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## Chapter 9

# Perspectives: Theorizing Mediatized Civic Settings and Cultural Conflict

**Abstract:** This chapter reflects on how the interplay between national media frames and discourses, social media, and user-generated content works out in practice in civic settings. It argues that while social media in theory break national elites' representational monopoly, in practice successful challenges (which would shift mass media frames and overall public opinion) are rare; rather, voicing of alternative views mostly results in the formation of networked counter-publics, with potential to challenge mainstream views but also to increase polarization. These dangers may be exacerbated by an increasingly uneven spatial distribution of both religious diversity and anti-immigrant sentiment, shown in levels of religious participation by ethnicity and voting patterns by region. The challenges posed for local governance by this situation are outlined, and possible solutions briefly considered, drawing on evidence from the literatures on superdiversity, contact theory, and political participation.

**Keywords:** mediatized civic settings, spatial distribution of diversity, digital hybridization, agency, networked crowd

## 9.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for the case studies of mediatized cultural conflict in the three chapters that follow. None are neighbourhood studies in a classic ethnographic sense, but rather range across scales to capture the interplay between them created by intensified media communications. Hence Repstad (Chapter 10) examines connections (and disconnections) between national media frames, political discourse, and local media representations in his study of the discourse on refugees amongst churches in Southern Norway; Liebmann (Chapter 11) traces links between national media frames, social media posts, the funding of local inter-faith groups, and the experiences and actions of residents in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in Eastern and Southern Norway; and Hansen and Herbert (Chapter 12) investigate how Muslims in the Greater Copenhagen area in Denmark respond to a negative national media frame, and reflect on the conditions

shaping the formation and acceptance of multiple identities as a key ingredient in cooperative community relations.

The aim of this chapter is to situate these case studies in the broader context of theories and empirical work relevant to the relationship between mediatization and other processes of social change at work in local civic settings. While there are studies of various relevant factors including the role of transnational media networks in the lives of diasporic minorities (Gillespie, Herbert, and Anderson 2010; Rinawwi 2012), citizens' use of media for a sense of public connection (Couldry and Markham 2008), and the mobilizing capacities of Web 2.0 social media for social protest (Theocharis 2013), the impact of mediatization on relationships and experience in local settings remains relatively underdeveloped, creating a gap between locality (and especially urban, as the main locus of religious diversity in contemporary European societies) studies and media studies. This section of the book, drawing on both CoMRel and its sister project *Cultural Conflict 2.0: The Dynamics of Religion, Media and Locality in North European Cities*,<sup>1</sup> seeks to address that gap.

In their introduction to media dynamics in Chapter 3, Hjarvard and Lundby provide a framework for conceptualizing media as embedded in and partly constitutive of social relations, outlining three types of dynamics through which media permeate and reshape them (amplification, framing and performative agency, co-structuring). They also emphasize, especially in their conclusion, that individual agency can still make a difference to outcomes, despite the powerful structuring forces at work. This chapter seeks to build on that account by examining how civic dynamics interact with media dynamics, and the conditions under which this interaction occurs, drawing on perspectives from a range of resources to conceptualize mediatized civic settings and the forms of agency emergent within them.

## 9.2 Mediatized Civic Settings

The city ... does not end with the visibly observable. ... Urban spaces are becoming hybridized, meaning they are composed through a combination of physical and digital properties. (Gordon and de Souza e Silva 2011, 1, 14)

In mediated societies – societies where media institutions have a dominant role and most, if not all, of our information about what is going beyond our immediate locality on comes from media – it is impossible to separate the recognition individuals get from each other from the way media resources are distributed. (Couldry 2011, 48)

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How people experience their own neighbourhood of residence, and those they work in, pass through or visit, has always been mediated by the impressions of others, whether through local gossip, newspaper accounts, or perhaps by travel guidebooks in the case of larger cities and favoured tourist destinations. However, changes in media technologies and their uses have significantly altered and arguably intensified the role of the media in shaping our experience of locality.

