöten's* coverage confirmed their experiences. As a go-between, Kjellberg shared the views of many

Swedish-Americans and wrote in a way that made his texts attractive to reprint. As indicated in Figure 1, news and opinion pieces critical of Swedish society were shared mostly by the liberal press in the USA. Still, there were several exceptions. Among other texts, conservative *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet* reprinted a call to ban child labour (cluster 11616385), another call against animal cruelty (cluster 11843003), news about the temperance movement (cluster 12577568), and complaints about the economic difficulties forcing people to migrate (cluster 11758865).

The latter issue was a key concern for Kjellberg and *Östgöten*. Kjellberg acted as a guide who informed – and warned – his readers about migration routes, what to expect, and what to avoid. The texts he reprinted from Swedish-American papers gave advice on where to settle down (clusters 101939209; 9831698; 11311649), and where to find work (9688865; 12775307; 11762719), sometimes narrated from the perspective of successful Swedes (12738408; 11762362; 11750043). Other texts warned about “runners” and shared stories about Swedish migrants being exploited and ruined (cluster 11883344), or dangers such as dishonest priests, uncivilized Native Americans, or countrymen who had fallen into quackery (clusters 12816139; 11617852; 11530337).

Östgöten’s agenda clearly aligns with the ideology already visible in *Justitia*. Kjellberg borrowed texts from the USA that expressed his scepticism towards clerical rule, religious narrow-mindedness, and the transplanted power structures among Swedes in the USA. Yet, as well as educating future migrants, he also used the Swedish-American press as an ally in his mission to democratize Sweden.

Editors of the Swedish-American press often complained about their new country being misrepresented in Swedish papers. “If the Swedish-American press was biased in the same way, it would mainly print news from Sweden about fraud and crime” (cluster 12509511). Kjellberg had already tried to counterbalance these negative reports in a series of articles written for *Aftonbladet* when he returned to Sweden in the summer of 1872: “America and Sweden: Parallels”. He specifically focused on what he described as “social conditions”. One article focused on social hierarchies (*Aftonbladet*, 11 June 1872), and another on career possibilities for those coming from poor families (*Aftonbladet*, 9 July 1872). In all of these comparisons, Sweden came up short.

As the editor of *Östgöten*, Kjellberg used texts from Swedish-American papers to amplify his own message about the need for urgent democratic and social reforms in Sweden. An illustrative example is “Why people emigrate”, a letter first published in *Svenska Amerikanaren* in 1893. “I still remember”, the author explained, “what made me leave Sweden”. The main reason turned out to be

Swedish election laws, also a prime concern for Kjellberg. "As it is in Sweden, money and the value of money, such as pigs and cattle, have the right to vote, not the people." The USA, on the other hand, offered "the greatest liberties and rights" (cluster 11313693). An interview republished by *Östgöten* in 1892 gave a similar answer: The main reason why people leave Sweden "is the unequal division of power" (cluster 11612620). The same thoughts were also expressed in reprinted poems. "A voice from America" asked: When will I return? "When the Swedes abolish / Power based on birth and family" (cluster 11700050). Another poem described how Swedish contract-workers, who had a status similar to serfs in Sweden, were offered land of their own once they settled in the USA (cluster 30266956). Other texts compared the booming economy in the USA to the difficult conditions in Scandinavia (cluster 11882097), and the educational systems, where American practical skills stood out against Swedish theoretical learning that was not of much use in real life (cluster 11593496).

When Swedish emigration to the USA really took off, various actors in Swedish society tried to prevent people from leaving (Kälve-mark, 1972; Alm, 2003). In Kjellberg's analysis, these actors – conservative politicians, landed gentry, industrialists, and clergy – were the same as those blocking social reforms and new election laws that forced Swedes to migrate. The best way to make people stay, he argued, would be to improve the social, political, religious, and economic conditions in Sweden. He used the Swedish-American press to push for such reforms.

The texts from Swedish-American newspapers that Kjellberg reprinted in his own paper show few signs of the new journalistic features introduced into American metropolitan dailies during the late nineteenth century. In this respect, the Swedish-American press was more similar to the Swedish papers. Interviews were rare, and headlines were labels rather than news-oriented summaries. As we shall see, Kjellberg was much more experimental in his own newspaper, where he introduced his own brand of "new journalism".

New journalism

Conventional histories of the Scandinavian press have emphasized the idea of the party-political press as the main framework explaining key characteristics of newspaper journalism from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. During periods when political loyalty was the main concern, editors did not prioritize the news, or American inventions. This, according to Høyer (2005, p. 75),

explains why it took half a century for the news paradigm to pass from the USA to Scandinavia.

Yet, an editor such as Kjellberg, regarded as a Swedish pioneer of the partisan press (Johannesson, 2001, p. 201), does not fit this picture. Politics dominated the pages of his paper, but he used elements central to the US news paradigm to cover the topics and edit the texts. Like the muckraker emerging in the American press at the same time, Kjellberg used his paper to expose negligent and corrupt public officials, and what he saw as social and political injustices.

In a handwritten PM, possibly from 1893 (Hellström, 2010, p. 56), Kjellberg explained who his readers were: “Östgöten is edited for the simple folks. They have a hard time reading long essays [...] They prefer to read short news items.” Therefore, the “dry and ‘boring’” news should be kept to a minimum, and he instead gave priority to “stories about fates and misfortunes”. Texts describing meetings and political deliberations should go “directly to the heart of the matter, without expositions” (Kjellberg, n.d.). The result was a paper that followed “American principles”, according to a Swedish-American editor in San Francisco, who explained in a letter to Kjellberg in 1893 that he read *Östgöten* regularly: “It seems to me that you run the paper according to American principles. It is fearless, lively – and spicy, something that cannot be said about Swedish papers in general, which to us Americans appear as boring and old fashioned” (Skarstedt, 1893).

Still, the body text of most news articles published in *Östgöten* during Kjellberg’s active years lack the features of the inverted pyramid. Stories were usually told in chronological order. The headlines, on the other hand, were often of the American kind, summarizing the most important elements of the stories in several rows:

The railway accident.

The former traffic director’s answers to several questions,
Important but tragic revelations about multiple, similar accidents recently
discovered.

A malfunctioning locomotive still in use.

Deceptive signals.

Locomotives and train cars meeting [on the same track].

The train drivers’ resourcefulness is often put to the hardest tests.

A cry of despair from Inspector Björkelund.

A collection among train drivers to hire an attorney for dead train driver
Andersson’s widow.

(24 November 1875).

Knut Wicksell's
lecture.
("Marriage and its future")

Tightly knotted, almost
indissoluble bonds,
or more free
love?

One of the most important cultural
issues: it is discussed in a very
lively way in the thinking
world.

The question is posed on the occasion
of women's position in marriage,
bordering slave-like conditions.

The treatment of Doctor Knut Wicksell
shows with all clarity the scary
madness in that a small
town authority can
ban him from
talking.

(15 June 1887).

Such multi-decker headlines were rare in *Östgöten* in the 1870s and the early 1880s but used on a regular basis from 1887 onwards. They were non-existent in most other Swedish newspapers, and used mainly to illustrate how American papers were edited (cf. Nilsson, 1974, p. 53). When other papers lifted articles from *Östgöten*, they usually reprinted the body text but added more conventional headlines (see, for example, clusters 13524874, 7218139 & 9210968). The standard headline at the time would give the topic ("The parliament") or the location ("Stockholm"), not the story itself (Johannesson, 2001). Similar headlines are found in leading Swedish-American papers from the 1880s and 1890s, like *Svenska Amerikanaren*, *Gamla och Nya Hemlandet*, *Nordstjernan* and others. In his own paper, *Justitia*, Kjellberg had used more colourful headlines, like "Scandal! Scandal! Scandal!", and "Bragging, hypocrisy, and falsehood" (both from 13 May 1871). For the multi-decker headlines in *Östgöten*, however, Kjellberg's inspiration probably stemmed directly from the big metropolitan dailies in Chicago or New York. Like the popular press in the USA, Kjellberg used the new layout to attract the "simple folks" who made up his readership. In his local

adaptation, however, he often arranged individual segments of the headlines into arrow-shapes pointing at the body texts, ensuring that the most important news stood out even more (see the headline from June 1887 above).

Kjellberg did not shy away from leading articles and opinion pieces, but they were often dressed up as sensational news, with polemical headlines capturing the essence of the main text. Below are a few examples to illustrate his technique:

The torture of swine.
Atrocities without limits.
Animals are scalded alive.
It is still not abolished.
But it must come to an end!

(10 March 1890).

That is why the right to vote is necessary.
As long as you don't want Sweden to be a deserted country.
The real truth about immigration.

(25 July 1892).

The last of these examples was a text cut from a Swedish-American paper, but the original headline simply asked: "Why do we emigrate?" (*Arbetaren*, 11 February 1892). The more elaborate headline in *Östgöten* was Kjellberg's own addition.

Apart from the editing, Kjellberg's adoption of the new journalism is most noticeable in his interviews. The method is not always visible in the texts, but there are exceptions. In July 1875, *Östgöten* reported that several buildings in central Linköping were about to be torn down. One of them had already had its upper floors partly demolished when a mother and her five children moved into the ground floor to seek shelter. *Östgöten* sent one of its staff members – probably Kjellberg himself – to "crawl inside" and investigate their situation. What makes this news item stand out is the fact that the mother spoke to readers in her own words.

– Maybe, she said, we can stay here tonight, but then I must take the children out into the woods. [...] I knew the building was about to be demolished, but it was impossible for me to find another home. Another woman staying here is lucky, she has no children. I've tried to support my family by working (washing and the like) but now it's impossible.

Östgöten's representative also spoke to those responsible for the demolition. How long could the family and others sheltering in the

house stay inside, before the roof collapsed? They too were speaking directly to readers, although with a collective voice:

– It depends, they said, on how efficient the workers are: if they only manage to take the top floor apart today, she can stay the night.

(24 July 1875).

In the text itself, the term “interview” was nowhere to be found. Yet, it is hard to label this investigation and the questions that were asked in any other way. Kjellberg was first introduced to the interview method while he was in the USA in the early 1870s (Nilsson, 1975). When he returned to Sweden, he used it regularly to cover local issues in *Östgöten*. In a way, the feedback loop was completed when the Chicago paper *Nya Svenska Amerikanaren* (26 August 1875) reprinted the story about the homeless family, introducing an interview conducted in Sweden for readers in the USA. Journalistic inventions usually travelled in the other direction. The article was also reprinted in Swedish papers (cluster 9767659).

Originating in the USA, the first interviews are dated either to the mid-1830s or the 1860s (Nilsson, 1975; Schudson, 1994). They became widely accepted during the 1880s, when public figures agreed to be interviewed on a more regular basis (Schudson, 2005). In the Swedish press, interviews were rare until the 1880s, and it took a few decades before they became common features (Nilsson, 1975). Kjellberg’s travel writing, published in *Göteborgs-Posten* in 1870, shows traces of the many conversations he had with the people he met. A Swedish settler in Wisconsin, for example, was quoted like this: “My piece of land”, he explained, “is satisfactory for my needs; and it’s a thousand times better that I paid for a small plot in cash, rather than a large one on credit” (*Göteborgs-Posten*, 25 August 1870; additional reprints in clusters 101114879 & 2336458). This conversational style, where ordinary people talked about their situation directly in the text, was something that Kjellberg brought back to Sweden.

In Swedish press history, Kjellberg is recognized as an early adopter of the interview, but his contribution is mainly associated with his interviews with striking workers and the most senior governmental representative in the town of Sundsvall in 1879 (Johannesson, 2001). Published in a Stockholm paper to increase the impact, this was almost certainly the first time in Sweden that a member of the press had received direct answers from a public official (Nilsson 1975). In his own newspaper, however, Kjellberg had already been using the method for a few years.

The interviews in *Östgöten* were not labelled as such in the newspaper itself, and people’s answers were not always reported as direct

speech. As pointed out by Høyer (2005, p. 12), the “news interview is a tool journalists use to retrieve information from information sources and does not necessarily appear in the text as questions and answers.” Kjellberg initiated “inquiries”, made “visits”, and “posed questions”. In 1873, for example, he visited the local jail to investigate the conditions for the prisoners, he asked the workers at the paper mill in neighbouring Norrköping how they were treated by their superiors and visited a local charity that provided housing for poor widows (22 March 1873; 29 March 1873; 19 April 1873). After a fatal railway accident just outside Linköping in November 1875, Kjellberg made inquiries which suggested that the railway company was to blame, rather than individual train drivers. The extensive report was widely circulated, reprinted in full or in part, but never with *Östgöten's* detailed, multi-decker headline, cited above (see clusters 1933858, 8946021, & 6818948). One paper explained to its readers what the news in *Östgöten* was about: Kjellberg had, “as is the custom in the American press, posed questions to the assistant director of traffic, and received calmly stated answers” (*Mariefreds Tidning*, 8 December 1875).

Journalists' ability to interview the powerful is often seen as a significant shift in the dynamics between the press and the government. Kjellberg's interview with a governmental representative in 1879 has been described as an important step in the coming of age of the Swedish press (Nilsson, 1990, p. 48). The idea that the interview is primarily an encounter between a journalist and a public figure also runs through Schudson's (1994) account of the institutionalization of the interview in the USA and Europe. It is not incorrect to understand the importance of the interview in this way, but it is limited. In a context where most news arrived as texts, copied and reprinted from other newspapers and official statements, the voices of public figures spread from column to column. The hybrid that Kjellberg introduced into the Swedish press involved interviews with those who would otherwise remain unheard: the factory workers, the widows, the homeless.

Conclusions

Copy-and-paste journalism created links between Swedish communities across the Atlantic and readers in Sweden. *Östgöten* was a vital node in this exchange network, serving as a platform for Swedish-American news and views in a Swedish context. The newspaper's role in the traffic going from Sweden to the USA was less prominent, but all the major Swedish-American papers reprinted *Östgöten* texts critical of Swedish society.

As a go-between with experience of both countries, Kjellberg acted as a guide, giving advice and updates on American conditions to prospective Swedish migrants. The Swedish-American press also provided him with an outsider's perspective on Sweden. Kjellberg used it as an ally in his campaigns for political reforms, workers' rights, and equality. In Kjellberg's opinion, those who wanted to prevent Swedes from migrating by spreading negative images of the USA were the same as those who blocked democratic and social reforms. By sharing testimonies from Swedish Americans, he was able to show that the political system and inequalities were important reasons explaining why so many had already left.

Kjellberg was no objective journalist merely reporting the facts. He was a political activist and used his paper to promote his agenda. Nevertheless, the methods he used to uncover injustices and corruption borrowed from the new journalism that was then emerging in the USA. Kjellberg was an early adopter of both the interview and a graphical form of layout highlighting the news. The result was not American journalism according to the standard news paradigm, but a hybrid inspired by his work in the USA and his experiences from Sweden.

Taken together, Kjellberg's life history, his movements in the USA and Sweden, and his experiences as a newspaperman in Chicago explain his role in the information network and how he used it in his efforts to democratize and liberalize Sweden.

FUNDING INFORMATION STATEMENT

This work was supported by the Swedish Research Council, project 2021-01216.

NOTES

¹ This ID identifies the cluster of reprinted or overlapping texts in the database "Text reuse in the Swedish-language press, 1645–1918", available at <https://textreuse.sls.fi/>. Matching segments of at least 300 characters in two or more papers are identified by a clustering algorithm, see the section on methods and data. To find the cluster, this search string must be used: "cluster_id:cluster_12744661".

REFERENCES

- Alm, M. (2002). *Americanitis: Amerika som sjukdom eller läkemedel: Svenska berättelser om USA åren 1900–1939*. Lunds Universitet.
- Backlund, J. O. (1952). *A Century of the Swedish American Press*. Swedish American Newspaper Co.

- Barton, H. A. (1994). *A Folk Divided: Homeland Swedes and Swedish Americans, 1840–1940*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Beijbom, U. (1987). The Swedish Press. In S. M. Miller (ed.), *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, (pp. 386–387). Greenwood Press.
- Beijbom, U. (2020). *Press och pennfäktare i Svensk-Amerika*. Emigrantinstitutets vänner.
- Björk, U.J. (2000). The Swedish-American Press as an Immigrant Institution. *Swedish-American Studies*, 51(4), 268–282.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/swe.2000.a940530>
- Blanck, D. (2016). “Very Welcome Home Mr. Swanson”: Swedish Americans Encounter Homeland Swedes. *American Studies in Scandinavia*, 48(2), 107–121.
<https://doi.org/10.22439/asca.v48i2.5454>
- Blanck, D. & Hjorthén, A. 2016. Transnationalizing Swedish-American Relations. *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 7(1), 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.5070/T871030649>
- Bonnier, J. (1870). Letter to Isidor Kjellberg. In Kjellbergs samling 1969:2, vol. 4. Linköpings stifts- och landsbibliotek.
- Broersma, M. (2010). Transnational Journalism History: Balancing Global Universals and National Peculiarities. *Medien & Zeit*, 25(4), 10–15.
- Broersma, M. (2020). Americanization, or: The Rhetoric of Modernity. How European Journalism Adapted US Norms, Practices and Conventions. In K. Arnold, P. Preston & S. Kinnebrock (eds.), *The Handbook of European Communication History*, (pp. 403–419). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119161783.ch22>
- Cordell, R. (2015). Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers. *American Literary History*, 27(3), 417–445.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajv028>
- Cunningham, S. & Sinclair, J. (eds.) (2001). *Floating Lives: The Media and Asian Diasporas*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Düring, M., Romanello, M., Ehrmann, M., Beelen, K. Guido, D., Deseure, B., Bunout, E., Keck J. & Apostolopoulos, P. (2023). impresso Text Reuse at Scale: An Interface for the Exploration of Text Reuse Data in Semantically Enriched Historical Newspapers. *Frontiers in Big Data*, 6, 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fdata.2023.1249469>
- Faist, T. (2000). *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Clarendon
- Garvey, E.G. (2012). *Writing With Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance*, Oxford University Press.
- Hellström, S. (2010). *Isidor Kjellberg och hans tid*. Östergötlands länsmuseum.

- Hoerder, D. (2002). *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium*. Duke University Press.
- Hofmeyr, I. & Peterson, D. R., (2019). The Politics of the Page: Cutting and Pasting in South African and African-American newspapers. *Social Dynamics*, 45(1), 1–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2019.1589333>
- Hickerson, A. & Gustafson, K. L. (2016). Revisiting the Immigrant Press. *Journalism*, 17(8), 943–960.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884914542742>
- Høyer S. & Pöttker H. (ed.). (2005). *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850–2000*, Nordicom.
- Høyer, S. (2005). The Idea of the Book: Introduction. In S. Høyer & H. Pöttker (eds.), *Diffusion of the news paradigm 1850–2000*, (pp. 9–16). Nordicom.
- Jarlbrink, J. (2015). Mobile/Sedentary: News Work Behind and Beyond the Desk. *Media History*, 21(3), 280–293.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2015.1007858>
- Johannesson, E. (2001). Med det nya på väg (1859–1880). In K. E. Gustafsson & P. Rydén, *Den svenska pressens historia, del II: Åren då allting hände (1830–1897)*, (pp. 126–235) Ekerlids.
- Kjellberg, I. (n.d.). P.M. In Kjellbergs samling 1969:2, vol. 1. Linköpings stifts- och landsbibliotek.
- Kälvemark, A-S. (1972). *Reaktionen mot utvandringen: Emigrationsfrågan i svensk debatt och politik 1901–1904*. Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Levitt, P., & Nyberg-Sørensen, N. (2004). The Transnational Turn in Migration Studies. *Global Networks*, 4(3), 207–212.
- Lundell, P., Salmi, H., Edoff, E., Marjanen, J., Paju P. & Rantala H. (eds.). (2023). *Information Flows Across the Baltic Sea: Towards a Computational Approach to Media History*. Mediehistoriskt arkiv.
<https://doi.org/10.54292/s6au8axqht>
- Lundström, G. (2001). En värld in rubriker och bilder (1897–1919). In K. E. Gustafsson & P. Rydén (eds.), *Den svenska pressens historia, del III: Det moderna Sveriges spegel (1897–1945)*, (pp. 22–141). Ekerlids.
- Manning, P. (2013). *Migration in World History*. Routledge.
- Metcalf, A. C. (2006). *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500–1600*, University of Texas Press.
- Meyrowitz, J. & Maguire, J. (1993). Media, Place, and Multiculturalism. *Society*, 30(5), 41–48. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02700289>
- Nilsson, N. G. (1975). “Ära och lof vare interviewandet”: *Studier i tidningsintervjuns historia*. Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen.
- Oiva, M., Nivala, A., Salmi, A., Latva, O., Jalava, M., Keck, J., Parker, J. (2019). Spreading News in 1904: The Media Coverage of Nikolay Bobrikov’s Shooting. *Media History*, 26(4), 391–407.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2019.1652090>

- Pigeon, S. (2016). Steal it, Change it, Print it: Transatlantic Scissors-and-Paste Journalism in the Ladies' Treasury, 1857–1895. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 22(1), 24–39.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13555502.2016.1249393>
- Raj, K. (2016). Go-Betweens, Travelers, and Cultural Translators. In B. Lightman (ed), *A Companion to the History of Science*, (pp. 39–57). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118620762.ch3>
- Salmi, H., Paju, P., Rantala, H., Nivala, A., Vesanto A. & Ginter, F. (2020). The Reuse of Texts in Finnish Newspapers and Journals, 1771–1920: A digital humanities perspective. *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, 54(1), 14–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01615440.2020.1803166>
- Schudson, M. (1994) Question Authority: A History of the News Interview in American Journalism, 1860s–1930s. *Media, Culture & Society*, 16(4), 565–587.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/016344379401600403>
- Schudson, M. (2005). The Emergence of the Objectivity Norm in American Journalism. In S. Høyer & H. Pöttker (eds.), *Diffusion of the news paradigm 1850–2000*, (pp. 19–35). Nordicom.
- Skarstedt, E. (1893). Letter to Isidor Kjellberg. In Kjellbergs samling 1969:2, vol. 4. Linköpings stifts- och landsbibliotek.
- Stephenson, G. M. (1929). Isidor Kjellberg: Crusader. *Swedish-American Historical Bulletin*, August, 31–51.
- Strindberg, A. (1996). *Tjänstekvinnans son III–IV*. Norstedts.
- Söderström, A. (1910). *Blixtar på tidnings-horisonten*. Svenska folkets tidning.
- “Text reuse in the Swedish-language press, 1645–1918”, database available at <https://textreuse.sls.fi>.
- Van Remoortel, M. (2020). Scissors, Paste, and the Female Editor: The making of the Dutch women's magazine *De Gracieuse* (1862–64). *Women's History Review*, 30(4), 555–573.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2020.1773041>
- Vesanto, A., Nivala, A., Rantala, H., Salakoski, T., Salmi, H. & Ginter, F. (2017). Applying BLAST to Text Reuse Detection in Finnish Newspapers and Journals, 1771–1910. In *Proceedings of the 21st Nordic Conference of Computational Linguistics. Gothenburg, Sweden, 23–24 May 2017*.
<http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/133/010/ecp17133010.pdf>
- Williams, A. (1991). *Skrivent i Svensk-Amerika: Jakob Bonggren, journalist och poet*. Uppsala University Press.

JIMMY ENGREN

Senior Lecturer

School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences

Örebro University

jimmy.engren@oru.se

JOHAN JARLBRINK

Associate Professor

Department of Culture and Media Studies

Umeå University

joan.jarlbrink@umu.se

Editorial control, the division of responsibilities, and journalistic autonomy

Historical newsrooms in Britain, Norway and Sweden

AARON ACKERLEY

University of Oslo

Abstract

This article presents a theoretical approach for exploring the role of individual journalists in media history by bringing research on early twentieth century British newsrooms into dialogue with Norwegian and Swedish journalism history. Traditional journalism histories usually took either a ‘great man’ approach focused on a small number of proprietors, editors, or famous columnists, or an institutional approach focused on the character of specific news organisations. The advent of the digital turn in recent years, meanwhile, has elicited a shift to a focus on media content, which can now be easily accessed, searched, and quantified. What has often remained missing is the role of individual journalists who were not famous nor at the top of the editorial hierarchy. Newspapers were hierarchical institutions, and while editorial control was paramount, the way newsrooms functioned also relied on a division of responsibilities, with specific departments and journalists overseeing the creation of specific types of content. Some journalists operated with a surprising amount of autonomy and agency and wielded a surprising amount of influence, including even on their superiors. The article showcases such dynamics via three case studies: financial editors, editors of the women’s page, and foreign correspondents. The article also argues that the theoretical approach provided can profitably guide future research in British and Scandinavian press history.

KEYWORDS

journalism, autonomy, editorial control, media history, transnational analysis

Introduction

Journalistic outputs such as news reports and commentary are the product of journalists, and recognition and understanding of the role of the individual people involved is important. Yet journalism is also, in the majority of cases, produced within the institutional framework of a media organisation. Journalists may work together to produce content, while even seemingly very individual and solitary products such as opinion columns will be edited by sub-editors before being greenlighted for publication. News organisations also tend to be hierarchical organisations, with individual journalists answering to department heads, editors, and in some cases proprietors. The role of the individual journalist and the importance of their contributions within such larger structures can therefore be overlooked, or hard to discern – especially in historic newspapers where the practice of anonymity was used. While notions of journalistic agency and autonomy have been explored in prior research, this article focuses on the autonomy of individual journalists who worked within hierarchical media organisations, to stress the importance of assessing the specific contributions of individuals, the division of responsibilities within media organisations, and the importance of relationships.¹ It offers a theoretical case for why the agency of individual journalists should be centred as a focus of research, and specific insights from existing scholarship to offer supporting evidence.

The article combines theoretical and methodological discussion with explorations of specific historical examples, drawing on my own research and other relevant scholarship. In particular, historic newspapers from early twentieth-century Britain, Norway and Sweden provide material to work through and illustrate important concepts. While there are differences in the histories of the press in Britain and Norway and Sweden, there are also similarities. This includes: the expansion of the size of news organisations which made newspapers require ever larger workforces; the common practice of anonymity which gradually faded in the mid-to-late twentieth century; some of the basic formats and genres evident in the newspapers of each nation; that there was a pronounced shift from a party press to a more commercial press in each nation (though this occurred earlier in Britain); and that newspaper readership penetration was very deep in all three nations by the early-to-mid-twentieth century (Koss, 1984; Weibull, 2013; Dahl, 2016).² Moreover, by drawing on research into journalistic autonomy in the early twentieth century British press and resonant parallels in Norway and Sweden, I will suggest some areas which future research can profitably directed towards in all three nations, and more generally as regards historical scholarship on journalism.

The article begins by discussing relevant concepts such as journalistic agency and autonomy, news values, a newspaper's "voice" or "social personality", and editorial control. It then develops the notion of a "division of responsibilities" within newspapers, and illustrates how this works in practice and how it relates to editorial oversight by focusing on three specific case studies centred on specific journalistic roles and the sections of the newspaper which they produced: Financial Editors (often referred to as City Editors in early twentieth-century Britain) and the City page; Women's Editors, the Women's page and other forms of notionally "feminine" content; and Foreign Correspondents and foreign news and opinion articles. These three case studies have been selected because they informed the development of my theoretical approach, and because they provide instructive areas of both overlap and contrast as regards the dynamic between journalistic autonomy and editorial control, they were each distinctive parts of newspapers' output produced by specific journalists and departments, and each were tied up with notions of specific areas of professional expertise. The section on the City page and financial journalism draws on my own original research on British journalism as it offers some particularly clear examples to illustrate the dynamics I am exploring. The sections on the Women's page and "feminine" content and Foreign Correspondents and foreign news, meanwhile, identify relevant dynamics evident in other scholarship on the UK, Sweden and Norway as well as, in the case of foreign reporting, some supplementary examples from my own research, to showcase the general utility and feasibility of the approach.

It will be shown that despite the editorial hierarchy of news organisations, specific journalists and departments could sometimes wield a surprising amount of autonomy, though this could result from different dynamics. Furthermore, in some cases, their status and expertise meant that certain types of journalists could exert important influence over other figures at their newspapers – extending all the way up to the apex of the hierarchy – and leave an imprint on parts of the newspaper outside of their own direct jurisdiction. This status and expertise could be accrued through experience within journalism, or in some cases from experience and expertise amassed in other prior pursuits – as newspapers have always been melting pots, bringing together a diverse range of individuals from different fields (Ackerley, 2020a; Jarlbrink, 2009). In other cases, most notably in the realm of "feminine" content, it was a lack of attention from proprietors and editors combined with notions of expertise in their specific area, which enabled greater journalistic autonomy. Indeed, the issue of gender and how it impacted journalistic status and agency is a throughline across the three case studies.

Theoretical and methodological contribution

Before proceeding to the historical analysis, it is important to explain how “autonomy” and the associated term “agency” are being conceptualized. Such terms are complex and much debated (Colburn, 2022; Krylova et al, 2023) and have been applied to studies of journalism in a variety of ways. Hanitzsch et al (2010) outline a six-dimensional scale of influences, defined as political, economic, organizational, professional, procedural, and reference groups. Örnebring and Karlsson (2022), meanwhile, sketch out the genealogy of the concept of journalistic autonomy, and focus on seven possible factors, which may infringe upon it: the state, political interests, the market, sources, the workplace, the audience, and technology. Narrowing down into some of these areas, autonomy from the state has long been a fundamental concern of journalists and the news industry: and central to the narratives they tell about themselves, and how they justify their profession (Steel, 2012; Ackerley 2020b; Ackerley, 2023). Autonomy from the market as well as the state has also been stressed as a key concern (Örnebring, 2013a), and there is a large literature on the ways in which market pressures and business concerns shape journalism (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 2008).

Focusing on the dynamics within media organisations, there has also been an influential interpretation that individual journalists tend to lack much in the way autonomy, with control instead mainly residing in the hands of owners, editors and managers who may prioritize business imperatives (Sjøvaag, 2013). In a more nuanced riff on this theme, Glassner and Gunther (2005) argue that journalists may have some autonomy within the newsroom, but that the newsroom is likely to have little autonomy in relation to other parts of a news organization. Other scholars have stressed the important symbolic dividing line which is held to lie – or hoped to lie – between editorial and business sides of newspapers, a particularly prominent idea in the US (Mari, 2014). At the level of individual journalists’ decision and activities, Flegel and Chaffee (1971) point towards various possible influences: editors, readers and audiences, and the personal opinions of journalists themselves. Carpentier (2005), meanwhile, stresses that journalistic autonomy can be conceptualised as having both positive and negative elements: the freedom for journalists to say and publish what they like, and freedom from interference in their work and output. Adding to this picture, there is also the issue of how journalists conceptualize and talk about their own autonomy. Such notions are reflected by some media scholars, where the concept has often been heavily linked to notions of

objectivity and thus seen as a key part of the professional norms of (at least some forms of) journalism (Høyer, 1996; Waisbord, 2013).

This article will explore one specific part of this broader picture of autonomy and agency: the autonomy of journalists as contrasted with editorial (and proprietorial) control. There are specific historical and historiographical reasons why this particular dynamic is of interest, particularly as regards early-twentieth century newspapers. In Britain, this was the supposed era of the press barons, who are popularly viewed as having dominated their newspapers and shaped them solely to their own beliefs and interests, and it remained the era of the party press in Norway and Sweden. However, while this article will argue for the importance of recognising the scope for journalistic autonomy which did exist, there were outside influences on journalists as well. Whether this amounted to an infringement on their autonomy (as implied by some works which class “sources” as an influence over journalistic autonomy), or was part of the way in which the journalists wielded autonomy will be explored. Much of the traditional work on media history in Britain and Scandinavia, as well as in many other nations including the USA, took the form of either ‘Great Man’ or institutional histories (with many early histories being penned by journalists rather than academic scholars) (Carey, 1974; O’Malley, 2002; Eide, 2017, p. 125). Such approaches continue to be evident even in more recent scholarship (Addison, 2015; Freedman, 2021; Hendy, 2022; Potter, 2022; Roberts, 2022). And, aside from the fact that such approaches mirrored the evolution of historical research more generally with its major blindspots and omissions (and, for a longtime media history tended to lag behind developments in the broader field of history) (Curran, 2002), there are some understandable reasons why this has been the case. Individual figures atop the editorial hierarchy of newspapers could and did wield great influence, and institutional cultures and norms shaped journalistic production. But what has often remained missing from the older ‘great man’ and institutionalist approaches as well as the newer digital and content analysis approaches which have become ever more common is the role of individual journalists who were not at the top of the editorial hierarchy, or who were not famed columnists.³

There is a pressing need to examine the role of this large cohort of journalists, who produced much of the content of historical newspapers, and whose role – or even identity, given the practice of anonymity which endured at many titles well into the twentieth century – remains largely overlooked (Lonsdale, 2015). There is also a need to examine such figures holistically, focusing upon both their behind-the-scenes activities as well as the content they produced. As Bingham and Conboy (2013) have noted, historians of the media

“have too often deployed news artefacts without properly considering their distinctive stylistic and institutional traits; scholars of the media, meanwhile, have frequently focused too tightly on the texts themselves without due regard for their social and cultural contexts.” This article suggests how a focus on individual journalists as part of a broader analysis of media organisations can help avoid these traps.

One factor which lends credence to an institutionally-focused approach to journalism history is that media organisations tend to have distinctive characters, or “voices”. Stuart Hall (1978, pp. 60-63; 2021) famously referred to newspapers’ “social personalities”. An influential study of the popular press remarked that the “daily newspaper is governed by the rhythm of day-to-day events”, yet “the air of immediacy is deceptive” because newspapers are already in complex relationships with regular readers (Smith et al, 1975, p. 11). The readership knows to expect certain things: the basic layout of the paper, the types of articles present, and the general style, or “voice”, of the writing held within. Journalists have certain working practices and follow procedures to ensure such continuity is maintained. New innovations are periodically introduced, but the basic nature of a newspaper generally persists for a long time. Having such systems in place also helps journalists deal with the deluge of possible news stories and topics worthy of comment and analysis, allowing them to more easily categorise the mass of material, assign it to dedicated journalists and departments, and institute structures and procedures to utilise it. A visible sign of the specific working practices at a newspaper are the style and content choices that come to define its image. We all know – or think we know – what a newspaper is like. Newspapers – and their readerships – such as the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, the *Sun*, *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, *Klassekampen*, *Aftonbladet*, *Expressen* and so on are all known for their general political stances, but also their tones, aesthetics, and preoccupations. This is part of how newspapers function and attract and maintain an audience: potential customers know what to expect before picking up a newspaper and may even come to have an affinity with its personality. It can also influence recruitment as well, whether as regards journalists or other roles. Margaret Smith recalled that when she went to be vetted in 1951 by the Editor of the *Guardian*, A.P. Wadsworth, after applying for a position as an editorial secretary, as soon as she mentioned she was from a “*Manchester Guardian* reading family” she was in (Guardian Oral History Project/84, Margaret Smith).

Former editor of *The Times* Henry Wickham Steed (1928, p. 10) mused that newspapers aimed to provide content that would give a daily victory over dullness. But, as he explained, “readers’ ideas of

dullness vary... Each journal seeks to minister to the tastes of its specific public, tickling the palates that like to be tickled..." Indeed, newspapers can come to embody a certain distinct character which reflects the broad views and mores of particular demographics – such as the manner in which the *Daily Mail* for a time came to speak for a to a specific kind of middle-class attitude (Jeffrey and McClelland, 1987), or the way different news genres in Danish newspapers helped construct identities, such as those based on social class and national identity (Willig et al, 2024). Moreover, a predilection for certain topics can arise at different newspapers due to the composition of specialist correspondents and institutional contacts that it has amassed – and individual journalists and departments play a key role in acquiring them.

Of course, atop the structure of media organisations sit owners and editors – and such figures, by virtue of their position atop the organizational hierarchy, are extremely important in shaping the general character of their newspapers, via the issuing of specific editorial lines or by setting and policing broader parameters which shape what is permissible. Moreover, such editors and proprietors can leave an imprint on the character of a newspaper which endures long after they are no longer involved. Indeed, there is a wealth of scholarship which highlights the importance of editorial and proprietorial influence in both Britain and the Scandinavian nations (Eide, 2000). Örnebring (2013b), for example, has convincingly showcased how at some nineteenth century newspapers across Europe – with a focus on Britain, Sweden, Germany and Estonia – the small size of newspapers at the time and the lack of a division of labour means editors deserve to have the majority of our focus – though, even then, lower-ranking journalists could still be important. Looking to the twentieth century, many journalists tried to stay loyal to traditions which had been instilled under earlier owners and editors and tried to emulate the style of writing and analysis that they thought was befitting of the newspaper, or tried to maintain consistency with the newspaper's prior ideological and policy positions.

The practice of anonymity played an important role here. In her work on female journalists in Sweden who wrote under pseudonyms, Birgitta Ney posed the question of whether it is actually important to know who was writing specific articles, rather than just focusing on the articles themselves, and concluded that who they were and how their own experiences shaped their journalism should be uncovered (Nye, 2006, p. 32). In the case of her subject's, the choice of pseudonym was used to evoke specific ideas, leading readers to approach their columns in a certain manner. More generally in the history of the press, anonymity was often a means of creating an editorial voice for a newspaper, subsuming the individual writers

into one entity.⁴ It was standard procedure in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries both in Britain and Scandinavia (Liddle, 1997; Salmon, 1997; Dahl, 2016, p. 56), but the use of anonymity and pseudonyms was still widely practised at the quality newspapers during the interwar period in Britain or in the Swedish case even until the 1970s (Ekecrantz, and Thomas Olsson, 1994). Even when full anonymity was not implemented, in the early-twentieth century the *Manchester Guardian* often only supplied opinion pieces and book reviews with initials, a common feature in its and *The Times*'s letters to the editor column as well, with a similar practice used at various Norwegian and Swedish newspapers. While a select group of readers would have been able to work out who the authors were, most readers would have been left in the dark. Full anonymity was maintained for the leading articles, now usually called editorials, at both quality and popular newspapers, a convention that usually persists until today.

Of course, this makes it harder to uncover who was producing journalism but also makes it all more the pressing to identify them, their contributions, and level of autonomy. Newspapers still had a coherent voice beyond the body of articles that lacked clear attribution, encompassing named individuals and even guest contributors and the letters page. While contributors internalised the style and news values of the newspaper and were actively taught how to reproduce it, editorial control was also at play. Sub-editors checked every article to ensure that they conformed to the correct style of the newspaper, both in matters such as grammar and prose style. They could even monitor pieces to ensure they complied with the paper's editorial line. R.D. Blumenfeld (1933, p.100), a veteran of the business and long-serving editor of the *Daily Express*, even went as far as to argue that although the sub-editor was the "unknown soldier" of journalism, they were "the maker of the newspaper in the real sense of the term – in the final form which it reaches the reader".

The personality of a newspaper is thus important and needs to be reassembled and understood, and editorial control plays an important role in it. But conceptualising both as overly monolithic can obscure the amount of diversity that existed within a single newspaper. Different departments, working on different sections of a newspaper, had their own practices and conventions,⁵ and it cannot be assumed that those at the top of the hierarchy paid an equal amount of attention to every part of the publication, whether this was due to their own perceived surfeit or deficit in the requisite skills and knowledge, their evaluation of the importance of different forms of content, or merely time constraints or their personal preferences. Sub-editors would often be engaged in more mundane aspects of copy editing, such as identifying spelling mistakes and grammatical

errors, rather than enforcing editorial lines. A detailed study therefore needs to be undertaken to ascertain who was assigned the task of producing specific types of content, how they achieved this, and what level of editorial oversight they received. The notion of a division of responsibilities is important here, which needs to be appreciated in relation to how editorial oversight was applied, the two being in constant tension. While space is limited and so the theoretical approach cannot be undertaken in an extensive manner, the next section of the article will focus on three case studies to showcase its utility.⁶ Financial Editors, Women's Editors and female journalists producing supposedly "feminine" material, and Foreign Correspondents will be expounded upon to explore how far journalistic autonomy could stretch, its limits, and the different forms that autonomy and influence could take. The first of these case studies will focus mainly on Britain, while the latter two will work through relevant examples from the UK as well as Sweden and Norway.

Financial journalism

By the late-nineteenth century, financial coverage within British newspapers had come to be included on a specific section of a newspaper called the City page, overseen by a City Editor (sometimes running a City office or department) – named this way due to their focus on the City of London, Britain's financial centre. A lot of the content on the City page was based on collection and reproduction of financial data, usually accompanied by short articles discussing news stories relevant to business dealings or the current state of other countries' economies, to guide the investments of readers. Most of the articles took the form of reports, but some element of analysis was also common, especially on topics such as inflation, or wage and price levels – which gave City editors licence to make political interventions, even if this was under the guise of the delivery of merely impartial technical knowledge. Indeed, there was also a pronounced political and ideological leaning evident across most – though not all – City Editors in early twentieth-century Britain: towards classical liberal orthodoxy, which consisted of a belief in the necessity of the Gold Standard, "sound money", fiscal restraint, free trade, and a deep antagonism towards anything deemed socialist (Ackerley, 2019, p. 200). Here we can see something akin to the way news values can be evident across the broader press, rather than merely confined to individual titles. This viewpoint was shaped by the tutelage of fellow City Editors, as well as due to the prevailing beliefs of the main focus of their reporting, the City financiers and banks, as well as in academic economics. Indeed, City editors were

enmeshed in networks of information and intellectual exchange through and beyond journalism, connecting them to financiers and economists. Moreover, City editors also offered, or were sought out for, advice by others working for their newspapers who wished to draw on their technical expertise in a realm which was seen as opaque and confusing. At *The Times*, for instance, long-serving Editor Geoffrey Dawson would ask the City Editor, Courtenay Mill, for his opinion about financial topics, and was reliant on him for appraisals of the health of the economy, analysis of how finance functioned, and for the formulation of appropriate policy. This gave Mill a large amount of influence over the newspaper's general editorial stance on financial and economic issues for the best part of a decade (Ackerley, 2022). Similarly, at the *Manchester Guardian*, Editor Ted Scott held a great reverence for economic expertise, having studied economics himself at the London School of Economics, and would look to this City Editors for advice and guidance (Ackerley, 2019).

Despite City Editors often having a lot of leeway to write analyses within their own section of the newspaper as they saw fit and holding sway over others within their newsrooms, including even Editors, there were still pronounced limits to their autonomy. Mill at *The Times*, for example, increasingly began to clash with senior members of the editorial team such as Deputy Editor Robert Barrington-Ward, as the latter became increasingly focused on new modes of economic thinking and analysis, but also with Dawson as well. A major point of contention arose over Mill's continual resistance to and criticism of the newspaper making reference to the economist John Maynard Keynes, and ultimately Dawson took the side of Barrington-Ward and his close friend and Director of *The Times*, the financier Robert Brand (Ackerley, 2022, pp. 259-63). One source of financial expertise, Brand, came to take precedence over the other, Mill.

At the newspapers of the press barons, Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook, City editors had less room for manoeuvre in general, though their expertise on financial issues and their contacts in the City meant that they were consulted to inform business decisions. Their more restricted autonomy was because both proprietors took great interest in that part of the newspaper and saw themselves as experts in the topic given their backgrounds in accountancy and business respectively. At Rothermere's titles, City editors were generally left to shape their section of the newspaper as they wanted, but only because Rothermere shared their views on most issues of financial orthodoxy (Ackerley, 2019, ch. 5). At the newspapers of Beaverbrook, however, his City editors were often treated with disdain, and when the press baron's own views clashed with financial orthodoxy, such as on the issues of imperial preference versus free

trade and whether policies should focus on raising or lowering wages, his City editors were beaten into submission and forced to support the newspaper's editorial line. In the case of Stanley Walter Alexander, who served as City editor for all three of Beaverbrook's title – the *Daily Express*, the *Sunday Express*, and the *Evening Standard* – this led him to anonymously publish works under the pseudonym Hannibal, where he championed orthodox policies and scathingly lambasted Beaverbrook, and to become involved in pressure groups which promoted classical liberalism (Ackerley, 2019, pp. 76-77, 172).

So, we see a clear distinction between newspapers where there was often a lack of proprietorial interference and where the Editors respected the expertise of their City Editors, and newspapers with powerful proprietors who were especially interested in monitoring financial and economic content because they deemed it centrally important, and because they thought of themselves as experts in these fields. Yet City Editors activities also mattered beyond journalism itself due to their wider activities and networks. Financial journalism was a feature of mainstream newspapers in the Scandinavian nations as well, and although research has been done on more contemporary financial reporting in these nations (Bjerke & Fonn, 2015), such works tend to take a more content analysis-based approach or focus on notions of professional ethics. An assessment of the role and level of autonomy of Financial Editors historically therefore provides a promising avenue for future research, to see if similar dynamics were evident, and if financial journalists were afforded the same status – at least at some titles. How notions of financial expertise interacted with the political affiliations of the press would also be an interesting avenue of inquiry.

Women's pages

As previously noted, the press barons are often held to be the archetypal exemplars of proprietorial dominance and control, and this held true for the coverage of financial and economic topics. Yet by the early-twentieth century, most newspapers in Britain were far too large, with too much information being gathered, and too much content being produced by too many journalists and departments, for any one individual, whether Editor or proprietor, to realistically oversee everything that was published on a daily basis.⁷ This meant that some journalists and departments could undertake their work with a surprising degree of autonomy. This is a distinction that historians often fail to grasp: different sections of a newspaper, written by different journalists, could even promote divergent views. As

Bingham notes when discussing content in newspapers owned by Rothermere that had a focus on life-style issues rather than high politics, particularly articles aimed at a female audience: "Rothermere's dictation of the main political line did not prevent radically different constructions of young women being included: Indeed, editorials were often discreetly subverted elsewhere" (Bingham, 2002, p. 29, 36). The case study from which this insight was drawn contrasted the deeply hostile coverage of 'flappers' – a name given to a certain type of young woman in the 1920s, identifiable by their clothing and behaviours, which were seen to signify a break with traditional gender roles – and the 1928 decision to grant all women over the age of twenty one the right to vote which was evident in editorial columns and political columns, with the much more sympathetic depiction of flappers in lifestyle features and the Women's Page. In this case, it was actually Rothermere's lack of interest in certain forms of content and lack of respect for the journalists who produced it which enable those working on the Women's Page and other parts of the newspaper dedicated to lifestyle features to have greater journalistic autonomy, at least in some form. This was despite such content being seen as important to the financial success of the newspaper, by attracting a demographic which was particularly important for securing advertising revenue: women.

In later decades, supposedly feminine features such as problem pages, and agony aunt and advice columns could also subvert the overall editorial line and political and social views of a newspaper. Phillips (2008, p. 110) has argued that such content often provided an "internal challenge to the masculine discourses of the news page and to the male dominance of the news institution". Though it is important to note that in the post-war decades, the female authors of such columns in Britain had become powerful celebrities in their own right and increasingly valued by editors as a draw for readers. Their autonomy came to be based more on their valued status rather than them being overlooked – and they were able to foreground notions of feminine sexuality and push back against male objectification of women. Yet, as newspapers came to prioritise more overtly sexualised content, exemplified by Rupert Murdoch's *The Sun* and its use of topless models on page three, as well as generally embracing risqué imagery and a tabloidese full of innuendo, agony aunts and other female lifestyle features writers came under closer editorial scrutiny. The Editor of *The Sun*, for example, instructed staff to add a "dirty letter" into the newspaper's "Dear Deirdre" column, while Claire Rayner resigned from the *Sunday Mirror* after an editorial mandate that she print "sexier letters" (Bingham, pp. 57-59).

Similar patterns concerning massively unbalanced gender representation were evident in the early-to-mid twentieth century

Scandinavian press, with women being especially absent from senior editorial roles and often being assigned to specific forms of content. Alongside the eventual introduction of Women's Pages, this also included content such as sensational – often crime related – stories from abroad (Dahl, 2016, pp. 96-97). Early research into women journalists in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Scandinavia press was focused merely on identifying who they were, rather than exploring their actual contributions (Berger, 1977), although certain high profile female journalists such as Wendela Hebbe did receive more attention (Hebbe, 1997). But, as Birgitta Ney notes, while this is an important first step, it is also important to reconstruct their experiences as journalists; the common assumption has been to view the male journalist as the norm, while female journalists historically conformed and deviated from this archetype in interesting ways (Ney, 2006, p. 12).

Ney's (2001a) research explores the ways in which gender shaped the role of women journalists in the early-twentieth century, such as limiting which kinds of public space they could enter – a limit not placed on their male colleagues. Yet, by offering a woman's perspective on the spaces they surveyed, they had agency to shape their reporting in innovative ways. How far such content may have challenged the broader output of the newspapers in which they were published and the press as a whole during the early twentieth century, however, remains unclear, and is worth further research.⁸ Nye does note that female journalists, such as Lotten Ekman, made contributions to newspapers which could challenge editorial agendas, but which can only be uncovered by looking behind-the-scenes at archival and personal records: such as by writing anonymous letters to the editor – sometimes, of a fictitious nature (Nye, 2001a, p. 43). Another important element of the impact of historic female journalists evident in the Swedish case which can only be fully appreciated by looking beyond published newspaper output was their role in networks promoting female enfranchisement. Such female journalists directly helped this issue gain coverage in the media, but they were also part of broader networks centred on the issue, helping with logistical efforts and engaging in social arenas such as salons. In the 1970s, female Swedish journalists were often involved in transnational networks aimed at aiding women in third world nations (Ney, 2001b). The work on female journalists in late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Scandinavia also has some interesting parallels with the British experience when it comes to the ways in which women could enter the profession due to networks and relationships, and especially family links. It was common in Norway for women to enter journalism due to familial links to editors and proprietors so as to contribute to the family business (Dahl, 2016, p. 97),

and similar trajectories can be found in the UK press, such as how Mary Crozier came to work as Women's Editor at the *Manchester Guardian*; her father W.P. Crozier, worked his way up from News Editor to Editor-in-Chief.

Of course, gender imbalances within journalism persist, including in the UK and Scandinavia (Djerf-Pierre, 2007; Sjøvaag & Pederesen, 2018), especially as regard who gets to write about topics which are still viewed as being more important, such as political and economic news and foreign affairs. This suggests a focus on the interplay of the division of responsibilities and editorial oversight, and the ways in which lack of status can in some ways enable greater room for autonomy may be fruitful – especially because, as Sjøvaag (2015) has argued, “soft journalism genres” continues to be overlooked in much journalism research. This includes in Norway, where the lack of such a clear-cut dynamic between a “quality” and a “tabloid” press as is found in Britain means that notions of hard and soft journalism – notions of worthy and unworthy – play out more *within* newspapers, rather than both within and *across* different types of title, which no doubt means the way the division of responsibilities and its interplay with editorial control functioned historically, and functions today, will have a different complexion.

Foreign correspondents

With Foreign Correspondents, the autonomy of the journalist is perhaps most obvious and pronounced.⁹ Indeed, in early-twentieth-century Norway, for example, foreign news was afforded high status, and newspapers such as *Norske Intelligenssedler* and *Morgenbladet* often boasted about how expansive their network of foreign correspondents were (Dahl, pp. 104-05). By virtue of being geographically removed from the newsroom (and hence their Editor and proprietor) and in lieu of the status and sense of expertise which arose from being the person ‘on the spot’ with supposed knowledge of the location where they were based,¹⁰ early-twentieth-century Foreign Correspondents had a lot of leeway to choose which topics to cover and how to write about them. They would be sent requests – or commands – to cover specific topics as well, especially those which obviously had the greatest international significance, or which were of particular interest to their proprietor or Editor. But this still left lot of room for autonomy, which was reinforced by the fact that such correspondents would usually be charged not only with covering major political events, but also economic and cultural affairs. Foreign Correspondents would, for example, often attend cultural events, or choose books from their assigned nation to review.

The papers of Cecil Sprigge, who served as Rome and Berlin Correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, before – somewhat oddly – being transferred to serve as the newspaper's City Editor – are instructive here, richly detailing the multifaceted nature of his activities and his licence to select topics.¹¹ Of course, the material that he wired to Britain would still have to be accepted, and could be altered by the sub-editors – but the choice of topics was often his.¹² Sprigge was also able to spend his time in Italy writing books related to Italian history and other topics, which added to his perceived expertise. It is important to include journalists working for wire agencies when considering this theme, as by the mid-nineteenth century this was a major source of foreign news, and continued to be so throughout the twentieth century and up to the present. An account of how foreign news entered Sweden in the 1960s (Thorén, 1968), for example, showcases just how important the reporting of wire agencies was.

Interestingly, when looking at early-twentieth-century Foreign Correspondents, a similar gendered pattern is evident as was the case in lifestyle feature – although there were exceptions, such as with the pioneering early Swedish female foreign reporter Ida Bäckmann. Her gender was often stressed, because being a woman – and a woman undertaking such overseas reporting in potentially dangerous areas – was a novelty, and presumably a selling point (Ney, 2006, pp. 47-48). As Lonsdale (2021) has documented for Britain, the more usual situation by the early-twentieth century was that women produced content for a range of publications, such as magazines and niche journals, but also mainstream newspapers. They usually worked in a freelance role and were often treated with condescension and as outsiders by male dominated newsrooms, consigned to mainly collecting material for and penning lifestyle and cultural topics. Similar dynamics were evident in Sweden and Norway (Ney, 2006), where female journalists were often assigned the task of assessing and then reformatting foreign news stories for use in specific forms of journalistic genre, including stories involving crime and scandal. But, once again, while constrained in their autonomy in important ways, such female Foreign Correspondents had a lot of autonomy to choose topics and shape news coverage of issues perceived to be “feminine”.

Other female Foreign Correspondents faced similar issues, but managed to attain greater leeway to write about supposedly more “important” and high-status topics as well, at least by the late 1930s. This was the case with Sylvia Sprigge nee Saunders, wife of Cecil, who served as Berlin correspondent for *The Times* and briefly as Rome Correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* after Cecil left the role before they were married,¹³ later served as *Guardian* Rome Correspondent again, and served as a war reporter mainly focused

on Italy during World War II. Surveying her personal documents and correspondence, it is clear that Sylvia enjoyed a similar level of autonomy as Cecil while serving in Rome. When it comes to the history of Scandinavian foreign news reporting and Foreign Correspondents, important work has been undertaken to map out who the relevant journalists were and their backgrounds, but there is a lot of scope to explore just how much autonomy they had to shape foreign news reporting and what kinds of topics they were choosing to focus upon, and the gender dynamics at play (Hovden & Werenskjold, 2019). Due to the nature of news production for radio and television and the logistical concerns, it seems that there was very likely less scope for such journalists to wield the level of autonomy of Foreign Correspondents for the press – and so more work in this area to explore such a comparison would be welcome.

Conclusion

To conclude, this article has made the case that in media and communications research, including journalism history, a useful way to explore journalistic autonomy is to focus on the notion of a division of responsibilities within news organisations, and assess the dynamic of how this interacted with editorial and proprietorial control. The notion of journalistic autonomy presented in this article has been implicit in prior research on the British, Swedish and Norwegian press, but has not previously been foregrounded and developed into a specific theoretical and methodological framework. While other aspects of journalistic autonomy are vitally important to consider, the contributions of individual journalists and the departments they worked within helps complicate notions of a newspaper's voice or social personality and news values – which are undoubtedly important, but which can occlude a nuanced understanding if applied uncritically. The article has showcased that editorial control was always an important feature, and it could in certain respects and for certain types of content, be very strong – but that by looking at specific contexts and dynamics it is evident that individual journalists can have – and have had – a surprising amount of autonomy, at least in specific areas.

The article has provided three short case studies to show the utility of this approach and why it is important to look at press content in a holistic manner beyond just newspapers' published news reporting,¹⁴ and sketched out some areas of overlap between research on the British, Norwegian and Swedish press to suggest areas that could be fruitfully applied to future research in these nations and more in media history research more broadly. In particular, whether

financial journalists held the same status in Scandinavia as in Britain and thus could wield influence more broadly across the publications they worked for, is worthy of exploration – especially given that the existence of a party press rather than an industry dominated by press lords would likely have led to different dynamics as regards how financial expertise was utilized. Some similarities are evident in the way female journalists were able to maintain autonomy in the early twentieth-century British and Scandinavian press, but the way the “hard” and “soft” news dichotomy tended to play out *within* newspapers in Scandinavia rather than *across* quality and tabloid titles as in Britain opens up avenues for future research on the three specific nations, and transnational comparisons of the dynamics at play. The special status accorded to Foreign Correspondents in the early-twentieth century press in Scandinavia and Britain is clearly showcased in prior research, but the extent and limits of their autonomy needs further exploration, especially as regards whether their autonomy remained stable over time. The gendered nature of the dynamics between the division of responsibilities, journalistic autonomy, and editorial control has also been demonstrated in Britain, Norway and Sweden, but such a lens could profitably be applied to other journalistic roles and forms of content production over a longer time period within these nations, and more generally.

Finally, a focus on the importance of individual journalists suggests the need to explore their relationships and networks as well, whether professional or personal, and this provides scope for research taking both a national and a transnational focus.

NOTES

¹ Örnebring (2013b) has explored how this division of labor within journalism expanded across Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, and the process only intensified with the emergence of a truly mass press at the end of the century.

² In Hall and Mancini’s (2004) classic work on “media systems”, Britain was placed under the “Liberal Model” while the Scandinavian nations were placed under the “Democratic Corporatist Model”, and differences such as the higher level of explicit party affiliation throughout the twentieth century were documented for Scandinavia. It is worth noting that similarities between the British and Scandinavian press were also highlighted, such as high rates of newspaper readership and gender equality in newspaper readership, and that the dominance of a metropolitan press was not as pronounced in early twentieth-century Britain as it later became. Similarly, while Syvertsen et al (2014) document the characteristics of Nordic media systems which make them distinctive, their history of the Scandinavian press showcases a lot

of similarities to the evolution of the British press, especially as regards notions of freedom of the press and industry self-regulation.

³ Bingham (2010) discusses issues which arise from a lack of context when relying solely on digital content analyses of newspapers.

⁴ See the view of a leader-writer for the *Standard*, who pointed to the importance of the practice in Edwardian journalism, and at *The Times* under its feted editor John Delane (Escott, 1908).

⁵ Franklin's (2008) volume provides an in-depth overview of different forms of newspaper content and why and how the diverse forms need to be critically engaged with in different ways.

⁶ Ackerley (2019) provides a more extensive consideration of who produced economic and financial content and how and why it was shaped in specific ways.

⁷ Long-serving *Manchester Guardian* editor C.P. Scott, who was seen to shape the paper in line with his own character and values, was far less comprehensive in his editorial oversight of all aspects of the paper than his reputation suggested (Ackerley, 2022, pp. 251-52).

⁸ Indeed, Voss (2018) has explored the ways in which the Women's Page served to report on social change and intersected with and contributed to the women's liberation movement in the post-Second World War decades in a range of Anglophone nations. Kurvinen (2024, pp. 95-99) has also detailed a similar development as regards Women's Pages in Finnish newspapers from the 1970s.

⁹ It is important to acknowledge that it has been showcased that during periods of crisis and war the coverage of international affairs – including by foreign correspondents – by the press of various nations has often been shaped by notions of national interest and political expediency, and thus by state agendas and the discourses of elite actors (Hallin, 1986; Bennett, 1990; Carruthers, 2011).

¹⁰ Hannerz (2007) has foregrounded the cosmopolitanism of many Foreign Correspondents.

¹¹ He was deemed to have the required economic expertise to serve as City Editor after having covered such topics as Foreign Correspondent.

¹² See, for example, the wide range of topics that feature in his letters to editorial staff W.P. Crozier and A.P. Wadsworth, which he usually chose – but with regular requests for specific stories as well (Crozier/Wadsworth Correspondence). A similar dynamic could be seen with the *Express* newspaper's Berlin Correspondent Denis Sefton Delmer. While Beaverbrook often requested specific topics be researched, he respected Delmer's expertise and gave him license to cover the topics the Correspondent found most interesting (Beaverbrook Correspondence, BBK/H/80 and BBK/H/81).

¹³ Sylvia was released from this role in November 1930. While receiving a later expressing commiserations for the *Guardian* Editor Ted Scott, this suggests her status as a woman journalist made her be deemed more expandable (Scott to Saunders, 1930).

¹⁴ Willig et al (2024) note that research into Scandinavian media history was for a long time too narrow in this regard, but this article has discussed some of the work focusing on these lacunae.

REFERENCES

- Ackerley, A. (2019). Economic ideas in the interwar British daily press. Unpublished University of Sheffield Ph.D. thesis.
- Ackerley, A. (2020a). Professional identity. In M. Conboy and A. Bingham (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press, Vol. 3: Competition and Disruption, 1900-2017* (pp. 227-46). Edinburgh University Press.
- Ackerley, A. (2020b). Free speech and the British press. In C.L. Riley (ed.), *The Free Speech Wars* (pp. 143-54). Manchester University Press.
- Ackerley, A. (2022). Radical and/or respectable: Coverage of radical politics in *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* in interwar Britain. *Historical Research*, 95, 240-63.
- Ackerley, A. (2023). Freedom of the press in Britain: From radical to reactionary... to reinvigoration? In J. Steel and J. Petley (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Freedom of Expression and Censorship* (pp. 379-88). Routledge.
- Addison, A. (2015). *Mail Men: The unauthorized history of the Daily Mail*. Atlantic.
- Beaverbrook Correspondence, BBK/H/80 and BBK/H/81, Beaverbrook Papers, Parliamentary Archives, London.
- Bennett, W. L. (1990). Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 40(2), 103-27.
- Berger, M. (1977). *Pennskaft, kvinnliga journalister under 300 år*. Norstedts.
- Bingham, A. (2002). 'Stop the Flapper Vote Folly': Lord Rothermere, the *Daily Mail*, and the equalization of the franchise 1927-28. *Twentieth Century British History*, 13(1), 17-37.
- Bingham, A. (2010). Digitization of newspaper archives: Opportunities and challenges for historians. *Twentieth Century British History*, 21(2), 225-31.
- Bingham, A. (2012) Newspaper problem pages and British sexual culture since 1918. *Media History*, 18(1), 51-63.
- Bingham, A. & Conboy, M. (2013) Journalism and history: Dialogues. *Media History*, 19(1), 1-2.
- Bjerke, P. & Fonn, B.K. (2015). A Hidden Theory in Financial Crisis Journalism? The Case of Norway. *Nordicom Review*, 36, 113-27.
- Blumenfeld, R.D. (1933). *The Press in My Time*. Rich & Cowan.
- Carey, J. (1974) The problem of journalism history. *Journalism History*, 1(1), 3-27.
- Carpentier, N. (2005) Identity, contingency and rigidity: The (counter-) hegemonic constructions of the identity of the media professional. *Journalism*, 6(2), 199-219.
- Carruthers, S. (2011). *The Media at War*. Bloomsbury.

