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News Sources, Gender and Majority-Minority in Danish TV News Programs

A Methodological Framework

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In this paper, I am going to identify some central methodological challenges in relation to a project on TV-news and news sources in a perspective of intersectionality and to sketch a research design.

In what follows, I will present some methodological issues and research designs of previous research (*section 1*), the research design of this project (*section 2*). And finally, I will discuss two challenges in the project, namely one dealing with usage of theories on intersectionality in an empirical framework based on visibility and observation on a TV-screen and a second frame of theories dealing with a discussion of a ‘democratic impact’ of a given news source-distribution (*section 3*).

Introduction

The ways, that journalism is framed, form a key in understanding gender dynamics, media and democracy. One element of framing is the choice of information sources, that is, the selections journalists make from among the many possible and potential holders of information of those sources whose information and viewpoints will actually be included in the news (Zoch & VanSlyke Turk 1998:762). This project analyses news sources in terms of gender and ethnicity. For the time being, I am going to stick to the term ‘ethnicity’ bearing in mind that the very categorization of this axis is a challenge in the project based on registration of television news items. Empirically, I characterize ‘gender’ in terms of female and male news sources and I characterize ‘ethnicity’ in terms of some established categories of nationality, first and second generation immigrant etc.

Applying a perspective of intersectionality seems particularly challenging on a media site and on news programs. The latter has typically been analysed in terms of a gender perspective (a notably exception is Andreassen's (2005) study of Danish media) and the design of suitable empirical categories is a challenge. The idea behind this paper is three-fold. First, the aim is to sketch a concrete research design and secondly to discuss some of the challenges related to operationalizing a perspective of intersectionality and of democratic impact. By looking at specific categories of news sources, this study contributes to a discussion of representation issues of sources in TV-news coverage. The leading question is related to the democratic impact of what we can assume to be a fairly biased distribution of news sources. The latter is documented and supported in several studies (GMMP 2010; Hooghe & De Swert 2009; De Swert & Hooghe 2010; Ross & Carter 2011). In this instance, 'biased' is defined as a clear difference in the ratio among female and male sources. A gender bias in the media can with Martin's (1991:181) terminology be characterized as a "pretheoretical conception about media treatment of news (Martin 1991:181).

The point of departure for such a research design is that every particular news source is important in explaining a given situation, in analysing knowledge and opinion and in shaping the world. The reporter's use of sources creates a representation to the reader (in this case the viewer/CF) of who has information important enough to cite in the news story. In this way, news is a representation of power and authority within the society (Zoch & VanSlyke Turk 1998:765). Along these lines, this project is based on the approach that news is powerful in a number of ways. In modern societies, the different media are especially important sites for the production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies (Hall 1981). Hall's example of constructions of ideology concerns media constructions of definitions of race, what meaning the imagery of race carries and what the 'problem of race' is understood to be (ibid.). Today, media are among our most powerful agents of entertainment, information, and socialization (Kearney 2012:3). It shapes public

attitudes and discourses as well as public policy (Meyers 2013:3). In short, news can be ascribed a lot of consequences in relation to conceptions of politics, power and democracy.

Qualitative and Quantitative Research

A key distinction can be drawn between on the one hand qualitative textual analyses of media-representation (fx. Dines & Hume eds 2011; Kearney eds. 2012) and on the other hand quantitative analyses of actors, of sources and data on reception studies (by some characterized as ‘body-counting’). My ambition is first to quantify the various sources in two Danish TV news programs in terms of gender, ethnicity and profession and secondly, to discuss these data in a perspective of democracy.

One key target of the project is to obtain statistical information about just what kinds of sources different news programs tapped. This is the first problem to address (Martin 1991:181 also states this ambition). With Armstrong (2004:139), one can ask if (and how/CF) the disparity between men and women can be broken down to specific dimensions? Another key target is to document the development over time in news source selection by designing a study based on regular time periods. The explanatory research question reflects a normative premise inasmuch as it discusses and problematizes the distribution of news sources in a democratic perspective. For the democratic analysis, the project draws on Dahlgren (2009) and others’ reflections on democracy and media.