First, the combination of digital mapping, geo-locating, and social media technologies has changed how we perceive and negotiate our way around local areas, especially but not exclusively in cities, because of the dense networks of digital information available for users to navigate the urban environment, using smartphones and other networked devices. Thus, as Gordon and de Souza e Silva (2011) argue in the first opening quotation, localities and especially urban spaces are becoming ‘hybridized’, with digitized layers of information interposed between us and the physical environment by navigation tools, often embedded with commercial recommendations, photos and videos posted on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, and commentary in blogs and on platforms such as Twitter. Indeed, this abundance of information creates the need to filter out what is most useful, attractive, or entertaining, producing selection processes enabled by social media platforms which may, ironically for technologies which are often widely available, intensify existing patterns of social segmentation, stratification, and inequality (Boy and Uitermark 2016).

Second, this production and circulation of urban imagery and other user-generated content breaks the representational monopoly of local and national leaders, as well as that of the one-to-many media platforms which have helped leaders disseminate their messages and secure consent for their policies – platforms ranging from parish magazines and political pamphlets to regional newspapers and national television and radio (Watt 2008). Using social media, audiences may become not mere observers but participants who can contest and challenge received understandings, as they fill comment sections on websites, tweet their thoughts, share their ideas on Facebook, post YouTube videos, or recirculate content (which, at scale, can generate the phenomenon of content ‘going viral’). And yet the evidence of our case studies suggests that local actors still have limited power to challenge national media frames; indeed, social media may function predominantly rather as channels to reinforce dominant stereotypes, both by recirculating stereotypically framed material, and by producing new material framed in terms of dominant stereotypes.

In Chapter 11 Liebmann draws on fieldwork from Groruddalen, an East Oslo suburb with a large ethnic minority population, and Kristansand in Southern Norway. In opening, she uses a vignette from Groruddalen which provides a good example of both the digital hybridization of locality and the unintended

stigmatizing effects of a potentially emancipatory technology. She describes the injured response of local resident ‘Zunair’ to a video posted on social media by another young man, an ethnic Norwegian from the other side of town, who recorded his apparently ‘horrific’ experience of an accidental visit to Groruddalen when he overslept on the train. While the stigmatizing video, posted by a member of an ethnic majority and feeding into existing media stereotypes (ECRI 2015), may readily gain traction in the social media marketplace, minority views may struggle to attract similar levels of attention. Hence while social media offer new vistas on localities and in theory the possibility to challenge mainstream and official representations, in practice minority voices may be drowned out by a torrent of re-hashed stereotypes, and the weakening of official representations mainly serve to remove barriers that once obstructed this flow.

Similarly, the findings of Chapters 10 and 12 tend to support the view that while Web 2.0 technologies in theory offer media audiences opportunities to participate in, and hence potentially co-construct, emergent media landscapes, in practice, at least in these cases, the sense of a national media frame, fed by powerful transnational media discourses, remains dominant, offering limited opportunities for interruption, let alone co-construction. Thus, in his study of local church discourse on refugees in Chapter 9, Repstad finds no warrant for national media and politicians’ claims that church leaders’ liberal views on asylum are at odds with those of local congregations. Yet neither the preponderance of positive attitudes of active local Christians towards refugees, at least as presented on church websites and in newsletters, nor their practical mobilization to support refugee welfare, nor the liberal statements of the national leadership of the most powerful religious institution in Norway, the Lutheran church, appear sufficient to interrupt dominant national media and political discourses. Indeed, this case fits with the narrative of historical mediatization described by Hjarvard and Lundby in Chapter 3, which holds that ‘in order to reach public attention through the news media, religious issues should fit the media’s news values.’ On the other hand, Repstad’s case shows that the national negative media frame does not determine the content of local discourses; while the local may not interrupt the national, at least the local retains some autonomy.