- Colburn, B. (ed.). (2022) *The Routledge Handbook of Autonomy*. Routledge.
- Coward, R. (2008) The monarchy. In B. Franklin (ed.), *Pulling newspapers apart: Analysing print journalism* (pp. 133-43). Routledge.
- Crozier/Wadsworth Correspondence, B/S/307a Box 71, Guardian Collection, John Rylands Library, Manchester.
- Curran, J. (2002). Media and the Making of British Society, c. 1700-2000. *Media History*, 8(2), 135-54.
- Dahl, HF. (2016). *A History of the Norwegian Press, 1660-2015*. Manchester University Press.
- Djerf-Pierre, M. (2007). The Gender of Journalism: The Structure and Logic of the Field in the Twentieth Century. *Nordicom Review*, 28, 81-104.
- Ekecrantz, J. & Olsson, T. (1994). *Det redigerade Samhället*. Carlssons.
- Eide, M. (2000). *Den redigerende makt: Redaktørrollens norske historie*. Høyskoleforlaget.
- Eide, M. (2017). The power of editing. *Nordicom Review*, 23(1-2), 125-36.
- Escott, T. (1908). John Delane and modern journalism. *Quarterly Review*, 209, 524-48
- Flegel, R. C. & Chaffee, S. H. (1971). Influences of editors, readers, and personal opinions on reporters. *Journalism Quarterly*, 48(4), 645-651.
- Franklin, B. (ed.). (2008). *Pulling Newspapers Apart: Analysing Print Journalism*. Routledge.
- Freedman, D. (2021). *Capitalism's Conscience: 200 Years of the Guardian*. Pluto Press.
- Glasser, T. L. & Gunther, M. (2005). The legacy of autonomy in the American press. In G. Overholser & K. H. Jamieson (eds.), *The Press* (pp. 384-399). Oxford University Press.
- Guardian Oral History Project/84 Margaret Smith, The Guardian News and Media Archive, London.
- Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J. & Roberts, B. (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*. Macmillan.
- Hall, S. (2021). The social eye of *Picture Post*. In C. Brunsdon (ed.) *Writings on Media: History of the Present*. Duke University Press.
- Hallin, D. C. (1986). *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*. University of California Press.
- Hallin, D. C. & Mancini, P. (2004) *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hanitzsch, T., Anikina, M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I., Coman, M., Hamada, B., Hanusch, F., Karadjov, C. D., Mellado, C., Moreira, S. V., Mwesige, P. G., Plaisance, P. L., Reich, Z., Seethaler, J., Skewes,

- E. A., Vardiansyah, D. N., & Yuen, K. W. (2010). Modeling perceived influences on journalism: Evidence from a cross-national survey of journalists. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 87(1), 5-22.
- Hannerz, U. (2007). Foreign Correspondents and the Varieties of Cosmopolitanism. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 33(2), 299-311.
- Hebbe, B. *Wendela: En modern 1800-talskvinna*. Natur och Kultur.
- Hendy, D. (2022). *The BBC: A People's History*. Profile Books.
- Herman, E.S. & Chomsky, N. (1988) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon Books.
- Høyer, S. (1996). Can “objectivity” save the autonomy of journalism? Some critical remarks. *Javnost-The Public*, 3(3), 73-80.
- Hovden, J.F. & Werenskjold, R. (2019). The Cold War reporters: The Norwegian foreign-news journalists and foreign news correspondents, 1945-1995. In Basiansen, H.G., Klimke, M. & Werenskjold, R. (eds.). *Media and the Cold War in the 1980s: Between Star Wars and Glasnost* (189-221). Palgrave.
- Jarlbrink, J. (2009). Det våras för journalisten: Symboler och handlingsmönster för den svenska pressens medarbetare från 1870-tal till 1930-tal. Mediehistoriskt.
- Jeffrey, T. & McClelland, K. (1987). ‘A World Fit to Live In’: The *Daily Mail* and the middle classes 1918–39. In Curran, J., Smith, A. & Wingate, P. (eds.). *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth Century* (pp. 27-52). Routledge.
- Koss, S. (1984). *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: Vol. 2, The Twentieth Century*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Kurvinen, H. (2024). *Feminism in Finnish Print Media, 1968–1985*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Liddle, D. (1997). Salesmen, sportsmen, mentors: Anonymity and mid-Victorian theories of journalism. *Victorian Studies*, 41(1), 31-68.
- Lonsdale, S. (2015). Man of letters, literary lady, journalist or reporter? *Media History*, 21, 265-79.
- Lonsdale, S. (2021). The ‘awkward’ squad: British women foreign correspondents during the interwar years. *Women's History Review*. 31(3), 387-407.
- Mari, W. (2014). ‘Bright and inviolate’: Editorial–business divides in early twentieth-century journalism textbooks. *American Journalism*, 31(3), 378-399.
- Krylova, A.Y., Sewell, W., Walkowitz, J., Eley, G. Zimmerman, A. & Tejada, V. (2023). The agency dilemma: A forum. *American Historical Review*, 128, pp. 883-37.
- Manchester Guardian (1921) A Century of History. *Manchester Guardian*, 5 May 1921, 48.

- McChesney, R.W. (2008). *The Political Economy of the Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas*. New York University Press.
- Ney, B. (2001a). The woman reporter goes street haunting: On the work of women reporters in the Swedish daily press 1900–1910. *Media History*, 7(1), 41–46.
- Ney, B. (2001b). Osynliga förbindelser: Om kvinnliga journalisters dolda insats i rösträttskampen. In Jönsson, C. (ed.). *Rösträtten 80 år: forskarantologi* (pp. 33–42). Justitiedepartementet.
- Ney, B. (2006). *Kvinnosaken i pressen - kvinnor, journalister och tidningstexter*. Centrum för genusstudier.
- O'Malley, T. (2002). Media history and media studies: Aspects of the development of the study of media history in the UK 1945–2000. *Media History*, 8(2), 155–73.
- Örnebring, H. (2013a). 'Anything you can do, I can do better? Professional journalists on citizen journalism in six European countries. *International Communication Gazette*, 75(1), 35–53.
- Örnebring, H. (2013b). Journalism as institution and work in Europe, circa 1860: A comparative history of journalism. *Media History*, 19(4), 393–407.
- Örnebring, H. & Karlsson, M. (2022). *Journalistic Autonomy: The Genealogy of a Concept*. University of Missouri Press.
- Phillips, A. (2008). Advice columnists. In Bob Franklin (ed.). *Pulling Newspapers Apart: Analysing Print Journalism* (102–11). Routledge.
- Pierson, P. (2004). *Politics and Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton University Press.
- Potter, S. (2022). *This is the BBC: Entertaining the Nation, Speaking for Britain, 1922–2022*. Oxford University Press.
- Roberts, A. (2022). *The Chief: The Life of Lord Northcliffe Britain's Greatest Press Baron*. Simon & Schuster.
- Salmon, R. (1997). Simulacrum of power: Intimacy and abstraction in the rhetoric of then journalism. *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 30(1), 41–52.
- Scott to Saunders, 21 November 1930, Ms1703/215, Cecil Jackson Squire and Sylvia Sprigge Collection, University of Reading Special Collections, Reading.
- Sjøvaag, H. (2013). Journalistic autonomy: Between structure, agency and institution. *Nordicom Review*, 34(1–2), 155–166.
- Sjøvaag, H. (2015). Hard news/soft news: The hierarchy of genres and boundaries of the profession. In M. Carlson & S.C. Lewis (eds.) *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practice and Participation* (pp. 101–116). Routledge.
- Sjøvaag, H. & Pedersen, T.A. (2018). Female voices in the news: Structural conditions of gender representations in Norwegian newspapers. *Journalism & Mass Communications Quarterly*. 96(1), 215–38.

- Smith, A.C.H., Immirzi, E. & Blackwell, T. (1975). *Paper Voices: The Popular Press and Social Change 1935-65*. Chatto & Windus.
- Steel, J. (2012). *Journalism and Free Speech*. Routledge.
- Syvertsen, T., Enli, G., Mjøs, O. J. & Moe, H. (2014). *The Media Welfare State: Nordic Media in the Digital Era*. University of Michigan Press.
- Thorén, S. (1968). The Flow of Foreign News into the Swedish Press. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 45(3), 521-533.
- Voss, K.W. (2018). *Re-Evaluating Women's Page Journalism in the Post-World War II Era: Celebrating Soft News*. Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Waisbord, S. (2013). *Reinventing professionalism: Journalism and news in global perspective*. Polity.
- Weibull, L. (2013). Är partipressen död eller levande? Reflexioner från ett presshistoriskt seminarium. *Nordicom Information*, 35(1-2), 37-48.
- Whelan to Robertson, 28 April 1929, BBK/H/66, Beaverbrook Papers, Parliamentary Archives, London.
- Wickham Steed, H. (1928). *Journalism*. E. Benn Limited.
- Willig, I., Bengtsson, M., Blach-Ørsten, M. & Jørndrup, H. (2024). So much more than news: Revisiting press epochs from an explorative study of non-news genres in Danish newspapers, 1918–2018. *Nordicom Review*, 45(1), 35-55.

AARON ACKERLEY

Senior Lecturer

Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages

University of Oslo

a.m.ackerley@ilos.uio.no

Kvinnliga journalister i Spanska inbördeskriget

En fallstudie

EVA ÅSÉN EKSTRAND

Högskolan i Gävle

Abstract

Efter att general Franco utropade sig som segrare i spanska inbördeskriget 1 april 1939, inleddes nästan fyrtio år av totalitärt styre. Pressen och radion formade bilden av konflikten: den undermåligt beväpnade folkfronten mot Francos officerare och legosoldater som stöttades av Hitler och Mussolini. Men segrarens historia vann inte kampen om berättelsen om inbördeskriget. Den dominerades av de förlorades perspektiv, av republikens förespråkare, författare, konstnärer och journalister. I fallstudien studeras två svenska kvinnliga journalister, tillika aktivister, bland flera hundra som reste till Spanien. De skrev utifrån ett engagerat narrativ samtidigt som de skildrade kriget enligt journalistiska ideal. Med tiden har dessa ideal förskjutits, vilket jag försöker visa i analysen av deras självbiografiska skildringar. Syftet med fallstudien är att bidra till studiet av kvinnliga journalisters berättelser som historisk källa till Spanska inbördeskriget.

KEYWORDS

aktivism, memoarer, new journalism, barnhem, antifacism, komintern

Inledning

Undoubtedly future historians will puzzle over the lessons that were never learned from the first world war... they will have to turn to Spain in 1936 for the first rumble of gunfire to break the stillness of the European continent; and it is in Spain that my story begins.

(Virginia Cowles, 1941).

Amerikanska journalisten Virginia Cowles, inledde sin ögonvittnesskildring med att beskriva hur den växande fascismen i Europa på allvar bröt igenom, då general Francos väpnade trupper revolterade mot den demokratiskt valda regimen i Spanien, sommaren 1936. Hon var en bland många journalister och konstnärer som skyndade till frontlinjerna för att skildra händelserna. Pressen och radion formade bilden av konflikten, av de bägge sidornas kamp och utgången av striderna: den undermåligt beväpnade folkfronten mot Francos officerare och legosoldater som stöttades av Hitler och Mussolini. Det ledde till att "El Caudillo"¹ kunde utropa sig till segrare 1 april 1939. En nästan fyrtio år lång period av totalitärt styre inleddes.

Men segrarens historia vann inte kampen om berättelsen, den dominerades alltsedan inbördeskriget bröt ut av republikens förespråkare. Hemingway, Orwell, Koestler och Capa för att nämna några. Berättelsen har ibland fått drag av romantik som filmatiseringen av romansen mellan Ernest Hemingway och Martha Gellhorn i *Hemingway & Gellhorn* (2012) och *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943), medan Ken Loach film *Land and Freedom* (1995) skildrar kvinnornas frigörelse och deltagande i samhällslivet, av kollektiviseringarna av jordbruket samt ger en bild av de interna, politiska striderna inom folkfronten. Protagonisten i Loachs film var i realiteten en av fler än trettiotusen frivilliga från hela världen som begav sig till Spanien för att strida mot Franco. De som valde rebellernas sida var betydligt färre.

I dag, närmare nittio år senare har den förlorande sidan i kriget långsamt vänts till den segrande i Spanien. Den processen inleddes 1978 då demokrati infördes och en ny konstitution antogs, tre år efter Francos död.

Källorna till historien om det spanska inbördeskriget utgörs i hög grad av dåtidens journalistik. Den här artikeln lämnar ett bidrag till journalistikens historiografi, genom fokus på två kvinnliga, svenska journalister, som var där och senare skildrade vad de sett och upplevt i sina självbiografier.

Anna Lenah Elgström har jag tidigare stött på i studier av Spanska inbördeskriget och intresserats av hennes aktivism samtidigt som hon var journalist. En hållning som strider mot dagens ideal om objektiv och konsekvensneutral journalistik. Gusti

Stridsberg mötte jag i samband med mitt avhandlingsarbete (Ekstrand, 2007) om den socialdemokratiska kvinnotidskriften *Morgonbris*, där hon skrev artiklar om kvinnokampen och krigets offer. Bägge hade de bevittnat krigets fasor på plats, vilket de skildrat på olika sätt i sina memoarer.

Bägge var involverade i både journalistiskt och humanitärt arbete, i en gråzon mellan aktivism och journalistik som de själva varken problematiserade eller framställde som något dilemma i sina minnen av kriget i de självbiografiska verk som ligger till grund för analysen.

Ett gemensamt drag är att de innan kriget hade tagit moralisk ställning mot fascismen samtidigt som de hade underförstådda anspråk på att skildra kriget i enlighet med journalistiska ideal som opartiskhet, objektivitet och fakticitet. Med tiden har dessa ideal förskjutits, vilket jag försöker poängtera i en analys av deras självbiografiska och litterära skildringar.

Det andra gemensamma draget är att de skrev om kriget utifrån ett *engagerat narrativ*. Den bakomliggande frågan i studien är *hur* de skrev om kriget och hur de samtida journalistiska idealen påverkade deras *stil*.

Inledningsvis diskuteras tidigare forskning och den teoretiska utgångspunkten, därefter följer befintliga källor, metodologi och val av analysmetod. Analysen vägleds av hur de journalistiska idealen kom till uttryck och det presenteras interfolierat under respektive namn. I konklusionen diskuteras hur deras yrkesroller och verk kan förstås mot bakgrund av de historiska processer de omslöt av.

Spanska inbördeskriget och kvinnliga krigsreportrar

Studier av kvinnliga krigsreportrar är ett forskningsområde som är eftersatt i Norden. Det kan ha sin förklaring i att artonhundratalets krigsrapportering ansågs vara en manlig affär vilket satte normerna för genren, till hinder för - och osynliggörande av - kvinnliga journalister. Men kvinnliga reportrar från såväl krigsförande som neutrala länder fanns på plats redan före och under första världskriget (Seul, 2019). En tidig svensk krigskorrespondent var till exempel Eira Hellberg som rapporterade från Balkan 1912 i *Aftonbladet*. I annan press raljerades typiskt över hennes manliga klädsel (Ney, 2021).

Det finns en rik skandinavisk och internationell litteratur skriven av överlevande frivilliga soldater från de Internationella brigaderna. Mycket finns samlat i föreningar som fortfarande har inflytande över formandet av narrativet². Men när det gäller vetenskapliga studier är situationen en annan (Heiberg, 2014). Vid sidan av militärhistoriska verk finns endast ett fåtal akademiska studier inom de

samhällsvetenskapliga och humanistiska områdena. Här bör nämnas Bertil Lundviks avhandling om arbetarrörelsens förhållande till spanska inbördeskriget (Lundvik, 1980), Kaj Lundgreen-Nielsens avhandling om den danska pressens bevakning av inbördeskriget (2001) och Peix Geldarts avhandling om de diplomatiska förbindelserna mellan Sverige och Spanien under trettioalet (2013). Ett visst forskningsintresse inom de nordiska journalistik-, medie- eller genusvetenskaperna har visat sig i Dahl och Werenskjolds bibliografi över nordisk forskning om spanska inbördeskriget (Dahl & Werenskjold, 2022) och i boken *Ekko fra Spania* som innehåller en lista över journalister som rapporterade om kriget, däribland ett antal kvinnliga (Dahl, Hagtvet, & Werenskjold, 2019).

Av hundratals kvinnliga journalister från hela världen, utgjordes ett drygt tiotal från de nordiska länderna. Från Danmark Klara Andrassy, Ruth Berlau, Carmen Bud och Karin Michaëlis; från Norge Gerda Grepp och Lise Lindbæk och från Sverige Barbor Alving, Sonja Branting Westerståhl, Anna-Lenah Elgström, Maja Funseth, Gusti Jirku alias Alexandra Stridsberg, Dagmar Klingensstierna, Karin Lannby, Margit Manus, Kajsa Rothman, Anna Schröder, Maria/Maja Lessak och Viola Wahlstedt (Diaz Nosty, 2023; *Internationale Frauen im Spanischem Krieg 1936-1939*, n.d.)

Vissa var utsända av sina redaktioner, men de flesta reste på egna initiativ som frilans, en av dem var Kajsa Rothman som har uppmärksamrats både nationellt och internationellt. Hon var i lika hög grad aktivist som journalist och en av de språkkunniga som hjälpte till med översättningar och kontakter i Telefónicas byggnad i Madrid. Hon arbetade som sjuksköterska i de internationella brigaderna, skrev artiklar för *Karlstads-Tidningen*, talade i propagandastationen *Radio Madrid*, engagerade sig för flyktningbarn, gav ut en bok med teckningar av dessa barn och propagerade för republiken på en Sverigeturné. Dessutom arbetade hon med pressavdelningarna i Madrid och Valencia (Kölbl, 2021; Dalin, 1999; Cowles, 1941; Lloris, Myklebust, & Swan, 2022; Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner, 2021). Även Barbro Alving, vars betydelse i kvinnliga krigsreportrars historia är omvitnad, deltog som så många andra aktivt i solidaritetsarbetet för Spanien sedan hon återvänt till Stockholm.

I vänsterpressen rapporterade Margit Manus och sedermera Anna Maria Schröder, alias Maja Lessak redan från den första dagen (Lindblom, 2022). Några samlade uppgifter om vilka som befann sig på den andra sidan och skrev för nordisk pro-fascistisk press, saknas i skrivande stund.

I motsats till den nordiska är den internationella forskningen om de kvinnliga krigskorrespondenterna tämligen omfattande. Särskilt intressant är *Periodistas extranjerias en la guerra civil* av Bernardo Diaz Nosty (2023). Den innehåller biografiska uppgifter om 185

kvinnliga journalister från 26 olika nationer, inklusive de nordiska länderna.

Det gemensamma draget hos de kvinnliga journalisternas rapportering var att de skildrade följderna av kriget hos den civila befolkningen i större utsträckning än vad de manliga kollegerna gjorde (Diaz Nosty, 2022). De senare betonade i högre grad hur kriget utvecklades på slagfälten, på framgångar och motgångar för de olika vapenslagen, vilket följde ett traditionellt könsrollsmönster: manliga "battlefield reporters" vs kvinnliga "human interest journalists" (Valis, 2017; Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner, 2021).

Diaz Nosty framhåller till exempel norska Gerda Grepps rapportering om det mänskliga lidandet av kriget som drabbade både soldater och civila (Diaz Nosty, 2022). Idag skulle det ha betecknats som krigsbrott. I *Arbeiderbladet* den 16 december 1936 rubriceras hennes artikel "MADRID-bombardementet er ikke krig, det er mord"³. Ett annat exempel är Barbro Alvings rapportering. Den traditionella bilden av kriget som rader av vita kors på slagfälten byttes i hennes reportage till bårhus fyllda av kvinnor och barn (ibid.). I Alvings självbiografi *Det kom aldrig i tidningen* (1961) beskriver hon i korta drag resan ner till Spanien och några dagar i Madrid samt reflekterar över journalistiken som nutidshistoria. Se också kapitlet Krigsreportern i Kristina Lundgrens avhandling (Lundgren, 2002; Carlomagno, 2001; Yrlid, 2006).

Frivillighet är ett nyckelord i berättelsen om spanska inbördeskriget. De så kallade Spanienfrivilliga var män som kom resande från världens alla hörn för att bekämpa fascismen i solidaritet med det spanska folket. Det gällde även de två journalister jag valt ut, Anna Lenah Elgström och Gusti Stridsberg. De var inte utsända av någon medieorganisation, den förra reste på uppdrag av en hjälporganisation, den senare var frivillig hjälparbetare utan formellt mandat från någon medieorganisation. Som Kevin Williams (2012) skriver är beteckningen krigskorrespondent flytande och möjligen omgärdad av myter, till exempel att man rapporterar direkt från skyttegravarna vid fronten. I det här fallet är det mer adekvat att använda de bägges egna beteckningar, journalister. De besökte i och för sig fronterna och intervjuade de stridande soldaterna, men det var som journalister de beskrev sig själva i memoarerna, inte som krigsreportrar.

De flesta frivilliga transporterades från Paris via Barcelona till de internationella brigaderna genom folkfrontens försorg. De som rapporterade från fronten ledsagades som "embedded journalists" oavsett vilken sida det gällde.

Allteftersom den militära kontrollen över de olika områdena skiftade, så ritades kartan om (Beevor, 2006). Madrid höll emot in i det sista. Där fanns den för journalisterna så viktiga Telefónica-

byggnaden som låg i republikanernas händer och varifrån de kunde telegrafera sina artiklar sedan de passerat censuren.

Teoretisk utgångspunkt

Avhandlingen *Female Correspondents Covering the Spanish Civil War. Assessment of Journalistic Quality and Partiality from a Comparative Perspective*, av Renée Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner (2021) ligger närmast temat för denna artikel och utgör en huvudsaklig referens.

Hon skiljer mellan *normativa* definitioner och *icke-normativa* definitioner av journalistik i sin översikt av utvecklingen sedan mitten av 1800-talet och i takt med att yrket professionaliserades. De förra framhåller den objektiva journalistikens betydelse för demokratin i ett öppet och fritt samhälle. Anna Lenah Elgströms skildring av kriget hör hemma i den kategorin, medan Gusti Stridsberg snarare motsvarar den icke-normativa journalistik som pragmatiskt utgår från sin historiska kontext. När hon skrev *Mina fem liv* hade det gått drygt tjugo år sedan hon lämnat Spanien och sextiotalets New Journalism hade börjat spridas utanför sin amerikanska kontext, där författare som Tom Wolfe och Hunter S Thompson anammat en stil som bröt mot de traditionella, opersonliga och objektiva journalistiska idealen. Utmärkande för den nya amerikanska stilen var journalistens subjektiva upplevelser, skildrade i scener, dialoger och med inslag av fiktion (Hartsock, 2000).

Den anglosaxiska pressens journalister framhöll tidigt den snabba nyhetens betydelse, medan de nord- och centraleuropeiska journalisterna såg som sitt uppdrag att förse läsarna med världsåskådningar, gärna med kritiska och litterära ambitioner.

Objektivitetsfrågan

Gemensamt för historikern och journalisten är betoningen av fakta och objektivitet. Den stora skillnaden är vilken tid de har på sig att bedöma sina källor. Journalisten som fångar ögonblicket i en intervju å ena sidan och historikern som oberoende av händelseutvecklingen på plats eller av produktionscykeln på redaktionerna, kan begrunda fakta och värdera utifrån olika perspektiv. En aspekt av inbäddningsproblematiken - till exempel att man blir vän med dem man är satt att bevaka - motverkas av memoarens tidsmässiga distans som ger plats för reflektion och kritisk tillbakablick.

Är det över huvud taget möjligt att vara objektiv och opartisk när man står inför mänskliga katastrofer som utspelas framför ögonen? Nej, hävdade BBC-journalisten Martin Bell som rapporterade från

inbördeskriget i Bosnien på nittonhundranittioalet och gav ett exempel som blivit omdiskuterat. Han var placerad bredvid en krypskytt som bad honom välja vilken av de två civila, som han hade på kornet, som han skulle skona. När svaret från journalisten uteblev sköt soldaten ner bägge.

Den påtvingade känslan av skuld fick Bell att ändra inställningen till krigskorrespondentens uppdrag från objektiv förmedlare av fakta till att förespråka en "journalism of attachment". Journalisten som befinner sig i moraliskt sett prekära situationer bör följa sin egen moraliska kompass. Det har inte stått oemotsagt. Under 1990-talet riktades kritik mot "attached journalism" som alltför emotionellt och motsatsen till objektiv journalistik samt med risk för kampanjjournalistik (McLaughlin (2016).

Ett annat exempel som ligger närmare ämnet för artikeln, är frågan om neutralitet i så kallade asymmetriska konflikter där styrkeförhållandet mellan de stridande parterna är påfallande ojämnt, så som fallet var i Spanien. Hur nära låg det inte att ställa sig på den demokratiskt valda republikens sida, vars militära resurser var underlägsna den fascistiska. Men "Den antifascistiska kampens ideal gjorde dem [journalisterna] blinda inför krigets många obehagliga sidor.", skriver Anthony Beevor (2006, Propagandakriget och de intellektuella). Bestialiska övergrepp och avrättningar utan rätttegång skedde på bägge sidor.

Stora amerikanska, franska och brittiska tidningar sände sina krigskorrespondenter som återsåg varandra på plats efter plats, vilket bland andra Martha Gellhorn beskrev efter kriget. Alla alarmerande, sakliga och objektiva rapporter om den framväxande fascismen som hon och hennes kolleger försett sina redaktioner och läsare med, hade inte gjort någon skillnad. "Gradually I came to realize that people will more readily swallow lies than truth, as if the taste of lies was homey, appetizing; a habit" (Gellhorn, 1959, Introduction).

Vännen och kollegan Virginia Cowles beskriver samma sak, hur lögn användes systematiskt mellan de stridande parterna i propagandasyfte. Hon tillbringade tid både i republikanskt område i Madrid, i skyttegravarna hos internationella brigader som stred för demokrati, och på den nationalistiska sidan. Inte ens uppenbara lögners förmådde ändra tilltron till berättelserna i propagandan på respektive sida.

I sällskap med en pressofficer på den nationalistiska sidan besökte Cowles den baskiska byn Guernica strax efter den tyska Condorlegionens bombardemang av staden. Hennes ledsagare hade hävdat att det var republikanerna, "de röda", som satt eld på och bränt ner staden, medan det i själva verket förhöll sig tvärt om. Inte ens när en invånare vittnade om terrorn, lät sig pressofficeren

övertygas, det var bara lögnaktig republikansk propaganda och vittnet var en av "de röda" (Cowles, 1941, s. 71 ff).

Var det samma insikter som Anna Lenah Elgström bar på när hon skrev *Innan det blir för sent?* att fakta och sanningen om sakförhållandena som journalisterna förmedlade inte räckte som varningsklockor mot fascismen?

Källornas betydelse för det pro-republikanska narrativet

Pressen och radion utgör de väsentligaste källorna till det narrativ som etablerades tidigt i de västerländska länderna. Den svartvita bilden av två stridande parter, den ena god (republikanerna) och den andra ond (Francosidan), har med tiden nyanserats och tillförts nya dimensioner i takt med att arkiven har öppnats och tillgängliggjorts för forskare.

Flera universitet, till exempel universitetet i Barcelona⁴ och franska Sorbonne⁵ driver forskningsprojekt rörande inbördeskriget och har upprättat databaser som utgör källor till en alltjämt pågående dokumentation av kvinnorna som deltog som journalister, frivilliga volontärer och aktivister.

På internet finns även databaser som inte administreras av universitet eller andra institutioner inom forskarsamhället, utan av exempelvis stiftelser⁶, fackförbund (transport), politiska (kommunistiska/syndikalistiska) partier och föreningar, till exempel Svenska Spanienfrivilliga i Sverige⁷ och utomlands, samt rent privata initiativ⁸.

Ingen av de nämnda kan sägas vara *intresselösa* i meningen opartiska. I vilken mån de offentliga universiteten i Spanien också hör dit, kan diskuteras. Påståendet motiverar en liten utveckling.

Kulturdepartementet i Spanien har i sitt uppdrag att främja utbildning och forskning om inbördeskriget och bevara, samt tillgängliggöra, arkiv och monument kopplade till detsamma. En annan uppgift är att främja sökandet efter massgravar med personer som stupat under och efter inbördeskriget. Den amnesti som den tillträdande regeringen utfärdade 1978 har använts av högerpartierna, så som Vox, för att motsätta sig att man bokstavligen gräver fram historien. Det öppnar sår som hindrar försoning hävdas det å ena sidan, medan den motsatta ståndpunkten är att försoning inte kan ske förän offren fått upprättelse. Här står motsatta politiska intressen mot varandra vilket kommer att ha betydelse för arkivens framtida vara eller icke vara. Det ligger således i republikens arvtagares politiska intresse att värna om lagen om det historiska minnet och därmed om det pro-republikanska narrativet.

Metodologiska utgångspunkter

Ett metodologiskt problem inom journalistikens historiografi har dels varit tillgängligheten på nyhetsmaterial och hur man ska ställa sig till sanningshalten i memoarer och andra litterära verk. Det förra problemet har avsevärt underlättats av digitaliseringen av nyhetsmedia men skapat andra problem till exempel sökmotorernas selektering. Det senare problemet kan hanteras genom jämförelser med militärhistoriska och andra officiella källor (Williams, 2012).

I denna fallstudie är det inte i första hand sanningshalten i historien som står i fokus, utan tyngdpunkten ligger på *hur* de bägge starkt involverade författarna skrev om kriget och hur de samtida journalistiska idealen påverkade deras *stil*. Det sker genom en närläsning av utdrag ur de valda verken *Innan det blir för sent* av Anna Lenah Elgström (1940) och *Mina fem liv* av Gusti Stridsberg (1961). Bägge skrevs efter att författarna lämnat Spanien och bygger på anteckningar och minnen. Elgströms bok tämligen snart efter hemkomsten medan Stridsberg gav ut *Mina fem liv* många år efter Spanienvistelsen. Under de dryga tjugo åren som förflöt mellan publikationerna hade de journalistiska idealen förändrats.

Journalistik och självbiografiskt skrivande är två olika genrer, som mer eller mindre sammanfaller i de texturval jag gjort. Redan nämnda Martha Gellhorn rörde sig i gränslandet mellan journalistik och litteratur (Williams, 2012). Även hennes självbiografi *The face of War*, som publicerades tjugo år efter inbördeskriget (Gellhorn, 1959). Vid det laget hade så kallad New Journalism, en ny etikett på ett gammalt fenomen, tillämpats av amerikanska journalister sedan länge som en kritik mot den förhärskande normen att skriva objektivt. Ett argument var att även en objektiv nyhet är i olika avseenden subjektiv, till exempel i val av ämne. Stilen utmärks således av subjektiva iakttagelser, av skildringar av miljöer och scener samt återgivande av dialoger. Ibland med dramatiskt förhöjande eller rent fiktiva inslag (Hartsock, 2000, ss. 152-203).

Anna Lenah Elgström var en traditionell journalist vägledd av honnörsorden objektivitet och fakta, centrala i den nord- och centraleuropeiska tradition där journalister sågs som "en intellektuell överklass" (Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner, 2021). Med *Innan det blir för sent* ville Elgström väcka sin samtid, få den att förstå hotet från den växande fascismen och hon gjorde det med ett brinnande patos, en häftig indignation över den passivitet hon tyckte sig uppleva i Sverige. Hon var i likhet med Ellen Key en välkänd kvinnosakskvinna och kulturpersonlighet i Sverige då *Innan det blir för sent* publicerades.

Gusti Stridsbergs memoarer *Mina fem liv* och uppföljaren *Tänk inte med hjärtat* skildrar inbördeskriget mot bakgrund av den

politiska utvecklingen i Europa, sedd med hennes personliga livshistoria som raster och med påtagliga inslag av efterkrigstidens New Journalism som förespråkade en oberoende ståndpunkt och sanningenslighet men som även kunde tillåta ett visst partstagande för de underprivilegierade.

För den svenska tidningsläsande publiken var hon mer eller mindre okänd. På fyrtioalet blev hon känd som journalist, främst inom socialdemokratiska kretsar och genom artiklar i *Morgonbris*. När *Mina fem liv* utkom på svenska 1962 hyllades den av kritikerna och trycktes fram till 1968 i sju upplagor. På femtiotalet arbetade hon som förste sekreterare på Svenska Institutet.

Det bör framhållas att analysen av Anna Lenah Elgströms och Gusti Stridsbergs texter utgör en liten och avgränsad del i deras respektive författarskap.

Analysmetoder

De aktuella verken skrevs under skilda tidsperioder och med olika syften, vilket motiverar valet av olika analysmetoder. Cecilia Aares artikel "Narrativt engagemang och komplex berättarteknik i Gustaf Hellströms krigsreportage", har inspirerat analysen av Anna Lenah Elgströms text. Gustaf Hellström rapporterade från den franska fronten för *Dagens Nyheter* under första världskriget. Några av Aares centrala begrepp lånas här för att belysa hur Anna Lenah Elgström strävade efter att skapa ett engagemang för sin politiska hållning som anti-fascist.

Det narrativa engagemanget kan skapas av *narrativ inlevelse* respektive *narrativ medkänsla/narrativ sympati* (Aare, 2021). Det förra begreppet (narrativ inlevelse) skapas av en här-och-nu-känsla. För att lyfta fram medkänsla och sympati, använder jag retoriska begrepp som *kontraster* (här mellan positivt och negativt), *hyperboler* (kraftig överdrift) och *patetik* (för att väcka deltagande).

Gusti Stridsbergs autobiografi skrevs i en annan historisk kontext och kan anses höra hemma i New Journalism, som belyser samhällsproblem ur ett subjektivt närvaroperspektiv. Här är det åter Lugschitz Kaltenbrunners innehållsanalyser av fem kvinnliga journalister, bland dem Martha Gellhorn och Virginia Cowles, som har inspirerat.

Hon utgår från kärnvärdena partiskhet respektive journalistisk kvalitet, där kvalitetsaspekten avser *relevans*, *saklighet* och *oberoende*. Det är den sistnämnda aspekten, oberoendet, som är intressant för analysen av Gusti Stridsbergs *Mina fem liv* där hon beskriver sig själv som oberoende journalist. Något som det finns skäl att ifrågasätta, vilket jag kommer att försöka visa.

Anna Lenah Elgström

Den autobiografiska reportagesamlingen *Innan det blir för sent* är en appell, en väckarklocka mot den "Medkänslans förfall" (Elgström, 2019, *Innan det blir för sent*) som hon upplevde i Sverige. Anna Lenah Elgströms författarskap har belysts i två litteraturvetenskapliga avhandlingar med främsta fokus på hennes pacifism under första världskriget (Brödje, 1998; Qvarnström, 2009, 2018). Skildringarna av spanska inbördeskriget ramas in kronologiskt av första världskriget och av hennes egen politiska och moraliska utveckling. Hon var djupt troende och samtidigt feminist, pacifist och socialist.

I de första kapitlen ger hon en historisk bakgrund till krigens historia, dess orsak och verkan, samt hur det påverkat henne. I tre kapitel skildrar hon så sin resa genom Spanien och i det efterföljande kapitlet ett reportage om hjälparbetet under Vinterkriget i Finland. De sista kapitlen är en hundra sidor lång uppfordran till människorna att besinna sig. I Guds namn.

Hon hade 1919 medverkat till att etablera den svenska avdelningen av *Rädda Barnen* som enligt henne eftersträfvade "ett speciellt medvetande" och som hon med egna ord "dubbade till *modersocialism*: idén att alla barn äro våra barn. Som mödrar äro kvinnorna ansvariga för alla världens barn, deras villkor och deras framtid" (Elgström, 2019, Ett generationsporträtt).

Uppdraget

Kort efter att Francos revolt startat den 17 juli 1936, hade organisationen av solidaritetsyttringarna för regeringen i Madrid inletts i många länder. *Kvinnokommittén för Spaniens barn*, som bildades i december av bland andra Anna Lenah Elgström, följde den svenska regeringens neutralitetspolitiska hållning och gjorde ingen skillnad på barnhemmen på den nationalistiska respektive republikanska sidan. Alla barn behövde hjälp.

Att hjälpa barn i andra länder av humanitära skäl kunde motiveras politiskt och stärka de internationella relationerna. Inrättande av barnhem i andra länder kunde också "fungera som ett sätt att exportera en nations värderingar till andra länder" (Sköld & Söderlind, 2022, s. 537 ff).

England, Frankrike och andra länder tog emot barn (Sköld & Söderlind, 2022), medan man i Danmark oroade sig för att det kunde väcka misshag hos den närmsta grannen nazi-Tyskland, vilket ledde till en inrikespolitisk schism (Lundgreen-Nielsen, 2001, ss. 181-212). Frågan om Sverige skulle kunna ta emot barn väcktes av Georg Branting men rann ut i sanden.

I Spanien framkallade kommunistkräcken på francosidan fruktan för att en degenerering av folket skulle ske om inte marxismen

och bolsjevismen utrotades. Därför omhändertogs 12 043 barn av organisationen Auxilio Social som drevs av det fascistiska kvinnoförbundet för att omplaceras i barnhem eller religiösa organisationer som kunde ge dem en katolsk uppfostran med nationalistiska värderingar (Beevor, 2006, *Det nya Spanien och Francos gulag*; Elgström, 2019, *Kastiliens budskap*; Sköld & Söderlind, 2022).

Efter årsskiftet reste Elgström till Spanien på kommitténs uppdrag för att inspektera två av de barnhem som hade etablerats, dels i den baskiska staden Getaria, dels barnhemmet i Denia i Valencia-provinsen. *Innan det blir för sent* utgör en gedigen, saklig och påläst, historiektion om Spaniens moderna historia. Men i skildringarna av de människor hon mötte under resan, kommer det engagerande narrativet till uttryck. Utdragen nedan börjar hos nationalisterna och slutar med att hon lämnar Spanien.

Getaria

Barnhemmet i staden Getaria vid Biscayabukten hade under en enda dag fyllts med barn och deras mödrar. På flykt i en fraktbåt till Frankrike, hade de fångats upp av ett skepp under Francos flagg och förts till den stora djuphamnen i Getaria (Elgström, 2019, *Baskerland*). Nationalistiska officerare skickade i väg mödrarna, sände de äldre flickorna till ett kloster och pojkarna till militär skolning. De mindre barnen fick stanna kvar på barnhemmet under ständig uppsikt av de religiösa myndigheterna (Lloris, Myklebust, & Swan, 2022).

Övernunnan, Madre Elvira, hade innan kriget varit föreståndare för ett stort hem för fabriksflickor i det republikanska Barcelona och hon berättade hur de hade jagats i väg av anarkisterna. "På den tiden var det nog att man bar prästrock — en man klädd i en sådan sköto anarkisterna ner utan att fråga vem han var". Citatet från övernunnans berättelse skapar medkänsla med prästernas öde och framställer anarkisterna som det verkliga och oberäknliga hotet mot oskyldiga. Men de utgjorde inte det enda hotet och det skulle visa sig att de nedbrända kyrkorna och arkebuseringarna av prästerna som rapporterades i spansk och utländsk press var kraftigt överdrivna. Det tjänade emellertid den fascistiska propagandan mot "de röda" (Beevor, 2006, *Propagandakriget och de intellektuella*).

Barnhemmets kapellan beskriver Anna Lenah Elgström sympatiskt som en verklig Kristi tjänare. Genom att lyfta fram en enstaka vänlig själ, kapellanen, förstärker hon de andra jesuiternas kyliga och ovänliga bemötande. Kontrasteringen, en återkommande stilfigur, mellan positivt och negativt förstärker också vilken utsatthet de befann sig i.

Nunnornas fläktande vita dok över deras rena bleka ansikten, barnen i sina rutiga blusar kring runda baskiska kroppar, smeksamma som kattungar, Padre Jaime med sina svarta kjolar slafsande om sina breda skor, ledande den muntra barnskaran i "Vi gå över daggstänkta berg, fallera!" som han satt spanska ord till — allt slöt denna ring av klosterlik frid mellan oss och den fascistiska yttrevärlden.

(Elgström, 2019, Baskerland).

Sången om daggstänkta berg fungerar som en metonym för svenskhet, en oskuldsfull idyll i en våldsam omvärld. Oskuldsfullheten tippar sedan över till patetik, fortfarande med kontrasteringen som narrativ teknik.

Den enda smekning, som bestods dessa ensamma flyktingsbarn, hungriga som alla spanska barn efter vänlighet, var då en blek nunnehand för ett ögonblick lades på ett litet svart baskerhuvud.

(Ibid.).

Implicit beskriver hon nunnans smekning som en gest av det speciella medvetande som hon hävdade alla kvinnor delar, modersocialism, dock utan att fullfölja tankegången till dess politiska implikationer.

I Francoland

Ledsagad av fascister som hänvisats henne av Prensa y Propaganda Extranjera reste Elgström runt i områden som erövrats av Franco. Begreppet hyperbol betecknar hennes överdrivna skildringar av dem som i väntan på att Franco skulle besegra "de röda" befann sig på bekväma hotell längs Biskayabukten, dem som hon kallade "de gamla aristokratiska hatarna i Baskerlandet".

Gamla herrar med namn sedan Armadans dagar vandrade med stelbent grandezza i grupper på stranden eller sutto i solskenet på bron framför hotellet likt gamla sköldpaddor, stekande sina gula rynkiga nackar under carlistbaretternas vallmoröda ylle. Deras damer sutto alltid lika mumieaktigt gula och rynkiga kvar inne i hotellets hall. Deras svarta kläder luktade rökelse och kamfer, då de tre gånger om dagen svepte in från mässan

(Ibid.).

De aristokratiska Carlistfamiljerna (starkt konservativ gren inom den spanska katolicismen) ägde jord och stora egendomar som hotades av republikens demokratiska jordreformer.

Hämnd, det var refrängen på vad de kallade sin "politik", sina "principer".

— Å, vi skola nog återigen få våra arbetare att dansa av hunger på kullarna som år 1934, sade en av de gamla herrarna en gång hoppfullt till mig. De "som skulle dansa av hunger på kullarna", voro de bönder och arbetare, vilka i generationer tjänat den gamle grevens illustra familj.

(Ibid.).

Citatet riskerar skjuta över målet om syftet var att skapa en engagerad inlevelse hos läsaren. Elgström var så fylld av avsky för dessa familjers levnadssätt, att hon inte ens försökte linda in känslorna. Inte heller när hon beskriver två markisinnor:

[...] två otroligt långa gamla kvinnor med hakor som den elaka feens i Grimms sagor och nästan starrblinda ögon, stirrande fram ur långa, gula pergamentsansikten. Man gick ur vägen för dem så långt man kunde, där de kommo hasande med den ena foten skjuten framför den andra likt en sorts blinda sniglar.

(Ibid.).

Med ett rakt motsatt tonfall beskriver hon med vördnad den fattiga landsbefolkningen som hon såg på resan till Madrid.

[...] långa, låga lerkor, vari en fem, sex familjer av högvuxna, skarpskurna, brunbrända människor kyffat in sig och sin fattigdom — vari de dock rörde sig med den kastilianska grandezza och den enkla värdiga vänlighet, som gör det spanska folket (ingalunda vare sig över eller medelklassen) till ett av naturens borna adelsfolk.

(Elgström, 2019, Kastiliens budskap).

Genomgående används stilfiguren hyperbol i de citerade avsnitten.

Vid fronten

De utländska journalister som inte kunde språket var utlämnade till den information som deras ledsagare och guider försåg dem med. Elgström beskriver hur journalisterna behandlades som barn, som måste skyddas. När Madrid var på väg att falla och många var på flykt, befann hon sig på pressklubben och överhörde ett samtal mellan spanska tolkar.

— De resa allihop nu, så rädda äro de att vägen skall bli avskuren! Jag satt bakom en engelsk tidning, och där blev jag kvar. Uppriktigt sagt stel av rädsla. Men mest rädd för att ingenting få höra, att bli behandlad som en oansvarig, ett paket utan möjlighet att själv avgöra mitt öde.

(Elgström, 2019, Dödsvägar).

I scenen använder hon "jag", vilket skapar inlevelse hos läsaren, även när hon blottar sin egen rädsla för att vara utlämnad till andra. Trots bristfälliga kunskaper i spanska språket, sökte hon senare upp skyttegravarna och guidades av en "spanskamerikansk" soldat, förmodligen från en av de internationella brigaderna.

Vad skulle han sagt om jag berättat att "gossarna där borta" [på andra sidan skyttegravarna] och jag också på sätt och vis voro gamla bekanta? ... Att jag aldrig ett ögonblick var rädd skyldes nog den känsla av att vara överklig, även jag, liksom allt annat i denna mardrömsaktiga strid mellan bröder, vilken automatiskt inställde sig varje gång jag från regeringens håll fick se en sak, en situation, en ställning, som jag redan sett från nationalisternas sida. (Ibid.).

I mötet med soldaterna ovan framställer hon sig som neutral, men i skildringarna av de civilas, de drabbades perspektiv, är det den republikanska sidan hon framhåller. I skolor och även i skyttegravarna pågick en alfabetiseringskampanj (Beevor, 2006, Del ett). I dålig belysning satt ett hundratal.

[...] gamla och medelålders män och några unga kvinnor, deras lärarinnor. En hålögd ung man uppenbarade sig för ett ögonblick i ljusskenet och försvann så likt en drömsyn, då ljuset slocknade. Ur mörkret kom hans förbindliga, lugna, kastilianska röst: — Jag är överläraren, vänta bara ett ögonblick så att vi kunna få ljus igen, sedan står jag med nöje till tjänst. (Elgström, 2019, Dödsvägar).

I en annan sekvens beskriver hon hur hon själv sveptes med av stämningen. Under ett besök hos republikanerna vid fronten hade hon intervjuat en general Miaja, mytomspunnen för sitt mod.

— Vi skola vinna kriget. Och vinna vi inte detta, så vinna vi nästa, fastän vi just nu ha svåra stunder att gå igenom! — Jag stannar, sade jag till Aurora. Ty en glimt av denna bekymmerslöshet på sidan av allt förnuft fyllde just då även främlingen. (Ibid.).

Det sättet hon omtalar sig själv i tredje person, "främlingen", skapar igenkännande sympati, men att det är ett avsteg från den mer distanserade rapporteringen understryks av "just då".

Denia

I motsats till Getaria-hemmet var Denia ett under av kärleksfull omvårdnad och värme (Lloris, Myklebust, & Swan, 2022). Elgströms

modersocialism, idén att alla barn äro våra barn, fick här sin bekräftelse av vad hon såg med egna ögon. "Svenska kvinnohjärtans villiga glada offer av säkerheten i hemlandet, av frid, skydd och vila. Det goda gick sin stilla väg genom nöd och död" (Elgström, 2019, Dödsvägar).

Avskedet från hemmet beskriver hon med samma patetik som hon beskrev barnhemmet i Getaria. Den yttersta konsekvensen av alla krig, döden, drabbade även de oskyldiga barnen. "[...] farväl, alla ungarna, som svensk hjälp skyddat för en liten tid och ännu får skydda — tills..." Ibid.).

Sammanfattningsvis rörde sig Elgström mellan de stridande parterna och svarade på så sätt mot den svenska regeringens neutrala hållning. De objektiva beskrivningarna av sakförhållandena skyler dock inte över hennes partiskhet.

Det engagerande narrativet skapade hon retoriskt genom inlevelse och medkänsla, genom att gestalta det lidande som kriget förde med sig. Därmed stärkte hon sitt eget humanistiska, pacifistiska och ideologiska budskap.

Berättelserna i boken är normativa, de vill varna och engagera, men hennes idealistiska patos genomsyrar texten och repar dess trovärdighet som en produkt av ett journalistiskt ögonvittne. Den överordnande principen enligt Lugschitz Kaltenbrunners definition, var demokratins försvar. Elgström ville varna för fascismen som var i antågande och det var bråttom. Hon skrev i linje med det tidiga nittonhundratalets ideal och det formade hennes pedagogiska stil.

Gusti Stridsberg

Forskningsläget gällande de bägge skribenterna skiljer sig åt markant. Anna Lenah Elgströms författarskap är väl känt och beforskat inom litteraturvetenskapen, medan kunskaperna om Gusti Stridsbergs författarskap är knapphändig inom nordisk, humanistisk forskning. Inom svensk samhällsvetenskaplig forskning har hon däremot rönt visst intresse för den roll hon spelade som agent under kalla kriget. Hon förekommer i Wilhelm Agrells bok *Tre spioner i kallt krig* och i Michael Scholz artikel "Gusti Jirku-Stridsberg („Klara“) und die finnische Friedensopposition 1943/44" (Scholtz, 2014). De tidigare hemligstämplade VENONA-dokumentet var namnet på ett samarbete mellan USA:s och Storbritanniens underrättelsetjänster för att avkoda sovjetiska diplomatiska och underrättelsemeddelanden under kalla kriget. Femtio år efter andra världskrigets slut 1995 offentliggjordes VENONA-dokumentet av den amerikanska regeringen. I dem framgår att Gusti Stridsberg (alias Augustine Jirku) hade varit underrättelseagent bakom sin

journalistiska täckmantel och att hon under täcknamnet Klara hade spionerat för Moskva i många år.

I internationell humanistisk forskning förekommer hon i minst två studier. Dels i österrikiska Lugschitz Kaltenbrunners journalistikhistoriska avhandling, framlagd vid spanskt universitet, där hon refereras som aktivist och medarbetare i den kommunistiska propagandan. Dels i en artikel i den rumänska litteraturhistoriska tidskriften *Dacoromania Litteraria*, där Manca G. Renco analyserar några kvinnliga, centraleuropeiska intellektuella författares memoarer och övergången från den habsburgska eran till det nya Europa efter första världskriget (Renko, 2023, s. 28). Stridsberg utgör en av fyra kvinnors biografier som fångar och färgsätter övergången från det habsburgska väldet till det nya Europa (Renko, 2023, s. 28). Renco framhåller värdet av autobiografiska verk som primärkällor eftersom de kan öppna upp nya sociala, kulturella och politiska aspekter på historien, som med några få undantag tidigare "i Central- och Sydösteuropa uteslutande tillhört maktens män" (Renko, 2023, s. 19). Stridsberg föddes 1892 (-1978) i dåvarande Ukraina och tillbringade sina första tjugo år i Österrike och nuvarande Slovenien. I den självbiografiska *Mina fem liv* skrev hon inte bara sin livshistoria, hon hade också litterära ambitioner, att visa upp sitt hantverk som skönlitterär, centraleuropeisk författare (Renko, 2023, s. 28).

I analysen av *Mina fem liv* nedan har sådana partier i texten brutits ut, som illustrerar hennes stil, hennes förmåga att skapa närvarokänsla samtidigt som hon är partisk och tar ställning, men med övertygelsen att det inte står i motsättning till objektiv saklighet. Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner urskiljer det senare som en aspekt - bland flera - på journalistisk kvalitet.

Till Moskva

Uppvuxen huvudsakligen i Wien i en välbärgad borgerlig miljö, språk- och konststudier samt resor i Europa, gav henne tidigt i livet många kontakter som kom att ge henne fördelar i det politiskt turbulenta Europa under tjugo- och trettioailet. Fadern var välbärgad bankdirektör och fostrade den enda dottern efter den tidens överklassideal i Österrike.

Hennes sociala samvete, för att inte säga klassmedvetande, väcktes när hon en kväll i hast kallades från sitt slovenska slott Hartenstein till en av de anställda. Fortfarande i vacker aftontoalett skulle hon hjälpa ett sjukt barn, och när det inte lyckades utan barnet låg dött och kallt i hennes händer mumlade hon "Jag kan inte hjälpa er". Hon gick mot dörren när alla omringade henne" och grep

tag i mig, kysste mina händer, med falsk undergivenhet och hat i blickarna..." (Stridsberg, 1961, s.115).

Våren 1932 hade hon lämnat sitt gods för att i Berlin starta sitt liv som oberoende och självförsörjande författare och journalist. En första novell hade fått beröm av Thomas Mann som talade om hennes "kristallklara språk" och hennes "charmfulla berättarkonst" (Ibid. s. 112). Redaktören för tidningen *Det Tag* sände henne till Moskva på rekommendation av Egon Kirsch och såg hennes ringa kunskaper om politik som en fördel. "Ni ska kastas i vår tids häxkit-tel. Ni ska, utan ledning, skaffa er egna erfarenheter, skriva för oss och sedan producera en bok" (Ibid. s.121). Uppdraget blev att skriva noveller om första femårsplanen.

Efter några månader reste hon tillbaks till Jugoslavien där hon träffade ledaren för ungkommunisterna Vilim Horvaj alias Stefan, hennes livs stora kärlek som går som en röd tråd genom hela boken. Hon valde bort ett tryggt, borgerligt liv för en yrkesrevolutionär.

Tillsammans med Stefan återvände hon till Moskva under en period, men lyckades lämna landet med ett falskt pass. Hans relation till henne, en borgerlig kvinna med aristokratiskt påbrå, kunde skada hans anseende i Moskva och i värsta fall få honom att "för-svinna". Vid den här tiden hade utrensningarna inom partiet inletts av Stalin. De moraliska betänkligheterna plågade henne "Mitt liv var kluvet – jag själv ett praktexemplar på fysisk och psykisk schizofreni" (Ibid. s.174).

Mot Spanien

På nyåret 1937 befann hon sig i Paris, på väg till Spanien. Hon sökte upp en adress där man fick hjälp med pass och resehandlingar. Ord-växlingen mellan henne och Max, "en rödhårig liten tjeck" är exempel på den ordkarga deckarstil som är utmärkande för New Journalism och som Gusti Stridsberg anammat.

- Vill ni uteslutande arbeta som journalist?, frågade Max.
- Jag är journalist. Men jag kan också arbeta på nyttigare sätt...
- Vilket parti?
- Inget parti alls.
- Men jugoslaverna...
- Jag känner dem och de känner mig. Det är allt.
- Vad kan ni förutom språk och journalistik?
- Åh, jag kom just att tänka på att jag har en viss utbildning i sjukvård. Särskilt kirurgi [hennes österrikiske make, som hon hade separerat ifrån, var läkare och hon hade assisterat honom under första världskriget].
- Utmärkt. Inget är så eftersökt just nu som sjuksköterskor. Ni ser tämligen bräcklig ut. Uthärdar ni strapatser?

-Jag uthärdar otroligt mycket.

(Ibid. s. 258).

I januari 1937 tog hon sig till Spanien över Pyrenéerna. Efter en tid som sjukvårdare blev hon allvarligt sjuk, hon tillfrisknade, men kunde inte fortsätta i den vårdande rollen. Två jugoslaver i den internationella Ernst Thälmann-brigaden hade befogenheter att tilldela henne nya uppgifter. I ett möte med dem och Egon Erwin Kirsch, som hon kände sedan tidigare, fick hon i uppdrag att skriva om sjukvårdstjänsten vid fronten.

-Du kan skriva på franska och engelska. Vi behöver propagandamaterial till Frankrike, England och Amerika.

-Och allra mest i Sovjet, sade Franek bittert, men där skulle en sådan bok inte bli tryckt.

Jag såg förbluffad på honom.

-Varför inte?

Franek undvek min blick.

-Spanien är inte så viktigt för tillfället.

Han tog min hand och sade tyst:

-Vi vet nu, stackars barn, varför du råkade i klorna på Gestapo. Vi vet hur din resa planerades – och av vem.

-Det har jag vetat länge. Vad är det som händer nu?

-Förhören är i full gång.

(Ibid. s. 276).

Förhören som åsyftades var de rättegångar som föranstaltades av Stalin, i hans jakt på trotskister. Det skedde på sensommaren 1937. I april hade Guernica bombats och fortfarande strömmade frivilliga till de internationella brigaderna, som hade organiserats av Komintern och de spanska Moskvatrogna kommunisterna.

På våren 1937 förflyttades hon till Albacete där hon blev sekreterare åt ledarna för internationella brigadernas hälsovårdstjänst och sedermera biträdande redaktör för veckotidningen *Ayuda Medical Internacional* (AMI). Hon tillbringade mycket tid vid fronten och på sjukhus, samlade in vittnesmål från sjukvårdspersonal och publicerade dem i AMI med syftet att ingjuta mod hos de stridande. Under ett besök hos de jugoslaviska frivilligas skyttevärn, ledsagad av ett befäl, hotades de av ett flyganfall som hon beskrev i samma hårdkokta deckarstil som ovan.

Plötsligt, innan jag hann tänka något, hade Copic kastat omkull mig och sig själv.

-Flygplan, mumlade han kort.

Långt bortifrån hörde jag för första gången det dova dånet av fällda bomber.

-De flyger åt Valencia till – stig upp Franz!

Jag reste mig, borstade jorden av min kappa och tände en cigarrett.

(Ibid. s. 272).

I beskrivningen av ett restaurangbesök som avbryts när huset bombades till grus, använder hon "jag" som anaför.

Jag vaknade i en gul skymning. Jag stod tryckt mot väggen, såg och hörde. Jag, den enda som stod upp, stel och stum i en storm av klagorop och djuriskt stönande. Jag måste hjälpa till, tänkte jag, men jag kunde inte röra mig. Är jag förlamad? Jag frågade högt. Jag såg på min hand och lyfte den. Jag var inte förlamad. [...] Vi gick förbi José, den femtonårige smörgåsnissen. Hans buk var uppspliten, tarmarna hängde åt alla håll i dammet. Så mycket tarmar. Han var död.

(Ibid. s. 280)

På samma objektiva, korthuggna sätt som hon beskriver de lemlästade kropparna och ödeläggelsen, skildrar hon sina egna subjektiva reaktioner och hur de påverkade henne. Upprepningen av anafören "jag", som en inre monolog, skapar ett rytmiskt tempo och närvaro i läsningen. Tillsammans med de detaljerade skildringarna präglas texten av New Journalism-stilen. Den subjektiva skildringen står i stark kontrast till den amerikanska objektivitetsprincipen (Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner, 2021, s. 86).

Hon fortsatte redigera propagandatidskriften *AMI*, reste till Valencia regelbundet för att korrekturläsa och övervaka tryckningen. Vid ett tillfälle deltog hon som ombud för sjukvårdarna i en kongress som de antifascistiska kvinnorna höll och där La Pasionara talade. Här lärde hon känna Sonja Branting Westerståhl och Georg Branting och fick höra talas om det fullt utrustade sjukhuset i Alcoy som hade uppförts med insamlade medel från Sverige och Norge.

I juni 1938 lämnade hon Spanien och bosatte sig i Stockholm. Då hon fruktade att bli utvisad från Sverige gifte hon sig med den svenske kommunisten och tidigare brigadisten Hugo Stridsberg för att få svenskt medborgarskap.

På svensk mark

I det avslutande kapitlet i *Mina fem liv* reflekterar hon över memoarskrivandet och citerar en fransk författare utan att uppge hans namn: "Mitt i gärningarnas och händelsernas ström var man naiv och utan distans till vad som skedde. Och memoarerna skall skildra vad man då upplevde, subjektivt" (Stridsberg, 1961).

De olika livsavsnitten i *Mina fem liv* skrev hon på basis av de dagboksanteckningar hon hade fört sedan tioårsåldern och som hon

trots sina många resor och olika hemadresser lyckats bevara. I inledningen förklarar hon att detaljerat återgivna samtal bygger på dessa anteckningar.

På sista sidan skriver hon att den smekmånad hon upplevde i neutrala Sverige endast varade till slutet av 1940. "Då inleddes en problemfylld period. Jag var inte neutral, jag kunde och ville inte vara det. Jag älskade Sverige med förbehåll". Umgänget med Sonja Branting-Westerstahl och kretsarna kring henne bestod och hon föreföll leva ett stillsamt liv. Hon fortsatte skriva artiklar för internationell press, såsom *Toronto Star* och gav ut ett antal böcker.

Hon framställde sig själv som en individualist med egna humanistiska ideal, som inte låtit sig påverkas av ideologier. Hon underlät inte att uttrycka sin motvilja mot det kommunistiska partiet i Moskva med sina förgreningar ända ut i de spanska skyttegravarna. Trots det var hon beredd att ansluta sig som medlem om det hade underlättat för Stefan att ta sig ut ur Sovjet. Så skedde dock aldrig.

Agenten Klara

Bilden av den oberoende journalisten Stridsberg grumlades när VENONA-telegrammen offentliggjordes 1995 och det visade sig att hon agerat som sovjetisk underrättelseagent i Sverige som agenten "Klara". Enligt Wilhelm Agrell var hon den viktigaste agenten för den dåvarande sovjetiska säkerhetstjänsten NKVD sedermera KGB under de sista krigsåren (Pryser, 2009, s. 137).

Telegrammen och hennes biografi *Mina fem liv*, utplaceringen som redaktör för en propagandistisk tidskrift av sovjetiska agenter i Spanien, samt förhören hos den svenska polisen, vittnar om hennes antifascistiska och -nazistiska engagemang. Det bekräftades också av hennes spanienvistelse, men ledde inte till några åtgärder från svensk polis. Saken rann ut i sanden (Scholtz, 2014; Agrell, 2018).

I Lugschitz Kaltenbrunners avhandling tas Stridsberg fram som ett exempel på hur rollerna kunde skifta, dock utan att beakta hennes underrättelseverksamhet (Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner, 2021, s. 120). Kan man då påstå att Gusti Stridsberg skrev oberoende journalistik? Svaret på frågan blir både ja och nej. Ja, om det enligt Lugschitz Kaltenbrunners definition handlar om ett

[...] Öppet sinne, vilket innebär att man har personlig frihet att bestämma ämnen, formulera tankar och uttrycka åsikter som är fristående från officiella ståndpunkter eller åtminstone diskutera dem innan de eventuellt antas.

(Ibid. s. 53, min översättning).

