

# The Media Landscape Under Threat: Navigating the Need for Change by Applying an Anthropological Approach

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*While newspaper subscriptions are plummeting and advertising revenues move from content providers to search engines, media houses struggle to adapt and to build new capabilities in order to adapt to emerging consumer practices. Drawing on an on-going research with regional media houses and with news-consuming young families with kids in the countryside of Denmark, I investigate the perception of local media within the broader spectrum of news consumption. How is the term 'news' understood? How does materiality play into this understanding? And how is the newspaper production reproducing contested meanings of „news“?*

## INTRODUCTION

The newspaper industry in Denmark is in a revolutionary stage of change. The production and consumption of news is changing and with it the cultural meaning of it. While news consumption by young people in Denmark has been taken over by television and the Internet<sup>1</sup>, the role of the print media as an historic agent in promoting civic values must be considered in any discussion of current and future practices. When investigating shifting patterns in consumption of news, it is necessary to understand Danish news production and consumption as a product of a *Democratic Corporatist* media system, with the goal to enlighten its citizens. This historic position has not only influenced the media house's development as a social institution, but also the perception of the media as a democratic entity of the state.

Within this context, regional media houses are a particular segment and the focus of this paper. I will discuss the changing perception of what news is, in both form and content and how news fit into the lives of young families.

Let me illustrate the need for a deeper understanding of this changing perception of news and its consumption with an empirical example from the ethnographic research:

One of my first home visits was with Maja<sup>2</sup>, a teaching mum of two kids and her husband Erik, outside of a Jutland town of 7500 inhabitants on the mainland of Denmark. It is Wednesday, which means they received their local newspapers. In their town they have delivered two free versions, but only one local newspaper makes it over the doorstep, the other one goes straight to the trash bin. Even though one newspaper makes it into the house, she starts our conversation by telling me that she doesn't know if she really can help me at all, as she "*doesn't really consume news*". This was particularly intriguing as while she said this I could hear the news coming on from the radio in the open kitchen area.

During our two and a half hour talk her awareness of being a consumer changed from being a non-consumer/user of news products to being a mixed consumer/user, gaining news from various channels. She not only consumes news from the radio when she drives the car (which is quite often as she is living in the countryside), or from the local weekly free newspaper, that she claims not really to read but only has a "*quick look in it*", or from her husband, who is consuming news more actively than she does, for example on their ipad while Maja is watching TV, after the kids have gone to bed.

Maja is not alone in the discrepancy between what she says and does surrounding the news. While quantitative research within media can help forecasting general trends, I am arguing for an anthropological approach, elucidating news practices that can only be understood by linking field structures, individual practices and human ways of thinking.

## THE PROJECT

In the fall/winter of 2014, the *Danish School of Media and Journalism* started a project in collaboration with seven Danish regional media houses<sup>3</sup> and the *Danish Agency for Culture* with the purpose of obtaining nuanced qualitative knowledge about regional media houses' role, significance and relation to families with children. In a further process these insights shall contribute to develop and test new or improve existing media concepts and solutions that strengthen the media houses' local presence and relevance to families who have chosen to stay in the region. The project is an on-going one. So far we have conducted a pilot research with young families around Denmark, a fieldtrip over several weeks in one specific village and fieldwork in a regional media house. Overall, we have conducted 18 interviews with young families and various stakeholders of regional media houses, which shall contribute to a holistic perception of the changing media landscape in Denmark. The project is due to be completed in the beginning of 2016, where we will be presenting user insights gained through ethnography, design anthropological methods and various prototypes. In this paper I am presenting preliminary findings of an on-going project, which should be read through these eyes.

## SITUATING MEDIA WITHIN DENMARK

When exploring news consumption practices it is inevitable to embed the research within the existing media system. Hallin and Mancini (2004) have established three media models, which set a frame to analyse differences and similarities in relationships between the media and politics. While the American media system is based on a *Liberal Model*, characterized amongst other things by domination of market mechanisms and with it a distinct commercial press, Denmark has been based on a *Democratic Corporatist* media system, which is characterised among other things by a high level of political parallelism and the coexistence of journalistic professionalism (ibid: 190f). This coexistence, and with it the institutionalization of the journalistic profession, is also responsible for a high level of consensus on standards of practice of both the social organisation and journalistic profession. There is an accepted understanding among journalists of the role they place in adhering to a certain journalistic code – as watchdogs for society in relation to the state. They work to produce content that is enlightening for their readers and thus good for society.