In Chapter 12, Hansen and Herbert report that ethnic Danish and minority heritage Muslims in Copenhagen often expressed exhaustion at their experience of an unrelenting flow of negative mainstream representation, and most experienced apparently little sense of empowerment flowing from their social media participation. However, some research has found social media significant in providing space for minority empowerment. For example, in the Netherlands Leurs, Midden, and Ponzanesi (2012) report on how the social media platform *Hyves* was used by Dutch Moroccan women to organize street protests against Dutch

politician Geert Wilders' proposal for a '*kopvoddentax*' ('head-rag tax'), announced to Parliament on 16 September 2009. Organized online under the heading *Wij Willen Geen Hoofddoek Verbod!* (We want no headscarf ban!), the site attracted 15,000 followers and led to protests in several locations across the Netherlands before the proposal was dropped. The researchers locate this activity in the broader context of Internet discussion platforms providing 'hush harbours' for sharing experiences of hostility and offering mutual support in the context negative public framing of Islam and Muslim practice in the Netherlands. For example, one platform for Dutch Moroccans, *Marokko.nl*, 'is estimated to reach a remarkable 70 to 75 percent of Moroccan-Dutch youth in the age category of 15 to 35' (*ibid.*, 159). The researchers conclude that these online spaces:

not only offer an important critique of mainstream media debates on multiculturalism, but also create space for alternative bottom-up interpretations of everyday practices of multiculturalism in the Netherlands. (*ibid.*)

Internet forums and social media platforms have also provided the organizational infrastructure for acts of inter-religious solidarity in Denmark and Norway, including the human ring formed around the synagogue in Oslo organized by young Muslims in the wake of the shootings at a synagogue in Copenhagen in February 2015 (Hovland 2015). Social media use enables rapid and widespread mobilization across space; thus, the ring of solidarity idea was a response to an attack in Denmark which led to action in Oslo, Norway, then was re-used in Bergen, and an earlier 'March Against Terror' in September 2014 in Oslo was re-used in Kristiansand.<sup>2</sup> In such mediatized events, the use of urban space is both enabled through the digital infrastructure supporting its organization and amplified in impact by the circulation of the images generated. Thus, while our case studies show some negative impacts of social media on minority stigmatization, there are clearly other sides to the story.

Such social media networks may be understood as constituting 'counter-publics', meaning 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses ... to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs' (Fraser 1990, 67), and which may produce 'offline' social and political action. This role of social media does not seem to fit easily into the typology of media dynamics in mediatized conflicts supplied by Hjarvard and Lundby in Chapter 3 (Table 3.1; see also Hjarvard, Mortensen, and Eskjær 2015, 10). Perhaps it best fits the metaphor of 'media as environment' and the dynamic of 'co-structuring', as the affordances

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<sup>2</sup> Observed by Sivin Kit for the Cultural Conflict 2.0 project, field notes September 2014.

of the social media platform structure the form that contributions to debates take (a kind of formatting – Instagram enables curated visual representations, Twitter favours aphoristic sloganeering etc.). However, while the platforms used operate in a broad commercial environment shaped by relations of power (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are all monetized commercial platforms), so that the media practices of users are in some sense ‘embedded in ... structural relations of power’, it is not clear how this influences them, and social media practices displayed on these platforms do not seem necessarily to reinforce these ‘relations of power’, but rather, may, under some conditions (modestly) redistribute power across networks, and indeed at a local level (by virtue of the concentration of network participants within a locality), for example by distributing counter-images, as with the positive representations of refugees in local church communications found by Repstad (Chapter 10).

While Hjarvard, Mortensen, and Eskjær recognize that ‘the relationship between media and conflict does not constitute a one-way street from media to social actors’ (2015, 10), and write of social actors ‘using’ media and media being ‘implicated in stratified systems of social power’ (ibid.), neither ‘use’ (by an intending agent) nor ‘implication’ within a stratified system seems to quite capture the networked dynamics of social media power. Rather, the power of social media is somehow more ‘distributed’ – not so much under the control of powerful individual (or corporate) actors as mass media power – yet capable of being activated by the posting of a single image, as the term ‘going viral’ suggests. Maybe this is a kind of ‘co-structuring’, though not of an incremental, gradual kind, as that term may suggest, but something more rapid and volatile; such power is the product neither of individual will nor of institutional formation, but rather of the networked crowd. Perhaps then, Hjarvard, Mortensen, and Eskjær’s (2015) model could use an extra, fourth media metaphor, that of the ‘network’, with its characteristic dynamic of ‘circulation’ and ‘influence’ of ‘increased volatility’ which creates ‘potential for disruption of dominant representations, but also for their retrenchment’.