Men knappast om man avser "partipolitisk obundenhet, opartiskhet, neutralitet, balans eller den ofta mycket missvisande objektiviteten" (Ibid.).

När Gusti Stridsberg skrev sin självbiografi hade tjugo år förflutit sedan hon hade lämnat Spanien. *Mina fem liv* är berättelsen om hennes egen utveckling framför allt, men i stor utsträckning också det politiska spelet i Moskva. Den antifascistiska hållningen som hon delade med Anna Lenah Engström handlade om avskyn av och motviljan mot alla former av auktoritärt styre, såväl spansk fascism som sovjetisk stalinism. Den nya litterära riktningen New Journalism, samtida med hennes självbiografi, framhöll värdet av subjektiva perspektiv vilket bröt mot objektivitetsidealet men som öppnade för inlevelsefulla berättelser i linje med hur Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner definierar kvalitet. Det fiktiva inslaget som New Journalism förknippas med, överglänstes i hennes fall av ett äventyrligt liv.

Konklusion

I enlighet med Lugschitz Kaltenbrunners terminologi utgör de bägge författares skildringar av kriget exempel på övergången mellan den normativa och icke-normativa journalistiska traditionen. Den förra, normativa traditionen, höll i sig en bit in i nittonhundratalet, och hit hör *Innan det blir för sent*, medan den senare icke-normativa och pragmatiska traditionen framhåller journalistiken i en föränderlig värld, vilket *Mina fem liv*, som skrevs på sextioalet, är exempel på.

Metaforiskt liknar *Innan det blir för sent* ett korståg för demokratin, medan *Mina fem liv* närmast liknar ett riskfyllt äventyr, en odysse, och denna skillnad visar sig i deras journalistiska stil, i hur de skapade ett engagerande narrativ, om än på olika sätt.

Anna Lenah Elgström genom målande beskrivningar av miljöer och situationer samt med retoriska grepp, blandat med pedagogiska upplysningar om Spaniens historia och sin egen världsåskådning. Genom att skildra möten med människorna på bägge sidor om stridslinjerna, kunde hon hävda en viss opartiskhet, trots att hon tog kraftigt avstånd från Franco.

Gusti Stridsberg å sin sida, genom subjektiva upplevelser av fäsansfulla scener, av strapatser och av den obskyra politiska styrningen av motståndet mot fascisterna.

Trots tidsavståndet går det att se vissa likheter mellan *Innan det blir för sent* och *Mina fem liv*. Ingen av författarna framhöll explicit i memoarerna att de var objektiva i betydelsen opartiska och utan ideologiska intressen. Tvärtom, de gjorde varken någon hemlighet av att deras sympatier låg hos republikanerna eller att de hade ett

uppdrag. Anna Lenah Elgström för kvinnokommittén och Gusti Stridsberg för de internationella brigaderna, det vill säga Komintern.

I princip hade de det gemensamma målet att ta ställning mot fascism och totalitära statsskick. Den avgörande skillnaden var vid vilken tidpunkt som deras minnen publicerades. Anna Lenah Elgström ringde sin varningsklocka när Europa stod inför hotet om ett andra världskrig, medan Gusti Stridsberg skrev ner sina minnen tjugo år senare, under kalla kriget, från ett välmående Sverige som var i färd med att bygga upp en modern välfärdsstat.

I förordet till biografen *Mina fem liv* skriver Gusti Stridsberg om de förhoppningar hon hade haft att under sitt händelserika liv finna en "moralisk-social" livsåskådning som var giltig för alla. I uppföljaren *Tänk inte med hjärtat* som utkom fem år senare, 1966, beskriver hon vad hon kallar sitt sjätte liv, i Sverige, och om relationerna med socialdemokratin och andra inom det politiska etablissemang som passerade hennes våning i närheten av S:t Johannes kyrka i Stockholm. Hennes umgängeskrets utgjordes bland andra av journalisten Arne Lundberg, sedermera statssekreterare i Försvarsdepartementet, Liselott och Hjalmar Mehr, finansborgarråd i Stockholm för att nämna några förutom redan nämnda Georg Branting och Sonja Branting Westerståhl, bägge djupt involverade i Spanienhjälp (Stridsberg, 1966).

Historien om spanska inbördeskriget skrivs fortfarande. Trots att snart nittio år förflutit fortsätter forskare och författare runt om i världen att reflektera över händelserna och hur kriget skall förstås. Det tidigt etablerade narrativet om inbördeskriget som uteslutande en kamp mellan de röda och de vita har nyanserats. Framför allt har den ideologiskt präglade synen på republiken såsom liktydig med demokrati omvärderats i takt med att bland annat arkiven i Moskva har öppnats och Kominterns roll har bekräftats (Lundgreen-Nielsen, 2001; Beevor, 2006; Carlgren, 2023).

Elgström och Stridsberg reste på uppdrag från Kvinnokommittén respektive Komintern. I och med att de inte var ackrediterade från någon tidning kunde de befinna sig i gråzonen mellan aktivism och journalistik utan att hamna i konflikt med sin yrkesidentitet, trots att de i första hand identifierade sig som journalister i memoarerna.

Inom journalistikforskningen har krigsrapporteringen en lång historia. När historien om den pågående konflikten mellan Ukraina och Ryssland i framtiden ska skrivas så torde den journalistiska bevakningen komma att granskas och analyseras utifrån bland annat objektivitets- och neutralitetsfrågan, oaktat den tekniska utvecklingen, internet och sociala medier som formar dagens berättelse om konflikten.

NOTER

¹ El Caudillo betyder Ledaren på spanska. Det var så Franco ville uppfattas.

² Se https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Brigades

³ <https://www.nb.no/items/9ee704ae77ef0756cdd6fbf3153cac6b?page=1#0> (Díaz, 2014).

⁴ <https://sidbrint.ub.edu/#>

⁵ <https://maitron.fr/femmes-yougoslaves-en-espagne-republicaine/>

⁶ Se <https://www.doew.at/wir-ueber-uns>

⁷ Se <https://www.arbark.se/sv/>

⁸ Se <https://internationale-frauen-im-spanischen-krieg-1936-1939.de/Start.html>. Privat initiativ med uttalat stöd till republiken. Den 3 feb 2025, innehöll sidan 1471, namn med biografiska data. Sidansvarig: Ingrid Schiborowski, ingridschiborowski@gmail.com

REFERENSER

- Aare, C. (2021). Narrativt engagemang och komplex berättarteknik i Gustaf Hellströms krigsreportage. *Samlaren. Tidskrift för forskning om svensk och annan nordisk litteratur*, ss. Årgång 142, s. 5-33.
- Agrell, W. (2018). *Tre spioner i kallt krig*. Stockholm: Appell Förlag.
- Beevor, A. (2006). *Spanska inbördeskriget*. Lund: Historiska Media.
- Brödje, C. (1998). *Ett annat tiotal: En studie i Anna Lenah Elgströms tiotalprosa*. DISS, Stockholms universitet.
- Carlgren, I. (2023). *Marionetterna: en berättelse om världen som politisk teater*. Stockholm: Norstedts.
- Carlomagno, M. C. (2001). *När Alving blev Bang*. Lund: Historiska media.
- Cowles, V. (1941). *Looking for trouble*. www.faberfinds.co.uk.
- Dahl, H., & Werenskjold, R. (2022). The Spanish Civil War in a Nordic Perspective. A Bibliographic Survey of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. *Mediehistorisk tidsskrift*, Nr. 1-2 (Nr. 37-38), ss. 84-91.
- Dahl, H., Hagtvét, B., & Werenskjold, R. (2019). *Ekko fra Spania den spanske borgerkrigen i norsk offentlighet*. Oslo: Dreyers forlag. Oslo: Dreyers forlag.
- Dalin, S. (1999). Värmlandspressen och Spanienfrågan. i K.-E. G. Rydén, *Folk och press i rörelse*. Göteborg: NORDICOM-Sverige.
- Díaz Nosty, B. (octubre 2022). Barcelona en la mirada de las periodistas extranjeras durante la Guerra Civil. *Quaderns del CAC* 48, vol. XXV, ss. 5-16.
- Díaz Nosty, B. (2023 [2022]). *Periodistas extranjeras en la guerra civil*. Spanien: Los cuatro vientos, www.editorialrenacimiento.com.

- Ekstrand, E. (2007). *Kaj Anderssons Morgonbris . Kvinnopress, trettiotal och längtan efter fri tid*. Umeå: Institutionen för kultur och medier, Umeå universitet.
- Elgström, A. (2019 (1940)). *Innan det blir för sent*. E-boksutgåva. e-ISBN: 9788726305623: SAGA Egmont.
- Geldart, P. (2013). *Relaciones políticas y diplomáticas entre España y Suecia de 1931 a 1939 (eng: Political and Diplomatic relations between Spain and Sweden 1931 - 1939)*. Instituto Universitario de Historia Simancas. <http://uvadoc.uva.es/handle/10324/3609>: Valladolid University, Spain.
- Gellhorn, M. (1959). *The Face of War*. e-ISBN: 978-0-8021--9116-8 .
- Hartsock, J. C. (2000). *A History of American Literary Journalism .* Amhurst, US: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Heiberg, M. (2014). VISIONES NÓRDICAS DE LA GUERRA CIVIL ESPAÑOLA . *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea*, 32(ISSN (online): 2444-7080), ss. 481-490.
- Internationale Frauen im Spanischen Krieg 1936-1939. (n.d.) *Startseite*. Retrieved October 2025 from <https://internationale-frauen-im-spanischen-krieg-1936-1939.de/Start.html>
- Kölbl, J. (2021). *The Babel of Tongues. Englischsprachliche Freiwillige und ihr Beitrag zur Kommunikation im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg*. Wien: LIT Verlag GmbH & Co. KG.
- Lindblom, P. (2022). *Svenska anarkister och syndikalister i spanska inbördeskriget: korrespondenter och frivilliga 1936–1939*. Stockholm: Federativs förlag.
- Loris, B. Å., Myklebust, J., & Swan, A. (2022). *L'Hogar sueco para niños: de Denia durant la guerra civil. El diario de Magnhild Olsson*. Spanien: Ajuntament de Denia.
- Lugschitz Kaltenbrunner, R. (2021). *Female Correspondents Covering the Spanish Civil War. Assessment of Journalistic Quality and Partiality from a Comparative Perspective*. UNIVERSIDAD MIGUEL HERNÁNDEZ DE ELCHE, Programa de Doctorado en Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas. DISS, Alicante, Spain.
- Lugschitz, R. (2016). Pressebüro und Zensur im Spanischen Bürger*innenkrieg. Reporterinnen zwischen Journalismus, Propaganda und Überwachung. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswiss enschaften*, 27(3), ss. 160-171. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25365/oezg-2016-27-3-8>
- Lundgreen-Nielsen, K. (2001). *Tro eller blændværk? Danmark og Den Spanske Borgerkrig 1936-1939*. Odense, Danmark: Odense Universitetsforlag.
- Lundgren, K. (2002). Solister i mångfalden: signaturerna Bang, Maud och Attis och andra kvinnliga dagspressjournalister med utgångspunkt i 1930-talet. Univ., Diss. Stockholm: Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation.

- Lundvik, B. (1980). *Solidaritet och partitaktik. Den svenska arbetarrörelsen och spanska inbördeskriget 1936-1939*. Uppsala: DISS, Sverige:: Historiska institutionen vid Uppsala universitet.
- McLaughlin, G. (2016). Journalism, Objectivity and War. i *The War Correspondent* (ss. 33-62. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt19qgf0x.7>). Open JSTOR Collection: Pluto Press.
- Ney, B. (2021). "Vår mest beresta kvinnliga journalist". i *Mediehistorisk årsbok 2021* (ss. 125-144). Svensk Mediehistorisk Förening www.mediehistoria.se.
- Pryser, T. (2009 (2007 J. W. Cappelens forlag AS, Oslo)). *Kvinnliga spioner - agenter i Norden under andra världskriget*. Stockholm: Natur och kultur.
- Qvarnström, S. (2009). *Motståndets berättelser: Elin Wägner, Anna Lenah Elgström, Marika Stiernstedt och första världskriget*. Hedemora: Diss. Uppsala universitet.
- Qvarnström, S. (2018). Regarding the pain of mothers. The First World War, Anna Lenah Elgström, and fiction as media. i L. S. Marie Cronqvist, *War remains. Mediations of Suffering and Death in the Era of the World Wars*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1vmnkfz.5>: Kriterium.
- Renko, M. D. (2023). "Uninvited, history entered our lives" The post-world war I transitions in autobiographical perspective. *Dacoromania litteraria* X, ss. 18-42, DOI: 10.33993/drl.2023.10.18.42.
- Scholtz, M. (2014). Gusti Jirku-Stridsberg ("Klara") und die finnische Friedensopposition 1943/44. i Manfred Menger & Burkhard E. Poser, *Finnland im Blick: Festschrift für Dörte Putensen*. Berlin: SAXA Verlag.
- Seul, S. (den 22 Juli 2019). *Women War Reporters*. Hämtat från 1914-1918 online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War: <http://www.1914-1918-online.net>
- Sköld, J., & Söderlind, I. (2022). "Vi måste rädda barnen" Svenska hjälpkommittéer för krigsdrabbade barn i andra länder under 1930- och 1940-talen. *Historisk tidskrift*, 142:4, ss. 533-563.
- Stridsberg, G. (1961). *Mina fem liv*. Originalets titel: Männen, Mäkte und Ich. Översättning Olof Hoffsten. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren.
- Stridsberg, G. (1966). *Tänk inte med hjärtat*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren.
- Valis, N. (2017). 'From the Face of My Memory': How American Journalists Covered the Spanish Civil War. *GLOBAL SOCIETY Soc*, 54, ss. 549-559. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-017-0189-7>.
- Williams, K. (2012). WAR CORRESPONDENTS AS SOURCES FOR HISTORY. *Media History*, 18:3-4, ss. 341-360. DOI: 10.1080/13688804.2012.722426.

Yrlið, R. (2006). *Till Madrid. Tre svenskars närvaro under det spanska inbördeskriget 1936-39*. Lund: Bokförlaget Atlantis.

EVA ÅSÉN EKSTRAND

Fil.dr. Medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap

Affilierad med Högskolan i Gävle

evaasen2@gmail.com

Människosyn och berättarteknik i svenska socialreportage

Fem 1900-talsreportrar och deras kontext

CECILIA AARE

Södertörns Högskola

Abstract

Sociala reportage skrivs av reportrar med ett personligt engagemang. De är hängivna det självpåtagna uppdraget att berätta om sin tids stora frågor. Så ser mytbildningen ut. Men vad avgör hur reportagen utformas? Baserat på journalistikhistorisk forskning och narratologiska närläsningar av reportage av Ester Blenda Nordström, Gustaf Hellström, Stig Dagerman, Ivar Lo-Johansson och Barbro Alving, fem särskilt hyllade svenska 1900-talsreportrar, pekar den här artikeln ut hur det finns ett direkt samband mellan den förmedlade människosynen och textens berättarteknik. Artikeln visar vidare att tidsandan präglar vissa texter, inte minst när det gäller idéer om reporterrollen: hur bör en reporter framstå i sin text? Samtidigt visar den i ännu högre grad hur profilerade reportrar kan välja en egen väg.

KEYWORDS

sociala reportage, 1900-talsreportrar, narratologi, berättarperspektiv, journalistikhistoria, människosyn

Inledning

Historiskt finns både en mytbildning och en omfattande historieskrivning om att sociala reportage skrivs av reportrar som vill påverka samhället med sin journalistik (Schudson, 1995, s. 94–110; McQuail, 2013, s. 22–24). I Sverige var ideal om reporteryrket som ett kall länge starka inom professionen (Nygren, 2008, s. 18; Hultén, 1995, s. 7). Detta återspeglas i debatter inom yrket men också i läroböcker om reportage, särskilt under det politiskt radikala 1970-talet då litterär sakprosa stod högt i kurs (Lagerlöf, 1985) och journalistutbildningen präglades av politiska vänstervindar (Gardeström, 2011, s. 228). Under 1980- och 1990-talen gav förlaget Ordfront ut hela tolv volymer om legendariska reportageskribenter i Sverige och internationellt (*Reportagens mästare*, 1989–1999). Dessutom utkom antologin med det talande namnet *Tio reportage som förändrade världen*. Utgivningen illustrerar vilken makt sociala reportage ansågs ha haft i samhället och vilken hög status de mest kända sociala reportrarna tillskrevs.

Den här artikeln zoomar in på det sociala reportaget under perioden 1910-talet–1950-talet, det vill säga innan 1970-talets samhällsintresse började påverka genren och före 1980-talets retroaktiva intresse. Under dessa fem decennier utvecklades socialreportaget i många riktningar, både till form och innehåll (Aare, 2023). I följande undersökning tar jag fasta på några av dem när jag identifierar samband mellan den valda berättartekniken och den människosyn som kan spåras i reportage av fem tongivande svenska socialreportrar: Ester Blenda Nordström, Gustaf Hellström, Stig Dagerman, Ivar Lo-Johansson och Barbro Alving. En utgångspunkt är frågan om de enskilda reportrarna verkar vara en produkt av sin tid eller om de tvärtom har varit föregångare.

Reportrarna har inte primärt valts för att de är representativa för sin samtid utan för att samtliga har hyllats för sitt sociala engagemang. Jag vill granska idealen, några av dem som setts som förebilder både inom och utom yrket. Därigenom bör det gå att säga något om socialreportagens ställning liksom om vilka sätt att berätta som alls kunde förekomma vid olika tidpunkter.

Det saknas mer omfattande forskning om svenska sociala reportage över en längre tidsperiod. Av de studier som finns är min monografi *Den engagerade reportern: Svenska sociala reportage 1910–2010* hittills den enda vetenskapliga undersökning som kombinerar journalistikhistoriska perspektiv med narratologiska närläsningar (2023).

Med *reportage* syftar jag i den här artikeln på den genre som internationellt går under benämningarna *literary journalism* och *narrative journalism*. Det rör sig om en texttyp där scener (något

händer på en specifik plats vid en specifik tidpunkt) är det centrala tillsammans med en personlig berättarröst (Aare, 2021, s. 9). Läsare erbjuds att ta del av en verklighet där de själva tycker sig vara på plats. Detta innebär att texterna inte ska blandas ihop med nyhetsartiklar, som saknar scener och har krav på opartiskhet och en neutral presentation där reportern själv är osynlig. Med *sociala reportage* avser jag reportage om ämnen av samhällskaraktär. *Reporterroll* syftar antingen på vilken karaktär en synlig reporter har i texten eller på berättarens attityd (Aare, 2021, s. 106–127). Tycker vi oss möta en flanör, ett ögonvittne, en äventyrare eller en reporter som uppträder förklädd?

För att dra slutsatser om idéströmningar med koppling till reporterrollen använder jag journalistikhistorisk forskning. För att identifiera reporterroll och människosyn i utdrag ur ett antal reportage använder jag en blandning av medieretorisk textanalys (Nerman 1973; Hultén 2000), som hjälper mig att tolka de förmedlade budskapen, och ett urval diskursnarratologiska analysbegrepp. För framställningsformer väljer jag de brett kända benämningarna *showing* (något skildras i scenisk form) och *telling* (något återges direkt av berättaren, utan koppling till en scen) (Booth, 1983, s. 40, 50 och 94). För berättarperspektiv väljer jag Göran Rossholms termer *afferent perspektiv* (en scen återges ur ett betraktande perspektiv) och *efferent perspektiv* (läsaren erbjuds att följa en karaktärs tankar eller känslor) (2005, s. 148–149). *Afferent perspektiv* innebär att något är ”som iakttaget eller uppfattat” av någon, antingen en anonym iakttagare eller en karaktär i berättelsen. Detta perspektiv passar särskilt bra för att beteckna den iakttagande positionen i ett klassiskt ögonvittnesreportage. Den kan förklaras med att ett ögonvittne i en scen är internt placerat, det vill säga närvarande inom berättelsen, men samtidigt externt placerat i förhållande till det eller dem som iakttas (Aare, 2023, s. 17–19). *Efferent perspektiv* innebär att något är ”som uttryckt, tänkt eller känt” av någon, primärt inom en scen. Jag har tidigare utvecklat en teoretisk modell över hur en reporters *professionella (kontextuella) engagemang* omsätts i ett *narrativt (textuellt) engagemang* i reportagetext (Aare, 2021). Det narrativa engagemanget, det vill säga det engagemang som texten kommunicerar, kan delas in i *narrativ inlevelse* och *narrativ medkänsla*.¹ Inlevelse, att känna *med* någon, kan förmedlas oberoende av om läsaren känner sympati för en person eller inte. Medkänsla/sympati, att känna *för* någon, innebär att läsaren erbjuds att tycka synd om eller sympatisera med någon utan att nödvändigtvis föreställa sig den personens situation.² Narrativ inlevelse är alltså en konsekvens av ett efferent perspektiv och ska förstås som att läsaren erbjuds att dela de upplevande karaktärernas *här och nu*. Detta begrepp hör därmed främst ihop med berättelsens

scener men kan också uppstå när berättarrösten simulerar en typ av hypotetiskt efferent perspektiv. Narrativ medkänsla ska förstås som att reportern som berättare eller karaktär explicit uttrycker medkänsla eller sympati med någon av (de andra) karaktärerna, alternativt att texten implicit förmedlar medkänsla eller sympati med en karaktär. I scenisk framställning är detta alltid en konsekvens av en typ av afferent perspektiv som innebär positiva generaliseringar om människor i form av romantisering eller exotisering. Men afferenta perspektiv kan också kombineras med negativt laddade generaliseringar, vilket ytterligare ökar distansen mellan läsaren och dem som skildras. Enstaka ytterligare begrepp tillkommer i artikeln och förklaras då direkt i texten.

En expansiv period med öppenhet för äventyr

Pressforskare pekar ut Wendela Hebbes "Arbetarkarlens hustru" från 1846 som det första sociala reportaget i en svensk dagstidning (*Tidningskvinnor*, 2000, s. 24–34). August Strindbergs reportageserie *Bland franska bönder* från 1886 brukar lyftas fram som särskilt inflytelserik för genren de kommande decennierna (*Tio reportage som förändrade världen*, 1982, s. 11–34). Annars var det nya under 1910-talet att svenska dagstidningsjournalister började arbeta uppsökande. De nöjde sig inte längre med att passivt sammanställa "meddelanden" som inkommit till redaktionerna utan prövade också en ny självständighet (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994, s. 129). Den självständigheten syntes först i reportagets form (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994, s. 129–130), och här var det kvinnliga reportrar som gick i täten; medan männen fortfarande satt kvar på redaktionerna och redigerade eller på sin höjd gav sig ut för att referera en riksdagsdebatt eller rättegång (Jarlbrink, 2009, s. 169) började kvinnliga reportrar skildra små och stora händelser mitt i vimlet där människor rörde sig. Efter en roman av Ellen Key, själv journalist, kom de att kallas "pennskaft" (*Tidningskvinnor 1690–1960*, s. 122). De skrev artiklar i form av korta impressionistiska scener, med färg och fläkt, återgivna sinnesintryck och livfulla detaljer.

Parallellt med denna utveckling blev det vanligare med äventyrsreportage och krigsreportage (Schudson, 1978, s. 69; Bak, 2020), två exempel på en journalistik som tog med läsaren till dramatiska skeenden långt bort. Samtidigt började dagstidningar använda sig av egna utrikeskorrespondenter som både arbetade uppsökande och kunde rapportera om krig och andra omvälvande händelser.

En svensk reporter som sökte äventyr genom sin journalistik var Ester Blenda Nordström, mest känd för reportageserien *En piga bland pigor*, som först skrevs för *Svenska Dagbladet* 1914 och sedan

gavs ut i bokform. Den byggde på iakttagelser från hennes tid som pigga på en gård i Sörmland och väckte uppmärksamhet för sina avslöjanden om de dåliga arbetsförhållandena för pigor, en fråga som Nordström sedan tidigare var engagerad i (Bremer, 2017, s.12).

Nordström kan på flera sätt uppfattas som föregångare. Hon var först med att introducera *rollreportaget* i Sverige, en arbetsmetod som innebar att uppträda förklädd för att som journalist kunna ta sig in i slutna miljöer. Det äldsta kända exemplet på metoden kommer från amerikanska Nelly Bly, som 1885 fingerade sinnessjukdom för att tas in på en anstalt och sedan publicerade en skildring av villkoren för de intagna. Långt senare skulle metoden bli känd under beteckningen att *wallraffa*, efter den västtyske reportern Günter Wallraff.

En pigga bland pigor trycktes i upplaga på upplaga och kom också att filmatiseras. Uppmärksamheten gav Nordström möjlighet att fortsätta skriva om miljöer som måste ha tett sig exotiska för läsekretsen. Det blev bland annat en bok om hur hon tog jobb som lärarinna åt samebarn och delade samiska familjers vardag, en annan om hur hon reste med ett fartyg för utvandrare till USA och sedan liftade runt på den nordamerikanska kontinenten och en tredje om hur hon ingick skenäktenskap med en svensk forskare för att kunna följa med på en expedition till Kamtjatka-halvön. Nordström drogs till äventyr och det okända (Bremer, 2017), och i alla sina reportage framträder hon i reporterrollen *äventyrsreporter*: hon inbjuder läsaren att ta del av märkvärdigheter och faror som hon själv utsatt sig för, till exempel milslånga vandringar över fjället i oväder eller att färdas i USA genom att hålla sig fast i underredet på en godstågsvagn.

Efter en närmare granskning av berättartekniken i Nordströms reportage kan jag direkt konstatera att växlingar i berättarperspektivet återspeglar hur människosynen skiftar. I *Kåtornas folk* skildrar hon hur renhjorden väntas återvända efter att ha varit på bete i Norge:

En halvmil bort hade hjorden stannat – om man lyssnade riktigt intensivt och allt var stilla, så kunde man höra hundarnas skall där bortifrån [...]. *Nu gällde* allt endast hjorden. *Var* den fet, *var* den frisk, *var* det många kalvar födda, [...]. *I morgon* var det gärde – javisst. Och i *övermorgon* och dagen därpå, och så många dagar man *kunde* få hjorden samlad.

(1916, s. 256–257, mina kursiveringar).

Från och med “Nu gällde” hittar vi *fri indirekt diskurs* (en tanke eller känsla uttrycks i tredje person, samtidigt som en hänvisande fras i stil med “tänkte hon”, “kände han” saknas). Stildraget hör ihop med den typ av språk som romanförfattare använder för att skapa interna

perspektiv i tredje person. Det medför att läsaren ser med en skildrad karaktärs ögon så att berättarperspektivet blir *efferent*; oavsett om vi känner sympati för personen eller inte tvingas vi uppleva världen så som hen uppfattar den. Därmed uppstår *narrativ inlevelse*. I det här fallet syftar "man" i början på citatet på reporterns och det samiska kollektivets gemensamma perspektiv. Det är detta, inklusive den samiska erfarenheten av renskötselns villkor, som läsarens erbjuds dela.

Detta sätt att berätta brukar förknippas med journalistik som uppstod med 1960-talets amerikanska *new journalism*. Men här märker vi alltså att det är på plats hos Nordström redan under svenskt 1910-tal. Detsamma kan sägas om *episkt preteritum* (att verb i preteritum inte betecknar dåtid utan kan stå tillsammans med tidsuttryck som signalerar nutid eller framtid), något som annars anses vara typiskt för fiktion (Hamburger, 1973, s. 64–73) men som här syns i de kursiverade uttrycken.

Även om Nordströms stil delvis kan te sig modern kan vi i hennes texter hitta en människosyn som kan kännas förlegad i våra dagars ögon. Ibland beundrar hon sin arbetskamrat på gården, pigan Anna, för hennes anspråkslöshet och flit: "Men när hon på morgonen vaknade, gick hon ständigt med lika lugn, belåten iver till arbetet, som hon utförde snabbt och väl och med samma glada villighet så lång dagen var. Vad jag beundrade henne och vad jag beundrar henne ännu! Och vad jag avundas henne den måttfulla styrka och kraft varmed hon gjorde allt" (1919, s. 126). Här uppstår narrativ medkänsla/sympati med Anna men också en distans genom att reportern själv, liksom underförstått läsaren, inte kan eller skulle ha klarat av de långa arbetsdagarna utan att klaga. Anna är dock bara nöjd och glad. Därmed görs hon främmande för läsaren.

Andra gånger framställs Anna som korkad och någon som inte bryr sig om sin hygien. Med ett drastiskt språk, kryddat av ironi, skriver Nordström att Anna "kliar sig länge och omsorgsfullt i huvudet med stelt stirrande ögon" och "spottar ljudligt" (1919, s. 50). I boken från Lappland heter det om en samekvinna: "Som en hök slog hon ned på allt som glänste grant och blankt, ögonen fingo ett tränande uttryck och händerna sträcktes med en nästan omedveten gest efter det. Såg hon en vacker, brokig mössa tog hon den utan krus från ägarinnans huvud" (1916, s. 25). Här bygger de nedsättande formuleringarna på generaliseringar. Nordström växlar mellan en syn på samer som tycks förankrad i 1910-talets koloniala blick (Bremer 2017, s. 178–179) och, på andra ställen i boken, en beundran för deras förmåga att tämja naturens krafter.

Berättartekniskt är människosynen i de två senaste citaten endast förenliga med ett *afferent perspektiv* där läsaren ser textens karaktärer från utsidan och får ta del av berättarens kommentarer (*telling*)

om dem. Det intressanta är att distans skapas oavsett om generaliseringarna är öppett negativa, som om samekvinnan, eller positiva, som i det första citatet om pigan Anna.

I Nordströms beskrivning av ett svenskt hem i utvandrabygder i USA framträder en distans som troligen inte var lika uppenbar för samtida läsare: "Men jag ska aldrig glömma [...] det varma lilla köket, där gulnade porträtt från Sverige stirrade på en från väggarna [...]. Då och då kom en djup suck från Karolina, allteftersom att minnena rullades upp, och för var gång hon suckade räckte Erik ut handen med en tafatt rörelse och strök henne över skuldran eller knät" (1926, 130). Denna gång är människosynen romantiserad och byggd på nostalgi. Detta reportage publicerades första gången 1923, men det är rimligt att anta att sådana romantiseringar låg i tiden redan under 1910-talet eftersom också Hellström ibland uttrycker sig på liknande sätt 1915 (Aare, 2023, s. 65). Både där generaliseringarna har positiv och där de har negativ karaktär blir det svårt för läsaren att tänka: "detta hade kunnat vara jag". Den här dubbelheten är något som tidigare forskare inte har pekat ut.

Till skillnad från i exemplen om pigan Anna och den samiska kvinnan återger citatet om utvandarparet en scen genom framställningsformen *showing*. Men berättarperspektivet är inte efferent; det förmedlar inte vad Karolina eller Erik själva tänker. Inte heller liknar det konstruktionen där reportern uttrycket samekollektivets gemensamma erfarenhet. I stället är det reportern själv, synlig i ett inledande "jag", som med ett afferent perspektiv betraktar det gamla paret. Läsaren är hänvisad till besökarens blick och, med den, hennes människosyn.

Varifrån kom då Nordströms värderingar, som särskilt märks genom stilen och det valda berättarperspektivet? Kanske spelade hennes medelklassbakgrund in, men större betydelse får man nog tillskriva de strukturer som bland andra Bengt Nerman (1973) har visat existerar inom journalistisk produktion. Det handlar om band som knyts mellan en redaktion och publikens förväntningar. Även modernare forskning inom dagordningsteori pekar ut hur journalistik växer fram i ett ständigt samspel mellan vad publiken väntar sig och vad journalisterna väntar sig att publiken väntar sig (se till exempel Shehata, 2015). Med en sådan förklaringsmodell återspeglar Nordströms värderingar om samer och pigor världsbilden hos *Svenska Dagbladets* dåtida, borgerligt sinnade Stockholmsläsare. Man skulle också kunna säga att reportern uppträder som länk mellan sin urbana läsekrets och den miljö som är exotisk för både henne och läsarna.

Gustaf Hellström speglad genom Stig Dagerman

Gustaf Hellström var både skönlitterär författare och en av Sveriges första fast anställda utrikeskorrespondenter. Under flera decennier rapporterade han för *Dagens Nyheter* från olika håll i världen. I en samling reportage från första världskrigets Frankrike visar mina analyser att han delvis går sin egen väg, både berättartekniskt och ideologiskt. Han tar visserligen tydligt ställning för Frankrike i kriget, men samtidigt ser han också tyska soldater som offer. Denna människosyn bottnade i en principiell motvilja mot militarismen och gick emot den rådande tidsandan (Hellström skrev på annan plats i tidningen debattartiklar i frågan). I ett reportage citerar han en fransk sergeant som beskriver hur tyska soldater skickas fram i led på led som kanonmat, oavsett hur dåligt det går för dem. "Stackars satar!" utbrister sergeanten. (Hellström, 2014, s. 66). På ett annat ställe reflekterar berättaren över hur en tysk soldat, "oavsett vilka älskansvärda egenskaper han än äger", tvingas lyda order: "Han är ett offer, han måste bli ett offer för ett politiskt system, som när det gäller, ej blinkar ett ögonblick att riva sönder neutralitetstraktater" (s. 49).

Det ideologiska perspektivet på krig delar Hellström med Stig Dagerman, som ett världskrig senare skulle göra en liknande analys. Under svenskt 1940-tal ansågs han vara en av de mest lovande unga författarna. Likheter mellan hans och Hellströms journalistik är både tematiska och stilistiska och utgör ett intressant exempel på att reportage inte behöver vara knutna till en viss tidsanda samt att man som forskare kan hitta oväntade beröringspunkter. Jag vill därför bryta den kronologiska dispositionen med en jämförelse mellan Hellström och Dagerman.

När Dagerman 1946 reste runt i Tyskland för att skildra andra världskrigets förlorare var han gift med en kvinna som kommit som politisk flykting från Tyskland till Sverige. Man skulle därför ha kunnat vänta sig att han i sin reportagesamling *Tysk höst* är hatisk eller åtminstone uppvisar en distans till tyskarna. Men en sådan attityd skulle gå emot hans syndikalistiska grundsyn, som ofta omnämns när hans skönlitterära författarskap analyseras (Palmkvist, 1989, s. 23–36). I stället avstår han från att döma dem som bara varit vanliga medlöpare. Kriget, menar han, berodde inte på att tyskar i allmänhet är ondare än andra folk. I stället var det följden av ett system som krävde odelbart lydnad av individen. Dagerman skriver: "är inte samma lydnad när allt kommer omkring det betecknande för individens förhållande till sin överhet i alla världens stater" (1981, s. 17).

Även om Dagerman idémässigt kan placeras in i det litterära 1940-talet, med teman som pessimism och hopplöshet, kan både han och Hellström i sin journalistik uppfattas som solitärer, framför

allt genom den icke-dömande attityden. Här finns också en likhet i ett socialt engagemang. Utöver reportage och romaner skrev Hellström opinionsartiklar i frågor om demokrati och diktatur samt sociala klyftor. När han under 1910-talet var *Dagens Nyheters* Londonkorrespondent rapporterade han om suffragettrörelsen och hungermarscher i East End och i sin roman *Kärlek och politik* skildrar han med kritisk blick det engelska klassamhället från samma period (Forsgren, 2018).

Humanismen i Dagermans reportagesamling var avvikande under hans livstid men har hyllats desto mer av eftervärlden, till exempel av Olof Lagercrantz som sätter fingret på hur *Tysk höst* skilde sig från andra Tysklandsskildringar åren efter krigsslutet: "det är i kraft av sin direkta och omedelbara medkänsla Dagerman gör sådan verkan. Flertalet som såg Tyskland dessa år kunde ej befria sig från en dömande attityd som gjorde deras ögon skumma för vad som skedde" (1989). Reportagen gavs 1947 ut i bokform och har sedan dess tryckts i flera upplagor. I en doktorsavhandling om Dagermans journalistik tar de stor plats (Palmkvist, 1989).

Hellströms journalistik föll efter hans död i glömska men fick en viss renässans när Gustaf Hellström-sällskapet bildades år 2000. Den uppburne journalisten Jan Olof Olsson, Jolo, som kom till *Dagens Nyheter* 1945, såg Hellström som en förebild och har hyllat hans insatser. Hellströms medarbetarskap i tidningen, slår Jolo fast, "hör [...] till det största inom den svenska journalistiken" (1954). Hellström är dock inte lika känd som Dagerman, som är ihågkommen för sin skönlitterära produktion på ett annat sätt. Det kan därför vara intressant att lägga märke till hur Hellström tänkte i samma banor som Dagerman drygt 20 år innan *Tysk höst* skrevs.

Berättartekniskt uppträder Hellström i sina krigsreportage i den klassiska reporterrollen av ett *ögonvittne* (Schudson, 1995, s. 99 och 108). Detta syns bland annat i några reportage som han skrev efter att ha bjudits med utländska journalister på en pressresa direkt till fronten. Ett exempel:

[P]å marken blomma gullvivor och liljekonvaljer, och i ett och annat träd, vars krona ännu är kvar, dikta trastar kärleksvisor, och längre bort håller göken på att stamma.

Men för resten - - -

Åttio procent av träden stå med avbrutna kronor. En jättestorm av granater har knäckt stammarna. [...] mellan gullviva och liljekonvalj ligger allt det, ett slag lämnar efter sig. Gravar, gravar och åter gravar. Uniformspersedlar av alla de slag, tyska "feldgrau" vapenrockar, franska mörkblå uniformskap-
por, skjortor och byxor och kalsonger och kängor, tyska stövlar,

uniformsmössor och pickelhuvor, splittrade gevärskolvar och allt tänkbart och otänkbart.

(s. 144).

Framställningsformen är främst *showing*, som framhäver kontrasten mellan naturens grönska och krigets lämningar. I sådana avsnitt är Hellström mer konventionell än Nordström, genom att han varken uppträder förklädd eller som äventyrare. I stället nöjer han sig med att, ur ett *afferent perspektiv*, skildra vad han ser på plats. Man kan lägga märke till att han i sin uppräkningslista både nämner "tyska" och "franska", som för att påminna läsaren om att kriget drabbar soldater på båda sidor.

Som berättare, i passager av *telling*, är Hellström desto djärvare, både stilistiskt och via en empatisk attityd. Här hittar vi på nytt den tydliga kopplingen mellan berättarperspektiv och människosyn. I ett reportage från början på kriget skriver han:

Kriget har kommit Paris inpå dörren. Ända till de allra senaste dagarna stod det som en överklig realitet för en. Kanondundret och mitraljöserna voro så långt borta, blodbadets fasor utspelade sig vid gränsen och mellan Paris och dit var det dagsmarscher. Man visste att en av de största människoslaktningarna krigshistorien känt försiggick däruppe vid Charleroi och Mons. Man visste att ens makes, ens brors, ens sons liv stod på spel, att löpgrafvar fylldes med lik och kanoner rullade över dem som på en landsvägs makadam.

(s. 40).

Här syftar "för en" i andra meningen och "Man" i tredje meningen på reportern tillsammans med resten av parisarna. Det skapar en inkludering på samma sätt som när Nordström gör sig till en i kollektivet som väntar på renhjorden. I nästa "Man" sker dock något oväntat. Det betecknar väntande hustrur, systrar och mödrar, alltså en grupp där reportern själv inte ingår. Men det bygger inte på att reportern har intervjuat franska kvinnor om deras tankar och känslor. I stället rör det sig om en sorts tankeexperiment där berättaren erbjuder läsaren att föreställa sig hur det kan kännas att vara en fransk kvinna som väntar i ovisshet på nyheter från fronten. Trots att läsaren inte erbjuds närvarokänsla via en scen lyckas Hellström förmedla narrativ inlevelse. Vi får därmed ett slags hypotetiskt efferent perspektiv utan att framställningsformen *showing* är inblandad. Detta sätt att skriva motarbetar effektivt tendenser till generalisering.

Också Dagerman använder pronomenet "man" som en sorts inlevelsefantasi, i hans fall för att locka läsaren att tänka sig in i hur det

kan vara att bo i en källare och leva på potatis (nöden var stor i Efterkrigstyskland):

Man vaknar, om man överhuvudtaget sovit, frysande i en säng utan filter och går i *kallt vatten över fotknölna* fram till *kaminen* och försöker få eld på några sura grenar från ett bombat träd. Någonstans i *vattnet* bakom hostar barn vuxet och tuberkulöst. [...] På *kaminen* står en gryta med *vatten – vatten* finns det gott om – och man böjer sig ner över *vattnet* på golvet och plockar upp några *potatisar* som ligger på källargolvets osynliga botten. Den som står i *kallt vatten över fotknölna* lägger dessa *potatisar* i *grytan* och väntar på att de med tiden skall bli ätbara, fast de var frusna redan när man lyckades få tag på dem.

(1981, s. 8–9, mina kursiveringar).

Texten är skriven på ett mer litterärt språk än Hellström använde; särskilt syns detta i de stilistiska upprepningarna av nyckelord (se mina kursiveringar). I bruket av pronomenet "man" finns dock en likhet. Scenen, visar Palmkvist (1989), baseras på en familj Dagerman faktiskt mötte. Men i stället för att namnge personerna och staden där källaren låg använder han den ovanliga "man"-formen och gör på så vis det individuella generellt – och då inte på ett sätt som hindrar utan *inbjuder* till narrativ inlevelse: det här hade kunnat vara vem som helst, det hade kunnat vara du.

Sociala kartläggningar och generaliserande anspråk

Åren kring 1930 växte i Sverige en typ av reportage fram som hade mer utpräglad social karaktär än det tidigare äventyrsreportaget. Reportrar skildrade socialt utsatta miljöer som fängelser, mentalsjukhus och bordeller liksom fattiga människors vardag. De var den här gången primärt inte ute efter äventyr. I en tradition med rötter hos Dickens och Zola hade de i stället ambitionen att kartlägga miljöer som läsekretsen dittills vetat lite om, trots att det inte rörde sig om fjärran länder (Elveson, 1979, s. 27–28, Hultén, 1995, s. 8–15). Arbetsplatser och arbetaryrken hörde också hit.

Många av dessa reportage publicerades i bokform, och en känd internationell föregångare är Jack Londons *Avgrundens folk* från 1902, om människor i slummen i Londonstadsdelen East End (Hultén, 1995, s. 11). Men framför allt är den Pragtyske reportern Egon Erwin Kisch en självklar portalfigur vars samlingsvolym *Den rasande reportern* från 1924 kom att bli förebild för generationer av sociala reportrar (Stolpe, 1982; Hultén, 1995, s. 13–15). Kisch förhöll sig inte neutral i sina texter. Tvärtom menade han i en programförklaring att

ett reportage bör vara ett "anklagande konstverk", på en gång samhällskritiskt och litterärt högtstående. (Stolpe, 1982, s. 250.)

Ett svenskt exempel där den kartläggande ambitionen står i centrum är Lubbe Nordströms *Lort-Sverige*, ursprungligen en radiodokumentär, senare en bok från 1938 om bostadshygien på svensk landsbygd. Två samhällskritiska romanförfattare som också skrev resereportage under det här decenniet var Josef Kjellgren och Ivar Lo-Johansson.

Lo-Johansson är främst känd för sina romaner och noveller om statare samt självbiografiskt grundade romaner, men han skrev också journalistik. Hans resereportage från slutet på 1920-talet tillkom på hans eget initiativ. De brukar räknas som tidiga exempel på 1930-talets sociala reportagevåg (Hultén, 1992) och handlar om när reportern är på luffen i Frankrike, engelska kolgruvearbetare, fattiga i East End och romska familjer i Ungern och Sverige. Genom sitt ämnesval och en uttalat undersökande ansats kan dessa reportage uppfattas som politiskt radikala och som del av den större litterära strömningen inom dåtida svensk arbetarlitteratur.

Även om Lo-Johansson gick i täten var han med den utgångspunkten alltså inte en solitär. Inte minst framgår detta av Mats Rehns avhandling *Jack London i Sverige* (1974). Rehn har hittat många svenska författare och journalister som i Londons efterföljd skrev skildringar om storstadsslum, och han visar hur Lo-Johanssons reportagebok från East End både tematiskt och stilistiskt (fattigdom romantiseras) kan inordnas i en sådan Jack London-vurm.

Reporterrollen i de fyra böckerna är oftast ett betraktande *ögonvittne*. Men undantag för vissa avsnitt i boken från Frankrike är resereportagens berättarteknik konventionell med en stark dominans av *telling*. Det innebär att Lo-Johansson inte skriver i form av utarbetade scener som ger läsare möjlighet att bilda sig en egen uppfattning om det skildrade. I stället är vi hänvisade till att acceptera berättarens beskrivningar och, framför allt, värderingar. För detta är journalistik där värderingar tar stor plats, i första hand genom generaliseringar i människosynen.

Positiva sådana generaliseringar hittar vi om manliga gruvarbetare. En arbetare som reportern möter i en gruva får honom att notera mannens "eldsvedda, manliga leende" (1928, s. 142) och fortsätta: "En enkel, bräcklig människa, men en man, som svurit av sig mycket av livet. Han log oss till mötes [...]. Det hade kunnat slå mig än djupare till marken, medan en våg av växande hat från mannens sida på sin höjd skulle ha gjort oss till jämlikar. Jag bekänner att jag greps av beundran inför detta drag av mänsklig nöjsamhet, ett brott till döden mot all social framåtanda" (1928, s. 143).

Vanligast är att berättaren i singular talar om gruvarbetaren som en viss "typ". När han ska beskriva denna typ (i praktiken gruppen

av gruvarbetare generellt) räknar han upp egenskaper som mod, styrka och just "nöjsamhet" (se ovan). Inte sällan kombineras hans beundran med romantisering, som då Lo-Johansson skriver om den typiserade mannens hem: "När samme man senare på dagen går ut från sitt lilla hem, där blommorna prunka på fönsterbrädan, symaskinen med bländande vitt överkast står i sitt hörn och barnen hoppa kråka på kammargolvet verkar han mycket prosaisk, men är sannolikt själv lyckligare. Faran i hans arbete undgår icke att sätta ett spår i hans väsen, även om han sist av allt skulle klaga eller beskärma sig över den" (1928, s. 63).

Beskrivningen kan påminna om Nordströms romantisering av ett hem i amerikanska svenskbygder fem år tidigare eller i hur Pigan Ester inte klagar på sina hårda arbetsvillkor. Det här sättet att skriva dyker ofta upp i svenska socialreportage under 1930-talet. I en inventering av fyra dagstidningar och tidskrifter 1930–1937 kommer Britt Hultén bland annat fram till att utsatta miljöer och människor får synas i journalistiken samtidigt som bilden är tillrättalagd. Hon talar om en "idyllvinkel" som präglar socialreportagens skildring av "strävsamma" arbetare och deras "enkla" hem (1993, s. 71–75). Nordströms reportage publicerades 1923, skildringen av gruvarbetare fem år senare. Liknande formuleringar återfinns hos Hellström (Aare, 2023, s. 65). Den romantiserande stilen i alla tre böckerna bör därför kunna uppfattas som tidstypisk.

Vad som däremot sticker ut i Lo-Johanssons resereportage är de generaliseringar som är negativa och betydligt grövre. I *Kolet i våld* redovisar reportern systematiskt fakta om kolbrytning, engelska gruvorters historik, löner, arbetsförhållanden, fackföreningar, olycksstatistik och bostadsstandard. Men på samma sätt beskriver han, som om det vore vetenskapliga fakta, vad som utmärker olika folkslag. I *Zigenare: En sommar på det hemlösa folkets vandringsstigar* från 1929, hävdar han att romer är genetiskt betingade till att ljuga och stjäla. Genomgående i alla fyra böckerna buntar han ihop människor efter etnicitet (även kineser, fransmän och norrmän). Så här kan det heta om judar i *Nederstigen i dödsriket*, boken från East End:

Avskryvårda gamla judegubbar med grått skägg, blå näsa, rinnande, vattniga ögon och snikna fingrar försöka prångla ut den simplaste lump till de passerande. Man ser unga smarta affärsjudar, som bedriva business i fint utmejslad stil. [...] Mitt bland vederstyggliga judekärningar till mer än hälften uppåtna av smuts och vanskördnad, möter man unga sköna judinnor med mjällvit hy under det kolsvarta håret, på vaggande länder i sköna kläder och på väg till synagogan.

(1929, s. 273–274.)

Som framgår av ovanstående citat blir de nedsättande formuleringarna särskilt iögonfallande då de gäller kvinnor, som ständigt sexualiseras och vars kroppar förknippas med äckelkänslor på ett helt annat sätt än mäns kroppar. Där kvinnor alls omnämns i böckerna sker det på gruppnivå; de definieras som "prostituerade", "arbeterskor", "hemlösa" eller, rätt och slätt, unga eller gamla. Om kvinnor som arbetar på en chokladfabrik heter det: "Något fuktigt *erotiskt*, fattigt *liderligt*, tandlöst och anfrått ligger över flertalet. De *skratta rått mot de mötande manfolken* och visa sina tandlösa munnar" (1929, s. 91). Om unga flickor i en gruvby förtäljer berättaren: "Ibland kan man hos byns flickor få se rörelser och poser av en så *förslagen charm*, att man kan börja undra över, vilka vägar sådant har kommit in i gruvbyn" (1928, s. 22). Kvinnor på ett hårbärge för hemlösa får berättaren att beklaga män som behöver se dem: "Det är något särskilt ohyggligt för en man att se och sysselsätta sig med *djupt fallna kvinnor*. [...] Redan salarna med dessa fysiskt förverkade och *moraliskt förfäade* kvinnoavarelser likt bylten och knyten bland skrubbiga möbler och tarvlig inredning" (1929, s. 127). Man kan notera att fattiga kvinnor förknippas med prostitution även om de har ett arbete eller "bara" råkar vara hemlösa (se mina kursiveringar i citaten ovan).

Givetvis motverkar alla negativa generaliseringar effektivt läsarens möjlighet att leva sig in i de skildrade människorna, men det gör också de mer positivt hållna generaliseringar där beundran och romantisering dominerar. I det senare fallet kan narrativ medkänsla förmedlas men aldrig narrativ inlevelse. Överlag är det ovanligt i böckerna att reportern möter enskilda individer, kommer dem nära och berättar något unikt om dem. I de rapsodiska scener som förekommer är berättarperspektivet alltid afferent och stannar vid betraktarens distansnerande blick.

Skulle då den människosyn som säkert chockerar många av dagens läsare kunna förklaras med värderingar i Lo-Johanssons samtid? Kanske till en del när det gäller etnicitet. Statens rasbiologiska institut hade instiftats 1922, vilket innebar att det i slutet på 1920-talet fanns en sanktionerad uppfattning om att "raser" kunde undersökas och definieras vetenskapligt. Samtidigt är det värt att jämföra med Jack Londons mer än 27 år äldre *Avgrundens folk*, som Lo-Johansson själv refererar till i *Nederstigen i dödsriket*. Den är inte alls lika dömande mot fattiga människor, vare sig kvinnor eller män, och läsaren möter en mer empatisk attityd. Man kan vidare jämföra med de samtida Josef Kjellgren och Willy Walfridsson, vars socialreportage Hultén finner skildrar människor i utsatta miljöer, till exempel prostituerade kvinnor, med en "jämlik" attityd och som dessutom gör en klass- och maktanalys (1993, s. 71). En sådan analys genomför även George Orwells *Vägen till Wigan Pier*, en reportagebok

om engelska kolgruvesamhällen som skrevs endast nio år efter *Kolet i Våld* men ändå ger uttryck för en helt annan kvinnosyn tillsammans med en kritik mot välbärgade människor som tänker att de som är fattiga har sig själva att skylla (Aare, 2023, s. 113–115).

Lo-Johannson undersökte makt och klass i sina romaner, självbiografiska berättelser och, på 1950-talet, i en reportageserie om svenska ålderdomshem. Han deltog också aktivt i samhällsdebatten när det gällde statsarsystemet, åldringsvården och svenska romers ställning. Men i resereportagen är det som om hans förklaringsmodeller stannar vid ett generaliserande anspråk på att ringa in vad som utmärker folkgrupper, gruvarbetare generellt och, med misgynna glasögon, kvinnor av olika slag.

Folkhemsgemenskap, exotisering och empatiskt engagemang

Under svenskt 1950-tal växte en samförståndsanda fram i dagstidningarna. Myndigheter och läsare skulle förenas i ett gemensamt projekt med journalisterna som påhejare men också som arkitekter. I en brett upplagd studie från 1995 visar en grupp medieforskare hur tidningarna tog en aktiv del i att forma idéer om det framväxande "folkhemmet" (Nittonhundrafemtiofem, 1995).

Studien bygger på analyser av hundra förstasidor från tio tidningar under en novembervecka 1955 och pekar ut hur innehåll, språk och bild konstruerar ett konsensusområde. Forskarna finner bland annat att förstasidestexterna innehåller en rad ord där ändelsen "sam" ingår, så som "samarbete", "samverka", "samhälle", "samordna", "samverka" och "tillsammans". Ordvalet signalerar underförstådda värderingar om att politiker, myndigheter och det svenska folket vid den här tiden hade ett gemensamt mål: att utveckla Sverige till ett välfärdsland (1995, s. 126–127). Tom Olsson kommenterar att journalister var med om att utforma folkhemmets "sociala horisonter", formulera problem som behövde lösas och anvisa lämpliga lösningar (1995, s. 126–127).

Studiens slutsatser kan appliceras på en reportageserie som Barbro Alving, känd som signaturen Bang, skrev från Norrland för *Dagens Nyheter* 1951. Bang är en av Sveriges mest kända dagstidningsreporter från 1900-talet. Under flera decennier rapporterade hon om vad som skulle komma att bli historiska ögonblick från krig och invasioner. Hon var aldrig stationerad som utrikeskorrespondent utan reste kors och tvärs, ibland på eget initiativ, och kallade skämtsamt sig själv "flygande reporter" (Alving 1982, s. 218).

Kristina Lundgren, som uppmärksammar Bang i en avhandling om tre kvinnliga stjärnreportrar, beskriver hur hon redan under sin livstid förvandlades till en myt (Lundgren, 2002, s. 9). Efter sin död

har hon fortsatt att hyllas. I en artikel inför *Dagens Nyheters* 160-årsdag i december 2024 lyfter Erik Ohlsson fram henne som en av de stora profilerna i tidningens historia (Ohlsson, 2024).

Bangs utrikesreportage har beundrats och analyserats. Men hon skrev även andra typer av texter, till exempel reportage från kungliga kröningar och begravingar där hon odlade en ironisk, lite raljant stil. Minst kända är reportage i mer vardagliga ämnen inom Sverige. Dit hör reportageserien från Norrland, som bestod av åtta reportage publicerade under en höstmånad 1951. I dem är Bang inte föregångare utan tvärtom en produkt av sin tid. De folkhemskonstruktioner som studien *Nittonhundrafemtiofem* identifierar i 1950-talets svenska journalistik dyker här upp i nästan parodisk form.

En närmare analys visar att ett "problem", med Olssons innebörd, beskrivs som att Norrland ännu inte är tillräckligt moget för att upp-tas i folkhemsgemenskapen. "Lösningar" antas finnas hos dem Bang intervjuar, vilka genomgående är elitpersoner: två landshövdingar, två distriktsläkare, en rektor, en tulltjänsteman och, lägst i rang, två distriktsköterskor, en bärödlare och en ABF-konsult. Alla representerar "det goda samhället" som ska lära norrlänningarna att äta mer frukt, sköta sin hygien bättre och läsa fler böcker. Vanliga människor, de som är föremål för förändringsivern, kommer över huvud taget inte till tals.

I ett reportage får Bang följa med en distriktsläkare när han åker runt på hembesök i gårdar i en trakt där tuberkulosen härjar:

Och vad gör man med de kvinnliga utskrivna som har stugan hemma full med ungar, som – læstadianismen! – hamnar i barnsäng och därmed eventuellt i återfallsstatistiken så snart det går och som ofta har att streta för familjen i ett hem som är norrländskt i gammal mening, *med golvdrag och obekvämlighet, med vattenbärning och djur i ladugården?* (Även om det fall väl är ett unikum som doktor Sandler kan berätta om, gården där man var så snål och rädd om hästen så frun fick gå för plogen!)

(4 november, mina kursiveringar).

Ordval som jag har kursiverat antyder visserligen narrativ med-känsla med gårdarnas kvinnor. Men det är "man" i första meningen som styr berättarperspektivet. Det kan jämföras med hur Hellström och Dagerman använder detta pronomen för att förmedla ett efferent berättarperspektiv med dem texten handlar om, i praktiken de som är offer. I exemplet av Bang tillhör "man" de sociala och medicinska myndigheterna. Det är de som berättaren gör gemensam sak med i grubblerier över hur norrländska kvinnor ska förmås att använda preventivmedel. Därmed förläggs den narrativa inlevelsen till dem och läsaren erbjuds att dela deras människosyn. Nu, menar berättaren, kan kvinnor som vårdats för tuberkulos komma hem och

sedan, av religiösa skäl (hänvisningen till læstadianismen), avstå från preventivmedel så att de föder barn på barn och samtidigt ris-kerar att få återfall i sjukdomen.

Bang uppträder i sina reportage alltid i reporterrollen som *läsarens ställföreträdare*. (Aare, 2021, s. 108–109). Det innebär att hon anspelar på sådant läsaren kan relatera till i sitt eget liv, ställer de frågor läsaren kan tänkas vilja få svaren på och, i utrikesreportagen, uppträder som en typisk svensk. I reportagen från Norrland kan man fråga sig vem denna läsare är. Anekdoten inom parentes i citatet erbjuder läsaren att skratta åt den snåla familjen och, i förlängningen, åt tokiga norrlänningar. Ironi är ett stilmedel som Bang ofta använder för att stärka känslan av samhörighet mellan reporter och läsare (Lundgren, 2002). Här lockas vi dock inte att skratta *med* norrlänningar utan *åt* dem. Det är med andra ord uppenbart att norrlänningarna själva inte antas ingå i den typ-läsare som Bang riktar sig till.

I ett annat reportage berättar Bang om en tidigare landshövding som lät plantera 37 000 äppelträd för att locka länsinvånarna att äta mer frukt och på så vis motverka bristsjukdomar bland befolkningen. Men det dröjde innan vändpunkten kom, berättar ”rektor G. Malmros” som konstaterar: “Till en början visade det sig lättare att få västerbottningen att odla grönsaker än att spisa dem” (22 november). Än en gång är norrlänningarna inte inbjudna till gemenskapen med reportern och läsarna.

I Bangs norrländska reportage finns inga spår av distansskapande generaliseringar i form av romantisering, som hos Nordström, Hellström och Lo-Johansson. Däremot återkommer exotisering, som i exemplet om norrlänningars misstänksamhet mot frukt. En formulering förbinder landskapet med ett påstått norrländskt folkkyne: “Norrland är som bekant skogar och malm och rikets råvarureservoar. Och väldiga *vidder* och *vida vyer* och folkets envetna segrar över ödslighet och avstånd och köld. Och sturskhet på botten av ett uppslammad mindervärdeskomplex” (4 november, notera allitterationen och assonansen, två av Bangs vanligaste stildrag som här har kursiverats av mig.) Beskrivningen exponerar en människosyn som främmandegör – både på gott (människor tyglar naturens makter) och på ont (de är sturska) – och kan te sig närmast kolonial när det exotiska folket anses behöva anpassas efter det framväxande folkhemmet.

Här går det att dra samma slutsats som jag gjorde om hur Nordströms attityd gentemot samer och pigor skulle kunna förklaras med att reportern utnyttjar bandet mellan sig själv och sin läsekrets. Också i Bangs fall skulle *Dagens Nyheters* dåvarande Stockholmsläsekrets, genom såväl attityder som stil (ironin) bjudas in till en gemenskap med reportern. Detta tror jag man kan utgå ifrån är av

större betydelse för Bangs sätt att skriva än hennes personliga bakgrund. (När det gäller ironierna visar Kristina Lundgren (2002) att denna stil var något som Bang utvecklade i samspel med en annan läsekrets, den hon riktade sig till när hon tidigt i sin karriär arbetade på veckotidningen *Idun*.)

Skenbart paradoxalt finns en helt annan närhet i människosynen när Bang berättar om offer för händelser på stort avstånd från Sverige, till exempel under spanska inbördeskriget, finska vinterkriget och när sovjetiska soldater marscherade in i Budapest 1956. I den sortens reportage saknas ironiska formuleringar. Reportern är då inte bara *läsarens ställföreträdare* utan liknar på samma gång Hellströms *ögonvittne*, som ser som sin uppgift att vittna för omvärlden om vilka grymheter människor har drabbats av. Ett reportage från japanska Hiroshima 1948 inleds:

En kvart över åtta morgonen den 6 augusti 1945 promenerade den unge spårvägsbokhållaren Kiyosho Kikkawa med sin hustru på en väg en och en halv kilometer från den punkt där atombomben föll över hans stad Hiroshima. Han blev bränd, hustrun blev bränd, men de trodde det skulle stanna därvid. Fyra månader senare började huden på de brända kroppsytorna förvandlas. I dag är han och hustrun de sista kvarlevande bomboffren på Hiroshimas sjukhus, och den som har sett hans armar och rygg får kämpa med mardrömmar länge. Och vad tänker han? Hatar han amerikanerna? Hatar han livet?

Nej. Han som hela Hiroshima hatar bara en sak. Krig.

Man står på sjukhustaket och ser ut över Hiroshima, där det ligger i strålande sol med en blånande bergkrans i fonden – och annoterar tacksamt ett nederlag. Ens fantasikraft räcker inte till. Man borde kanske kunna, men man kan inte måla upp för sig hur synen såg ut den morgonen när en isande vit blix skrev världshistoria tvärsöver Hiroshimas himmel.

(Alving, 1982, s. 240–241).

En antydd rekonstruerad scen erbjuder läsaren att föreställa sig vara på plats när bomben föll och dela en drabbad civilpersons efferenta perspektiv. Berättaren gör sedan ett tidshopp fram till reportagets nutid men dröjer vid spårvägsbokhållaren Kikkikawas upplevelser. Hon formulerar frågor som hon precis har fått läsaren att undra över. Deras indirekta form suddar ut gränsen mellan inre och yttre, mellan mannens efferenta perspektiv (frågorna liknar vad mannen skulle kunna säga till sig själv) och en yttre scen där reportern intervjuar honom och samtidigt iakttar honom ur ett afferent perspektiv.

