Framing Gender Justice

A comparative analysis of the media coverage of #metoo in Denmark and Sweden

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Abstract

This study examines the media coverage of the #metoo movement in neighbouring countries Denmark and Sweden. A comparative content analysis shows differences in genres, sources and themes across the two samples. Further, the analysis shows that the coverage predominantly positioned #metoo within an individual action frame portraying sexual assault as a personal rather than societal problem in both countries. However, the individual action frame and a delegitimising frame focused on critique of #metoo were more prevalent in the Danish coverage. A framing analysis revealed four different news frames in the coverage: #metoo as (1) an online campaign connecting networked individuals, (2) part of a broader and long-standing social movement for gender justice, (3) an unnecessary campaign fuelled by cultures of political correctness and, finally, (4) a witch hunt and "kangaroo court". Finally, we discuss and relate these findings to the political and cultural contexts of the two countries and their different historical trajectories for the institutionalisation of feminism and implementation of gender equality policies.

Keywords: #metoo, gender justice, framing, Denmark, Sweden

Introduction

In the autumn of 2017, #metoo gained widespread attention worldwide when actress Alyssa Milano responded to allegations of sexual assaults against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein uncovered by the New York Times. To showcase the magnitude and ubiquity of sexual violence and harassment, Milano encouraged women to use the hashtag #metoo.[1] This article examines how Danish and Swedish newspapers framed the debate on sexism and gender inequality spurred by the hashtag. The Nordic countries are known for gender equality and Denmark and Sweden have historically been considered to be similar on these issues.

Both in Sweden and Denmark, the hashtag and the public outcry it generated received extensive coverage in mass media and spurred considerable public debate on issues related to sexual harassment, rape culture and gendered power structures in and beyond the cultural industries. Interestingly, the scope, substance and tone of this debate differed in significant ways between the two countries, just as the long-term ramifications and political aftermath of the public debate stirred by #metoo has since proven to take very different directions.

In Sweden, the hashtag rapidly snowballed into a large public outcry, with street demonstrations, torchlight rallies and other protest events organised across the country, prompting journalists, politicians and other observers to call #metoo "a revolution", "a catharsis in all institutions", "a historic moment in Sweden" and the "largest social movement in the country since women fought to secure the right to vote". Leading politicians, including the Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven (S), the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström (S), and the Minister of Culture, Alice Bah Kuhnke (MP), showed public support by participating in political meetings, panels and demonstrations. Several public figures, including leading politicians and ministers, also came forward with personal stories of assault and experiences of sexism.

In March 2018, the Minister for Gender Equality, Åsa Regnér (S), received a list of demands from 65 #metoo-groups ranging from lawyers (#medvilkenrätt), musicians (#visjungerut), actors (#tystnadtagning), journalists (#deadline) and politicians (#imaktenskorridorer) to high school students (#tystiklassen), social workers (#orosanmälan) and athletes (#timeout). Several books have been published, some focusing on personal testimonies, others debating rape culture, power and the underlying societal structures of sexual harassment. In May 2018, the affirmative consent law, recognising sex without consent as rape, was passed in parliament becoming effective from 1 July that same year.[2] To a large extent, the debate continues in Sweden.

In Denmark, the media coverage was much less extensive (the number of Danish articles was less than a fifth of the number of Swedish articles) and public debate around #metoo took a rather different turn. In its initial phases, during October 2017, the movement was covered extensively by most news media, but political responses and voices were absent in the coverage and a backlash occurred as voices that criticised or opposed the movement started to gain a foothold and dominate the debate. In Denmark, there were fewer organised calls for action or pushes to change legislation and only a few street demonstrations, which were poorly attended. In October 2018, a year after the hashtag fuelled a global movement, an opinion poll commissioned by the public broadcaster TV2 showed that one in four Danes believed that the #metoo movement had had a negative impact on how Danes treat each other and that the majority of Danes considered the movement a joke.[3]