The counter-publics enabled by social media – whether ethnic minority hush harbours or regional subcultures (such as Repstad’s churches in Chapter 10) – also suggest a mechanism which might disrupt the ‘spiral of silence’ dynamic (Noelle-Neumann 1984) identified by Hjarvard and Lundby (Chapter 3), whereby majority viewpoints become more dominant in public discussions as dissenters become reluctant to contribute, once a dominant position is established. Certainly, our Danish interviewees (Chapter 12) illustrate this spiral, as interviewees expressed reluctance to contribute to public forums due to the overwhelmingly negative responses received. However, the formation of social media networks might also interrupt this process, by providing forums in

which minority opinions form a critical mass empowered to challenge dominant positions. While this might contribute to a ‘filter bubble’ effect (Pariser 2011), increasing fragmentation of public opinion, this is unlikely for minorities, who are not likely to be unaware of dominant media frames. Rather, such counter-publics can enable the strengthening of minorities through the development of solidarity, and may empower them to intervene in the public sphere at opportune moments (as with the anti-head scarf ban protest, or the human ring initiatives).

Furthermore, both Scandinavian and Dutch counter-publics discussed suggest the importance of spatial relations for grasping the dynamics of interaction between media and locality. In several cases, online activity galvanizes protest enacted at specific significant sites; and in Groruddalen we see an example of the uneven spatial distribution of religious diversity in Scandinavia, which, it will be argued, is central to understanding the dynamics of mediatized civic conflicts in this region.

### 9.3 Place Matters: The Uneven Spatial Distribution of Religious Diversity, Practice, and Fear of Difference in Scandinavia

Non-European immigrants tend to be more religious – typically Muslims or Christians – than their host populations. ... The limited evidence for second-generation minority populations suggests that religious decline will occur more slowly (if at all) among them than it has among the majority population. ... We may begin to see ‘de-secularization’ in Western Europe in the coming decades. Indeed, this is already visible in the continent’s religiously vibrant immigration cities. (Kaufmann, Goujon, and Skirbekk 2012, 71–86)

Debates for or against the banning of the construction of mosques and/or minarets reveal the tumultuous transition of Muslims from the status of the invisible migrant worker to that of visible Muslim citizenship. ... Public visibility is approached therefore as a radically disruptive, transgressive, provocative form of transformative agency that is intrinsically related to the political process of becoming citizens. (Göle 2011, 383)

The presence and hence experience of religious diversity in Scandinavia, as elsewhere in Europe, is not evenly distributed spatially. Rather, it is the major cities which are the sites of significant religious diversity, due both to initial immigrant settlement patterns and ongoing residents’ constraints and choices. Thus, it is in the Scandinavian capitals of Oslo, Copenhagen, and Stockholm, and some larger regional cities such as Malmö, that higher concentrations of visible minority populations exist, often focused residentially in particular neighbourhoods. It is here that Pentecostal churches and mosques are mostly located (where plan-

ning permission can be obtained), and it is on these neighbourhoods that media attention is often focused, with coverage of religion uneasily mingled with anxieties about public safety, urban disorder, and criminality, and prone to proliferate into periodic moral panics (Bangstad 2011). While immigrant, especially asylum seeker, settlement policies to some extent offset these patterns, for example creating settlements of Sri Lankan Tamils (mostly Hindu) in the coastal towns of Arctic Norway (Guribye 2011), the pattern of urban concentration predominates.

Indeed, it is not just religious diversity that is unevenly distributed spatially, but religious participation. As pointed out in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, Scandinavians have amongst the lowest levels of religious observance in the world, but the immigrants, and especially refugees, arriving in Scandinavia's major cities come from some of the most religiously observant societies globally, notably from Africa and the Middle East. While it should not be assumed that all will wish or choose to maintain this observance, assumptions informed by secularization theory that minorities will rapidly assimilate to Northern European norms in this respect are not supported by empirical studies.

