Mediatization in Danish central government

**By Birgitte Poulsen**

\*\*\* First draft – please do not quote \*\*\*

**ABSTRACT**

*This article presents a qualitative study of the impact of medialization in Danish central government. It is analyzed how the logic of medialization penetrates Danish central government, affecting the norms and roles of the civil service in their every-day work life. Through a typology of mediatization of bureaucracies it is illustrated how the Danish civil service perceive, respond to, and integrate media considerations within their everyday working practices. Theoretically, the study draws on an institutionalist and interpretative approach to the study of public sector organizations. Within this approach, mediatization is regarded as an institutional logic that enters the state administration and mingles with other already existing logics and norms of the civil service. Empirically, the study is based on 20 in-depth qualitative interviews with civil servants in the Danish state administration respectively in the Ministry of Health and in the Ministry of Finance. First, the article confirms findings from quantitative studies that the state administration is mediatized and confirms findings from a Norwegian qualitative study that mediatization affects the bureaucracy in four different ways. Second, however, the Danish study shows that the impact of medialization differs in the two ministries. Mediatization is identified in both ministries but seems to depend on the field of policy. In the Ministry of Health, we see a higher degree of “personalization” compared to the Ministry of Finance, which affects the way in which mediatization influences the role of the civil service. Although differences between the two cases are identified, the article finds that media exposure and skills related to media appearances are entering the palette of civil servant norms in general in the Danish State administration.*

# Introduction

Within recent years scholars of media research has obtained attention regarding the concept of mediatization from other academic disciplines such as sociology, organizational studies, political science, and public administration. The underlying claim in mediatization theory is that the mass media has obtained a dominant role in modern societies influencing many spheres other than the media themselves, such as politics, culture, religion, sport, and business (Lundby, 2014). Mediatization, thus, refers to the penetrating role of media and communication in various institutions that changes and transforms the very same institutions (Guy Peters, 2016, p. 9). Notably the effect of mediatization on politics have been widely acknowledge (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014; Meyen, Thieroff, & Strenger, 2014; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). Studies show how governance actors, mainly politicians, adjust their conduct to a political environment largely dominated by a media logic (Guy Peters, 2016). Often focus is on political agenda setting and political communication (Hjarvard, 2013, p. 58). Some scholars have investigated how political parties adapt to a media logic (Strömbäck & van Aelst, 2013). Others focus on government and how mediatization is used to explain the need for, and use of, spin doctors by ministers in relation to their political communication strategies (Schillemans & Pierre, 2016, p. 1). Similarly, theories on presidentialisation and political leadership bring focus to the role of the media when linking prime ministers predominant role over parliament and cabinet to the expansion of a media logic (Guy Peters, 2016, p. 14; Poguntke & Webb, 2007).

Correspondingly, scholars of public administration has shown an increased interest in what has been called mediatization of public sector organizations (Fredriksson & Pallas, 2016a; Klijn et al., 2016; Schillemans, 2016; Schillemans & Pierre, 2016). For example, Schillemans investigates how public (and private) public service delivery organizations are influenced by the media and seek legitimization through media attention (Schillemans, 2012), whereas Fredriksson and Pallas argue that a distinct focus on public sector organizations are needed, since they have a number of characteristics that distinguishes them from other types of organization (Fredriksson & Pallas, 2016b).

When it comes to mediatization of central government organizations, however, studies are still few and limited and mediatization of bureaucracy may still be regarded as a niche. Through a recent literature review on mediatization of public administration Tremblay- Antoine concludes that: *“Studies on the mediatization of politics generally focus either on political actors or on political institutions as a whole, leaving public administration out of the fray. While the link between political and administrative spheres is often studied, the link between public service and the media is considerably under-researched.”* (Tremblay-Antoine, 2021, p. 106). The relationship between mediatization and the civil service in central government is, thus, a rather new and underexplored research agenda, although few, initial studies have emerged.

Thorbjornsrud and Figenschou have illuminated the vast impact of media logic on public administration through their qualitative investigations in Norwegian central government (Figenschou & Thorbjornsrud, 2015; Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2018; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Thorbjornsrud et al., 2014). Likewise Garland et al. demonstrates how an increased media pressure on politicians in Great Britain is passed on to the administration, and thus, to the civil service (Garland et al., 2018b, p. 500). The tight link between minister and the civil service working in the state administration may, thus, suggest that mediatization of politics also affects the work life in the administration.

Both the Norwegian and British studies investigate the administration “from within”, and thus the every-day practices of the civil service under the influence of media logic. And both argue that government is not just influenced by a media logic that calls for special skills in the field of political communication, but also that the media logic penetrates the norms and behaviors in the everyday life of public bureaucracies, and thus the role of civil servants. Consequently, they launch a research agenda to study the civil service in central government organizations through the lens of mediatization and media logic. The study presented in this article is in line with, and inspired by, this research agenda, only now, the focus is on Danish central government.

In a Danish context, we have seen few, quantitative, studies of mediatization of central government. A study of strategic communication in central government shows how civil servants are involved in strategic communication for political purposes, confirming a link between mediatization and politicization (Salomonsen, Frandsen and Johansen 2016: 217). Similarly, the Bo Smith commission, that was established to investigate the role of the civil service in the light of several administrative scandals in Denmark, concluded that the development in the media was the most noteworthy one, when both ministers and civil servants were asked to pin-point significant challenges in central government (Bo-Smith Commission, 2015: 70). However, the impact of the media in central government is not unfolded in the Bo Smith Commission report, nor is the consequences for the role of the civil servants. Most recently, the Dybvad commission, established to examine the relationship between Parliament, government, civil service and the media in Denmark, identifies a crisis of confidence between the media and the civil service as a main result of a survey among civil servants and media actors (Dybvad et al., 2023, p. 100). The commission report, however, also concludes that the relationship between media and the political administrative system in general need further investigations. Although it is concluded that radical changes in the media landscape have occurred, especially since 2000, the Dybvad commission concludes that we lack information of the effects of these changes on the civil service (Dybvad et al., 2023, p. 398). Especially, the use and effect of social media on the political administrative system is enhanced as a key development that needs further investigations.

Hence, we know from quantitative studies that Danish central government to some extent is mediatized. However, we know little of the way in which mediatization affects the every-day work life in central government and more specifically how mediatization affects the role of the civil servant.

Therefore, the study presented in this article, focus on the *qualitative aspects of medialization* among civil servants in central government and the way in which an increasing media logic affects the inner organizational life and, thus, the everyday practices at the administrative levels. The study at hand is not just occupied with the question of politicization among civil servants in relation to medialization, but more broadly explores the norms and behaviors among civil servants in a contemporary and modern state administration under influence of a rather dominant media logic, if we are to believe the preliminary studies of mediatization on Danish ground.

The research question put forward in this article is: *How do civil servants* *perceive, respond to, and integrate media considerations within their everyday working practices?*

*Theoretically*, the article draws upon an interpretative and institutionalist approach to the study of public sector organizations, studying the beliefs and norms within the bureaucracy. This more general theoretical framework is supplemented by meso-level theoretical reflections from literature on mediatization, providing the overall theoretical framework for the study presented in this article. *Empirically*, the article is based on a qualitative case study of two Danish Ministries – the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health – centered on in-depth interviews with 20 civil servants at all organizational levels.

First, we present our theoretical framework for the analysis. Second, we introduce our empirical data material and the methods that are used, before we, third, present our analysis of medialization among the civil service in Danish central government seen from a “with-in” perspective. Finally, we conclude the article by summing up the results from our analysis.