This project employs quantitative and qualitative methods and holds a descriptive (a ‘how many’-question), an explanatory dimension (a ‘why’-question) and finally a question of (democratic) consequences of the distribution of sources.

1. Review of Previous Research (Focussing on Methodology)

The above brings us to a review of previous research and I have high-lighted two types of investigations: one based on coding of data (such as for example news sources) and another on analysis of representation of stereotypes on gender, ethnicity, race and other markers. A key question is how previous projects have designed their investigation and have defined and employed theories and concepts. Previous research has identified a common conclusion about a bias in news source selection on TV and this conclusion is also the main idea behind this project. This is bearing in mind that a detailed investigation in terms of categories of sources in a Danish context contributes to a better understanding of the field.

In what follows, I present some examples of relevant designs and methodology of previous research on media. Concerning these examples, I draw on Albæk et al.'s analysis of Danish media's use of experts over five decades (2002), on Andreassen's analysis of Danish news media's communication about visible minorities from 1971-2004 (2005), on three examples of news sources selection in North American news media (Martin 1991; Craft & Wanta 2004; Zoch & VanSlyke Turk 1998) on Meyers' (2013) analysis of gender, race and class in North American news /journalism, on Ross and Carter's (2011) analysis of British and Irish media 2010 and on De Swert and Hooghe's analysis of Flemish TV news 2003-2005 (2009; 2010).

Albæk investigates a specific sub-group of news sources namely experts with a focus on the use of experts in Danish omnibus newspapers. The term 'expert' is defined rather narrowly as the ones who are institutionally independent. This definition is frequently used in the social sciences and easy to work with as the registration of experts is clear (2002:24-25).

Albæk et al. registered all newspaper articles in which one or more named expert or research groups from research institutions are quoted in three daily Danish omnibus newspapers (Jyllands-Posten, Politiken and Berlingske) during one month in five different years. Two aspects are of relevance in relation to my project: the coding of the newspaper articles and the selection of

the time period. With regard to the coding of every researcher, the following parameters are registered: sex, scientific field, institutional belonging, disciplines, and the type of article. The latter concerns the object of the newspaper article: does the quote deal with the researcher's own research, a comment to other researchers work, a comment to knowledge produced by the media, by ministries, international organizations, EU or other decision-makers, a comment to a political or administrative decision or another event (Albæk et al.2002:27). With regard to the time period, January 15th -February 14th, this was selected in order to avoid time periods during which regular events take place such as the negociation of the annual budget etc. This could bias the result. The 40-year period (1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001) was selected to be able to sketch a picture of the development. The conclusion is that there has been a clear increase in the amount of newspaper articles quoting an expert from 1961 (64) to 2001 (441) especially during the 1990s (p.29). Danish data documented by Albæk et al.'s analysis (2002) originating from the Danish Power and Democracy Study concludes that experts quoted in the written press primarily are male. 14% of the quoted experts in the written press in the year 2001 were women (2002: 40).

A study of three newspapers from three Southeastern states of the US looks at the selection that journalists make from many information holders based on a sample of stories published between 1986 and 1996. The study found that women were infrequently cited as sources, that female journalists attached greater credibility to female sources than male reporters, and also that female reporters were still more likely to cover local stories, while their male counterparts covered state, national and international news (Zoch & VanSlyke Turk 1998:772-773). The three papers represent different circulation sizes and different states. Methodologically, newspaper stories in different sections were selected to a total of 1126 stories evenly distributed among the three papers. Information coded for each story included (among other data) topic covered and its scope

(international, national, state, or local) – these topics were selected based on a review of the newspaper content analysis literature (p.766, note 30)- and a range of characteristics of each source.