I nästa stycke syftar "man" inte på någon myndighet, som i reportagen från Norrland, utan på reportern själv i hennes vittnande roll. Men denna reporter är inte ett neutralt, oberört vittne som känslo-mässigt ställer sig utanför vad hon ser. Hennes "man" är inte heller

av samma slag som Hellströms eller Dagermans mer sofistikerade stilgrepp. I stället får det sin styrka av berättarröstens öppna värderingar. Här fungerar kontraktet om en ställföreträdare så att läsaren känner vad reportern känner, vi delar hennes efferenta perspektiv – och reporterns känsla är empati med alla atombombens offer. Därmed rymmer den korta passagen hela fyra berättarperspektiv: spårvägsbokhållarens efferenta, reporterns afferenta och reporterns efferenta perspektiv samt, till sist, ett hypotetiskt efferent perspektiv knutet till alla atombombens offer. Narrativ inlevelse i de japanska offren är en given slutprodukt.

Med detta medkännande sätt att rapportera hakar Bang inte på värderingar i tiden på samma sätt som då hon gör sig till tolk för "folkhemsvärderingar" i reportageserien från Norrland. Tvärtom går hon sin egen väg när hon med berättarteknikens hjälp förmedlar en människosyn fjärran generaliseringar.

Sammanfattning

I den här artikeln har jag presenterat fem portalgestalter inom det svenska, sociala 1900-talsreportaget. Min undersökning visar att de fem i olika grad kan inlemmas i tidsandan respektive valde en solitär väg. Den visar också hur starkt sambandet är mellan berättarperspektiv och reporterroll å ena sidan och den förmedlade människosynen å den andra. När reporterna skriver med efferenta berättarperspektiv förmedlar de narrativ inlevelse i de skildrade människorna, något som gör att läsaren kan sätta sig in i deras situation. När de skriver med afferenta berättarperspektiv förmedlar de i stället generaliseringar, antingen positiva, i form av exotisering eller romantisering, eller negativa, som leder till läsarens avståndstagande.

Ester Blenda Nordström skiftar mellan att, i rollen som äventyrsreporter, gå in i miljöer och skildra människor från insidan, med deras egen blick, och att ställa sig bredvid och främmandegöra dem hon möter. I det förstnämnda var hon en föregångare, i det sistnämnda tycks hon ha varit mer präglad av sin samtid. Mellan Gustaf Hellströms reportage från första världskrigets Frankrike och Stig Dagermans *Tysk höst* från 1946 finns likheter i en icke-dömande attityd. Båda reporterna gick sin egen väg i att hålla lydnadsprinciper snarare än enskilda soldater ansvariga för krig, och båda fick retroaktiv uppskattning för sitt humanistiska budskap, som hänger intimt samman med den valda berättartekniken. Parallellen mellan dem är fascinerande och har inte lyfts fram tidigare.

Ivar Lo-Johansson var i sina resereportage från slutet på 1920-talet en av flera föregångare genom ämnesvalet fattiga invånare i slumområden och människor i arbetaryrken. Han var också tidigt

ute med en systematisk, socialt utforskande ansats. Däremot sticker han i resereportagen ut med en människosyn präglad av fördomsfulla generaliseringar om etnicitet och kvinnor, något som går hand i hand med ett såväl afferent som distanserande berättarperspektiv och som tidigare forskare inte har uppmärksammat. Åtminstone kvinnosynen avviker från den man kan hitta hos flera samtida, jämförbara reportrar.

Barbro Alving, Bang, återskapar 1951, i en reportageserie om Norrland, tidens idéer om folkhemmet som ett gemensamt myndighets- och medborgarprojekt, samtidigt som hon exkluderar och exotiserar norrlänningar. Inget av detta har noterats av tidigare forskare. Både hon och Nordström knyter, via tematik och stil, sina läsare till sig på ett sätt som skulle kunna förklaras med målgruppstänkande och dagordningsteori. När Bang skriver drabbande om historiska ögonblick i länder långt från Sverige är människosynen en annan. Då förmedlar hon i stället en engagerad narrativ inlevelse som inte är tidstypisk och som i dag är en av de främsta anledningarna till att hon fortfarande är ihågkommen.

Jag har i ett tidigare sammanhang kunnat identifiera en mångfald av stilar och berättartekniker inom reportagegenren, i Sverige och internationellt, under hela perioden 1910–2010 (Aare, 2021). Med undantag för en stil dominerad av ifrågasättande och metakommentarer, som började dyka upp under 1960-talet (2021, s. 241–262), var alla dessa sätt att berätta på plats redan under 1910-talet. Skillnaderna har därmed historiskt varit större mellan enskilda reportrar än mellan olika tidsperioder.

För det begränsade urvalet i den här artikeln går det att konstatera att de undersökta reportrarna, med undantag för Lo-Johansson, utnyttjade en komplex berättarteknik med tydligt litterära inslag. Att Dagerman hade en litterär teknik förvånar inte, eftersom han är mest känd för en skönlitterär produktion där särskilt hans medvetna stil brukar framhållas. Mer spännande är det att Nordström och Hellström redan under 1910-talet skrev med litterära stilgrepp. I den kritiska diskussionen av *new journalism* är ett vanligt påstående att reportrar under amerikanskt 1960-tal med en sådan stil ägnade sig åt *fiktionalisering*. De skulle alltså ha lånat stilgrepp från skönlitteraturen, vilket ansågs ha varit något radikalt nytt (se till exempel Wahl Jorgensen, 2013). Jag har dock funnit att även Kisch, med en uttalad förebild i Zola (Hultén, 1995, s. 11), redan 1913 använde sig av *episkt preteritum*, *efferent perspektiv* och *fri indirekt diskurs* (Aare, 2021, s. 211–214). Skulle det därmed ha kunnat vara de svenska reportrarna som hade läst och tagit intryck av Kisch?

Min bedömning är att sambandet inte återfinns på individnivå. Mycket faller på plats om man, i stället för att uppfatta reportagegenren som en genre som "härmar" eller "lånar", inser att den

realistiska romanen och det moderna reportaget är två grenar på samma träd. De utvecklades parallellt i en mylla där viktiga företrädare var både romanförfattare och journalister (till exempel Zola och Dickens men också Hellström). Det som var utmärkande för den realistiska romanen (att gestalta i stället för att berätta, det vill säga mer av *showing* och mindre av *telling*, liksom scener med miljöbeskrivning och dialog) var och är också det som skiljer reportagegenren från nyhetsartikeln (Aare, 2021, s. 54–71). Reportrar som, likt Nordström och Hellström, båda reste och läste mycket insöp helt enkelt ett sätt att skriva som även den samtida Kisch tillägnade sig. Allt detta talar för att dessa tekniker faktiskt var spridda bland både romanförfattare och reportageskribenter många decennier innan *new journalism* gjorde sitt intåg på den journalistiska scenen.

Sammanfattningsvis är urvalet i den här artikelns undersökning begränsat till fem reportrar, men i och med att dessa särskilt har hyllats som förebilder bör slutsatserna ändå vara relevanta för den som vill förstå mekanismerna bakom viktiga strömningar inom det svenska sociala reportaget under 1910-talet–1950-talet.

NOTER

¹ Dessa två begrepp kan delvis sägas motsvara Suzanne Keens (2013) *narrative empathy* respektive *compassion/sympathy*. Jag vill dock understryka att Keens begrepp, som hör hemma inom forskningsfältet *narrative empathy*, ska förstås som både (skribentens) teknik och (textens) effekt (på läsaren). Mina begrepp syftar främst på strukturella och stilistiska konstruktioner inom texten, alltså vissa berättar- och stiltekniker.

² Underlaget till artikeln är, utöver angivna källor, hämtat från Aare (2023).

REFERENSER

- Aare, C. (2021). *Reportage som genre: En narratologisk undersökning av reportagegenren*. Diss., Stockholms universitet.
- Aare, C. (2023). *Den engagerade reportern: Svenska sociala reportage 1910–2010*. Makadam.
- Alving, B. (4 november 1951). Tornedalen mörk fläck i statistiken, älven ingen gräns för tbc-baciller. *Dagens Nyheter*.
- Alving, B. (22 november 1951). Boskap bas för framtida försörjning. Pionjär fann vild vinbärsbuske som löst problem i kala bygder. *Dagens Nyheter*.
- Alving, B. (1982). *Klipp ur nuets historia*. Gidlunds.
- Bak, J. S. (2020). Of Troops and Tropes: US Literary War Journalism from the Civil War to the War on Terror. I E. Dow & R. S. Maguire

- (red.), *The Routledge Companion to American Literary Journalism*. Routledge (s. 235–255).
- Booth, W. C. (1983). *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Bremer, F. (2017). *Ett jävla solsken: En biografi om Ester Blenda Nordström*. Forum.
- Dagerman, S. (1981) [1946]. *Tysk höst, Samlade skrifter* 3. Norstedts.
- Ekecrantz, J., & Olsson, T. (1994). *Det redigerade samhället: Om journalistikens, beskrivningsmaktens och det informerade förnuftets historia*. Carlsson.
- Elveson, G. (1979). *Reportaget som genre*. Avdelningen för litteratursociologi, Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen vid Uppsala universitet, nr 11.
- Gardeström, G. (2011). *Att fostra journalister: Journalistutbildningens formering i Sverige 1944–1970*. Diss., Stockholms universitet.
- Forsgren, P. (2018). "Jag är ett mellanting". Klass och kolonialism i Gustaf Hellströms bildningsroman *Kärlek och politik*. *Sammlaren*, s. 79–96.
- Hamburger, K. (1973) [1957]. *The Logic of Literature*. (M. J. Rose, övers.). Indiana University Press.
- Hellström, G. (2014) [1914–1915]. *1 1/2 mil härifrån står världens största slag. Gustaf Hellström i första världskrigets Frankrike*. L. Leopold & Sigurd Rothstein (red.), Gustaf Hellström-sällskapets skriftserie 2.
- Hultén, B. (1993). *Trettioalet och det sociala reportaget: Brott och straff, idyll och folkhem*. JMK, skriftserie.
- Hultén, B. (1995). *Förändra verkligheten! Det sociala reportaget från Zola till Zaremba*. Ordfront.
- Hultén, B. (2000). *Journalistikanalys: En introduktion*. Studentlitteratur.
- Jarlbrink, J. (2009). *Det våras för journalisten: Symboler och handlingsmönster för den svenska pressens medarbetare från 1870-tal till 1930-tal*. Diss., Linköpings universitet. Mediehistoriskt arkiv, 11, Kungliga biblioteket.
- Keen, S. (2013). Narrative Empathy. I *The Living Handbook of Narratology*.

<https://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/42.html>.

- Lagercrantz, O. (1989). Baksidestext till Palmkvist, K. *Diktaren i verkligheten: Journalisten Stig Dagerman*. Diss., Stockholms universitet. Federativ.
- Lagerlöf, K-W. (1985) Om realism och sårbarhet. *BLM*, 1, s. 27–32.
- Lo-Johansson, I. (1928). *Kolet i våld: Skisser från de engelska gruvarbetarnas värld*. Wahlström och Widstrand.

- Lo Johansson, I. (1929). *Nederstigen i dödsriket*. Wahlström och Widstrand.
- Lundgren, K. (2002). *Solister i mångfalden, signaturerna Bang, Maud och Attis samt andra kvinnliga dagspressjournalister med utgångspunkt i 1930-talet*. Diss., Stockholms universitet.
- McQuail, D. (2013). *Journalism and Society*. SAGE Publications.
- Nermnan, B. (1973). *Massmedieretorik*. Awe/Gebers.
- Nittonhundrafemtiofem: Journalistiken och folkhemmet. (1995). J. Ekecrantz, T. Olsson & K. Widestedt (red.), Skriftserien Journalistik, medier och kommunikation, Stockholms universitet, 2
- Nordström, E. B. (1916), *Kåtornas folk*. Wahlström och Widstrand.
- Nordström, E. B. *En piga bland pigor*. (1919) [1914]. Wahlström och Widstrand.
- Nordström, E. B. (1926) [1923]. *Amerikanskt: Som emigrant till Amerika*. Åhlén och Åkerlunds förlag.
- Nygren, G. (2008). *Yrke på glid*. Stiftelsen Institutet för Mediestudier.
- Ohlsson, E. (23 december 2024). Profilerna som präglat DN – i 160 år. *Dagens Nyheter*. <https://www.dn.se/sverige/profiler-na-som-praglat-dn-i-160-ar/>
- Olsson, T. (1995). Från social utopi till byggprojekt: Journalistiken i omvandlingen av folkhemmet. I J. Ekecrantz, T. Olsson & K. Widestedt (red.), *Nittonhundrafemtiofem: Journalistiken och folkhemmet*. Skriftserien Journalistik, medier och kommunikation, Stockholms universitet, 2 (s. 125–145).
- Olsson, J.-O. (1954). Gustaf Hellström, reporter. *BLM*, 23 (8).
- Palmkvist, K. (1989). *Diktaren i verkligheten: Journalisten Stig Dagerman*. Diss., Stockholms universitet.
- Rehn, M. (1974). *Jack London i Sverige*. Diss., Stockholms universitet.
- Rossholm, G. (2005). Perspektiv och inlevelse i film och prosa. I S. Hellberg & G. Rossholm (red), Att anlägga perspektiv (s. 147–172). Brutus Östlings bokförlag Symposion.
- Schudson, M. (1978). *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*. Basic Books.
- Schudson, M. (1995). *The Power of News*. Harvard University Press.
- Shehata, A. (2015). Journalistikens dagordningar och gestaltningar. I *Handbok i journalistikforskning*. M. Karlsson & J. Strömbäck (red.), (s. 189–206). Studentlitteratur.
- Stolpe, J. (1982). Kisch och konsten att se. I *Tio reportage som förändrade världen, från Strindberg till Hemingway*. O. von Friesen, C. Hellmark & J. Stolpe (red.), (s. 239–251). Ordfront.
- Stål, M. (2002). *Signaturen Bansai: Ester Blenda Nordström. Pennskaft och reporter i det tidiga 1900-talet*. Diss., Göteborgs universitet.
- Tidningskvinnor 1690–1960*. (2000). K. Lundgren & B. Ney (red.), Studentlitteratur.

Tio reportage som förändrade världen, från Strindberg till Hemingway.
(1982). O. von Friesen, C. Hellmark & J. Stolpe (red.), Ordfront.
Wahl-Jorgensen K (2013) Subjectivity and story-telling in journalism.
Journalism Studies 14(3): 305–320.

CECILIA AARE

Lektore

Institutionen för samhällsvetenskaper

Södertörns Högskola

cecilia.aare@sh.se

Hurra for kvinden!

Kvinder i navnestoffet gennem 100 år

HANNE JØRNRUP

Roskilde Universitet

IDA WILLIG

Roskilde Universitet

MARK BLACH-ØRSTEN

Roskilde Universitet

METTE BENGTSSEN

Københavns Universitet

Abstract

Siden 1915 har kvinder i Danmark haft stemmeret, men har det også givet kvinder en ligeværdig plads i offentligheden? I denne artikel har vi sat fokus på kønsrepræsentationen i et hidtil udforsket hjørne af aviserne, nemlig i navnestoffet. Her fremhæves enkeltpersoner i anledning af deres mærkedag, så som fødselsdag, jubilæum eller død, og baseres på bidrag fra både avisernes redaktioner og private borgere. Artiklen ser på udviklingen i navnestoffet i udvalgte danske aviser over en 100-årig periode (1918-2018) og konkluderer, at kvinder kontinuerligt er underrepræsenteret, ligesom andelen af kvinder i navnestoffet ikke mærkbart ændres over tid. Præsentationer af kvinder bliver desuden særligt kønnede i de nutidige eksempler, hvor navnestoffet er blevet en journalistisk genre, modsat tidligere hvor det mestendels var baseret på indsendt materiale. Artiklen konkluderer også, at navnestoffet – og særligt omtale af kvinder – i hele perioden har balanceret på grænsen mellem det offentlige og det private.

KEYWORDS

navnestof, kønsrepræsentation, kvinder i offentlighed, avisoffentlighed

Indledning

Hvordan kan kvinders rolle i offentligheden aflæses i avisernes indhold? Adskillige studier af kvinder i medierne ser på enten repræsentationen af kvindelige kilder i nyhedsartikler, som i de tilbagevendende *Who Makes The News*-studier, eller på hvordan nyhederne fremstiller kvinder i fx politik, i voldtægtssager m.m. (Gill, 2008; Jørndrup, 2021). Men det kan også undersøges gennem et hjørne af avisernes indhold, som er dedikeret til at fremhæve enkeltpersoner fra samfundet i anledning af deres mærkedage og sætte ord på, hvad der gør en mand/kvinde til en værdsat del af offentligheden – nemlig navnestoffet.

Byrman definerer i sin undersøgelse af familiesiderne i svenske aviser (som i store træk er identisk med navnestoffet i danske aviser) udvælgelseskriterier for, hvem disse sider omhandler, på følgende vis: “Vilka hyllas på familjesidan? Frågan kan besvaras med att det är prenumeranter och deras närstående, men också de som familjeredaktionen av någon anledning anser ha ett intressant levnadsöde” (Byrman, 2002, s. 3, 2004).

Kønsrepræsentation i navnestoffet er ikke tidligere undersøgt på danske forhold, men internationale studier viser, at der også på dette felt er en skæv repræsentation af kvinder. Kvinder fremhæves ikke nær så ofte som mænd i navneportrætter og ofte med fokus på kvindelige dyder fremfor samfundsmæssige meritter (Brusser & Louw, 2019; Fowler, 2004; Fowler & Bielsa, 2007; Maybury, 1996; Siivonen, 2007; Spilka et al., 1980).

Med inspiration fra disse studier vil vi se nærmere på fremstillingen af kvinder i offentligheden gennem et studie af navnestoffets blik på kvinder og udviklingen heri fra 1918-2018 i et udvalg af danske aviser. Vi forventer, at dette hidtil understuderede felt kan bringe nye perspektiver til forståelsen af kvinder i offentligheden.

Studie af avisoffentligheder og relation til læserne

Artiklen er resultat af forskningsprojektet “Cultural Publics”¹, hvor vi har vendt blikket mod nogle af de oversete dele af avisernes indhold, nemlig de stofområder, der sjældent inddrages i nyhedsforskning. Særligt har vi set på udviklingen af læserbreve, ledere og navnestof over 100 år fra 1918-2018. Projektets tese er, at disse dele af avisernes indhold bør trækkes frem i lyset, da der kan være væsentlige pointer at hente om avisernes relation til offentligheden, særligt de konkrete lokaliserbare deloffentligheder for de enkelte aviser. I denne artikel vil vi fremadrettet bruge begrebet “avisoffentlighed”, defineret som den særlige del af offentligheden, de enkelte aviser taler til og med.

Gennem studier af de mindre undersøgte dele af aviser kan man nemlig få et givende blik på, hvem det er, aviserne skriver til, og hvilke forestillinger om såvel samfundet som borgernes rolle, der direkte og indirekte kommunikerer herigennem. I lederne udtrykker avisens sit eget eksplicitte synspunkt på tidens udvikling som avisens nyhedsstof beretter om. I læserbrevene er det læserne selv, der giver deres besyv med til den offentlige debat. Endelig bliver det gennem navnestoffet tydeligt, hvilke medborgere der trækkes frem til offentlig hyldelse i forbindelse med personlige mærkedage (fx fødselsdag, bryllup, jubilæum og død), og hvad der fremhæves ved dem. Hvem der hyldes som den gode, samvittighedsfulde samfundsborger skifter både over tid og fra den ene avisoffentlighed til den anden.

I nærværende artikel er det særligt kønsforskelle i navnestoffet over de seneste 100 år, som er i fokus. Der har hidtil ikke været interesse i dansk medieforskning for navnestoffet og slet ikke kvinders tilstedeværelse heri. Internationalt har navnestof (dog særligt nekrologer) haft større forskningsmæssig bevågenhed også med fokus på kvinders rolle. For eksempel har Fowler og Bielsa i et studie af nekrologer i store internationale aviser fra 1900-2000 fundet markante og konsistente kønsforskelle. Kvinder var genstand for omtale i 11% af nekrologer i *The Times* i år 1900, mens andelen 100 år senere kun var steget til 17%, hvorimod aviser som *The New York Times* og *Le Monde* kun portrætterede kvinder i 14% af nekrologerne i år 2000 (Fowler & Bielsa, 2007, s. 208).

Studier af nekrologer, dødsannoncer og portrætter, ser på stofområdet som en prisme til at studere samfundets skiftende værdier og normer for den gode borger og det ønskede samfund. På tværs af kulturer har mærkedage – primært døden – givet både aviser og læsere anledning til at markere og kommentere på den afdødes liv og levned (Fowler & Bielsa, 2007; Hanusch, 2009). Dødsannoncen er den mest udbredte måde at hædre afdøde på, når private borgere indrykker dødsannoncer for familiemedlemmer, hvor navn og dødsdato for afdøde optræder, til tider med meddelelser om hvor og hvornår begravelsesceremonien finder sted. For mange læsere vil de afdøde være helt ukendte, men for udvalgte læsere, nemlig de der kendte afdøde, er det en vital oplysning. Dødsannoncerne bevæger sig derfor på kanten mellem det private og det offentlige (Brusser & Louw, 2019). De internationale studier har ikke fundet kønsforskelle i forhold til, hvem der indrykkes dødsannoncer for (Brusser & Louw, 2019; Ergin, 2009).

Modsat de indsendte meddelelser og annoncer så er længere portrætter og nekrologer oftest resultat af et redaktionelt valg og afspejler såvel redaktionens som samfundets hierarkier og værdier (Avital-BenAtar, 2022; Brusser & Louw, 2019; Byrmann, 2004; Fowler, 2004;

Gavriely-Nuri & Lachover, 2012; Hume, 2000; Lachover & Gavriely-Nuri, Spring2011; Siivonen, 2007). En af de seneste 100 års markante samfundsændringer har været, at kvinder i den vestlige verden er trådt ud i offentligheden og har meriteret sig i egen ret på arbejdsmarkedet. Det kan dog være svært at se i resultaterne fra de internationale studier. Fx kan der både konstateres en forskel i antal og længde af nekrologer for henholdsvis mænd og kvinder i amerikanske medier (Maybury, 1996; Spilka, Lacey og Gelb, 1980). En særlig gruppe kvinder kunne dog undtagelsesvis få længere nekrologer, nemlig hvis de var mødre eller hustruer til meget kendte mænd, fx amerikanske præsidenter (Maybury, 1996, s. 33).

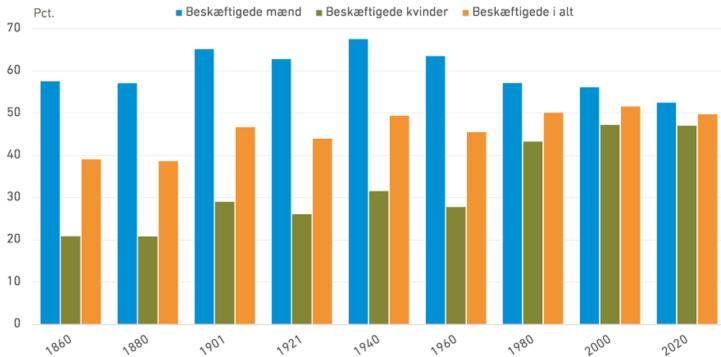
Flyttes fokus fra repræsentation til præsentation af kvinder, så kan der også findes markante kønsforskelle. I et nutidigt studie af nekrologer og dødsomtaler for mænd og kvinder i israelske aviser fremhæver Avital-BenAtar tre elementer, hvor afdøde kvinder omtales ud fra helt særlige kvindelige præmisser.

For det første gives kvinders udseende et særligt fokus, for det andet er kvindens familierolle central i portrættet, mens kvinder for det tredje sjældent beskrives som personer, der aktivt skabte egen karriere. Derimod beskrives de som hjulpet på vej af andre - oftest mænd (Avital-BenAtar, 2022). Hvorvidt og hvordan disse tre forskelle også gør sig gældende ved danske nekrologer og portrætter, vil vi også se nærmere på.

Teser om udviklingen i navnestoffets blik på kvinder

Kvinders plads i offentligheden igennem tiden vil i høj grad afspejle andelen af kvinder på arbejdsmarkedet. Danmarks Statistik har i over 150 år ført statistik over andelen af borgere, der har været i beskæftigelse udenfor hjemmet. Selvom opgørelsesprincipperne er ændret lidt over tiden (gifte kvinder blev fx først registreret under eget erhverv, og ikke mandens, fra 1940) så er udviklingen tydelig. På nedenstående oversigt er fremhævet andelen af henholdsvis mænd og kvinder i beskæftigelse for udvalgte år. Tættest på undersøgelsens start i 1918 finder vi 1921-tallene, hvor ca. 25 % af kvinderne (primært ugifte kvinder) var beskæftiget udenfor hjemmet², mens det for mændene var over 60%. I 2020 er mænd og kvinder i næsten lige høj grad i beskæftigelse udenfor hjemmet.

Andel af beskæftigede i befolkningen



Figur 2: Danske kvinder og mænds beskæftigelse gennem tiden. Kilde: Danmarks Statistik (2025a).

Ligeledes kan andelen af kvinder i det politiske liv være en indikator for kvinders plads i offentligheden.

Danske kvinder fik stemmeret i 1915 og kunne for første gang stille op til valg i 1918. Ved folketingsvalget i 1918 stillede i alt 402 kandidater op, hvoraf 41 var kvinder, og 4 blev valgt, mens der blev indvalgt 5 kvinder til det daværende landsting. Andelen af folketingsmedlemmer forblev beskeden ind til 1960'erne, men siden folketingsvalget i 1988 har der konstant været over 30% kvinder, og i 2022 nåede andel op over 40%

I 1924 blev socialdemokratiske Nina Bang udpeget som den første kvindelige minister, mens Helle Thorning-Schmidt i 2011 blev valgt som første kvindelige statsminister. Siden 2001 har andelen af kvindelige ministre (på nær en enkelt kort periode) ligget over 30% og i visse regeringskonstellationer over 40% (Danmarks Statistik, 2023; Folketinget, 2018) .

På denne baggrund vil vi i artiklen både se på repræsentationen og præsentationen af kvinder i navnestoffet over 100 år, men også have blik for, at avisernes samtidigt gennemløb en udvikling, hvor relationen til den offentlighed, de skrev til og om, ændrede sig. Vi har i projektet undersøgt aviserne i lyset af tre forskellige presseepoker, hvor aviserne i Danmark orienterede sig efter forskellige publikumsforståelser: Partipressen, omnibuspressen og segmentpressen (Schultz, 2007).

I partipressens tid henvendte avisernes sig til deres læsere som loyale partimedlemmer og med fokus på politiske, sociale og kulturelle forhold, der netop var relevante for læsernes særlige klasseforhold. Da kvinderne i denne periode kun i begrænset omfang var på

arbejdsmarkedet, forventer vi her at finde få kvinder omtalt og oftest i relation til deres ægtemands erhverv og rolle i offentligheden.

Omnibuspressen kendetegner en tid, hvor aviserne forsøgte at sprænge partitilhørsforholdet og henvende sig til en bredere læsekreds på tværs af erhvervs- og partiskel. En avisoffentlighed, der nu også inkluderede kvinder og børn. I aviser fra omnibuspressen forventer vi at finde langt flere kvinder omtalt på navnesiderne, da det også er i denne periode, at kvinder i tiltagende grad kommer ud på arbejdsmarkedet. I 1960 var tre ud af fire 20-59-årige gifte kvinder registreret som husmødre, men fra slut 1960'erne og frem fandt en stadig større andel af også de gifte kvinder beskæftigelse udenfor hjemmet (Danmarks Statistik, 2025a).

Endelig er segmentpressen kendetegnet ved, at aviserne henvender sig til et specifikt publikum med særlige værdi- og forbrugskendetegn. Her forventer vi, at kvinder er til stede i navnestoffet som eksempler på samfundsborgere, der har forfulgt specifikke erhvervsmæssige eller kulturelle karriere, og at vi i højere grad finder dem på lige fod med mændene i navnestoffet.

I takt med den generelle ligestillingsudvikling i Danmark forventer vi også, at de kønnede beskrivelser i navnestoffet gradvis formindskes og kvinder i højere grad hyldest for offentlige meritter og i gradvis mindre grad for særlige kvindelige dyder knyttet til udseende og familieliv.

Analysedesign

Efter vi kastede os udi projektet og særligt læsningen af de ældre aviser, opdagede vi, at projektet havde karakter af grundforskning på ubetrådt grund. I de følgende afsnit vil vi redegøre for, hvordan vi både udvalgte undersøgelsens konkrete empiri og eksplorativt arbejdede videre med denne.

Hvad undersøger vi?

Undersøgelsen af avisoffentlighederne er historisk funderet med et udvalg af aviser fra de seneste 100 år. Vi har undersøgt seks aviser fra 1918 - 2018 med nedslag hvert 20. år. For hvert undersøgelsesår er der udvalgt aviser fra syv dage, spredt ud over året og ugedagene, med fx en mandag i januar, en tirsdag i februar etc. (en såkaldt syntetisk uge, jf. Eskjær et al., 2015). De undersøgte aviser er morgenaviserne Berlingske Tidende (Senere Berlingske), Politiken, Jyllands-Posten og Social-Demokraten (senere Aktuelt/Det fri Aktuelt) og tabloidaviserne B.T. og Ekstra Bladet. Valget af disse aviser bunder i et ønske om et differentieret sample, der forventeligt har haft læsere i vidt forskellige samfundslag og har adresseret sig til hver sin

særlige avisoffentlighed. Særligt i undersøgelsen tidlige periode har vi haft en forventning om, at de fire morgenaviser i nogen grad fungerede som avisoffentligheder for læsere, der politisk orienterede sig mod forskellige partier. Tabloidaviserne derimod er kendetegnet ved at prioritere både nyhedsstof og det øvrige indhold efter korte, underholdende formater (Bruhn Jensen et al., 1996), hvorfor vi heri ventede at finde en avisoffentlighed med en anden relation til læserne end i morgenaviserne, hvor det private og genkendelige er mere i fokus.

Fra en nutidig avislæsningskontekst er det åbenlyst, hvor man finder navnestoffet i avisen og dermed empirien til undersøgelsen. Men aviserne fra første halvdel af 1900-tallet har slet ikke samme faste inddeling af stofområder, ligesom flere af de elementer, vi i nutidige aviser genkender som mærkedagsomtaler, kun meget sjældent kan genfindes i de ældre aviser. Indledningsvist var vores arbejde derfor eksplorativt og centreret om i fællesskab at læse aviser igennem for at kunne identificere de forskellige elementer i aviserne. Skelnen mellem nyheder og meningsstof er langt fra altid tydelig, ligesom der også er flere eksempler, hvor det er svært identificere om diverse indlæg bygger på faktiske hændelser, er fiktive parafraseringer over tidens gang eller satiriske referencer til samtidige personer. At sladder og nyheder har et fælles ophav, ses tydeligt i ældre aviser.

Da studiet bygger på et stort empiriske materiale indhentet i 20 års intervaller fra 1918 til 2018, kan vi også iagttage, at der på tværs af aviserne over tid sker en standardisering af genrerne, hvor stoffet rubriceres efter stofområde. Således fremkommer der med årene mere faste formater for, hvordan privatpersoners mærkedage omtales i avisen. Ud fra et kvantitativt parameter når mærkedagsomtalerne et højdepunkt i aviserne i årene 1958, 1978 og 1998, hvor navnestoffet i høj grad beror på input fra læserne. Derimod indeholder 2018-avisernes navnestof langt færre input fra læserne, men er i højere grad blevet genstand for journalistisk bearbejdning i længere portrætartikler.

Denne sammenblanding af genrer, stemmer og aktører på aviserens sider kan også ses som en mix af offentlige og private sfærer. Ved at sætte fokus på kvindernes omtale i aviserne, så træder sammenblandingen af privat- og offentlighedssfæren markant frem, da kvinder ofte omtales på kanten af det private og i mindre grad (særligt i de ældre aviser) som en ligeværdig borger i offentligheden. Denne skelnen vil vi løbende undersøge i relation til kvinders fremtræden i avisernes offentlighed over 100 år.

Hvordan greb vi materialet an?

Grundet materialets meget forskelligartede karakter har det været svært at registrere og kvantificere alt materiale ud fra sammenlignelige principper. Derfor beror gennemgangen af mærkedagsomtaler hovedsageligt på kvalitative læsninger af aviserne side for side samt enkelte numeriske opgørelser af delelementer i de tilfælde, hvor dette meningsfuldt har kunne lade sig gøre.

I det følgende vil der derfor skiftes mellem kvalitative læsninger af stofområdets fremkomst og forandring belyst gennem udvalgte empiriske eksempler og enkelte oversigter over fx antal af portrætter og nekrologer i aviserne fordelt på år. Optællingerne skal derfor ses som et supplement til at understøtte iagttagelser i de kvalitative avislæsninger. Den primære metode har været eksplorative gennemlæsninger, hvor aviserne én efter en er gennemlæst med blik for at lokalisere og læse alle elementer, der på den ene eller anden måde fremhæver enkeltpersoner ved mærkedage, forstået som markante livsbegivenheder som fødsel, fødselsdag, forlovelse, bryllup, udnævnelse, jubilæum og død. Vi er flere gang vendt tilbage til aviserne for at læse dem på ny på baggrund af de indsigter, vi har fået fra såvel de første gennemlæsninger som inspiration fra internationale studier af nekrologer, dødsannoncer og portrætter. På baggrund af de gentagne kvalitative læsninger har vi udvalgt, hvilke elementer det gav mening at optælle og kode.

Det blev for det første tydeligt, at det ikke var muligt at kode mærkedagsomtaler i de tidlige aviser fra 1918 og 1938, da materialet var for spredt og forskelligartet. Fra perioden har vi dog noteret os eksistensen af bestemte indholdselementer, som var til stede i de fleste aviser, nemlig dødsannoncer og døds- og begravelseslister, men vi har hverken kodet for antallet af lister og annoncer, eller hvem der blev omtalt heri. Men i analysen har vi fremhævet enkelte eksempler på navnestoffet fra denne periode, som vi fandt karakteristiske for tidens mærkedagsomtaler.

Fra 1958 og frem er navnestoffet samlet på deciderede navnesider, og vi har kodet de længere omtaler (over 5 linjer), men ikke kodet de helt korte omtaler (ofte blot en enkelt linje). For de længere omtaler er der kodet for køn på den portrætterede, og hvorvidt der er byline eller ej på omtalen. Det er også disse portrætter (over 5 linjer), som har været genstand for kvalitative analyser af, hvordan kvinder portrætteres i navnestoffet.

I det følgende vil kvinder i mærkedagsomtaler blive gennemgået i tre presseperioder med et samtidigt blik på stofområdets udvikling og hvad disse betyder for tilstedeværelsen af kvinder i navnestoffet. Denne periodeinddeling støtter sig op af Schultz' presseepoker; partipressen, omnibuspressen og segmentpressen, hvor "Cultural

Publics"-projektet har undersøgt, hvordan og hvorvidt presseepokerne kan genfindes i de dele af avisernes indhold, der ikke er nyheder (Schultz, 2007; Willig et al., 2024).

Første periode er baseret på aviserne i partipressen tid før 2. verdenskrig (1918 og 1938), anden periode ser på institutionaliseringen af navnestoffet (med empiri fra omnibuspressen 1958, 1978 og 1998), mens den sidste periode, segmentpressen (med data fra 2018), ser på, hvorledes kvinder optræder i denne del af avisernes offentlighed i de seneste årtier efter navnestoffet har ændret sig og er blevet mere redaktionelt.

Fremkomsten af de moderne aviser i partipressen tid 1918 og 1938

I de tidlige aviser er der ikke faste sider for navnestof eller et fast format for, hvornår og hvordan mærkedagsomtaler af enkeltpersoner optræder i aviserne. Men døden er den livsbegivenhed, som tidligst gav anledning til omtale i aviserne, nemlig via døds- og begravelseslister, som publiceres i de fleste aviser.

Dødslisterne er indhentet fra de forskellige stifter og nævner kun navn og stilling, mens begravelseslisterne også nævner kirke og klokkeslæt for begravelsen. De københavnske aviser har hentet lister fra Københavns og Frederiksbergs stifter, hvilket i høj grad kunne signalere, at det er i disse områder deres abonnenter findes. Jyllands-Posten har omvendt meget lidt listestof og synes ikke at have orienteret sin avisoffentlighed mod en særlig lokalitet (som Aarhus, Viborg eller Aalborg Stift). Kendetegnende for listerne er, at alle, der dør indenfor stiftet, kommer med på listen. Derfor er der heller ingen forskel mellem kønnene at finde her.

I undersøgelsens ældste aviser udgør annoncestoffet en meget stor del af avisens sider. Fra 1918 finder man også dødsannoncerne – dog ikke i alle aviser – men med tiden bliver de udbredt og fremstår i dag i næsten uændret form i alle morgenaviserne, men ikke i tabloidaviser.

Dødsannoncerne er læsernes eget bidrag og annoncerer nyheden om hvem, der ikke længere er del af samfundet. Med dødsannoncen vælger den afdødes efterladte at kundgøre, at "Vor elskede fader/moder er død". I langt de fleste dødsannoncer nævnes tid og sted for begravelsen også, så de, der kendte afdøde, ved hvor og hvornår, de skal møde op. Dødsannoncerne i danske aviser har samme karakteristika som fundet i internationale studier (Brusser & Louw, 2019; Ergin, 2009).

Men selvom de efterladte lige så ofte indrykker dødsannoncer for mænd som for kvinder, så er der alligevel markante kønsforskelle i måden, hvorpå de afdøde omtales. Dødsannoncer for mænd

nævner næsten altid den afdødes erhverv enten som "skomager" eller "forhenværende viktualiehandler", mens langt størstedelen af de afdøde kvinder udelukkende beskrives i deres familiære rolle som mor, søster, hustru, og de kvindelige dyder hyldes gennem formuleringer som "elskelige møde" eller "trofaste hustru". Til tider kan de tilknyttes et erhverv gennem deres mand fx: "enke efter Smed Peder Hansen".

En anden markant kønsforskel kan bl.a. ses i Social-Demokraten i 1938, hvor kvinders dødsannoncer fx ofte indledes med formuleringer som "for slægt og venner bekendtgøres", hvilket signalerer en skelnen mellem den private del af den socialdemokratiske bevægelse, som kvinder 'hører til', hvorimod mænds dødsannoncer adresseres til en bredere kreds af oftest fagforbundskammerater. I Social-Demokraten er det i mange tilfælde fagforbundet, der under fagforeningslogo har indrykket dødsannoncen – i visse tilfælde også for enker efter fagforeningsmedlemmer. Heri appelleres til medlemmerne om at møde op med bekendtgørelse om, at "fanen vil være til stede".

Ugifte kvinders dødsannoncer er indrykket af forældre, søskende eller i enkelte tilfælde af deres arbejdsgiver. Derfor er det også kun for de ugifte kvinder, at man finder angivelse af erhverv, fx lærerinde, telefonistinde eller husholderske.

Med årene begynder der også at dukke annoncer op i forbindelse med andre livsbegivenheder, som forlovelse, bryllup, sølvbryllup, jubilæum, fødselsdag etc. På linje med dødsannoncerne er det oftest mandens navn og stilling, der fremhæves ved fx et sølvbryllup mens kvinden kun medvirker under "og frue" - tilføjelsen.

DØDSFALD

Vil heri haft den store sorg at miste
vor kære lille
BIRTHE
Agnes Sørensen, Anton Sørensen,
Prosten.
Elevationen finder sted Lørdag den 5.
de. Kl. 12 i Søndermark Krematorium
enke Søl.

Vor kære Mand og Fader,
Bryllups
Christian Christensen
er død den 18. Juli.
Hedvig Christensen,
Gammel og kære.
Begravelsen foregår Lørdag d. 5. de
Kl. 11 1/2 i St. Vester Kirkegaard på
København.

Vor Moder No. 136
AAGE RICHTER
er død. Begravelsen foregår Lørdag
den 2. August Kl. 12 i St. Nikolaj
Kirke.
Bryllups.

Vor kære Mand og Fader,
Bryllups
Jens Peter Nielsen
er død den 18. Juli.
Hedvig Christensen,
Gammel og kære.
Begravelsen foregår Lørdag d. 5. de
Kl. 11 1/2 i St. Vester Kirkegaard på
København.

Vor kære Mand og Fader,
Bryllups
Gudrun Karen Larsen
er død den 18. Juli 1938.
Hedvig Christensen,
Gammel og kære.
Begravelsen foregår Lørdag d. 5. de
Kl. 11 1/2 i St. Vester Kirkegaard på
København.

Vor kære Mand og Fader,
Bryllups
Anna Bendix
er død den 18. Juli 1938.
Hedvig Christensen,
Gammel og kære.
Begravelsen foregår Lørdag d. 5. de
Kl. 11 1/2 i St. Vester Kirkegaard på
København.

Illustration 1: Dødsannoncer fra Social-Demokraten (1938).

Sideløbende findes en række korte noter omhandlende mærkedage som fx fødselsdagsomtaler. De er forholdsvis kortfattede og lister en række meritter samt fremhæver fødselarens position som en fremtræden og velsanset samfundsborger. Da fokus er på fødselarens offentlige rolle, er langt de fleste af disse omtaler af mænd.

I Social-Demokraten findes dog en enkelt hyldelse af en husmor, nemlig noten om enkefru Laura Rasmussen, der fyldte 70 år d. 28. december 1938:

Hun, som gennem mange Aar har stræbt for og opdraget en stor Børneflokk, vil på Dagen blive fejret ved en fest i Villa Dyb.

(Social-Demokraten 28/12, 1938).

De kvindelige dyder findes sjældent så eksplicit beskrevet alene af den grund, at kvinders mærkedage næsten aldrig omtales. Kvinders position i samfundet opnås i denne periode gennem ægteskab, hvor manden repræsenterer familien i offentligheden, mens kvinden passer på hjem og familie. Den eneste omtale, der kun er kvinder forundt, er de få, kortfattede noter, der omtaler navngivne fruer i anledningen af, at de er nedkommet med et barn på en af byens fødselsklinikker.

Enkelte undtagelser findes dog ved fx kvinders positioner via slægtskab, hvilket ses i følgende note fra Berlingske Tidende i 1918:

Hofdame hos Hds Maj. Enkedronningen, Frk. Frederikke Castenschiold fylder i dag 50 år.

Frk. Castenschiold er født i Aarhus som Datter af Kammerjunker, Ritmester Carl Castenschiold og hustru Alvilda, født Grevenkop-Castenschiold. Frk Castenschiold boede efter Faderens Død sammen med sin Moder og Søster her i byen og blev i 1916 Hofdame hos Enkedronningen - nært knyttet til det danske Hof, som den Castenschioldske Slægt altid har været, en Kusine af Fødselsdagsbarnet er Hds Maj. Dronningens Overhofmesterinde, Frk Louise Grevenkop-Castenschiold.

(Berlingske Tidende 5/5, 1918, s.5).

Her er det ikke kvindens egne meritter som hofdame, der fremhæves, men ene og alene hendes position gennem slægtskabsrelationer i den danske adel. Fowler og Bielsa (2007) gjorde lignende iagttagelser i deres studier af nekrologer i internationale aviser, hvor slægtskab var primær årsag til, at kvinder blev omtalt i første halvdel af 1900-tallet.

Modsat de mere kortfattede annoncer og noter, så finder vi også få længere portrætter i forbindelse med fødselsdage og udnævnelser

samt nekrologer og jordefærdsreportager (reportager fra begravelses-processioner) i 1918 og 1938, som næsten udelukkende omtaler mænd med en væsentlig position i samfundet, oftest via en offentlig stilling. I årene inden anden verdenskrig var højere, offentlige embeder sjældent besat af kvinder. Berlingske Tidende har fx i 1938-aviserne en fast rubrik med "Nyt fra Hæren", hvor der er portrætter af afgående og tiltrædende officerer, som alle er mænd, da kvinder dengang ikke kunne opnå ansættelse i det danske forsvar. At netop Berlingske Tidende har fokus på at hylde forsvarlets officerer vidner også om partiavisernes særlige forståelse af deres konkrete avisoffentlighed, som for denne avis inkluderede officerslaget i forsvaret.

Der fandtes få omtaler af kvinder, der virkede indenfor kunsten, så som skuespillerinder og forfatterinder. Mange af de fremhævede skuespillerinder var unge og ugifte, og ofte var deres yndige fremtoning central i beskrivelsen, som fx blev gentaget i 60 års-omtalen af solodanserinden Ellen Price:

Det er 25 Aar siden, at "Den lille Havfrue" forlod balletten – nu har vi kun mindet om hende og Statuen på Langelinje. Ellen Price har trukket sig tilbage til Privatlivet, hun bor hele Aaret på Bornholm, men at hun stadig har mange Venner, der mindes hendes sublime Kunst, vil hun faa at vide paa sin 60 Aars Fødselsdag på Tirsdag. I Dagens Anledning har hun til sine Venner udsendt en Radering af Axel Hou fra Aaret 1900. Den viser os hende, da hun stod i sin Ungdoms Blomst og Skønhed.

(Politiken 19/6, 1938, s.10).

Meget få kvinder synes at være så betydningsfulde, at flere aviser skriver mærkedagsportrætter om dem, men forfatteren Agnes Henningsens 70-års fødselsdag d. 18. november 1938 giver dog omtale i både Berlingske Tidende og Politiken.

I Berlingske Tidende bliver det dog kun en mellemlang notits med billede, hvor hun omtales rosende for sin debutroman (Berlingske Tidende 18/11, 1938). Agnes Henningsens udseende gives dog ingen omtale. Politiken har Agnes Henningsen på forsiden med billede, hvor der også henvises til dagens kronik, som er én lang hyldest fra forfatteren Karin Michaëlis i anledning af 70 års dagen (Politiken 18/11, 1938). Men Price og Henningsen er undtagelserne i et ellers helt mandsdomineret felt af mærkedagsportrætter.

Omnibuspressen 1958, 1978, 1998: Navnestoffets storhedstid

I efterkrigstiden finder navnestoffet faste formater med dedikerede sider i aviserne, og der bliver markant mere af det. I nogle aviser findes dødsannoncer og begravelseslister samlet, mens lykønskninger

og portrætter findes andetsteds under rubrikker som "Tillykke" eller "Familie og Hjem". Tabloidaviserne har ikke længere navnestof, hvilket var en overraskende opdagelse. Tabloidaviserne er fyldt med personstof, der hylder enkeltpersoners bedrifter, men det er knyttet til skuespillere, sportsfolk, kongelige m.m. og udgives i anledning af film- og teaterpremierer, sportsresultater eller de kendte og kongelige rejser og fester. Derfor kvalificerer det ikke til at falde indenfor navnestoffet, som vi karakteriserer som knyttet til de portrætteredes mærkedage (fødselsdag, død, jubilæum m.m.).

Som tidligere beskrevet, så var klare grænser mellem stofområder meget svære at opridse i undersøgelsens ældste aviser, da sladder og nyheder gik hånd i hånd. Men i omnibuspresse er stofområderne klart adskilte.

Fra 1958 og frem har det været muligt at optælle antallet og typen af mærkedagsportrætter på navnesiderne i morgenaviserne. De andre elementer fra navnestoffet, som vi fandt i de tidlige aviser genfindes fortsat i stor stil. De officielle døds- og begravelseslister forsvinder dog fra 1978, men de indsendte annoncer er i vækst, så det ikke blot er dødsannoncer, men i stigende grad lykønskingsannoncer til fødsels- og bryllupsdage. Her er der ingen kønsforskelle at spore. Annoncerne hylder både kvinder, mænd og brudepar på disse sider, ligesom børn lykønskes af fx bedsteforældre med en annonce på fødselsdagen. Omnibuspresseens ekspansion til en bredere læserkreds er tydelig på navnesiderne i denne periode.



Illustration 2: Navnesider i Jyllands-Posten (1978).

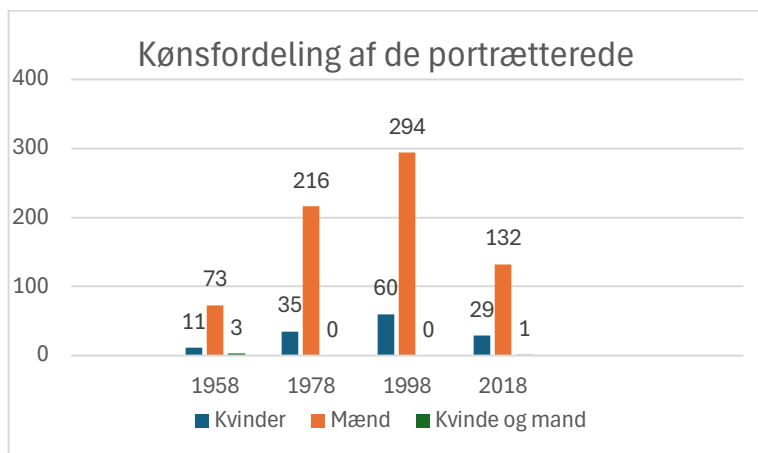
Noterne er ligeledes i vækst og overgangen mellem de længste noter og de korteste portrætter er glidende. Størstedelen af dette materiale er indsendt af abonnenterne (der findes flere henvisninger i aviserne på, hvordan man kan indsende noter om fødselsdage, bryllup-per jubilæer m.m.). De fleste noter er yderst kortfattede og fremstår indforstået mellem indsender og de udvalgte medlemmer af avisof-fentligheden, som ved, hvem det er, der omtales. Mange helt almin-delige kvinder og mænd omtales kortfattet med navn, adresse, fx fødselsdag og erhverv.

Vi har udvalgt det, man kan kalde mærkedagsportrætter (på min. 5 linjer), til optælling, og her kan man ligeledes se, at antallet af por-trætter er i vækst gennem årene og når højdepunktet i 1998, mens det også er tydeligt, at denne genre ikke vinder frem i tabloidavi-serne BT og Ekstra Bladet.

	Aktuelt	Berlingske	BT	Ekstra Bladet	Jyllands- Posten	Politiken	Alle
1958	7	49	0	0		31	87
1978	27	67	0	0	121	36	251
1998	55	68	0	0	90	141	354
2018		47	6	0	50	59	162
Total	89	231	6	0	261	267	854

Tabel 1: Antal mærkedagsportrætter på navnesiderne fordelt på avistitel og år.

Vi har ligeledes set nærmere på kønnet på de portrætterede. Be-mærk, der findes enkelte dobbeltportrætter med både mand og kvinde (fx ved bryllupsdag).



Figur 3: Mærkedagsportrætter pr. år fordelt efter køn.

Denne udvikling er fra et ligestillingsperspektiv slående. Over 60 år er andelen af kvinder, der i avisernes fremhæves på deres mærkedag, kun steget marginalt fra 14% til 18 % samtidigt med, at kvinder i samme periode markant træder ind på arbejdsmarkedet (Danmarks Statistik, 2025a). Her ligger det danske materiale dog helt på linjen med udviklingen set i internationale studier (Fowler & Bielsa, 2007; Maybury, 1996; Spilka et al., 1980).

På trods af en voldsom ekspansion i navnstoffet er der et meget begrænset blik for kvinderne i offentligheden. For den del af stoffet, som baserer sig på indsendt materiale fra læserne selv, er kvinderne i høj grad inkluderet i avisoffentlighederne – om end gifte kvinder så sent som 1958 stadig omtales som fruer til navngivne mænd og i mindre grad i eget navn.

I de meget populære bryllupsbilleder, som særligt er fremtrædende i 1978 og 1998, kan vi helt op til 1978 se, at brudepar omtales med reference til deres forældre. Her er det med meget få undtagelser de nygiftes fædre, der nævnes.

For den del af navnestoffet, som er redaktionelt behandlet, er kvinder langt mere usynlige. Der er dog gennem hele perioden en stor gråzone af noter og portrætter, hvor det er overordentligt svært at finde ud af, hvor de kommer fra. Det er oftest kun de længere portrætter, der udgives med redaktionel byline, og det er primært i aviserne fra 1998 og frem. Ligeledes er det et fåtal af fx mindeportrætter, der indsendes med angivet afsender. I 1998 er der fx 26 af de 354 portrætter på tværs af alle aviser, der har redaktionel byline, mens 12 portrætter er indsendt med afsender. Resten har en udefinerbar relation mellem redaktion og læsere som afsender.

Kønsforskelle i omtalen

Næste spørgsmål er, hvordan kvinder så omtales i mærkedagsomtalerne?

Er udseende og familierolle også en fast ingrediens i omtalen af danske kvinder på linje med tendensen i de internationale studier? Svaret er både ja og nej. Udseendet spiller meget sjældent en rolle i mærkedagsomtalerne, men familierollen sniger sig ind i flere sammenhænge

Ser man på omtalerne i 1958 og 1978, så er de først og fremmest korte. Oftest kun 5-10 linjer, der meget nøgternt beskriver personens position og offentlige meritter. I langt størstedelen af omtalerne er der hverken for mænd eller kvinder nogen form for personkarakteristik at finde. Omtale af udseende og familieliv er derfor meget sjældent noget, der finder vej til navnstoffet i disse år.

For nogle omtaler – særlig i Aktuelt – fremhæves der dog flere gange, at personen har være en "loyal" eller "trofast" støtte i

fagbevægelsen. Personer, der omtales i denne avis, er meget ofte til-lidsrepræsentanterne, forbundssekretærer eller lignende med virke i arbejderbevægelsen. Arbejderklassens kvinder var i langt højere grad og tidligere at finde på arbejdsmarkedet end gennemsnittet af danske kvinder, hvilket bl.a. afspejles i avisens specifikke avisoffent-lighed.

Men kvinder kan også nogle gange blive fremhævet på deres mænds meritter. I 1958 giver Anna Stensgaards dødsfald anledning til en omtale i Jyllands-Posten, hvor det fremhæves, at hun var datter af en kendt mand indenfor afholdsforeningen og senere gift med en kendt mand fra Husmandsforeningen, og hendes eget virke i livet beskrives i tilknytning til ægtemandens: "Fru Stensgaard stod ham trofast bi i arbejdet, og hun var gennem aarerne værtinde for et stort antal selskaber af Husmandsfamilier" (Jyllands-Posten 19/8, 1958).

Når der endelig findes længere portrætter, er det af offentligt kendte personer. Og i Berlingske Tidende d. 21. juli 1958 genfinder vi ballerinde Ellen Price, der gives et længere portræt nu i anledning af hendes 80-års dag. Hvor hendes udseende var omtalt ved 60 års omtalen, så er det i høj grad slægten Price, som er i centrum for por-trættet ved 80-års dagen. Den første del af portrættet bruger plads til at omtale slægtskabet til en række kendte medlemmer af Price-slægten indenfor ballet- og teaterliv, ligesom der gives omtale til de navngivne mennesker, der hjalp Ellen Price frem i karrieren. Hendes egne bedrifter og meritter kommer i anden række (Berlingske Ti-dende 21/7, 1958).

I 1998-aviserne finder vi allerflest mærkedagsomtaler. Få er læn-gere, men de fleste er mellem 10-20 linjer lange. Næsten ingen har journalistisk byline, men de fleste synes at basere sig på indsendt materiale (fx er flere omtaler af personer i positioner, der må forventes af være ukendte for andre end personens egen omgangskreds). Stadig er det meget nøgterne levnedsskildringer og meget sjældent med omtale af personlige forhold eller familierelationer. Dog kan slægtskab beskrives, hvis den portrætterede har haft kendte foræl-dre, eller at personen har overtaget forældrenes virksomhed.

At kvinder ofte portrætteres gennem deres familierelation, holder ved gennem årene. Da cand.polit. Eja Packness dør i en alder af 102 år, er det hendes placering i familiedynastiet bag Aalborg Stiftsti-dende, som fremhæves først i Politikens nekrolog fra d. 17. juli 1998. Omtalen af hendes far og bror, som begge var chefredaktører for avi-sen, fylder godt i portrættet, mens det i en enkelt sætning nævnes, at hun var landets første kvindelige cand.polit. Hun arbejdede selv som journalist og sad senere i bestyrelsen for fonden bag avisen (Po-litiken 17/7, 1998).

For såvel husmandsfrue Anne Stensgaard, ballerinde Ellen Price som journalist og bestyrelsesmedlem Eja Packness er det gældende,

at deres rolle i samfundet primært beskrives som givet af deres slægt og ægtefælle, mens deres egne meritter og kvalifikationer kommer i anden række.

Det samme gør sig ikke gældende for mænd. Her er der meget sjældent omtale af hustruer eller familie. Mænd bliver øjensynligt ikke hjulpet frem i verdenen, men har dem selv at takke for succesen. Disse iagttagelser ligger helt i tråd med studiet af kønsforskelle i nekrologer og omtaler af mænd og kvinder i Israelske aviser (Avital-BenAtar, 2022), hvor der også var en tendens til at succesfulde kvinder ofte blev omtalt som hjulpet på vej af andre, mens mænd derimod havde skabt deres egen vej.

Fremkomsten af en ny journalistisk genre i segmentpressen 2018

I 2018-aviserne er navnestoffet fordelt mellem større redaktionelle portrætter eller nekrologer, mens der samtidigt findes en række længere notitser af 10-20 linjer, som i hovedsagen bygger på indsendt materiale. Til tider kan man nemlig genfinde den nøjagtigt samme omtale med samme portrætbillede i flere aviser samme dag. Mens andre af disse korte portrætter også baserer sig på interview med den portrætterede, uden der dog er byline på portrættet. Den store masse af små notitser om mere ukendte personer, som fyldte siderne fra 1958-1998, er næsten helt forsvundet på linje med bryllupsbilleder og lykønskingsannoncer. Tilbage er kun dødsannoncerne, som stadig findes i morgenaviserne, men også disse i et mindre antal end tidligere. Det er nu et langt mere elitært udvalg af befolkningen, som finder vej til navnesiderne, og portrætterne fokuserer på personer fra erhvervslivet, fremtrædende offentligt ansatte og politikere, samt mænd og kvinder fra kulturen og sportens verden.

I 2018 viser Danmarks statistik, at 23 procent af ledere i erhvervslivet er kvinder, mens det gælder for hele 57 procent af lederne i det offentlige (Danmarks Statistik, 2025b). Som tidligere beskrevet er kvinder nu også velrepræsenteret i folketing og regering, ligesom flere partiledere er kvinder. Det kunne derfor med rette forventes, at kvinder var mere til stede i navnestoffet end de 18% af portrætterne, som vi har identificeret.

I 2018-aviserne kan man finde dage, hvor der stort set kun er omtaler af mænd, med en enkelt kvinde eller to som undtagelse, og hvor det alene er en opremsning af de portrætteredes offentlige meritter. Omvendt kan man også se, at privatlivet sniger sig ind i beskrivelserne af både mænd og kvinder. I flere omtaler afsluttes med bemærkninger om fx ægtestand, antal børn og fritidsinteresser. Det er som om, at et portræt nu også forventes at give indblik i privatpersonen bag de offentligt kendte meritter.

Portrættet af Vejles borgmester i anledningen af hans 50-års fødselsdag afsluttes med ordene: "Jens Ejner Christensen er gift og har tre børn i alderen 15-22 år. Fritiden fordeles mellem afslapning i det vestjyske sommerhus, vinterbadning, jagtture og løb – senest i år en halvmarathon" (Politiken 19/6, 2018).

Til tider nævnes hustruens navn, men kontrasten er nu alligevel slående i forhold til, hvordan familieliv og ægtefæller til kvinder ofte beskrives. Berlingske har d. 31. januar 2018 fødselsdagsportrætter af to tvillingesøstre i anledning af deres 75-års dag. Begge har haft flotte karrierer med høje stillinger som direktører og bestyrelsesposter, men alligevel fylder familien en del. Om den ene søster skrives der: "Hun er gift med Ejvind Christiansen, civ.ing. HD og partner i Patentvirksomheden Zacco Danmark. Sammen har de datteren Barbara, og samværet med hele familien og særligt datter, svigersøn og børnebørn er en stor glæde for Anne Flindt Christensen". Mens søsterens omtale afsluttes med ordene: "Tiden bruges nu på at være bagstopper for børn og fem børnebørn, når der er behov for det, hyppige teaterbesøg, rejser til storbyer samt ballet og golf" (Berlingske 31/1, 2018). Hvor familiens omtale i portrætter af mænd er en lille krølle til sidst, som skal vise, at han samtidigt med karrieren også har familie og fritidsinteresser, så fylder det oftest mere i kvinders portrætter, ligesom ægtefællernes karriere også indgår. Dette modsvarer konklusionerne fra de internationale studier af kønsforskelle i nekrologer.

Man kan finde flere fødselsdagsportrætter af den kompetente og potente mand, der som Jyllands-Postens 70-års portræt af Jørgen Lindegaard. Portrættet indledes med at opsummere, at tidligere topchef Jørgen Lindegaard er involveret i en række mindre selskaber. I fritiden dyrker han sin cool veteranbil. Lindegaard fremstilles som en driftig mand i en kongebå Jaguar Mark 2, der selv giver følgende status på sit liv: "Jeg greb hver en chance, der bød sig, for at skabe en spændende karriere – og få et spændende liv, hvor der trods lange arbejdsdage blev tid til at være sammen med børn og børnebørn. Nej, jeg fortryder ikke noget". Samtidigt fremhæves det også, gennem hans egne ord, at han har levet et liv på solsiden, aldrig har haft en sygedag og stadig er gift med sin hustru Birte Wind Lindegaard (Jyllands-Posten 7/10, 2018).

Hvad viser kønsforskellene os?

Det er svært at konkludere, hvad disse forskelle bunder i. Er det journalisternes kønnede blik på, hvad der er værd at fremhæve for henholdsvis mænd og kvinder, eller er det de informationer, der kommer frem i den research og de interview, der ligger bag portrætterne, som giver en forskel i, hvordan mænd og kvinder hyldes? Svaret kan

vi ikke finde blot ved at læse portrætterne, men vil kræve andre analytiske tilgange, men det er tydeligt, at kønsforskelle på visse punkter er mere udtalt i 2018-stoffet end tidligere. Når nekrologen og fødselsdagsportrættet bliver en journalistisk genre, er det i mindre grad blot en opremsning af fødselaren/afdødes mange meritter, men et personportræt af mennesket både i og bag karrieren. Og her ser vi så, hvordan referencer til ægtefæller, børn og fritidsinteresser fylder mere end tidligere. Slægtsskabsrelationer har igennem alle 100 år været en selvstændig anledning til at fremhæve fødselarer (jf. hofdame Carstenskjold), men det private liv i familiens skød får nu også en stadig større plads.