# Mediatization of bureaucracy

The theoretical approach in this article is interpretative and institutionalist (Bevir et al., 2003; Rhodes, 2011; Thornton, 2012). Within *the interpretative approach* the state is regarded as a cultural practice, which cannot be understood detached from the beliefs and practices among the individuals occupying the organization at hand (Bevir, 2011, p. 192). Consequently, institutions are seen as a complex of various narratives and traditions that individuals continuously draw upon in the creation of meaning and justifications of their actions. In other words, it is through the individuals’ interpretations of these narratives and traditions that institutions are constantly constructed and remolded. Corresponding with this line of thought *the institutionalist approach* provide a theoretical conceptualization of the emergence, competition and impact of various logics that co-exist in modern public sector organizations (Poulsen, 2005; Thornton, 2012). The institutionalist approach, thus, offers an insight into the traditions and narratives that may surround the actors in public sector organizations, for example the bureaucratic logic and the media logic, whereas the interpretative approach offers insights into the identifications and interpretations that take place among the civil servants.

Within this theoretical framework, *medialization* may be considered as an institutionalized idea or an institutional logic that enters public sector organizations, and that must be interpreted, negotiated and given meaning in relation to already existing values and practices among the people working in these organizations (Fredriksson & Pallas, 2017, p. 6). Fredriksson and Pallas, thus, link the conception of mediatization to organizational theory, defining medialization as a process embedded in various organizational elements such as best practices, routines, and professional norms. Hence, the process of mediatization regards the discovery, interpretation and translation of these elements into the already existing, local value systems in the organization (Fredriksson & Pallas, 2017; Pallas et al., 2016).

In line with this theoretical approach, we find Garland et al.’s studies of mediatization in British central government. Garland et al. argue that we see an internalization of news values and news-making within government and that changes in everyday routines and norms of government practices occur due to an increased sensitivity from politicians to the media representation of policy. Consequently, it appears that this development extend deep into the bureaucracy, which require further analysis, especially in political administrative systems that professes to a politically neutral civil service like in Great Britain and in Denmark (Garland et al., 2018a, p. 508). Mediatization of bureaucracies, thus, goes further than an extended focus on communication in the administration and employment of communication experts and spin doctors. Instead mediatization potentially alters the norms and practices of the entire civil service in a more profound way.

Likewise, a Norwegian study of the central Norwegian administration of migration demonstrates how a media logic transcends the public administration, influencing the work routines within the administration (Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014). In the latter study, a ‘news logic’ enters the organization and becomes part of a new ‘logic of appropriateness’, which influences and mingle with the formal bureaucratic rationale among career bureaucrats (Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014).

Within the mediatization literature, the news logic refers to the use of drama, personalization, polarization, conflict, and simplification (Aagaard & Blach-Ørsten, 2018, p. 43; Stromback, 2008, p. 233). Mediatization is therefore related to the need for short texts and clear, unambiguous communication, the need for faces to illustrate the case, strong personalization, and stories with emotional cues, along with the need to act quickly, since the 24/7 news media demands prompt response (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015, p. 181).

Especially, personalization as part of a media logic has received attention in relation to mediatization of political-administrative systems. Media personalization of politics and ministers has led to changed work routines within the civil service. Civil servants focus on the minister at the expense of the ministry, since it is seen as a necessity to use individualized proactive media strategies when communicating on substantial policies and initiatives (Figenschou et al., 2017, p. 423). Hence, government communication practices focus on government leaders, while simplifying the complexity of government organizations and processes (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2018).

Common for these studies is an interest in the consequences of mass media for the everyday workings of public bureaucracies (Garland, 2017; Garland et al., 2018b; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014). In the English study, it is argued that the media pressure on politicians seems to spill over into the administration. The same argument is put forward in the Norwegian study, where a typology of mediatization of bureaucracy is developed by studying how civil servants perceive, respond to, and integrate media considerations within their everyday working practices (Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014). It is this typology that forms the starting point of this article’s empirical investigation of mediatization of Danish state administration. Four types of mediatization are identified and is briefly presented in the following.

1. Adapting to the news rhythm and response requirements

The 24/7 news cycle is characterized by a constant series of deadlines that put a pressure on the civil service. Journalists call for quick responses to current cases on the media agenda and expect the civil service to provide answers before the next deadline. This type of mediatization of bureaucracy points to the fact that it has become part of a daily routine within the administration to meet these requests from journalists seeking information and comments on current cases. Included in this type of mediatization is also the civil service’s attempt to work with the “timing” in relation to the news cycle, for example when they aim to pitch a positive story to set the news agenda or the contrary to break a negative story at a time when media attention is directed elsewhere (Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014, p. 11).

1. Adapting the language and format of news

The language and format of the news is a specific text genre that alters the traditional bureaucratic forms of communication. Above all, the news format and its language are short and favors unambiguity. The news format often involves personalization and encourages stories with an emotional approach to the case; often it uses faces and images to illustrate the case, and in general enhances the use of everyday language. Conflict is also part of the news format with clear-cut morals and the naming of heroes, victims and villains (Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014, p. 12). The news format and its language are thus far from traditional bureaucratic language that requires a comprehensive and thoroughly survey of the case or of a decision. Bureaucratic language is often technical and juridical and builds on the norm of comprehensive information and a neutral, and by no means emotional, form of communication. This second type of mediatization of bureaucracy, thus, potentially challenges a fundamental bureaucratic ideal to provide comprehensive, correct, and neutral information.

1. Belief in the significance of news

Part of a journalistic ethos is the belief that news media speak the truth and that they report valuable and attention-worthy issues (Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014, p. 14). The believed relevance of the news means that politicians need to respond to news and attempt to communicate political issues through the media. In this sense, political life is closely linked the news media. In this third type of mediatization it is emphasized that it is also believed to be strategically important *within the public administration* to be present in the news media. Part of this belief is linked to the mediatization of politics, since it is seen as important to help the minister act strategically in relation to the media and is, thus, associated with the norm of loyalty towards the political leader. Importantly, however, this third type of mediatization encompasses a belief within the administration that it is crucial to strengthen the reputation and the public perception of the organization as such independently of the minister. Mediatization of the organization, thus, exceeds the direct link to the political level in the organization. The media logic entails a belief within the bureaucracy that it is utmost important for the modern civil service organization to be present and trustworthy in the news media (Thorbjornsrud et al., 2014, p. 14).

1. Reallocation of resources and responsibilities

The fourth and final type of mediatization of bureaucracy affects the use of resources within the bureaucracy both when it comes to allocation of personnel and hours used on media work and when it comes to the way in which problem areas and cases are prioritized within the administration. The latter also encompasses changes in policies and decisions within the bureaucracy related to the agenda in the news media. The fourth type of mediatization, hence, covers the employment of press officers and personnel with communication skills, as well as the time used by the ordinary civil service on handling the media; it covers the prioritization of cases high on the media agenda in the expense of other cases within the organization, and finally, it covers changes in regulations and decisions made by the civil service as a response to critical media coverage (Thorbjornsrud et al., 2014, p. 17).

In the investigation of mediatization of Danish state administration the point of departure is this typology developed by the Norwegian team.

# Method and data

The interpretative and institutional theoretical perspective to understand how mediatization affects the civil service from “with-in” benefits from a qualitative research design. The aim of the study is to understand how civil servants perceive, respond to, and integrate media considerations within their everyday working practices. Thus, it is important to get access to knowledge about the every-day work-life practices in the state administration and the way in which the civil servants interpret their own role in relation to various institutional logics that dominates the state administration.