Another American study looked at 18 big and small newspapers throughout the US for a randomly selected week in 1999 employing content analysis of 889 stories selected across the newspaper sections. The first pages of four sections were isolated using a random number table. Two stories on each of the pages were selected (Armstrong 2004:143). The study found that male sources and subjects received more mentions and were placed more prominently in the stories. The author concludes that males have a higher public status in newspaper coverage than females and that the writer's influence is significant: the gender of the newswriter can be linked to gender portrayals within news stories. I.e. that female writers were more likely to write about women and showcase women in news coverage, whereas male writers were more likely to include males in their stories. Gender of the writer appears to play a role in the attention and emphasis of sources and subjects in news coverage (Armstrong 2004:149-150). The data indicates that overall newspaper coverage conveys a more negative public status for women than for men in the form of less frequent mentions and less prominent positions in the story (Armstrong 2004:148).

A third American analysis of the influences of gender of the editors and reporters via 30 newspapers' web sites showed few differences in issues covered, but differences in what male and female reporters covered related to the predominant editor's gender. The study points at the significance of women (editors) in managerial positions as they tend to treat their female reporters on a par with male reporters but equally conclude that "these findings do not support drawing a straight line from reporter or editor gender to news content that somehow flows out of one's gender"(p.136) (Craft & Wanta 2004:135-136).

Ross & Carter's (2011) analysis of women and news is built on a world-wide data-sample *Who Makes the News?* based on national media monitoring of TV, radio and newspapers.

The data, gathered in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010, point in a similar direction of gender bias. Each of the four investigations focuses on one single day of news coverage across the world. The most recent of 2010 is the one that Ross and Carter employ and it includes findings from 108 countries participating in the day of monitoring of women's portrayal in the news as sources and subjects and as journalists (Ross & Carter 2011:1151, *WACC-Who Makes the News?*). One interesting conclusion of this investigation describes some of the ways that women traditionally have been framed in the news as celebrity, victim or "the wife/daughter/girlfriend of a newsworthy male". Ross and Carter point at some other frames of women in their data with a particular focus of women as victims (2011:1155 + their references). Besides, another finding suggested that women's voices are invited to provide "personal testimony and impressionistic anecdote rather than authoritative and informed perspectives.." (p.1160).

Belgian researchers equally suggest that the selection of news sources, i.e. actors appearing in a news broadcast and delivering a statement, remains strongly biased (Hooghe & de Swert 2009:13). Their analysis covers a comprehensive data set covering 76,673 news items, accounting for the entire news production of the Flemish public broadcasting corporation VRT and the main commercial station 2003- 2007. The main research question was to determine when female news sources receive air time, i.e. get to say at least a full sentence (Hooghe & de Swert 2009: 16).

Meyers' (2013) analysis of representation of African American women in a variety of news formats on six case studies demonstrates some of the ways that race, class and gender shape media representation. Her point of departure is "that we do know a bit about the representation of African American men in the news, but very little about African American women" (2013:1). Meyers employs an approach of qualitative textual analysis and critical cultural studies. One of her case studies investigates the representation of African American women on TV; i.e. national cable network news (CNN and FOX NEWS). One of her conclusions is that African American women,

unlike men, were more likely to be portrayed as victims than as criminals (2013:46) and that the dominant themes in news coverage of African American women are victimization, poverty, crime, dysfunction and violence (2013:139). This conclusion is in line with a key study of Danish news media's communication about and representation of visible minorities from 1970-2004 by Andreassen (2005). The project examines how mass media's communication about visible minorities has contributed to constructions of sexuality, gender, race and nation with a specific focus on how whiteness – represented by ethnic Danes – has been constructed (2005:6). Andreassen concludes that the news media's representation of visible minorities contributed to stereotypical images of visible minorities such as "the criminal immigrant", "the oppressed immigrant woman", "the veiled woman" etc. (2005:277).

Based on a quick review of the literature, I can situate the contribution of my analysis (and more precisely the construction of empirical categories) with a focus on obtaining a precise picture of the degree of bias in Danish news media concerning news sources in terms of local versus international news, in terms of opinion versus analysis and in terms of gender and ethnicity.

