

"The consumption of news media as democratic resources"

A cross-cultural research project

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## "A day with the news media, 2014"

(Kirsten Hansen: early retired nursery school teacher)

- Morning
  - Browse email, then Facebook (no read, no reply)
  - dr.dk: read key news stories
  - Email + Facebook: serious read-reply
  - Facebook: shared links to news sites: denkorteavis.dk, avisen.dk, ekstrabladet.dk, information.dk, YouTube.
    - gets agitated: responds
    - "led astray": reads other news stories
- Daytime: (iterative) email, Facebook, dr.dk
- Evening:
  - Primetime TV news (DR or TV2)
  - TV Current affairs/debate
- "Google is my friend!" leads to Wikipedia, news sites



#### Kirsten Jensen is....

- Not representative, not atypical
- Her Top-5 of news media:
  - Public service online news
  - Facebook
  - Public service TV
  - Public service TV current affairs/debate
  - Google
- Highest-ranked print newspaper: No. 16
- Social media sites have a dual function:
  - News media in their own right
  - Links to other online news media



## Project frame: How do people use the news media – as a democratic and everyday resource?

- Cross-media research focus beyond 'silo' research:
  - How do people navigate in today's mediatized news landscape?
  - How do people make sense of "the supermarket of news"?
- Descriptive research purpose:
  - building an empirical fact base that maps news media as everyday and democratic resources

#### Related international news research

- Survey cross-national: The Reuters Digital News Survey 2013-2015
- Survey cross-national: The media landscapes of European audiences (Jensen et al. 2015)
- 'Fortified' qualitative cross-national 2014-2015:
  - What do the news media mean to people?
  - How do people build news repertoires from the 'media manifold'(Couldry, Hepp)



## Why do we use news? What does news do for us?

Audience 'logics' as 'worthwhileness': News media must be perceived by audience members as *worthwhile*!

7 worthwhileness factors: A news medium must:

- be worth the time spent
- maintain public connection to networks, through relevant content
  - democratic worthwhileness
  - everyday worthwhileness
- undergo normative negotiation with significant others
- have participatory potential (cf. 'user-created content')
- be affordable (price)
- have technological appeal (mobil/smart phone, text-TV/remote control)
- have situational fit (living-room, train/car commuter)

The worthwhiless 'equation': - an aggregate 'score' determining what news media become part of our news diet



## Beyond surveys? Adding a qualitative perspective

Research landscape dominated by "hard evidence":

"The audience formations (...) are all based on measures of behavior. (...) people's self-reports are especially prone to error. (This book is) based on meters or server-generated data." (Webster 2014)

#### This project's research interest:

- How do people make sense of their news media preferences?
- How are people's choices from the 'media manifold' interrelated?
- How can cross-media news repertoires be discovered with a qualitative approach?
- How is news use a contextualized part of daily life?
- How do news repertoires interrelate with forms of democratic engagement and participation?
- How can such national profiles of news use be compared across cultures?

## "The consumption of news media as democratic resources" A cross-cultural research project

- Our solution: A qualitative methodology integrated with a reliable quantitative generalization capability (Q methodology)
- A spin-off from the COST Action *Transforming Audiences*, *Transforming Societies* (2010-2014), initiative of Hillel Nossek & Hanna Adoni
- 12 participating countries
  - Germany, Belgium (Flanders), Belgium (French), Netherlands, Poland,
     Denmark, Croatia, Portugal, Spain, Israel, New Zealand, Canada
- Replicates Schrøder's original research design (Denmark 2009) and cross-national study with Flanders (2011)
  - Courtois, Schrøder & Kobbernagel 2014
- Fieldwork with 36 informants, 36 news media types

## How to integrate the qualitative and the quantitative?

## Qualitative inspiration:

- Depth-interview: A day in the life with the news media
- Think-aloud when doing card puzzle game

### Quantitative inspiration:

- Q-sorts (factor analysis) finds typologies in small samples
- Short questionnaire: political engagement/participation

## Motivation for integrating:

 the interpretive procedures of qualitative analytical generalization are opaque (Schrøder 2012)

## The qualitative-to-quantitative translation device Kirsten's puzzle game



## 36 news media categories on Q cards

- TV news or current affairs (on a TV set or any other device)
  - 8 news formats/types)
- Radio news or current affairs (on a radio set or any other device)
  - 3 news formats/types)
- Newspapers print
  - 6 types
- Newspapers and broadcasters' online text multimodal news (on a computer or any mobile device)
  - 9 types
- News on social media (on a computer or any mobile device)
  - 5 types
- Other news media
  - 5 types

## Challenges of the 2014 cross-cultural fieldwork

- 2014 news media landscape differs substantially from 2009: different focus for the cards' news media types:
  - from technology/device orientation to media institutions/formats orientation, irrespective of device
  - 'social media' must be differentiated
- The media systems are moderately different: countries struggle for maximum 'fit' with their national media system:
  - how fine-grained should social media be differentiated?
  - regional TV and newspapers in Germany?
  - text-TV in Denmark?
  - how to handle 'non-existent' media?
- Informants are differentially familiar with different media technologies and softwares within and across countries: How to handle 'unknown' media types?