I studier af nekrologer i Israelske aviser viser Lachover og Gavriely-Nuri, hvordan skift i samtidens værdier og forståelse af den gode borger i nationalstaten afspejles i, hvordan de afdøde portrætteres i nekrologerne (Lachover og Gavriely-Nuri, 2011; Gavriely-Nuri og Lachover, 2012). På samme måde er det også oplagt at udlede, at det nye fokus på privatpersonen og værdier for henholdsvis den succesfulde kvinde og mand også afspejler samfundets herskende værdier for kønnene – og personernes forventninger til sig selv. Det er oftest i interview med de portrætterede selv, at oplysninger om at passe børnebørnene eller dyrke veteranbilssport kommer frem. I portrættet af Jørgen Lindegaard er det ham selv, der fremhæver, at hans karriere ikke stod i vejen for at tilbringe tid med børn og børnebørn. Her svares indirekte på en potentiel kritik af, at karrieren skulle have været på bekostning af familien. Tidens succesfulde mand er ikke blot firmaets mand, men også far, bedstefar og en person med spændende fritidsinteresser.

18 Tirsdag den 19. juni 2018

Navne

Redaktør: Ole Bøllow

50 ÅR TIRSDAG

Borgmesteren, der blev kørt i stilling

JACOB HAUGLUND

jacob.hauglund@jysk.dk

Det var med et solidt forspring, at Jens Ejner Christensen vandt sejren. Det var i november 2017, og med 5.207 personlige stemmer var den rutinerede Venstre-mand og folketingspolitiker Socialdemokratiets modkandidat overlegen i kampen om borgmesterposten i Vejle Kommune. Således gik det til, at Venstre landtold magten i kommunen i yderligere fire år. Men det var ikke kun i stemmenærværet forstand, at Jens Ejner Christensen var fokus fra begravelsen. Da han vandt borgmesterkæden, havde han nemlig allerede fungeret som Vejles øverste politiske leder i ni måneder, efter at forgænger og partifælle, Arne Sigtebergsgaard, i februar 2017 trak sig for at give den nye



ARKIVFOTO: JP

Jens Ejner Christensen er gift og far til tre børn, og han er den slags borgmester, som tager arbejdet med hjem og vender det ved middagstid, har hans hustru, Anita Løkkegaard Christensen, tidligere fortalt i et interview med Vejle Amts Folkeblad. Og når det kommer til stykket, er tilværelsen som borgmester ikke noget glansbillede. «Livet er altså også mæret af gå hverdag, hvor man skal rene tapetser, stryge skjorte og støvsuge. Sådan er livet. Det gælder også for borgmesteren – det skal også frem, siger han til Fredericia Dagblad.

Jens Ejner Christensen, borgmester i Vejle

Henvender du navnhenheder til navne@jysk.dk. Henvendelser om dagbøger og meninger på hverdage til annoncer@jysk.dk eller til: 87 38 35 35.

Hver dag: Se listen over nyligt afdøde i Danmark baseret på indberetninger fra et flertal af landets bedemænd. Dødsfald er opstillet efter bopæl.

PREMIUM

JyskUdvalgte

RUNDE FØDELSEDAGE TIRSDAG DEN 19. JUNI

60 ÅR

Asel Kornrup Hansen, professor, Roskilde. Asel Kornrup Hansen er uddannet dyrlæge fra 1985. Fra 1993 – 97 var han dyrlæge for forsøgdyrene på Københavns Universitet og Rigshospitalet, og fra 1997 har han været professor i forsøgsvetenskaber og velfærd ved først Landbohøjskolen og nu Københavns Universitet. Han har været med til at give dyrevetenskaberne i Raket for Dyreforsøg fra 2000 til 2013, og han er i dag bestyrelsesmedlem i Danmarks 38. center under Fødestyrelsen, der skal mindske og forbedre brugen af forsøgdyr. I sin fritid er han fodboldtræner og -dommer, og han spiller guitar. Han bor i Roskilde med sin kone.

50 ÅR

Thue Roye Horslev, hospitalchef, Gråsten. Siden han gjorde sin uddannelse som cand. scient. pol. færdig fra Aarhus Universitet i 1997 har Thue Roye Horslevs karriere koncentreret sig om sundhedsområdet. Først som fuldmægtig på Sønderborg Sygehus og siden på den amtslige og kommunale side af bordet, hvor han bl.a. var med til at etablere lægehelikopter-tjenesten fra Nielsbo, varetagelse af administrative arkiver for det prætoriske område i Sønderjylland, og i 1996 blev han vjerpræt på TV 2. Han er også isædragsholder samt forfatter til bøgerne 'Decembereknelsen 3. december 1999' og 'Tænevs vejrbog'. Udover stadig at være en populær vjerpræt er Peter Tænevs i dag også chef for TV 2 Vejret.

Peter Tænevs, vjerpræt og chef for TV 2 Vejret, København. Da han blev gift med sin kone Anna i 1999, regnede det konstant i 24 timer. Det generede ham dog ikke. Som professionel vejrmænd er Peter Tænevs vant til at lade vejr, og han sætter pris på at kunne fortælle de gode vejrhistorier det er en god historie, at det ensnære, da den populære vejrmænd skulle gives. Peter Tænevs er uddannet klimatolog fra Københavns Universitet, og i 1996 blev han vjerpræt på TV 2. Han er også isædragsholder samt forfatter til bøgerne 'Decembereknelsen 3. december 1999' og 'Tænevs vejrbog'. Udover stadig at være en populær vjerpræt er Peter Tænevs i dag også chef for TV 2 Vejret.

Illustration 3: Jyllands-Postens navnestof (2018).

I Jyllands-Postens navnesektion d. 19. juni 2018 var der fire klassiske fødselsdagsportrætter af mænd. I to bliver familien slet ikke nævnt, mens hustruen perifert nævnes i de andre to (bl.a. i endnu et portræt af Vejles borgmester, hvor hustruen beskrives som en baglands-kvinde, han kunne vende dagens dont med). Der var ingen portrætter af kvinder i avisen den dag, men yderligere to længere portrætter af mænd.

Omvendt kan man samme dag i Politiken finde to forskellige slags fødselsdagsportrætter af 70-årige kvinder, der begge har haft en karriere som offentlige chefer i biblioteksverdenen. Det ene portræt er et klassisk navneportræt med opremsning af meritter fra hendes karriere, men helt blottet for private oplysninger. Det andet portræt oplister både karrierens meritter og ser frem mod pensionistlivet, der skal fyldes med spændende hobbyer, rejser og familien.

Nogle kvindeportrætter følger skabelonen for mærkedagsomtalen af mænd, mens andre stikker markant ud, bl.a. med private oplysninger og fokus på familien. Om disse to korte portrætter er indsendt af kvinderne selv eller deres pårørende vides ikke. Men når vi finder portrætter med vægt på familie og privatliv, er det næsten altid i portrætter af kvinder.

70 Anne Møller-Rasmussen

Fhv. stadsbibliotekar, Holte



Fhv. stadsbibliotekar Anne Møller-Rasmussen er uddannet bibliotekar og dimittende i 1973. Efter ansættelse på Frederiksberg og Køge Biblioteker blev hun i 1990 vice-stadsbibliotekar på Frederiksberg, og i 1996 rykkede hun op i stadsbibliotekar-embedet i Frederiksberg Kommune. I 2011 gik hun på pension.

Som chef forestod fødselaren en stor it-udvikling på kommunens biblioteker – herunder et stort automatisk sorteringsanlæg og selvbetjeningsanlæg for brugerne. Anne Møller-Rasmussen forestod også den faglige planlægning i udvidelsen af Frederiksberg Hovedbibliotek med

den unikke underjordiske tilbygning tegnet af Henning Larsens Tegnestue, og det blev i 2004 et markant løft af Hovedbiblioteket. Frederiksbergs borgere var i hendes cheperiode meget tilfredse med deres biblioteker jf. en stor brugerundersøgelse i 2008.

Hun har deltaget i diverse faglige råd, navn og bestyrelser, ligesom hun i en år-række var censor ved bibliotekaruddannelsen.

Anne Møller-Rasmussen har været medlem af bestyrelsen for Historisk Topografisk Selskab for Frederiksberg og var i en år-række såvel sekretær som redaktør af selskabets udgivelser, ligesom hun i 10 år var medlem af bestyrelsen for Frederiksberg Fonden. Hun er medlem af Frederiksberg-Mariendal Rotary Klub, hvor hun i 2004-05 var præsident.

70 Aase Andreasen

Fhv. bibliotekschef, Virum



Aase Andreasen er uddannet bibliotekar årgang 1971. Hun arbejdede i 15 år på Hovedbiblioteket i Gentofte med at finde information og litteratur til brugerne og fortsatte i det spor i Politikens Oplysning fra 1988. Aase Andreasen var aktiv i det biblioteks-faglige arbejde i Bibliotekarforbundet, underviste i et par perioder på Danmarks Biblioteksskole og var også censor der i en lang år-række.

I 1994 oprettede Politikens Hus en afdeling med 4 bibliotekarer, der skulle besvare spørgsmål i Politikens Oplysning, opbygge et bibliotek og løse researchopgaver for journalisterne i huset. Denne afdeling blev Aase Andreasen en populær, vidende og højt respekteret leder af.

Da internettet var nyt, underviste hun mange journalister i informationsøg-

ning og brug af nettet på forskellige kurser, bl.a. på Den Journalistiske Efteruddannelse.

Selv synes fødselaren, at hun har haft et virkelig sjovt og udfordrende arbejdsliv i mere end 40 år, men for 3 år siden valgte hun at gå på pension.

I dag bruger hun lang tid på at læse avis og – typisk for Aase Andreasen! – holde øje med, at fakta er i orden. Der er også mange gode romaner, der skal læses – og det bliver prioriteret. Haven skal passes, familien (mand, børn og børnebørn) og det sociale liv skal ikke forsvømmes, og cafélivet holdes i gang. Broderiet er også genoptaget. Fitness er droppet (for kedeligt), men det er godt at cykle rundt til udstillinger og ud i naturen.

I disse år er Aase Andreasen i gang med at opbygge et bibliotek med 'de 1.000 bedste bøger' på Johan Borups Højskole i Frederiksholms Kanal.

Hendes næste vandretur bliver i Andorra i juli.

Illustration 4: Politikens navnestof (2018).

Kvinder i offentlighedens spotlight – hvad er der sket på 100 år?

Partipressens tid

Her var avisernes navnestof i overvejende grad kendetegnet ved et fokus på dødsfald via de officielle døds- og begravelseslister, som uden kommentarer blev viderebragt i aviserne og læsernes egne indrykkede dødsannoncer. Kvinder var, målt på antal, ligeligt repræsenteret i både lister og annoncer. Den kønnede forskel findes ved, at mænd konsekvent omtales med erhverv, mens dette var undtagelse for de få kvinder, der døde efter et arbejdsliv uden for hjemmet. Derimod blev kvinderne omtalt i deres familiære rolle som hustru, mor eller enke. Hvis et erhverv var omtalt i dødsannoncen, var det mandens erhverv, da hendes position i samfundet er givet ud fra ægtefællens arbejdsliv. Denne kønsforskel kunne iagttages på tværs af aviserne og derfor også på tværs af læsers partitilhørsforhold. Den maskuline dominans i samfundet, som læses ud af dette, placerer manden i det offentlige liv, mens kvinden hører privatsfæren til.

Dette blik på samfundsindretningen forstærkes ved at se nærmere på de få portrætter, der blev udgivet i starten af 1900-tallet, hvor det på nær enkelte kvinder fra kunstens verden, udelukkende var portrætter af mænd – oftest i offentlige embeder, som skoleledere, officerer i militæret m.v. Offentlige embeder var mændenes domæne i 1918-1938 (på nær lige positionen som hofdame), og avisernes mærkedagsomtaler gengiver samfundsstrukturene.

Omnibussens periode

Fra 2.verdenskrig og frem er navnestoffet langt mere folkeligt og giver plads til et hav af små noter om mænd, kvinder og børns mærkedage. Aviserne navnestof fungerer som avisoffentlighedens fælles opslagstavle, hvor små og store mærkedage for såvel kendte som ukendte læsere kan få et par ord med på vejen.

Ser man på de personer, der gives en længere omtale, så er kønsforskellene stadig til stede, idet langt flere mænd end kvinder gives en fyldigere omtale på mærkedagen. Fælles for kvinder og mænd er, at det i høj grad er deres offentlige erhvervsmæssige rolle, som fremhæves. Det private liv er fraværende og der gives næsten aldrig oplysninger om, hvem de er gift med, antallet af børn, eller hvad fritiden bruges til.

Også i denne periode kan kønsforskelle og balancen mellem offentligt og privatliv iagttages på tværs af aviserne.

Segmentpressens periode

Hvor meget få kvinder i 1918 bestred offentlige embeder, så er samfundet fundamentalt ændret i 2018, hvor kvinder længe har været på arbejdsmarkedet. Denne udvikling kan dog ikke spores i antallet af mærkedagsomtaler for kvinder. I de undersøgte medier, er der kun kommet marginalt flere kvindelige portrætter og nekrologer siden 1958. Så der kan lokaliseres en kønsbias alene på antallet af kvinder, der omtales i navnestoffet. På trods af at Danmark gennem årene ofte fremhæves som et foregangsland for ligestilling (bl.a. ved den høje beskæftigelseskvotient for kvinder), så er tallene ikke bedre end i britiske og amerikanske studier (Fowler og Bielsa, 2007; Maybury, 1996; Spilka, Lacey og Gelb, 1980)

Når det gælder spørgsmålet om, hvordan kvinder portrætteres i navnestoffet, så adskiller 2018 sig, til vores overraskelse, fra resten af undersøgelsen, idet kønsforskellene fremstår mere markante end tidligere. Privatlivet begynder at fylde mere i portrætterne og her er særligt familierollen til stede i omtalen af kvinder. I langt mindre grad vinder omtale af familieliv og særligt fritidsinteresser ind i portrætter af mænd, og her som et ekstra plus i fortællingen om en succesfuld mand.

Samlet set fremtræder kønsforskellene mest bemærkelsesværdig i portrætterne fra 2018, som samtidigt er kendetegnet ved, at de i langt højere grad end tidligere er et journalistisk produkt og i mindre grad indsendt materiale fra læserne selv.

Diskussion af offentlighed og privatsfære

Denne artikel har haft som mål at se nærmere på, hvordan kvinder har været til stede i offentligheden set gennem avisernes navnestof i en periode over 100 år. Analysens konklusioner har både været forudsigelige og overraskende. Det har været forudsigeligt, at vi særligt i de ældste aviser ville finde en overvægt af mænd, da det er gennem personers offentlige virke, at de har gjort sig bemærket og værdige til en omtale ved mærkedagen. Da kvinderne først senere i 1900-tallet for alvor kom ind på arbejdsmarkedet, har det været forventeligt, at vi i starten af århundredet hovedsageligt fandt mænd i navnestoffet.

Omvendt har det været en overraskelse at konstatere, at andelen af kvinder i navnestoffet stort set er uændret i de seneste nedslagsår trods kvinders indtog på arbejdsmarkedet. Ligeledes er det overraskende, at de kønnede beskrivelser, hvor kvinden defineres i forhold til sine relationer til fædre, ægtefæller og børn, findes mest udtalt i den moderne journalistiske portrætgenre. I de mere kortfattede, oftest indsendte omtaler, som i hobetall fyldte aviserne fra 1958-1998

var kønne beskivelser og privatlivsrelationer næsten helt fraværende.

Udvikling kan også anskues gennem at se på skillelinjen mellem det offentlige og private eller måske snarere på dualiteten mellem disse to størrelser. Over undersøgelsens 100 år har navnestoffet været kendetegnet ved både at være offentligt og privat. Der har været offentlige begravelseslister og private dødsannoncer, portrætter af offentligt kendte personer og private fødselsdagslykønskninger til børn. Navnestoffet har hele tiden indeholdt begge dele og været et medie for såvel offentlige som mere private omtaler, ligesom såvel avisens medarbejdere som almindelige borgere har bidraget til produktionen af navnestoffet. I undersøgelsen seneste sample fra 2018 er bidragene fra privatborgere og de private lykønskninger dog i stor stil ved at være forsvundet. Tilbage er kun dødsannoncerne, som synes at være blevet mere private – både for mænd og kvinder. I nedenstående klip fra en dag i 2018 med påfaldende mange dødsannoncer er der kun enkelte – mandlige – afdøde, hvor erhvervet nævnes. Ellers er den familiære forbindelse altdominerende, men dog stadig i en offentlig annoncering.

DØDE

Jytte Veien Sass * 10. december 1923 † 27. januar 2018 er stille sovet ind På familiens vegne Tina Bisættelsen finder sted fredag den 2. februar kl. 13.00 fra Himmelsk Kirke, Årskilde	Vores kære mand, far, svigerfar og farfar Michael Jørgensen arkitekt MAN * 5. januar 1918 † 24. januar 2018 er stille sovet ind efter kort tids sygdom Berit, Martin og Salla Kajsa og Søren Marie, Sofie og Fridtjof Bisættelsen finder sted fra Vår Frue Kirke fredag den 2. februar kl. 14.00	Vores elskede mor, svigermor, søster og kæreste Henny Aase Søs Tvede * 30. maj 1942 † 12. januar 2018 er stille sovet ind Da ved alle vores i vores hjerte Familien Bisættelsen har fundet sted	Vår kære, mor, svigermor, søster og olde Jytte Buus Lassen * 24. maj 1923 † 28. januar 2018 er stille og fredfyldt sovet ind med familien omkring sig Pia og Jørgen Jane og Anders Mette, Kirstoffer, Lene og Viggo Bente og Helle Malthe, Freja og Magnus Bikke, Morten, Pelle og Tilde Tine, Konnie, Silke og Olinda Bisættelsen finder sted fra Søndermark Kirkegård i Søndermark fredag den 2. februar kl. 14.00
† Poul Olsbro * 23. januar 1927 er stille sovet ind, den 26. januar 2018 På familiens vegne Pernille, Jonathan, Astrid og Peter Bisættelsen finder sted fra Gentofte Kirke fredag den 2. februar kl. 12.30	Dødsannoncer kan bestilles via politikkensannoncer Vilg fast selvannoncer	Min kære hustru Gerda Holck * 14. april 1908 er stille sovet ind, mart. af dage, den 26. januar 2018 Urban og Henrik Bisættelsen finder sted fra Frederiksberg Kirke fredag den 2. februar kl. 13.00 Er vi borte fra hinanden, vore tanker mødes dog, vore hjertes banker sammen, det er kærlighedens lov	Ojenlæge Erik Rud Frederikshavn * 1. marts 1921 † 28. januar 2018 er stille sovet ind På familiens vegne Bitten, Lars og Søren
Vores kære far, svigerfar og farfar Hans Gotthardt Bayer * 16. januar 1930 † 29. januar 2018 er sovet stille ind efter et godt og aktivt liv Johan & Hanne, Ulrik & Pia Marie, Henrik, Sophie & Emilie Bisættelsen finder sted fra Gentofte Kirke fredag den 2. februar kl. 13.00 I stedet for en blomst kan man bestille Lager uden Grænser, reg. 4900 kontonr. 10036024 eller Hans Gotthardt Bayer Så tag til personalet på Jagtvejshøj for glim i øjet, tid til kærlig omsorg, og altid plads til en god snak basert på gensidig respekt	Willy Torben Gutfelt Der er stille i dit hus kun et enkelt englebrun Du er gået ud og op af din længe, lange krop Der er hul hvor du var sommer bål du kære far deres fader er i søng på din allerøste dag * 2. februar 1934 † 28. januar 2018 Kærligt Indtil, Henrik Benjamin, Pernille, Frederik Begravelsen finder sted fra Sønder Kapel på Brobjerg Kirkegård fredag den 2. februar kl. 10.00	Vores kære mand, far, sønnesfar, svigerfar, morfar & farfar Ole B. Kohnke * 1. januar 1943 † 27. januar 2018 Tid for alt Du vil bli altid lev i vores minder På familiens vegne Helen, Maria & Andreas Bisættelsen finder sted fra Mariendal Kirke Søndag d. 27. januar fredag den 2. februar kl. 11.00	Grethe Hingard Har fået fred. * 23. september 1909 † 26. januar 2018 Hanne, Anders og Karinika Dødsannoncer og takviser kan bestilles via dødsannoncer@politik.dk Dødt Oplysninger til brug i nedbrændingen stilles til navn@politik.dk

Onsdag 31. januar 2018 POLITIKEN

Illustration 5: Dødsannoncer i Politiken (2018).

I portrætterne er det kun offentligt kendte personer, der omtales og fremhæves for netop deres offentlige meritter, og det er nu journalister, der forfatter de længere mærkedagsportrætter. Navnestoffet er blevet mere elitært, mens de folkelige lykønskninger er forsvundet (formentlig rykket til sociale medier).

Dog har det private sneget sig ind på en ny måde nemlig i inddragelsen af privatlivsforhold i portrætterne – mest eksplicit i

beskrivelser af kvinder men også i mindre omfang i beskrivelser af mænd. Portrættet af en offentlig kendt person skal nu ikke længere kunforholde sig til offentlige meritter, men også at tegne konturerne af det private menneske bag.

Kvindens i navnestoffet balancerer gennem alle årene på skellet mellem det private og det offentlige. Fra de tidligste annoncer og notitser har kvinders mærkedage ofte været offentliggjort til "slægt og venner" og ikke i udgangspunktet til en bredere offentlig. I det nutidige navnestof er kvindernes position i privatlivet som mor, bedstemor eller hustru ofte en central del af beskrivelsen af dem, når de ellers er kendt for deres offentlige erhvervskarriere – og det i langt højere grad end for mænd. Mange andre studier af kvinders repræsentation i nyheder og medier har tidligere påpeget det forhold, at kvinder først kan forstås og accepteres som legitime stemmer i den offentlige debat, når man har beskrevet, hvordan de håndterer deres ansvar som hustru og mor samtidigt med, at de forfølger en offentlig karriere (Avital-BenAtar, 2022; Ross et al., 2013).

NOTER

¹ Denne artikel er et af resultaterne fra forskningsprojektet "Cultural Publics: A study of the opinion- and people's pages in Danish Newspapers from 1908 to 2018". Forskningsprojektet blev støttet af Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond - Kultur og Kommunikation, bevilling 9037-00195B.

² Tallet dækker over beskæftigede uden for hjemmet. Den resterende del af befolkningen var enten beskæftiget i eget hjem (fx egen gård eller virksomhed), arbejdsløse, børn, pensionister eller på andre måder udenfor arbejdsmarkedet.

REFERENCER

- Avital-BenAtar, M. (2022). Until death do us part: Gendered media coverage of the deaths of Israeli male and female public figures. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2022.2137828>
- Berlingske* 31/1. (2018).
- Berlingske Tidende* 5/5. (1918).
- Berlingske Tidende* 18/11. (1938).
- Berlingske Tidende* 21/7. (1958).
- Bruhn Jensen, Klaus., Agger, Gunhild., & Drotner, Kirsten. (1996). *Dansk mediehistorie / Bind 2, 1880-1920, 1920-1960*. Samleren.
- Brusser, P., & Louw, J. (2019). Public Representations of Loss in Death Announcements, 1912 to 2002. *Omega: Journal of Death & Dying*, 79(1), 3–17. CINAHL. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222817709692>

- Byrmann, G. (2002). Mångkulturellt och harmoniskt op familjesidan? *HumaNettet*, 11.
- Byrmann, G. (2004). Manligt och kvinnligt på familjesidan. *HumaNettet*, 15.
- Danmarks Statistik. (2023). *Flere kvinder i folketinget* [Dst.dk]. Flere kvinder i Folketinget. <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/nyheder-analyser-publ/bagtal/2023/2023-03-08-flere-kvinder-i-Folketinget>
- Danmarks Statistik. (2025a). *Historien om statistik*. dst.dk. <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/temaer/historien-om-statistik>
- Danmarks Statistik. (2025b). *Kvinder i ledelse* [Www.dst.dk]. Danmarks Statistik. <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/temaer/SDG/globale-verdensmaal/05-ligestilling-mellem-koennene/delmaal-05/indikator-2#istart>
- Ergin, M. (2009). Taking it to the Grave: Gender, Cultural Capital, and Ethnicity in Turkish Death Announcements. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, 2009–2010(Vol 60(2)), 175–197. <https://doi-org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/10.2190/OM.60.2.e>
- Eskjær, M. Fugl., & Helles, R. (2015). *Kvantitativ indholdsanalyse*. (1. udgave.). Samfundslitteratur.
- Folketinget. (2018). *Folketinget*. www.ft.dk. https://www.ft.dk/da/aktuelt/tema/historisk_folketingsvalg-1918
- Fowler, B. (2004). Mapping the Obituary: Notes towards a Bourdieusian Interpretation. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2_suppl), 148–171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2005.00529.x>
- Fowler, B., & Bielsa, E. (2007). The Lives We Choose to Remember: A Quantitative Analysis of Newspaper Obituaries. *The Sociological Review*, 55(2), 203–226. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2007.00702.x>
- Gavriely-Nuri, D., & Lachover, E. (2012). Reframing the Past as a Cosmopolitan Memory: Obituaries in the Israeli Daily Haaretz. *Communication Theory* (10503293), 22(1), 48–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2011.01397.x>
- Gill, Rosalind. (2008). Gender and the media. I *Gender and the media* / (2. reprint.). Polity Press.
- Hanusch, F. (2009). 'The Australian We All Aspire to Be': Commemorative Journalism and the Death of the Crocodile Hunter. *Media International Australia*, 130(1), 28–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878x0913000105>
- Hume, J. (2000). *Orbituaries in American culture*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Jyllands-Posten* 2/12. (1978).
- Jyllands-Posten* 19/6.. (2018).
- Jyllands-Posten* 7/10. (2018).
- Jyllands-Posten* 19/8. (1958).

- Jørndrup. (2021). *Ligestilling i medierne—DEN DANSKE DEL AF UNDERSØGELSEN: WHO MAKES THE NEWS? 2020*. Center for nyhedsforskning.
- Lachover, E., & Gavriely-Nuri, D. (Spring2011). Requiem to nationalism? Shaping a collective Israeli identity through obituaries. *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition*, 6(1), 24–39.
- Maybury, K. K. (1996). Invisible Lives: Women, Men and Obituaries. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, 32(1), 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.2190/RAPG-H4B2-2QH8-3PCG>
- Politiken* 31/1. (2018).
- Politiken* 17/7. (1998).
- Politiken* 18/11. (1938).
- Politiken* 19/6. (1938).
- Politiken* 19/6. (2018).
- Ross, K., Evans, E., Harrison, L., Shears, M., & Wadia, K. (2013). The Gender of News and News of Gender: A Study of Sex, Politics, and Press Coverage of the 2010 British General Election. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(1), 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212457814>
- Schultz, I. (2007). Fra Partipresse over Omnibuspresse til Segmentpresse. *Journalistica* (Århus.), 2(5). <https://doi.org/10.7146/journalistica.v2i5.1807>
- Siivonen, J. (2007a). Kvinnoliv och mansliv i dagstidningars personporträttsgenre: Duktiga pappor och ansvarsmammor: Män och barnlösa kvinnor. *Astra Nova*, 24–26.
- Siivonen, J. (2007b). *Personporträttet som tidningsgenre: En närläsningstudie med fokus på innehållsliga teman, berättarkonventioner och kön*. Svenska social- och kommunalhögskolan vid Helsingfors universitet.
- Social-Demokraten* 11/8. (1938).
- Social-Demokraten* 28/12. (1938).
- Spilka, B., Lacey, G., & Gelb, B. (1980). Sex Discrimination after Death: A Replication, Extension and a Difference. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, 10(3), 227–233. <https://doi.org/10.2190/TEUJ-19YK-M6KE-RTL8>
- Willig, I., Bengtsson, M., Blach-Ørsten, M., & Jørndrup, H. (2024). *So much more than news: Revisiting press epochs from an explorative study of non-news genres in Danish newspapers, 1918–2018*.

HANNE JØRNDRUP

Lektor

Institut for Kommunikation og Humanistisk Videnskab
Roskilde Universitet

hajoe@ruc.dk

IDA WILLIG

Dekan for Humaniora

Institut for Kommunikation og Humanistisk Videnskab
Roskilde Universitet

idaw@ruc.dk

MARK BLACH-ØRSTEN

Professor

Institut for Kommunikation og Humanistisk Videnskab
Roskilde Universitet

oersten@ruc.dk

METTE BENGTTSSON

Lektor

Institut for Kommunikation
Københavns Universitet

bengtsson@hum.ku.dk

Visualizing national and international deaths with data during the COVID-19 pandemic

ESTER APPELGREN

Södertörn University

FRANCESCA MORINI

Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg

AMANDA MAYA

Federal University of Ouro Preto

Abstract

This study focuses on the difference between visual representations of data concerning international and domestic COVID-19-related deaths in a selection of European countries. Both semi-quantitative and qualitative analyses are carried out on a sample of 255 data visualizations published in the digital editions of selected European newspapers. The visualizations were originally included in 97 news articles published by media outlets online, across ten European countries between February 2020 and April 2022. Data visualizations are analyzed using visual and textual framing methods, and results show that COVID-19-related visualizations follow different stylistic and framing patterns if the data represented concern domestic or international victims. This finding is in line with how journalists traditionally cover crises, such as wars. Additionally, the importance of death can be subtly diminished with techniques of statisticulation. Despite the global implications and consequences of the pandemic and journalists' efforts to report beyond their own national boundaries, the enforcement of domestic interests seems to have been a priority.

KEYWORDS

death, data journalism, visualization, covid-19, statistical reporting, war metaphor

Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, statistics have dominated the news coverage of data-driven journalism. The daily coverage of infection rates, the number of victims, and other numbers related to the pandemic have been so common that a shared visual language related to COVID-19 has emerged (Alexander & Smith, 2020). This language came about through the reiteration of familiar generic visuals: computer-generated or illustrated representations of the virus molecule, stock photos of doctors and syringes, or simple statistical charts like the flatten-the-curve line chart, choropleth maps, bar charts, and line charts (Aiello et al., 2022). Furthermore, at the top of the online and printed editions of international and domestic newspapers, interactive dashboards or tickers appeared, showing distinct kinds of numbers and charts monitoring the pandemic's development (Comba, 2020). While the statistical dashboards about the pandemic shared generic visual representations of statistics, the way in which journalists covered data in individual articles both in text and with visualizations differed across the globe (see, for example, Quandt and Wahl-Jørgensen, 2021). This is not surprising: different contextual settings are related to different journalistic cultures, and national borders are one of the many variables at play in distinguishing between them (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). Moreover, in increasingly data-rich societies, data is journalism (Shirky, 2014, as cited in Nguyen, 2018), and this specific kind of journalism – namely data journalism – might differ across journalistic cultures.

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, data journalists vowed to explain to their audiences how the crisis unfolded through the use of official and publicly available data while maintaining their journalistic autonomy and authority (Cairo, 2019; Quandt and Wahl-Jørgensen, 2021). To do so, data journalists communicated scientific data about COVID-19 to general audiences, relying on the ability of their readers to be “risk-literate”, i.e. make sense of visual depictions of risks and translate these images into informed and ethical decision-making (Amidon et al., 2020). One of the key datasets used for this goal traced the number of deaths caused by COVID-19 (Romano et al., 2020). To communicate these data, journalists often resorted to data visualization – graphical representations of abstract data (Gershon et al., 1998). Previous research has shown that data visualization plays a key role for journalistic storytelling, and design elements have a strong impact on readers' perceptions and emotions (Hullman & Diakopoulos, 2011; Morini, 2024). Data visualization is a promising method, as readers are more likely to make sense of graphical representation of numbers and retain their key message for longer periods of time, especially compared to other visual

artifacts, like illustrations (Garretón et al., 2023a). However, previous research has also found that data tend to be reported as neutral, impartial, and objective when data visualizations are used in journalistic contexts (Garretón et al., 2023b). In relation to death, this tendency can be especially problematic.

Already at the very beginning of the pandemic, in March 2020, when the virus had caused around 20,000 victims and 500,000 more people were known to be infected, the director of the World Health Organization, General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stated “we are at war”, describing the virus as deadly and framing the pandemic as the defining moment of our time (Chappel, 2020). Previous research has paid attention to how domestic media coverages support their own government efforts in times of war, with a clear division between “national” and “international” causalities (Craig, 2009; Hanusch, 2010). Furthermore, domestic deaths enjoy a preferential visual treatment compared to international ones – with the use of dedicated photographs (Hanusch 2010). Also, in relation to COVID-19, media have frequently used textual metaphors to create a sense of national belonging and to support governmental measures (Aiello et al., 2022; Varma, 2020; Wodak, 2021).

Research on the representation of death in data visualizations is scarce, particularly when it comes to COVID-19-related deaths. Visualization has become globally known as a method for journalistic inquiry, yet because the expertise and guidelines available to journalists differ between countries and the COVID-19 crisis unfolded differently around the globe, the charts produced by data journalists differ. For this reason, a study that looks at how design elements are used in pandemic-related visualizations could show how graphic design and statistical methods are used in contemporary data journalism.

In this study, we chose to specifically focus on the differences between how international and domestic COVID-19-related casualties are represented across a selection of European countries. The study uses qualitative content analysis with quantitative elements to analyze 255 European data visualizations of COVID-19-related deaths. These visualizations belong to a sample of 97 online articles. The collected stories come from 33 media outlets in ten European countries (see Appendix 1 and the ‘Method and sampling’ section). Five of the selected countries (UK, Czechia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, and Sweden) suffered high numbers of casualties (January 2021); the other three (Norway, Denmark, and Ireland) had relatively fewer reported cases and deaths. Based on these premises, the methods of content analysis and verbal/visual framing are used to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What differences can be observed between representations of domestic and international COVID-19-related deaths?

RQ2. How can design elements in data visualizations be used to emphasize COVID-19 related death?

The next sections include a succinct literature review, which serves as context for our work. The sections are organized in three main research directions: the role of visualizations and design in making news-worthy charts; the definition of statisticulation and the risks it might pose; and finally, how war metaphors are used to present deaths related to COVID-19.

Visualizations and designs during the pandemic

Cairo (2019) has recognized the role of COVID-19 very early in determining the mainstream popularization of data visualization, given its key role in representing the development of the pandemic. Visualizations of COVID-19 were created across domains to convey many different messages to a variety of audiences.

Zhang et al. (2021) looked at 1,184 public-facing pandemic visualizations from English-speaking news outlets and government websites and found the following main communication purposes: to inform about COVID-19 severity; to make predictions and explanations about the nature of the crisis; to offer advice on how to reduce risk; to communicate risk, vulnerability, or equity; and to measure the crisis's many effects. Most visualizations focused on the current state of the crisis, making historical comparisons in the early stages of the pandemic before shifting to the trajectory of the crisis over time and the geospatial spread (*ibid.*). Some of these visualizations have become iconic. For instance, the most common visual based on predictive data became known as 'flatten-the-curve', a bell-shaped curve of how COVID-19 should, after reaching its peak, flatten out again (Pentzold et al., 2021). Among these, there were also guides explaining social distancing practices, the nature of the disease, risk factors associated with the disease, and its economic impact on society, and as the crisis grew, visualizations were updated and their visual style changed (Zhang et al., 2021). Stylistic choices about colors and other design elements can affect how users see risk (*ibid.*). Also, the differences and similarities in how visualizations are designed across media outlets may show biases, power issues, and media positioning that are inherent in widely used visualizations (*ibid.*).

In a study of how audiences react to visualizations of COVID-19, articles with interactive visualizations were found to be more frightening than articles without visualizations (Oh and Hwang, 2021).

However, these findings are not definitive. Markant et al. (2023) have also found evidence of little attitude shift related to visualizations – especially in the presence of high uncertainty. The topic of COVID-19 in visualizations appears to support mild attitude changes at best, with readers maintaining previous beliefs despite being exposed to data. This is significant since the COVID-19 coverage was characterized by uncertainty from the beginning; in some cases, the data were only temporary estimates (Cairo, 2019). Moreover, COVID-19 visualizations were often banal (Aiello et al., 2022), reproducing empty versions of nationalism in the face of the crisis. (ibid.). This stands in contradiction to what has been argued by Hanusch (2010): journalistic images of death have the ability to project reality and are viewed as powerful documentary evidence. However, specific to the COVID-19 visualizations proposed by news outlets was that they were often repetitive and largely symbolic (Aiello et al., 2022; Delicado and Rowland, 2021).

Ultimately, the role of visualizations in COVID-19 still seems uncertain. On the one hand, news outlets largely popularized data visualization as a method to support audience sense-making during the pandemic. On the other hand, it is still unclear what impact these visualizations had on readers. Researchers have been skeptical about their ability to inform beyond pre-formed beliefs. It also remains underexplored how visualizations' design might have played a role in the shaping of journalists' rhetorical arguments.

Statisticulation in data visualizations

Data journalists tend to use simple statistical charts such as bar charts, line charts, or area charts as they afford low visual complexity (Zamith, 2019). Such charts are used to represent data related to a specific issue. Journalists carefully design them to be easy to understand, appealing, and ideally mathematically correct.

This process of simplification is prone either to casual or intended statisticulation (i.e., the act of misinforming someone using statistical material) (Huff, 1954). Statisticulation happens through the exaggeration, oversimplification, or distortion-through-selection of data. For instance, one can use scale in various misleading ways to either highlight or downplay important aspects in the data (Kask, 2007). Scale manipulations include cropping baseline values, omitting the graphic representation of the scale, or editing out the middle values in a chart. These practices are context-dependent and not

intrinsically wrong but can make it difficult for readers to understand the data.

In relation to scale, Romano et al. (2020) have looked at COVID-19 visualizations, with a specific focus on death. By testing readers' ability to understand visualizations with logarithmic and linear scales, they found that readers generally favor linearity since the data then will appear straightforward. However, readers also perceived COVID-19 as more catastrophic than usual if presented with linear scales rather than logarithmic. Similarly, changing the aspect ratio of the graphic elements within a chart can lead readers to under- or overestimate change (Fan et al., 2022). Plotting multiple variables on a single chart may encourage readers to compare unrelated data (Kask, 2007). Using certain colors (e.g., red) can cause elements to appear bigger than they actually are (Fan et al., 2022). According to Doan (2020, p.75) and Cairo (2015), even when charts are accurately designed, they can still grossly mislead readers by displaying deceptive patterns or by providing inadequate or incorrect information. Doan (2020) studied examples of misleading COVID-19 visualizations and found that some of these were using pie charts to show infection rates, comparing two unrelated charts, cropping scales, and making the Y-axes range unclear. Moreover, Alieva (2021) found that despite its claims of objectivity, news coverage enhanced by data and statistics still suffers from framing effects, influencing readers' interpretation of key events. The author observed that while objectivity and transparency constitute the basis of data representation, rhetorical strategies are used to co-opt these values into forming connoted interpretations of news events. In this context, it is meaningful to note that data journalists do not have specific codes of conduct related to data visualization but make use of their subjective understanding – informed by key journalistic values like transparency, truth, objectivity, privacy, and diversity – to ensure data and visualization quality (Morni et al., 2023). These previous contributions provide consistent evidence of how data visualizations can be manipulated for rhetorical intents. These findings also suggest the tendency of data journalists towards simplification and the lack of consistent guidelines on how to design visualizations for journalistic coverage.

The COVID-19 pandemic as war and visual enemy

In the case of death, previous research has found that its visual display for news coverage varies across countries and cultures.

Hanusch (2010) offers several factors of influence, such as religion, previous domestic experiences with war, as well as political

and economic reasons. In general, newspapers tend to show little imagery of victims. When it happens, it is more common for newspapers to show international deaths rather than national ones (Hanusch, 2010). Moeller (2002) suggests that international events are treated in a more sensational or dramatic manner to catch national audiences' attention. This happens especially if an international crisis seems remote and death poses no direct risk, or if crises are uncertain and casualties are difficult to attribute. Regarding domestic death, certain countries might impose governmental restrictions or censorship to limit its display. During war, media ownership and journalists themselves tend to practice self-censorship to not upset their audiences (Hanusch, 2010). In global disasters, journalists have been found to initially fixate on reporting the latest body count, then moving on to human interest stories about "our" nationals involved, to then favor national infused coverage where examples of international solidarity are presented, for instance the sending of help to the distant crisis (Cottle, 2009). Moeller (2002) has argued that journalists might also tend to escalate their language during conflicts. They might be affected by "compassion fatigue", i.e.: progressive use of language and images that make the event look deadlier in comparison with previous events. Reasons behind this behavior are linked to journalists belief that audience's attention is limited, and that readers might become bored without an escalating effect.

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Krawczyk et al. (2021) found that 16% of COVID-19 news articles from eleven countries were highly negatively polarized, citing issues such as death, fear, or crisis. Baekkeskov, Rubin, and Öberg (2021) analyzed Danish and Swedish media coverage in the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on the justification of the policies their government had chosen, with the measures being repeated without any encouragement for open public debate. Varma (2020) showed that the war metaphor not only unites people against the virus, but also that the use of medical militarism motivated individuals positively and produced an attitude to fight the "war", with medicine as a war tactic. Wodak (2021) analysed crisis communication about COVID-19 in Austria, Germany, France, Hungary, and Sweden. She found four distinct frames used by political leaders to mitigate the audiences' dread: a "religious frame", a "dialogic frame", a frame emphasizing "trust", and a frame of "leading a war". Indeed, political leaders in these European countries used the war frame repeatedly to suggest an upcoming domestic victory against the virus. They called for national unity around government measures. For instance, Panzeri et al. (2021) have focused on Italy, reporting similar findings and showing how a bellicose framing of

COVID-19 could have supported negative emotional responses. In a study of how COVID-19 deaths were covered in New Zealand, Morgan et al. (2021) found that COVID-19 was framed as a 'battle' where victims were turned into conflict's casualties. Since these victims were often the elderly and vulnerable, researchers found that journalists played an advocacy role in justifying the country's lockdown measures with compassionate coverage of older people's deaths, praising the national COVID-19 strategy and restrictions. Likewise, in a study on British coverage, Sowden et al. (2021) found stories where journalists created a 'war-like' conflict between people complying with social distancing regulations and those who were not, creating a battle against "lockdown rebels". Furthermore, in public statements by world leaders, the COVID-19 pandemic was likened to a war with the virus as the invisible enemy; terminology included war-like terms such as "curfew" or "frontline workers" (Varma 2020). In daily press conferences, medical experts were framed as war heroes, given their centrality in updating citizens about the spread of the disease and the measures taken on a state level to stop or curb it (Craig, 2020). Whereas the war metaphor was popular at the beginning of the pandemic, as time progressed, new local metaphors emerged – showing specific features of the crisis (Hanne, 2022). Nevertheless, war analogies and the use of bio-militarism in journalism are not a new phenomenon and have been observed in covering other epidemics such as, the Spanish flu, cholera epidemics, or AIDS (See for example Craig, 2020; Spratt, 2001).

This corpus of research shows how the war metaphor has infiltrated the journalistic discourse about COVID-19. However, research falls short in showing if and how data visualizations with their distinctive graphic elements might have been influenced by these rhetorical strategies.

Method and sampling

This study isolates and analyzes the graphic elements belonging to a sample of 255 data-journalistic visualizations on COVID-19-related deaths. The aim of this analysis is to understand what visual strategies are used by journalists when representing death through statistical charts by answering RQ1 and RQ2. 97 news articles from online news media outlets in ten European countries featured the visualizations in our sample. The countries were Italy, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Czechia. Despite being geographically and economically close, these countries reacted to the pandemic with very

different measures, making them a compelling example of the pan-European coverage of COVID-19.

The timeframe of the collection went from February 2020 to April 2022. The timeframe was chosen to obtain a diverse range of articles reflecting the different phases of the pandemic as it unfolded. The selection of media outlets in each country was primarily based on their market data from the Reuters Institute 2021 Digital News Report (Newman et al., 2021); we selected media outlets listed in the top ten for weekly reach in each country. We strived to include at least one public service company, one major morning newspaper, and one major tabloid newspaper in our sample. After an initial data sampling activity, we realized that many of the major news outlets across our sample of countries did not publish visualizations that met our criteria. Oftentimes, these outlets relied on generic dashboards at the top of their webpages instead of producing original coverage. For some countries, we had to exclude certain news outlets in favor of others. Some of these cannot be considered major but still produce authoritative and reliable coverage.

The final list of outlets range between 2 and 5 different ones per country. For **Sweden** we included: SVT, *Aftonbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*; **Denmark**: DR, TV2 and *Jyllandsposten*; **Norway**: VG and *Aftenposten*; The **Czech Republic**: TV Nova News and *Denik*; The **UK**: BBC, *The Guardian*, *Sky News* and *Daily Mail*; **Portugal**: Cm, JN, *Noticias au Minuto* and *Sapo*; **Ireland**: RTÉ, *BreakingNews.ie*, *Irish Mirror* and *The Business Post*; **Italy**: *Il Sole 24 Ore*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, and *L'Avvenire*; **Spain**: RTVE, *el Pais* and *el Mundo*; **Germany**: *Der Spiegel*, *ZDFheute*, *die Zeit*, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

We included only data visualizations, defined as graphical representations of numerical data (Gershon et al., 1998). We did not include comics, illustrations, or photographs – unless combined with a chart and matched with a unique caption.

Many studies based on content analysis of journalistic content are focused on the framing of issues found in both textual and visual content (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). For this study, we chose to focus on online articles that included visualizations, since the online news format, to a greater extent than, for example, the mobile news format, has the potential to include rich interactive content. During the pandemic, most online news outlets published statistics in a general dashboard found on top of the page or at times embedded in articles. Dashboards contained, for example, number of people infected, deceased, vaccinated, recovering or in intensive care or recovering from intensive care on a national or regional level. The dashboards were updated daily and often embedded repeatedly in news articles about COVID-19. Given their lack of direct

relationship with individual articles, we chose to exclude such dashboards and focused on articles with unique visualizations featuring death by COVID-19. Furthermore, we opted to eliminate duplicates of visualizations. Choosing this delimitation resulted in a very focused sample where only original visualizations were included, avoiding those that were repeated over time. Thus, we did not focus on representativity for all articles published on death by COVID-19 but strived to find a comparative sample of unique visual strategies for visualizations on death by COVID-19, tailored and designed to fit a specific news angle of that article. In articles with several visualizations, every instance with its unique caption was considered a unit for analysis. Since there is no comprehensive sampling frame for data journalism projects (Lowrey & Hou, 2021), we constructed a non-probabilistic sample. Previous research has often focused on award-winning data stories (see Loosen 2020; Ojo & Heravi, 2018). In our case, we decided to scrutinize “everyday” data journalism, which has the potential to better represent the overall discourse about pandemic-related deaths. Contrary to Zamith’s (2019) study on North American “everyday” data journalism, we did not access content programmatically (i.e. through the Twitter API). The reason for this is that in a European context, few news organizations have separate graphics teams dedicated to data journalism, as well as open archives and accessible APIs. Hence, we approached the research by mirroring the behavior of a regular online audience member if they were looking for data journalism visuals focused on the pandemic.

We employed a systematic approach to identify articles, mirroring the public’s online search behavior. Initially, we scrutinized the main landing page of the media outlet, clicking on every mention of ‘Corona’ or ‘COVID-19’. Then, we performed a more granular exploration by searching for ‘COVID-19’ or ‘Corona’ and the word ‘death’ in each language using the search function on the news websites. If no search function was available, or it did not include more than the most recent published articles, we used the COVID-19 or Corona tags provided by the outlet at hand or searched for articles created by data journalists at the news outlet. When available, we considered the special sections dedicated to ‘data’ or ‘data journalism’ as containers for data visualization projects. In this case, we only selected the projects related to COVID-19. The approach was reproduced systematically across all publications.

In this non-probability sample, death had to be mentioned in the headline, lead, or body of the news story and be the focus of the visualization. The number of articles that met our criteria turned out to be low. Our research design partially explains this. We made the decision to exclude duplicate articles featuring a visualization that

appeared repeatedly. Since we collected articles in retrospect, it was also difficult to track pieces that had been updated or removed. We found that while some media outlets published several ambitious data-rich projects monthly, others repeated the same graphs over time.

Appendix 1 contains the total number of articles and visualizations, broken down by country and media company. Some countries had an abundance of visualizations, while other countries and media outlets published few visualizations depicting COVID-19-related deaths. To balance our selection, we considered ten unique articles per country, except for Portugal and Ireland, where we were only able to gather eight.

Coding instrument

Given the hybrid nature of data visualizations (Uggla, 2021) – combining text and visual elements – we included both quantitative and qualitative elements in the content analysis and coded for both verbal and visual frames. Frames have been widely studied to influence the formation and accessibility of beliefs, attitudes, behavioral action, and policy support regarding an issue by defining problems or issues, identifying who is responsible for an outcome or at the center of an issue, involving moral judgments, and suggesting remedies (Entman, 2004; Tewksbury & Riles, 2018).

A frame repeatedly invokes the same objects and traits, using identical or synonymous words and symbols in a series of similar communications that are concentrated in time (Entman, Matthes & Pellicano, 2009, p. 177). Following Dan (2018), we created two distinct datasets. In the content analysis for frames, each article has been treated as one unit of analysis for variables concerning text. This dataset contains the article with the title and number of visualizations, marked by a unique identifier. Since articles usually contained several visualizations, in the second dataset each visualization is treated as a sub-unit. Here, unique features of the visualizations – for example, chart type, interactivity, etc.—were coded. Both data sets were joined together by the unique identifier, matching the article with its visualizations.

To identify verbal frames, our approach was to build on recent framing death-related scientific research in health, war, and risk crises covered by the media. Therefore, we looked at headlines and used Krishnatray and Gadekar's four frames of constructing death in the H1N1 death news coverage (2013). We did so to find clear examples of death-related discourse. Krishnatray and Dadekar's frames consists of the fear-panic frame; the attribution-of-responsibility frame; the action frame; and the human-interest frame.

Moreover, since numbers are central to data journalism projects, we added frames associated with numbers (Lee et al., 2019), such as the safety-assertion frame; and statistics frames such as variable, trend, value, and balance as suggested by Kong et al. (2018).

Frames were not considered mutually exclusive; one headline could hold multiple frames. We coded headlines as the fear-panic frame if the headline contained wording that implied COVID-19 as extremely dangerous and catastrophic. The attribution-responsibility frame was for headlines that implied responsibility for death. The action frame encompassed headlines that detailed institutional measures or actions taken to prevent deaths. We used the human-interest frame for headlines that showcased emotions, or a personal or human element associated with death. For the safety-assertion frame, the headline had to include statements as to whether a given death statistic indicated that conditions were safe or unsafe. For the statistics-variable frame, the headline compared numbers; for the statistical-trend frame, the heading mentioned a trend; and for the statistical-value frame, the headline simply included a number. For the statistics-balance frame, the headline presented both sides of an argument. We also coded frames called “Other” for headlines that did not fit into any of the frames described above.

To be able to discuss the representation of death in visualizations, we used Cairo’s categorization of graphs (2019) and Weber’s framework for analyzing interactive visualizations (2020). We analyzed the charts in Cairo’s (2019) extensive taxonomy, dividing them according to type of chart or table, representation of scale, and timeframe. We considered these variables as key in detecting visual patterns in how death is represented: as already mentioned above, the choice of chart or scale can influence readers’ understanding and foster certain emotional and even rational responses to the topic. Moreover, these variables are also highly dependent on each other. For instance, the representation of scale is dependent on the type of chart. We considered the position of the maximum data point in relation to its axis as fundamental in changing readers’ perspectives on data, as also suggested by Sinar (201, p. 143). We coded for how the maximum data point was positioned on the scale in relation to the last axis tick, for example, if it was over, under, or matching. We coded for the possibility for the reader to interact, for example through scrolling, filtering, or clicks (Appelgren 2018; Engebretsen et al., 2018; Stalph 2018).

Three researchers independently coded the articles. To test the reliability, we coded percentage agreement between all three coders. We chose to calculate percentage agreement since most of our variables were binary and most of them was not equally probable, ie. they tended to be 1 with much higher frequency than 0. The first

test resulted in too low reliability. We revisited the code book and did a recode of the entire sample. Then, a second percentage agreement test for all 33 variables was conducted. It resulted in a range of percentage agreement for the variables between 0,67 and 1. The majority of the variables had a score above 0,93. We decided not to use two of our variables which had considerably lower agreement (0,53). These variables were completely excluded from the analysis.

Results

Pandemics are global phenomena. Hence, journalism about pandemics contains both national and global perspectives. Within our sample, around half (48%) of the visualizations had an international focus.

Articles about COVID-19 were usually published under dedicated COVID-19 subsections of the news websites. More specifically, numbers and statistics about COVID-19-related deaths were found in four distinct types of items: 1) as part of dashboards, at the top, bottom, or at the margin of the main homepage of websites; 2) as general and updated visualizations, embedded within every COVID-19-related article either at the bottom or inside the article and regularly updated; 3) on separate summary pages with several different visualizations about the pandemic; and 4) in articles, where visualizations were tailored uniquely depending on the topic.

The sample of articles held at least one, but mostly more than one, visualization per article (mean 5.56, std. deviation 4.783), ranging from 1 (found in 9% of the articles) to 40 (found in two articles). Not all the visualizations included in an article were about COVID-19-related deaths. The mean for 'COVID-19-related deaths visualizations' per article was 2.68, standard deviation 4.025.

Across the sample, line charts, bar charts, heat, and choropleth maps were the leading chart types across our sample. In Denmark, Norway, and the Czech Republic, we also observed a high use of interactive features to help readers focus on certain aspects of data, particularly the comparisons across countries. The data used to create these charts also varied based on country and subject. Figure 1 shows how the visualizations about death were created from various datasets and based on a variety of metrics, with the most common one being the total number of COVID-19-related deaths followed by others, meaning that one visualization could contain several types of measures, including "deaths from other causes". We found that data about COVID-19-related deaths were often depicted in relation to other kinds of data about the pandemic (infected, vaccinated,

recovering from intensive care, etc.) or other unrelated causes of death (i.e. traffic deaths).

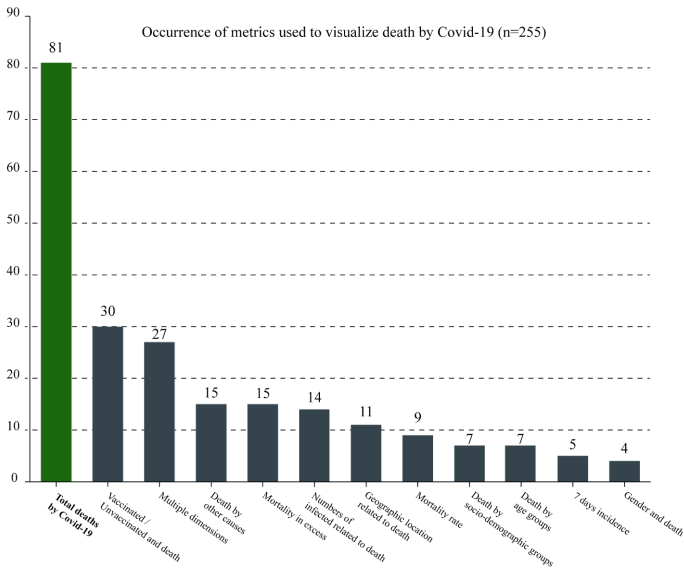


Figure 1: Metrics used to visualize COVID-19-related deaths (n=255).

The selected metrics included in charts were different when the visualization illustrated international or domestic fatalities ($X^2(11, 225) = 33.988, p = 0.001$). While the most common metric for both international and domestic deaths was total number of deaths, the second most common for domestic death-focused articles were “death by other causes” (24 charts with domestic deaths compared to 3 charts with international deaths).

Domestic deaths were often grouped according to socio-demographic groups (7 domestic vs. 0 international charts). Instead, international casualties were shown in relation to other metrics (12 domestic vs. 18 international), for instance, the number of people deceased against the total number of infections (5 domestic vs. 10 international).

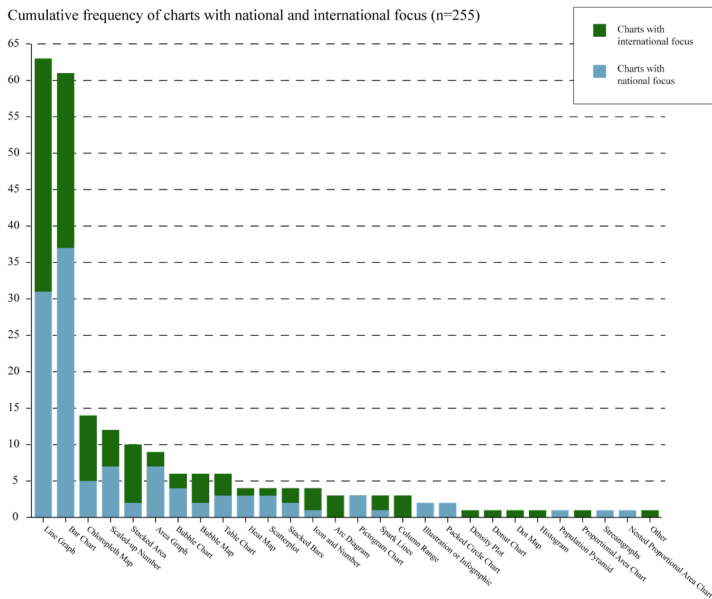


Figure 2: Type of visualization in relation to international or domestic focus (n=255).

Verbal frames in articles with visualizations of COVID-19-related deaths

We analyzed headlines within our sample and appreciated the complexity and multi-layered nature of how news angles are represented as frames. For instance, headlines typically included several frames used for the analysis. In total, the most common frame used for headlines was the safety-assertion frame (1), followed by the variable frame (2), the fear-panic frame (3), the trend frame (4) and lastly by the category “Other” (5). This category turned out to be one of the largest in our sample and was surprisingly uniform. Headlines coded as ‘Other’ all pointed to summaries of data collections with the aim of guiding the reader; for example “Here is the latest data on COVID-19” or “This is the pandemic in numbers.”

When analyzing frames used for international news angles about death by COVID-19 compared to content about national death, we found some significant differences (see Table 1). It was more common to find the fear-panic, safety-assertion and human-interest frames for visualizations of domestic deaths, while for depicting international ones the frame “Other” was preferred, meaning that journalists tended to refer back to current statistics, dashboards, and in general informational guides to data with titles like “Here you can find the latest numbers”.

	International deaths	National deaths	Chi2 p- value
Attribution of responsibility	15	10	0.186
Action	10	5	0.125
Human interest	1	14	<.001
Safety assertion	40	73	<.001
Variable	39	60	0.032
Trend	22	40	0.025
Value	13	19	0.397
Balance	8	5	0.298
Other	41	18	<.001
Total	107	118	255

Table 4: International or national COVID-19-related deaths depicted in visualizations in relation to the news frame in the headline of the article (n=255).

Visual frames in articles with visualizations of COVID-19-related deaths

We found 28 different types of visualizations, and the most common were line graphs (28%), bar charts (27%), choropleth maps (6%), scaled-up numbers (5%), and area graphs (4%) (see Figure 2). When an X and Y axis were included, we noticed that data points were sometimes positioned beyond, above or below the last tick on the scale. Thus, in visualizations where a scale was included, for instance, in a line chart, the highest record of fatalities was sometimes pictured above the maximum provided on the given scale and sometimes under the highest point on the scale. There were also instances where the maximum number of fatalities perfectly matched the last tick on the scale (see Table 2).

	%	CZ	DK	DE	IRL	I	N	S	ES	P	GB
Under the scale	40%	15	3	4	4	5	5	10	8	4	7
Over the scale	39%	2	7	16	2	0	7	6	4	3	5
Matches the scale	12%	0	2	3	1	4	0	1	2	2	1

Table 5: The maximum data point in relation to the scale and across countries.

Our results indicate that the position of the maximum data point differed significantly across countries for those charts that included a scale ($X^2(18, 133) = 40.825, p = 0.002$). In Denmark, Germany, and

Norway, it was more common for the maximum number of deaths to be visualized over the maximum graphical benchmark provided by the scale. In Czechia, Sweden, Spain, and the UK, it was more common for the maximum number of deaths to be visualized under the scale's maximum point. Interestingly, in the latter case, these countries can also be found among those that in January 2021 had suffered more deaths than the other countries in the sample. Furthermore, when taking into consideration whether the story focused on international or domestic deaths, for the countries where it was more common to represent the maximum number of deaths over the maximum tick of the scale – Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Portugal – the charts were mostly visualizing COVID-19-related deaths abroad.

Discussion

Visualizations appearing in news media are designed to convey certain messages. However, graphs and interactive visualizations in journalism, like photographic images, rarely stand on their own. Hanusch (2010) asserts that this is why images are powerful; they are woven into narratives and used to enhance the truthfulness of the text. In our sample, data visualizations about death were interwoven with other textual and visual elements, describing and depicting various other aspects connected to the pandemic. Similarly, to what was suggested by Aiello et al. (2022), the individual visual components about COVID-19 in our sample were generic and often reiterated. Aside from confirming the use of generic visuals and repetitive schemas, our focus on the different treatment of international and national deaths shows a noticeable pattern. National deaths were often framed together with deaths from other causes, for instance, car accidents (24 domestic vs. 3 international). The combination of metrics could be an attempt to minimize the impact of the pandemic in the reader's own country. International fatalities were put into perspective with other metrics (such as recoveries, infections, etc.), sometimes data were shown for multiple countries at once.

This higher variation of metrics and deluge of data could be an attempt at avoiding “compassion fatigue”, where journalists try to make an event more interesting in comparison with previous events. This is achieved, for example, by emphasizing a crisis as more deadly than a previous similar crisis (Mueller 2002). Aiello et al. (2022) have already observed this tendency to compare countries' fatalities and described the practice as taking the form of “a (very deadly) global sporting event, in which nations were presented in a competition with each other on who did a better job in

managing the global pandemic” (p. 326). This too signals support for national efforts and an attempt to minimize the impact on the reader's own country.