2. Research Design of the Project: Case Selection

With the ambition of finding two relatively comparable TV-news programs during the same time period of the day, the late evening news on the two large public/ partly public/private Danish TV-stations were chosen for analysis; i.e. the evening sloth. The two evening news form an attempt to finish off today's news stream and introduce tomorrow's news agenda. Despite their common status as Danish national TV-stations, these two empirical sources can be described as a most different case. These two cases attempt to ascertain whether the findings of previous news studies are applicable to the Danish late night news.

Bearing these similarities in mind, different news formats have different points of foci, which may be shaped by newsroom imperatives, economics, technology, social values and the routines of the reporters as well as the interactivity of online media and social networks (Meyers 2013:4 /see also Schudson). A salient distinction between the two programs and the two TV-stations is their respective status as private and public TV-stations. This is among other parameters reflected in one station being committed to gender equality policies along the same lines as other public organizations and institutions.

One case is the daily current affairs program 'Deadline' broadcast by the state-financed public service provider DR *Danish Radio* and the other case is the daily news program *TV2-nyhederne* broadcast by the partly private, partly commercial TV-station *TV2*. The first program, *Deadline* is characterized by sources, who are typically experts and resource persons. *Deadline* has typically got 4-6- sources/news items in each program. *Deadline* presents a selection of the news of the day and establishes their significance for the following day (jf. Meyers 2013:31). *Deadline* constitutes a 'heavy', specialized, frontline program and in my view forms a critical case: if there is a very uneven or biased /very limited composition of gender and ethnicity in relation to news sources, one can expect that to be the case in a range of other news programs.

The other case is the daily news-program *TV2-nyhederne* of the commercial station *TV2*. It is an extremely popular news-outlet with a more popular profile, shorter news items, more emphasis on the 'vox populi' (the (wo)men in the street) etc.

My argument on the significance of different media systems is in line with Curran, Iyengar, Brink Lund and Salovaara-Moring's (2009) work on media systems, public knowledge and democracy. It identifies different media systems; an unreconstructed public service model in which the programming principles of public service still largely dominate (exemplified by Denmark and Finland), a dual model combining increasingly deregulated commercial television with strong

public service broadcasting organizations (the UK) and the market model (the US). The differences between the models are remarkable. The authors conclude that their evidence suggests that the public service model of broadcasting gives greater attention to public affairs and international news and thereby fosters greater knowledge in these areas, than the market model. It equally makes television news more accessible on leading channels and fosters high levels of television news consumption (Curran et al. 2009:22).

Research Design: Towards a Media Codebook

Two particular aspects are of relevance in relation to my project: the coding variables of news sources and the selection of the time period for investigation. I define a news source as an individual interviewed in the studio/ in the field/ on location / on the phone. Sources with a direct contact with the journalist, i.e. actors appearing in a news broadcast and delivering a statement of at least one sentence (Hooghe & de Swert 2009:13).

A first main goal of the research design is to create a framework for a content analysis in order to systematically obtain quantitative, comparable information from the analysed items (Eurosphere 2008:1). A key question is how other investigations have designed the coding of sources and of news items. Here, it is relevant to be inspired by the EU-funded –project *Eurosphere* (2008), which investigated different dimensions of a European public sphere in 16 different countries.

The empirical data describes the news sources in terms of gender and majority Dane / minority ethnicity, different types of source-profession (journalists, politicians, bureaucrats, researchers, spokespersons from NGOs, laypeople in vox populi). Concerning the ethnicity of the sources, a central issue is related to the coding of what I have chosen to characterize as minority-

majority status of the news source. A key point here is to sub-divide majority and minority groups in relevant 'categories' for a Danish context.

With regard to the coding of every news item, the following parameters are registered about the source: gender, institutional belonging /profession/ disciplines, and the type of news item. A focus here is on your 'status' as a source and what kind of source you are, when you speak based on knowledge; experience?

