Under the Press(ure)? The Role of Media in Organisation and Provision of Municipal Elderly Care

Signe Jernberg and Josef Pallas*

Signe Jernberg,
Department of Business and
Economic Studies, University
of Gävle, Sweden
signe.jernberg@fek.uu.se

Josef Pallas,
Department of Business
Studies, Uppsala University,
Sweden
josef.pallas@fek.uu.se

Abstract

What is the role of media(tisation) in organisation and provision of elderly care? By looking at how planning, organising and execution of elderly care is understood in two Swedish municipalities this paper seeks to contribute to discussions of the ways in which values, preferences and working practices of news media play out in shaping conditions for provision of municipal welfare services. Our findings suggest that we can see the role of media values and preferences as embedded – although in different ways and to varying extent – in three distinct but inter-related processes that influence how actors connected to organisation and provision of municipal welfare services understand and relate to each other. These are: 1) setting the aims, aspirations and priorities in the provision of welfare services (i.e., the *what)*; 2) translating these aims, aspirations and priorities into necessary means, resources and activities (i.e., the *how)*; and 3) explaining and justifying the *what* and the *how* to different constituencies (i.e., the *why)*. The paper concludes that commonly held values and beliefs about media reinforce the ongoing changes in the governing regime of elderly care in a direction where the role of municipal administrative bodies is more explicitly articulated, especially in terms of accountability and responsibility.

Introduction

In the Nordic context, the governance model of the public sector has changed at the same time as the role of the relatively stable political sphere has been challenged by the advancement of economic and market institutions that claim accountability and ask for influence over organisation and execution of public sector services in general and welfare provision in particular (Olsen 2016). In the literature pertaining to governance of areas of welfare such as education, health and research it is argued that the market principles of consumption, competition, supply vs. demand and branding re-shape power bases, relationships and responsibilities between local governments, municipal administrative bodies and welfare providers, and that this process has consequences for the type, extent and quality of services provided (Alvehus & Andersson 2018; Blomgren & Waks 2017; Moberg 2017).

In relation to the market-driven re-definition of public sector governance the question of media and mediatisation1 (or media orientation) has emerged as of particular interest (Jacobs & Schillemans 2016; Peters 2016; Pallas et al. 2016; Salomonsen, Frandsen, & Johansen 2016; Thorbjørnsrud 2015). In this context, media(tisation) is approached as a set of institutionalised ideas and perceptions that in tandem with and in relation to other (conflicting) institutional pressures influence public sector organisations (cf. Blomgren & Waks 2017; Lindberg, Czarniawska, & Solli 2015). In this research context, it is assumed that the

***Signe Jernberg**, PhD, is a senior lecturer at the University of Gävle. Her research interests focus on organisation and governance of higher education institutions. In her thesis and following publications Signe seeks to understand the processes through which universities and colleges gain their status as autonomous actors.

Josef Pallas, PhD, is Professor at the department of Business Studies, Uppsala University. His research focuses on the expansion, dynamics and consequences of mediatisation and other related societal processes that shape the governance and organisation of public sector organisations in general and universities, government agencies and municipalities in particular.

market-driven reforms of public sector governance have also created new demands for scrutiny, assessment and evaluation of quality of welfare products and services available, and the processes in which these are produced (Lægreid, Peter, & Koen Verhoest 2010). This has paved the way for external professional and semi-professional scrutinizers such as quality assessment agencies, consultants, ranking and accreditation institutes and, not least, the media. Hence, media(tisation) comes about in the larger context of changing governance regimes.

Studies of media and central governments (Garland 2017; Laursen & Valentini 2015), local governments/municipalities (Djerf-Pierre & Jon Pierre 2016; Fredriksson & Färdigh 2018), healthcare organisations (Blomgren, Hedmo, & Waks 2016; Briggs & Hallin 2016), governmental agencies (Fredriksson et al. 2015; Schillemans 2016), political parties (Esser & Strömbäck 2014) and universities (Stack 2016) have illustrated the fact that adaptation to and internalization of media-oriented practices and values influences and transforms not only communication and media activities of actors within the public sector, but also organisation and execution of core the activities of these actors (see also Sandén & Turunen 2020; Schillemans 2016; Pallas et al. 2016).

Supported by the general writings on mediatisation (e.g. Couldry & Hepp 2016; Lundy 2009, 2014; Hjarvard 2008, 2013), these studies suggest that media orientation challenges and transforms how PSOs understand and act in relation to the services and products they are set to offer and deliver to their constituencies. Relocation of universities' resources from teaching/research to their communication and PR departments with subsequent changes in research and education policies, practices and priorities (Engwall 2008; Ekström 2004), less time available in for instance elderly care to ensure proper documentation, which in turn can provide protection from adverse news coverage (Edlund, Lövgren & Thorén 2021; Forssell & Westerberg 2014), or a general inclination of governmental agencies to selectively make priorities among the responsibilities they have been assigned in order to maximise positive media visibility (Figenschou et al. 2019; Fredriksson & Pallas 2013) are just a few examples of such a transformation.

However, despite the insights derived from these studies, we still do not have an adequate understanding of what media orientation of public sector organisations (PSOs) means in terms of structuring the conditions of the public sector in general, and the governance and provision of welfare products and services in particular. Previous research has focused on responses to media from organisations or individual actors, rather than taking into account how media orientation plays out between the diversity of actors who constitute the public sector, and what consequences this has for the overall provision of activities, products and services for which these actors are jointly responsible. As the focus of actors in relation to media and media-related issues evolves in relation to a general transformation of public sector governance systems, in which a shift in responsibility and accountability is a central aspect, we argue that a better understanding is needed of the role of the media and media orientation in this transformation.

In this paper, we therefore seek to understand how the preferences, values and practices of the media manifest themselves in relation to existing political-economic regimes that govern and re-define the relationships between and responsibilities of different actors involved in organising and providing welfare services. We translate this challenge into the following research question:

How do public sector actors make sense of the structures, relationships and responsibilities within existing governance regimes through the notion of the media's role as monitors and mediators of public sector activities?

Media in the context of public sector governance

In the literature on how public sector organisations in general deal with news media it is argued that PSOs face increasing market pressures on visibility, marketing, branding and other activities that are directly associated with promotion and implementation of the NPM reforms, i.e., reforms where market and competition figurate as main ingredients (Fredriksson & Pallas 2016; Greve et al. 2019; Wæraas & Maor 2015). These studies suggest that a positive public and media image is essential for PSOs in building their identities and capacities to act autonomously, rationally and strategically.