To meet this purpose, 20 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with civil servants working within the Danish state administration. The qualitative interviews enable a contextual understanding of the way in which the logic of mediatization and the logic of bureaucracy are interpreted by civil servants in their every-day practices. The interviews were conducted with Danish civil servants from two ministries: the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health. The aim of the case selection was to ensure a variation in the organizational context based on the review of mediatization literature (Flick, 2019). Mediatization literature point to “personalization” as an important part of the media logic. The ministry of Finance deals with fiscal policy of the state and as a point of departure the ministry is not associated with personalized stories in the media. On the contrary, the Ministry of Health is responsible for health policies which often involves personalized stories in the media, for example cancer patients not receiving the right treatment. Hence, the case selection is a maximal variation case collection (with the intent to cover the Danish state administration as broadly as possible with regard to the effects of mediatization (Flyvbjerg, 2001, Flick, 2022). However, the cases are selected due to relevance and not representativeness.

To obtain access in government organizations may turn out to be difficult when the aim is to study serving civil servants due to the sensitivity of the subject (Garland et al., 2018a, p. 504). This was also the situation in the Danish case. As in Great Britain the civil service in Denmark is a merit-bureaucracy and is not replaced along with the election of a new government. It is, thus, crucial that the civil service is not perceived as politized, and the role of the civil service is a behind the scenes role. We tried to obtain access in four different ministries, but only obtained access in the two mentioned above. We were given access to conduct interviews, but not to do observation studies.

The interviews were used to investigate the civil servants’ perception of the media logic, how they respond to the media logic and more generally to understand the beliefs and norms that characterizes their role as civil servants. Questions focused on the actors’ own role perceptions, perceptions of media in the organization and media logics inspired by the typology of mediatization of bureaucracy. In both cases the interviewees represented all levels in the ministerial hierarchy. Interviews covered primarily civil servants working in the departments. All interviewees were promised anonymity and all interviews used in this article has been approved by the interviewees. In two cases, interviewees asked to approve the use of specific quotes, which has been met. The interviews were conducted from 2019 until 2021. Below is a list of the interviewees.

**Table 1. List of interviewees**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Interviewees: the ministry of Finance** | **Code** |
| Permanent secretary, government department | IV1 |
| Head of division, government department | IV2 |
| Head of office, government department | IV3 |
| Head of office, government department | IV4 |
| Senior civil servant, government department | IV5 |
| Head of press and communication division, government department | IV6 |
| Director General, government agency | IV7 |
| Head of office, government agency | IV8 |
| **Interviewees: the ministry of Health** | **Code** |
| Permanent secretary, government department | IV9 |
| Head of division, government department | IV10 |
| Head of office, government department | IV11 |
| Head of office, government department | IV12 |
| Senior civil servant, government department | IV13 |
| Senior civil servant, government department | IV14 |
| Head of press and communication division, government department | IV15 |
| Director General, government agency | IV16 |
| Head of press and communication division, government agency | IV17 |
| Senior civil servant, government agency | IV18 |
| Senior civil servant, government agency | IV19 |
| Senior civil servant, government agency | IV20 |

All interviews were transcribed and subsequently coded in Nvivo. Codes were both concept-driven and data-driven (Gibbs, 2008). The concept-driven codes derive from theory and structure the interview guide. In the investigation at hand the concept-driven codes were the four types of mediatization. Data-driven codes, on the other hand, arise inductively from the material itself, where certain notions or concepts prove to be significant through the interview material (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012, p. 362; Tanggaard Pedersen & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 47). In this study “social media”, including the codes “Twitter” and “Facebook”, were data-driven codes alongside the codes “new type ministers”, “field of policy” and “coordination of communication across ministries”. We now turn to the analysis of mediatization in Danish state administration.

# Mediatization of Danish central government

In the following each of the four types of mediatization of bureaucracies is analyzed in relation to both cases. Within each type, it is shown how the civil service perceives, responds, and integrates the specific type of mediatization. This analysis is supplemented by an examination of the use and consequences of social media.

**Adapting to the news rhythm and response requirements**

Within this type of mediatization we identify similarities and differences between the two ministries. In both ministries, the civil service adapts their daily work to the news rhythm. A senior civil servant from the ministry of Finance says: *“Typically, inquiries from journalists come in the morning and they need something quickly. It's obviously a, I wouldn't call it a stress moment, but it's something that keeps coming every day”* (IV5 980-982). Similar, a head of division from the ministry of Health explains: *“Journalists have short deadlines and they think they can get an answer within an hour and it just puts a lot of pressure on a system that is already far, far too busy - absurdly busy.”* (IV 10 383-385). Hence, in both cases they share a common perception of the hastiness of the news, which affects their work. A senior civil servant from the ministry of Health explains the challenges due to the hastiness of the news. She says: *“The hastiness of the news is a challenge in a system like ours, where everything has to be checked and coordinated.”* (IV14 900-901).

Similarly, in both cases this type of mediatization is often linked to the role of the minister. The permanent secretary in the ministry of Finance says: *“When the minister is under pressure, the whole system is under pressure. And this is accentuated due to the hastiness of the news.”* (IV1 330-336). Furthermore, the response requirements are highly dependent on the type of minister. The old type of ministers is highly respected because of their coolness regarding media pressure. The permanent secretary in the ministry of Finance gives an example of an old-time minister and his handling of bad news: *“He (the minister) did not give a damn, which is a huge asset in an organization like ours.”* (IV1 336-341). On the contrary, *the new types of ministers* are media driven and live through the media. These new types of ministers highly impact the work routines of the civil service. All interviewees enhance the difference between old-time and new-time ministers in relation to the effects of mediatization. We, thus, see a shared perception of this type of mediatization across the two cases.

In the ministry of Finance, head of office, explains how the two latest (new) type of ministers create an enormous pressure in the organization: *“Both ministers created an incredible pressure inside the system due to their constant request for press exposure, which made us restructure our internal work routines. Approvement levels were scaled down, if a head of division assessed that the case was unproblematic, the case did not need approval from the permanent secretary.”* (IV3: 426-440). Alike, in the ministry of Health a senior civil servant explains that there is a clash between the hastiness of the news and politics and the slowness in the civil service, which is also affected by the new type of minister in the ministry. She says: *“There is no doubt that sometimes he (the minister) just loses patience and goes out with something himself (on Twitter). Because in this civil service, it takes days to send something out.”* (IV14 875-876). The bureaucratic logic and work routines are fundamentally different compared to the quick tweets, which is illustrated when a senior civil servant says: *“A week goes fast in here when you have to present to many different bosses and the minister.”* (IV14 184).

However, it seems to vary between the two ministries, whether all civil servants are potentially affected by this type of mediatization. In the Ministry of health, all civil servants are potentially affected by this type of mediatization. On the contrary, mediatization in the ministry of Finance is highly dependent on the civil servants’ tasks in the organization. Some respondents are only somewhat affected by the media - if affected at all. A head of office says: *“My work is not particular impacted by the news media./../I think we are very little media-driven, very little media influenced. So of course, we follow what the leading politicians say. For my part, I sit and cast the balls down here, far down in the hierarchy. Of course, it is different when you come up around those who also do a lot of ministerial services (*ministerbetjening) *and a lot of press work.”* (IV4 915-925). And he continues: *“We as a system are not public, we don't talk to many people and we never talk to journalists”* (IV4 1152). Hence, some civil servants in the ministry of Finance, do not think of their work as influenced by this type of mediatization at all. Consequently, in the ministry of Finance, they are affected by the news cycle, but most if it involves the minister directly or if the work tasks are of media interest.