This study is driven by an imperative to understand the different trajectories #metoo took in the two countries. In two countries where the statistics on the actual level of sexual abuse and harassment look very similar, and where gender equality seems to have an equally high profile in official policy discourse, how and why did it resonate so differently? When it comes to issues of gender equality, Scandinavia is often perceived as a homogenous area and the so-called Scandinavian model of gender-equal welfare states is an established concept in international scholarship. Sweden and Denmark are often lumped together, under headings such as "Scandinavian struggles

for gender equality" (Liinason, 2018a) "Nordic feminism" (Liinason, 2018a; weise, 1990) or "Nordic models of gender equality" (Melby et al., 2009). While they are neighbouring countries with shared histories and intertwined labour markets, fairly similar languages and very similar trajectories of liberal social democracies and welfare systems, the two countries have however "grown apart" in quite radical ways over the past two decades, not least when it comes to policy, political activism and public debate related to feminism and gender equality (Birgersson, 2015; Dahlerup, 2004). This cross-national comparison between seemingly similar countries provides the opportunity to give detailed attention to the nuances of similarities and differences in public debates on gender justice movements as reflected in the media coverage of #metoo in the autumn of 2017.

Decades of research on the so-called protest paradigm has shown that the mainstream media's framing of social movements matters to the creation of public support or opposition on a given matter; that dominant frames work to legitimise, delegitimise and demonise protesters/activists and the causes they struggle for (Chan & Lee, 1989; Gitlin, 2003; McLeod & Detenber, 1999). Thus, questions of how the public debate around #metoo evolves and resonates are important as the mediated public debate sets the frame for political action and potential change towards gender justice (Dahlerup, 2011). Dovetailing with these insights, we examine the following two research questions:

• How was #metoo covered and framed in Danish and Swedish newspapers?

• How can we understand the similarities and differences between these frames in relation to the political and cultural contexts in Denmark and Sweden respectively, and the different historical trajectories of gender justice movements in the two countries?

The research questions are answered in a two-step analysis. First, we present the results of a content analysis of the coverage in eight leading national newspapers both online and offline (N=879). Drawing on the results of this study, we then further elucidate the intricacies of the news frames and the similarities and differences identified between the two samples in a qualitative framing analysis (N=109). Finally, we briefly discuss the results in the light of broader historical developments related to gender equality in the two countries.

Previous research and theoretical starting points

Research on the dynamics between social movements, protests and their coverage by mainstream media is abundant (for an extensive review, see Mccurdy, 2012). In the context of feminist movements specifically, scholars have given evidence of the various ways in which mass media tend to erase, undermine, misrepresent or depoliticise women's movements (Ashley & Olson, 1998; Bronstein, 2005; Van Zoonen, 1992). Some explain the largely negative or unfavourable representations of feminists and feminist movements with reference to a combination of patriarchal and neoliberal/capitalist structures in newsrooms (Mendes, 2011a), while others argue that mainstream news media can also play an important role in enhancing the visibility of protest events and communicating a movement's key messages and goals, as evidenced recently during the Women's March on Washington 2017 (Nicolini & Hansen, 2018).

Framing theory and analysis have long been considered to offer a useful starting point for examining the relationship between media and feminist activism and movements (McDonald & Charlesworth, 2013; Mendes, 2011a, 2011b). The central logic of framing is that journalists construct the symbolic representations of society that members of the public use to make sense of events and issues. In doing so, journalists offer audiences a certain set of "interpretive packages" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) with which to make sense of an event. A central tenet of the theory thus posits that the media, through these familiar story patterns, have the power to give order and meaning to the social world (Bronstein, 2005). In terms of operationalising such a perspective, Entman (1993) suggests that scholars conducting framing analysis should mine for four different properties of a news frame: the proposal of a particular problem definition, interpretation, causal relation, moral evaluation and/or recommendation/proposed solution. Attention to these four functions of a frame informed the design of the content analysis as well as the qualitative framing analysis.

Previous studies have identified a limited number of stock frames used to report on women's movements. Rhode (1995), for example, finds five persistent frames including marginalisation (through inadequate coverage), personalisation and trivialisation (focusing for example on female protesters' physical appearances), polarisation of feminists (presenting extreme positions) and finally feminists as deviants. In her seminal work on Dutch news media, Van Zoonen (1992) also identifies a dominant framing pattern construing feminists as social deviants. Lind and Salo (2002) argue that the idea of feminists-as-deviants is intimately linked to a broader demonisation frame construing activists and protesters in general as social and political misfits. They found that feminists were ten times as likely to be described with pejorative descriptors such as "bitches", "radical" and "bad" than women in general – a finding echoed by Bronstein (2005) who adds "militant", "angry", "looney" and "hateful" to the list of labels (Bronstein, 2005: 790). Bronstein's study also shows that whereas the demonisation frame was emblematic to the framing of second wave feminism, contemporary generations of feminists are less likely to be framed in overtly negative terms. Instead, news media tend to delegitimise feminist activism by offering framing patterns that make it seem unimportant and pointless.