The strong relation and partnership between the media house as a social institution and the state also being responsible for it, seems to set the Nordic countries apart from other Democratic Corporatist countries, such as Germany, Belgium or the Netherlands (ibid: 193). This is seen in the form of a strong public broadcasting and press subsidy systems, protecting the freedom of press (ibid: 191). The historical development of governmental involvement, and with it the process of consensus-seeking discussion with political authorities of oppositional views, grounds how the news media in Nordic countries is understood, namely as subject and object (or medium) for creating and forming a democratic opinion.

In Denmark the first publications, which can hardly be compared to what one perceives as newspapers nowadays, mark however the starting point of the press in the time of absolute autocracy until the middle of the nineteenth century (Jensen 2003). From then on every larger provincial town had four newspapers, corresponding to the four major political parties: the *Liberals*, *Social Democrats*, *Conservatives* and *Radicals* (Schultz 2007: 6), which is why it was also called the four-party-paper system (Hallin & Mancini 2004: 159).

After the interwar period this changed and shifted towards an Omnibus Press: a press for everyone. Søllinge argues that this is explained by newspaper houses not being able to expand their audiences any longer, as they were limited to the partisan interests of a particular political party (in Hallin & Mancini 2004: 159).

One of the major changes in the shift from the four-party-paper system to the Omnibus Press according to Schultz<sup>4</sup>, is what the Danish media researcher refers to as the *ideological ownership* - where a newspapers advocated a certain political stance – and this had several consequences (2007:7). The shifting relation of ownership mainly during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, from unions to privately owned media houses, also caused changes in ideologies: from a partisan ideology towards a predominantly public ideology – what is good for society and

the greater good – rating commerciality secondly (ibid.). This transformation came hand in hand with further structural changes such as the changing image and role of newspaper editors, the changing format of newspapers, competition of the newspaper market, and the changing role of the journalistic profession, all having an essential role in understanding newspaper production and consumption in a Danish context<sup>5</sup>. While those characteristics are incorporated in today's journalism and the production of news, Schultz points towards a newly emerging press system – the *Segmentation Press* (2007: 5), a newspaper for “some”, and not to “all” (ibid: 20)

Despite this development, the practice of media houses and the profession of journalism needs to be seen in the light of this historical development, which makes several Scandinavian media researchers (Brink Lund, Nord and Roppen 2009) including Schultz, argue against Hallin and Mancini's argument that all media systems will move over time toward a Liberal Model (2004: 301).

## HOW REGIONAL MEDIA HOUSES CONSTRUCT THEIR BUSINESS

The term regional<sup>6</sup> media house in a Danish context refers to one media house covering several (local) municipalities, however not necessarily covering all the municipalities of a particular region. When regional media houses talk about their own products they distinguish between daily and the weekly local newspapers. While the daily news covers a municipal area and needs to be subscribed for in exchange for money, weekly newspapers cover a hyper local area, are delivered for free, and they are financed by advertisement revenues.

With larger history as context, regional media houses in this project saw themselves as contributing and maintaining the local community, as being part of the public interest. While some of the regional media houses have been taken over by national media houses<sup>7</sup>, the project's participating media houses are mainly foundation-funded companies. They see this as an important role to give part of their profit back to the local society or as Adam (57) the administrative director of one of the regional media houses in Denmark said:

We are owned by a fund. (...) We keep of course part of the profit for development (...) however we also distribute our profit back to the local communities. Tomorrow we will share 100.000 DK out to four people of the region, who have had a significant impact on the local community [voluntarily]. We do this to say thank you, but we do it also to say: "Here is a role model (...) worth following as an example". (...) So we are not just working here, like in those large corporations, where news is only there to maximize profit.