A related but more specialized research field on the media's role in the public sector argues that the adaptation to and internalization of media preferences and working routines in public sector organisations is not only a consequence of the general process of mediatisation (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Schillemans 2012; Thorbjornsrud, Figenschou, & Ihlen 2014), but also an expression of NPM-oriented processes such as managerialism, marketization, economization and rationalization (Fredriksson et al. 2015; Schillemans & Pierre 2016). A core argument here is that the internalization of media-oriented practices and preferences cannot be seen as separate from changes in the political and economic pressures that reshape – both in detail and generally – the working conditions, organisation and governance of the public sector.

More precisely, media orientation of PSOs has not only organisational and operational consequences in the context of their operations. It also influences how PSOs and other non-media actors are jointly involved in organisation and provision of products and services within specific fields such as education, healthcare, research, culture, etc. (see for instance Figenschou et al. 2019). An illustrative example in this context is brought by Fredriksson & Pallas (2013) who argue that preferences and values of the media shape the governance of science by putting mediatized rankings at the center of attention for a variety of actors occupying the higher education field (see also Stack 2016). Similarly, Briggs (2020) in his study on the N1H1 pandemic suggests that understanding of health risks and responses to it requires understanding media coverage of the risks as emerging "through linkages among a wide range of sites and professional logics, from clinical facilities to laboratories to epidemiologists' webs of statistical calculation to public health offices to pharmacies to corporations that make vaccines and antiviral medications to newsrooms" (2020: 106). Yet in another study, Rodwell (2020) shows that medially prompted dog-whistles are a part of political processes that aim at altering teaching standards, practices and curriculums in UK, US and Australian schools.

Altogether, the research indicates that the role of media orientation in the formation of specific areas within the public sector is better understood if put in a context of a dynamic interplay between PSOs and their counterparts, and where media orientation of PSOs is only a part of political and economic pressures and processes that are central to organisation and governance of the public sector (Canel & Luoma-aho 2018; Figenschou et al. 2020).

Media and Governance of Swedish Municipal Elderly Care

An area where a scarcity of empirical studies of media orientation in the public sector warrants particular research attention is the provision of welfare services provided by local governments/municipalities in Sweden. The limited knowledge of this is at least in the Nordic context a bit surprising as the provision of welfare services has several qualities which make it a suitable case to study. However, before examining how media orientation of PSOs plays out in organisation and provision of municipal welfare services we need to put this orientation into a wider context of governing regimes in which Swedish municipal welfare provision is embedded (i.e., market- and competition-oriented reforms and policies).

The Swedish provision of welfare services (including the elderly care which is also the focus of our study) has a strong legal foundation that guarantees extensive local autonomy from the central government over (and responsibility for) the funding, planning, organising and delivery of these services. The 1977 Local Government Act is commonly seen as a starting point from which the contemporary mode of governance of welfare has evolved (Elander & Montin 1990). In short, the Act granted local governments (i.e., municipalities) extensive and explicit freedom to identify and meet the needs and expectations people have on quality and extent of services provided. The central government, through national legislative and regulatory frameworks, control mechanisms and financial structures, could ensure that municipalities fulfilled their responsibilities to provide an equal, equivalent and high-quality social care (Meagher & Szebehely 2013; Trydegård & Thorslund 2010). In practice, this conventional governance regime assumed that the central government could steer by legislation, regulations, goals and evaluations, while the municipalities were (within such a national framework) given the autonomy to organise their provision of welfare, and decide how resources should be used and distributed. Such a set-up was based on a relatively low degree of detailed regulation concerning the ways in which different welfare services were carried out. This gave welfare providers and professions dominating these providers extensive possibilities to design and perform their work (Szebehely & Meagher 2018; Montin 2015). Based on these characteristics we can argue that organisation, governance and provision of Swedish welfare relied on a combination of state regulation, municipal social service administration and professional discretion of those producing and delivering the welfare services.

However, this threefold governance model has changed as the role of the relatively stable political and administrative sphere has been challenged by an advancement of economic and market institutions that claim accountability and ask for influence over organisation and execution of public sector services in

general and welfare provision in particular (Olsen 2016). The autonomy of municipalities is still preserved, but we can see how the national government as well as local political bodies, by way of deregulation, creating competitive settings and delegating strategic decision-making processes to professionalized managers, leave the municipal administration to balance between market forces, economic constraints, professional norms and democratic values as they try to organise and provide welfare service to their citizens (Moberg 2017; Petersen & Hjelmar 2014).

Based on the literature mentioned above we can assume that the influence of media orientation will manifest itself mainly in contexts such as distribution of responsibilities between the actors involved in municipal welfare, the level and extent of these actors' co-operation, the type and characteristics of joint structures and incentives, and the role these actors have in local policy-making processes.

Method

We generated the empirical material for this paper from a larger study on mediatisation of the provision of welfare services by local governments/municipalities in Sweden. The study focuses on elderly care in two municipalities (hereafter referred to as Alpha and Beta) that we treat as an illustration of assumed variety in mediatized governance of elderly care rather than a foundation for a comparative analysis. We chose the two municipalities on the basis of their size (small and large) and presence of local media (low and high). Alpha is one of Sweden's largest municipalities with more than 150,000 citizens. The municipality's activities – including its social services – have historically experienced ongoing media attention from the local as well as national press. Beta on the other hand is a small municipality with less than 25,000 citizens. There are no local news media outlets in Beta and the municipality's provision of welfare services attracts only limited attention from the regional and national media. Both municipalities have introduced laws on public procurement guaranteeing freedom for non-public welfare actors to establish their activities, both have a mixture of public, private and non-profit providers of elderly care, the administration of both municipalities is organised in a similar manner, and both municipalities have been governed by liberal political parties for at least two mandate periods preceding our study.

The empirical material from the larger study includes interviews with 41 employees (operational managers, administrators, healthcare professionals and nursing staff) from seven nursing homes in these municipalities, and 14 interviews with senior employees at the municipalities' Social Service Administrations (or corresponding). We approached the interviews as a form of social conversation, i.e., using an interview guide but with an intention to support the interviewees in describing their views on and interpretations of their work. We digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim the semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. Providing anonymity was a central ethical and methodological issue in our design of the whole project. Therefore, we do not disclose the identities of the

participating municipalities, the elderly/retirement nursing homes or their employees.

Furthermore, a content analysis of the municipalities' policy and strategy documents was made, as well as a content analysis of news coverage of elderly care in six Swedish municipalities (including Alpha & Beta). As a part of two parallel reports within our project (Fredriksson & Pallas 2018; Pallas & Fredriksson 2021), a limited content analysis from the two newspapers covering the studied municipalities was conducted. That is, the figures and tables used in this paper were originally published in these reports. The analysis was based on articles on elderly care that were published in the local press in the two studied municipalities in 2015 and 2018. News coverage in Alpha included 148 articles in 2015 and 210 in 2018. Corresponding numbers in Beta were 151 articles in 2015 and 136 in 2018. In both cases the news coverage of elderly care represents less than 1% of total news production of the newspapers.