Mendes (2012) in her study of four decades of coverage in print media traces changes in the way feminist activism has been discursively constructed over time. She illustrates how there has not only been an "erasure" of feminist activism but that discourses of feminism also have become depoliticised and de-radicalised since the 1960s. Several studies echo Mendes' findings showing that media representations of third wave feminism tend to reduce collective feminist activism, organised protest or demonstrations to a depoliticised and individualised "trendy me-first feminism" (Genz & Brabon, 2009) in ways that undercut political progress and seek to install in public consciousness that gender equality has already been obtained, thus making any further activism unnecessary (Gill, 2016; Vavrus, 2007).

With the advent of social media, scholars drawing on framing theory have obviously started to look beyond print news or to the relationship between social media and print media in processes of framing. For example, in a study of the SlutWalk movement, Darmon (2014) examines the tension between online feminist articulations and their representation and repercussions both on- and offline. More specifically, she asks how

feminist messages created in online spaces travel into the mediated public sphere *via* the mainstream news media and what happens to them on this journey. Nicolini and Hansen's (2018) study of the framing of the Women's March on Washington 2017 shows that mainstream news media played a key role in enhancing the visibility of the event and communicating why participants were taking to the streets to protest the presidential inauguration from a feminist standpoint (Nicolini & Hansen, 2018).

The Nordic case: shared histories but separate ways

In both Denmark and Sweden, gender equality has been an official political goal written into party programmes and government policy since the 1960s (Borchorst & Riis, 2000) and both countries are ranked as high-performing on the gender development index (World Economic Forum, 2017).[4] Previous research, however, has identified a gender equality paradox in the Nordic countries following the notable discrepancy between the official governmental optimism with regards to gender equality and the experiences of young women in their everyday lives (Karvonen & Selle, 1995). A recent survey among Danish MPs, for example, showed how a large minority in parliament, including all the male MPs from the four right-wing parties, considered gender equality to be a "closed case", thus pointing to discrepancies in politicians' adherence to gender equality principles and actual policies (Dahlerup, 2018). Overall, statistics on employment, education and representation of women and men indicate striking similarities between the two countries (Dahlerup, 2011), although the gap seems to be widening somewhat as Denmark in recent years has dropped from the top tier of countries that have progressed furthest towards gender parity.

Despite the similarities in official policy and overlapping developments in the area of policy and political discourse, public debates about gender equality differ markedly. Addressing yet another paradox, Dahlerup (2004) explores the discrepancy between gender *policy* and gender *debate*, which to her indicates that the debates on these issues to some extent live a life of their own independent of socio-economic conditions and contexts. Because there are no clearly defined oppositional parties on this issue, like workers and employers for example, political discourse and policy-making is to a large extent informed and shaped by the public debate (Dahlerup, 2011). This makes public debate about gender (in)justice and the role of media in this region a particularly important and rich site of comparative studies.

Methodology and material

We start from the assumption that researching mainstream news media is (still) important even in today's hybrid mediascape, as print media facilitate diverse discussions about social movements and reflect the availability of discourses on offer – from those directly involved in a news event to the reactions of the wider society; "from reporters, voices of authorities, those most closely involved in the event and the voices of readers who wish to share their views in letters to the editor or online comment sections" (Wardle, 2004: 7).

The study thus draws on a combination of a quantitative content analysis of 879 articles on #metoo as a case study and a qualitative framing analysis of 109 articles from eight newspapers. The cross-national research design involves four newspapers

from each country: *Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet* and *Expressen* in Sweden, and *Politiken, Berlingske Tidende, Extrabladet* and *B.T.* in Denmark. The newspapers were chosen to represent relatively similar newspapers in the two countries and a mix between broadsheet and tabloid. We chose to both include news, comments, analysis and debate, in order to give evidence to a broad spectrum of tone, style and perspectives. The period chosen for the quantitative analysis extends from 15 to 31 October 2017, resulting in 245 articles from Danish newspapers and 634 articles from Swedish newspapers (N=879). As the analysed data is based on a full sample of articles on #metoo in a specific immediate period after the movement started, we do not test for the statistical significance of differences between countries.