Thus, van Tubergen (2006) found that British and Dutch immigrants (from several major religions, and 12 percent with no religious affiliation) had a weekly congregational attendance rate of 34 percent and 33 percent respectively (*ibid.*, 10), compared with national rates of 17 percent and 12 percent, suggesting considerable differences between migrant and majority populations. Amongst Muslims, Güveli and Platt (2010, 1027) found weekly mosque attendance rates for British and Dutch Muslims of 67 percent and 47 percent respectively, roughly four times higher than amongst the national population in both countries. Supporting these findings, Maliepaard, Lubbers and Gijsberts (2012) found that amongst Dutch Muslims, whereas data before 1998 suggested a 'linear trend towards secularization over time and over generations', evidence from 1998–2006 shows a 'striking revival among the second generation', leading them to conclude that, 'forces of secularization such as educational attainment and generational replacement gradually lose their predictive power' (2012, 359).

Similar patterns may be found in Scandinavia. Certainly, fear of the consequences of religious diversity also seems to be unevenly distributed spatially here, paradoxically highest in areas of least diversity, especially where these are near major urban centres; a 'halo effect' of media-driven anxiety about the ethnic other. One source of evidence for this is voting patterns: support for anti-immigrant political parties is strongest in areas with fewer immigrants and ethnic minorities. Thus, in Denmark in the 2015 elections support for the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) was strongest in the areas of



Southern Jutland (Syddjylland) and Sjælland, located away from the major urban centres (*Politiken*, 2015<sup>3</sup>). In Norway, support for the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) in the 2013 elections was strongest in rural and small-town areas close to major urban areas (e.g. Vestfold with 19.5 percent and Telemark with 19 percent, compared to Oslo with 11.7 percent [Statistics Norway 2015]<sup>4</sup>). This pattern repeated in Sweden's 2015 elections, where the Swedish Democrats were strongest outside Stockholm in Södermanlands län (13.4 percent) and outside Malmö in Blekinge län (14.1 percent), while in Stockholm proper the party received 5.8 percent and in Malmö, 8.9 percent (Statistics Sweden 2017<sup>5</sup>). These lower rates in the major cities are more than the effect of minorities themselves not supporting these parties – as these groups constitute small minorities in most areas, and tend to vote less (Scuzarello, 2015), these voting patterns mostly reflect differing majority population preferences in urban and rural areas.

So, why are people living in areas with fewer immigrants more worried about immigration than those living in areas with more immigrants? Survey evidence points to the processes which might be involved. Duffy and Frere-Smith analysed Ipsos-MORI polls conducted in the UK from 2006 – 2011, finding that immigration was consistently perceived as a much greater problem nationally (69 – 76 percent) than locally (15 – 28 percent; 2014, 90). This suggests a dominant role for the national media in the production of anxieties about immigration (closely associated with religious diversity in the Scandinavian context). The mechanism could be that those who live in areas of lower immigrant concentration fear what they perceive through the media, which tend to over-represent conflict in general (due to its higher 'news value', Jewkes 2011), and especially conflict relating to immigration and Muslims (ECRI 2015). In this context, short-term encounters such as visits to major cities tend may be read in the light of dominant media narratives. In contrast, residents in major cities, accustomed to living with diversity, are less fearful of it but aware (again, through the media) of concerns elsewhere in society. Either way, we find an uneven pattern of concern, with media coverage likely to be the major factor shaping it.

This evidence of the power of media frames to shape our perceptions of other localities – beyond our immediate neighbourhood where we must rely

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3 *Wikipedia*, s.v. Wahlkarte Folketing Dänemark 2015, last modified 19 June 2015, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wahlkarte\\_Folketing\\_D%C3%A4nemark\\_2015\\_da.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wahlkarte_Folketing_D%C3%A4nemark_2015_da.svg)

4 Statistics Norway, "Storting election 2013: Valid votes, by party/electoral list and county," <http://www.ssb.no/196612/storting-election-2013.valid-votes-by-party-electoral-list-and-county.per-cent-sy-7>