For the purpose of this paper, we included 14 interviews with the administrative and managerial personnel working at the municipalities' Social Service Administrations. We made this choice based on the assumption that this group of professionals operates at an intersection of different pressures exercised by local politics, welfare professions, civil society organisations, caretakers and their relatives. Furthermore, we used the 41 interviews with representatives of different professions operating at elderly care homes as a backdrop for our analysis, to contextualize and mirror the realities of the administrative and managerial staff. For this paper, we translated the quotes as closely to the original wording as possible with the ambition not to lose what the interviewees intended to convey, and without violating the anonymity agreement. In addition, we used the reports from the larger study to contextualize and reflect on the interviewees' own statements and perceptions of the media and the influence media have on governance of elderly care.

All interview material was imported and then coded in MAXQDA where we first read it inductively with focus on the raw data. Here we focused on identifying patterns that we compared with findings in existing literature (Reay & Jones 2016). We then used these patterns to generate first-order codes that helped us to re-approach the text more structurally and to re-organise the material into more coherent and robust analytical units (Corley & Gioia 2004, 2011). In a second round of coding, we thematized the existing codes on the basis of the theoretical framework introduced above. We used the literature on public sector governance and mediatisation of public sector organisations to identify relevant themes such as format and content in policy processes, work division and co-ordination between different parties involved in organisation and provision of welfare services, accountability and responsibility for different aspects of municipal elderly care. In the final step, we reduced these themes to three distinct meta-themes that captured the interviewees' identifications of ideas, pressures and expectations that they feel influence organisation and provision of elderly care in their municipalities. We named these themes the *What*, the *How* and the *Why*.

The media content analysis that was used for this paper is limited to data on extent, topics, valence and type of actors being mentioned in the news coverage. Figure 1 provides an illustrative picture of the extent of news coverage of elderly

care in the municipalities by simply accounting for occurrence of different types of articles (e.g. news articles, editorials, columns, op-eds and letters to the editor) that had elderly care as their main focus. Figure 2 addresses the valency in news coverage in terms of the articles' overall tendency to describe their topics in positive, neutral or negative terms. Table 1 and Table 2 provide then a sense of what the newspapers in Alpha and Beta prioritize in their daily coverage of elderly care in terms of topics (Table 1) and actors (Table 2).

Findings: Media in the Context of What, How and Why

What

Organisation and production of welfare services and care for the elderly, especially in the studied municipalities, are described as being governed by two types of issues that different welfare actors must understand and relate to, namely questions about the *What* and the *How*. The *What* refers to the overall ambition with and goals for the municipalities' elderly care. In more specific terms, the *What* includes aspects such as quantity and quality requirements for elderly care, the extent to which elderly care is expected to be provided by private, non-profit and public (municipally owned) actors, budget frameworks, requirements for cooperation and coordination both within municipalities (e.g. between different parts of the municipal administrations) and with external actors such as neighboring municipalities, industry associations and interest organisations including the National Organisation of Pensioners (PRO) or the Dementia Association.

Although the formal responsibility for elderly care lies with the different political committees (Elderly Committee in Alpha and the Social Affairs Committee in Beta), it is obvious that the municipalities' administrative bodies (municipal administrations – Elderly Service Administration in Alpha and the Social Service Administration in Beta) are critical to the political processes in which decisions and directives regarding the *What* are taken. As the political ambitions with the *What* eventually need to be translated into realistic, quantifiable and tangible goals and priorities that then constitute the framework within which individual welfare providers are expected to operate, the administrative bodies serve not only as "executors and translators" of the political will, they also serve as an important approximation of reality to which the political *What* needs to relate.

In both municipalities, it is also obvious that the administrative bodies are not the only force involved in the political framing of the *What*. The general public, relatives and of course the elderly themselves are all involved both directly through formalized dialogues and indirectly through various media platforms and professional pressure groups in the design of the *What* – both in terms of expressing general priorities and overall desirable ambitions, and with respect to specific requirements and ideas on how long-term conditions for care for the elderly in each municipality are to be achieved. Quality manager at Alpha:

> *Organisations like PRO [The Swedish National Pensioners'*
> *Organisation] have direct contact with the [political] board …*
> *But I mean relatives who are [also] so important in our*

> *[elderly care] activities, they are very important. … We make a compilation [of their views and interests]. … We present [these views] to the [political] committee absolutely. … It is a way to see what people think of us [the municipality and its work with elderly care].*

Our interviewees have been relatively clear that values, discussions and work processes in which the *What* is formed and defined must also be linked to issues relating to the media, news coverage and a broader public discourse. The interviewees express that it is not the actual media coverage (which in the studied municipalities seems to be quite limited and mostly neutral in character as we can see in Figure 1) that seems to have the main role when elderly care is defined in its political context.

Figure 1: Number of articles published in local (Alpha) and regional (Beta) press on elderly care in 2015 and 2019 (n)
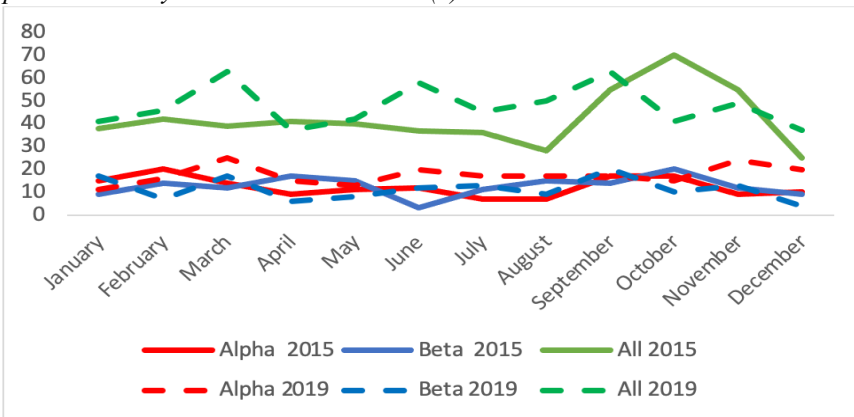
Comment: In this figure we have included all types of articles such as news articles, editorials, columns, op-eds and letters to the editor. (Source: Fredriksson & Mossberg, 2020)