The sample was coded for genre, source (including the gender of these sources), main themes and language (e.g. the metaphors and labels with which #metoo is portrayed). The list of pre-determined themes was developed from a first pilot coding of the material.[5] To ensure intercoder reliability, three researchers independently coded a representative 10 per cent of the sample of articles and then met to discuss and compare the results. The categories and variables were then adjusted and altered based on the obstacles and incongruences encountered during this initial analytical step. After the pilot phase, the coding was conducted by one researcher over a period of eight weeks in close contact with the research team.

The qualitative framing analysis consisted of 109 articles which were published on Wednesdays in weeks 42, 44 and 46 (2017). This period was chosen in order to cover possible changes of frames over a longer period of time. The reason why we chose to study the coverage of a weekday is that we wanted to avoid weekend specials and focus on the everyday coverage of the issue. The qualitative analysis is inspired by Entman's (1993) framework for addressing four different properties of news frames: the proposal of a particular problem definition, interpretation, causal relation, moral evaluation and/or recommendations/proposed solutions.

The results of the framing analysis are not quantified, but we are able to link frames to cross-national differences identified in the coding for themes in the quantitative content analysis, and in this manner establish a connection between the four frames and differences across the two samples. For example, the frame "#metoo as personal testimony" is linked to themes such as "testimony/witnesses' stories" and "technology/social media" prevalent in both countries; the "#metoo as witch hunt frame" can be linked to the themes "criticism of #metoo" and "men's legal rights", both of which were more prevalent in the Danish coverage. In a similar way, the "#metoo as social movement frame" is linked to themes such as "feminism", "political activism", and "human rights, gender inequality/power imbalances", themes that the content analysis had revealed were more prevalent in Sweden than in Denmark. Whereas the main focus of the framing analysis is to provide a detailed and qualitative account of the framing patterns, we do end each section discussing the four frames with a contextualisation of the empirical observations in relation to the results of the quantitative coding for key themes.

Analysis

The analysis falls into two parts. First, we present the findings of the quantitative content analysis, which provides us with insights into the overall thematic patterns in the fram-

ing in the two countries. We compare the scope, genres, sources and main themes in the coverage. We then proceed to explore similarities and differences across the samples in more depth through a qualitative framing analysis. In the concluding discussions, we bring the analysis of the dominant news frames into dialogue with insights from previous research on the framing of women's/feminist movements and comparative perspectives on gender politics and policy and the historical trajectories of feminist and women's rights movements in the region.

Genre, sources and key themes in the coverage of #metoo

The first noticeable difference is the intensity of the coverage in the two countries. In the four Swedish newspapers, a total of 3,332 articles were published in the first three months, whereas the total coverage in the four Danish newspapers consisted of 594 articles. This indicates that Swedish newspapers considered it more important to address and discuss the issues raised by #metoo than did the Danish newspapers.

In terms of genre, the coverage was quite similar in both countries (see Table 1). However, a noticeable difference is that #metoo in Denmark was more likely to be covered in the debate sections than in Sweden, which had more editorials and news stories on the matter. This can partly be explained by the greater prominence given to letters to the editor in Denmark compared to Sweden.

Table 1. *Distribution of genres in Danish and Swedish newspapers (per cent)*

	Denmark	Sweden	Total
News articles	61	72	68
Opinion	18	19	19
Letters to editor	18	6	10
Editorial	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100

Comments: N=879 (n, Denmark=245; n, Sweden=634). The examined period extends between 15 and 31 October 2017.

Sources and key themes

In both countries, sources are predominantly citizen observers (21% in Denmark and 15% in Sweden). Second in line are actors from within the media and cultural industries, third are artists and fourth are scholars. Notably, in Sweden many different voices were heard, whereas in Denmark sources were predominately citizen observers, media professionals and artists. What is also noticeable is the absence of public officials, politicians and other authorities in the Danish coverage. In Sweden, MPs for example make up 15 per cent of the sources whereas this is the case of only 9 per cent in the Danish sample. This indicates that #metoo made it onto the political agenda and succeeded in spurring a conversation between politicians and citizens in Sweden more so than in Denmark. Another critical difference is that the critique of #metoo as a main theme was present in only 1 per cent of the articles in Sweden, while the corresponding figure for Denmark was 10 per cent. An additional finding related to the quantitative coding for themes is that the Swedish newspapers were more likely to report on #metoo in the context of themes

such as "feminism", "political activism", "gender (in)equality and gender justice" than were the Danish newspapers.