In addition to the historical background that has been shaping media houses and the journalistic profession in Denmark, the regional media houses' self-perceived role is particularly one that works towards contributing to and maintaining the local community. Despite the newspapers' goal of reaching the fully geographical segmentation, which inherently describes a plurality and diversity of potential consumers tied together by one criteria - geography - there seems to be a challenge in reaching the younger citizens with kids, a part of the local community, which makes a nuanced investigation of this particular demographic segmentation relevant.

### Local News Just For Some?

From a media studies point of view, local newspapers are already a segment in itself, as this particular niche newspapers transfers' news to a geographically segmented group (Jensen 2003: 135). The local segment however extends itself again as it covers various people and is thus hard to target. As Adam said, “While for us locals we have geography as a foundation, we [media house] need to consider that there is also a huge plurality within the local society. (...) While geography was once enough, I can see that nowadays a lot is built around a community of interests.” He is well aware, that his primary audience is older, or as he said “we use various medias in our lifecycle. (...) it is not unnatural to see that I have an older audience to print the newspaper for”. While in practice it seems that the audience is perceived as something given, Jen Ang (1991) discusses the audience from a broadcast television point of view and points out that the audience is not a static category, but rather dynamic and socially constructed. Schudson

(2003) makes a similar argument that *news media do not find and respond to an existing audience; they create one* (in Willig 2010: 95). This argument contradicts with the self-understanding of the Danish journalistic profession, where audiences rather „are” than „are constructed” and where journalists take over an objective role of information mediation rather than also contribute to construct the information that is communicated. This also calls for a more critical reflection upon the profession of journalism in Denmark.

When visiting young families with kids, one of the first associations’ they would comment on would be the local newspaper’s way of being “*old-fashioned*”. This comment was not really about the materiality (that it is physical) but quite the contrary, more about content and form. Freja (42), a creative employee at an elderly care centre, and mother of two children, would like to see a more nuanced representation and selection of articles in her local newspaper:

I would like to see our local newspaper to be more involved. How is it to be a child in our town? How it is to be young in our town? How it is to be old in our town? It could be great to have a campaign about this. What happens to the old in our town and our neighbours’ town, but also what happens to young people, what happens to the families with kids?

Instead, she is experiencing “*a lot of chaos*” and a lot of things that are not relevant to her. Her husband Frederik (44) agrees and continues that their city is about much more than what comes into the local newspaper and that it lacks subjects that concern the younger generation.

Even though the journalistic profession in Denmark is based on *objective journalism* (Schultz 2007: 10), I refer to Willig (2010) and Gans (1979) who argue that there is a high probability that journalists construct audience images. Gans (1979) further writes that this imagined audience does not necessarily mesh with reality but as Pool and Shulman wrote in 1959, the image a *journalist holds of the reader has an effect on the way the story is written* (in Willig 2010: 96). While it seems that local newspapers have become the image and embodiment of an elderly audience, this research provides a foundation to recreate this imagined audience for younger people and their interests and attract this audience while retaining the existing audience. It furthermore provides media house employees with a nuanced understanding about young families with kids’ needs and their desires for a local newspaper. This could also contribute to create a more realistic picture for journalist’s audience image or potential audience, without threatening their journalistic integrity, which is grounded in the journalistic self-perception, based on the historical development what media and journalists should be and contribute.

### **Advertisement and Content**

The use of advertisement is a necessity to partially finance the production of journalistic work. This is not to say that sales departments would influence what will be written in the newspaper but, as a journalist explained to me, it contributes to journalists’ being able to do their work freely according to their journalistic profession. This is nothing new: according to sociologists Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1990) selling advertisement space in newspapers has been part of media house income since the 19th century (in Puustinen 2006: 2). While not all of the regional media houses have established marketing departments, they all are in possession of a sales department, trying to boost advertisement space. While this is a well-known practice within the media, the promotion and maintenance of local business is an additional motivation for regional media houses, “It is our most important task as a local media house to ensure that local businesses are alive. Also in five years so I think it will be even more important than before, to have a close cooperation with customers [local businesses] (Klaus – newly hired Commercial Director of a local media house).