Our findings also reflect how journalism about the pandemic uses the same war metaphors used by politicians and leaders, as also highlighted by previous research. We found subtle signals justifying government restrictions and a tendency to describe the pandemic as how war traditionally is covered: a focus on body count, country comparisons where one's own nation comes out as a winner, and how international death seems to be treated differently compared to national death.

Because saliency, such as the use of color and size, was not part of our analysis, Figure 3 is included here only to illustrate what saliency can look like in news visualizations with, for example, the strong color black representing death by COVID-19. We suggest that saliency in visualization would serve as a compelling case for future research.

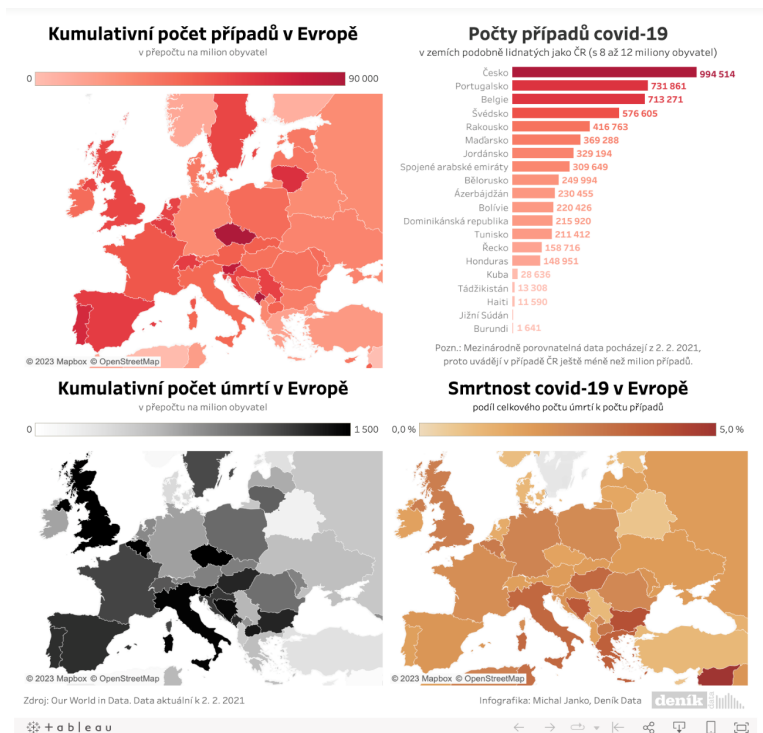


Figure 3: An example of use of saliency (Janko, 2021). Translated to English, the four captions display: “Accumulated number of cases; Number of COVID-19 cases; Accumulated number of deaths in Europe; Rate of death by Covid-19 in Europe”.

The analysis on frames shows how articles that discuss domestic deaths are prone to include headings hinting to fear and giving more importance to individuals and their safety. We found examples of subtle warnings in headlines that could induce fear yet coupled with comforting safety assertions. For example, in an article on excess mortality from the Danish public service broadcaster shown in Figure 4, the headline reads “Corona came, but for almost a year Denmark has not had excess mortality. This is about to change”, which is combined with the subtitle “Denmark is one of the few European countries that has avoided excess mortality for a long time” (translations from Danish by the authors). The textual message praises the performance of Denmark, and it is reinforced by the chart, where the choice of countries and colors hints to a sense of comfort for Danish residents, Denmark being depicted in blue, and other European countries with clear excess mortality visualized in pink, red, and dark red.

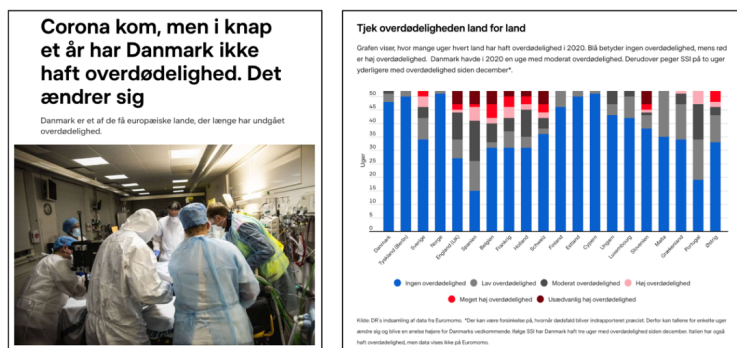


Figure 4: A Danish example of a warning in the title, and the visualization with comparisons between countries and colors hinting to a sense of comfort for Danish residents (Kildall Rysgaard, 2021). Translated from to English, the two captions read: “Corona came, but for almost a year Denmark has had no excess mortality. This is about to change” and “Check excess mortality country by country”.

Another of our findings concerns how casualties are depicted by different countries. Across the sample, line charts were the most common type of visualization. However, depending on the country, we also observed significant differences in how scale was used in line charts. In Denmark, Germany, and Norway, it was more common to find line charts with the maximum value plotted over the maximum value provided by the scale (Figure 5). In Czechia, Sweden, Spain, and the UK, it was more common to find the maximum value in the

data under the highest scale value, creating a subtle effect of diminishing the number of dead.

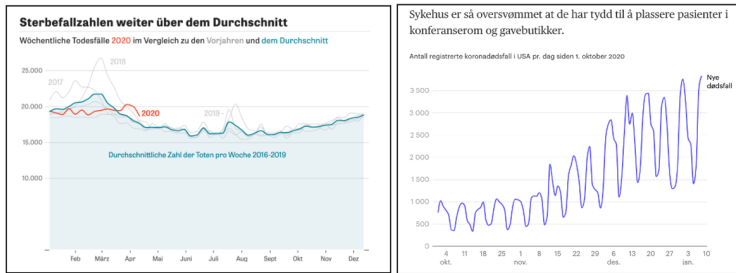


Figure 5: Examples of charts with the value above the last tick of the scale, the graph to the left from Germany (Ehmann et al., 2020) and to the right from Norway (Selbo Torset and Gausen, 2021). Translated to English, the two captions read: “Numbers of deaths again over the average: weekly reported deaths for 2020 in comparison with the previous year and the average”, and “Hospitals are so overwhelmed that they have resorted to placing patients in conference rooms and gift shops.”

Our results are in line with previous research that points to the fact that the dissemination and delivery of content online are not neutral activities (Tewksbury and Riles 2018, p. 138). Scale manipulation is a prominent example of what Huff (1954) denotes as *statisticulation* (i.e., misinforming someone using statistical material). We suggest that representing the maximum data point under the scale can be used to diminish the dramatic number of fatalities, while plotting the maximum number of deaths above the maximum range could be used to increase the sensation that the number of fatalities is high, and above an anticipated level.

Journalistic considerations behind why these attributes were used to change the visualizations are outside the scope of this study; however, we argue that if understanding a visualization of death comes with a higher level of concern, as suggested by Romano et al. (2020), the design choices made by journalists in this context may have had an impact on how audiences reflected on and felt about the overall message in the article. Therefore, these choices, if deliberate, could mirror current ethical considerations and long-standing practices in journalism related to death. Future research could investigate these ethical considerations that journalists make when designing charts in times of crisis.

These findings raise two main points. First, data visualization is far from being an objective and neutral representation of data, especially within the journalistic domain. Second, national debates and social expectations, in addition to rational or technical choices,

influence the design of these visual artifacts. In countries like Denmark or Norway, where COVID-19 has been treated as a foreign disease with little domestic impact, comparisons between other countries are frequent. For others, such as Sweden and the Czech Republic, where the death toll at specific points in time soared, our results indicate that the number of casualties seems to be systematically downplayed. The decision to downplay the death toll in countries that suffered a high number of deaths at certain points in time might have been based on deliberate journalistic ethical decision-making – possibly following existing ethical guidelines on how to deal with death in journalistic coverage (Frazer 1992). Ultimately, these visualizations seem to be built to support the national narrative on the pandemic and are similar to how journalism traditionally supported national efforts in times of war (Hanusch 2010).

Conclusions

Our results illustrate how journalists in ten European countries choose to visualize death by COVID-19 as the pandemic progressed. Coleman (2010, p.237), inspired by Entman (1993), argues that visual framing in hybrid visuals such as maps and graphics, much like text, also “selects some aspects of a perceived reality and makes them more salient [...]”. Framing is not only about text but includes many journalistic choices of visual cues that will convey a message.

In this study, we have explored how death was represented in online articles focused on COVID-19-related deaths in ten European countries. Our analysis focused on finding differences between the various types of representations as well as similarities, with a specific focus on national and international COVID-19-related deaths. The difference between national and international is also a key-aspect of journalism in times of war. We found that the pandemic often was portrayed as a war with fear-inducing language for both textual and visual elements. In particular, this was noticed in representing national deaths compared to international ones. We also found indications that deaths at times were subtly diminished or dramatized in visualizations, similar to how journalism in times of war often treats domestic deaths with more care, compared to international fatalities.

In general, the topic of death seemed to be visualized with basic graphs and few variables. Nuance is there, but it takes dubious form. While it seems like journalists were striving to strengthen data literacy among their audiences using visualizations to explain the complex nature of the pandemic, they were also using techniques of statisticulation to distract readers from national death counts as a

comforting strategy throughout the crisis. International deaths have been presented as crude numbers, whereas the portrayal of national deaths was equipped with socio-demographic context, with a slightly stronger emotional aspect. One limitation of the study is posed by how visualizations were analyzed. The coding process happened on desktop computers, whereas a lot of data journalism is now produced with mobile phones and social media in mind. It is possible that interactivity or complexity might have been disregarded by journalists, making the visualizations simpler to fit distinct types of platforms such as mobile. These aspects are difficult to study. Methodologies for content analysis that focus on mobile devices are still rare in journalism studies.

Even though the pandemic is a global phenomenon and journalism about the pandemic spanned national borders, for journalists the importance of their “own” nation, similar to frames in journalism about war, seemed to be key. Because public data often are released with a geographical component, such as country, region or municipality, these data are easy to obtain and represent, especially on maps. However, such visual geographical representation brings an inevitable element of comparison, or, as Aiello et al. (2022) suggest, competition. We suggest that in the context of COVID-19 visualizations, a low death toll became a success factor. In countries that suffered a large number of fatalities, a high death toll could be compensated through either visual edits such as scale adjustments, or a change of metrics. The use of other kinds of death measures, such as excess mortality, also helped to diminish the effect. We found that in this competition, similar to journalism in times of war, journalists’ own nation had to “win” against other countries, even if their death toll was considerably higher.

REFERENCES

- Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa. (n.d.). *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*. ADS. Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <https://www.adsnotizie.it/>.
- Aiello, G., Kennedy, H., Anderson, C. W., & Mørk Røstvik, C. (2022). ‘Generic visuals’ of Covid-19 in the news: Invoking banal belonging through symbolic reiteration. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 25(3-4), 309-330.
- Alexander, J. C., & Smith, P. (2020). COVID-19 and symbolic action: global pandemic as code, narrative, and cultural performance. *American journal of cultural sociology*, 8, 263-269.
- Alieva, I. (2021). How American Media Framed 2016 Presidential Election Using Data Visualization: The Case Study of the New York Times and the Washington Post. *Journalism Practice*, 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1930573>

- Amidon, T. R., Nielsen, A. C., Pflugfelder, E. H., Richards, D. P., & Stephens, S. H. (2021). Visual risk literacy in "flatten the curve" COVID-19 visualizations. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 35(1), 101-109.
- Appelgren, E. (2018). An illusion of interactivity: The paternalistic side of data journalism. *Journalism practice*, 12(3), 308-325.
- Baekkeskov, E., Rubin, O., & Öberg, P. (2021). Monotonous or pluralistic public discourse? Reason-giving and dissent in Denmark's and Sweden's early 2020 COVID-19 responses. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(8), 1321-1343.
- Cairo, A. (2015). Graphics lies, misleading visuals. In *New challenges for data design* (pp. 103-116). Springer, London.
- Cairo, A. (2019). *How charts lie: Getting smarter about visual information*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Carpendale, S., Diakopoulos, N., Henry Riche, N., & Hurter, C. (2016). Data-driven storytelling (dagstuhl seminar 16061). In *Dagstuhl reports* (Vol. 6, No. 2). Schloss Dagstuhl-Leibniz-Zentrum fuer Informatik.
- Chappel, B. (2020). 'We are at war,' WHO Head Says, Warning Millions Could Die From COVID-19. *NPR*. Available online: <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/26/822123471/we-are-at-war-who-head-says-warning-millions-could-die-from-covid-19>
- Coleman, R. (2010). Framing the pictures in our heads: Exploring the framing and agenda-setting effects of visual images. In *Doing news framing analysis* (pp. 249-278). Routledge.
- Comba, J. L. (2020). Data visualization for the understanding of COVID-19. *Computing in Science & Engineering*, 22(6), 81-86.
- Cottle, S. (2009). Global crises in the news: Staging new wars, disasters and climate change. *International Journal of Communication*, 3, 24.
- Craig, D. (2020). Pandemic and its metaphors: Sontag revisited in the COVID-19 era. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(6), 1025-1032.
- Delicado, A., & Rowland, J. (2021). Visual Representations of Science in a Pandemic: COVID-19 in Images. *Frontiers in Communication*, 6, 645725. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.645725>
- Doan, S. (2021). Misrepresenting COVID-19: lying with charts during the second Golden age of data design. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 35(1), 73-79.
- Ehmann, A., Mast, M., Schröter, A., Tröger, J., Venohr, S. (2020) 'Weiterhin mehr Tote durch den Corona-Effekt?' [In English: More deaths due to the corona effect?], 15 May. Available at: https://www.zeit.de/wissen/gesundheit/2020-04/statistisches-bundesamt-coronavirus-tote-sonderauswertung?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F (Accessed 4 07 2023).
- Fan, A., Ma, Y., Mancenido, M., & Maciejewski, R. (2022, April). Annotating line charts for addressing deception. In *Proceedings of the 2022 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1-12).

- Garreton, M., Morini, F., Celhay, P., Dork, M., & Parra, D. (2023). Attitudinal effects of data visualizations and illustrations in data stories. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TVCG.2023.3248319>
- Gershon, N., Eick, S. G., & Card, S. (1998). Information visualization. *interactions*, 5(2), 9–15.
- Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Ramaprasad, J., & De Beer, A. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Worlds of journalism: Journalistic cultures around the globe*. Columbia University Press.
- Hanne, M. (2022). How We Escape Capture by the “War” Metaphor for Covid-19. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 37(2), 88–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2021.1935261>
- Hanusch, F. (2010). *Representing death in the news: Journalism, media and mortality*. Springer.
- Huff, D. (1957). *How to lie with statistics*. New York: W.W Norton and Company.
- Hullman, J., & Diakopoulos, N. (2011, December 12). Visualization Rhetoric: Framing Effects in Narrative Visualization. IEEE.
- Janko, M. (2021) 'Milion nakažených v ČR: Podívejte se, jak se covid šířil, jak přibývalo úmrtí' [In English: One million infected in the Czech Republic: See how covid spread, how deaths increased], 3 February. Available at: <https://www.denik.cz/cesi-v-cislech/milion-nakazenych-k-prekroceni-milniku-stacil-cesku-mene-nez-rok-20210203.html> (Accessed 3 7 2023).
- Kennedy, H., & Hill, R. L. (2018). The Feeling of Numbers: Emotions in Everyday Engagements with Data and Their Visualisation. *Sociology*, 52(4), 830–848. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038516674675>
- Kildall Rysgaard, K. (2021) 'Corona kom, men i knap et år har Danmark ikke haft overdødelighed. Det ændrer sig' [In English: 'Corona came, but for almost a year Denmark has not had overdødelighed. It is changing], 6 January. Available at: <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/corona-kom-men-i-knap-et-aar-har-danmark-ikke-haft-overdoedelighed-det-aendrer-sig> (Accessed 3 7 2023).
- Krawczyk, K., Chelkowski, T., Laydon, D. J., Mishra, S., Xifara, D., Flaxman, S., & Bhatt, S. (2021). Quantifying Online News Media Coverage of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Text Mining Study and Resource. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 23(6), e28253.
- Loosen, W., Reimer, J., & De Silva-Schmidt, F. (2020). Data-driven reporting: An on-going (r) evolution? An analysis of projects nominated for the Data Journalism Awards 2013–2016. *Journalism*, 21(9), 1246–1263.
- Lowrey, W., & Hou, J. (2021). All forest, no trees? Data journalism and the construction of abstract categories. *Journalism*, 22(1), 35–51.
- Markant, D., Rogha, M., Karduni, A., Wesslen, R., & Dou, W. (2023). When do data visualizations persuade? The impact of prior attitudes on learning about correlations from scatterplot visualizations. *Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581330>

- Moeller, S. D. (2002). *Compassion fatigue: How the media sell disease, famine, war and death*. Routledge.
- Morgan, T., Carey, M., Gott, M., Williams, L., Egli, V., & Anderson, N. (2021). More than mortality data: a news media analysis of COVID-19 deaths in Aotearoa, New Zealand. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 1-13.
- Morini, F. (2024). *Design+ Data Journalism: Shifting epistemologies, values, and practices* (Doctoral dissertation, Södertörns högskola).
- Morini, F., Dörk, M., & Appelpgren, E. (2023). Sensing what's new: considering ethics when using sensor data in journalistic practices. *Digital Journalism*, 11(3), 465-483.
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Schultz, A., Simge, A, Robertson, C. & Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis (2021): *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021*. Oxford: Reuters Institute.
- Nguyen, A. (2018). Exciting Times in the Shadow of the 'Post-Truth' Era: News, Numbers and Public Opinion in a Data-Driven World. *News, Numbers and Public Opinion in a Data-Driven World*. New York: Bloomsbury, 113-131.
- Panzeri, F., Di Paola, S., & Domaneschi, F. (2021). Does the COVID-19 war metaphor influence reasoning? *PLOS ONE*, 16(4), e0250651. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0250651>
- Pentzold, C., Fechner, D. J., & Zuber, C. (2021). "Flatten the Curve": data-driven projections and the journalistic brokering of knowledge during the COVID-19 crisis. *Digital Journalism*, 9(9), 1367-1390.
- Quandt, T., & Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2021). The coronavirus pandemic as a critical moment for digital journalism: Introduction to special issue: Covering Covid-19: The coronavirus pandemic as a critical moment for digital journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 9(9), 1199-1207.
- Romano, A., Sotis, C., Dominioni, G., & Guidi, S. (2020). The scale of COVID-19 graphs affects understanding, attitudes, and policy preferences. *Health economics*, 29(11), 1482-1494.
- Selbo Torset, N. & Gausen S. (2021) 'Flere land setter nå dystre rekorder i antall døde av korona. Her er det flest dødsfall nå.' [In English: Several countries are now setting grim records in the number of deaths from corona. Here are the most deaths now], 9 January. Available at: <https://www.aftenposten.no/verden/i/weRLd5/flere-land-setter-naa-dystre-rekorder-i-antall-doede-av-korona-her-er-det-flest-doedsfall-naa> (Accessed 3 7 2023).
- Selman, L. E., Sowden, R., & Borgstrom, E. (2021). 'Saying goodbye' during the COVID-19 pandemic: A document analysis of online newspapers with implications for end of life care. *Palliative Medicine*, 02692163211017023.
- Sowden, R., Borgstrom, E., & Selman, L. E. (2021). 'It's like being in a war with an invisible enemy': A document analysis of bereavement due to COVID-19 in UK newspapers. *PLoS one*, 16(3), e0247904.
- Spratt, M. (2001). Science, journalism, and the construction of news: How print media framed the 1918 influenza pandemic. *American journalism*, 18(3), 61-79.
- Stalph, F. (2018). Classifying Data Journalism: A content analysis of daily data-driven stories. *Journalism practice*, 12(10), 1332-1350.

- Tewksbury, D., & Riles, J. M. (2018). Framing in an interactive news environment. In D'Angelo, P. (2018) *Doing News Framing Analysis II* (pp. 137-162). Routledge.
- Varma, S. (2020). A pandemic is not a war: COVID-19 urgent anthropological reflections. *Social anthropology*, 28(2), 376.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K., & Hanitzsch, T. (Eds.). (2009). *The handbook of journalism studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Weber, W. (2020). Exploring narrativity in data visualization in journalism. *Data visualization in society*, 295-311.
- Wodak, R. (2021). Crisis communication and crisis management during COVID-19. *Global Discourse*, 11(3), 329-353.
- Zamith, R. (2019). Transparency, interactivity, diversity, and information provenance in everyday data journalism. *Digital journalism*, 7(4), 470-489.
- Zhang, Y., Sun, Y., Padilla, L., Barua, S., Bertini, E., & Parker, A. G. (2021, May). Mapping the landscape of covid-19 crisis visualizations. In Proceedings of the 2021 *CHI conference on human factors in computing systems* (pp. 1-23).1999a.

ESTER APPELGREN

Associate Professor
Department of Media Technology
Södertörn University
Ester.appelgren@sh.se

FRANCESCA MORINI

Postdoctoral Researcher
Institute for Artistic Research
Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg
f.morini@filmuniversitaet.de

AMANDA MAYA

Journalism student
Federal University of Ouro Preto

No-panic pragmatism

Nordic journalism educators' preparedness to teach artificial intelligence (AI) in 2024

MAARIT JAAKKOLA

University of Gothenburg

JENNY WIIK

University of Gothenburg

Abstract

This article investigates the educational preparedness of Nordic academic journalism schools to teach artificial intelligence (AI) in 2024. More specifically, we examine journalism educators' initial ideas on AI at a time when AI had gained prominence in public, following the release of the first user-friendly applications of generative and conversational AI. Based on the concept of pedagogical domestication of new technologies and journalism schools' responsibility to critically adapt to industry development, we conducted a survey among journalism educators at major Nordic journalism education institutions (N=118, response rate 58%). We found that academic educators had mixed feelings about AI technologies. They expressed the need for AI to be incorporated primarily in the teaching of journalism ethics, as well as in fact-checking and information validation processes, but highlighted that the journalistic core values and understandings of the world needs to remain the same. With a mode of 'no-panic pragmatism', educators perceived AI as something that should be integrated into existing structures rather than anticipating a structural change in education. The study provides an initial documentation of the current state of journalism education and concludes with suggestions for further research and development of pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS

artificial intelligence (AI), journalism education, AI literacy, AI pedagogy, generative AI, pedagogical domestication, the Nordic countries

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a pervasive learning challenge, discussed in the educational contexts (e.g., Luckin et al., 2022; Jaakkola, 2024; 2025), both in the basic level of education (see e.g. Casal-Otero et al., 2023) and in higher education (e.g., Aoun, 2017). As a disruptive and general-purpose technology, AI is expected to bring about transformation in all sectors of society, which needs to be prepared for facing this rapid, transformative and volatile technological development (OECD, 2018). Global and national debates have revolved, above all, around the structural conditions of producing and using AI, such as the development and investments in AI, ethical frameworks, as well as the automatization processes of production processes, including newsrooms (Wiik & Jaakkola, 2024). Despite the insecurities that are involved, competence frameworks related to AI have started to emerge across cultural contexts (Cardon et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Southworth et al., 2023; Miao & Cukurova, 2024; Miao et al., 2024; OECD, 2025), based on the initial conceptualizations of AI literacy and other AI-related competencies (Long & Magerko, 2020; Ng et al., 2021; Yi, 2021), as well as empirical findings (Wenger et al., 2024; Gomez Diago, 2022).

Consequently, AI has also been addressed as a competence area in journalism and journalism education (Deuze & Beckett, 2022; Jaakkola, 2023; Wiik & Jaakkola, 2024). During the past decades, journalism education – which typically refers to the tertiary education of future practitioners within distinct study programmes of journalism at universities and university colleges (see Terzis, 2010; Deuze, 2000; 2006) – has in line with the technological environment faced several techno-educational phases of transformation, including the digitalization and the emergence of the internet, social media journalism and platformization, the rise (and death) of specific technologies such as mobile technologies, producing pedagogies of *mojo* journalism and mobile learning (see e.g. Walck et al., 2015), social journalism and related pedagogies (Kothari & Hickerson, 2016), drone journalism connected to experiential learning (Uskali & Gynnild, 2018), and data journalism with distinct skills and competences (Bhaskaran et al., 2024). Some calls for harnessing technological innovations, like the one for Flash journalism (McAdams, 2005), have become obsolete as the associated technologies have been discontinued. Meanwhile, certain ideas remain topics of ongoing debate, such as whether all journalists should acquire basic programming skills (Sørmo Strømme, 2023; Royal, 2017). While some concepts may fade away and attempts to systematically integrate these technologies into curricula may be abandoned, others may evolve and thrive, often under the banner of specialized

journalism fields. These include innovation journalism (Hewett, 2016; Machado & Texeira, 2016) or computational and algorithmic journalism (Lewis, 2017; Thurman et al., 2021), which can also serve as tools for teaching other forms of journalism, such as participatory or data journalism.

In 2024, the question is whether something called “AI journalism” will emerge in the future, and whether journalism schools should respond to the “AI spring” marked by the breakthrough of generative AI in 2023. Historically, journalism education has been expected to mirror the journalism industry, as students need to be prepared to integrate into the professional community. However, while adapting to changes and upholding professional standards (Deuze, 2001; Wiik, 2010), journalism education has also sought to avoid becoming too aligned with industry practices. As Deuze (2006) notes, journalism education has been seen as both a follower and a socializer, as well as an innovator and critic of the industry. Determining which of these roles should take precedence has not always been straightforward. Over the past decade, particularly in the U.S. with discussions around the “hospital model” of journalism education,¹ there has been an expectation for journalism schools to stay ahead of the industry, maintaining a critical and proactive stance (Adam, 2001; Mensing & Ryfe, 2013). In the Nordic countries, this critical distance is often associated with emphasizing the academic foundations of journalism programs (Jaakkola, 2019).

This article builds on the idea of journalism education as a responder to change, with journalism educators as key agents in this process. It examines the perspectives and experiences of Nordic journalism educators at the forefront of integrating new technologies into pedagogy. In our analysis, we focus on the findings from a survey conducted among educators at major Nordic journalism schools, marking a first attempt to document their relationship with emerging technologies. The Nordic countries are known as a region with a strong cultural integration, similar media systems and journalistic cultures, as well as a solid common foundation in journalism education, even if there are also small cross-country differences (see Hovden et al., 2016). Previous studies have examined Nordic journalism educators in terms of their values and views on journalism education (Hovden et al., 2018; Jaakkola & Uotila, 2022), as well as curriculum and instructional design (Jaakkola & Uotila, 2020; Jaakkola, 2019; 2018). However, the pedagogical relationship to various technologies has largely been studied within national contexts (cf. e.g., Splendore et al., 2016). Thus, exploring Nordic journalism educators’ initial perspectives on AI technologies provides a valuable addition to this body of knowledge.

Nordic journalism educators represent a distinct occupational group with a unique identity. First, they are part of a professional education system with strong ties to the journalism industry and its broader field. They are often described as “hackademics” – professionals with experience in journalism who have transitioned to academia. Second, journalism education is also an academic discipline, subject to the standards and requirements of higher education programs. University-based journalism educators frequently navigate between professional and academic traditions, balancing the divide between “practice” and “theory” (Jaakkola, 2019). Their orientation is critical in shaping the learning ecosystem formed by both formal educational institutions and informal practices.

Our theoretical framework relies on the concept of domestication. Domestication of media and technology has been explored in the context of everyday media use (Hartmann, 2023), but the pedagogical domestication of new technologies – referring here to the responsive integration of new technologies into journalism education – presents a unique challenge. It takes time for new ideas to be incorporated into curricula, instructional designs, classroom practices, and teaching cultures. The year 2023 marked a turning point in the discourse on AI, widely recognized by tech and innovation companies as “the year of AI” (Johnson, 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2023), and as “the year we started to panic about it” (AP, 2023). In a survey by Hussain and Wenger (2024) of U.S. journalism educators on the most influential technologies for the future of journalism education, AI ranked at the top, followed by virtual and augmented reality—both of which are closely interconnected with AI, practically, professionally and pedagogically. By 2024, journalism educators found themselves in a context where general awareness of AI had surged, sparking widespread public and professional discussions. However, resources and best practices for effectively integrating AI into journalism education were still scarce (see Jaakkola, 2023; Andreassen, 2020).

By exploring journalism educators’ perspectives and experiences with AI, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on how journalism education can critically respond to emerging technologies. In the following sections, we briefly examine the current place of AI within journalism education, before presenting survey findings. We conclude by discussing what these early results may suggest for the future direction of journalism education in the Nordic countries.

Background: AI in journalism education

By 2023, most established frameworks for understanding AI had emerged from formal education, particularly in the fields of computer and data sciences. Discussions about the role of AI in journalism, and especially within journalism education, were still in their early stages (for journalism, see Marconi, 2020; Thurman et al., 2021; Pihlajarinne & Alén-Savikko, 2022; Kumar Biswal & Kulkarni, 2024; Whittaker, 2019; Lemershtich Latar, 2018). Meanwhile, AI was being actively integrated into media and information literacy curricula of formal education systems, adopting a cross-disciplinary approaches (Kim et al., 2021; Pinski & Benlian, 2024). In the Nordics, AI became an official subject in Swedish upper secondary schools and vocational education programs starting in Fall 2024 (Swedish Agency for Education, 2024).

In early 2024, there was no unified consensus on how AI should be incorporated into journalism education or on its role in shaping pedagogical strategies. Discussions about automated journalism and AI-driven practices in the newsroom were only just beginning. Although AI is expected to play an increasing role in journalism education, the scope of its integration into curricula, teaching methods, and independent study practices remains uncertain. At this stage, we are witnessing the initial steps of what is anticipated to be a significant and ongoing development. As one educator noted in our data, “Everyone is talking about AI in university teaching and journalism, but no one really knows what to do.”

Despite growing interest, there are currently only about ten academic programs across the Nordic region explicitly focusing on AI, mostly in computer or data sciences (NMN, 2024). In journalism education, during the 2023–2024 academic year, only one course specifically mentioned AI in its title. The course “Artificial Intelligence” (5 ECTS), offered by the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, was part of the organizational communication curriculum and accessible to students from various disciplines. According to the syllabus, the course aimed to provide “theoretical and empirical knowledge about the adoption and consequences of artificial intelligence in organizations”. Additionally, a Nordic MOOC (massive open online course), “The Elements of AI”, was launched by the University of Helsinki in 2021, signalling a broader interest in making AI knowledge accessible.

As journalism programs typically undergo curriculum updates every four years, it is likely that AI-related content will be formally included in upcoming revisions. However, elements of AI are already being introduced informally and are part of the hidden curriculum, which often serves as a precursor to more structured

inclusion. In this context, the focus on preparedness – encompassing organizational, social, and individual aspects – becomes increasingly important as journalism educators navigate the complexities of integrating AI into their teaching practices.

AI literacy and preparedness

In educational settings, AI is generally approached as a set of skills, competencies, or literacies (Long & Magerko, 2020). Early discussions on AI literacy often focused narrowly on specific tools (e.g., equating AI with ChatGPT) or emphasized the importance of integrating AI into curricula (see e.g., Cai & Nishal, 2023; Irfan, 2023). However, Ioscote and colleagues (2024) noted in their literature review that AI's role in journalism education has received limited attention in academic research over the past decade. AI literacy in journalism education can be categorized into three distinct types (also summarized in Table 1):

1. **Professional AI literacy:** This involves skills and knowledge directly related to the use of AI in journalistic practice. It includes competencies such as data analysis, content generation, and the use of AI tools in reporting. Professional AI literacy also requires educators to effectively scaffold learning through appropriate pedagogies and didactics. According to Deuze and Beckett (2022), the core components are: knowledge of AI, the ability to discern when AI can be applied creatively (and when it should not be), and the skills to coach or guide others in implementing AI effectively.
2. **Academic AI literacy:** This focuses on the application of AI within academic work, such as research, thesis writing, and critical analysis. Here, AI is used as a tool for co-intelligence, supporting academic tasks while preserving the researcher's agency (Jaakkola, 2024). Academic AI literacy also emphasizes critical thinking and a cautious, reflective stance toward AI. Drawing on Deuze and Beckett's (2022) framework, it includes: understanding AI, recognizing when it can be used effectively, and having the ability to mentor others in leveraging AI for scholarly activities like research, writing, editing, and publishing.
3. **Integrative literacies:** This hybrid category combines elements of both professional and academic AI literacies. It encompasses the intersection where journalistic methods are blended with academic theories and practices. Integrative literacies emphasize the ability to apply AI tools in a way that supports both practical journalism skills and deeper academic inquiry, creating a cohesive learning experience that bridges practice and theory.

Role	Professional AI literacy	Integrative literacies	Academic AI literacy
Learner	AI skills for journalistic practice	Blended academic-journalistic use	AI skills for research and writing
Educator	Teaching AI tools in journalism	Hybrid pedagogical approaches	Teaching AI in academic contexts

Table 6: AI Literacy areas in journalism education.

In both professional and academic contexts, a key aspect of AI literacy is understanding the core nature of AI, recognizing when to use or bypass it, and thoughtfully integrating it into existing structures. Verma (2024, p. 150) highlights that implementing AI in journalism requires a balanced approach, leveraging its capabilities while maintaining journalistic integrity and ethical standards. Similarly, journalism educators must navigate this balance, shaping the concept of journalism they teach while upholding ethical principles in both pedagogy and academic practice.

The conditions of pedagogical domestication can be described as a state of preparedness or readiness (Holmström, 2022). At the organizational level, this preparedness is typically described as maturity with which the organization’s ability to conduct tasks related to the technology and the challenges posed by it are fulfilled (Sadiq et al., 2021). The condition that influences the preparedness of educators is the state of curriculum planning, which includes the selection of topics and identification of relevant fields for the study programmes (for the Nordic curricula, see Jaakkola, 2019).

Traditionally, journalism education has framed its learning goals in terms of competencies, which include knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to specific technologies (see e.g., Donsbach, 2014; Kim et al., 2021). However, the advent of AI has renewed interest in the concept of literacy, understood as a cultural practice linked to a particular technological environment (Street, 1987; Gee, 1987). From the educational perspective, there are three main areas of inquiry: (1) learners’ knowledge and perception of AI in their environment, (2) their emotional and cognitive engagement with AI, and (3) their ability to use AI tools independently, enhancing their understanding through trial and error. These areas are fundamental to developing both professional and academic AI literacies, as well as effective pedagogies for journalism education.

Research questions

In this blueprint study, we aim to explore the preparedness of journalism educators in Nordic countries to integrate AI into teaching practices, and their views on the relevance of AI for the future of journalism education. By examining educators' perceptions of professional, academic, and integrative AI literacies, the study seeks to provide an initial mapping of the current state of AI readiness in Nordic journalism education. More specifically, we address the following research questions:

1. How do journalism educators in Nordic countries perceive their preparedness to integrate AI into teaching practices?
2. What are their conceptions of AI's relevance to the future of journalism education?

We address the research questions by surveying the knowledge, perceived skills, relevance, attitudes, and values related to AI among educators at major journalism schools in the Nordic region. Our focus is primarily on professional AI literacy, which is central to the vocational training of journalists. However, we also recognize that academic literacies are an essential component of journalism programs, and there is significant overlap between the two. As the first study of its kind, this survey provides an initial attempt to document the current state of teaching in a rapidly evolving technological area with substantial transformative potential for the future.

Data and methodology

The empirical material is based on a web survey directed to employees involved in delivering journalism education at major academic journalism programs in Denmark (including Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden (N=26). These journalism schools are partners in the Nordic Cooperation Committee for Journalism Education (*Nordiska samarbetskommittén för journalistutbildning*), which has operated since the 1970s and currently includes 22 higher education institutions as members (NCCJE, 2024). Approximately half of these journalism schools (n=12) are also members of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA, 2024), an organization comprising 83 institutions across 34 countries. Membership in these networks indicates that these institutions adhere to professional and academic journalism training standards in their respective countries' official languages and contribute significantly to the education of journalists, thereby having a nationwide impact.

The questionnaire was distributed to employees at academic institutions who were expected to be involved in journalism education, including lecturers, lecturing researchers, and professors listed on the universities' websites as part of journalism programs. A total of 203 individuals with valid email addresses were contacted. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent on January 25–26, 2024. In the invitation letter, it was emphasized that while respondents were expected to be currently involved in journalism education, they were not required to have expertise in AI or consider themselves experts in the field; rather, the focus was on understanding journalism educators' general perspectives on AI. Respondents were given three weeks to complete the survey. After sending reminders on February 15, we received 118 responses by the deadline, resulting in a response rate of 58 percent. We consider this response rate sufficient to draw representative conclusions (see Dolsen & Machlis, 1991).

The questionnaire, which initially described the objective and intention of the study and asked the respondents to actively provide their informed consent for participation, consisted of three sections: the first section gathered information about the educator's profile and experience (Q1.1–1.10), the second focused on perceived uses of AI (Q2.1–2.5), and the third addressed attitudes and assessments regarding the future of education and technology (Q3.1–3.3). The questionnaire was provided in English, but respondents were allowed to answer open-ended questions in their native language. In designing the questionnaire, we strategically chose not to provide predefined definitions of AI or limit the discussion to specific types of AI or related literacies. This approach was intended to explore respondents' overall relationship with this broad technological category without excluding aspects that might be relevant in different countries, regions, or institutions. Instead, we encouraged respondents to elaborate on their thoughts in open-text fields included with each question.

The respondents were from Sweden (38%), Denmark (23%), Finland (21%), Norway (18%), and Iceland (1%). The majority (68%) were affiliated with universities or comparable academic institutions, while the remaining 32% came from universities of applied sciences (Finland) or university colleges (Denmark, Norway), which, although more practice-oriented, still pursue academic goals and emphasize student employability.

Slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) were male, with 1% choosing not to disclose their gender. This distribution indicates a slight overrepresentation of males, but it closely reflects the gender balance of those invited to participate in the study, where approximately 50% ($n=101$) were assumed to be male.

Among the respondents who disclosed their native-language job title (N=97), 72 (74%) held primarily teaching-focused positions (e.g., lecturers, senior lecturers, university instructors), while 24 (25%) were in research or administrative roles (e.g., professors, associate professors, docents, or chairs of study programs). The educators represented a wide range of specializations, including photo-journalism, news reporting, collaborative journalism, and television journalism. Despite their varied expertise, they shared a common goal of training aspiring journalists for the labour market, in line with the Nordic tradition of higher education (see Hovden et al., 2018). The respondents were generally experienced, with 44% having worked as journalism educators for 11–20 years, 20% for 6–10 years, 16% for 21–30 years, and 16% for 2–5 years.

Despite the small sample size (N=26), the study remains valid for several reasons. First, the respondents were drawn from major academic institutions in the Nordic region, many of which are members of respected networks like the Nordic Cooperation Committee for Journalism Education (NCCJE) and the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA). This ensures representation from key educators with significant influence in journalism education. The high response rate of 58% further strengthens the study's validity, as it reflects meaningful engagement from the target population (Dolsen & Machlis, 1991). Additionally, the diversity of respondents across countries and institution types captures a broad range of perspectives. Given the exploratory nature of this research, the focus on experienced educators provides valuable insights into the early stages of AI integration, offering a foundational understanding that can inform future, larger-scale studies.

Results

AI presence

A key aspect of AI awareness among respondents was their perception of AI's presence in the educational environment. In response to the question, "Have you been actively addressing AI as part of teaching journalism so far?" over half of the respondents (61 percent) said "yes," while a third (29 percent) said "no," and 10 percent were unsure. This indicates that a majority had consciously engaged with the topic in 2023 and could recall specific instances. Some respondents, however, expressed uncertainty about how to define and delineate AI, noting that it often appeared more as a component of broader discussions rather than as an independent topic. Respondents frequently mentioned using translation and transcription tools and reflecting upon prompts with large language models like

ChatGPT. Some reported designing exercises with tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, MidJourney, and ChatPDF, or offering theoretical lectures and workshops on AI in journalism. These activities aligned with professional AI literacy. Additionally, several respondents linked AI use to academic AI literacy, citing cases of plagiarism in academic theses where AI was implicated.

Overall, it was evident that most Nordic journalism educators had encountered AI in their daily teaching practices, indicating an integrative literacy requirement that encompasses both professional and academic skills. There was an ongoing, active exploration of AI, highlighted by the recurring question of whether to permit student use of AI tools.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the presence of AI in various aspects of their professional activities. As shown in Table 2, AI was most frequently noted in university pedagogy courses, scoring an average of 3.1 on a scale from 0 (“not at all”) to 5 (“a great deal”). AI was also perceived to play a role in the strategic initiatives of the university (average score of 2.4) and in the personal tasks of the educators (2.3). This suggests that AI integration is occurring both at the organizational (macro) level and at the individual (micro) level. Additionally, respondents indicated that AI was more prevalent in practical courses (2.0) compared to theoretical courses (1.8).

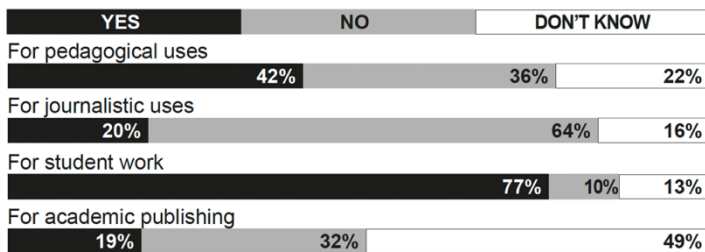
Area	Average
On theoretical courses	1.80
On practical courses	2.01
On university pedagogical courses	3.08
In the strategic work of your university	2.40
In the everyday teaching activities at your institution	1.46
In collaboration with society (third assignment)	1.09
In your personal work as a teacher	2.31

Question: To which extent, on a scale between 0 (=not at all) and 5 (a great deal), is AI currently present in the following areas at your department and university?

Table 7: Perceived presence of AI in different work areas of journalism educators.

The open-ended responses revealed that students were also actively exploring AI, with many respondents noting that the most ambitious students frequently used AI to complete tasks. However, the presence of AI was not reflected in course syllabi or other curriculum documents; instead, it relied on individual initiatives by students or teachers. As shown later in Figure 2, 25 percent of respondents strongly agreed that they had encountered dilemmas as educators due to AI, including issues such as suspicions of unfair use.

When asked whether their universities had established written guidelines for AI use (see Figure 1), a majority of respondents (77 percent) reported that formal guidelines existed for student work, such as writing academic essays and theses. Additionally, 42 percent indicated that their university had introduced pedagogical guidelines for teachers, likely related to managing student use of AI. In contrast, 64 percent stated that there were no guidelines for the use of AI in practical journalism courses, with only 20 percent reporting the opposite. Regarding academic publishing, 49 percent of respondents were unaware of any formal guidelines, suggesting that many were not directly involved in research leadership roles.



Question: Has your university presented written guidelines or rules regarding the uses of AI in the following areas?

Figure 6: The existence of written guidelines.

AI emerged as a relevant area for both professional and academic competencies in journalism education, but it has been more prominently emphasized as an academic issue at the institutional level. This focus is likely due to the widespread use of AI-driven plagiarism detection software, making plagiarism a practical concern for departments. Additionally, questions related to academic ethics, which apply across study programs and universities, have long been supported by national science organizations and initiatives. Public debates about AI in higher education have also primarily centred on these ethical and integrity-related issues.

AI on the curricula

Respondents expressed mixed feelings about their personal relationship with AI. When asked to rate their emotions towards AI on a scale from 0 (“not at all”) to 100 (“fully”), the results were varied. The highest average scores were for both “troubled” (51) and “inspired” (47), as shown in Table 3. Feelings of empowerment received a lower average score, while emotions like hesitance, uneasiness, and doubt were more prevalent. One respondent captured these tensions: “AI

stands in stark contrast to the foundations of journalism. Journalists should be witnesses who convey testimony to their readers, viewers, or listeners” (translated from Swedish by the authors).² Despite this, AI was also described as a “gamechanger” and “an inevitable tool embedded in our everyday lives.” Many journalism educators felt they had little influence over its development and often could not even discern when AI was being used. A recurring theme in the open responses was the concept of “delayed learning”, articulated by one respondent as follows:

I think journalism students should first learn the trade in a traditional way, that is, by doing things on their own. I would only introduce AI-enhanced journalism at the master’s level, once they already know the basics and have some work experience. At the moment, however, I wouldn’t feel very confident teaching these topics myself, as I don’t feel I have enough knowledge about the practices or needs in the field.

Respondents felt that the craft of journalism should be learned with minimal technological assistance, emphasizing that students must first master the core patterns of journalistic thinking and the foundational elements of journalistic culture. Only then should they begin to rely more on technological tools. In this context, AI was viewed as an issue largely outside the direct control of journalism educators, perceived instead as the responsibility of the industry. While the primary focus in journalism education remains on developing journalistic thinking, the expectation is that specific tools and technologies will be learned on the job.

	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Count
Troubled	50,64	5	100	73
Inspired	47,39	0	100	77
Puzzled	46,88	0	100	65
Sceptical	46,66	4	100	79
Amused	41,11	0	100	54
Frightened	40,04	0	100	71
Empowered	39,28	0	85	67
Disinterested	25,71	0	100	51

Question: How do you feel about AI on a scale between 0 ('not at all') and 100 ('fully')?

Table 8: Feelings among journalism educators regarding AI.

Respondents tended to differentiate between two distinct aspects of AI: first, AI as a set of production and productivity tools for use in the production process, and second, AI as a societal issue that needs to

be critically examined and reported on by journalists. Individual respondents placed varying emphasis on these two aspects. Some argued that the focus on AI as a production tool was less relevant, suggesting that journalism education should instead prioritize teaching future practitioners to critically analyse AI's impact on society. This view was based on the belief that decisions about production tools are mainly organizational and will be part of workplace learning. One respondent expressed scepticism about journalism schools' ability to lead in this area, given the pace of development driven by substantial industry investments.

In contrast, other respondents saw a more active role for journalism educators and students in experimenting with, testing, developing, and even co-designing AI tools for newsrooms. They argued that journalism schools should play a proactive role in critically assessing industry practices and exploring alternative approaches.

Another set of questions focused on how AI should be integrated into the curriculum and how educators view AI as a subject of learning. The most preferred area of knowledge for AI, according to the responses, was journalism ethics, with most respondents identifying it as the top priority. Following the ethical dimensions, respondents saw AI playing a supportive role in production tasks, such as illustrating stories, fact-checking and information validation, data visualization, as well as proofreading and editing. These production-related uses were generally seen as less critical compared to the emphasis on ethics.

Thus, AI was primarily seen as an ethical issue that needs to be emphasized, discussed, and critically examined by future journalists. At the same time, it was also viewed as a helpful tool in journalistic production. As one respondent noted, "AI can assist with creating video subtitles, planning social media content, making articles accessible by adding audio, simplifying text, or converting audio notes to text." The respondent also highlighted that AI could help "plan the content, tone, or point of view of an article to better attract the target audience," suggesting that these applications came to mind due to promising industry examples.

Indeed, AI has often been used to enhance journalistic production by augmenting reporting capacity, reducing production costs, and optimizing revenue (Keefe et al., 2021). However, unlike the media industry, journalism education does not need to focus on streamlining workflows or maximizing cost-efficiency. Instead, universities can provide more space for slower, reflective production processes, allowing for experimentation and deeper critical engagement.

AI as a competence challenge

Respondents were aware of the new challenges they face in conveying knowledge about AI and supporting the development of both journalistic and academic AI literacies among future journalists. As shown in Figure 2, around half (51 percent) of the respondents “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed that their knowledge was up to date for meeting the requirements of teaching, while the other half disagreed. This suggests a split among journalism educators regarding their confidence in effectively teaching AI concepts to students.

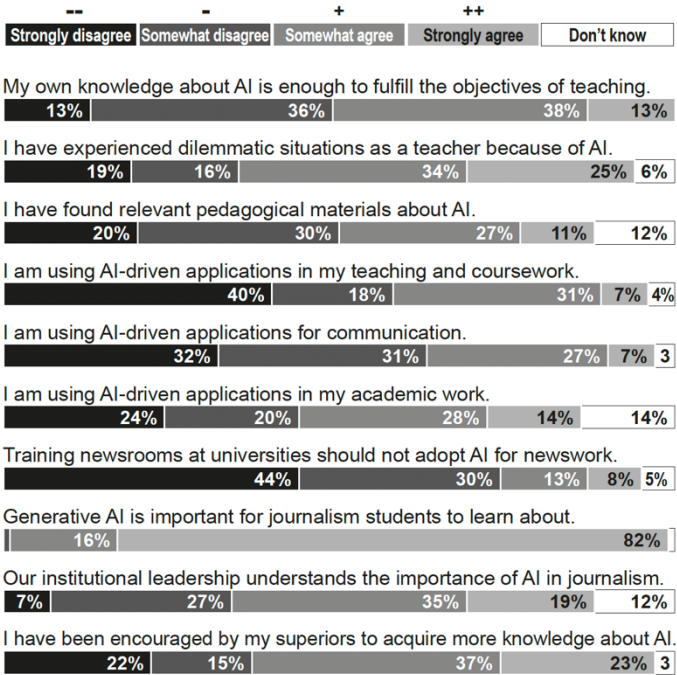


Figure 7: Journalism educators' responses to statements on AI.

Overall, 58 percent “strongly” or “somewhat” disagreed that they used AI-driven applications in their coursework (e.g., proofreading student work), 63 percent reported not using AI for communication tasks (e.g., creating presentations, lectures, or emails), and 44 percent did not use AI in their academic work, as shown in Figure 2. Only 7 percent “strongly” agreed with the statements “I am using AI-driven applications in my teaching and coursework” and “I am using AI-driven applications in my communication”. This indicates

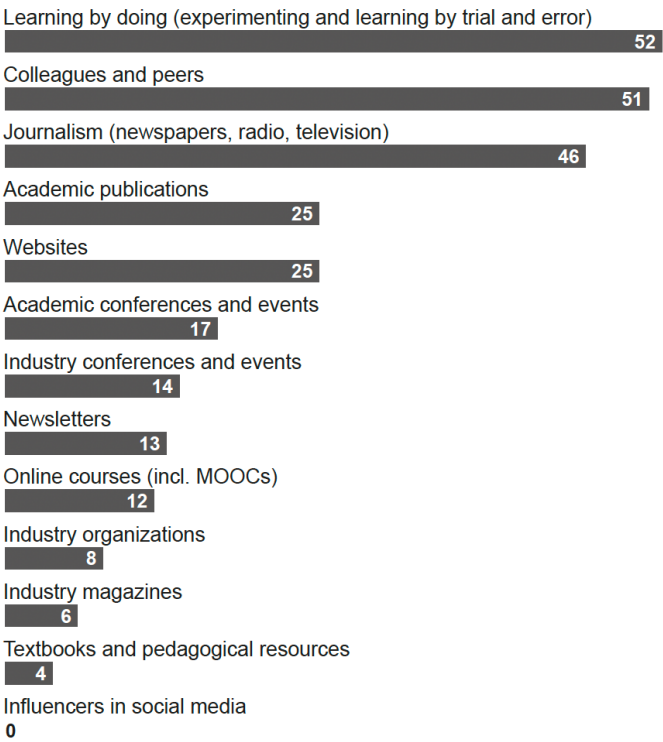
that AI tools were not widely adopted in the educators' personal teaching activities. Instead, AI appeared to be more relevant to the academic aspects of their roles than to their direct teaching responsibilities. Nevertheless, as indicated in Figure 2, a significant majority (82 percent) "strongly agreed" that generative AI would be an important area for journalism students to learn about.

Many respondents noted that staying up to date with the rapid developments in AI and its implications for journalism is time-consuming. Some even expressed a sense of frustration, as one respondent remarked: "It [AI] bores me to death and makes me long for retirement!" Acquiring new knowledge about AI often had to take place during personal time, with collegial and multi-stakeholder networks playing a more significant role than the academic institution itself, as one respondent described:

Denmark has a network for AI in Journalism, there's also a Nordic Network, and we've created a network specifically for journalism teachers in Denmark. All of these are essential, but they are also extremely time-consuming. It feels like we, as teachers, now have to re-skill ourselves in our free time just to keep up with the basics. It seems that our institutions are not prepared for this revolution—they treat it like just another text tool, like Word, without considering the implications for exams, copyright issues, creativity, and many other aspects that come with it.

Respondents reported significant differences in attitudes towards AI among colleagues within their departments and journalism schools. As shown in Figure 2, a majority (54 percent) "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed that the institutional leadership understands the importance of AI in journalism. However, one-third (34 percent) "strongly" or "somewhat" disagreed with this statement. This suggests considerable variation in the level of support provided by different departments and faculties.

As shown in Figure 3, self-study emerged as the primary source of information on AI and its development. About 54 percent (n=52) reported relying on hands-on learning, experimenting with different tools and systems, and discovering new features through trial and error. Learning from colleagues and peers was also common, with 53 percent (n=51) citing peer-to-peer information exchange as a key channel. This combination of experiential learning and word-of-mouth was seen as the most relevant approach. Both methods involve the domestication of technology, where individuals test specific tools or systems and apply discipline-specific knowledge to them.



Question: What are the three main sources for you to acquire information about AI and AI development?

Figure 8: The most important sources for journalism educators to learn about AI.

The third most important channel for acquiring information was journalism, cited by 48 percent of respondents. This underscores the influential role of public discourse in shaping perceptions of AI. However, journalistic coverage has faced criticism for being dominated by industry perspectives, specific brands, and particularly male influencers (Jaakkola, 2023; Deuze & Beckett, 2022). Although respondents did not favour commercial channels as primary information sources, if the critique of journalism holds true, industry- and influencer-driven agendas may still influence the content of journalistic reporting.

No-panic pragmatism

Overall, the qualitative responses were characterized by a pragmatic tone, often downplaying the significance of AI. This downplaying was evident in comments that minimized AI’s role as a new

component in the curriculum, as one respondent noted: “I think it [AI] will be an extremely tiny part of journalism education, 7.5 ECTS at most.” Dismissing the importance of a technology that has not yet had a major impact on education may also reflect a strategy to counteract the hype often associated with future-oriented topics. Many respondents viewed AI as “just another technology,” similar to attitudes seen during previous technological transformations. This “no-panic pragmatism” was likened to the response to the Web 2.0 revolution, as one respondent expressed:

I feel that, just as social media became an integral part of journalism, media, and society in the 2010s, AI will similarly be integrated into journalism and journalism education in the coming years. So, there’s no need to panic—we just need to incorporate AI into the workflow. Basic journalistic skills will still be essential.

The message of “just integrate it when it’s time” reflects the educators’ experience with previous major digital transformations, particularly the rise of social media and social journalism (e.g., Kothari & Hickerson, 2016). The core task of journalism education remains to teach the fundamental elements of journalistic ideology and practice. While technologies and methods of presentation evolve, the core principles largely stay the same.

Most journalism educators appear to support the inclusion of AI in the journalism curriculum, as indicated by the high number of responses favouring the integration of AI into the pedagogical and journalistic workflows of training newsrooms, and teaching students to adopt generative AI principles (see Figure 2). However, respondents also voiced concerns, with one noting that AI could potentially undermine students’ cognitive skills and efforts:

[S]tudents [are] using AI to cheat on tasks and exams, or at least to complete half the work without thinking for themselves. Written texts no longer reflect what students truly know about a subject; instead, they show how skilled they are at editing AI-generated drafts. This is a serious issue that goes far beyond grading. It challenges the very core of what it means to possess knowledge in an academic field and raises questions about the value and status of a text within an academic context.

The responses suggest a need for discussion about AI’s impact on authorship, like ongoing debates in academic literacy (Jaakkola, 2024). However, rather than advocating for restrictions, educators emphasized the importance of providing guidance and fostering reflection.

Discussion

The nuanced approach to AI literacy identified in this study underscores the importance of distinguishing between different types of skills and knowledge. Professional AI literacy focuses on practical competencies for newsroom applications, while academic AI literacy emphasizes critical thinking and ethical considerations. The findings indicate that educators are attempting to balance these literacies, integrating both practical tool-based skills and broader critical perspectives into the curriculum. However, the reliance on informal learning and self-study highlights significant gaps in institutional support, suggesting that educators are often left to navigate these changes independently. This ad-hoc approach points to the need for more structured resources and clearer frameworks to support effective AI integration.

Institutional readiness emerged as a major challenge, with many educators expressing frustration over limited support from their universities. The findings suggest a disconnect between the rapid development of AI technologies and the conservative pace of higher education institutions. By treating AI as “just another tool,” universities risk underestimating its broader implications for areas such as authorship, creativity, and academic integrity. This conservative response may hinder the potential for critical engagement and innovation within journalism education, limiting the ability of educators to fully prepare students for an AI-driven media landscape.

The significance of this study lies in its documentation of the early stages of AI integration into journalism education. It shows that while educators are willing to engage with AI, they do so cautiously, reflecting broader cultural and pedagogical norms of adaptation. This cautious approach may serve as a protective measure, allowing educators to critically assess the implications of AI without succumbing to the hype. However, it also highlights the need for a more proactive institutional strategy to enhance AI preparedness, including formal training, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the development of comprehensive AI literacy frameworks.

Conclusion

The study’s findings have several important implications for the future of journalism education. First, there is a clear need for institutions to take a more active role in supporting educators through formal training and the provision of clear guidelines. Structured resources and interdisciplinary collaboration—particularly with fields like computer science and data analytics—could help build a more

cohesive understanding of AI's potential and limitations, enabling educators to navigate its integration more confidently.

Second, the evolving nature of AI literacy must be addressed within the curriculum. This includes expanding the skill set beyond practical newsroom applications to include critical analysis and ethical considerations. Journalism programs should emphasize the importance of understanding not only how to use AI tools but also how to critically engage with their broader societal implications. By fostering a reflective approach to AI, journalism education can equip students with the skills needed to navigate an increasingly complex media landscape.

Finally, the findings suggest a need for future research that extends beyond the Nordic context, offering comparative insights into how different educational systems globally are responding to the rise of AI. Such studies could provide valuable lessons on best practices and highlight diverse approaches to integrating AI in journalism education. Additionally, longitudinal research could track the evolution of AI preparedness and the effectiveness of different strategies over time, shedding light on which methods prove most successful in fostering both practical proficiency and critical awareness among journalism students.

In conclusion, the integration of AI into Nordic journalism education reflects a careful negotiation between embracing technological innovation and preserving the core values of the field. While the cautious, incremental approach tempers the hype, it may also delay necessary adaptations, potentially hindering the development of future journalists who are both proficient in AI tools and capable of critical inquiry. By adopting a balanced approach that combines practical skills training with ethical reflection, journalism education can play a proactive role in shaping an AI-literate and critically aware generation of journalists. This balanced strategy will ensure that journalism continues to fulfil its democratic role, even in an era increasingly influenced by automated technologies.

The study's insights underscore the importance of preparing for an AI-driven media landscape while maintaining the foundational principles of journalism. As AI becomes more embedded in journalistic practices, the challenge for journalism education will be to integrate these technologies thoughtfully and critically, equipping students not only with the technical skills needed but also with the critical mindset to question and shape the future of journalism in an AI-influenced world.

NOTES

¹ The “hospital model” of journalism education refers to an approach where journalism schools aim to closely mimic a professional news-room environment, similar to how medical schools use teaching hospitals for hands-on training.

² Translations of quotes from Northern languages are indicated; otherwise, quotes appear in the original English.