Table 2 shows that only a third of all articles framed #metoo as addressing problems at a societal level. An article was coded as "individual" if #metoo was discussed mainly as a social media campaign with little or no links to social movements or broader political struggles, or as a scandal (personal or organisational). This includes articles with individual testimonies of sexual harassment or responses to other people's experiences. Quite a few articles on sexual harassment were coded as "individual", because they described the problem as related to specific people or specific workplaces. Some articles included generalisations of men and women (for example proclaiming that "men like to flirt"), but unless these differences were related to historic or structural reasons or struggles, they were coded as "individual level". Articles were coded as "societal" if #metoo was portrayed as addressing structural problems and discussed in relation to issues of, for example, power, gender equality/justice or political activism. For example, some of the articles reporting on the Harvey Weinstein case referred to general and long-standing issues of harassment of women in the cultural industries and were thus coded as societal, while other articles on the same topic remained on an individual level by reporting on sexual harassment as distinct or isolated cases.

If we zoom in on the differences between the two countries, the Danish coverage was somewhat more concerned with individual-oriented stories; this difference is, however, very small (DK 71%, SE 67%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, tabloid newspapers seem to focus more on personal testimonies and celebrity scandals, thus positioning the problem definition at the level of individuals and individual cases, whereas the broadsheet newspapers focus more on themes such as structure and power in their coverage of #metoo.

Table 2. *#metoo as individual or societal problem (per cent)*

	Denmark	Sweden	Total
Individual	71	67	68
Society	29	33	32
Total	100	100	100

Comments: N=879 (n, Denmark=245; n, Sweden=634). The examined period extends between 15 and 31 October 2017.

Main frames across the two countries

While the content analysis gave us a general idea of the overall similarities and differences between the two data sets, this step of the analysis allows us to unpack in more detail the central frames that characterise the coverage in both countries. Through the analytical process, four distinct frames emerged: #metoo as (1) personal testimony, (2) social movement, (3) political correctness, and (4) witch hunt. Whereas the first two frames legitimise and essentially support the message and meanings condensed into the hashtag (however multivalent and ambiguous these may be), the two latter frames are delegitimising in how they construe the issue in a way that is largely negative or dismissive of the movement. All translations from Danish and Swedish were made by the authors.

#metoo as personal testimony:
an online campaign connecting networked individuals

The first and most dominant frame in the coverage is the "personal testimony frame", which presents #metoo as a legitimate driver for social change and personal vindication for women across the world. The role of technology and social media is often mentioned and celebrated as an important factor in this process. In this sense, media technology, embodied for example by tweets and Facebook status updates, is implicitly presented as a solution; a way of bringing an end to sexual harassment if only enough women make use of this technology to raise their voices. Numbers, both in terms of the large number of women coming forward but also in terms of the magnitude with which the testimonies are shared, liked or reported on, play a central role in this line of reporting.

Within this frame, journalists largely position the problem at the level of the individual, for example by focusing on the personal stories of women who have experienced sexual abuse, ranging from discrimination to rape, or on individual cases of accusations against specific male perpetrators and/or the working environment of specific workplaces. There is thus a tendency to focus on actors within the cultural industries, celebrity producers considered as "bad apples", and various "scandals" (see appendix 69; 70; 72; 79) rather than on a systemic problem rooted in gender inequality and an uneven distribution of power. Most often the "bad apples" are Hollywood celebrities (see app. 29b; 76; 78; 83) or American politicians (app. 78; 87). Correspondingly, firing certain individuals, breaking ties and ending collaborations with or at least conducting an internal investigation into these men are often implied to be possible solutions to the problem, just as the mere act of "starting the dialogue" and the hashtag itself is presented as a solution. #metoo is described using labels such as "social media campaign" or a "sexual harassment campaign" (app. 85) which signal a degree of ephemerality and technology-driven "trend" among networked individuals. As we saw in the first part of the analysis, this representation of #metoo as an online campaign connecting networked individuals around individual action frames was somewhat more prevalent in the Danish coverage than in the Swedish.