Figure 2: Valence in news coverage of elderly care in local (Alpha) and regional (Beta) press in years 2015 and 2018 (%)
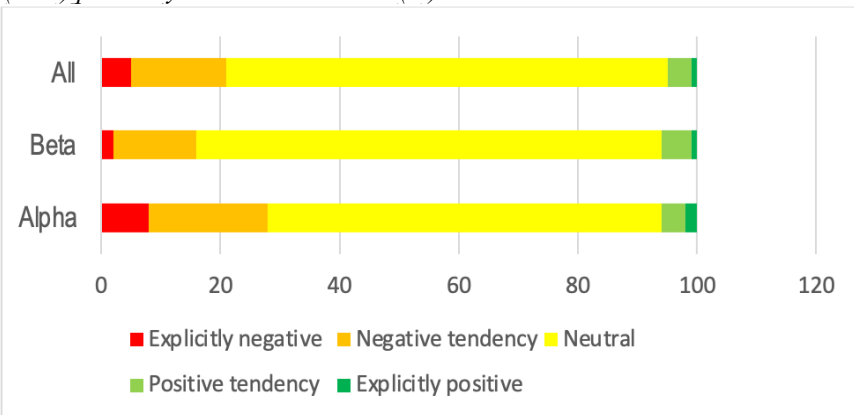
Comment: In this figure we have included all types of articles such as news articles, editorials, columns, op-eds and letters to the editor. Each article was coded once with respect to its overall valence - explicitly negative, has negative tendency, is neutral, has positive tendency or is explicitly positive. (Source: Fredriksson & Mossberg, 2020)

Instead, it is believed that it is people's (and especially the politicians') assumptions about how others see and act on the media coverage of the municipalities' elderly care that inform the political discussions in which the *What* is defined. Both the municipal administrative personnel and welfare workers at the elderly home express a rather dynamic view on the *What*. They see the definition of the *What* as an open-ended process where politicians, municipal administration, elderly care providers, users of the elderly care services and their relatives as well as the general public introduce and argue for their ideas, views and demands, not seldom through public initiatives where media figure as a channel or platform. An example is that the interviewees often refer to the formal and professional associations that represent the users of the elderly care services (e.g. PRO). These associations are described as media-competent and skillful in using their competence to influence the political process in which the scope and content of municipal elderly care is set.

> *I had a meeting with YYY and their pensioners' association. … They have sent a letter to us with a major complaint and a large palette of questions that they wanted to shed light on for us… This is the case throughout Sweden, we have very strong pensioners' associations that have strong opinions and it is not unique to Alpha. KPR [municipal pensioners' council] is established in all municipalities so they represent a strong (public) voice.*

Thus, it seems that the *What* is not as stable as one might expect, and it is challenging for the diversity of elderly care providers to relate to it. The *What* is described as continuously redefined and renegotiated, at least in terms of not having a fixed time-based political framework to relate to. The *What* is also understood as driven by internalisation of what different actors think about the media's preferences and working processes. Our interviewees point out that it is mainly the dramaturgical and temporary elements in the media's work that make it difficult to see the *What* as stable over time. Simplification of complex phenomena, perspectives that are medially altered, focus on conflicts, generalisation of negative events presented without broader and more objective contexts, short-term and tendentious coverage are some of the often mentioned characteristics of media's work that our interviewees believe influence the process in which the *What* gains its political underpinning. Chief of Staff at Alpha explains:

> *The media plays a huge role in this [the What in the municipal elderly care]. How do they play their angle? Most often it is about David vs. Goliath. Then it will be a series of articles about the sad users who don't get hot food and who can't microwave their own food and so on.*

How

If the *What* is understood as being about identifying and defining political, financial and legal conditions for the scope, type and level of quality of the elderly care in the studied municipalities, the *How* is about breaking down and translating the *What* into specific ideas and plans for how to organise, execute

and evaluate the elderly care. Aspects such as implementation of national elderly care guidelines and regulatory framework (see for instance the National Board of Health and Welfare) and national and local quality and reporting systems (e.g. those under the Health and Social Care Inspectorate) and municipal compensation models constitute the formal framework for how to translate the *What* into the *How*. But there is also a number of regular and ongoing local structures and initiatives between the political and administrative bodies as well as other actors involved in elderly care that the interviewees describe as framing the work with the *How.* In their stories, these national and local frameworks are then left for the municipal administration to contextualize, adjust and modify so they fit each municipality's local needs and challenges. As such, the interviewees describe the way in which the *What* turns into the *How* as an internal process, seen from a perspective of the municipal administrative bodies. The way in which senior administrative personnel at the municipalities' elderly care homes views the difference between the *What* and the *How* is illustrative:

> I mean directives come from different places… not everything goes through the local government … the director of social service administration or the municipal management team decides what we should do and then it does not have to be political. It can be within the framework of normal operations and … you relate to the requirements and opportunities [in the municipality] because there can be positive opportunities as well.

The head of elderly service administration at Alpha complements the picture of the *How* as a process where the municipal administrations have a decisive role:

> Yes, there are a lot of meetings [with the politicians about the How]. But it is really the management of the operations [who is in charge of the process with the How.] So it [the What] is very much about meetings … with development groups, decisions but also about leading line managers in different parts [of elderly care]. So there is a lot [of work] with the line managers around distribution, priorities as well as directions …. helping them to implement the decisions that have been made, both by the management of the elderly care administration but also by the political bodies.

The management staff at the municipal administrations and the elderly care homes included in the study described their relations to the local political bodies as based in locally developed structures. In Alpha's case, it seems that the role of political preferences in specifying the *How* is limited to determining financial and reputational frameworks. Annual budgets and financial performance evaluation dominate the political input into the *How* closely followed by an overall wish to avoid negative and increase positive reputation of elderly care and the municipality as a whole. The ideologically driven demands on for instance a share of private vs. municipal elderly care providers, how to prioritize between different types of elderly care services, or how the services should be

performed, where they should be located and under what conditions seems to be downplayed in the discussion with the administrative bodies.

Similar to the processes in which the *What* is seen as influenced by the actors' different understandings of the media, our interviewees also suggest the media have a decisive role in shaping the specifics in municipal elderly care. But this time the ideas people hold about how media influence the *How* seem to be quite different from their role in the *What*. The clearest difference is described in terms of seeing media either as informing or as scrutinizing. In the context of the former and especially in relation to defining the *What*, the local politicians, representatives of the Elderly and Social Service Administrations and the personnel at the elderly homes are described as seeking to anticipate and incorporate possible interpretations that the media may be expected to cover in their reporting. In the context of the latter and the way it relates to defining the *How*, our interviewees are more measured in their assumptions considering the ways in which the media will describe different aspects of organising and providing the municipal elderly care. The *How* is described as defined in relation to what the Social and Elderly Service Administrations believe can be written about different issues. How elderly care services and products have been carried out, controlled and evaluated; how feedback and evaluation of care for the elderly have been handled; how quality improvements have been ensured; and how various accidents, challenges, mistakes or bureaucratic errors have been handled and corrected are few examples of questions that can be asked in this context. Our interviewees seem to be relatively in agreement on how they describe what to expect from the media's coverage of these issues. A senior manager at Alpha's Social Service Administration put it in the following words:

> *We have endless policies and guidelines and routines about what is a bribe, what is bribery … but I think a lot about how the media will write about these things. That you have attended a Christmas dinner at a contractor, for example. I think that somewhere it means that you stay within that [formal] framework to a greater extent than if the media weren't there …You are bounded by the existing [formal] guidelines and routines. But the media are there. And many times you think that "no, we cannot do that because then, what would it look like in the newspaper? What angle would they use?"*

Quality manager at Beta had a similar picture of how the perceptions of the media's work affect the How:

> *For the media, their lifeblood is the negative stuff - more than for the others [scrutinizers]. And then it is that when you work with these activities [elderly care], you understand them differently when you know that those who sit in front of the TV will perceive it [the coverage of elderly care] in the same way [as media portrayed them]. … I understand that. … But it is clear that I can sometimes think in my role [as quality manager] that we should do this too [think in terms of media coverage]. Or what do we do in our role? Can we*

*relate [to news coverage]? And what approach do we have
in this [creating conditions for provision of elderly care]? And
how do we think about these issues?*

It is a commonly held belief that the way media cover elderly care issues is
based on relatively predictable principles and values. Our interviewees argued
here that these principles and values limit their maneuvering space in translating
the political/financial framework into more realizable strategies, practices and
activities. The head of Social Service Administration at Alpha clearly states this:

*I experience a lot of "media control." But they do not control
our decisions directly, but they control how we react to them.
… There is a "reaction pattern" here to [how we respond to]
the media. A pattern that I have not used before [in a
previous job].*

The formation of the *How* in relation to the media is seen by our
interviewees as relatively predictable and stable, at least when compared to how
they viewed the media's role in shaping the *What*. Although our interviewees see
the media (and the news reporting that other actors may give rise to) as
important for how the content of the *How* is specified and performed, the
assumed predictability of the work of the media also means that Social and
Elderly Service Administrations can plan the *How* in advance, and partly also
independently from the *What*. One of the Social Service administrators pointed
out in this context how media are thought of when planning and executing the
elderly care:

*… when we are now in the newspapers because we bicycle
with our pensioners or we arrange [game] tournaments or
whatever we do now. … it is positive… you can feel like
"look how good we are" … I mean, how do we know that we
have achieved good quality in what we do? Are we really
good at our job? And here I think, the media fulfill an
important function – there is like some kind of little extra
whip. If we are actually not doing what we are supposed to
do [and doing it right] then we are exposed in the media.
And that is perhaps how it should be [letting the media
shape the ambition with and content of the elderly care].*

To summarize our discussion on the *What* and the *How* so far: Looking at
our results from a perspective on the general effects of media as they are
discussed in the mediatisation literature (e.g. Couldry & Hepp 2016; Lundy
2009, 2014; Hjarvard 2008, 2013) offers relativity few new insights. That is, the
way in which ideas and perceptions about media – in terms of assumptions about
how media coverage and news reporting arise, what it contains, what it focuses
on and how different aspects of elderly care are noticed and interpreted – are
given prominence in shaping the *What* and the *How* of the governance and
organisation of elderly care does not differ significantly from what has been
observed in studies of other public sector organisations such as universities,
political parties, governments and governmental agencies (Sandén & Turunen

2020; Figenschou et al. 2019; Fredriksson & Pallas 2016; Thorbjornsrud, Figenschou & Ihlen 2014; Schillemans 2014; Esses & Strömbeck 2014).

On one account the material presented so far speaks directly to a part of mediatisation literature that relates to the argument made by Marcinkowski (2014). Namely, that ideas and beliefs that people hold about media are expressions of an assumed rather than a real work of the media and their effects. It is obvious that most of our interviewees lack their own direct experience from work/contact with the media (if we do not include their presence in social media). Nor do their perceptions seem to be based on what actually happens in the media in terms of type, extent and main characteristics of news coverage and what our interviewees describe as happening in their own and other actors' organisations.

Table 1: Different topics mentioned in the news coverage of elderly care in Alpha and Beta in 2015 and 2018 (%)

	Alpha	Beta
Organisation/structure	6	10
Access	24	21
Economy	11	8
Recruitment and competence	6	9
Working conditions	8	10
Quality of housing	28	17
Management and administration	8	9
Activities for elderly	5	8
Other	4	7
Total (%)	100	100
Total (n)	2693	1844

Comment: The results include all articles on elderly care in the two selected newspapers and that were published in 2015 and 2018. Each article was coded in paragraphs. In each paragraph we have coded all topics that were mentioned. Therefore the total number of topics is higher than the number of articles. (Source: Fredriksson & Mossberg, 2020)

As such, their descriptions are much closer to Marcinkowski's notion of mental medialisation and what Sandén and Turunen (2020) address in terms of discrepancy between actors' views and understanding of the media and the beliefs they hold about their own (and their organisations') values, experiences, disposition and preferences.

But a number of observations in our material suggest that we can look in a more interesting direction in discussing the influence of media on organisation and governance of municipal elderly care. Namely, the argument introduced by Fredriksson & Pallas (2017) that ideas about media are given different meanings as they travel between and across different organisational contexts where they interact with other governing and organising rationales – rationales that capture values, preferences and practices of professions populating organisations (Pallas et al. 2016). The suggested relation between the ideas about media and rationales connected to a variety of professions that permeate the governance and

organisation of elderly care helps us to introduce a third aspect of how people's perceptions of media manifest themselves in the processes, relations and activities in which municipal welfare services such as elderly care are formed – the *Why*.

Why

While the What and the How have been discussed in terms of what people believe are the more direct effects of media on formation of goals, format and content of elderly care in the two studied municipalities, the Why is more oriented on formation of accountability and responsibility for how the provision of elderly care turned out in practice. Looking at the Why helps us thereby to better understand and explain how the ideas about media can be seen as a part of processes in which the municipal administrations are turned into autonomous actors that are not primarily transforming politics into specific elderly care, but rather into actors that are expected to take responsibility for the outcomes of such politics.