5 Statistics Sweden, "General elections, results," <http://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/democracy/general-elections/general-elections-results/>

on mediated sources – comes from the UK, but there are good reasons to think that similar mechanisms are at work in Scandinavia. While concerns about immigration are higher in the UK, concerns about religious diversity run at similar levels – for example, the wish to restrict Muslim immigration runs at the same level in Denmark and the UK (46 percent agree with the statements ‘allow few’ or ‘no’ Muslim immigrants), at comparable level in Norway (34.4 percent), though significantly lower in Sweden (19 percent, European Social Survey 2014). Thus, the scale of public concern is broadly similar. But more importantly the key ingredients – powerful negative media frames shaping perceptions of immigration and Islam, and an inverse relationship between local experience of diversity and anxieties about it – are present in each case; in the UK, residents in ‘low migration small towns and rural areas’ are twice as likely to want to restrict immigration as residents in ‘superdiverse’ London (Duffy and Frere Smith 2013, 22), similar to the distribution suggested by voting patterns in Scandinavia.

## 9.4 Governance and Challenges for Civic Leadership

Mediatization changes the logic of governance. It introduces new stakes for governance actors as their actions are ... perceived through a media gaze. (Uitermark and Gielen 2010, 1327)

In the kind of mediatized civic environments described, local (as well as national) leaders face new challenges in the management of cultural conflicts. As national and international conflicts percolate through different media channels, they may create or amplify local tensions. When satellite and digital communications transcend national borders, local disputes may escalate rapidly into international incidents, as with the Danish Muhammad cartoons controversy in 2005–2006 (Lindekilde, Mouritsen, and Zapata-Barrero 2009). Similarly, since people are entangled in extensive and complex media landscapes, local civic relations may be affected by distant events, or even by their anticipation. For example, Uitermark and Gielen (2010) found in their study of the Amsterdam neighbourhood De Baarjes in aftermath of the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004, that local government officials were strongly influenced by their anticipation of national media coverage, adopting a kind of proactive media-oriented stance, more than they were informed by a detailed grasp of local civic dynamics, with damaging consequences for the latter in the long run.

This mediatization of local politics needs to be understood in the context of the neo-liberalization of governance in Northern European cities, part of a global

pattern. While Scandinavian societies may be less affected than others, due to the strength of social welfare model of democracy, they are not exempt. Neoliberalism is understood here as ‘a series of contemporary projects of capital accumulation that, beginning in the 1970s, sought to reconstitute social relations of production including the organization of labour, space, state institutions, military power, governance, membership and sovereignty’ (Glick-Schiller 2011, 213–4). Neo-liberal ideologies advocate increasing the scope of market logics, bringing purchaser–provider relationships into areas of social provision previously dominated by the welfare state and professional norms, and emphasizing the exchange value of urban space at the expense of its multiple use values (Lefebvre 1991).

In the field of local governance, as elsewhere, this has led to a disruption of established relationships between residents, welfare institutions, and local authorities. For example, analysing the case of the Dutch national community development agency *Wijkalliantie* (Neighbourhood Alliance), which they see as indicative of trends across Western Europe to bring private entrepreneurial organizations into local governance, Uitermark and Duyvendak argue that ‘fragmented and transparent institutions have to compete in a new landscape dominated by periodical evaluations and quick shifts in policy ... Flexibility for financiers, including politicians, administrators and charities, has at the same time meant instability for professionals and citizens’ (2008, 117).

So, in contrast to previous practice where, through processes of consultation and discussion, ‘residents defined which discourses were legitimate’, now ‘governmental organizations formulate a discourse that primarily reflects the concerns of ... their financially and politically powerful partners ... and subsequently try to find residents who are willing and able to ground this discourse institutionally in disadvantaged neighbourhoods’ (ibid., 115).

Parallel impacts of mediatization and neo-liberalism are suggested by Liebmann’s study of organized cultural encounters in an Oslo neighbourhood (Chapter 11). First, local projects must compete for funding in a competitive environment (neoliberalism), then mediatization shapes what funding is available, especially national media-driven frames of reference formed by anxieties related to security, which influence the cultural programmes of local organizations. Thus, the influence of media frames may be refracted both through local government policies (as in the Dutch examples) and national funding programmes (as in Groruddalen and Kristiansand), impacting local civic dynamics.