#metoo as a social movement challenging gender inequalities
and power structures

Similar to the frame above, the frame construing #metoo as part of a larger social movement against sexism, misogyny and rape culture is legitimising and supportive of the movement; but instead of focusing on experiences, individual companies or distinct male perpetrators, the focus is on industries, societies and cultures, placing the issue on a more structural level. In this frame, the cause of the problem is defined as an imbalance in power structures between men and women, as a gender equality issue, as a culture of silence, as lack of respect for women on a more general level. The solution suggested by this frame is logically to change this culture by changing the laws and by finding collective solutions, suggesting that men both take the blame (even if they have not individually done anything) and that they should be part of the solution. Charged words and statements reflecting the moral judgement in this frame include "important", "deeply saddened", "horrified", "awful" and "enough is enough". Sexism is presented as a structural problem built into the fabric of our culture, a culture that is not changed

by removing bad apples: "This is not about television celebrities and their assaults, it is about a structure in which women's worth is systematically diminished because of their gender" (app. 33). Others express how they are "struck by the magnitude of this which give us a clear indication that this is about structural issues and problems which extend beyond any one industry" (app. 71). Changes and solutions are proposed at the structural level, for example changes in policy, legislation and penal codes (app. 98), reforms in labour market policy, or government-funded support to improve education and teacher training in the area of sexual consent and gender inequality (app. 50).

Interestingly, in the Swedish coverage this frame is particularly prevalent in articles by male authors, who disavow the impulse to "defend every man, as this is a societal problem with many expressions in a world-wide structure" and instead help fight "this macho culture, which is limiting the space of action for people around us" (app. 14). In this cluster of articles, men reflect on their complicity in these structures and reflect on how "I have helped to upload patriarchy" (app. 13). Calls are repeatedly made for men to take responsibility and for the debate to direct attention towards how men now need to get involved and take on the bulk of the work. One article quotes the Minister of Justice arguing that: "It must be said again and again. If we want to stop violence against women, it is men who have to change" (app. 44). In the Swedish coverage in general, men are included in the "we" who will help move the movement forward and thus presented as part of the solution: "Without men being part of this struggle and realising their responsibility in the redistribution of power and in reformulating their traditional roles, we will not achieve equality between the sexes" (app. 31).

Juxtaposing these findings with the results of the content analysis, it is clear that this supportive and legitimising frame was more prevalent in the Swedish sample than in the Danish, and it was especially pronounced in articles authored by men. In Denmark, a key theme in male-authored articles was instead "critique of #metoo". We might partly understand these stark differences by taking into consideration that it is not uncommon to see men engaging in "gender-consciousness positionings" in public debates in Sweden (Holmgren & Hearn, 2009) and that generally there is much less of a stigma related to being a declared feminist or to openly assuming a feminist standpoint as a man in Sweden compared to Denmark (Dahlerup, 2018).

#metoo as a culture of offence and a regime of political correctness

In the third frame, #metoo is challenged and brought into question in subtle ways. In some cases, accusations of sexual harassment are described as a "grey zone", whereas other articles go as far as to question whether sexual harassment is a problem proportional to the magnitude of the response and attention #metoo received. Articles within this frame tend to diminish #metoo as an uproar against gendered sexual violence, for example by arguing that "men also experience sexual harassment", or that explicit discussions about consent will make it difficult for people (men) to know how to act properly in public space. In these articles, harassment and discrimination is described as something "felt by the women", referring to cases in which women "have an experience of being harassed" or "feel intimidated" (app. 4; 5). Some articles describe incidents as "rumours" (app. 72) and the solutions suggested are investigations and meetings with management to "straighten out what really happened" (app. 87).

In Denmark, this framing was especially present in articles about a new French law criminalising street harassment, in which journalists pondered the prospects of men being fined for whistling at women in the street. The words used to describe the law subtly ridiculed #metoo, for example by referring to the problem addressed by #metoo as "a small tap on the bum" and legislative action as "a law against whistling at women in the street". This reporting implicitly or explicitly calls attention to how contemporary cultures of political correctness have allegedly "gone too far" or "gotten out of hand" (app. 83). It is also implied that women are enjoying and, in a way, looking for victimhood: "It's an important campaign and one should not put up with anything. However, now it's just gone a bit overboard and everyone is suddenly a victim" (app. 84).