Many of our interviewees express their views on the media (and how others understand and act upon media) as part of how the municipal administrations explain and thus express (at least in part) responsibility for the *What* and the *How*. This explanation can also be seen as an expression of the administrations' autonomy, mainly from the political sphere (i.e., the municipal political bodies) but also in relation to the elderly homes, the caretakers and the general public. That is, the municipalities' administrations to a certain extent (both voluntarily and based on explicit expectations) take on that responsibility for planning and implementing care for the elderly, that is, responsibilities that are usually ascribed to local policy (especially with regard to the *What*) and elderly care providers (especially with regard to the *How*). Quality manager at Alpha comments on the Elderly Service Administration's responsibility for the municipality's reputation as linked to the content and quality of elderly care:

> *Yes, so [you have] this loyalty … as an ambassador [for the municipality], whether we like it or not. Because this is what is so difficult. Because we have politics quite close to us. We bear the responsibility [for what happens in elderly care]. For the private [caregivers] they do not need [to be loyal]. … But we have [the responsibility] in a different way. … we are still part of Alpha.*

Although the municipalities' administrations and the local political bodies work closely together – for instance, the Elderly Service Administration is to a large extent involved in providing material and information used for policy formation – the municipal personnel argued that they feel that they have to defend and explain the strategic and long-term policy to the media, citizens and other actors. The Chief of Staff at Beta's Social Service Administration described the importance of the relationship with the media by pointing at the responsibility for the policy pursued or planned:

> *[A]fter every council meeting we have a press conference where he [a journalist who covers the elderly care in the regional newspaper], the director of Social Service*

Administration, myself, the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the council sit and talk about what has been decided …. And [as] he is familiar with the business, he often asks questions out of curiosity, yes, but "what does this mean?" and "what are the consequences?" And if there is anything interesting, he writes about it. … And then there are many times when he gets in touch [with the Social Service Administration] between the council meetings [to ask more specifically about the policies].

His colleague who worked as communicator at the Social Service Administration described his view of the administration's relationship with the media:

First and foremost, we try to work proactively so that we, like, if there is something we think that "this can be controversial" [implementation of political decisions], we would like to give our side of the story and explain first before it becomes a big thing in the media. When it may be just one side of the issue or that you first get that side and then comes our explanation. But once negative things happen, then we never try to silence anything. We do not believe in that at all. But we believe in transparency … and to provide information needed.

Another example taken from the conversation with the head of operations at Beta's Social Service Administration shows that the administrative personnel is encouraged and expected to take responsibility for the political context in which the municipal elderly care is formed. The example has to do with what people at Beta's Social Service Administration refer to as being responsible for their share of the "Contract with Society." That is, the role of the municipal administration to ensure the active involvement of relatives, non-profit welfare providers and civil society in maintaining the current levels and quality of welfare in general and care for the elderly in particular.

I think that, if we talk about that "Contract with Society" again, I think that … it is important that they [the public and politicians] realize that they will not be able to have it [the extent and quality of welfare services] as we have it now. So that's why it's so important to have that communication with the group [elderly] that will rely on it [municipal elderly care]. … Then you have to start doing something, they [younger generations] are aware that this will not last. And I do not really know how to do that... We have had some discussions with our politicians… Now we have to deal with a newly elected council that this [the Contract with Society] is something that you have to make political decisions about.

In both municipalities, it is argued that the municipal administrations need to explain not only to relatives, prospective users and the public but also (and perhaps above all) to the media what challenges municipal elderly care faces and

how this should be handled in terms of the organisation and management of welfare. Head of Assistance at Alpha's Elderly Service Administration explained:

> *It is very important to help politicians to meet … the media. Help them with answers … so that they do not go into details without the administration helping to [formulate] answers. Then it can be difficult sometimes with the demarcation. … should you step into everything? You have to make an assessment… Is this just something general?… then maybe you do not need to step in. But if anyone [from the council] is talking about an idea of how to experience Alpha municipality and its activities… then it is important [to step in].*

Focus on and willingness to take on and accept the explanatory role and the responsibility that comes with it is motivated by our interviewees with reference to (the assumed) increased pressure from the media. The administrations and their personnel are expected, as they put it, not only to identify and describe the problems and challenges related to elderly care. They also expressed a belief that it is included in their work to explain and take responsibility for the causes and consequences of the problems and challenges at hand. As politicians are seen as increasingly aware of and skillful in managing the media, our interviewees saw difficulties in media's efforts to successfully address and scrutinize the politicians. The Managing Director of Alpha Social Service Administration and her colleague explained:

> *It is clear that everyone reads XXX [the local newspaper] and all politicians read XXX. And we do not control politicians. Because it has happened that we have made decisions which are then taken back because it [the council] gets cold feet. Because there is too much media and then you [have to] do something else. … I sometimes think that one should not underestimate the media. They [the media] have a lot of influence and everyone [is] well aware of that ... But I think our politicians are aware of that. So the last time I heard about it, there was talk about – not our chairman but other politicians – "yes, but if you want to make a change then it is at the beginning of the term of office because then it will be time to go to bed before the next election [i.e., time deal with the public and the media]."*

Unlike the statements concerning the *What* and the *How*, our interviewees' perceptions of the *Why* were more anchored both in their own experiences of how politicians primarily handled the media, and in how the regional and local newspapers seem to more often turn to municipal officials for comments, opinions and justifications of the elderly policy.

The analysis of news content in the local media in the studied municipalities conducted in a parallel report (Figenschouet al. 2020) supports our interviewees' claims that the municipal administrations are becoming a dominant source of

information outperforming the local politicians, elderly homes, caretakers and other types of actors approached by the local press.

Table 2: Different actors mentioned in the news coverage of elderly care in Alpha and Beta in 2015 and 2018 (%)

	Alpha	Beta
Politicians	13	16
Administrative personnel	15	13
Owners (parent company)	3	2
Government agency	3	5
Management	3	2
Employees (nursing homes)	11	13
Caretakers	16	13
Relatives	4	2
Nursing homes	18	16
Public - Elderly people	3	3
NGOs	2	2
Other	9	13
Total (%)	100	100
Total (n)	4266	2613

Comments: The results include all articles on elderly care in the two selected newspapers that were published in 2015 and 2018. Each article was coded in paragraphs. In each paragraph we have coded all actors that were mentioned. Therefore the total number of actors is higher than the number of articles. (Source: Fredriksson & Mossberg, 2020)

Discussion

From our material, we conclude that ideas about media are central in articulating conflicts and tensions both within and between actors representing different interests in the organisation and provision of municipal elderly care. Putting our findings in a context of a more general discussion of governance of public sector and welfare services, we argue that ideas of media expressed in our study relate to two parallel but interwoven processes: 1) an increase of (conflicts) between different governing rationales; and 2) reconciliation of conflicts between different governing rationales by professionalisation and shift of responsibilities from the political sphere and welfare professions to municipal administrative bodies. The first process refers to the relation between values, preferences and practices put forward by actors representing a variety of governing fields such as politics, public administration, market or welfare professions. These fields serve as a fertile ground for rationales and motives that public sector organisations need to understand and relate to (Alvehus & Andersson 2018; Blomgren & Waks 2017). Moreover, as the different rationales and related practices travel across and from these fields they get packaged in formats that legitimize and popularize these in different parts of the public sector (Fredriksson & Pallas 2017; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). A part of such popularisation includes medially driven dramatisation and polarisation of governing rationales, for instance, by putting economic efficiency against demands on accessibility, quality or administrative reporting (Figenschou et al. 2020).