Regarding how the civil service respond to this type of mediatization, in both cases we see a backstage role interpretation linked to the bureaucratic logic. Neither the civil servants in the ministry of Finance, nor in the ministry of Health sees it as their role to participate in the public.

In the ministry of Finance, it is particular the communication division that handle the press daily. It is also the communication division that launches new policies and strategically tries to frame the policies and the timing of the launch. The same goes for the launching of “bad news” when other events dominate the news.

The Head of press and communication division equals his work life in the ministry of Finance to be at war daily. Beforehand, he worked as communication adviser in private companies, where he could *“sit up in the tent and strategize about a war you want to fight in six months”,* where as his work in the ministry equals to *“sit out on the front line every day.”* (IV6 208-209). He confirms: *“We have a need to communicate on a daily basis.”* (IV6 177). Hence, it seems that the media pressure affects the entire ministry of Finance. However, the ordinary civil service tries to stay calm and carry on, whereas the head of communication is in the frontline 24/7. The war metaphor is also used in the ministry of Health, when civil servants describe the interaction with the news media.

We identify a slight difference between the two cases related to the willingness to deliver to the press, and hence, how they this type of mediatization is integrated. In the ministry of Health, the cycle of the news media and the following demands in embraced. It creates pressure in the organization when journalist demands answers during the day, but it is part of the job to deliver these answers.

In the ministry of Finance, it is possible to identify some kind of resistance to the increased media pressure, and they do not answer all questions. The permanent secretary explains: *“Most of the press demands, we do not answer. Many asks us to participate in the public and comment on cases, but we limit that kind of participation in the public. It is not our task. It is the minister who plays the leading role, so I, personally, hardly ever comment on cases.”* (IV1 261-265). The resistance is, thus, linked to a backstage role perception of the civil service, who should not go public, which is the job of the minster.

To stay calm in a house under media pressure, thus, also becomes an essential role feature. The permanent secretary in the ministry of Finance states: *“One of my most important tasks is to create calm, calm, calm, because there is a lot of chaos around a house like this, politically, media-wise, everything, if I had to go into overdrive every time someone attacked us or wrote something wrong about us, then the house would die. Because it would send so many shockwaves through the house all the time if some choleric permanent secretary ran around saying "We have to answer that! It has to be now! We have to, and please come up with some quick things!", people would rush away. So, one of my tasks is just to say calm, calm, calm and be reasonably robust.”* (IV1 341-347). Hence, we see a difference between the two ministries in the way they are mediatized that may be due to differences in the field of policy. Both between the two cases and within each of the cases. Some policy areas have greater media awareness. Hence, in both ministries we see a difference in the influence of the media due to variations in the field of policy that the civil servants work with. A head of office in the ministry of Finance explains that the priorities in the ministry are less dependent on the news media compared to other ministries as for example taxation and integration.

The same perception, we find in the ministry of Health. A senior civil servant says: *“The health area is characterized by an incredible number of individual cases. It may be that a member of parliament has heard something from a citizen or believes that something is in a certain way, and that can be a challenge.”* (IV13 984). Also, many of the media cases within the Ministry of Health are personal and case-oriented, such as the Ringsted case (about women who did not receive the right breast cancer treatment) and the HPV case (young women suffering from (believed) side effects from the HPV vaccine). The permanent secretary describes the health policy field in the following way: *“We're in an area that's full of media, and full of stakeholders making policy. Strong stakeholders, very strong stakeholders with very strong communication skills. “* (IV9 41-43).And according to a senior civil servant in the ministry of Health, these cases increase the workload enormously (IV13 588-637). But also, within the ministry we see variation depending on the policy field. In the ministry of Health, a head of office describes her work and its link to news in the media. She says: *“Some of my areas I are very much influenced by media. There are a lot of things that come up from day to day, from hour to hour that need to be dealt with - politically and in terms of the media, where we must find solutions. So, in that way, it's very unpredictable what's going on. We are very much guided by where the media is right now, what's happening.”* (IV12 38-41). It is obvious that cases in the media affects the work of the civil service. However, it varies due to different policy areas.

**Adapting the language and format of news**

Both ministries are affected by the demand to short, clear-cut communication, which may alter the professional standards in the civil service.

This dilemma plays out between the press and communication division and the civil service. In the ministry of Finance, head of office describes the back and forth between her office and the press and communication division: *“We write a press brief, then the communication division pop-it-up, to make it sexier (lækkert), then we pop-it-down, and so it goes back and forth”.* (IV3: 216-223). The head of the press and communication section confirms the backs and fourths. He gives an example: *“If we're going to do an interview, I say to the heads of division, can you "fact check" this, then we sometimes have a little, how shall we say, not a discussion, but an exchange of opinions about where the cut should be made, because if you're a head of office or head of division and an economist, you may have spent three to four to five months preparing a case. They've spent a lot of time getting it professionally well-prepared, and then they will often present it perhaps a little too academically or with a few too many reservations, and these are perhaps details that, in my world, don't necessarily belong in a speech, where it's the big picture that needs to be presented.”* (IV6 485-504). Hence, the response to this type of mediatization is closely linked to the work in the press and communication section in the ministry of Finance.

In the ministry of Health, we see a more radical and deliberate adaption to the format of the news, which is not just reflected in the dilemma between short clear-cut communication and professional standards with nuances and reservations. This is exemplified in the HPV-case, which fundamentally altered the ministry’s communication strategy. In short, the HPV vaccine is part of the Danish Childhood Immunization Program. The vaccine protects against HPV, which can develop into cervical cancer. In 2015, uptake of the vaccine plummeted. In March 2015, TV2 aired a documentary, 'De Vaccinerede Piger' (The Vaccinated Girls), where you meet 47 girls who are sick, which they blame on the HPV vaccine. The HPV case is causing great debate in Denmark. In November 2015, the European Medicines Agency, EMA, cleared the HPV vaccine after an extensive investigation. But the conclusion does not affect the support for the vaccine. Facebook is one of the places where people post about the suspected side effects of the HPV vaccine.

A senior civil servant, who worked with the HPV case, explains: “*After the TV2 documentary where young girls are driven into wheelchairs and we get a lot of parliamentary questions, we can just see we can't penetrate the general population. And we can see that the vaccination rate is plummeting and at the same time we also fear that it will spread to other vaccines - will it be the entire childhood vaccination program we can put in the grave?”* (IV14 273-282). This prompts the Ministry of Health to change communication strategy. The senior civil servant continues: *“It was such an unequal battle because they kept lining up crying parents and crying girls and we had to say if that's the way we're going to fight this battle, we're going to line up with families who are missing a mom who died of cervical cancer, little kids who no longer have their mom, or where mom is in the hospital and we don't know if she's coming home/../we'll go just as hard on the emotions."* (IV14 302-309). And so, they did. The Ministry of Health with the Danish Health Authority in front rethink their entire communication strategy. A leading civil servant in the Danish Health Authority, explains: *“We had to learn during the HPV case that it is no longer a viable coin if you want to penetrate a sensitive area, i.e. where emotions are in play. You can't go in there as professor know it all.”* (IV19 251-255).

Hence, we identify a common perception of this type of mediatization across the two cases, where the format of the news challenges the bureaucratic logic, but the response and integration vary. In both cases it poses difficulty to communicate in brief and short sentences on complex matters, and in both cases the press and communication section pushes towards short and clear-cut messages, which sometimes is perceived as a challenge among the common civil service. Variation is detected, however, when it comes to response and integration.