REFERENCES

- Adam, G. S. (2001). The education of journalists. *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, 2(3), 315–339.
- Andreassen, A. M. (2020). *Sådan forandrer automatisering medierne: En guide til dig i mediebranchen*. Syddansk Universitetsforlag.
- Aoun, J. E. (2017). *Robot-proof: Higher education in the age of artificial intelligence*. MIT Press.
- AP (2023, December 27). 2023 was the year AI went mainstream. It was also the year we started to panic about it. *Euro News*.
<https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/12/27/2023-was-the-year-ai-went-mainstream-it-was-also-the-year-we-started-to-panic-about-it>
- Bhaskaran, H., Kashyap, G., & Mishra, H. (2024). Teaching data journalism: A systematic review. *Journalism Practice*, 18(3), 722–743. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2044888>
- Cai, M., & Nishal, S. (2023). *Motivations, goals, and pathways for AI literacy for journalism*. A paper presented at the CHI ‘23 workshop on AI literacy: Finding common threads between education, design, policy, and explainability on April 23–28, 2023, in Hamburg, Germany.
- Cardon, P., Fleischmann, C., Aritz, J., Logemann, M., & Heidewald, J. (2023). The challenges and opportunities of AI-assisted writing: Developing AI literacy for the AI age. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 86(3), 257–295.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/23294906231176517>
- Casal-Otero, L., Catala, A., Fernández-Morante, C. et al. (2023). AI literacy in K-12: A systematic literature review. *IJ STEM Ed* 10, 29 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-023-00418-7>
- Deuze, M. (2000). Redirecting education: Considering theory and changes in contemporary journalism. *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, 21(1), 137–152.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2000.9665859>
- Deuze, M. (2001). Educating ‘new’ journalists: Challenges to the curriculum. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 56(1), 4–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580105600102>

- Deuze, M. (2006). Global journalism education: A conceptual approach. *Journalism Studies*, 7(1), 19–34.
- Deuze, M., & Beckett, C. (2022). Imagination, algorithms and news: Developing AI literacy for journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 10(10), 1913–1918. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2119152>
- Dolsen, D. E., & Machlis, G. E. (1991). Response rates and mail recreation survey results: How much is enough? *Journal of Leisure Research*, 23(3), 272–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.1991.11969858>
- Donsbach, W. (2014). Journalism as the new knowledge profession and consequences for journalism education. *Journalism*, 15(6), 661–677. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913491347>
- EJTA, European Journalism Training Association (2024). *List of EJTA members*. <https://ejta.eu/index.php/membership/list-of-ejta-members/>
- Future of Life (2023, April 12). *Policymaking in the pause: What can policymakers do now to combat risks from advanced AI systems?* https://futureoflife.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FLI_Policymaking_In_The_Pause.pdf
- Gee, J. P. (1987) What is literacy? *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 2(1). <https://commons.und.edu/tl-journal/vol2/iss1/2>
- Gomez Diago, G. (2022). Perspectives to address artificial intelligence in journalism teaching: A review of research and teaching experiences. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 80, 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2022-1542>
- Hartmann, M. (Ed.) (2023). *The Routledge handbook of media and technology domestication*. Routledge.
- Hewett, J. (2016). Learning to teach data journalism: Innovation, influence and constraints. *Journalism*, 17(1), 119–137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884915612681>
- Holmström, J. (2022). From AI to digital transformation: The AI readiness framework. *Business Horizons*, 65(3), 329–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2021.03.006>
- Hossain, M. S., & Wenger, D. (2024). Has journalism education kept up with digital transformation? *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 79(2), 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10776958231224038>
- Hovden, J. F., Nygren, G., & Zilliacus-Tikkanen, H. (Eds.) (2016). *Becoming a journalist: Journalism education in the Nordic countries*. Nordicom.
- Ioscote, F., Gonçalves, A., & Quadros, C. (2024). Artificial intelligence in journalism: A ten-year retrospective of scientific articles (2014–2023). *Journalism and Media*, 5(3), 873–891. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia5030056>

- Irfan, M. (2023). Enhancing critical thinking and journalism skills through artificial intelligence literacy: A case study of journalism students in Tajik National University, Tajikistan. *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences*, 5(1), 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.34961/researchrepository-ul.22337980.v1>
- Jaakkola, M. (2018). S(t)imulating journalism in the classroom: A structured comparison of the design of pedagogical newsrooms in Nordic academic journalism training. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 73(2), 182–199.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695817709180>
- Jaakkola, M. (2019). The heterogeneity of the Nordic journalism education: The “academic” and the “professional” in the Bachelor’s curricula. *The Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies*, 8(1), 3–24. https://doi.org/10.1386/ajms.8.1.3_1
- Jaakkola, M. (Ed.) (2023). *Reporting on artificial intelligence: A handbook for journalism educators*. UNESCO.
- Jaakkola, M. (2024). *Academic AI literacy: Artificial intelligence in scholarly writing, editing, and publishing*. NordMedia Network Online Educational Resources. Nordicom.
- Jaakkola, M. (2025). Operationalizing positive-constructive pedagogy to artificial intelligence: The 3E model for scaffolding AI technology adoption. *Frontiers in Communication*, 10.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1610111>
- Jaakkola, M., & Uotila, P. (2020). The literary construction of journalism education: A review of the course literature in the Nordic academic Bachelor’s programmes. *Journalism Practice*, 14(1), 84–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2019.1596037>
- Jaakkola, M., & Uotila, P. (2022). Exploring the normative foundation of journalism education: Nordic journalism educators’ conceptions of future journalism and professional qualifications. *Journalism and Media*, 3(3), 436–452.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia3030031>
- Johnson, E. (2024, April 2). 2023 was the year of AI hype – 2024 is the year of AI practicality. *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2024/04/02/2023-was-the-year-of-ai-hype-2024-is-the-year-of-ai-practicality/>
- Keefe, J., Zhou, Y., & Merrill, J. B. (2021, May 21). The present and potential of AI in journalism. *Knight Foundation*.
<https://knightfoundation.org/articles/the-present-and-potential-of-ai-in-journalism/>
- Kim, S., Jang, Y., Kim, W., Choi, S., Jung, H., Kim, S., & Kim, H. (2021). Why and what to teach: AI curriculum for elementary school. Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence, 35(17), 15569–15576. <https://doi.org/10.1609/aaai.v35i17.17833>

- Kothari, A., & Hickerson, A. (2016). Social media use in journalism education: Faculty and student expectations. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 71(4), 413-424.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695815622112>
- Kumar Biswal, S., & Kulkarni, A. J. (2024). *Exploring the intersection of artificial intelligence and journalism: The emergence of a new journalistic paradigm*. Routledge.
- Lemershtrich Latar, N. (2018). *Robot journalism: Can human journalism survive?* World Scientific.
- Lewis, S. C. (Ed.) (2017). *Journalism in an era of big data: Cases, concepts, and critiques*. Routledge.
- Long, D., & Magerko, B. (2020). What is AI literacy? Competencies and design considerations. In: *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '20)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376727>
- Luckin, R., George, K., & Cukurova, M. (2022). *AI for school teachers*. CRC Press.
- Machado, E., & Texeira, T. (2016). Innovation as an essential part of journalism education in contemporary societies. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 5(1), 103-116.
https://doi.org/10.1386/ajms.5.1.103_1
- Marconi, F. (2020). *Newsmakers: Artificial intelligence and the future of journalism*. Columbia University Press.
- McAdams, M. (2005). *Flash journalism: How to create multimedia news packages*. Routledge.
- McCarthy, J., Minsky, M. M., Rochester, N., & Shannon, C. E. (1955, August 31). *A proposal for the Dartmouth summer research project on artificial intelligence*.
<https://raysolomonoff.com/dartmouth/boxa/dart564props.pdf>
- McKinsey & Company (2023, August 1). *The state of AI in 2023: Generative AI's breakout year*.
<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/the-state-of-ai-in-2023-generative-ais-breakout-year>
- Mensing, D., & Ryfe, D. M. (2013). Blueprint for change: From the teaching hospital to the entrepreneurial model of journalism education. A paper presented at ISOJ: The International Symposium on Online Journalism, 2, 144-161.
https://www.academia.edu/3412374/Blueprint_for_Change_From_the_Teaching_Hospital_to_the_Entrepreneurial_Model_of_Journalism_Education
- Miao, F., & Cukurova, M. (2024). *AI competency framework for teachers*. UNESCO.
- Miao, F., Shiohira, K., & Lao, N. (2024). *AI competency framework for students*. UNESCO.

- Ng, D. T. K., Leung, J. K. L., Chu, K. W. S., & Qiao, M. S. (2021). AI literacy: Definition, teaching, evaluation and ethical issues. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 58(1), 504–509. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.487>
- NCCJE, Nordic Cooperation Committee for Journalism Education (2024). *In English*. <https://nordiskjournalistutbildning.org/in-english>
- NMN, NordMedia Network (2024). *Educational programmes: Artificial intelligence*. <https://nordmedianetwork.org/resources/degree-programmes/?search=artificial+intelligence>
- OECD (2018). *The future of education and skills: Education 2030*. [https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20\(05.04.2018\).pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf)
- OECD (2025). *Empowering learners for the age of AI: An AI literacy framework for primary and secondary education*. Review draft, May 2025. https://ailiteracyframework.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AILitFramework_ReviewDraft.pdf
- Pihlajarinne, T., & Alén-Savikko, A. (Eds.) (2022). *Artificial intelligence and the media: Reconsidering rights and responsibilities*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Pinski, M., & Benlian, A. (2024). AI literacy for users – A comprehensive review and future research directions of learning methods, components, and effects. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2(1), 1000062. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbah.2024.100062>
- Royal, C. (2017). Coding the curriculum: Journalism education in the digital age. In: Goodman, R. S. & Steyn, E. (Eds.) *Global journalism education in the 21st century: Challenges and innovations*. Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, 383–408.
- Sadiq, R. B., Safie, N., Abd Rahman, A. H., & Goudarzi, S. (2021). Artificial intelligence maturity model: A systematic literature review. *Peer J Computer Science*, 7(e661). <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.661>
- Southworth, J., Migliaccio, K., Glover, J., Glover, J. Reed, D., McCarty, C., Brendemuhl, J., & Thomas, A. (2023). Developing a model for AI Across the curriculum: Transforming the higher education landscape via innovation in AI literacy. *Computers and Education*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2023.100127>
- Splendore, S., Di Salvo, P., Eberwein, T., Groenhardt, H., Kus, M., & Porlezza, C. (2016). Educational strategies in data journalism: A comparative study of six European countries. *Journalism*, 17(1), 138–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884915612683>
- Sørmo Strømme, E. (2023). Should I say or should I code? Of collaboration and do-it-yourself programming in investigative journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 12(7), 965–984. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2261030>

- Street, B. V. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Swedish Agency for Education (2024, March 8). *Artificiell intelligens – nytt ämne i gymnasieskolan och komvux*.
<https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/forandringar-inom-skolomradet/artificiell-intelligens---nytt-amne-i-gymnasieskolan-och-komvux>
- Terzis, G. (Ed.) (2010). *European journalism education*. Intellect.
- Thurman, N., Lewis, S. C., & Kunert, J. (Eds.) (2021). *Algorithms, automation, and news*. Routledge.
- University of Jyväskylä (2024). *VIES2000 Artificial Intelligence (5 ECTS)*.
<https://sisu.jyu.fi/student/courseunit/otm-69c90d8e-e67c-452b-be22-5fd6cc2d9cba/brochure>
- Uskali, T., & Gynnild, A. (2018). Drones, teaching and the value of the explorative player-coach. In: Gynnild, A., & Uskali, T. (Eds.) *Responsible drone journalism*, Routledge, 58–70.
- Verma, D. (2024). Impact of artificial intelligence on journalism: A comprehensive review of AI in journalism. *Journal of Communication and Management*, 3(2), 150–156.
<https://doi.org/10.58966/JCM20243212>
- Walck, P. E., Cruikshank, S. A., & Kalyango, Y. (2015). Mobile learning: Rethinking the future of journalism practice and pedagogy. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 70(3), 235–250.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695815600478>
- Wenger, D., Hossain, M. S., & Senseman, J. R. (2024). AI and the impact on journalism education. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 80(1). First published online October 31, 2024.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10776958241296497>
- Whittaker, J. (2019). *Tech giants, artificial intelligence, and the future of journalism*. Routledge.
- Wiik, J. (2010). *Journalism in Transition. The Professional Identity of Swedish Journalists*, JMG Book Series no. 64, Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg.
- Wiik, J., & Jaakkola, M. (2024). *AI-journalistik: Artificiell intelligens och algoritmer på redaktionen*. Studentlitteratur.
- Yi, Y. (2021). Establishing the concept of AI literacy. *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics*, 12(2), 353–368.
<https://doi.org/10.21860/j.12.2.8>

MAARIT JAAKKOLA

Associate Professor
Department of Journalism, Media and Communication
University of Gothenburg
maarit.jaakkola@gu.se

JENNY WIIK

Associate Professor
Department of Journalism, Media and Communication
University of Gothenburg
jenny.wiik@gu.se

The (far-) right kind of feeling

How representations of emotional experiences perform discourses in Swedish far-right alternative news media

MAGNUS DANIELSON

Stockholm University

Abstract

The growth of far-right alternative news media and its influence on political debate highlights the need to understand the role of emotions in this type of media. Emotions are central to how ideologically motivated news gains persuasive power, yet few studies have shown in detail how descriptions of emotions help shape patterns of discourse. This article addresses that gap by analysing how emotions, as represented in language, perform discourse in Swedish far-right alternative news texts. The analysis shows how these texts construct a contrast: emotions tied to the far-right are legitimized and valued, while emotions tied to the left-wing are delegitimized and devalued. In doing so, the texts define which issues deserve emotional attention, shape how readers are expected to feel about them, and portray those who respond differently as ignorant or weak of character.

KEYWORDS

alternative media, right-wing populism, emotions, discourse, fear, polarization

Introduction

Research shows that far-right alternative news is gaining importance in Western politics (Haller, et al., 2019), and that its influence on the public agenda is increasing (Ihlebak & Nygaard, 2021). Emotionality is identified as one of its main features (Rae, 2021; Freistein, et al., 2022; Ruzza & Fella, 2011; Hameleers, et al., 2017), and as a factor contributing to an increased polarization in society (Lu & Lee, 2019; Garrett, et al., 2014; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Revers, 2023; Törnberg, 2022). Those developments motivate sustained scholarly efforts to “furthering the empirical study of emotions in political and social life to understand the use of emotions in contentious politics” (Fullerton, et al., 2023, p. 295; Ihlebak, et al., 2022).

Drawing on concepts identifying emotional expressions as discursive elements (Reddy, 2001; van Kleef, et al., 2015; Bericat, 2016; Barbalet, 2002), and news media as a key vehicle for the circulation of emotionality in society (Wahl-Jørgensen, 2019; Beckett & Deuze, 2016; Lünenborg & Medeiros, 2022), this article contributes to that field of inquiry by answering the following research question:

How do emotional experiences represented in Swedish far-right alternative news texts construct ideology and perform discourse?

Populism, far-right alternative news, and emotionality

Studying “alternative right-wing media of the populist brand” (Holt, 2020b, p. 202) calls for some theoretical clarifications as to the meaning of the concepts of populism and alternative media, as well as their relation to emotionality. Populism as a concept is described as “elusive”, (Demertzis, 2019, p. 31) and “contested” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 2). Canovan (1999) characterizes the concept as “notoriously vague” and states “there is a good deal of agreement on which political phenomena fall into this category but less clarity about what it is that makes them populist” (p. 3).

Far-right populism has been conceptualized in terms of actors, organizations, consequences, and normative implications (Demertzis, 2019, p. 31). It has been defined as an ideology, a symptom, a mentality, a political movement, political discourse, and a political style (Mudde, 2004; Moffit, 2016; Tarchi, 2016; Wodak, 2015). Researchers also define populism in a Western context as a communication phenomenon (de Vreese et al., 2018) and claim that focusing particularly on the online aspects of the phenomenon is a key to understanding its role in contemporary politics.

Right-wing populism

In this study *far-right* populism is understood as a combination of the “ideational” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 5, Müller, 2020) phenomena composing far-right political ideology (Canovan, 1999, p. 3), and the rhetoric/political style used to “articulate [that] ideology discursively” (Mannuci, 2017, p. 482) through “repertoires of embodied, symbolically mediated performance” (Moffit, 2016, p. 28). The term is applied to groups, politicians, and political parties who propagate a critical stance towards immigration, Islam, globalization, feminism, and environmentalism, and for whom nativism and protectionism are accentuated ideological positions. The main rhetoric style consists of an expressed ambition to champion the needs and aspirations of a pure and homogenous *common people whose interests are purportedly circumvented by a corrupt and devious elite whose characteristics need to be exposed and unmasked* (Mudde, 2004; Müller, 2022; Wodak, 2015, p. 7).

Far-right populist rhetoric has been analysed as a form of particularly emotional communication, the main modes being fear of immigration, Islam, and multiculturalism, derogatory out-group representations, nostalgic romantic folkloric affection for the nation, disdain for political and cultural elites, and suspicion towards environmentalist politics (Demertzis, 2019; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017; Wodak, 2015). Tarchi (2016) states that populist thinking is “based more on emotional inputs than on rational consideration” (p. 104), and he lists “the use of a popular language, characterised by vulgarity, extreme simplifications, absence of doubts, and exaggerations; paternalistic attitudes; the frequent recourse to proverbs, stereotypes, clichés and other expressions of ‘popular wisdom’”, as rhetorical populist strategies employed to connect emotionally with target audiences (p. 102). Demertzis (2019) shows how such rhetoric has an emotionally polarizing effect as it develops feelings of “antipathy”, “alienation”, and “frustration” on behalf of common people in relation to those elites (p. 33). The rhetorical identification of legacy media in general, and public service media in particular, as integrated parts of such elites is a main factor in understanding the reason for the establishment, development, and proliferation of far-right alternative media.

Far-right alternative media and the Swedish case

The expression *Alternative Media* has historically been used to characterize media that, from various ideological, social, or cultural positions, challenge the dominant or hegemonic media discourse (Waisbord, 2022; Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019 a; Guedes Baily, et al., 2007; Atton, 2002; Cushion, 2024). In recent years the term has been

applied to a growing number of online platforms supporting far-right populist ideology in a European context (Holt, 2018; Ihlebæk & Nygaard, 2021; Frischlich, et al., 2020) by harsh, and sometimes vulgar, criticism of immigration, Islam, globalization, and gender politics.

Holt et. al (2019) defines alternative right-wing media as a “proclaimed and/or (self-) perceived corrective, opposing the overall tendency of public discourse emanating from what is perceived as the dominant mainstream media” (p. 862). Holt (2020b) describes it as “relational” or “reactive” in the sense that its reason for being is a strong notion that mainstream media is not representing issues, actors, and events fairly and accurately, and that it excludes certain perspectives, and fails to cater to important interests of the people (p. 202). Legacy news journalism is branded as “biased, elitist, leftist, politically correct, and distanced from the people” (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019b, p. 903).

In Hallin & Mancini’s (2004) classification of media systems, Sweden is classified as belonging to the Democratic Corporatist Model, which is characterized by high circulation rates, substantial journalistic autonomy, a developed professionalism, and a strong position of legacy media (p. 144). In comparison to the media in other Scandinavian countries, legacy media in Sweden has more critically covered the domestic populist party, the Sweden Democrats (Herkman & Jungar, 2021). According to Heft et. al. (2019) this may contribute to the strong position of alternative right-wing media in Sweden as their research shows that countries with a media ecology where far-right and right-wing populist ideological positions are well-represented, like Austria and Great Britain, have a less vibrant far-right alternative news media presence. In contrast, countries where legacy media adopt a “marginalization of right-wing views and positions in media and politics” (p. 20), like Sweden and Germany, alternative news becomes more prevalent and popular. Sweden is one of the countries in Europe where the demand for, and the reach and supply of, right-wing alternative media is the greatest considering population (Holt, 2020b). In 2019 around 10 % of Swedes read the news sites studied in this article (Ihlebæk & Nygaard, 2021).

Far-right communication and emotionality

Scholars claim that the success of far-right populist movements is in part explained by their efficient use of messages that cater to negative emotions rather than rational thought (Wirz, 2018; Betz & Oswald, 2022; Nguyen, et al., 2022), and far-right alternative media has been associated with emotionalization for ideological purposes (Demertzis, 2019; Freistein, et al., 2022; Rae, 2021).

Several studies seem to substantiate those assumptions. Hameleers et al. (2017) argue that “populist messages are characterized by assigning blame to elites in an emotionalized way” (p. 870). Wirz (2018) found that “populist appeals elicit stronger emotions than non-populist appeals and that these emotions mediate the persuasiveness of the appeals” (p. 1114). A study of Kaati et al. (2016) showed that Swedish far-right alternative news consistently features more negative emotion words than legacy journalism.

In a study based on interviews with far-right online commenters, Ihlebaek & Riborg Holter (2021) conclude that even though the informants consume a fair amount of both legacy and far-right alternative news, fear of political change, particularly related to immigration and Islam, influences them to endorse the emotional discourses and narratives in far-right alternative media, and to develop hostility towards, and disdain for, what they perceive as legacy media’s unsubstantiated claims of factual and emotional objectivity (p. 1209). The results of a visual analysis show that Finnish far-right alternative media use recontextualized images of people published elsewhere, to express negative emotions, such as fear, disgust, hate and distrust towards three groups in particular; ethnic minorities, young women who advocate multiculturalism, and elite politicians promoting generous immigration policies (Tuomola & Wahl-Jørgensen, 2022). Freistein et al. (2022) demonstrate how this type of media is “establishing alternative emotion norms that collectivize feelings and their expressions” in line with ideological goals, and how this is done through storytelling and visual narratives that employ a complex cocktail of indignation, humour, compassion, and *schadenfreude*, and not necessarily by simply promoting negative emotions (pp. 1, 2).

Represented emotional experiences as discourse

This study uses the term “discourse” as “language use as a form of social practice” (Fairclough, 2002, p. 63). Descriptions of emotional experience in news texts are analysed as such practices. Potter (2007) states that “discourse is constructive of (...) psychological characteristics and phenomenological experiences” and “descriptions of how social actions [such as representing emotional experience] build character and group affiliation when embedded in broader ideological contexts and practices”. He also explains that “discourse is situated rhetorically, such that any description can be inspected for how it counters relevant alternative descriptions” (Potter, 2007). Descriptions and contextualization of emotional experiences in media texts are not just readouts of internal emotional

states, they are also given discursive value as they position the feeling subjects politically, socially and culturally, and in the process, perform identity, ideology, and political antagonism (Döveling & Konijn, 2022; Farkas, 2023).

Emotional experiences may constitute elements of discourse in several ways. Firstly, they identify and provide understanding of values of communities and ideological groups (Rosenwein, 2002, p. 842; Smith & Mackie, 2018). Rosenwein & Cristiani (2018) describe how *emotional communities* develop systems of displaying emotional expressions and assessing them as valuable or abject; and structure them according to what is expected, encouraged, tolerated, deplored, and derided (p. 42). Those expressions emotionally communicate the ideological values of the group (Greer, 2022) and are used to construct and characterize the ideological “other” (Koschut, 2018, p. 334). Representations of such expressions perform what Döveling (2009) calls “the cohesive power of the media” (p. 315), which refers to how media environments constitute emotional rallying points pivotal to the creation and maintenance of emotional cultures significant for ideological groups. Eksner (2015) explains that textual displays of emotion enact specific “affective identities” and constitute “a site in which the relationship between emotions and social structure is enacted” (p. 193). A specific media environment may also constitute an *emotional refuge* (Reddy, 2001), where the influence of the prevalent emotional culture is relaxed.

Secondly, displays of emotionality are social and moral “learning cues” (Harris, 2018, p. 260) identifying acceptable emotions and teaching how to express emotional experiences in an acceptable way (Marinetti, et al., 2011), and thus grooming those exposed to fit into a particular social milieu (Freistein, et al., 2022; Reddy, 2001). Smith & Mackie (2018) show that “people’s perceptions of typical emotions in their group as a whole (...) influence their self-reported emotions, appraisals, and collective action tendencies”, and that members of an emotional group-culture tend to emotionally “converge toward the group profile” (p. 418).

Thirdly, expressed emotions have motivating properties (Harris, 2018, p. 259), as they accentuate the importance, urgency, and meaning attributed to specific events and societal issues, and could be used to “manipulate the internal states and behaviours of others, in service of social goals” (Harris, 2018, p. 257). Reddy (2001) categorizes emotional expressions as “a dynamic tool that can be seized by attention in the service of various high-level goals” (p. 105).

Fourthly, displayed emotionality performs morality, character, and personality. Displays of emotion are normative indications of appropriate, or inappropriate, conceptualizations of morality and justice (Rosenwein & Cristiani, 2018, p. 46; Turner & Stets, 2006).

Emotional responses and the way in which they are expressed indicate personality characteristics, social status, dominance, affiliativeness, likability, and since emotional expressions are culturally gender-coded, degrees of masculinity/femininity are associated with how emotions are expressed (Hess, 2018; Sabini, 1995, p. 273). Koschut (2018) discusses how verbally expressed emotional experiences perform “self-validation” (p. 334), when they either are presented as a reasonable and sound positive reaction to the moral excellence of self, or the unavoidable negative emotional response to the failure of adversaries.

Fifthly, emotional expressions make sense of social reality and forge an understanding of cognitive experience. Reddy (2001) suggests that expressions of emotional experience have an “exploratory and self-altering effect”, which means that expressing an emotion, or being exposed to an emotional expression, may define, and intensify that emotion, bringing it from the domain of diffuse circulation of thought material into an articulated and activated emotion to which focused attention is paid and importance is attributed (p. 100). Basic emotional needs are catered to by the exposure to emotional expressions with which one sympathize and identify – but there is also a more complex and elaborate multi-level intellectual and emotional pleasure to be gained by the impression of having gained deeper insight and understanding. Konjin, et al. (2022) describe how a processing of exposure to expressed emotions engenders potentially “rewarding experiences of insight, and reflexivity” (p. 34).

The theoretical understanding of how certain properties of emotional expressions construct social surfaces of emergence through which discourse appears, is pivotal when systematically researching the discursive, ideological, and cultural implications of the circulation of emotions in a particular ideologically confined media space.

Method and material

The method used is a qualitative content analysis conducted in the following sequence (1) identification of textually described emotional experiences, (2) a systematic coding and categorization of those expressions according to a theoretically determined set of properties (Bertrand & Hughes, 2018, p. 268; Schreier, 2012), and (3) a subsequent analysis of how they construct ideology and discourse. The unit of analysis is: *an emotional experience represented by language, either expressed/quoted, or attributed to a feeling subject*. Expressed or attributed emotions refer to how emotional experiences are represented in the texts. Either “I am so angry”

(expressed/quoted), or “He was very angry” (attributed).

The method follows three steps. The first step is to establish the experiences as emotional profiles by identifying, structuring, and coding them according to the following set of properties.

Feeling subject. Bericat states that “the feeling subject, constitutes the central reference upon which emotions turn” (Bericat, 2016, p. 493). The subject may be an individual or a group (Bednarek & Caple, 2012, p. 54).

Type of emotion. The expressions are labelled and coded according to the characterization, classification, and identification of emotions described in Plutchik’s (1980) “Wheel of Emotions”, where he proposes eight primary emotions that serve as the foundation for all others, and group them in polar opposites, joy/sadness, acceptance/disgust, fear/anger, surprise/anticipation. For a detailed presentation of the taxonomy see (Williams, et al., 2019, p. 622).

Object. An emotional experience is elicited by an object, or stimuli (Sabini, 1995).

Valence. The expressed emotion may be pleasant or unpleasant (Kagan, 2007).

Intensity. High, medium, or low. Example: Furious – high. Angry – medium. Irritated – low (Kagan, 2007).

Context. How is the expression contextualized? In what socio-cultural environment is the emotion expressed. What is the topic at hand? Is it commented on in an ironic sense? Is it legitimized or delegitimized? Does it have discursive or ideological implications? Is it performative (Reddy, 2001)?

Complexity. Simple, or complex. By complex I mean an expressed emotion that may be multi-faceted. If someone claims to be angry, but also scared, or disgusted, but also fascinated – the expression is coded as complex (Harris, 2018).

Motivated action/goal. Emotions disposes their subject towards certain actions (Frijda, et al., 1989), which means that emotional expressions suggest, implicitly or explicitly, some sort of action with some sort of goal, either the prolongation or amplification of a pleasant state, or a change of the state of affairs to alleviate or extinguish the negative emotion expressed (Bericat, 2016, p. 493).

In the second step, the profiles are entered into a descriptive matrix (See Table 1). Using the matrix, the profiles are then subjected to an

iterative sorting according to properties to get a holistic overview and to identify patterns and clusters (Averill, 2002; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Terry & Hayfield, 2021). Firstly, the profiles are sorted and analyzed according to *Subject*, secondly, according to *Emotion type*, thirdly, according to *Object*, etc.

Properties	Description	Example from the data [SN230716]
Subject	Who is expressing, or being attributed the emotional experience?	The Swedish minister of migration
Emotion	Type of emotion?	Disgust
Object	Towards what, or whom, is the emotion directed?	A critical stance towards Islam
Valence	Negative or positive?	Negative
Intensity	High, low, or medium?	High
Desired outcome	What action, outcome, or change of affairs, does the feeling subject desire?	An end to critical comments of Islam and Islamophobic actions
Complexity	Simple or complex?	Simple
Context	What contextual factors influence the meaning of the emotional experience?	The expression is presented and commented on in an ironic and exaggerated manner.

Table 9: Descriptive matrix of the properties making-up emotional profiles

The third phase is an analysis of how the emotional profiles construct discursive meaning at an aggregated level. To guide the analysis, the five performative characteristics of emotional expressions described in the literature review are employed to analyse how represented emotional experiences are: a) indicating the emotional and ideological composition and values of communities and ideological groups, (b) identifying and demonstrating distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate emotions, (c) motivating action, (d) constructing morality and character, and (e) stimulating the exploration and understanding of our own emotions and those of others. Attention is given to how the representations of emotional experience are woven into the discursive fabric of the texts, and how they “build character and group affiliation when embedded in broader ideological contexts and practices” (Potter, 2007). The profiles are thematized according to similarities and variation in discursive meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Material and sampling

The empirical material in this study consists of articles from the three largest Swedish far-right alternative online news sites (*Samhällsnytt*, *Fria Tider* and *Nyheter idag*) (Holt, 2020a, p. 58). A 2018 survey showed that they reach between 8–11 % of the Swedish online population, that their readers mainly are positioned on the far-right political scale, and that regular users have a low level of trust in legacy media (Levy, et. al, 2019). *Samhällsnytt* has close connections to the Swedish far-right populist party *Sweden Democrats* (Heft, et. al., 2019), and one of its expressed purposes is to study and map anti-democratic, left-wing extremist, and anti-nationalistic tendencies in society (Freje Simonsson, 2020). *Fria Tider* is also reckoned to be a part of the Swedish “radical right-wing populist digital ecology” [my translation] by the Swedish Media Counsel (Statens medieråd, 2013). It describes its own ideology as paleo-conservative (Holt, 2016, p. 129). *Nyheter Idag* is defined as libertarian-conservative but has no direct ties to a political party, it has some professional journalistic ambitions, and is a part of the Swedish self-regulatory system of the press and thus professes to abide to its ethical codes of conduct (Holt, 2016; Ihlebæk & Nygaard, 2021, pp. 275, 276). All three sites promote anti-immigration sentiments, disdain for the political and cultural elite, and critique of legacy media, “mainly through a descriptive news-genre style” (Ihlebæk & Nygaard, 2021, p. 271). Scholars have identified those three news outlets as the major mouth-pieces of the Swedish far-right populist movement (Holt, 2016; Ihlebæk & Nygaard, 2021, p. 274). The study treats the material as one single set of data, and does not analyse differences between the sites.

The articles were retrieved from the sites’ general news flows, and were sampled in chronological order as they appeared in the main news flows (the news flows produced a mixed stream of chronicles, editorials, and various types of news articles), until 25 articles containing emotional expressions from each media outlet and sampling period were sampled. The first sampling started on March 14, 2023 and the second sampling started on August 8, 2023. A total of 150 articles containing some 334 expressions or attributions of emotional experience were sampled. The sampling was purposive, “on a substantial, concrete level” (Flick, 2009, p. 126), with the purpose to sample articles that met readers directly as they accessed the sites in that particular temporal and local setting. When citing sampled articles, I use the abbreviations: *Samhällsnytt* (SN), *Fria Tider* (FT), and *Nyheter idag* (NiD), using the following format [NewssiteYear-MonthDay].

Quality criteria

Yardley's (2000) criteria of sensitivity to context, commitment, and rigor; transparency and coherence were employed as guiding principles when assessing the quality of the study. The context sensitivity criterion was addressed by sampling data from far-right alternative news organizations identified as representative and relevant by previous research (Ihlebaek & Nygaard, 2020), and by an analytical engagement with theoretical aspects close to the empirical material (Atton, 2001; Holt, 2020; Ihlebaek et. al., 2022; Waisbord, 2022). Rigor and transparency were pursued by following a standardized analytical process informed by established methods of qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Bryman, 2016, p. 387; Terry & Hayfield, 2021), and further endeavored by providing a description of the steps of the research method as clearly and detailed as possible, and making detailed references to its theoretical foundations (Bertrand & Hughes, 2018; Bryman, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Results and analysis

The representations of emotional experience are related to immigration, Islam, gender studies, left-wing political elite, climate activism, multi-culturalism, "political correctness", and mainstream media (Holt, 2020a; Figschou & Ihlebaek, 2019 a; Greven, 2016). The feeling subjects are not only far-right sympathizers. Representatives of political and cultural elites, are also given emotional agency. However, the experiences are strictly organized into a dichotomy between a constructed legitimacy of far-right feelings and a delegitimization of left-wing feelings. A dichotomy illustrated by contrasting a quote expressing far-right feelings: "What feels right is almost always also rationally right. (...) The most efficient way to get rid of parasites and criminals just happens to be what our gut-feeling tells us: Kick them out!" [FT230809], with this comment on left-wing emotionality. "Every single one of those reality-denying convictions have been so entrenched that they border religious obsession. Logic, empirical data from the surrounding world – yes, everything that would have made normal persons revise their standpoints, does not affect those people. On the contrary, emotions rule" [SN230401]. The results section will analyse how this dichotomy is discursively constructed and contextualized.

The delegitimization of left-wing emotions

Left-wing sympathizers are represented as irrational, overly sensitive and easily offended. The intensity of their emotional

expressions is generally high. The left is “raging”, or “hitting the ceiling” [NiD230529], filled with “great anger” [FT230606], or characterized as “the screaming left” (FT230602). High-pitched offended emotional reactions, and moping and sulking when not getting things their way, connote immaturity, and a sense of entitlement. Their emotional reactions are presented as preventing left-wing elite persons from rational thinking. When a former Swedish Centre Party leader was said to despise those claiming a correlation between immigration and crime, that emotional expression was branded as a dangerous, “total, almost absurd, refusal to accept reality” [NiD230511]. Recurringly, articles attribute, interpret, and impersonate emotions of political opponents in an apparently exaggerated way. One article claimed that liberals “dislike real democracy (...), calling it populism when the voice of the people is given political significance. Arrogantly they frown upon the man and woman on the street, lecturing them by explaining that they are too stupid to understand (...) how society should be governed” [SN230804].

Left-wing fear is delegitimized as cowardice. Support for measures against discrimination of Muslims is represented as an anxious subjection to Islam. Left-wing sympathizers are qualified as “Quislings”, or “traitors”, who “in fear of threats, violence, or terror, or as a result of a misguided postcolonial guilt complex, succumb to an invasion of a Medieval Islam, at the expense of the democracy and the civil rights our forefathers sacrificed their blood, sweat, and tears, to conquer and defend” [SN230709]. Expressed left-wing emotions are repeatedly placed within a discourse of weakness and feminization. Left-wing politicians (and sometimes right-wing politicians who express sympathy for any of the objects of discontent) are constructed as too weak and too fearful to take necessary measurements. One news article stated: “Our elected representatives are too much cowards to oppose a loud and screaming left-wing minority” [FT230510].

An editorial explained why women sympathize less with far-right politics than men by claiming that they are more prone to succumb to Islamic threats and to “believe in the establishment’s theories of a climate crisis” due to “a fundamental inner fear of events beyond their control, due to their physical weakness”. The article continued:

But that being said, there are also a lot of Swedish male wimps. Social media is filled with beta-males, snowflakes, and soy-boys who declare their wish to succumb to Muslim threats and violence [SN230722].

Attributed left-wing expressions of emotional experience are

branded as “hypocritical” in the sense of being deliberate misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and exaggerations, to fuel and justify strong emotional reactions against far-right political positions. Left-wing reactions to controversial statements made by far-right politicians are said to be “deliberately misunderstood (...) otherwise the Left had not been able to act indignant and upset to the point of demanding their resignation” [SN230806].

The valence of left-wing emotions is mostly negative, but there are also instances of constructed ironic positive valence. Left-wing representatives are quoted expressing joy over political failure, and satisfaction over disastrous effects of their own political actions. A representative of the workers’ union commenting on his role in an economic hospital reform, was said to be “‘extremely satisfied’ that patients now are given even worse care” [SN230405]. Expressed emotions of joy and contentment are represented as tokens of irresponsible behaviour, bad judgement, a stubborn overriding of public will, or a violation of common sense.

Legitimized far-right emotions

Far-right emotions are represented as rational, logical, and well-founded. Feeling subjects are given the status of concerned citizens, experts, and knowledgeable officials with first-hand experience, thus reinforcing the legitimacy and accuracy of the emotional experience. This status, together with a low to moderate intensity of the expressions, connote reflection and reliability and construct the subjects as initiated and level-headed. When commenting on how far-right representatives are labelled Islamophobes, one editor wrote that fear of Islam:

Is however not more unfounded than fearing Nazism or Communism, at least not for anyone who considers freedom and democracy as inalienable parts of a dignified life [SN230730].

Expressed emotional experiences are predominantly negative and situated along the whole spectrum of far-right objects of discontent, immigration being the dominant theme. In Swedish far-right alternative news media, responsible citizens are not outraged by heart-breaking deportations, but by criminal immigrants remaining in the country. They fear multiculturalism, Islam, and the feminisation of politics, but neither climate change, nor xenophobic violence. Those who feel differently are portrayed as misled, misinformed, or weak. Objects of indignation, or fear, are constructed as caused by a societal failure due to mismanagement of the ruling elite.

Some emotional expressions are constructed as encompassing an obviously wider range of objects than intended. A report on why many urban Swedes want to move to the countryside, had the headline “Swedes Abandon Immigrant-Infested Inner Cities.” [The article discussed an article in the Swedish legacy newspaper *Sydsvenskan* [230403] in which urban residents who had moved from inner-city areas discussed their decision to move. The far-right alternative news article argued that immigration is making life in inner-cities unbearable, and thus causing people to want to leave. However, in the in *Sydsvenskan* none of the feelings expressed, or the rationales provided, were linked to immigration [SN230404]. A report from a press conference where a Police Officer expressed her concern about how criminal gangs in problem areas are recruiting children, there was an interjection explaining how the purported tax-financed support of gangster rap by Swedish Public Service Media incites young immigrants to pursue a criminal career. The spokeswoman’s subsequent quotes thus appeared to indicate that the purported Swedish Public Service’s support of gangster rap was the main object of her concerns [SN230120].

Some subjects are constructed as formerly left-wing sympathizers having undergone self-altering “conversion experiences” (Reddy, 2001, p. 128), now expressing emotions reinforcing far-right ideology. A columnist working for the legacy tabloid *Expressen*, who previously declared measures against immigration “insane”, is quoted expressing sadness over a migration policy that “has been more of a failure than I wanted to realize” [NiD230627]. Former Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt is presented as someone who previously supported a generous immigration policy, but now “seems to finally be fed up with immigrants” [NiD230802].

The feelings of indignation and fear have both a predictive, present, and retrospective discursive value. Some are represented as a “predictive affective experience” (Harris, 2018, p. 259) in the sense of being expressed in anticipation of a negative development culminating in the future. Others express imminent fear of present conditions, and some are retrospect in the sense that they point to an undefined moment in the past when something could have been done to prevent the current situation. One article emphasizes that the party-leader of the Sweden Democrats identified Islam as “the greatest threat against Sweden since the Second World War” already 15 years ago and adds “and the threat has only increased since” [SN230730]. The emotions perform a discursive “self-validation” (Koschut, 2018, p. 334) by a “told you so!” and “if they only had listened”-rhetoric. Emotions, past, present, and predictive, are circumstantially validated by references to a tragic political development that could have been avoided if far-right politics had been

given more attention at an earlier stage. One editorial is looking forward to a future day when applied far-right politics “create a much better society than we have today”. It concludes: “However, that day feels long in coming, and it may be so far away, that when it finally comes, it will be too late, and Sweden will be beyond rescue” [SN230804].

Far-right	Left-wing
Rational	Irrational
Appropriate	Inappropriate
Balanced	Exaggerated
National interest	Ideological interest
Masculine	Feminine/Childish
Earnest	Hypocritical
Moderate intensity	High intensity
Reflected	Spontaneous
Important	Ridiculous

Table 10: Characteristics of representations of far-right and left-wing emotional experiences in Swedish far-right alternative news media

Conclusions

Representations of emotional experience in Swedish far-right alternative media perform discourse primarily by adding an emotional dimension to the construction of a qualitative division between “‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite’” symptomatic for far-right populist rhetoric (Mudde, 2004). They are drawn into that divide by being sorted, not only according to how they express differences in political affiliation, but more outstandingly along the lines of character-indicating opposites. The left-wing feeling subject is constructed as “a psychological type, with sensitivity, intolerance, sense of entitlement and immaturity being the dominant traits” (Alyeksyeyeva, 2017, p. 10) corroborating Törnberg’s (2022) characterization of contemporary ideological polarization.

Polarization on digital media is driven by conflict rather than isolation, affording a form of politics rooted in identity rather than opinion. Digital media intensify polarization not as echo chambers but as a sorting machine, fueling a runaway social process that destabilizes plural societies by drawing more and more issues into a single expanding social and cultural divide (Törnberg, 2022, p. 10).

Müller (2022) states that populists “assert that all other contenders

for office are illegitimate” based more on flaws in character than policy (p. 14). Swedish far-right alternative media elaborates on that assertion by declaring representatives of left-wing elites unfit to govern by portraying them as putting sentimentality, misguided emotions, and ideological affiliation ahead of rational thinking and national interests.

Scholars argue that emotionality in general, and fear in particular, are main elements of the political rhetoric of far-right populists (Tarchi, 2016; Wodak, 2015). Swedish far-right alternative media adopts the populist strategy to produce and reproduce fear, provide simple solutions by identifying scapegoats and enemies responsible for those fears, and thus legitimizing exclusion as a proposed policy (Wodak, 2015). But this study shows that it also discursively constructs a dichotomy of two types of fear. Left-wing fear is constructed as naïve, short-sighted, feminine, hysterical, and hypocritical, whereas rational and insightful thinking is attributed to the fear felt by far-right populists. Research indicates that populist messages cater to negative emotions instead of logical reasoning (Betz & Oswald, 2022; Wirz, 2018). The news sites studied use representations of emotional experiences in news reporting as a way to discursively counteract that notion.

The represented feelings create a political “identity of shared grievance” (Nguyen, et al., 2022) over an illusory society that was, and could have been, but has been ruined by immigration, leftist elites, public service media, etc., thus playing a role in the formation and reinforcement of a particular *emotional community* (Rosenwein, 2016; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016). Swedish far-right alternative media constructs an intersubjective communality where far-right minded audiences are given the opportunity to feel comfortable and reassured as emotionally likeminded and discreet, since the emotional experiences with which they sympathize are constructed as appropriate, and justified, conceptualizations of morality and justice (Rosenwein & Cristiani, 2018, p. 46). That performative process also turns the news platforms into an *emotional refuge* (Reddy, 2001), or *emotional incubator*, where a specific set of emotions, that may have a negative moral connotation in other parts of the political landscape, are nourished, and allowed to thrive and grow without being directly censored. The accumulated discursive value of the expressions soothes internal goal-conflicts between humanitarian concerns and a nationalistic outlook by articulating emotional acceptance of the non-humanitarian aspects of right-wing politics and identifying humanitarian reflections and empathic reactions as misguided and naïve. The representations thereby suggest and facilitate a *cognitive change* (Konijn, et al., 2022, p. 35), which means an emotional reinterpretation of events,

pictures, and utterances that demobilises potentially empathetic reactions towards the objects of far-right populist discontent. Converts who used to feel “wrongly”, but now feel the right way, are personalizing and idealizing that cognitive change.

Far-right alternative media audiences are offered emotional gratification as both reinforcement of ideology (we are right), emotional intersubjectivity (we are united), and experienced cognitive prowess (now I understand). The discursive value of constructions of emotional expressions offers potentially “rewarding experiences of insight, and reflexivity” (Konijn, et al., 2022, p. 34) as to the make-up of social reality, and thus generates “collective effervescence” (Collins, 2004) – a collectively generated emotional flow that is the result of a socially shared pleasure informed by values and ideology (Freistein, et al., 2022, p. 6).

Limits of the study and suggestion for further research

The method used does not capture all dimensions of emotionality in the texts examined. Represented emotional experiences are not the only elements contributing to discursive patterns of news texts. The temporal and local setting, as well as the limited sample, make for a low degree of generalizability and allows for only a limited scope of conclusions to be drawn concerning the role emotional expressions play in the construction of societal discourse. Further research into how a wider range of emotional elements concur in forging far-right populist discourse, as well as into how such elements are perceived and interpreted by audiences over a longer period of time, may therefore be of value when testing temporal generalizability. A comparison with constructions of emotional expressions in legacy media and radical left media would also put the findings of this study in a wider context.

REFERENCES

- Alyeksyeyeva, I. O. (2017). Defining snowflake in british post-brexit and us post-election public discourse. *Science and Education a New Dimension. Philology*, 39(143), 7-10.
- Atton, C. (2002). *Alternative media*. Sage.
- Averill, J. B. (2002). Matrix analysis as a complementary analytic strategy in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(6), 855-866. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973230201200611>
- Barbalet, J. (2002). Introduction: Why emotions are crucial. *The Sociological Review*, 50(2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2002.tb03588.x>

- Beckett, C., & Deuze, M. (2016). On the role of emotion in the future of journalism. *Social Media + Society*, Volume July-September, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116662395>
- Bednarek, M., & Caple, H. (2012). *News discourse*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Bericat, E. (2016). The sociology of emotions: Four decades of progress. *Current Sociology*, 64(3), 491-513. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392115588355>
- Bertrand, I., & Hughes, P. (2018). *Media research methods. Audiences, institutions, texts* (2nd ed.). Palgrave.
- Betz, H., & Oswald, M. (2022). Emotional mobilization: The affective underpinnings of right-wing populist party support. In M. Oswald (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of populism* (pp. 115-143). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis. a practical guide*. SAGE.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press
- Collins, R. (2004). *Interaction ritual chains*. Princetown University Press.
- Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy. *Political Studies*, 47 (1): 2-16.
- Cushion, S. (2024). *Beyond mainstream media. Alternative media and the future of journalism*. Routledge.
- de la Brosse, R., Haller, A., & Holt, K. (2019). The “other” alternatives: Political right-wing alternative media. *Journal of Alternative & Community Media*, 4(1), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1386/joacm_00039_2
- de Vreese, C. H., Esser, F., Aalberg, T., Reinemann, C., & Stanyer, J. (2018). Populism as an Expression of Political Communication Content and Style: A New Perspective. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(4), 423-438. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161218790035>
- Demertzis, N. (2011). Emotions in the media and the mediatization of traumas. In S. Papathanassopoulos (Ed.), *Media perspectives for the 21st century* (pp. 83-100). Routledge.
- Demertzis, N. (2019). Populisms and emotions. In P. Cossarini & F. Valespín (Eds.), *Populisms and passion. Democratic legitimacy after austerity* (pp. 31-48). Routledge.
- Döveling, K. (2009). Mediated parasocial emotions and community: How media may strengthen or weaken social communities. In D. Hopkins, J. Kleres, H. Flam & K. Helmut (Eds.), *Theorizing emotions. Sociological explorations and applications* (pp. 315-337). Campus Verlag.

- Döveling, K., & Konijn, E. A. (2022). Emotions and the media. Interdisciplinary perspectives. In K. Döveling & E. A. Konijn (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of emotions and mass media* (2nd ed., pp. 3-16). Routledge.
- Ekman, M., & Widholm, A. (2022). Parasitic news: Adoption and adaption of journalistic conventions in hybrid political communication. *Journalism*, 25(2), 295-312.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849221136940>
- Eksner, H. J. (2015). Indexing anger and aggression. From language ideologies to linguistic affect. In: H. Flam & J. Kleres (Eds.), *Methods of exploring emotions* (pp. 193-205). Routledge.
- Engesser, S., Fawzi, N., & Larsson, A. O. (2017). Populist online communication: introduction to the special issue. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(9), 1279-1292.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1328525>
- Farkas, J. (2023). Discourse analysis in journalism studies. *Journalistica*, 17(1), 243-248.
<https://doi.org/10.7146/journalistica.v17i1.138573>
- Fairclough, N. (2002). *Discourse and social change* (8th ed.). Polity. (Original work published 1992).
- Figschou, T. U., & Ihlebæk, K. A. (2019 a). Challenging journalistic authority. Media criticism in far-right alternative media. *Journalism Studies*, 20(9), 1221-1237.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1500868>
- Figschou, T. U., & Ihlebæk, K. A. (2019 b). Media criticism from the far-right: Attacking from many angles. *Journalism Practice*, 13(8), 901-905. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2019.1647112>
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research*, (4th ed.). Sage.
- Freistein, K., Gadinger, F., & Unrau, C. (2022). It just feels right. Visuality and emotion norms in right-wing populist storytelling. *International Political Sociology*, Volume 16, 1-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olac017>
- Freje Simonssen, J. (2020, April, 17). Medierna granskar: Vilka ligger bakom Samhällsnytt? [The media investigates: Who are behind Samhällsnytt?]. Sveriges radio.
<https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7454767>
- Frijda, N. H., Kuipers, P., & ter Shure, E. (1989). Relations among emotion, appraisal, and emotional action readiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Volume 57, 212-228.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.2.212>
- Frischlich, L., Klapproth, J., & Brinkschulte, F. (2020). Between mainstream and alternative – co-orientation in right-wing populist alternative news media. In C. Grimme, M. Preuss, F. Takes & A. Waldherr (Eds.), *Disinformation in open online media* (pp. 150-167). Springer.

- Fullerton, A. H., Gabehart, K. M., Yordy, J., & Weible, C. M. (2023). Analysing emotional discourse among allies and opponents in the news media. *Emotions and Society*, 5(3), 296-314.
<https://doi.org/10.1332/263169021X16893162013622>
- Garrett, R. K. et al. (2014). Implications of pro- and counterattitudinal information exposure for affective polarization. *Human Communication Research*, 40(3), 309-332.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12028>
- Gendron, M., & Feldman Barret, L. (2018). Concepts are key to the "communication" of feelings. In A. S. Fox, R. C. Lapate, A. J. Shackman & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *The nature of emotions. Fundamental questions* (pp. 261-264). Oxford University Press.
- Greer, M. R. (2022). *Emotional histories in the fight to end prostitution: Emotional communities 1869 to today*. Bloomsbury.
- Greven, T. (2016). *The rise of right-wing populism in europe and the united states*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Guedes Baily, O., Cammaerts, B., & Carpentier, N. (2007). *Understanding alternative media*. McGraw Hill - Open University Press.
- Haller, A., & Holt, K. (2019). Paradoxical populism: how PEGIDA relates to mainstream and alternative media. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(12), 1665-1680.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1449882>
- Haller, A., Holt, K., & de la Brosse, R. (2019). The 'other' alternatives: Political right-wing alternative media. *Journal of Alternative and Community Media*, 4(1), 1-6.
https://doi.org/10.1386/joacm_00039_2
- Hameleers, M., Bos, L., & de Vreese, C. H. (2017). "They did it: The effects of emotionalized blame attribution in populist communication." *Communication Research*, 44(6), 870-900.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650216644026>
- Harris, L. T. (2018). The how and why of emotion communication. In A. S. Fox, R. C. Lapate, A. J. Shackman & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *The nature of emotions. Fundamental questions* (pp. 257-261). Oxford University Press.
- Heft, A., Mayerhoffer, E., Reinhardt, S., & Knupfer, C. (2019). Beyond Breitbart: Comparing right-wing digital news infrastructures in six Western democracies. *Policy & Internet*, 10(2).
<https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.219>
- Herkman, J., & Jungar, A. C. (2021). Populism and media and communication studies in the Nordic countries. In E. Skogerbø, Ø. I. Ihlen, N. Nørgaard Kristensen & L. Nord (Eds.), *Power, communication, and politics in the Scandinavian countries* (pp. 263-282). Nordicom.

- Hess, U., 2018. The (more or less accurate) communication of emotions serves social problem solving. In A. S. Fox, R. C. Lapate, A. J. Shackman & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *The nature of emotions. Fundamental questions* (pp. 250-253). Oxford University Press.
- Holt, K. (2018). Alternative media and the notion of anti-systemness: Towards an analytical framework. *Media and Communication*, 6(4), 49-57. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i4.1467>
- Holt, K. (2020a). *Right-wing alternative media*. Routledge.
- Holt, K. (2020b). Populism and alternative media. In B. Krämer & C. Holtz Bacha (Eds.), *Perspectives on populism and the media. Avenues for research* (pp. 201-214). Nomos.
- Holt, K., Figenschou, T. U., & Frischlich, L. (2019). Key dimensions of alternative news media. *Digital Journalism*, 7(7), 860-869. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1625715>
- Ihlebaek, K. A., Figenschou, T. U., Eldridge II, S. A., Frischlich, L., Cushion, S., & Holt, K. (2022). Understanding alternative news media and its contribution to diversity. *Digital Journalism*, 10(8), 1267-1282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2134165>
- Ihlebaek, K. A., & Nygaard, S. (2021). Right-wing alternative media in the Scandinavian political communication landscape. In E. Skogerbo, Ø. I. Ihlen, N. Nørgaard Kristensen & L. Nord (Eds.), *Power, communication, and politics in the Scandinavian countries* (pp. 263-282). Nordicom.
- Ihlebaek, K. A., & Riborg Holter, C. (2021). Hostile emotions: An exploratory study of far-right online commenters and their emotional connection to traditional and alternative news media. *Journalism*, 22(5), 1207-1222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920985726>
- Kaati, L., Shrestha, A., Cohen K., & Lindquist, S. (2016). *Automatic detection of xenophobic narratives: A case study on Swedish alternative media*. IEEE Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), Tucson, AZ, USA, 121-126. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ISI.2016.7745454>
- Kagan, J. (2007). *What is Emotion?* Yale University Press.
- Katriel, T. (2015). Exploring emotion discourse. In H. Flam & J. Kleres (Eds.), *Methods of exploring emotions* (pp. 57-66). Routledge.
- Kelsey, D. (2020) News, discourse, and ideology. In K. Wahl-Jørgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), *Handbook of journalism studies* (2nd ed., pp. 246-260). Routledge.
- Konijn, E. A., ten Holt, J. M., & de Jonge, J. (2022). Emotions are key in processing media messages. From noise to nucleus. In K. Döveling & E. A. Konijn (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of emotions and media* (2nd ed., pp. 32-47). Routledge.

- Koschut, S. (2018). No sympathy for the devil: Emotions and the social construction of democratic peace. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 53(3), 320-338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836717737570>
- Levy, D. A., Newman, N., Fletcher, A., Kalogeropoulos A., & Kleis Nielsen, R. (Eds.). (2018). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2018*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Lietz, C. A., & Zayas, L. E., (2010). Evaluating qualitative research for social work practitioners. *Advances in Social Work*, 11(2), 188-202. <https://doi.org/10.18060/589>
- Lu, Y., & Lee, J. K. (2019). Partisan information sources and affective polarization: Panel analysis of the mediating role of anger and fear. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 96(3), 767-783. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018811295>
- Lünenborg, M., & Medeiros, D. (2022). Under pressure. Journalism as an affective institution. In M. Churcher, S. Calkins, J. Böttger & J. Slaby (Eds.), *Affect, power, and institutions* (pp. 80-101). Routledge.
- Manucci, L. (2017). Populism and the Media. In C. R. Kaltwasser, P. Taggart, P. Ochoa Espejo, & P. Ostiguy (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Populism* (pp. 467-488). Oxford Academic. <https://doi-org.ezp.sub.su.se/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803560.013.17>
- Marinetti, C., Penny, M., Lucas, P., & Parkinson, B. (2011). Emotions in social interactions: Unfolding emotional experience. In R. Cowie, P. Catherine & P. Petta (Eds.), *Emotion-oriented Systems, Cognitive technologies* (pp. 31-46). Springer Verlag.
- Moffitt, B. (2016). *The global rise of populism: Performance, political style, and representation*. Stanford University Press.
- Mudde, C. (2004). Populist zeitgeist. *Government & Opposition*, 38(4): 541-563.
- Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2017). *Populism. A very short introduction*. Oxford Academic.
- Müller, J. (2022). The Politics of Fear Revisited. In C. Schapkow & F. Jacob (Ed.), *Nationalism and Populism: Expressions of Fear or Political Strategies?* (pp. 11-22). De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110729740-002>
- Nguyen, C., Salmela, M., & von Scheve, C. (2022). From specific worries to generalized anger: The emotional dynamics of right-wing political populism. In M. Oswald (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of populism* (pp. 145-160). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Plutchik, R. (1980). A general psychoevolutionary theory of emotion. In R. Plutchik & H. Kellerman (Eds.), *Theories of emotion* (pp. 3-33). Academic Press.
- Potter, J. (1996). *Representing reality: Discourse rhetoric and social construction*. Sage.

- Potter, J. (2007). Introduction to Volume III: Discursive psychology. In J. Potter (Ed.), *Discourse and psychology*. SAGE.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446261408>
- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. Sage.
- Rae, M. (2021). Hyperpartisan news: Rethinking the media for populist politics. *New Media & Society*, 23(5), pp. 1117-1132.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820910416>
- Reddy, W. M. (2001). *The navigation of feeling: A framework for the history of emotion*. Cambridge University Press.
- Revers, M. (2023). Performative polarization: The interactional and cultural drivers of political antagonism. *Cultural Sociology*, 0(0), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17499755231188808>
- Roberts, J., & Wahl-Jørgensen, K. (2020). Breitbart's attacks on mainstream media: Victories, victimhood, and vilification. In M. Boler & E. Davis (Eds.), *Affective politics of digital media: Propaganda by other means* (pp. 170-185). Routledge.
- Rogowski, J. C., & Sutherland, J. L. (2016). How ideology fuels affective polarization. *Political Behavior*, 38, 485-508.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-015-9323-7>
- Rosenwein, B. H. (2002). Worrying about emotions in history. *American Historical Review*, 107(3), 821-845.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/107.3.821>
- Rosenwein, B. H. (2006). *Emotional communities in the Middle-Ages*. Cornell University Press.
- Rosenwein, B. H. (2016). *Generations of feeling: A history of emotions, 600-1700*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenwein, B. H., & Cristiani, R. (2018). *What is the history of emotions?* Polity Press.
- Ruza, C., & Fella, S. (2011). Populism and the Italian right. *Acta Politica*, 46, 158-179. <http://doi.org/10.1057/ap.2011.5>
- Sabini, J. (1995). *Social psychology* (2nd ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. SAGE.
- Smith, E. R., & Mackie, D. M. (2018). Intergroup emotions. In L. Feldman Barret, M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland-Jones (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 412-423). The Guilford Press.
- Statens medieråd. (2013). *Våldsbejakande och antidemokratiska budskap på internet*. [Violence promoting and anti-democratic messages on the internet]. (Report) Statens medieråd [Swedish Media Counsel].
<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/c6460146d8de486eabf7f209b3a9093a/valdsbejakande-och-antidemokratiska-budskap-pa-internet>
- Terry, G., & Hayfield, N., (2021). *Essentials of thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association.

- Tarchi, M. (2016). Populism: Ideology, political style, mentality? *Czech Journal of Political Science*, 23(2), 95-109.
- Tuomola, S., & Wahl-Jørgensen, K. (2022). Emotion mobilisation through the imagery of people in Finnish-language right-wing alternative media. *Digital Journalism*, 11(1), 61-79.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2061551>
- Turner, J., & Stets, J. (2006). Moral emotions. In J. Turner & J. Stets (Eds.), *Handbook of the sociology of emotions* (pp. 544-566). Springer.
- Törnberg, P. (2022). How digital media drive affective polarization through partisan sorting. *PNAS*, 119(42), 1-11.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2207159119>
- van Dijk, A. T. (2009) News, discourse, and ideology. In K. Wahl-Jørgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), *Handbook of journalism studies* (1st ed., pp. 191-204). Routledge.
- van Kleef, G. A., van den Berg, H., & Heerdink, M. W. (2015). The persuasive power of emotions: Effects of emotional expressions on attitude formation and change. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(4), 1124-1142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000003>
- Wahl-Jørgensen, K. (2019). *Emotions, media and politics*. Polity Press.
- Waisbord, S. (2022). Alternative media/journalism and the communicative politics of contestation. *Digital Journalism*, 10(8), 1431-1439. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2130385>
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear. What right-wing populist discourses mean*. Sage.
- Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology & Health*, 5(2), 215-228.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08870440008400302>

MAGNUS DANIELSON

Associate professor
 Department
 Stockholm University
 magnus.danielson@ims.su.se

Screenshots as data and documentation

Journalistica: The Methods Section

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

JULIE MÜNTER LASSEN

Danish School of Media and Journalism (DMJX)

KEYWORDS

screenshotting, qualitative research, interfaces, digital media, archiving

1. Introduction

Digital media are characterised by their ephemerality: continuous news updates, stories on social media being available for only 24 hours, ever-changing feeds, and promotion of new content on streaming services. From a scholarly and cultural heritage perspective, the fleetingness is a challenge as digital media are generally not systematically archived. On this background, Aegidius and Andersen (2024, p. 2) stress that interfaces “[...] are essentially lost to us on a daily basis”, and Kelly (2022) warns that the lack of digital preservation can lead to a scholarly dark age (see also Distelmeyer, 2023). However, in the words of Kneese (2022, p. 163): “Screenshots are one strategy for working with and through platform temporality”. Taking screenshots (also termed screen captures or screen grabs) is a simple and straightforward method for collecting, archiving, and presenting the user experience of an on-screen interface. As such, it differs from e.g. web scraping where data is typically extracted from a webpage and does not depict the interface that meets the user.

For several years, screenshots have been a natural part of research of digital media (e.g. Caple, 2019; DeCook, 2018; Eklund, 2022; Hesmondhalgh & Lotz, 2020; Johnson, 2017), but interestingly, it is not necessarily widespread practise for scholars to reflect explicitly on the use of screenshots as their method for archiving and analysing digital content (for exceptions, see Andersen, 2024; Bruun &

Bille, 2022; Johnson, 2019; Lassen, 2023). However, in all research, it is important to be aware of and reflect on one's choice and use of methods, and this also applies to the use of screenshots. This contribution offers reflections on and recommendations for integrating screenshots into digital media research. While the examples and much of the literature are related to qualitative research into audiovisual streaming services, it is important to emphasise that screenshots can be used in the study of a variety of media, which can be accessed via a screen such as webpages of news media, social media, video games, digital communication (e.g. text messages), and self-tracking apps.

2. Description of the method

As stated above, digital interfaces are typically not collected and archived, and services such as the Internet Archive's *Wayback Machine* or the Danish *Netarkivet* do not offer a stable day-to-day collection. Therefore, researchers must collect the data themselves by taking screenshots. Using this method for data collection requires planning as screenshots often cannot be used for collecting data retrospectively: Newspages, feeds, and interfaces constantly change and must thus be captured going forward. Several questions must therefore be considered regarding sampling strategy: which services to collect, when, how often, and for how long a period (see also Markham, 2020). The examples of use below illustrate different research designs, all based on screenshotting but with different sampling strategies and outcomes.

The tools for screenshotting are always at hand, as the computer's keyboard or smartphone's buttons can be used to capture an on-screen image. However, it is possible to install a browser extension that takes a screenshot of the entire page length just as webrecordings can be considered to supplement or replace the static screenshot. Preferably, screenshotting should be carried out on the device usually used to access the given medium in accordance with a given target group's media habits. This would typically mean a smartphone for social media and other apps, a PC for computer games and news websites, and TV sets for streaming services. However, this principle must be balanced with pragmatism. For instance, audiovisual streaming service researchers often collect data on PCs instead of TVs because screenshotting tools are readily available on PCs.

Once screenshotting has been used as a method to collect data, the captured screenshots function as data that can be analysed. Depending on the research question, the screenshots can be subject to

e.g. visual (Pajkovic, 2022), (para)textual (Lassen, 2023), semiotic (Caple, 2019), or discourse analysis (DeCook, 2018). Which approach is most suitable depends on the research purpose, questions, and data.