Moreover, we conclude that ideas about media reflect a development where the conflicts and tensions between different governing rationales are concentrated and reconciled within the municipal administrative bodies. This process unfolds alongside two types of changes that we recognized from other types of public sector organisations. The first relates to the general professionalisation and hybridisation of core competencies and activities in these organisations (Blomgren & Waks 2015. The second one is more associated with strengthening of the autonomy of (management of) public sector organisations, especially in relation to their political constituents (Lægreid & Verhoest 2010). Our interviews testify to professionalisation of the way in which media issues are understood and dealt with in Social and Elderly Service Administrations. Such a professionalisation is not limited to media and communication personnel or units – it runs throughout the entire municipal administration (cf. Trydegård & Thorslund 2010). The context of the *How* illustrates how the shared understandings of media and its effects seem to contribute to a relative consensus between different professions occupying the municipal administration, at least when the *What* was translated into specific strategies, plans and goals. Seemingly, this challenges the notion of the discretion of non-communicative professions involved in the municipal welfare professions.

Lastly, based on our discussion around the *Why* the paper suggests that at the same time as the Social and Elderly Service Administrations operate at an intersection of different pressures exercised by local politics and welfare professions, the municipal administration seem to be granted extensive autonomy and responsibility not only for translating political directives into practice, but also for the policy itself (cf. Szebehely & Meagher 2018). The results reported here also suggest that the municipal administrations in our study, similarly to for instance governmental agencies or universities, do not seem to avoid responsibility – quite the opposite. Municipal administrations and their personnel are actively seeking and taking part in explaining to media (and other external actors) both practices and procedures of elderly care as well as accounting for the outcomes of these practices and procedures. The way media are understood testifies to efforts to uphold and strengthen the mandate and authority the municipal administration have for planning and organising the welfare services (cf. Figenschou et al. 2020).

Conclusions

We started this paper with a question concerning the role of the media in organising and governing public sector organisations (PSOs) in general and (their) welfare services in particular. More specifically, we sought to contribute to discussions about the interplay between media(tisation) and relations, activities and processes in which type, extent, execution and quality of welfare are decided. Putting this question into a context of provision of elderly care in two Swedish municipalities we have discussed how (the governance of) welfare services might be formed by (internalisation of) preferences, values and practices of the media. Departing from literature on mediatisation and governance of public sector organisations, the results of our study add to the discussion on organisation and provision of welfare services as being shaped by loosening, and to some extent also a shift, of the traditional division of roles between policy,

administration and executor. In alignment with arguments presented elsewhere (Jarl et al. 2012; Montin 2015; Olsen 2016), our material also witnesses about the processes that lead to more or less pronounced expectations that the administrative bodies (rather than the political ones) will take on the role of being accountable and responsible for how elderly care is organised and managed and what results it leads to.

This shift of accountability and responsibility is also something that is reflected in notions of media, especially because the media are considered to describe care for the elderly on the basis of relatively given frameworks. In light of this, we can note that perceptions and ideas about the work of the media reflect how the actors view the formal relations between politics, administration and welfare providers, rather than that they experience that the media directly affect these conditions.

References

Alvehus, J. & Andersson, T. (2018). A new professional landscape: entangled institutional logics in two Swedish welfare professions. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies, 8*(3).

Blomgren, M., Hedmo, T. & Waks, C. (2016). Being Special in an Ordinary Way: Swedish Hospitals' Strategic Web Communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 177–194.

Blomgren, M. & Waks, C. (2017). The Impact of Institutional Pluralism on Governmental Reforms in the Public Sector. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration, 21*(4), 3–25.

Blomgren, M. & Waks, C. (2015). Coping with contradictions: hybrid professionals managing institutional complexity. *Journal of Professions and Organisation*, *2*(1), 78–102.

Briggs, C. L. (2020). Moving beyond "the Media": Critical Intersections between Traditionalization and Mediatization. *Journal of Folklore Research, 57*(2): 81–117.

Briggs, C. L. & Hallin, D. C. (2016). *Making health public: how news coverage is remaking media, medicine, and contemporary life*. London: Routledge.

Canel, M. J. & Luoma-aho, W. (2018). *Public sector communication: Closing gaps between citizens and public organisations*: John Wiley & Sons.

Corley, K. G. & Gioia, D. A. (2004). Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 49*(2), 173–208.

Corley, K. G. & Gioia, D. A. (2011). Building theory about theory building: what constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review, 36*(1), 12–32.

Couldry, N. & Hepp, A. (2013). Conceptualizing mediatization: Contexts, traditions, arguments. *Communication Theory*, 23(3), 191–202.

Christensen, T. & Lægreid, P. (2017). *Transcending new public management*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Djerf-Pierre, M. & Pierre, J. (2016). Mediatised local government: Social media activity and media strategies among local government officials 1989–2010. *Policy & Politics, 44*(1), 59–77.

Edlund, P., Lövgren, D. & Thorén, C. (2021). *Från ideal till golv: Marknadsliknande reformer i mötet med dagens äldreomsorg*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Organisational Research.

Engwall, L. (2008). Minerva and the Media: Universities Protecting and Promoting Themselves. In C. Mazza, P. Quattrone, & A. Riccaboni (Eds.), *European Universities in Transition: Issues, Models and Cases*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 31–48.

Ekström, A. (2004). *Den mediala vetenskapen*. Nora: Nya Doxa.

Elander, I. & Montin, S. (1990). Decentralisation and Control: central-local government relations in Sweden. *Policy & Politics*, 18(3), 165–180.

Figenschou, T. U., Karlsen, R., Kolltveit, K. & Schillemans, T. (2019). Mounting media pressure: Push and pull forces influencing agendas, resource allocation and decision-making in public bureaucracies. *European Journal of Communication*.

Figenschou, T. U. & Thorbjørnsrud, K. (2018). Mediated Agency, Blame Avoidance and Institutional Responsibility: Government Communication in a Personalised Media Landscape. *Scandinavian Political Studies, 41*(2), 210–232.

Figenschou, T. U., Fredriksson, M. Pallas, J. & Houlberg Salomonsen, H. (2020). Under the influence of politics: Mediatization and political-administrative systems in Scandinavia. *Nordic Journal of Media Studies, 2*(1), 85–96.

Figenschou, T. U., Fredrikson, M., Kolltveit, K. & Pallas, J. (2019). Public Bureaucracies. In I. Oyvind, E. Skogerbø, N. Nørgaard Christensen, L. Nord, & O. Ihlen (Eds.), *Power, Communication and Politics in the Nordic Countries*. Gothenburg: Nordicom.

Forssell, A. & Westerberg Ivarsson, A. (2014). *Administrationssamhället*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Fredriksson, M., Lövgren, D. & Pallas, J. (2018). *Svenska myndigheter i Almedalen 2005–2017*. University of Gothenburg: Division of Media and Communication Science Research Report. 2018:77.