In the ministry of Health, they deliberately integrate media logic in the way in which they communicate, which is illustrated through the HPV case. Emotions and personalization are used actively in their communication strategy, when they realize that scientific communication on facts about the vaccine has limited effect. This is contrary to the ministry of Finance, where the bureaucratic logic dominates among the civil service regarding response to this type of mediatization.

**Belief in the significance of news**

It is of utmost importance to defend the organization in the news media if a critical story continues to run. Then it is important to enter the scene and the debate, to ensure the reputations and professional legitimacy of the organization (IV1).

The permanent secretary in the ministry of Finance explains*: “We should not go public all the time. And often, press stories pass. But if a critique is ongoing, we need to act. We cannot live with a continued critique if it tampers the professional integrity of the house, if to many people are allowed to say wrong things about us, whether is about our professional standards or our role in general. Then we need to enter the scene and make our voice heard.”* (IV1 134-138 and 355-361). The permanent secretary says. *“I had a head of division in Deadline (Danish political news show), which I would never have done 5-6 years ago.”* (IV1 89-94).

However, the need to defend the organization in the news media is closely linked to a defense of the bureaucratic logic, where professional norms need to be protected. The civil service cannot live with the tampering of the ministry’s professional integrity. Nevertheless, it seems to be an exception for the civil service to enter the scene, since it is not regarded as part of their role. The permanent secretary says: *“I do not see it as part of our role as civil service to perform live in the media.”* (IV1 781-789). Thus, although it is important to defend the organization in the press, it is not the role of the individual civil servant to do so. Head of office in the Ministry of Finance insist on her role as a backstage role. She says: *“We should always stand behind the minister. In that sense, we should never take an active front stage role in the media as civil servants”* (IV3: 648-650).

The front stage role, thus, seems to be an exception for the civil service in the ministry of Finance. A head of division describes the (rare) public role in this way: *“It's a bit of a borderline case to go into that room, because it's not our room, we basically just want to serve the government and the minister.”* (IV2 1224-1225). The permanent secretary explains the balance between defending the organization and never steel the scene. He says: *“It is not our job to shine in the news media. It is the prerogative of the minister to shine. We should never steel the scene as civil servants.”* (IV1 140-141).

We see the same backstage role in the Ministry of Health. A head of division says: *“In the ministry, we never go out as civil servants and make statements. Civil servants don't want to be in the press, at least not if you're in the government department”*. (IV10 628-630). As it is suggested here, there is a difference between government department and subordinate agencies.

In the Danish Health Authority all key employees undergo training in how to perform in the news media (IV16 429). Hence, the civil servant role in the Danish Health Authority is to a large extent a frontstage role at least when it comes to the leading civil servants. An explanation may be that they, traditionally, have taken on the task of communicating to the public about health matters. The Danish Health Authority, however, is an exception. They have deliberated taken on a public front stage role, where all senior civil servants are supposed to be able to act front stage in the media. The Danish Health Authority initiated a communication strategy in 2015-2016 driven by the newly employed Director General. He says: *“From day one, when I came into office, we focused on a very, very deliberate and pro-active communication effort.(Sl, l:412-413)/../From day one I stated that we should answer all inquiries from the press, and not try to avoid to answer. /../ We should have an open approach to the press”* (IV16 426-427, 440).

A leading civil servant in the Danish Health Authority, says: *“One of the values here in the house is presence. In a press strategy, this is translated into the fact that we must be present in the media, we must be able to respond, so that citizens understand what we say, we must not respond in official language, we must respond in plain talk so that what we say is understood”* (IV19 125-128). All leading civil servants are trained to be in the media. A senior civil servant explains about the media training. She says: *“Body language, tone of voice and no use of technical jargon or professional language, since it makes you unintelligible or distances you from your recipients.”* (IV18 882-884). A leading civil servant in the Danish Health Authority, says: *“What we typically do here is that we work with agencies that create campaigns. And then we make some demands where it is important for us to reach out to ordinary people, for example, when we order photos, it is a requirement for us that there must be people in the photos. In the past, you might have had a picture of an institution, such as Skejby Hospital, but now we want a nurse or a patient or a doctor. We need people, and we need to signal that it's people who work here and not machines.”* (IV19 346-354).

The Danish Health Authority is, thus, highly mediatized compared to the government department in both the ministry of Health and the ministry of Finance, when it comes to performing a front stage role. This may be due to the special and historic role of the Danish Health Authority to communicate health policy to the public.

However, we also identify a front stage role conception in the Ministry of Finance’s government agency. The Director general says: “…”. Consequently, the director general also sees it as an integrated part of his role as leading civil servant to perform front stage in the media.

However, this new role poses dilemmas and is by no means embraced by him, which we see in the following example. He explains:*“Then all of a sudden, here they are from Danmarks Radio with all their equipment and lights and everything, standing out here in the corridors, and I just have time to talk briefly with the journalist. He says, this is a bad story for you, I'm going to run the story with this angle, he's really quite clear with his angle, and makes it clear, and to that I can only say, I understand that, we'll take it from there, right, and I just have time to go to the toilet and stand there and hyperventilate a bit, right, and I go in front of the camera and we do the interview, right.”* (IV7). And he continues on the relation to the government department. He says: *“The challenge for me that day was that there was no one around me to be able to inform me about what the case is really about, so I, that is, I had to see this presentation, what the hell we've gotten ourselves into. I didn't have any help./.../: The ministry also employs several press people, we tried to communicate with them over there, they chose and it is one of the things you can also get into as a director that they are at arm's length to us./.../This is a matter that has nothing to do with the minister, you have to handle it yourself, we can't help.”*

In both cases, this third type of mediatization is identified. It is perceived to be important to defend the organization in the media. However, most commonly, the role of the civil servant is to maintain a backstage role and only seldom enter the media arena. The exception to this rule seems to be at the agency level.

**Reallocation of resources and responsibilities**

In both ministries we see reallocation of resources and responsibilities. First and foremost, we see an upgrade of the communication divisions in both ministries. A head of division in the ministry of Finance describes the development toward employment of civil servants only working with communications. He says: *“We employ more people now than we did years ago who work directly with communication as their sole purpose. And from when I started as a civil servant 25 years ago, it's a giant leap.”* (IV2 14-15). A head of division in the ministry of Health describes the same development: *“Twenty years ago, two men sat in a corner and cut out newspaper clippings. Nowadays, you have huge press departments everywhere. Lots of press officers and communications officers and SOME employees.”* (IV10 358-360).

The ministry of Health, thus, employs civil servants to handle social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and they uses external communications companies. This was also the case during the HPV case, since they did not have the expertise in house. A senior civil servants says: *“We hired one or two extra project workers and reallocated a lot of resources./../an external media agency was actually put on the job as well, and again, we realized we didn't have the right profile to be able to do these things or make it happen with the employees we had”* (IV14 358, 824-826). In the Danish Health Authority, they increased their presence on social media platform during the HPV crisis. A senior civil servant explains: *“Every time they found threads on Facebook where doubts were raised about the HPV vaccine, they had some employees to sit and say no, that's actually not true, or the symptoms we see and here's a link to our campaign stophpv.dk. So, they were there all the time trying to stop some of these dialog threads.”* (IV14 339-343).