The regional newspapers’ role to contribute to the local community and to preserve local livelihood, are thus legitimizing the use of marketing in the field of media. Klaus further elaborates that he views local companies as the quintessence for local livelihood and the maintenance of it. In this context it is worth mentioning that everything outside of the two biggest cities of Denmark, namely Copenhagen and Århus, are labelled in the public discourse as “*Uden for hovedstadsregionen*”, the periphery of Denmark, which has been heavily discussed not least during the recent elections in Denmark.

While a media house is on the one hand financially forced to include a large amount of advertisement, particularly in the free addition but also in the subscribed ones, the practice contributes in creating a negative spiral, generating a negative perception of local newspapers.

I do not read our local newspaper from the beginning to the end. Half of it is just listings - it's actually the majority - and the rest is all about handball. They need to get hold of the young citizens and write about some exciting things. They are not so good at that.  
(Frederik, 44, work-seeking teacher)

Like others, Frederik points out that advertisements have been taking over news content in the free newspapers, even though he is well aware that advertisements are a necessary requirement in order to ensure local newspapers' free availability. Nevertheless, I can see a pattern that there needs to be a balance between the content and ads in order to be valuable enough for local young citizens to read local newspapers and create a feeling of added value. The overkill with ads is creating a loss of credibility and damages the newspaper's image.

Beyond the overabundance of advertisement, Frederik addresses an additional frustration, namely content for young families. The value loss is thus also connected to what topics are communicated.

## HOW CONSUMERS CONSTRUCT NEWS - DECODING

When we were starting the project one of the areas we were interested in exploring was the media's role in creating a local and regional identity and affiliation. Some of our informants grew up around the area they were living in but most of them we talked to had moved to a particular area mainly due their spouses' affiliation to the area. This diverse mix however gave us a good opportunity to understand people's perception of local newspapers as they shifted from newcomer to residents.

In my mind, I was probably thinking about Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1986), where he argues that capitalism and print technology caused nations to adopt a national language to communicate to the masses in order to foster the modern state, which is what he called an "imagined community". While I generally agree with Anderson's argument, I observed that particularly newcomers to a local area seem to lack interest in reading the local newspaper. Karen (38), a newspaper subscriber of a mainly physical national newspaper, but also local and regional newspapers, explained her initial lack of interest when she moved from Copenhagen to the countryside of Zealand. With a lack of shared knowledge she said, "I did not read the local newspaper in the beginning when I moved here. I was not integrated into the local community. I did not feel I had any common references. It is only when I knew what I had to read after that I start reading it." The perceived function of a local newspaper is thus not to create an entrance to the local community, but rather one must first become a part of the community before local newspaper become relevant to everyday live. In this sense the audience is not consuming news as a reflection of reality, but as a symbolic text (Bird & Dardenne 1988: 71), that ascribes ideas about the community those people live in. The local news consists therefore of its own symbolic codes that need to be recognized and decoded by its audience and correlates thus with Anderson's concept of the imagined community.

But the decoding process is not only related to the degree of local integration, it is also contingent on relating to the printed stories. Local stories that one could relate to, were also the stories informants would stop and pay attention to when "*quickly having a look*", as I heard so many times. Even though all of the informants would state it does not all have to be about kids related topics, or as one informant put it "*Yes, I am more than just a mum*", promotion of the local area, subjects of local business and local politics were equally important to be informed about.

Birte (38), who does not consume news on a daily basis but subscribes to a printed weekend newspaper, highlights the interest in recognizing people and things she can relate to through pictures.

National newspapers don't touch me the same way. It is not local, like the image of my neighbour's kids, or even better my own. (...) If there is someone you know, who has

been involved, then it's super interesting and relevant. It's nice to have a picture to the article, so I can look if there are there is anyone that I know.

While pictures of past events contribute to the decoding process of symbolic text, the local newspaper's role is not only there to inform of past events and happenings, it should also be about present and future occurrences.

### News! News Must be New!?

A news story is news. (...) It is purportedly a true story; that is, a story about something that happened. (Michael Schudson 2005: 121)

The word *news* comes itself from the plurality of new but in times of technological change the meaning of news has changed in itself. News has become a collective term for many different kind of information. Think of *Breaking News*, a symbol for the newest information, to newspapers that cover two-page-long articles, such as the Danish newspaper *Weekendavisen* a newspaper that comes only once a weekend, over to following a newspaper on twitter, receiving a line of updates or some of the new news features at *Snapchat*.