The individual news item/ topics discussed are also classified in categories such as local/ domestic/international politics, EU politics, welfare, human rights, gender /equality, law etc. According to some of the analyses of American media, a dimension of geography is also important in relation to gender and news. Women journalists are more often than male journalists writing local news and men more often global or international news.

With regard to the time period, one idea is to follow Albæk's et al. (2002) coding period and the time slot January 15th -February 14th, which was selected in order to avoid time periods during which regular events take place such as the negotiation of the annual budget etc.

3. Theories on Intersectionality and the Empirical Framework

An intersectionality perspective is addressed throughout the project with an ambition of attending to differences among women and men, working to ensure that the unique perspectives of different groups of women are not overshadowed by those of more privileged women and men. Being caught up in 'single axis- thinking' or 'monism' (Weldon 2008:202) by 'only' addressing gender will (most probably) mask some central biases regarding (in)visibility of particular categories of sources. And also 'exposing relations of domination' (Weldon 2008: 193) in the news media. The idea of intersectionality has been helpful in showing how thinking in terms of gender *plus* race is incomplete and obscures the experience of women at the interstices of these social relations

(Weldon 2008: 197). That an account that focuses only on gender will not be able to provide a full account of the ways that women are disadvantaged (op.cit p.202). In relation to media and news, such an approach seems to seize the empirical picture well.

As mentioned previously, Meyer's (2013) analysis of American journalism points out how news coverage contributes to the invisibility of African American women and how the intersection of gender, class and race play out in American journalism. Based on a range of case studies, she concludes that the primary themes within coverage of African American women were poverty, violence, victimization, crime and dysfunctionality. No African American women appeared in cable networks, news as a spokesperson or politician (2013:44;49). The analysis is a fairly recent example of the movement from a gender/ a single-axis design to a multiple perspective of intersectionality in media studies. That is one that complicates each of these social categories by examining how they interact with one another. This movement is part of a new trend within contemporary gender and media studies (Kearney 2012:12-13). This is a trend that looks at the "*de rigueur* exploration of sexuality, race, ethnicity, and other components alongside gender" (op.cit.). In the case of this particular project, an attention to whiteness and gender is important as it contributes to an analysis of Danish news media characterized by an ethnically very homogeneous 'population'.

A perspective of intersectionality can enrich the analysis by illuminating how the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and class characterizes news sources. The term intersectionality refers to both a normative theoretical argument *and* an approach to conducting empirical research that emphasizes the interaction of categories of difference (including but not limited to race, gender, class and sexual orientation) (Hancock 2007: 63-64).

Intersectionality as a concept originates in efforts of black feminists in the United States to theorize about their experiences and social position as women (gender) of colour (race)

(Crenshaw 1991). Intersectionality is grounded in the thinking that studies of gender are always related to other social categories that work together to define a person's particular subject positions (Crenshaw 1994; Phoenix 2006; Yuval-Davis 2006). The argument being that "(w)hen race and gender are viewed as parallel, rather than as intersecting, institutional discrimination can only be recognized when it occurs along one axis, as due to either race or gender, but never both" (Molina-Guzman & Cacho 2014). A perspective of intersectionality indicates that the analytical focus is broader than a gender perspective and that the relationship between social categories forms an open empirical question (Hancock 2007). And equally that intersectionality is an aspect of social organisation that shapes all our lives: gender structures shape the lives of both women and men, and everyone has a race /ethnicity (Weldon 2008:195). Everybody is positioned simultaneously within social categories, such as age, class, ethnicity, gender, race and sexuality. So even when focusing particularly on one social category such as gender, intersectionality reminds us that we cannot understand the category in isolation (Phoenix 2006: 22). The complex and varied ways that gender, race, class and other markers of social identity are inextricably linked with a hierarchy of dominance (Meyers 2013:2).