Furthermore, a leading civil servant in the Danish Health Authority explains: *“We also make extensive use of things like influencers, which many public agencies don't do, but we do here.”* (IV19 326-327). Hence, a proactive use of social media has become an integrated part of the work in the Danish Health authority.

In the ministry of Finance, we do not see employment of SOME employees, nor use of influencers, which again may be due to differences in policy area, but also differences in response to, and integration of, media considerations in the two cases.

Nevertheless, mediatization affects the priorities in the ministry of Finance. The permanent secretary says: *“If a case runs in the media and the minister finds it important, of course we prioritize that case.”* (IV1 207-211). Again, this type of mediatization is closely linked to the minister in the ministry of Finance. It, thus, confirms that the mediatization of politics spill over into the administration.

But the reallocation of resources may also simply be connected to the field of policy you as a civil servant work with. A head of division in the ministry of Finance says: *“If your area of work becomes the subject of a big single case that grows in the press, then there is suddenly a shortage of manpower. Not because there is pressure from the minister, but because there is pressure from the press and derived pressure from the parliament. In this way, it has a huge impact on resource allocation, and it has a huge impact on time prioritization, which is not determined by any active managerial choice, but simply by the fact that you must do it, because that's just the way things are.”* (IV2 82-89).

This description is confirmed in the ministry of Health. A head of office says: “*Media attention obviously affects the workload, but it also affects which cases we focus on. It's no secret that we throw ourselves into the cases where there is a large media focus first, we do that because then there will also typically be a large political focus, so in that way it is of course connected.”* (IV12 63-66). Often, it is also linked to personalization as part of the media logic. A head of office in the ministry of Health says: *“You have to deal with these personal cases in the media, and it is often these personal cases that in one way or another also lead to making some more general adjustments.”* (IV12 496-497).

The increased number of communication workers are creating more work in the organization according to the ordinary civil service. A head of division in the ministry of Health says: *“We've sat in management meetings where the permanent secretary wants us to have more press people and we're just like 'noooo' because it's just my attempt to protect my employees./../Communication professionals are often journalists and their job is to communicate. So, when it comes to substance, they will typically need help from in-house. Where there are people who know something concrete. So the bigger these press departments are, the more work we have to do in-house, because the caseworkers have to help and respond to these things”* (IV10 383-385, 361-366). Thus, the work load from mediatization is also ascribed to the press and communication sections in the ministry themselves. Consequently, this type of mediatization is detected in both cases.

However, mediatization also seems to affect practices across ministries with cross-cutting work routines across ministries. The permanent secretaries meet regularly, typically once a month. The media is a subject for discussion at the meeting. The permanent secretary of the ministry of finance says: *“We (the permanet secretaries) meet regularly and of course we discuss the media a lot. There are some common guidelines for all of us in some areas and everyone needs to know what is going on internally in the government and what the priorities are now. Typically, we meet in the Prime Minister's Office.”* (IV11091-1095).

Also, we see a coordination among the heads of press and communication in the various ministries. The head of press and communication division, in the ministry of Finance, government department, explains how coordination among ministries has become a vital part of the communication strategy. He says: *“A lot of communication rhymes with coordination. If the government wants to succeed with its goals, it's no use, for example, announcing five launches on the same day, so it might be a better idea to spread things out a bit, both so that the public has time to understand it and journalists have time to write about it.”* (IV6 921-931). This is confirmed by the head of press and communication in the ministry of Health. He describes the link between coordination and communication and how the Prime Ministry takes on a new role when it comes to communication. He says: *“The government's communications unit was set up in the Prime Ministry. We've begun to think of the government as a unit, i.e. that all the ministries work for one government/.../and the important thing is that if the Prime Ministry says no, then no, or if they say it should be on a different date or it should be, then you completely adjust accordingly. In terms of communication, it was actually an innovation that there was even more coordination of communication.”* (IV15 919-929).

The head of press and communication in the ministry of Health gives an example of a new institutionalization regarding the cross-ministry work among the heads of communication. He says: *“We are also starting to have monthly meetings, all communication managers, press officers or whatever they are called, meet in the Prime Ministry and typically with presentations on various things, just for an hour or two such morning meetings.”* (IV15 990-993). According to him these meeting has become more formalized.

The purpose of the meetings is to coordinate the communication of the entire government. The head of press and communication in the ministry of Health says: *“We try to start thinking that we're not just the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education, where we've each been minding our own business. We started to think, oh okay, you're on your way with some big news about this, so maybe we should wait with ours until next week, where it could get a little more 'play'.”* (IV15 957-961). And he continues: *“At the same time, our toolboxes are also starting to grow, because we are starting to use social media much more actively, and more and more of the ministries are starting to hire people who are really skilled in social media”* (IV15 1054-1056). They have realized how powerful the use of social media platforms may be. The head of press and communication gives an example of a video they made with the minister signing a document and then they posted it on Twitter or Facebook. He says: *“That post was read by, I think it was a quarter of a million people, and it was shared like crazy, which means that the impact that he as a minister had with his message was much greater than if we had just called Jyllands Posten (Danish newspaper)./../It would be the kind of story that would have ended up on page four of the newspaper. It was a whole new tool in our toolbox that we just hadn't tried before.”* (IV15 1267-1276).

In general, the communication strategy in government has been highly professionalized. He says: “*There has been a professionalization. A high degree of coordination and professionalization of communication planning.”* (IV15 979-980).

**Use of social media**

The use of social media is a relatively new development that challenges the traditional work routines in the ministries. Almost all of the new type of ministers are active on various media platform, whereas it differs whether the ministry is active on social media platforms. The head of Press and communication is in the ministry of Health tells: *“When I started at the Ministry of Health, we weren't on Twitter, but then we were, and it's both that we support the minister's Twitter use and that the ministry itself is on Twitter.”* (IV15 1112-1114). In the ministry of Health, they have, thus decided to use social media platforms, although it does pose challenges. A senior civil servant says: *“The format (Twitter) is mega challenging. Of course, we try to make short catchy statements in 140 words. But it's just a challenge when you're used to wanting to substantiate every statement and always refer to sources/../But it's just a new medium, we have to adapt to it.”* (IV14 866-870, 892). Thus, the dilemma between bureaucratic logic’s demand for high professional standards and the media logic’s demand for quick and short text bites as we saw under type two, is further enhanced by social media.

In the Ministry of Finance, the civil service also points to the dilemma between short media bites and complex economic calculations. According to the Permanent secretary it is impossible to communicate via social media. He says: *“We have deselected Facebook. The ministry used to have an account, but no more. The idea was to communicate policy launches to the public. The issue, however, was that Facebook invited to dialogue with both journalists and citizens, which became a dilemma. Because who is the sender? A journalist asks a question in the feed and then some communication worker should answer, but he would need clearance. That type of dialogue is simply to troublesome and too time demanding.”* (IV1 654-661). Thus, the bureaucratic logic won over Facebook in the ministry of Finance due to the format of social media. The permanent secretary in the ministry of Finance elaborates: *“Political problems like climate change, refugees or economic issues are complex matters that have no quick solutions. And I find it impossible to communicate nuances and solutions to matters like that on Twitter. It is simply not possible.”* (IV1 44-53).

In the ministry of Health, it seems important to be present in social media platforms due to the character of the policy field. A head of office says: *“Many people get their news from Facebook. And regardless of whether it's your aunt making a statement about something on Facebook or whether it's the Danish Health Authority writing something on Facebook, you believe it.”* (IV11 723-724). Hence, one of the significant differences between the two ministries is whether they embrace or resist mediatization through the use of SOME platforms or not.