Lenard (58), self-employed and father of two sons, was one of the few informants who saw value in keeping the local newspaper for several days.

I check Borsen [national newspaper] on my computer but we have it also in paper, which I look at sometimes. Than we have the two local newspapers coming and they just lay at home as a foundation for everything what is happening locally. And they are always there. They stay in the house until they are out-dated 3, 4, 5 days after. We don't throw it out the same day, because it has a lot. I always see it through and I also can go back to certain topics.

He elaborates further that he particularly likes to see what is going to happen in the local area, which might explain the action of some of the other informants, who would get rid of their local newspaper immediately or soon after a quick look. Both Alice (38) and Birte (38) would wait for their husbands to have a quick look but would throw it out the same day or the next. "Sometimes, I wait until he has time during the weekend" says Birte, but only because she knows he likes to have a look at it.

Like those two, there is also Uffe (41), who is not particularly interested in local newspapers, but orientates himself more towards online national news updates several times a day and subscribes to a printed national newspaper for the weekend. He mentions, however, that he would like the local newspaper to present more activities and events that he and his kids can attend. Even though pictures of previous events are desired, the possibility of engaging with the local community is equally important, or as to say it in Birte's words "*it can be frustrating to see only the events you missed out on and not get any new suggestions what is actually happening locally*".

In addition addressing the future could also positively promote the local area, which all the informants indicated as one of the newspaper's objectives. In this sense local newspapers have great potential to cross the lines between past events, helping to maintain and strengthen a platform for common reference, and simultaneously create a platform that makes local citizens aware of what is and will be going on.

### A 'Real' Newspaper

"*The little newspaper*" is a term I was introduced to, when conducting fieldwork in a small town in Jutland. It is a nickname for the free local newspaper, which Alice discovered over time, once she moved there due to her spouse. Besides, *quickly looking through the local newspaper to see if something interesting is in there*, she was one of the informants who pointed out a particular *guest journalist*, a scientist that sometimes writes articles in the free local newspaper, that she "*always stops reading for*".

There is typically a big picture of an animal, than I know it's Morten and I wonder what he came up with now again. And I actually read it from the start to the end, because he

communicates well. Usually it's also a longer story [1/2 -1 pager], it's a bit funny and he usually has a couple of interesting angles.

She also continued by telling me that the way he writes reminds her more of a “*real*” article in national newspapers. Birte (38) made similar statements about the weekly local newspaper. Like Alice, she also started out the interview by stating that she might have a “*quick look*” at the local newspaper but she “*doesn't really read it*”. However “this newspaper [the daily paid subscription local newspaper] is more like a real newspaper. You can feel the articles are longer and more is made out of them. That makes them obviously also more exciting, so you read more than just the headlines. It's [the daily paid subscription local newspaper] still not at the newspaper level as Weekendavisen [a national Danish weekly newspaper that she subscribes to], but closer.

While Birte is reading the daily local newspaper once in a while as it is available at work, she also tried a free subscription trial for a month so she could read it at home. She has still two more weeks left, and she is surprised how much she actually likes it.

“I have tried to keep Berlingske, and Børsen, I have tried to keep a lot of different ones. But those daily paid subscription local newspaper [physical daily newspaper], I simply do not get read. They just pile up and it is just so frustrating when I don't get around to reading them. Compared to a real [physical] daily newspaper like Weekendavisen is adequate as it comes only once a week.”

Readers assign varying values to the newspapers based on their type, their frequency, their costs and what they contain, which has an influence whether they are perceived to be a real newspaper or not. Free local newspapers do not carry the same metaphorical ‘weight’ as their ‘bigger brothers’ – like the local paid subscription and national newspapers like Weekendavisen that Birte mentions. In various ways they are considered the ‘little newspaper’ in comparison to these ‘real’ newspapers.