## The Danish factor solution: 6 factors The F3 scores as example (Top 10 media)

<ul> <li>Tabloid online</li> </ul>	2,59994	F3 informants:
<ul> <li>24-hour TV news</li> </ul>	1,87336	
<ul> <li>National PSB TV</li> </ul>	1,67307	No.26
<ul><li>Facebook</li></ul>	1,33503	No.22
<ul><li>Text-TV</li></ul>	1,30634	No.5
<ul> <li>TV current affairs light</li> </ul>	0,98101	No.7
<ul> <li>Tabloid print</li> </ul>	0,88672	No.14
<ul> <li>National quality, online</li> </ul>	0,69325	No.31
<ul> <li>TV current aff. Serious</li> </ul>	0,64234	No.13
<ul> <li>Free daily online</li> </ul>	0,58804	
• Etc.		

## Interpreting the pattern of a factor score: distribution of prominent news media types

### Things we look for:

- News media in the Top 5
- Highest-ranked print newspaper
- National public service TV, or 24-hour news
- Text-TV
- Highest-ranked radio news
- Highest-ranked newspaper online
- Highest-ranked PSB national broadcaster online
- Highest-ranked social media (Facebook or Twitter)
- News aggregators
- Highest-ranked international news provider

## The nexus of news repertoires and political engagement Short questionnaire

Do those constituting a news repertoire also substantially share digital and deliberative practices:

- mediating news to and discussing news with others
- engagement in cultural practices
- political deliberation and participation online and offline

## The nexus of news repertoires and political engagement Short questionnaire: questions

## 5 questions:

- 1. How do you share or participate in news coverage?
  - 12 options: yes/no
- 2. Importance to you of media-related activities
  - 7 options, scale from 1 to 5
- 3. Role played by social and cultural activities in your life
  - 9 options, scale from 1 to 5
- 4. Role played by political activities last month
  - 4 options, scale from 1 to 5
- 5. Relevance of news as sources for conversation
  - 5 options, scale 1 to 5

## Now a world premiere!

The 6 country repertoires 2014!

## Denmark: Preliminary inventory of repertoires Labels encapsulate the groups' news use

- F1: Online quality omnivore
- F2: Hybrid PSM lover
- F3: '(Light) News Snacker'
- F4: Mainstream Networker
- F5: The intellectual/professional networker
- F6: Print addict

## F1 Online quality omnivore

- Top 2: Online news media
  - National quality newspaper online; Born-online news sites
- Top3-5: Online news media
  - PSB online; YouTube; International news provider online

Profile: Prefers online news from both legacy and born-online news providers. Except for free print newspaper, the Top-10 is online only and includes legacy online, social media, aggregators, email alerts and blogs. TV and radio news are given low priority, approaching non-use. International outlook. Tend towards quality-conscious: National quality newspaper online no.1); PBS online no.3; International online no.5.

- Online/social media participation: High
- Political deliberation/engagement: High, NGO-oriented
- Everyday conversational resources: Online/social media

## F2 Hybrid PSB lover

- Top 2: Radio PSB; Online PSB news
- Top 3-5: National quality online; National PSB TV; PSB Text-TV

Profile: 7 news media in the Top-10 are PSB institutional origin, 6 of them broadcast, 1 online, penchant for radio (no. 1). All of Top-10 are legacy news media. Social media are outside the staple news diet. Not at all averse to 'familiar' online news sources. Tend towards quality-conscious – PSB online+broadcast; national quality newspaper online; Current affairs TV + Radio.

- Online/social media participation: Non-existent
- Political delib./engage.: Low deliberation, some NGO engagement
- Conversational resources: Legacy news media off- and online (incl. radio)

## F3 (Light) News Snacker

- Top 2: Tabloid online; 24-hour TV news
- Top 3-5: National PSB TV; Facebook; Text-TV

Profile: Goes for frequent news updates in the brief and light genres, on a versatile range of technological platforms. TV formats dominate. Print platforms play a minor role, print media are at the bottom of the ranks. But newspapers online play an important role (no.1). A fairly salient taste for depth of information (TV current affairs as no. 6 and 9). PSB TV formats are nos. 3, 5, 6, 8. Newspapers across platforms are nos. 1, 7, 8

- Online/social media participation: High lean-back and lean-forward
- Political delib./engag.: Online delib. high; pol. engagements low
- Everyday conversational resources: Online news, TV news, and social media are near-equal, print sources dispreferred

### F4 Mainstream Networker

- Top 2: National quality daily print; Other social media
- Top 3-5: International TV news; National PSB TV; Facebook

Profile: Another versatile repertoire (cf. F1), with several news consumption strategies: One finding news through one's networks; another searching for news through mainstream national and international news providers, incl. lean-forward news aggregators (no.10) that supplement a variety of lean-back quality suppliers (national print daily quality (no.1), national PSB TV news (no.4). Conspicuous absence of legacy media online.