In both ministries, however, the civil service helps the minister to communicate on social media platforms to some extent. Nevertheless, it is seen as a challenge that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook blur the picture regarding who is communicating: the minister as minister or the minister as private person. A senior civil servant in the ministry of Health explains: *“You are a politician, but you are also a private person. And you often mix up your hats when you tweet something or when you post on Facebook. Because is it as a minister or as a private person? Then there are pictures of birthday buns along with a picture from a visit to Skejby Hospital.”* (IV13 813-817).

Nevertheless, they do help the minister to communicate via social media. The head of press and communication in the ministry of health describes how is has been submitted discussion in the department. He says: *“In the beginning, there was a lot of this, well, social media and Facebook profiles, that must be something that the special advisor takes care of, because it was the minister as a politician, but there has also come an understanding that it is no different from civil servants in the ministry sitting and writing drafts for opinion pieces and writing speeches as well, it's just a different form of communication.”* (IV15 1114-1120).

It is seen a challenging to have a minister who communicates all the time on social media. In the ministry of Health, they describe how it poses challenges to have minister who is “very fond of tweeting.” (IV14 463). A senior civil servant says: *“The minister tweets something that perhaps wasn't exactly how we as civil servants think it should have been interpreted, so it may be a bit of a stretch, going too far, saying it has an effect that it may not quite have. It may also be something that is simply downright wrong because things have not been discussed with us in the offices, who often know more and, in more detail, than the minister does.”* (IV13 831-836). Thus, in the ministry of Health their (new type of) minister accentuates the dilemma between bureaucratic logic regarding thoroughness and the hastiness of the media logic with short tweets.

The Director General of the Danish Health Authority enhances that he, from the beginning of his appointment, is communicating through various social media, especially Twitter, which no one in the Health Authority had done before (IV16 413).

**Table 2. Mediatization in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Ministry of Finance** | **Ministry of Health** |
| **Adapting to the news rhythm** | Yes. However, the extent is dependent on the type of minister. Distinction is made between old and new type of ministers.  Dilemmas related to professional standards vs. hastiness of the news is identified. However, we also see parts of the administration that is not under influence of the media logic at all. | Yes. However, the extent is dependent on the type of minister. Distinction is made between old and new type of ministers.  Dilemmas related to professional standards vs. hastiness of the news is identified. The entire administration seems under influence of the media logic due to policy area. |
| **Adapting the language and format of news** | Yes. Dilemmas related to professional standards versus clear-cut short communication bites. Insist on bureaucratic logic, which causes ‘back and forth’ with the press and communications section. | Yes. Dilemmas related to professional standards versus clear-cut short communication bites. However, we see integration of media logic when using faces, personalized stories, and emotions in their communication, and we see deliberate use of SOME platforms. |
| **Belief in the significance of news** | Yes. Reactive handling of cases in the news  Backstage role perception is still the dominant role perception. However, we see few examples of front stage performances – although always related to reactions to agendas in the news.  Communication adheres to professional standards linked to bureaucratic logic.  Director general of Agency forced to perform frontstage. | Yes. Reactive and proactive strategies towards political communication  Backstage and front stage role perceptions.  Communication incorporates emotions and personal stories linked to media logic.  Extensive frontstage role among leading civil servants in Agency. |
| **Reallocation of resources and responsibilities** | Yes. Employment of communication experts.  Extensive coordination across ministries among heads of press and communication and among permanent secretaries.  Cases in the media are prioritized.  Examples of reorganization due to media pressure. | Yes. Employment of communication experts.  Extensive coordination across ministries among heads of press and communication and among permanent secretaries.  Cases in the media are prioritized.  Employment of SOME employees to survey threads on various platforms and address wrongs from users of SOME platforms outside the administration. |
| **Use of social media** | The ministry is not using Facebook, Twitter nor influencers.  However, the minister uses social media platforms which requires that the civil service is aware what he/she communicates. They civil service also provide help to the minister to communicate om SOME platforms. | The Ministry is using various social media platforms.  Also the minister uses social media platforms which requires that the civil service is aware what he/she communicates. They civil service also provide help to the minister to communicate om SOME platforms. |

**Conclusion**

Mediatization is present in both cases. The study at hand, thus, confirms what we know from quantitative studies of mediatization of central government in Denmark that the media logic has entered central government organizations and affects every-day practices of the civil service (Dybvad et al., 2023; Salomonsen et al., 2016; Smith-udvalget, 2015).

All four types of mediatization accentuated in the typology of the Norwegian case study is confirmed in the Danish cases, when it comes to the civil service’s perception of the media. Both ministries (1) adapt to the news rhythm and are influenced by it. The 24/7 news cycle affects the work routines in the civil service and creates a vast workload, when journalist calls for quick responses that should be answered the same day. Also, we identify a strategic attempt to work with “timing” in relation to the news cycle mostly by the communications employes in both ministries. Both ministries (2) adapt to the language and format of news, which in some cases leads to conflict and dilemmas for the civil service in relation to professional standards associated with the bureaucratic logic on the one hand and the need for short and clear communication on the other. Also, both ministries (3) regard news as significant and see a need to ensure the reputation of the organization in the public eye. Additionally, we identify examples in both cases that (4) resources and responsibilities are reallocated based on cases high on the media agenda.

Similarly, the study shows that the role of the minister is of upmost importance when it comes to mediatization. In both cases, a distinction is made between old type ministers and new type ministers. Old time ministers are more likely to resist the media logic with its demand for quick responses. New time ministers are more alert regarding day-to-day media cases and want to respond immediately, which may create stress within the ministry. Moreover, the new type ministers communicate via various SOME platforms several times during the day, which sometimes creates stress among the civil servants and challenges the bureaucratic logic with a demand for correct and nuanced information.

In general, the interviewees states that communication has been professionalized with employment of press and communication employees, but also through extensive coordination and centralization of communication across ministries.

Importantly, however, we also see distinct differences in the two Danish cases regarding the way in which the civil service response to media pressure and, how they integrate media considerations in the every-day work life. The ministry of Finance follows a reactive strategy. If the civil servants identify errors in a news article, they are inclined to contact the journalist to make sure that the error is corrected, and misunderstandings eliminated. However, they do not leave the traditional bureaucratic role associated with high professional standards and impartiality. In the ministry of Health, a much more proactive strategy is used. During the HPV-case they fundamentally change their communication strategy using emotions and personalization as tools to reach the public and advance their health policies. The HPV-case, hence, represents a shift from a science based, impartial and professional role of the civil service to communication using emotions and personal cases and faces.

We also see a difference in the way in which the civil service sees their role as either powerless and unable to control the media or as powerful and attempting to enter the media to influence the news agenda to some extent. Several civil servants in the Ministry of Finance speak of the media as something uncontrollable. In the Ministry of Health, they do not believe that they are able to control the news agenda, but they seek to influence the news agenda and work actively with commination as a professional skill as part of the civil servant role.

We can also identify a difference regarding the media platforms that are used. The ministry of Finance is not present on social media platforms such as Facebook and X (Twitter), whereas the Ministry of Health are present on various social media platforms.

These difference between the two cases regarding how they respond to and integrate media considerations, may be ascribed to (1) differences in policy area and (2) differences in choices made in the administration. Regarding differences related to policy areas the mediatization literature point to the fact that personalization and emotions plays an important role in the media logic, which influences the ministries differently due to their diverse policy fields. But the differences also seem to be ascribed to differences in the handling of the media pressure and interpretations of the role of the civil servant under the influence of a media logic. As when the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Finance states that *“Most of the press demands, we do not answer.”.* In the ministry of Finance, we see an attempt to resist some of the pressures from the media, which we do not see in the same way in the ministry of Health.