## Materiality

When investigating news consumption, materiality is nearly impossible to avoid. All of the informants were to some extent consuming digital newspapers whether it was through newspaper apps or checking out online newspaper platforms. There was however still a common support for physical newspapers, which offered an additional value to their news consumption. For example Uffe (41), father of three kids:

I get Politiken [a national newspaper] during the weekend. This is when I actually have time to read it, but sometimes I don't get it done on a weekend. I still get it because it is a great newspaper. I am on their homepage daily and sometime several times. But there is something different about unpacking a newspaper, the physical element in it, the smell and the silence in it. Whereas the Internet version is often about more and more and more and about quick and on to the next, it [physical newspaper] is all about finding quietness in it. It is a luxury hour to sit with a physical newspaper. It usually sits and waits for me until I take it and have a look at it. I use it almost as a weekly newspaper. Also particularly because the news content I get covered by the Internet.

While Uffe consumes his daily news content online, he prefers to read the physical newspaper on weekends as it creates additional value in form of intellectual ‘*luxury*’. While this perception can be related to the print media's historic role as a civic voice, an authorised voice telling the reader what they should know about, the experience of the newspaper as ‘luxury’ is simultaneously related to the revitalisation of newspaper as a niche product consumed to physically experience that someone has put in a special effort. Uffe further elaborates that he once had a daily physical newspaper, which he also did not manage to read at all. It was frustrating and gave him a bad conscience when he had to throw out a pile of unread newspapers.

The frustration of throwing out unread newspaper is however a very physical reminder of what has not been achieved, which does not become as visible on a digital platform for example. Besides the missing nudge, an online offering has also a different kind of logic in its consumption. In line with Raymond Williams (1974) I am thus arguing that technology is having an influence on the cultural understanding of news.

The underlying logic of online newspaper consumption is a different kind of logic than the one of physical newspaper. Alice (38) a self-employed consultant and mother of three kids, and a newspaper subscriber and enthusiast of both online and physical newspapers is rather tempted to click on populist content online than on a physical edition.

Often I am reading a different kind of content online, compared to the physical newspaper. I have a rather populist taste online, or I orientate myself on the “most seen” articles, but typically something with celebrities, or sex or something like that. I don’t think so much over it, but I get kind of irritated if it is in my newspaper [physical]. Than I don’t care about David Beckham - I really don’t want to read that in my newspaper [physical].

While Alice is not only reading tabloid material when she is scrolling through her online newspaper, she is ascribing the physical newspaper with a much less populist newspaper content. Moreover for her the physical newspapers have a much more authorial vibe around them. She even gets angry with herself when she is clicking on populist content that she would normally not read.

As material goods carry social meanings (Douglas 1979: 59), I see a tendency among my informants to follow populist content in their online reading. Online reading is characterized by quick and new rather than static and immersive. Uffe (41), who is less enthusiastic than Alice but still subscribes to *Politiken* a national weekend newspaper states:

Once in a while I go on Ekstra Bladet<sup>8</sup>, but mostly because I think it is extremely funny. When I look, it is only online - I would never buy it. The difference is that if I would be sitting with a physical newspaper of Ekstra Bladet then it doesn’t have the same volatility as online. I would not sit down with it [physical newspaper] and immerse myself in it.

Readers perceive the physical newspapers as static, without the constantly updated and new content, and yet with the potential for intellectual luxury. Local newspapers are seen as static but not perceived as providing content that can be immersive, such as those that informants label ‘real’ newspapers like national newspapers and the daily paid subscription local newspapers.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the preliminary field research I have conducted, I have described a trend towards a changing media landscape in Denmark. I have described how the practice of regional media houses is influencing users’ perception of local newspapers images, which can both be useful in a commercial advertisement sense, but also in recreating some of the audience images journalists have, such as the one of an older audience to a more diverse one. In particular, the latter calls for a more critical reflection by the journalistic profession on how journalists are contributing in the construction of the audience.

In a further prospect I have shown different perceptions of what is understood as news. Whether informants would “*not really consume news*” or “*just quickly have a look*” or “*read it from the start to the end*” is grounded in technological changes, but also in the articles’ content, which seem to have a mutual influence. In the case of local newspapers, there seems to be a missing link between the print media’s historic role and current consumption practices. By reflecting upon the gained user insights it seems natural to also reflect upon the current news production, including aesthetics, layout, content and media channel.