3. Example of use

The following three research examples make use of screenshots in analysing and documenting curational practices on Danish and/or transnational streaming services, but their research design and purpose differ.

In his analysis of how the placement of reality programmes on the front pages of four streaming services changes over time, Andersen's (2024) conclusions are based on a larger corpus of screenshots. Lassen (2023) uses screenshots to examine how temporality is emphasised by the two legacy broadcasters DR and TV 2 in the captions, labelling of programmes, and placement of time-sensitive content within their streaming services. Using screenshots from four different Netflix profiles, Pajkovic (2022) tracks how personalisation affects the artwork on the front pages so that the same programme is offered with different thumbnail pictures across the profiles. Even though all of these studies employ screenshots as data, there are important differences to highlight: Both Lassen's and Pajkovic's findings can be characterised as snapshots as they document practices during a period of two weeks. In contrast, Andersen has built an archive with data collected over a period of three years. Similarly, Andersen uses constructed weeks as a sampling strategy, whereas Lassen and Pajkovic use consecutive days. Finally, both Andersen and Lassen collect data from unused accounts, while Pajkovic seeks to personalise the Netflix profiles before the data collection. In all three cases, screenshotting is a suitable method for data collection as interfaces play a vital role in the user's experience of and engagement with a streaming service.

Just as screenshotting can be employed in research of various digital media, it is important to emphasise that screenshots can function as data in its own right or can be integrated into different kinds of mixed or multi-methods research. Several studies combine screenshotting with qualitative interviews (e.g. Flore, 2024; Ørmen & Thorhauge, 2015; Schreiber, 2017) but there are also examples of screenshotting being integrated into or combined with quantitative research of digital communication (e.g. Clark-Gordon et al., 2017; Cramer et al., 2023; Judy Kamalodeen & Jameson-Charles, 2016).

4. Main advantages and challenges of using the method

A picture is worth a thousand words. Compared to describing an interface or making illustrations to depict the analytical object, screenshots have the advantage that they allow the researcher to display the object of study as it appeared to the user at a given point in time. As noted above, a further advantage of this data collection method is that screenshots are easy to take. There are, however, some important shortcomings which are relevant to reflect on when deciding to include screenshots in research. Laursen, Brügger, and Sandvik (2017, p. 35) consider a disadvantage of screenshots to be the limited useability compared with the original webpage: links do not function, the screenshots are not searchable, and audiovisual content is not playable. Besides these limitations, Andersen (2024) points out how a rich dataset can be time-consuming to build. This might seem self-evident, but another point is that while it is very easy to acquire a significant amount of data, the same amount requires a systematic approach and good structure to archive and navigate.

5. Ethical considerations

In general, screenshots are to be considered quotes if analysing them in a publication. If studies are based on e.g. social media content or donated data from smartphones, it is necessary to consider if what is in the screenshot is subject to GDPR rules and requires informed consent, blurring, or other precautions to ensure privacy protection.

REFERENCES

- Aegidius, A. L., & Andersen, M. M. T. (2024). Collecting streaming services. *Convergence*, 30(5), 1665–1684.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565241253906>
- Andersen, M. M. T. (2024). Showcasing reality content on the front page: Comparing four services on the Danish video streaming market. *Critical Studies in Television*, 17496020241259734.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/17496020241259734>
- Bruun, H., & Bille, B. K. (2022). Television documentaries as spearheads in public service television: Comparing scheduling practices on the linear channels and video-on-demand services of Danish TV 2 and DR. *Nordicom Review*, 43(1), 79–93.
<https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2022-0005>

- Caple, H. (2019). "Lucy says today she is a Labordoodle": How the dogs-of-Instagram reveal voter preferences. *Social Semiotics*, 29(4), 427–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2018.1443582>
- Clark-Gordon, C. V., Workman, K. E., & Linvill, D. L. (2017). College Students and Yik Yak: An Exploratory Mixed-Methods Study. *Social Media + Society*, 3(2), 2056305117715696. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117715696>
- Cramer, E. M., Jenkins, B. M., & Sang, Y. (2023). What's behind that screenshot? Digital windows and capturing data on screen. *Convergence*, 29(2), 467–480. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565221089211>
- DeCook, J. R. (2018). Memes and symbolic violence: #proudboys and the use of memes for propaganda and the construction of collective identity. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 43(4), 485–504. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2018.1544149>
- Distelmeyer, J. (2023). A Case for Interface Studies: From Screenshots to Desktop / Screen Films. In W. Gerling, S. Möring, & M. De Mutiis (Eds.), *Screen Images. In-Game Photography, Screenshots, Screencast* (pp. 317–331). Kulturverlag Kadmos Berlin. <https://doi.org/10.55309/c3ie61k5>
- Eklund, O. (2022). Custom thumbnails: The changing face of personalisation strategies on Netflix. *Convergence*, 28(3), 737–760. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211064520>
- Flore, J. (2024). (Dis)assembling mental health through apps: The sociomaterialities of young adults' experiences. *Media International Australia*, 192(1), 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X221114486>
- Hesmondhalgh, D., & Lotz, A. D. (2020). Video Screen Interfaces as New Sites of Media Circulation Power. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 386–409.
- Johnson, C. (2017, July). Beyond catch-up: VoD interfaces, ITV Hub and the repositioning of television online. *Critical Studies in Television*, Volume 12(2), 121–138.
- Johnson, C. (2019). *Online TV*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315396828>
- Judy Kamalodeen, V., & Jameson-Charles, M. (2016). A Mixed Methods Research Approach to Exploring Teacher Participation in an Online Social Networking Website. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 15(1), 1609406915624578. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915624578>
- Kelly, J. (2022). "This Title Is No Longer Available": Preserving Television in the Streaming Age. *Television & New Media*, 23(1), 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420928480>

- Kneese, T. (2022). Breakdown as Method: Screenshots for Dying Worlds. *Media Theory*, 5(2), 142–166.
<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03815763>
- Lassen, J. M. (2023). The reappropriation of time in television: How traditional qualities of broadcast media are being adopted by their video-on-demand services. *Nordicom Review*, 44(2), 217–234.
<https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/nor-2023-0012>
- Laursen, D., Brügger, N., & Sandvik, K. (2017). Metoder til indsamling af internetmateriale og deres effekt på senere analyser—Med Facebook som eksempel. In K. Drotner & S. M. Iversen (Eds.), *Digitale Metoder: At skabe, analysere og dele data* (pp. 31–49). Samfundslitteratur.
- Markham, A. (2020). *Doing digital ethnography in the digital age*.
<https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/hqm4g>
- Ørmen, J., & Thorhauge, A. M. (2015). Smartphone log data in a qualitative perspective. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 3(3), 335–350. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157914565845>
- Pajkovic, N. (2022). Algorithms and taste-making: Exposing the Netflix Recommender System’s operational logics. *Convergence*, 28(1), 214–235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211014464>
- Schreiber, M. (2017). Showing/Sharing: Analysing Visual Communication from a Praxeological Perspective. *Media and Communication*, 5(4), 37–50.
<https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v5i4.1075>

JULIE MÜNTER LASSEN

Senior Associate Professor
 Department of Media, Communication and Design
 Danish School of Media and Journalism
jmml@dmix.dk

Dialing in with participants

Journalistica: The Methods Section

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

PETER BUSCH NICOLAISEN

University of Southern Denmark

KEYWORDS

recruitment, focus groups, cold calling, qualitative research, climate communication

1. Description of the method

Cold calling denotes the act of contacting people without a prior agreement to offer them something that they have not asked for (Merriam-Webster, 2025). Although cold calling is traditionally associated with sales and marketing, I argue that it is a viable way of recruiting participants for qualitative scholars within journalism studies. It is mainly relevant to qualitative researchers as they may have something to gain from forming a connection with potential participants. In addition, they tend to operate with modest sample sizes, which makes it manageable to reach out to all study candidates by phone. Cold calling is an alternative to other means of enrollment which involve either outsourcing the process to professional recruitment agencies, encouraging potential participants to contact the researcher via physical posters or social media posts, or writing letters or emails to eligible individuals directly. It is important to note that cold calling cannot stand alone. The phone calls must be supplemented by written material such as a project description and a consent form to guarantee the uniformity of information and to enable the participants to better comprehend the complexities involved.

2. Example of use

I used cold calling when recruiting participants for a large-scale focus group study with Danish climate journalists, climate scientists, and citizens, which centered on how they perceived their own and each other's roles in the public climate debate (Busch Nicolaisen, 2022; Nicolaisen,

2024). Being a trained journalist, I was comfortable talking to strangers on the phone. Besides, my schedule was extremely tight since pandemic-induced restrictions had postponed the data collection, and I believed that cold calls would be the most time-efficient way of recruiting participants. Using this method, I managed to recruit 76 participants in less than two months. The climate journalists were pinpointed with the aid of the chairs of the Danish Science Journalists Association (Danske Videnskabsjournalister) and the Association of Energy and Environmental Journalists (Foreningen af Energi- og Miljøjournalister). For the climate scientists, potential participants were identified by examining the websites of the Danish universities working on climate science. The participants from the citizen segment were located via two channels: Facebook groups and my network.

3. Main advantages and challenges of using the method

One of the key advantages of using cold calling in a research context is the establishment of personal contact. The phone calls provide a way to mitigate the alienation that some people may feel towards science and to immediately tackle any insecurities related to participating. In my case, they enabled me to build rapport with the climate journalists by emphasizing my journalistic background and engaging in discipline-specific discourse. Furthermore, they allowed me to demonstrate my thorough preparation to the climate scientists as I had tried to familiarize myself with their research.

Cold calling can also speed up the recruitment process as it is possible to receive an immediate indication of whether people want to participate. If potential participants are contacted via email, for instance, a significantly longer response time is to be expected.

While cold calling can be used for enrollment in a variety of qualitative studies, including interviews and ethnography, it has certain merits when it comes to recruitment to focus group research. The insights gained from talking with the participants can help inform decisions about the composition and optimal size of the focus groups. When hanging up, the researcher will likely have a well-formed impression of the communicative dispositions (Daly, 2011, pp. 144–147) of the person on the other end of the line as well as of their commitment to the subject in question. Typically, it does not take long to tell whether an individual is talkative, reticent or something in between. These observations can feed into the deliberations regarding how to organize the groups. Social dynamics are an integral part of focus group research (Belzile & Öberg, 2012; Halkier, 2010, p. 74; Peek & Fothergill, 2009, p. 33), so the interaction effect of the participants' personalities can have a vast bearing on the focus group discussions (Vicsek, 2007, pp. 26–27). It thus seems

essential to be aware of the participants' personality types when composing focus groups.

The main challenge inherent in cold calling is that not all inquiries result in an expression of interest in participating. Kristensen and Ravn assert that "the recruitment process is emotional work" and routinely entails plenty of embarrassment (2015: 725; see also Thomas et al., 2007: 435–436). My own experience confirms this observation. Getting five rejections in a row is undoubtedly psychologically taxing, not least when they are delivered straight into your ear instead of less directly through email. Calling participants without any prior notice is therefore situated at the far end of what Scott et al. term the 'cringe spectrum', which categorizes different research activities on a continuum according to the shame they may evoke and the associated risk of losing face (2012, pp. 721–722). Hence, it is worth noting that this *modus operandi* may be reserved for so-called 'non-shy researchers', who are comfortable with spontaneous interaction with strangers (Scott et al., 2012, p. 726).

Another concern related to this recruitment method is that researchers may place too much weight on the first impression formed during the phone call. This can influence how you moderate the focus group and potentially disrupt the natural flow of social interaction. For example, you may have formed a preconceived notion that certain participants are dominant or shy, which may affect how you engage with them during the session.

3. Relevance to journalism studies

Blanchett et al. (2023) hold that journalists are commonly unwilling to take part in research, as they are becoming more and more pressed for time. Moreover, Ray (Ray, 2017, p. 17) contends that there is a pronounced gulf between journalism and academia, as "journalists are at best dismissive of academics and, at worst, antagonistic." To counter this perceived distance, scholars may benefit from a more personalized approach. In their acclaimed work on qualitative researchers' membership roles in the populations they investigate, Dwyer and Buckle (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 58) describe how researchers' insider status can promote feelings of acceptance and trust among the participants that would not otherwise be present. When calling the climate journalists, I sought to leverage this insight by highlighting my journalism degree and my experience as a freelance writer for several media outlets. The tactic seemed to work. Once it became clear that I was "one of them", the conversations commonly went on to touch on stories they were currently working on or new developments in the Danish media landscape. Another factor that supports the use of cold calling in research involving

journalists is that they are accustomed to initiating contact with strangers, which may make them more open to receiving unsolicited calls themselves.

5. Ethical considerations

The main ethical concern connected to cold calling is that the people who are contacted might be caught off guard by the request and either feel pressured to participate or perceive it as an invasion of their privacy. According to Bredal et al., such foregrounding of the potential negative aspects of research participation is common in the modern era of qualitative inquiry, a spillover effect from the increasing regulation by ethical committees (2022, p. 3; Traianou, 2020). They adopt a critical stance towards this trend, as it does not align with their field experiences, which attest to “research participants’ willingness and even eagerness to participate” (Bredal et al., 2022, p. 2). My attitude to recruitment was characterized by a similar emphasis on the upsides of enrollment. When I decided to initiate contact through phone calls, I essentially performed an act of *phronesis*, a judgment on the best course of action in a complex situation without clear-cut rules to follow (Traianou, 2018, pp. 166–167). Under such circumstances, one must weigh “what is likely to lead to success” against the probable benefits, risks, and harms (Traianou, 2018, p. 167). I thus deemed that the potential risks and harms were marginal compared to the benefits. In addition to the participants’ contribution to the production of new scientific knowledge, I was confident that they would also gain something from their involvement. This reward can come in different forms, whether through exploring a subject of personal interest, satisfying their curiosity about academic work, engaging in social comparison, or enjoying the process in itself, according to the assortment of motivations for participating in qualitative research proposed by Clark (2010, pp. 404–407).

REFERENCES

- Belzile, J. A., & Öberg, G. (2012). Where to begin? Grappling with how to use participant interaction in focus group design. *Qualitative Research*, 12(4), 459–472.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111433089>
- Blanchett, N., Mellado, C., Brin, C., Nemat Allah, S., & Vallender, C. (2023). Is It Us or Them? The Challenge of Getting Journalists to Participate in Academic Research. *Journalism Studies*, 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2216796>
- Bredal, A., Stefansen, K., & Bjørnholt, M. (2022). Why do people participate in research interviews? Participant orientations and ethical

- contracts in interviews with victims of interpersonal violence. *Qualitative Research*, 0(0), 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941221138409>
- Busch Nicolaisen, P. (2022). A State of Emergency or Business as Usual in Climate Science Communication? A Three-Dimensional Perspective on the Role Perceptions of Climate Scientists, Climate Journalists, and Citizens. *Science Communication*, 44(6), 667–692.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10755470221136220>
- Clark, T. (2010). On ‘being researched’: why do people engage with qualitative research? *Qualitative Research*, 10(4), 399–419.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794110366796>
- Daly, J. A. (2011). Personality and Interpersonal Communication. In M. L. Knapp & J. A. Daly (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Interpersonal Communication* (Fourth Edition, pp. 131–167). SAGE Publications Inc.
- Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105>
- Halkier, B. (2010). Focus groups as social enactments: integrating interaction and content in the analysis of focus group data. *Qualitative Research*, 10(1), 71–89.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109348683>
- James, D. C. S., Harville, C., Efunbumi, O., Babazadeh, I., & Ali, S. (2017). “You Have to Approach Us Right”: A Qualitative Framework Analysis for Recruiting African Americans Into mHealth Research. *Health Education & Behavior*, 44(5), 781–790.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198117727324>
- Kristensen, G. K., & Ravn, M. N. (2015). The voices heard and the voices silenced: recruitment processes in qualitative interview studies. *Qualitative Research*, 15(6), 722–737.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114567496>
- Losi, L. (2023). Who engages with science, and how? An empirical typology of Europeans’ science engagement. *Public Understanding of Science*, 32(6), 798–814.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09636625231164340>
- Merriam-Webster. (2025, May 17). *Cold call*. Merriam-Webster.Com.
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cold%20call>
- Nicolaisen, P. B. (2024). Orchestrating the climate choir: the boundaries of scientists’ expertise, the relevance of experiential knowledge, and quality assurance in the public climate debate. *Climatic Change*, 177(3), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-024-03697-3>

- Peek, L., & Fothergill, A. (2009). Using focus groups: lessons from studying daycare centers, 9/11, and Hurricane Katrina. *Qualitative Research*, 9(1), 31–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794108098029>
- Ray, V. (2017). Journalists and Scholars: A Short Manifesto. In L. Barakho (Ed.), *Towards a Praxis-based Media and Journalism Research* (1st edition, pp. 15–22). Intellect Books. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv36xvz8k.4>
- Scott, S., Hinton-Smith, T., Härmä, V., & Broome, K. (2012). The reluctant researcher: shyness in the field. *Qualitative Research*, 12(6), 715–734. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112439015>
- Thomas, M., Bloor, M., & Frankland, J. (2007). The process of sample recruitment: an ethnostatistical perspective. *Qualitative Research*, 7(4), 429–446. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794107082300>
- Traianou, A. (2018). Ethical Regulation of Social Research Versus The Cultivation of Phrónēsis. In N. Emmerich (Ed.), *Virtue Ethics in the Conduct and Governance of Social Science Research* (Vol. 3, pp. 163–177). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2398-601820180000003010>
- Traianou, A. (2020). The Centrality of Ethics in Qualitative Practice. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd edition, pp. 86–110). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190847388.013.12>
- Vicsek, L. (2007). A Scheme for Analyzing the Results of Focus Groups. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 6(4), 20–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690700600402>

PETER BUSCH NICOLAISEN

Postdoc

Department of Political Science and Public Management

University of Southern Denmark

pbni@journalism.sdu.dk

Qualitative reconstruction interviews to study journalistic practice

Journalistica: The Methods Section

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

ALEXANDRA SCHWINGES

University of Amsterdam

KEYWORDS

reconstruction interviews, news production, qualitative interviews, journalism

1. Description of the method

This approach to reconstruction interviews focuses on reconstructing journalistic practices through retrospective interviews anchored in a concrete news product, often described as the “biography” of a news story (Brüggemann, 2013). They center around one or more specific news item(s), and trace how these were produced – from the initial idea to editorial choices and publication (Reich & Barnoy, 2020). Reich and Barnoy (2020) provide a comprehensive overview of how reconstruction interviews can be implemented in a quantitative manner; this method brief specifically focuses on the qualitative reconstruction interviews. In the following, a step-by-step guide is provided using the example of a news story reconstruction.

Sampling for reconstruction interviews can begin with either the journalist or the journalistic text, depending on the research design. The key criterion is that the journalist must have been directly involved in producing the news item(s) relevant to the study. Sampling can be either purposive or systematic, depending on the research objectives and context. Reconstruction interview guides use open-ended questions that are typically organized in a two-part structure (Reich & Barnoy, 2020). 1) In a biographical-narrative section, journalists are encouraged to retrospectively recount their news production process in detail. The

interview may begin with an open-ended prompt: “Can you walk us through how this story came about, from the very beginning?” (Boesman et al., 2015, 2016). Guided by the interviewer, journalists narrate reasoning behind stylistic or editorial choices, norms, values, or constraints that influenced their work, always centering on the final news story to illustrate points. 2) In a focused-discourse section, researchers can probe specific elements of interest related to the study objectives based on the news story at hand, such as interactions with sources, editorial pressures, or journalistic roles. This stage allows for a more targeted exploration of the production process, often returning to particular story elements, passages, or decisions to elicit deeper reflection. The method is flexible: the semi-structured interview guide format enables researchers to go back and forth between sections, the news story text, and emerging themes, allowing journalists to introduce themes the researcher may not have anticipated – an important advantage in complex and evolving media environments.

The systematic analysis of the interviews typically triangulates two perspectives. A perceptual (i.e., how a journalist perceives their practice) or agent-based analysis centers on the journalist’s interpretations, experiences and decision-making processes in their work. A performative (i.e., how a journalist performs their practice) or item-based approach anchors the analysis in the text – examining what the journalist actually did, and how their narrative aligns with the finished news story. The researcher aggregates individual insights into meaningful themes or patterns, for example, by following the steps in thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) or grounded theory approaches (Charmaz, 2015). Reconstruction interviews can also be supplemented with content analysis (Anderson, 2013).

2. Example of use

While the origins of reconstruction interviewing trace back to early newsroom ethnographies (Tuchman, 1978), the method has gained increased recognition in various journalism subfields, particularly through the work of Zvi Reich and colleagues (Reich, 2006; Reich & Barnoy, 2016, 2020). Recent scholarship has investigated increasingly complex working realities of journalists, such as journalist-source relationships (Brüggemann, 2013; Lawson, 2023; Malling, 2021; Reich, 2010), journalistic role negotiations and interactions (Arregui Olivera, 2024), the influence of technology and algorithms in news reporting (de Haan et al., 2022; Matsilele et al., 2022), or crisis reporting (Hoxha & Hanzitzsch, 2018; Lawson, 2023). In my own work, I have studied how journalists negotiate their role and interaction with lobbyists (Schwinges et al., 2024) to understand how the institutionalized role of watchdog

journalism (Bovens et al., 2014) is transformed when applied to powerful new actors like technology companies.

3. Main advantages and challenges of using the method

Qualitative reconstruction interviews are a valuable tool for studying journalism practice but require careful methodological considerations. While the method provides a dual perspective on journalism practice, it is necessary to keep an analytical distinction between agent- and item-based insights to avoid oversimplification and conceptual conflation (Schwinges, 2024); instead, the method can be used to study their interplay and ensure robustness of insights. One key challenge lies in the method's reliance on journalists' retrospective accounts. Agreeing on the story in advance and using prompts like the published article can help the journalist prepare and recall details more accurately. While the method's flexibility challenges academic rigor and replicability, this very same adaptability helps to reveal previously unexamined and tacit aspects of news-making (Malling, 2023), and together with its avoidance of *a priori* assumptions (Reich & Barnoy, 2020), makes it suitable in new research settings.

Reconstruction interviews have gained increasing popularity as a way to address the complexity and opacity of journalistic practices (Reich & Barnoy, 2020). Unlike think-aloud protocols, which capture real-time cognition, they are valuable for their systematic, reflective examination of journalistic processes that are not necessarily visible in the final news product (Malling, 2023). In increasingly complex information ecosystems - where boundaries between different levels of influence are blurring (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Xu & Jin, 2017) - the reconstruction method is particularly well-suited to study journalistic practice across micro, meso, and macro levels of influence (Schwinges, 2024). Newsroom ethnographies often integrate reconstruction interviews for story-level insights when analyzing journalistic ecosystems (Boesman et al., 2016).

4. Ethical considerations

Some ethical guidelines are paramount to this specialized form of interviewing. Detailed accounts of news items may reveal sensitive details about internal processes, interpersonal dynamics, or editorial conflicts. Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of both the journalist and others involved in the news story is essential but also complex. Anonymization may be insufficient and should be complemented by focusing reports on aggregate insights rather than identifiable news item content. While the item anchored testimony (Reich & Barnoy, 2016) creates

some robustness, the reconstruction method remains dependent on journalists' subjective accounts in need for further contextualization to ensure accuracy and transparency. Particularly when applied to novel research settings, insights that contradict common assumptions should be reported with nuance.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, C. (2013). What aggregators do: Towards a networked concept of journalistic expertise in the digital age. *Journalism*, 14(8), 1008–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913492460>
- Arregui Olivera, C. (2024). Feeding off Each Other: Journalistic Role Negotiations Between Local and Foreign Reporters in Nairobi. *Journalism Practice*, 18(9), 2300–2316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2024.2314158>
- Boesman, J., d'Haenens, L., & Van Gorp, B. (2015). Triggering the News Story: Reconstructing reporters' newsgathering practices in the light of newspaper type, newsroom centralization, reporters' autonomy, and specialization. *Journalism Studies*, 16(6), 904–922. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.953783>
- Boesman, J., d'Haenens, L., & Van Gorp, B. (2016). Between Silence and Salience: A Multimethod Model to Study Frame Building From a Journalistic Perspective. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 10(4), 233–247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2016.1228864>
- Bovens, M., Goodin, R. E., Schillemans, T., & Norris, P. (2014). Watchdog Journalism. In M. Bovens, R. E. Goodin, & T. Schillemans (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199641253.013.0015>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. SAGE.
- Brüggemann, M. (2013). Transnational trigger constellations: Reconstructing the story behind the story. *Journalism*, 14(3), 401–418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912453284>
- Charmaz, K. (2017). Constructivist grounded theory. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 299–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262612>
- de Haan, Y., van den Berg, E., Goutier, N., Kruikemeier, S., & Lecheler, S. (2022). Invisible Friend or Foe? How Journalists Use and Perceive Algorithmic-Driven Tools in Their Research Process. *Digital Journalism*, 10(10), 1775–1793. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2027798>
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology.

- Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15–31.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428112452151>
- Hoxha, A., & Hanitzsch, T. (2018). How conflict news comes into being: Reconstructing ‘reality’ through telling stories. *Media, War & Conflict*, 11(1), 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635217727313>
- Lawson, B. T. (2023). Hiding Behind Databases, Institutions and Actors: How Journalists Use Statistics in Reporting Humanitarian Crises. *Journalism Practice*, 17(3), 429–449.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1930106>
- Malling, M. (2021). Reconstructing the Informal and Invisible: Interactions Between Journalists and Political Sources in Two Countries. *Journalism Practice*, 1–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1930571>
- Malling, M. (2023). Reconstructing the Informal and Invisible: Interactions Between Journalists and Political Sources in Two Countries. *Journalism Practice*, 17(4), 683–703.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1930571>
- Matsilele, T., Tshuma, L., & Msimanga, M. (2022). Reconstruction and Adaptation in Times of a Contagious Crisis: A Case of African Newsrooms’ Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 46(3), 268–288.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01968599221085702>
- Mellado, C. (2015). Professional Roles in News Content: Six dimensions of journalistic role performance. *Journalism Studies*, 16(4), 596–614. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.922276>
- Reich, Z. (2006). The Process Model of News Initiative. *Journalism Studies*, 7(4), 497–514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700600757928>
- Reich, Z. (2010). Measuring the Impact of Pr on Published News in Increasingly Fragmented News Environments. *Journalism Studies*, 11(6), 799–816. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616701003760550>
- Reich, Z., & Barnoy, A. (2016). The Anatomy of Leaking in the Age of Megaleaks: New triggers, old news practices. *Digital Journalism*, 4(7), 886–898. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2016.1168706>
- Reich, Z., & Barnoy, A. (2020). How News Become “News” in Increasingly Complex Ecosystems: Summarizing Almost Two Decades of Newsmaking Reconstructions. *Journalism Studies*, 21(7), 966–983. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1716830>
- Schwinges, A. (2024). Navigating Ideals and Realities: On Using Reconstruction Interviews to Study Journalistic Roles. *Journalism Practice*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2024.2305165>
- Schwinges, A., Lock, I., van der Meer, T. G. L. A., & Vliegenthart, R. (2024). Stepping on Toes? Role Dynamics between Journalists and Lobbyists Regarding Big Tech’s Accountability Agenda. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 19401612241242401. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612241242401>

- Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content* (2nd ed). Longman.
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making News*. Free Press.
- Xu, Y., & Jin, J. (2017). The Hierarchy of Influences on Professional Role Perceptions Among Chinese Online Journalists: A multilevel analysis. *Digital Journalism*, 5(2), 194–212.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2016.1162662>

ALEXANDRA SCHWINGES

Assistant Professor
Communication, Organizations and Society
University of Amsterdam
a.schwinges@uva.nl

Ethnographic reporting: immersion as journalistic practice and pedagogy

Journalistica: The Methods Section

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

STEFFEN MOESTRUP

Danish School of Media and Journalism

KEYWORDS

ethnographic journalism, immersion, participant observation, journalism methods, reflexivity

1. Description of the method

Ethnographic reporting is a journalistic approach rooted in immersion, participant observation, and co-presence. It borrows tools from anthropology, yet the purposes of ethnography in journalism and in research are not the same. Whereas academic ethnography seeks to build theory and contribute to scholarly knowledge, ethnographic journalism aims to create vivid, empathetic accounts that help audiences understand lives and worlds beyond their own. This means reporters “go deep” into people’s lived experiences, spending extended time with sources, inhabiting their environments, and interpreting meaning through detailed observation and participation (Conover, 2016). Ethnographic reporting challenges conventional notions of objectivity and offers a more engaged, layered way of understanding and portraying people’s lives. Unlike conventional reporting, which often pursues facts and answers through interviews and statements, ethnographic journalism embraces *thick description* (Geertz, 1973), personal involvement, and inductive discovery. It is less about extracting facts and more about interpreting lived experience — through a combination of being there, seeing with, and writing from within.

Rather than “parachuting in” to cover a story, the ethnographic reporter enters the environment of their subject over time, participating where appropriate, observing continuously, and letting the story emerge inductively. The goal is to understand how people see themselves and navigate their worlds. Ethnographic journalism is not about the view from above, but the view from among — privileging how people understand their own actions, identities, and social worlds. The method also implies a critical awareness of the journalist’s own role, acknowledging positionality and potential biases. In that sense, ethnographic journalism is not only a method but a critical rethinking of the very foundations of journalistic objectivity, authorship, and narrative voice (Hermann, 2016, 2024).

Step-by-step guide

Ethnographic reporting can feel daunting especially given the time and access it requires. But even short-term engagements can benefit from its mindset and method. This simplified step-by-step approach helps guide the process:

Before: entering the field

Choose a site or group not simply based on newsworthiness, but on curiosity, social relevance, or personal intrigue. Conover (2016: 33) suggests starting with what confuses, annoys, or fascinates you.

Build access slowly. Identify gatekeepers, be transparent about your role (or strategically ambiguous, depending on context), and begin forming relationships.

Do background reading but stay open. Ethnographic reporting depends on inductive thinking: going in without fixed hypotheses.

During: in the field

Observe and participate: Take notes on interactions, behaviors, environments, silences, routines. Participate where ethically appropriate, not to act but to better understand.

Be aware of power: Your presence may alter behavior. Instead of ignoring this, reflect on it. Include yourself in the context as observer, participant, and interpreter.

Attend to the insider perspective: Ethnographic reporting must foreground how people see themselves; their customs, contradictions, aspirations, and explanations. Your job is not to label or explain them, but to amplify how they make sense of their lives.

Keep a field journal: Record your observations, reflections, and feelings. This helps track your evolving understanding and provides narrative material later (Conover, 2016: 81).

After: storytelling and representation

Organize around themes, not chronology or preconceived angles.

Include your positionality: How did your presence shape the material? What biases shaped your view? This isn't self-indulgence — it's methodological transparency.

Let the voices in: Quote generously and faithfully. Allow people to speak in their own terms while still situating them in narrative and context.

Review ethically: Where possible, let subjects review how they're represented, not necessarily for approval, but for dialogue and correction (Cramer & McDevitt, 2004).

2. Examples from journalism and the classroom

In a university setting, Cramer and McDevitt (2004) describe a powerful example where journalism students conducted a project on homelessness and panhandling. Rather than simply report on the issue, they analyzed existing media coverage, engaged directly with people experiencing homelessness, and in some cases lived in similar conditions for a day. Their resulting stories were then shared and discussed with the very community they reported on, turning journalism into dialogue, not just publication.

In my own teaching at the master's level, I introduce students to a downscaled version of ethnographic journalism adapted to the time and resource constraints of the classroom. While classical ethnographic journalism projects might take months or even years often culminating in books, long-form features, or documentaries, we don't have that kind of time. Instead, students work within shorter timeframes and toward more modest formats: a written article, a short video, or an audio vignette.

Despite these constraints, the essential principles of ethnographic journalism remain intact. Students begin with mini field observations in everyday public spaces such as cafés, laundromats, library reading rooms, or bus routes. They are tasked with noticing the rhythms, interactions, and social codes of these environments through quiet, systematic observation. As the course progresses, they move into more structured micro-ethnographies, focusing on

a specific group or recurring setting such as dog walkers in a local park, food delivery workers, or late-night convenience store staff. Over the course of several days or weeks, they return to the same setting repeatedly to observe, interact, participate and gradually build a more layered understanding of the people and practices involved.

What this scaled-down approach offers is a practical and accessible way to develop ethnographic sensibilities. Students learn to slow down, suspend judgment, and attune themselves to detail — skills that can deepen their reporting in any journalistic context. They also practice reflexivity, keeping field journals and discussing how their background and presence shape the story. While the results may not be book-length or exhaustive, they often reveal overlooked perspectives and foster meaningful encounters. Even a brief immersion, if done thoughtfully, can yield richer, more empathetic stories than fast interviews or vox pops. In that sense, this adapted method becomes a valuable tool not only for classroom learning, but for the future practice of journalism itself.

3. Main advantages and challenges of using the method

Ethnographic reporting offers several distinct strengths. It allows journalists to represent communities more accurately and empathetically, moving beyond quick interviews and surface-level portrayals. By spending extended time in a given environment, reporters can uncover underlying dynamics that are often hidden from the news agenda, producing work that resonates with both audiences and sources. At the same time, the method encourages reflexivity, as journalists are pushed to reflect on their own role and influence, thereby strengthening trust and transparency in the reporting process.

Yet these advantages are counterbalanced by clear challenges. Immersion requires time and continuity, which often conflict with the fast-paced rhythms of newsroom production. Ethical dilemmas around power, access, and representation are intensified when relationships with sources extend over longer periods, and journalists must carefully balance involvement with independence. Finally, the method can be emotionally demanding, particularly for students or early-career reporters who are stepping into unfamiliar social settings. These challenges underscore that ethnographic reporting is both rewarding and demanding, requiring patience, ethical awareness, and resilience.

4. Relevance for journalism studies

Ethnographic reporting is relevant not only as a practice but as a critique of journalistic norms. It questions the myth of neutrality and reframes objectivity as transparency and responsibility. As Anne Kirstine Hermann (2016: p. 263) argues, it offers a genre with episodic, strategic, and stylistic dimensions: it alters how journalists know, how they act, and how they communicate to an audience.

In journalism studies, it bridges theory and practice. It can be read alongside qualitative research, anthropology, and literary non-fiction offering students and scholars a way to investigate journalism as a social encounter, not just a profession.

5. Ethical considerations

Immersion blurs lines. Should the reporter reveal their identity upfront? What happens when relationships deepen over time? What if the journalist witnesses illegal activity, or starts to empathize too strongly with one side?

Conover (2016) reflects candidly on these dilemmas, describing situations where full transparency might close doors, or where withdrawal might feel like betrayal. Cramer and McDevitt emphasize the importance of verification through dialogue, where sources have a say in how their lives are represented (2004: p. 136). In classrooms, we must create space for students to process their ethical uncertainties and learn how to navigate power dynamics without reducing people to story material.

Ultimately, ethnographic journalism offers both reporters and students a way to move beyond surface narratives and engage more deeply with the people and environments they cover. Whether pursued over months or condensed into a classroom project, the method fosters curiosity, empathy, and a sharpened awareness of how meaning is made — not just by journalists, but by those whose lives journalists seek to represent.

6. Further readings

Conover, Ted (1984) *Rolling Nowhere - Riding the Rails with America's Hoboes*. New York: Viking Penguin

Fadimann, Anne (1997) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

D'Aubuisson, Juan José Martínez and Bryan Avelar (2024) The Moskitia: The Honduran Jungle Drowning in Cocaine. *InSight Crime*. Available online here: <https://insightcrime.org/investigations/moskitia-honduran-jungle-drowning-cocaine/>

REFERENCES

- Conover, Ted (2016). *Immersion: A Writer's Guide to Going Deep*. University of Chicago Press.
- Cramer, Janet M., and Michael McDevitt (2004). "Ethnographic Journalism." In *Qualitative Research in Journalism: Taking It to the Streets*, edited by Sharon H. Iorio, 127–143. New York: Routledge.
- Hermann, Anne Kirstine (2016). "Ethnographic Journalism." *Journalism Studies*, 17(1).
- Hermann, Anne Kirstine (2024) "Ethnographic journalism: I enter an unfamiliar culture" In *What am I doing here? A guide to first-person journalism*, edited by Steffen Moestrup, Jesper Gaarskjær and Gitte Luk, 139-155. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.
- Jenkins, Mandy (2019). "What Ethnography Can Teach Us About Better Reporting." Medium. <https://medium.com/jsk-class-of-2019/what-ethnography-can-teach-us-about-better-reporting-92d858d2e6cb>
- Geertz, Clifford (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic Books.

STEFFEN MOESTRUP

Senior Associate Professor
Research and Development
Danish School of Media and Journalism
sdm@dmjx.dk

Den engagerade reportern: Svenska sociala reportage 1910- 2010

Af Cecilia Aare. Makadam, 2023. 307 s.

RASMUS RØNLEV

Syddansk Universitet

Fortællende journalistik udmærker sig ved at skabe indlevelse i de mennesker den fortæller om. Sådan hedder det ofte i håndbøger om fortællende journalistik – forstået bredt som journalistik der anvender fortællende virkemidler til at formidle virkelige historier (van Krieken & Sanders, 2021, s. 1404). “Menneskene behandles som *personer i stedet for kilder*”, skriver Mikkel Hvid i *Fascinerende fortælling* (2007, s. 12); og “[i]nsigt i andre menneskers indre liv skaper identifikasjon og innlevelse hos leseren”, skriver Linda Dalviken i *Fortællende journalistik i Norden* (2005, s. 31). For nu bare at tage to markante skandinaviske eksempler. I min egen undervisning hører jeg undertiden mig selv sige noget i stil med at hvor den traditionelle nyhedsjournalistik *generaliserer* og forfladiger mennesker til *cases*, *nuancerer* den fortællende journalistik og favner mennesker i al deres *kompleksitet*.

Men er det nu også helt så enkelt? Det er det centrale spørgsmål i Cecilia Aares imponerende bog *Den engagerade reportern: Svenska sociala reportage 1910-2010*. Undertitlens ‘sociala reportage’ henviser til reportager der har et socialt, forandringsrettet sigte, og som afspejler et særligt professionelt og undertiden også personligt engagement fra journalisternes side (s. 7 og 91). Gennem en diakron undersøgelse af skrevne reportager gennem 100 år viser Aare hvordan socialt engagerede svenske journalister som Ester Blenda Nordström (1891-1848), Ivar Lo-Johansen (1901-1990), Barbro Alving (1909-1987) og Jan Guillou (1944-) med deres fortællinger måske nok er med til at give indblik i ‘det levede liv’ blandt bondepiger, minnearbejdere, sygeplejersker og ‘raggare’, men samtidig formidler romantiserede generaliseringer og fordomsfulde stereotyper der i hvert fald delvis modarbejder egentlig indlevelse i de pågældende mennesker. Bogen fungerer på den måde som et nuancerende mod-svar til den fejende og fejrende påstand om at fortællende journalistik er indlevelsens genre. I forlængelse af dette udfordrer bogen den

journalistiske selvopfattelse at journalister der skriver socialt engagerede reportager, er ædle riddere der kæmper den gode sag for samfundets svage og udsatte og mod politiske og økonomiske magtinstanser (s. 9). Som Aare selv skriver som programmerklæring i bogens introduktion: "Det er dags at nyansere synen på det sociale reportaget som ett tidløst uttryck för en hängiven reporters osjälviska uppdrag" (s. 10).

Før jeg når til hvordan Aare så gør dét, er det dog nødvendigt med lidt begrebsafklaring: For nogle læsere vil det måske undre at jeg i en anmeldelse af en bog om *reportager* indleder med at skitsere en udbredt normativ antagelse i håndbøger om *fortællende journalistik*. Aare anlægger imidlertid en bred forståelse af reportagegenren og definerer reportage som: "Varje text som har skrivits med ett journalistiskt syfte och som helt eller delvis berättas i en narrativ form med sceniske inslag" (s. 11). Denne forståelse har hun tidligere forklaret og forsvaret i sin – meget anbefalelsesværdige – ph.d.-afhandling *Reportaget som berättelse* (Aare, 2021, s. 5-11). Personligt er jeg agnostiker på dette punkt så længe man som Aare lægger sine antagelser åbent frem; men det kan være relevant for læsere at vide at Aare med betegnelsen 'reportage' altså ikke begrænser sig til tekster der bygger på journalistens egne observationer, men også inkluderer tekster der bygger på rekonstruktion (ibid., s. 7-9). Hos Aare er reportage ikke nødvendigvis den 'stedets genre' (Steensen, 2009) som jeg i hvert fald selv er vant til at tænke på reportage som, men en genrebetegnelse hun – som hun selv skriver i sin afhandling – bruger synonymt med betegnelsen 'berättande journalistik' og beslægtede engelske termer som 'literary journalism', 'narrative journalism', 'literary narrative journalism', 'creative non-fiction' med flere (Aare, 2021, s. 10) – alene mylderet af betegnelser antyder hvor kært et barn der er tale om. Det giver derfor mening at anskue *Den engagerade reportern* som et bidrag til fortællende journalistik som forskningsfelt.

Det centrale for Aare er at reportager er journalistiske fortællinger. Hoveddelen af bogen består af nærlæsninger af udvalgte reportager med afsæt i narratologisk teori med (medie)retorik i ascendanten. Det sidste, altså det retoriske, er vigtigt fordi Aare i endnu højere grad end hvad tilfældet er i hendes tidligere undersøgelser, er optaget af samspillet mellem tekst og kontekst i den forstand at hun undersøger hvordan de fortællinger hun analyserer, spejler deres samtid, herunder herskende journalistiske professionsidealer (s. 8-9). Nøglebegrebet i analyserne er *narrativt engagement* – et begreb Aare oprindeligt har fremsat i sin ph.d.-afhandling – hvilket hun inddeler i henholdsvis *narrativ medfølelse* (at læsere får sympati med fortællingens karakterer) og *narrativ indlevelse* (at læsere forstår karaktererne ved at se verden fra deres perspektiv) (s. 24-25). De to ting,

medfølelse og indlevelse, spiller sammen, men er ikke betinget af hinanden. Som Aare forklarer, kan en journalistisk fortælling godt skabe indlevelse i eksempelvis en morders perspektiv uden samtidig at skabe medfølelse for vedkommende (s. 25). Omvendt betyder det forhold at en fortælling får læsere til at føle med fortællingens karakterer, ikke nødvendigvis at fortællingen samtidig gør læsere i stand til at leve sig ind i og dermed forstå karaktererne.

De reportager som Aare analyserer, har hun valgt fordi de er skrevet af journalister der, som hun formulerer det, "har hyllats för att vara engagerade i bemärkelsen hängivna sin reporteruppgift" (s. 9). Hyldesten har manifesteret sig ved at de pågældende journalister og deres reportager er blevet fremhævet i håndbøger, antologier og forskning. Det betyder, som Aare selv bemærker, at reportagerne ikke nødvendigvis er repræsentative for journalistisk praksis i deres samtid, men de er dog repræsentative for sam- og eftertidens idealforestillinger om god journalistik og må i kraft af at være blevet fremhævet som forbilleder formodes at have øvet særlig indflydelse på praksis (s. 10 og 277-278). Aare har udvalgt syv journalister fordelt på fem perioder: Ester Blenda Nordström og Gustaf Hellström repræsenterer den første periode omkring 1910; Ivar Lo-Johansson repræsenterer den anden periode omkring 1930; Barbro Alving repræsenterer den tredje periode omkring 1950; Jan Guillou repræsenterer den fjerde periode omkring 1970; og Maciej Zaremba og Karen Söderberg repræsenterer den femte og sidste periode omkring 1990-2000. For hver periode karakteriserer Aare samtidens journalistiske idealrolle, introducerer de(n) journalist(er) hvis reportager hun analyserer, og dykker så ned i et antal reportager. Alt er konsekvent struktureret og tydeligt metakommunikeret. Som læser er man aldrig i tvivl om hvor man er, hvor man kommer fra, og hvor man er på vej hen.

I sine analyser undersøger Aare hvordan narrativt engagement i de valgte tekster spiller sammen med journalisternes professionelle engagement uden for teksterne, altså fx det forhold at Ester Blenda Nordström(s samtid) så journalistens rolle som at opsøge miljøer læserne ikke kendte (s. 39), eller at Jan Guillou(s samtid) så journalistens rolle som at være et kritisk korrektiv til samfundets øvrige magtinstanser (s. 175). På tværs af analyserne viser Aare hvordan en såvel individuel som institutionel hensigt om at forandre verden til det bedre kun delvist realiseres i teksterne særligt på grund af en mangel på narrativ indlevelse – om end det retfærdigvis skal siges at Aare også viser hvordan teksterne samtidig i varierende omfang skaber både medfølelse og indlevelse. Som Aare selv forklarer: "Spelet och spänningen mellan engagemang och generalisering utgör den röda tråden genom analyserna" (s. 10). Eksempelvis var det Ivar Lo-Johanssons hensigt at give sine læsere indblik i arbejdnernes vilkår

rundt om i verden og samtidens forventning at reportager havde et socialt engageret ærinde; men dét modarbejdes i passager af at Lo-Johansson reducerer de arbejdere han skriver om, til romantiserede arketyper uden navne eller andre særtræk – og i øvrigt generelt beskriver kvinder i seksualiserede vendinger og jøder, kinesere og romaer (“sigøjnere” hos Lo-Johansson) i decideret racistiske termer (s. 102-137).

Som analyserne skrider frem, udpeger Aare løbende ligheder og forskelle mellem de valgte journalister og reportager, og på den måde fremhæver hun delanalysernes indbyrdes sammenhæng og akkumulerede pointer på forbilledlig vis. Dette leder i sidste instans til en overordnet analytisk pointe om at reportagerne afspejler værdier og normer i deres samtid og samtidig er med til at formulere selvsamme værdier og normer (s. 278). Et særligt slående eksempel på det sidste, altså fortællingernes skabende kraft, er Barbro Alvingss reportageserie fra Norrland publiceret i 1951. Her er fortællingens helte myndighedspersoner som toldere og sygeplejersker der fungerer som tematiske repræsentanter for et idylliseret “folkhem”, mens landsdelens indbyggere, norrlændingene, undertiden ender som fortællingens fremmede der gennem mild ironisk afstandtagen iscenesættes på kanten af selvsamme idealsamfund – tænk engang, her kan bonden finde på at sætte konen for ploven for at skåne hesten, tøhø (s. 147-172). Som journalistiske fortællinger er reportagerne på én gang konstitueret af og konstituerende for den tid de er skrevet i. De er fortællinger til tiden.

I sine vurderinger af om reportagerne skaber narrativt engagement, gør Aare sig løbende overvejelser om hvordan teksterne kan tænkes at virke på forskellige publikummer. Hun inddrager i den forbindelse flere relevante publikumsinstanser såsom reportagerenes samtidige læsere, nutidige læsere og ideallæsere på tværs af tid (s. 32-33). I en analyse af en reportage af Jan Guillou fra 1979 hæfter Aare sig fx ved fortællerens kommentar om at den 14-årige svenske svømmer Lotta Karlsson måske ender som “en kraftigt kurvig 15-åring”, og argumenterer for at nutidige læsere nok vil finde kommentaren “gubbig” (s. 190). Det tror jeg også, men i princippet kan vi ikke vide det uden at inddrage en form for receptionsanalyse, ligesom vi i princippet heller ikke kan vide hvad samtidige læsere har tænkt. Når Aare vurderer at de reportager hun analyserer, i flere tilfælde modvirker narrativt engagement og særligt narrativ indlevelse, rumstærer spørgsmålet om i hvilket omfang reportagerne måske alligevel har engageret sine samtidige læsere alene i kraft af den gestus der lå i at de pågældende journalister opsøgte ukendte miljøer og anlagde alternative vinkler på verden. At vi ikke kan vide det baseret på tekstanalyse alene, er ikke en udfordring som er unik for Aare og hendes undersøgelse, men en som alle kvalitative

tekstanalytikere, mig selv inklusive, kæmper med. Aare viser i mine øjne en farbar vej ved, når det lader sig gøre, at validere sine vurderinger med henvisning til andre forskeres læsninger af de samme tekster, fx Britt Hulténs. Men ud over det lavpraktiske metodiske spørgsmål om hvordan man bedst vurderer teksters virkning, melder der sig et andet og større spørgsmål: Hvordan skal vi forholde os til at fortidens tekster afspejler andre værdier og normer end vores? I disse år synes det at være et spørgsmål der i stigende grad melder sig ikke blot i journalistik- eller retorikforskning, men i humanistisk forskning mere generelt. Igen synes jeg at Aare viser vejen ved at tage fortidens tekster alvorligt, nærlæse dem omhyggeligt og lægge sine iagttagelser åbent frem så læseren kan gøre sig sine egne konklusioner. Aare er måske nok kritisk over for fortidens journalistik, men hun er i dialog med den. Og som hendes analyser demonstrerer, er der meget at lære af fortidens fortællinger, om journalistisk research og værdien af at forlade sit skrivebord og tale med de mennesker man fortæller om, såvel som om journalistisk fortællekunst og de mange muligheder man har som journalist som henholdsvis fortæller og karakter.

Cecilia Aares bog *Den engagerade reportern* belyser i mere end én forstand hvad menneskers stemmer betyder i journalistik(forskning): De stærke fortællerstemmer i de journalistiske fortællinger som Aare undersøger, og som hendes læsninger, trods kritikken, viser stadig fortjener at blive læst. De stemmer som fortællerne i hvert fald har en hensigt om at lade komme til orde. Og så Aares egen letgenkendelige afdæmpede, men autoritative stemme der leder læseren sikkert gennem bogens argument i alt fra pointerede underrubrikker til formfuldendte fodnoter der osrer af old school akademisk håndværk. Alt i alt skal der her fra lyde et hurra for en udgivelse der helt i sit analysemateriale ånd tager sig god tid til på kritisk-kærlig vis at rette lyset mod betydningen af menneskestemmen i journalistik i al dens forbilledlighed og fejlbarlighed!

REFERENCER

- Aare, C. (2021). *Reportaget som berättelse: En narratologisk undersökning av reportagegenren*. Institutionen för kultur och estetik, Stockholms Universitet.
- Aare, C. (2023). *Den engagerade reportern: Svenska sociala reportage 1910-2010*. Makadam Förlag.
- Dalviken, L. (2005). *Fortællende journalistik i Norden*. Forlaget Ajour.
- Hvid, M. (2007). *Fascinerende fortælling*. 3. udgave. Update.
- Steensen, S. (2009). *Stedets sjanger. Om moderne reportasjejournalistikk*. IJ-forlaget.

van Krieken, K., & Sanders, J. (2021). What is narrative journalism? A systematic review and an empirical agenda. *Journalism*, 22(6), 1393–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919862056>

RASMUS RØNLEV

Lektor

Center for Journalistik

Syddansk Universitet

roenlev@journalism.sdu.dk

Journalistikkens danske historie: Journalister, redaktører og nyhedsmedier fra 1830'erne til nutiden

**Av Lars Kabel. Samfundslitteratur, 2024. 343
s.**

HENRIK G. BASTIANSEN
Høgskolen i Volda

Det er dristig å ville oppsummere et lands journalistikk gjennom 200 år mellom to permer, men danske Lars Kabel tar sjansen. Han vier 300 sider til dette formidable prosjektet. Hans nye bok, *Journalistikkens danske historie* handler om håndverk, fag og yrke på tvers av de ulike medieformene. Boken er derfor hverken pressehistorie eller radio- og TV-historie, men inkluderer alle disse og legger til nye digitale medier til slutt – hele tiden med journalistikken selv i sentrum. Hvordan har han så løst denne oppgaven?

I bokens innledende “deklarasjon” skriver Lars Kabel at her kommer den danske journalistikkens historie, “kortlagt og beskrevet for første gang”. Det vil si: det som er nytt er hans egen syntese av kunnskaper fra mange kanter. Forfatteren har løst sin oppgave ved å skrive 32 korte kapitler som er viet til hvert sitt avgrensede tema, men boken angir ingen overgripende epoker eller lengre linjer utover dette. Hvert kapittel er et selektivt nedslag i dansk journalistikk og forfatteren presiserer at de er sett gjennom hans egen faglige optikk og temperament. Han innrømmer helt eksplisitt at kapitlene er preget av hans eget subjektive ståsted. De 32 kapitlene – som skal kunne leses uavhengig av hverandre – bygger likevel på mange kilder og mye forskning. Litteraturlisten oppgir 140 verk. Og når forfatteren selv har 45 års erfaring med journalistikk, medier, forskning og utvikling, er det klart at han legger hele sin faglige tyngde inn i dette prosjektet. Hans innledning er likevel overraskende kort; kun halvannen side. Deretter går han i gang med 1830-årene og brytningene i datidens journalistikk.

Forfatteren bringer oss raskt inn i 1830-årene og hvordan journalistikken den gang overvåket makten og øvrigheten i Danmark frem

til 1849. Boken åpner altså med et flott nedslag om journalistikkens samfunnskritiske rolle, som passer godt med profesjonens selvopfatning. Jeg undrer meg dog over at forfatteren ikke starter med de første danske aviser i 1660 og hva slags journalistikk som kom på trykk under det dansk-norske eneveldet. Da ville han nemlig fått frem det stikk motsatte: hvordan journalistikken krøp for kongen og makten i 170 år før 1830. Så allerede her ser vi konsekvensene av forfatterens subjektive valg: det er noen typer journalistikk han liker – den samfunnskritiske – mens han distanserer seg fra andre. Han utelater faktisk hele epoken 1660-1830 og oppgir ikke en gang noen begrunnelse for det. Men ved å utelate perioder der journalistikken krøp for makten og ikke dekket noen samfunnskritisk funksjon gir han et altfor snevert bilde av journalistikkens reelle rolle i Danmark. Han tar riktignok opp eneveldet til behandling i bokens første kapittel og får frem dens brytninger, men 170 års dansk journalistikk er utelatt allerede ved starten av første kapittel.

Når dette er sagt gir første kapittel et levende innblikk i journalistikken i “gullalderen” for dansk kultur, med mange kjente personligheter. Kapitlet avsluttes med Grunnloven av 1849. Det andre kapitlet følger opp med begynnelsen til den moderne danske journalistikken, mellom 1849 og 1871. Nyhetstelegrammer, Ritzaus byrå og det første intervjuet i dansk presse (1871) kom disse årene. I det tredje kapitlet – som han kaller “kampjournalistikk” – handler det om fremveksten av partipressen i Danmark mellom 1870 og 1888 og dens tre første grener: Venstrepressen, Høyrepressen og den sosialistiske pressen. Avisproduksjonen ble industrialisert, samtidig som nye navn – som Hermann Bang – etablerte seg som lysende navn i dansk presse. Lars Kabel ser Bangs teknikk – med beskrivelser scene for scene – som et spill av den moderne journalistikkens gjennombrudd disse årene.

Mens de tre første kapitlene integrerer flere temaer i seg, er bokens fjerde kapittel en biografi om den viktige pressemannen Henrik Cavling (1858-1933). Han omtales som Danmarks første journalist. Cavling skildret tidens hendelser så presist og detaljert at det virket som om han hadde vært til stede – selv når han ikke var der. Inspirert av amerikansk presse fornyet han storavisen *Politiken* og gjorde den til en foregangsavis for aviser i hele Norden. Kapitlet om Henrik Cavling – som er svært interessant – er på 24 sider.

Slik fortsetter boken. Korte kapitler belyser stadig flere sider av dansk journalistikk helt opp til i dag. Temaene varierer mye. Ett kapittel handler om journalistikkens metode, et annet om fotojournalistikken, et tredje om pressen under Første verdenskrig, om den angelsaksiske journalistikkens dominans, om etableringen av Statsradiofonien, om den første danske lærebok i journalistikk,

dokumentarfilmens fremvekst og dansk journalistikk under besetelsen 1940-45 osv.

Lars Kabel setter hele tiden journalistikken selv i sentrum og man kan tydelig se at han er opptatt av yrket som håndverk og metode. Samtidig klarer han ikke å unngå at tematikken spriker i nokså mange retninger, for også i andre halvdel av boken betyr de mange korte kapitlene at fremstillingen tilføres stadig flere temaer. Så mange blir det at man som leser etter hvert begynner å savne en rød tråd, eller noen overordnede redigerende grep, for eksempel noen hovedkapitler som kunne strukturert stoffet klarere. Jeg har selv skrevet bøker som er synteser av store mengder kunnskap fra mange kilder og vet at dette lar seg gjøre. I stedet fortsetter fremstillingen med flere enkeltkapitler – om radio og TV, Watergate, Vietnam, TV 2, webjournalistikk, medielogikk, medialisering, segmentpresse, konsensusnyheter, sosiale medier, medieplattformer osv. Flere av dem overlapper hverandre i tid, fordi de følger opp utviklingstrekk som forfatteren behandler separat i hvert sitt kapittel. Man får etter hvert inntrykk av at boken egentlig er en serie nærbilder. Boken begrenser seg til en punkt-til-punkt-belysning av dansk journalistikk. Den blir en slags katalog. Jeg skulle som nevnt gjerne sett at forfatteren – utover sine 32 enkeltkapitler – hadde lagt like stor vekt på å skape analytiske overblikk og større utsyn. Forfatterens løsning gjør at fremstillingen blir tematisk fragmentert.

Dette forhindrer likevel ikke at mange av enkeltkapitlene er både interessante og fascinerende i seg selv. Det gjelder for eksempel kapittel 14 om *Ekstra Bladet* og *B.T.* og deres suksess fra 1960-årene og fremover. Det er også interessant å lese om hvordan lokalavisen *Orange County Register* i California ble et innflytelsesrikt forbilde for danske aviser etter at de utviklet sin nye "life journalism", som lå mye tettere på lesernes hverdag.

Og det er direkte hyggelig å lese så inngående om Lise Nørgaard i kapittel 15: hun er en ruvende skikkelse i dansk journalistikk og samtidig skaperen av TV-serien *Matador*, som er blitt folkets felleseie. "Lise af Danmark" skrev hennes gamle avis, *Politiken*, ved hennes død i 2023, 105 år gammel. Avisen mente hun hadde oppnådd en posisjon i Danmark som bare kunne sammenliknes med kongehuset. Nørgaard-kapitlet er nok et biografisk innslag i denne boken og det er lett å se at Lars Kabel bygger sin fremstilling på hennes egne bøker, for teksten legger stor vekt på hennes egne følelser og opplevelser.

Noen ganger overrasker Lars Kabel med hvordan han dimensjonerer sine kapitler. Enkelte store og viktige emner kan få en ganske kort omtale, slik som partipressens fall, mens enkelte mindre emner, kan få mye plass. Hans vektlegging av de ulike emnene opp mot hverandre kan derfor i høy grad diskuteres.

Fra og med kapittel 24 handler boken om 2000-tallets journalistikk i Danmark. Lars Kabel viser at han er oppdatert på digitale medier, medialisering, segmentpressen, de nye plattformenes logikk osv. Og i bokens siste kapittel handler det om “nutiden”. Der trekker Lars Kabel opp noen linjer og perspektiver på samtidsjournalistikken. Han avslutter med å slå fast at “Historien har vist, at journalistikken remedieres gang på gang, men også at dens kerne er universel – nærmest tidløs” (s. 335). Med dette ender boken – og jeg synes å registrere enn viss resignasjon på yrkets vegne i enkelte av hans formuleringer. Er denne boken forfatterens farvel til sin livslange pasjon?

Til slutt må jeg påpeke to konkrete mangler ved boken. Det er synd å måtte konstatere at forfatteren daterer sitt forord til august 2024, bare to uker før stipendiat Josef Batikha disputerte for doktorgraden i Roskilde den 12. september 2024. Hans avhandling kaster nemlig helt nytt lys over dansk radio og TV fra 1945 til 1970. Mens Lars Kabel trekker frem eksempler på mer kritisk journalistikk i Statsradiofonien og DR disse årene, dokumenterer Batikha det motsatte: at radio og TV i årevis stod på det bestående samfunns side. De var i tillegg sterkt preget av amerikanske kilder og USAs verdensoppfatning i sitt internasjonale stoff. Det virkelig nye som Batikha dokumenterer så grundig er at dette var amerikanske myndigheters strategisk bevisste påvirkningsforsøk overfor Danmark. I all hemmelighet forsøkte de helt bevisst å bruke dansk radio og TV for å skape en proamerikansk opinion i et land som USA oppfattet som en frontlinjestat mot Østersjøen og Sovjetunionen under den kalde krigen. Og amerikanernes PR-arbeid lyktes: danske radio- og TV-programmer brukte stoffet i stor grad. Josef Batikha bygger på primærkilder fra US National Archives i Washington DC, et materiale som ingen andre danske forskere har studert. Jeg var selv opponent ved denne disputasen i Roskilde. Og på denne bakgrunn må jeg bare konstatere at den fremstillingen som Lars Kabel gir av etterkrigstidens danske radio og TV er helt misvisende. Det er bare å lese Batikhas avhandling, som heter *Koldkrigsjournalistik*, så vil enhver se det. Dette kan ikke Lars Kabel kritiseres for, siden disputasen kom rett etter at han hadde innlevert sitt manus.

Den andre mangelen må han ta ansvaret for selv, nemlig at han som sagt utelater dansk presse og journalistikk under eneveldet mellom 1660 og 1830: 170 år av yrket har falt ut ved bokens start. Dette er et valg som ikke kan forsvares faglig. Felles for journalistikken under eneveldet og den kalde krigen er at den langt på vei fungerte på det bestående samfunnets premisser: den ble systemlojal. Selv om han innrømmer sin subjektivitet kan ikke Lars Kabel føre den så langt at han mister interessen for de epokene der dansk journalistikk stilte seg på maktens side – slik disse tilfellene viser. Jeg

håper derfor at forlag og forfatter vil påta seg å utgi en revidert utgave av denne boken – i hvert fall hvis de tar sikte på at den fortsatt skal gi et helhetsbilde av journalistikkens danske historie. Om de kunne tilført boken en tydeligere analytisk struktur i selve disposisjonen, ville de også gjort boken bedre.

HENRIK G. BASTIANSEN

Professor

Avdeling for mediefag

Høgskolen i Volda

Henrik.grue.bastiansen@hivolda.no