Weldon's discussion of the concept of intersectionality is helpful in that it points at a model ('intersectionality-plus'), which admits the possibility that the ways that social structures affect each other vary over time and space. Some axes might be more salient or politicized in some contexts than in others (Weldon 2008:208). The idea being that different social structures might have different types of effects in different contexts. The intersectionality-plus version allows for the idea that "finding that gender, race, and class *sometimes* combine to create effects that are unique to specific gender-race-class groups does not mean that *every* effect of social structures is unique to such groups. Finding intersectionality in *some* effects does not necessarily imply intersectionality in all effects" (Weldon 2008:204).

Weldon points out that these differences and variations help us identify the distinctive features of particular national constellations of social structure, perhaps linking such structures to particular historic trajectories (ibid.). Along similar lines, Verloo argues that a ‘one fits all’-approach to addressing multiple discriminations is based on an incorrect assumption of sameness or equivalence of these social categories connected to inequalities and to the mechanisms and processes that constitute them (2006:2011).

In relation to this particular project, it is important to contextualize the analysis in a Nordic context bearing in mind women’s roles in public life and the relations between majority and minority populations. In the case of the two Danish news programs, which form the basis of the empirical investigation, there are relatively few sources which are visible minorities; i.e. people of colour or persons belonging to a group of minority population. This indicates, that a focus on ‘whiteness’ also forms a central analytical focus as well as a focus on visible minorities. We know from a study of Danish news media’s communication about visible minorities that Danish news media’s representation of these minorities contribute to stereotypical images in a range of different ways (Andreassen 2005).

The project is rooted in a Danish and also in a Nordic empirical context both in terms of gender norms, media regimes, the relationship between the public and the private spheres, in terms of history of multiculturalism and democratic practices.

3. Democratic Impact of a Given News Source Distribution

The project’s democratic perspective is partly informed by a theoretical framework by the German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1962; 1996) who has argued for the (positive) significance of the public sphere and citizen engagement in its democratic dialogue. This theoretical framework raises a question of the democratic impact of a certain distribution of news sources in

terms of gender and ethnicity. And secondly a question along the following lines: how can we meaningfully assess the democratic impact of a given distribution and with what types of parameters. Having asked these questions, I have to admit that I have not formed a fixed answer yet. In relation to Section 3, the idea is first to establish a framework of democratic theory as a basis for the analysis and secondly to construct parameters which can measure / analyse / discuss the democratic significance of a presumably biased news source distribution.

Such a theoretical horizon is of course tied up with some fundamental normative conceptions and assumptions about people and society (Dahlgren 2009:2). With a Habermasian perspective and its normative underlining of inclusion, public dialogue and public participation, the media is emphasized as a key vehicle for the public sphere. The concept of the public sphere forms 'a central analytical construct' in our 'ongoing efforts to understand the relationship between democracy and the media' (Dahlgren 2009: 126). I am inspired by Dahlgren's take on political engagement and participation (2009) and his line of thinking in relation to the media. He does not consider a gender-dimension in relation to his analysis.

By means of a distinction between politics and the political (inspired by Mouffe 1999) and talk, Dahlgren sets out to analyze how 'talk' in the media can generate the political and thereby potentially lead towards politics, both traditional and alternative politics (2009:101). Dahlgren's analysis looks at television journalism and popular television culture and its (lack of) success in helping to sustain civic engagement in national politics guided by the question of how the popular quality of television resonate with notions of public spheres and civic cultures? (2009:126).

Dahlgren's analysis of television as a space for civic identity and agency is formed by a discussion of contributions and limitations framed by some of the dimensions of civic cultures (knowledge, values, trust, practices and identities) that he has identified in regard to the links between politics and television (2009:141-148).