## 9.5 What Makes Diverse Neighbourhoods Work? Converging Evidence, and a Research–Policy Rupture

A feature common to many European countries is that the body of scientifically based knowledge on immigrant integration has increased substantially, while at the same time public authorities seem to have become less interested in making use of the assembled knowledge. ... Although the idea of ‘evidence-based policymaking’ has gained wide recognition discursively, strong evidence also exists that politicians and policymakers often use scientific research for symbolic rather than instrumental purposes. (Scholten 2015, 2)

In concluding this introduction to shaping cultural conflicts in mediatised civic settings, and given the challenges facing local leaders implied by this account, it may be useful to consider briefly empirical evidence and theories on what makes diverse neighbourhoods ‘work’, and, given the problem of the spatial distribution of anxieties about cultural difference, to ask, what might reduce fears in less diverse regions? In addressing these topics, on the one hand there is good news that several theoretical perspectives and a range of empirical studies converge on which features help make diverse neighbourhoods work (and may be transferable to less diverse areas), and on what impacts on the anxieties that underlie prejudices. On the other hand, as Scholten argues, it is unfortunate that across Europe, precisely because of the dominant media frames concerning immigration and Islam that they must negotiate and the political dynamics these have generated, politicians and policy makers are reluctant to act on such evidence-led recommendations.

First, several theories (superdiversity, Vertovec 2007; contact, Al Ramiah and Hewstone 2013; political participation, Scuzzarello 2015), are both well-grounded in empirical studies and concur that development and public recognition of multiple, intersecting, and overlapping roles and identities is critical to successful social integration. In other words, seeing that others who are different in some respects (e.g. religion, ethnicity) also have overlapping interests and roles (e.g. as parents, neighbours, school governors, tenants, etc.), combined with a basic level of civility in public contact, seems sufficient to form the basis of mutual recognition necessary for the development of trust between neighbours and a localized sense of a shared public good, even in very diverse neighbourhoods (Wessendorf, 2014). On this basis engagement with and acceptance of divergent aspects of identity may develop.

In fact, it seems that conditions in more diverse neighbourhoods, with an established history of migration and with many immigrants from different back-

grounds, seem work in favour of civic integration (Hickman and Mai 2015). This may be because in these conditions it is difficult for the binary categories around which prejudice is formed (us and them, long-time resident and newcomer, Muslim and Dane, as we shall see in Chapter 12), to develop. And this may be why less diverse regions pose greater challenges, as it is easier for such binary categories to take hold. Nonetheless, programmes which build on contact and para-contact theory show that even in some of the most unpromising conditions (e.g. in Israel–Palestine, where ‘natural’ inter-ethnic contact is limited and binary categorization reinforced by most social processes), school programmes which combine education with extended contact and constructive interaction can have a major impact on attitudes (Berger et al., 2016).

## 9.6 Conclusion

This survey of evidence on the relationship between the changing media landscape, civic settings and cultural conflict, framing Scandinavia in a European context, suggests complex challenges facing both future research and policy. While macro, structural factors have always impacted local civic relations, which in turn have their own logics not reducible to structure, and national and regional media have long been a significant link between scales, the evidence reviewed suggests social media significantly intensifies and complicates these links, introducing new dynamics whose effects are hard to predict, as they include both amplifying the dominance of national media frames (e.g. mediatization of local governance in Amsterdam), and empowering marginalised groups to resist the political effects of such framing (the Dutch Muslim anti-headscarf ban campaign). For researchers, this implies the need for constant attention to factors operative at different scales and their mediated interconnection. For policy makers and advisers, the challenge has the added difficulty that the field has become not just intensely mediatized but politicised by populist discourses which frame relations between majorities and minorities antagonistically, mobilizing a divisive binary worldview which ‘pits a virtuous and homogenous people against a set of elites and dangerous “others” who are depicted as depriving ... the sovereign people of their rights, values, identity, and voice’ (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008: 3). Furthermore, this competitive framing may be intensified by the neo-liberalization of local governance. Under these conditions, evidence based policies of inclusion meet a sceptical reception, even when based on well-grounded theories, as both may be dismissed as mere ‘expert opinion’ in populist rhetoric. But, surely in Scandinavia, with its

traditions of social equality, high value placed on education and inclusivity, they may yet prevail?

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