

## Abstracts

*Ragner Waldahl*

### **Media Influence, the Construction of Meaning and Political Agenda-setting**

There have been great changes in the political role of the media during the last decades. While the media 50 years ago primarily worked as loyal channels for the political parties, they now are independent participants on the political arena. This article discusses three important aspects related to modern media's position in political life, based on recent research. The first part deals with the agenda setting function, and shows that the political agenda in society is influenced by the media coverage of different issues, by the ability of the media to affect the criteria by which people judge the political leaders and by the way the media frame their political content. The second part deals with the relationship between the media's political strategies and the strategies of the politician to keep the political initiative, and how this process create a medialization of politics which have an impact upon people's understanding of the political life and on the work of the politician. The third part deals with the media's role as a moderator of the political debate, and how this role change the working conditions of the politician, intensify the political climate and give the politician new challenges.

*Anker Brink Lund*

### **The Journalist's Roles in the Edited Society**

Modern mass communication tends to promote political action by proxy, reducing responsible citizens to consumers of media products rather than producers of public opinion. On the other hand, mass mediated coverage of spectacular cases frequently places individuals without formal office of authority at the very center of the political scene. In order to explain these contradictions, Scandinavian media research offers a supplementary approach to traditional gatekeeper studies and agenda setting theory analyzing political

communication in terms of changes in the public sphere, i.e. parliamentary democracy gradually moving from an editing political system towards an edited society. Taking this point of departure the author demonstrates how elected officials and public administrators tend to lose former privileges in terms of defining what cases should be regarded as relevant issues demanding public regulation, while journalists achieve an active political role acting on behalf of the edited society in unstable alliances with professional communicators and their clients.

*Anders Esmark, Peter Kjær og Ove K. Pedersen*

### **System of Political Communication**

It is easier to agree on the fact that political communication is very *important* than on what political communication *is*. In this article, we suggest that political communication has yet to be elaborated as an object of analysis in political science. We claim that research on political communication has been hampered by two very common tendencies. First, the tendency to understand political communication *normatively*. This has to do with the fact that political communication evolved historically from a paradigmatic combination of pluralism, behaviorism and media sociology. Second, the development of a *division of labour* between political science and media research that has made it even harder to replace the normative understanding with a more adequate analytical understanding of political communication. We suggest one way to overcome both these tendencies - via the concept of „system of political communication“. We thus describe how a political communication system can be made the object of analysis in a way that does not presuppose a normative understanding, and which accordingly attempts to bridge the gap between political science and media research.

*Jens Henrik Haahr*

### **Dancing in Bali: Media Presentations of the Free Youth Education Scheme**

Based on a case study, this article explores the consequences of media presentations for societal agendas. The medias presentation of the education programme termed the Free Youth Education exemplifies efficient agenda setting. With a few TV features, an issue was placed higher at both the media agenda, the political agenda and the public agenda. The article demonstrates how these features at the same time rest upon and contribute to the construction of a discursive knowledge of what education is and what it is opposite to. The efficiency of agenda setting thus involves the construction of bipolar oppositions. This approach to analyses of the medias influence on agendas constitutes a qualitative alternative to quantitative studies of the „framing“-effects of media presentations

*Ferruh Yilmaz*

### **The Construction of Ethnic Minorities: The Elite, Media and the „Ethnification“ of the Danish Debate**

The media has an important role in ethnifying the Danish debate on ethnic minorities. The difference between „us“ and „them“ has become the pillar of a discourse which constructs minorities as an ethnified group with essential traits. The traditional criticism of the media's treatment of ethnic minorities focuses on the positive or negative meanings that media products are believed to contain. The result is that the difference between „us“ and „them“ is maintained and reproduced. Instead, we should problematize the discursive construction itself.

*Peter Marker*

### **Political Representation in the Danish Parliament**

In most situations the focus of representation of Danish MPs is the political parties in parliament. At internal meetings within the parties' parliamentary groups, however, discussions reflect that the MPs also represent different constituencies, interest organizations or social groups. Likewise, the style of representation changes from one situation to another: it varies with the place and time of the representation and the subject of negotiation. Generally, both the focus and style of representation in the Danish parliament *Folketinget* seem to be influenced by factors such as political affiliations, party size, the geographical location of the MPs' constituencies and the MPs' positions within their respective party groups. The conclusions of the article are based on personal interviews with 16 out of 179 Danish MPs.