Regarding *knowledge*, television does not so well in conveying detailed information, whereas it does well at evoking discussion and hereby contributing to a 'talkative citizenry' (p.145). TV is therefore important in promoting political talk. Regarding the second dimension of *values*, Dahlgren argues that TV "offers a mixed bag in regard to values" (p.145). Many concerns with values connected to private life, consumption and market relations and at the same time, discourses still reiterate many basic values and virtues of democracy (p.145). When it comes to *trust*, Dahlgren argues that TV tends to show very few examples of 'thin trust' that typifies civic social bonds "or cooperation that makes a political impact" (p.146). On the other hand, Dahlgren argues, TV does an important job of rendering as familiar particular elements of society that many people would otherwise never encounter meaning that TV has been conveying a growing sense of society's plural character (p.146). Concerning *practices*, Dahlgren points out that one of the key practices of civic culture is discussion and that different kinds of programming situate the viewing subject differently – hence the different roles, the viewers are placed in and the different relation to practice. With reference to Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen (2005), Dahlgren reminds us that the "immediate civic practices and sense of empowerment to be derived from television news as such is limited" (p.147). Finally, the dimension of identities, which Dahlgren seems critical of. He points out that a sense of civic "we-ness" in contemporary television is "quite thin" (p.147) with a typical media focus on the viewer as consumers on the market and less with the viewer as citizen and the principles of universality "embedded in the notion of the citizen" (p.147). On the other hand, television as a major institution of popular culture offers us a framework for fantasize and speculation about our lives and identities, Dahlgren argues (p.148).

Summing up, Dahlgren concludes that TV news contributes to the public sphere in complex ways while at the same time offer very few entry points for civic identity and agency. Dahlgren's conclusion is mixed:

“The point is not that we should try to arrive at some ultimate, once-and-for-all evaluation, but rather, to be alert for how television- despite all its familiar limitations- may at times help move us beyond the narrow definitions of politics and the public sphere, and connect us to civic cultures in subtle, surprising and unintended ways”
(Dahlgren 2009: 148)

Another way of approaching analyses of media phenomena and their democratic impact is by looking at news and at the relationship between journalism and democracy. Scudson (2008) presents a discussion of what news can do for democracy and the democratic role of journalism based on the premise that democracy and journalism are not the same thing (2008:11). Scudson offers this discussion by means of six functions (2008:chap.2) of news in a democratic perspective.

1. Information: Informing the public of news we would not otherwise know
2. Investigation: journalists performs its institutional role as a watch dog
3. Analysis: demands a great deal of time and effort to do serious analysis. Explanatory journalism articulates a silence or foregrounds what was background making it thereby available for conversation and collective notice (p.17)
4. Social empathy: the journalistic imagination. Telling an individual story and demonstrating the link between private troubles and public issues (p.18)
5. Public forum: for a dialogue among citizens
6. Mobilization: the news media can serve as advocates for particular political programs and mobilize people.

In relation to the idea of a top-heavy power division in the Danish society concerning men and women in the elites and the uneven distribution of leadership positions across the different sectors in Denmark, we can have different expectations to the distribution of sources across the different categories of sources.

Summing up

I am inspired by Sartori's idea of 'concept travelling' (1970) and his idea that thinking about concepts must include how well the concept 'travels' to a variety of cultural and national contexts (here from Mazur & Goertz 2008:5). In this particular project, the theoretical approaches primarily originate in an Anglo-Saxon research context, which means that this conceptual travel covers the reception of and application in an empirical context of the Nordic countries and the Danish case. This is both in terms of a media system (Curran et al. 2009), democracy and intersectionality. Especially the last theoretical approach highlights the need for some reflections on the importance of a 'transatlantic travel of the categorical triad of race-class-gender' (Knapp 2005) and on how these dimensions play out in the case of Danish news programs.

To address the potential influence of a 'transatlantic travel', I am going to look at the three issues of media systems, democracy and intersectionality based on the idea that they potentially are played out differently in a Nordic empirical context compared to an Anglo-Saxon context. This task is carried out with the danger of exaggerating the differences between a Nordic and an Anglo-Saxon context based on theoretical debates. An empirical study can contribute with more precise knowledge on the significance of a Nordic context.

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