The framing of #metoo as an unimportant or even dangerous form of political correctness, in which it is described as a "trend" comparable to fidget spinners or other flashes in the pan of 2017 (app. 47), or as a crusade unnecessarily complicating flirting and romantic relations between men and women, is most pronounced in the Danish coverage. This frame echoes patterns identified in previous studies of feminist movements in which journalists were found to persistently deploy depoliticised or post-feminist frames, presenting gender justice activism as unimportant/unnecessary and ephemeral. Bronstein (2005), in her account of recurring patterns in media representations of feminist movements, has labelled this the "trivialisation frame". Similar conclusions were reached by Mendes (2011c), who identified post-feminist discourses in British and American newspapers as far back as the 1970s. While Mendes found that the goals of feminism were generally discussed in positive terms, the overall discourse was subtly depoliticising and rejecting the movement itself with reference to activists being too extreme or having "gone too far".

#metoo as a witch hunt and "kangaroo court"

The fourth and final frame in the material is the most clearly delegitimising frame, in which #metoo is construed as a witch hunt against men. #metoo is described as a smear campaign, where women are "ganging up" against innocent men who are put on trial in a "kangaroo court" (app. 1). This court is described as "illegitimate", even "dangerous", and "at odds with basic principles of judicial justice in liberal democracies". Such reporting stresses how issues of sexual harassment should only be brought forward in a formal court of justice, and by following the already existing laws against sexual harassment and violence. "The important thing now is that we rely on the democratic structures that we have in our organisations and let them make the decisions" (app. 43). The moral judgement within this frame is conveyed by associating #metoo with tropes such as "witches", emotional and irrational women who are "out of control", and acting in a "frenzy of bloodlust": "There is nothing revolutionary about burning witches or hanging named people on the square. It's reactionary" (app. 89). The moral judgement at the heart of this frame echoes what previous studies have referred to as a demonising portrayal, in which feminists are described in unflattering terms or depicted as social deviants (Bronstein, 2005). Interestingly, when this frame features in Danish coverage, Sweden often serves as a worst-case scenario – a "feminist dictatorship" (app. 40) – and a country which has gone overboard. Ideas about state-enforced "totalitarian feminism"

in Sweden are a recurring trope in Danish debates on gender equality that is created and continuously reproduced by mainstream media and pundits (Edemo, 2002).

Like the frame above, this highly critical and delegitimising frame is most pronounced in the Danish sample. Compared to Sweden, where only 1 per cent of the articles were overtly critical of or even against the movement, this is the main theme in nearly 12 per cent of the Danish articles, making it the second most commonly occurring theme after that of personal testimonies. Further, we see a concentration of delegitimising framing in the Danish sample, construing #metoo as a witch hunt and a campaign that has gone too far. Interestingly, many of the articles in which this framing pattern is employed are written by men and/or draw on male sources. In contrast, in the Swedish sample, we iden-tified a concentration of supportive and legitimising reporting among the male journalists.

Concluding discussion: contextualising the differences

As a global news story, which spread around the world like wildfire in the autumn of 2017, #metoo presents an ideal case for comparative research and a window onto how public debates about sexual harassment and violence are unfolding differently across national contexts. The differences between the two samples are subtle but, in the light of the similarities between the two countries, remarkable. First, our study shows that the coverage of #metoo was much more extensive in Sweden compared to Denmark: during the first three months, the four Swedish newspapers published 3,332 articles on #metoo, the four Danish newspapers published 594 articles.

Further, our results show that the themes, questions and issues brought up in the debate about #metoo predominantly remained at the individual level in both countries, framing sexual assault as a personal rather than a societal problem. The tendency was, however, somewhat more pronounced in the Danish coverage, where the hashtag was largely framed as dealing with the issue of sexism at the level of workplace policy and the working environment of specific companies and celebrity personalities in the cultural industries or focusing on individuals' experiences and personal stories of rape, harass-ment or sexual assault. In comparison, the coverage in Sweden relied more often on a frame understanding sexual violence as a structural rather than a personal problem – and thus as something to be dealt with by the state on a policy level.

We identified four main news frames, which both legitimise and delegitimise #metoo. Although the four different frames were present in both countries, the distribution between these frames across the two countries differs greatly. More so than the Swedish press, Danish newspapers questioned the legitimacy of the movement, partly by framing #metoo as an unimportant campaign without any effect, or by portraying #metoo as a witch hunt against men. In Denmark, this highly critical frame was dominated by male journalists and sources. In comparison, less than 1 per cent of the Swedish articles propagated this frame. In Sweden, #metoo was also framed as part of a larger social movement more often than in Denmark. The discussed results show the importance of cross-country comparisons, even of countries we might assume will cover issues in quite similar ways.