The insights provided thus far enliven a debate about the role that local newspapers can play in the communities they serve and within those communities the audiences they hope to attract. Informants expressed a multitude of desires about what they wished local newspapers provided and expressed their perception of their value in terms of contrasting what other ‘real’ newspapers - which they consumer both in print and digitally - offered. It appears that each type of newspaper offers something different to readers. Local newspapers can put this knowledge into practice, in how their marketing departments and journalists serve their current and potential audience, how they choose to present themselves or, even, work to be perceived as ‘real’ and the content and mode in which they engage their audience.

This research opens up for further investigations how news is consumed, how content and form are interacting with each other and what materiality does with our news perception. The on-going project will delve further into these questions with an aim towards understanding how the implications of these perceptions and changing media consumption practices have for the future of regional media houses.

Finally the argument is made that an anthropological approach towards consumption can provide a nuanced understanding of changing media consumption habits and with it new ways for regional media houses to expand their audience and grow business opportunities. Combined with an anthropological perspective towards consumption, ethnographic research can contribute to get regional media houses in touch with their customers in ways they have not before. For example Maja's discrepancy between what she says and does surrounding the news. It follows the old adage that it is just as important what people say as what they do. It is in investigating the contradiction between both that anthropology and ethnography can demonstrate its value in uncovering the meaning and implications of changing consumption practices.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Rasmus Kleis Nielsen and Kim Schröder have been undertaking a study in 2013, where they have investigated the media consumption of Danish citizens.  
[https://www.ruc.dk/fileadmin/assets/cbit/MMK/Danskernes\\_brug\\_af\\_nyhedsmedier\\_2013.pdf](https://www.ruc.dk/fileadmin/assets/cbit/MMK/Danskernes_brug_af_nyhedsmedier_2013.pdf)  
 On page 21 they elaborate on the different kind of age groups and what kind of channels they use consuming news.

<sup>2</sup> All the names of my informants have been anonymised.

<sup>3</sup> The seven media houses include:  
 NORDJYSKE Medier: <http://www.nordjyskemedier.dk>  
 Midtjyske Medier: <http://www.midtjyskemedier.dk>  
 Fynske Medier: <http://www.fynskemedier.dk>  
 Jyske Medier A/S: <http://jyskemedier.dk>  
 Mediehuset Herning Folkeblad: <http://mediehusetherningfolkeblad.dk>  
 Syddanske Medier: <http://www.sdm.dk>  
 Sjællandske Medier: <http://sn.dk>

<sup>4</sup> Ida Schultz is a Professor at RUC University in Denmark. She married and changed her name Willig, which is why I quote her sometimes Schultz and sometimes Willig, depending on when the article was written.

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|                             | <b>Partisan Press</b>         | <b>Omnibus Press</b>         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Ownership Ideology</b>   | Party-political/ Journalistic | Public/ commercial           |
| <b>Editors Role</b>         | Political                     | Journalistic                 |
| <b>Material selection</b>   | Small range                   | Wide range                   |
| <b>Technology</b>           | Printed media /Plump print    | Rotary press/Offset printing |
| <b>Reader imagination</b>   | Voters                        | Citizens                     |
| <b>Journalism</b>           | Partisan                      | Sought objective             |
| <b>Competition</b>          | Four-party-paper system       | One-paper system             |
| <b>Advertisement market</b> | New/weak                      | Established/strong           |

Figure 1. Ida Schultz's model of historically significant press development in Denmark (2007:12) translated to English

<sup>6</sup> While the biggest region in Denmark, which is simultaneously also the capital, covers around 1.7 million inhabitants, the smallest covers around 580.000 inhabitants <sup>6</sup>. Size wise regions cover in Denmark much less people compared to other countries like for example the US, and must thus also be understood in these proportions.

<sup>7</sup> *Berlingske Lokale Medier* have bought for example *Mediehuset Holstebro*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ekstra bladet* is a contradicted newspaper of Denmark that has elements of a tabloid.

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