Fredriksson, M. & Mossberg, C. (2020). *En fråga om tillgång, kvalité och arbetsvillkor - Mediebilden av äldreomsorgen i fyra svenska lokaltidningar*. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, Department of Journalism Media and Communication.

Fredriksson, M. & Pallas, J. (2016). Diverging Principles for Strategic Communication in Government Agencies. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 10*(3): 153-164.

Fredriksson, M. & Pallas, J. (2013). *Med synlighet som ledstjärna: en analys av vilka principer som styr kommunikationsarbetet i nationella förvaltningsmyndigheter*. University of Gothenburg: Division of Media and Communication Science Research Report. 2013:1.

Fredriksson, M. & Pallas, J. (2017). The localities of mediatization: How organisations translate mediatization into everyday practices. In: Driessens, O. et al. (eds.) *Dynamics Of Mediatization: Institutional change and everyday transformations in a digital age*. Berlin, Springer: 119-136.

Fredriksson, M., Schillemans, T. & Pallas, J. (2015). Determinants of Mediatization. An Analysis of the Adaptation of Swedish Government Agencies to News Media. *Public Administration, 93*(4): 1049-1067.

Fredriksson, M. & Färdigh, M. (2018). *Den kommunikativa blicken*. Retrieved from University of Gothenburg.

Garland, R. (2017). The Dynamics of Resistance and Response to Mediatization in Government: Whitehall Press Officers Caught in the "Cross-Field" Since 1997 *Dynamics Of Mediatization*. Berlin: Springer, 155–175.

Greve, C., Ejersbo, N. Lægreid, P. & Rykkja, L. H. (2019). Unpacking Nordic Administrative Reforms: Agile and Adaptive Governments. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 1–14.

Hjarvard, S. (2008). The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change. *Northern Lights*, 6(1), 9–26.

Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The mediatization of culture and society*. New York: Routledge.

Jacobs, S & Schillemans, T. (2016). Media and public accountability: typology and exploration. *Policy & Politics, 44*(1), 23–40.

Lægreid, P, & Verhoest, K. (2010). *Governance of public sector organisations: proliferation, autonomy and performance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Laursen, B. & Valentini, C. (2015). Mediatization and Government Communication: Press Work in the European Parliament. *The International Journal of Press/Politics, 20*(1), 26–44.

Levay, C. & Waks, C. (2009). Professions and the pursuit of transparency in healthcare: two cases of soft autonomy. *Organisation Studies,* 30(5): 509–527.

Lindberg, K., Czarniawska, B. & Solli, R. (2015). After NPM? *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration, 19*(2), 3–6.

Marcinkowski, F., et al. (2014). Organisational influence on scientists' efforts to go public: An empirical investigation. *Science Communication,* 36(1): 56-80.

Meagher, G. & Szebehely, M. (2013). *Marketisation in Nordic eldercare:: a research report on legislation, oversight, extent and consequen*. Stockholm: Department of Social Work, Stockholm University.

Moberg, L. (2017). *Marketization in Swedish Eldercare: Implications for Users, Professionals, and the State.* Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

Montin, S. (2015). Från tilltrobaserad till misstrobaserad styrning. *Nordisk administrativ tidskrift, 92*(1), 58–75.

Olsen, J. P. (2016). Democratic order, autonomy and accountability *The Routledge Handbook to Accountability and Welfare State Reforms in Europe*. London: Routledge, 29–44.

Pallas, J. & Fredriksson, M. (2021) När pressen ligger på! Hur föreställningar om medier påverkar ambitionerna för den kommunala äldreomsorgen. In: Pallas, J. (ed.) *Den medialiserade välfärden*. SCORE rapportserie 2021:1. Stockholm: Stockholms centrum för forskning om offentlig sektor.

Peters, B. G. (2016). Governance and the media: Exploring the linkages. *Policy & Politics, 44*(1), 9–22.

Petersen, O. H. & Hjelmar, U. (2014). Marketization of welfare services in Scandinavia: A review of Swedish and Danish experiences. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration, 17*(4), 3–20.

Pollitt, C. & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public Management Reform: A comparative analysis-new public management, governance, and the Neo-Weberian state*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reay, T. & Jones, C. (2016). Qualitatively capturing institutional logics. *Strategic Organisation, 14*(4), 441–454.

Rodwell, G. (2020). *Politics and the mediatization of school educational policy: the dog-whistle dynamic*. London: Routledge.

Salomonsen Houlberg, H., Frandsen, F. & Johansen, W. (2016). Civil Servant Involvement in the Strategic Communication of Central Government Organisations: Mediatization and Functional Politicization. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1–15.

Sandén, J. & Turunen, J. (2020). Public Servants' Values and Mental Mediatization–an Empirical Study of Swedish Local Government. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration, 24*(3), 3–28.

Sahlin-Andersson, K. & Engwall, L. (2002). *The Expansion of Management Knowledge: Carriers, Flows, and Sources*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Schillemans, T. (2012). *Mediatization of Public Services. How organisations adapt to news media*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Schillemans, T. (2016). Fighting or fumbling with the beast? The mediatisation of public sector agencies in Australia and the Netherlands. *Policy & Politics, 44*(1), 79–96.

Schillemans, T. & Pierre, J. (2016). Entangling and disentangling governance and the media. *Policy and Politics, 44*(1), 1.

Stack, M. (2016). *Global university rankings and the mediatization of higher education*: Berlin: Springer.

Thorbjornsrud, K., Figenschou, T. U. & Ihlen, Ø. (2014). Mediatization in Public Bureaucracies: A Typology. *Communications - The European Journal of Communication Research, 39*(1), 3–22.

Thorbjørnsrud, K. (2015). Mediatization of public bureaucracies: Administrative versus political loyalty. *Scandinavian Political Studies, 38*(2), 179–197.

Trydegård, G-B. & Thorslund, M. (2010). One uniform welfare state or a multitude of welfare municipalities? The evolution of local variation in Swedish elder care. *Social Policy & Administration*, 44(4), 495–511.

Wæraas, A. & Maor, M. (2015). *Organisational Reputation in the Public Sector*. New York and Oxon: Routledge.

Notes

[1]We use the term "media orientation" in the paper as the concept of "mediatization" evokes different meanings in different theoretical traditions (Couldry & Hepp 2013; Fredriksson & Pallas 2017). We employ "media orientation" as a way of describing the role media, media values, preferences and practices have in shaping different aspects of the everyday lives of individuals, organisations, fields and societies (Pallas 2018). When we use "mediatization" we are refering to a societal process that is characterized by a duality in that the media have become integrated into the operations of other social institutions, while they have also acquired the status of social institutions in their own right (Hjarvard 2008).