- Online/social media participation: Moderate Lean-back
- Political delib./engagement: Delib. low; pol. engagement very low
- Everyday conversational resources: TV news and online news media near-equal, print sources playing a modest role

## F5 The intellectual/professional networker

- Top 2: Facebook; Radio current affairs
- Top 3-5: Professional magazines; TV current affairs serious; News on Twitter

Profile: Shares with F4 key strategy to find news through social media networks. Unusual in a Danish context is the prominence of Twitter. The difference from F4 lies mainly in the prominence of two kinds of current affairs programs (radio, TV serious) - radio current affairs signals 'niche intellectual community'. High ranking of professional/party-political magazines is unusual. Mainstream news media come in a second tier of importance.

- Online/social media participation: Lean-back dominates
- Political delib./engage.: online pol. delib. Moderate LOW???; pol. engagem. strong
- Conversational resources: Online news, TV news, print news nearequal

### F6 Print addict

- Top 2: Free daily print; National quality newspaper print
- Top 3-5: Local weekly print; Local daily print; National PSB TV

Profile: Dominated by printed national + local newspapers, incl. paid + free newspapers. Supplemented with PSB TV news, followed by diverse supple-mentary sources incl. 2 sources of TV news (Regional, TV current aff.) and two online-based services (Email alerts; Aggreg.). Apart from these two differently personalized online news providers, online news media are conspicuous by their 'absence', both legacy media online news and social media.

- Online/social media participation: None
- Political delib./engagem.: Low social media delib.; moderate pol.engagem.
- Convers.res.: TV news + print news, online+social news all but absent.

## News repertoires and political engagement: General insight

- Cultural activities: no differences
  - seeing family and friends is given maximum priority by all repertoires;
  - groups differ in terms of which particular cultural activity is most valued (cinema, exhibitions, concerts, etc.)
- Political engagement: membership of a political party is rated low or non-existent.
- There is no direct relationship between high levels of communicative deliberation (Q2) and political engagement (Q4):
  - F3 showing high Q2 (online delib.) and low Q4 (pol. engagem.)
  - F5 showing low Q2 (online delib.) and high Q4 (pol. engagem.)
  - F6 showing low Q2 (online delib.) and considerable Q4 (pol.engagem).

## What next: deeper interpretation of national repertoire

The news media mixes of the six repertoires:

Orientation towards traditional and new platforms:

Uniformity vs. versatility:

- R1: uniform online (almost)
- R2: very hybrid re media platforms; uniform re PSM
- R3: versatile platforms
- R4: strongly versatile platforms
- R5: versatile niche orientation
- R6: uniform print orientation

# What next: interpreting the national repertoires? Coupling the repertoires with

- 'Thick' informant discourses back to the qualitative:
  - interview transcripts for fine-tuning of the repertoires' news consumption profiles
  - Depth understanding of political engagement-andparticipation profiles
- Demographic profiles: age, gender, education, geography
- Further generalization of the repertoires: indexing the ranks of media categories?

#### 'Index' of news sources in Denmark?

Creating index table 1) for each repertoire, 2) for the country

- calculated as an average rank for selected categories of news media

#### Suggested media category indexes:

- Newspaper print index: ranks of 2 top print newspapers
- Newspaper online index: ranks of 2 top online newspapers
- TV index: ranks of 2 top TV news sources
- Radio index: ranks of 2 radio news sources
- TV online index: rank of 1 media (DK)
- Social media index: ranks of 2 media (Facebook, YouTube <u>or</u> Twitter, whichever is highest)
- Index a heuristic lens for cross-national comparison?

#### Danish news index

(the lower average, the better)

	Newsp. Print	Newsp. online	TV news	Radio news	Broadc. online	Social media
Denmark Profile: role of the media types (average ranking across reps.)	3,3	3,3	<b>2,3</b>	<b>4,7</b>	4,2	3,3
Denmark profile: No. of times ranked 1 or 2 in the 6 reps.	1	2	<u>5</u>	0	2	2

- Television news dominates
- Three runners-up: printed newspapers, Online newspapers, Social media
- Broadcasters online and Radio trailing considerably
- F2, F3 F4, F5 are hybrid across traditional and new media

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F1 and F6 have an either-or pattern

## What next: cross-national comparison of repertoires?

- The full picture: nation-by-nation ensembles similarities and differences of the national repertoire systems
- Cross-national spotlight on selected news media categories:
  - Role of public service media across nations
  - Role of social media across nations
- Cross-national spotlight on urgent issues:
  - 'Common ground' versus "Echo chambers"?
  - Nexus of news media/political engagement
- Cross-national spotlight on different media systems (Perusko et al. 2014; Brüggemann et al. 2014)

## Going translocal with Q? Beyond territorial comparison?

- Transnational Q analysis of total data set: towards transnational news repertoires
- "Without the data first being aggregated on a nationalterritorial basis (...), one can obtain a system of categories that describes not simply national differences, but more general common factors and differences in cultural patterns." (Hepp 2013: 140f.)
- Building a new typology with transcultural membership: Multinational news consumption repertoires?

Thank you!