Finally, the study suggests that mediatization of subordinate agencies, including the agencies’ relation to the government departments should undergo further investigations. In both the government departments in each of the two ministries, they have kept a traditional perception of their role as a backstage role associated with the bureaucratic logic. This seems to differ among the leading civil servants in the subordinate agencies. It may seem that the traditional backstage role of the director generals is under pressure with an expectation to perform front stage. However, this needs further investigations.

# References

Aagaard, P., & Blach-Ørsten, M. (2018). *Politisk kommunikation : nye tider og nye aktører.* (P. Aagaard & M. Blach-Ørsten (eds.); 1. udgave. 1. oplag.) [Book]. Hans Reitzel.

Bevir, M. (2011). Public Administration as Storytelling. *Public Administration*, *89*(1), 183–195. https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1467-9299.2011.01908.X

Bevir, M., Rhodes, R. a W., & Weller, P. (2003). Traditions of Governance: Interpreing the Changing role of the Public Sector. *Public Administration*, *81*(1), 1–17.

Charmaz, & Belgrave Linda Liska, K. (2012). *Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis* (pp. 347–365).

Dybvad, K., Jensen, J., Vendelbo, K., Ellemann, K., Lidegaard, M., Trangbæk, A., Sørensen, J. S., Jensen, L., Madsen, K., & Østergaard, M. (2023). *Dybvad-udvalget. Bedre samspil mellem Folekting, regering, embedsværk og medier*. DJØF, Jurist- og Økonomforbundets Forlag.

Esser, F., & Strömbäck, J. (2014). *Mediatization of Politics* [Book]. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137275844

Figenschou, T. U., Karlsen, R., Kolltveit, K., & Thorbjørnsrud, K. (2017). Serving the Media Ministers: A Mixed Methods Study on the Personalization of Ministerial Communication [Article]. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *22*(4), 411–430. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161217720772

Figenschou, T. U., & Thorbjornsrud, K. (2015). Backstage Media-Government Negotiations: The Failures and Success of a Government Pitch [Article]. *International Journal of Communication (Online)*, 1947.

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. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12117

Fredriksson, M., & Pallas, J. (2016a). Characteristics of Public Sectors and Their Consequences for Strategic Communication [Article]. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *10*(3), 149–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2016.1176572

Fredriksson, M., & Pallas, J. (2016b). Characteristics of Public Sectors and Their Consequences for Strategic Communication. *Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/1553118X.2016.1176572*, *10*(3), 149–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2016.1176572

Fredriksson, M., & Pallas, J. (2017). The Localities of Mediatization: How Organizations Translate Mediatization into Everyday Practices [Bookitem]. In *Dynamics Of Mediatization* (pp. 119–136). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62983-4\_6

Garland, R. (2017). The Dynamics of Resistance and Response to Mediatization in Government: Whitehall Press Officers Caught in the “Cross-Field” Since 1997 [Bookitem]. In *Dynamics Of Mediatization* (pp. 155–175). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62983-4\_8

Garland, R., Tambini, D., & Couldry, N. (2018a). Has government been mediatized? A UK perspective [Article]. *Media, Culture & Society*, *40*(4), 496–513. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717713261

Garland, R., Tambini, D., & Couldry, N. (2018b). Has government been mediatized? A UK perspective. *Media, Culture & Society*, *40*(4), 496–513. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717713261

Gibbs, G. R. (2008). *Analyzing qualitative data* (G. R. Gibbs (ed.); Reprinted.) [Book]. Sage Publications.

Guy Peters, B. (2016). Governance and the media: Exploring the linkages. *Policy and Politics*, *44*(1), 9–22. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557315X14446617187930

Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* [Book]. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203155363

Klijn, E. H., van Twist, M., van der Steen, M., & Jeffares, S. (2016). Public Managers, Media Influence, and Governance: Three Research Traditions Empirically Explored. *Administration and Society*, *48*(9), 1036–1058. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399714527752

Lundby, K. (2014). *Mediatization of Communication* (Vol. 21) [Book]. De Gruyter, Inc.

Meyen, M., Thieroff, M., & Strenger, S. (2014). Mass Media Logic and The Mediatization of Politics [Article]. *Journalism Studies (London, England)*, *15*(3), 271–288. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.889459

Pallas, J., Fredriksson, M., & Wedlin, L. (2016). Translating Institutional Logics: When the Media Logic Meets Professions [Article]. *Organization Studies*, *37*(11), 1661–1684. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840616655485

Poguntke, T., & Webb, P. (2007). *The presidentialization of politics : a comparative study of modern democracies /* (T. Poguntke & P. (Paul D. ). Webb (eds.)) [Book]. Oxford University Press.

Poulsen, B. (2005). *Nye tider, nye roller?, embedsmandsroller i den danske centraladministration* (1. udgave,). Jurist- og Økonomforbundet.

Rhodes, R. (2011). *Everyday life in British government*. Oxford University Press.

Salomonsen, H. H., Frandsen, F., & Johansen, W. (2016). Civil Servant Involvement in the Strategic Communication of Central Government Organizations: Mediatization and Functional Politicization. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *10*(3), 207–221. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2016.1176568

Schillemans, T. (2012). *Mediatization of Public Services* [Book]. Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften.

Schillemans, T. (2016). Fighting or fumbling with the beast? The mediatisation of public sector agencies in Australia and the Netherlands. *Policy and Politics*, *44*(1), 79–96. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557315X14466438893302

Schillemans, T., & Pierre, J. (2016). Entangling and disentangling governance and the media. *Policy and Politics*, *44*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1332/147084415X14503518462782

Smith-udvalget, B. (2015). *Embedsmanden i det moderne folkestyre* (1. udg.). Jurist- og Økonomforbundets Forlag.

Stromback, J. (2008). Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics [Article]. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *13*(3), 228–246. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161208319097

Strömbäck, J., & Esser, F. (2014). Introduction [Article]. *Journalism Studies (London, England)*, *15*(3), 243–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.897412

Strömbäck, J., & van Aelst, P. (2013). Why political parties adapt to the media: Exploring the fourth dimension of mediatization. *International Communication Gazette*, *75*(4), 341–358. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048513482266/FORMAT/EPUB

Tanggaard Pedersen, L., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Kvalitative metoder : en grundbog.* (L. Tanggaard Pedersen & S. Brinkmann (eds.); 2. udg.) [Book]. Hans Reitzel.

Thorbjørnsrud, K. (2015). Mediatization of public bureaucracies: Administrative versus political loyalty. *Scandinavian Political Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12041

Thorbjornsrud, K., Figenschou, T. U., & Ihlen, Ø. (2014). Mediatization in public bureaucracies: A typology. *Communications*. https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2014-0002

Thorbjørnsrud, K., Figenschou, T. U., & Ihlen, Ø. (2014). 17. Mediatization of public bureaucracies. In *Mediatization of Communication* (pp. 405–422). DE GRUYTER. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110272215.405

Thornton, P. H. (2012). *The institutional logics perspective foundations, research, and theoretical elaboration* (W. Ocasio & M. Lounsbury (eds.)) [Book]. Oxford University Press.

Tremblay-Antoine, C. (2021). The Mediatization of Public Administration: A Scoping Review. *Canadian Journal of Media Studies*, *17*(1), 105–133. https://doi.org/10.18192/CJMS-RCEM.V17I1.5881