These findings need to be understood within the historical and political contexts in which they are embedded and the role of media should not be isolated. Indeed, framing processes are one of a wider range of factors which need to be weighed to better un-derstand variations within feminist movements. Such factors include state support (see

e.g. Beckwith, 2005, 2007), political opportunities (Tarrow, 2011 see also Beckwith on gendered opportunity structures), culture and previous mobilisation structures (see e.g. Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Although we have focused exclusively on framing processes, additional factors are important to consider for a rounded picture. Yet, media institutions are key players in the process of legitimising and delegitimising social movements, as the "interpretive packages" they offer can either promote or impede activism.

In order to help us understand the differences among media's ways of portraying the movement and in the public debate on gender inequality more generally, we may look to the different political contexts of the two countries – both at the level of activism and grassroots politics and at the level of institutional politics. First of all, research suggests that Denmark and Sweden, despite their shared histories (for example, the implementation of women's rights during the emergence of the welfare state) have evolved very differently in the past decades. Feminist scholars have pointed to the heterogeneities, power relations and exclusions that characterise the Scandinavian region in questions of gender politics today (Dahl et al., 2016). Examining these heterogeneities, Dahlerup (2011) argues that whereas the issue of gender equality has been gradually politicised in Sweden, and filtered into institutions and mainstream politics, the reverse process has taken place in Denmark, where the issue has been depoliticised and increasingly marginalised. Whereas a series of important events and actors in Sweden, such as the release of the widely debated official government report *Because the power is yours* (Kvinnomaktsutredningen, SOU 1998: 6) and the presence of influential feminist networks struggling for electoral gender quotas, has shaped policy, political culture and public debate in the decades following the second-wave mobilisations of the late 1960s, Wängnerud (2000) points to the lack of similar epoch-making political events and actors in Denmark at the level of grassroots and institutional politics. For example, the activist network "the Support Stockings" ["Stödstrumporna"] in Sweden successfully managed to keep gender on the political agenda and to keep gender issues alive and visible in the media in the 1990s, a period largely characterised by political demobilisations and stagnation in Denmark.

Since the 1990s, progress towards full gender equality has stagnated in Denmark and concurrently feminism as a concept and a label to describe the struggle towards gender equality has largely disappeared from official political lingo in Denmark. In comparison, the majority of party leaders in Sweden declare themselves feminists (Dahlerup, 2011; 2004). Overall, the general conservative and neoliberal turn in Denmark in the past decades has given prominence to the widespread idea that feminism has "gone too far" (Dahlerup, 2018). Such ideological currents of recent years should be understood in relation to Denmark's historical role as "the libertarian of the north", where resistance to quotas and state interventionism in general is pervasive.

These different political trajectories thus provide us with some of the context and history to understanding how and why #metoo resonated so differently in the two countries and, in turn, why public debates on gender inequality and feminism in general tend to differ so markedly and persistently. Our findings get to the heart of discursive struggles over the meaning of gender equality and feminism in Scandinavia today, and highlight the role of media in these struggles. The debate about #metoo and the struggles over its implications reflect the significant disagreements in the "hegemonic understandings of feminism and gender equality" in this region (Liinason, 2018b: 10). Rather than a

homogeneous stronghold of gender equality – in terms of policy, practices and public debate – Scandinavia is indeed more fruitfully conceptualised as "a site of negotiation" (ibid.) and a space characterised by multiple power struggles.

Notes

1. African American women's rights activists Tarana Burke originally coined the phrase me too on MySpace when she started a project in 2006 to support survivors of sexual violence.
2. Although the law on consent was passed in the immediate aftermath of #metoo, a lot of the legwork and lobbying had been undertaken for years by, for example, activist non-profit organisations such as FATTA! and umbrella organisations for women's groups and relief centres such as Roks and Unizon.
3. The opinion poll was conducted by Megafon on a sample of 1,229 representative respondents. Three out of four people who considered the movement to have had negative effects were men.
4. According to the latest 2017 Global Gender Gap report, Sweden was ranked number 5 and Denmark 14, (see http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf). Alternative ratings such as UN's Gender Development Index place Sweden as number 7 and Denmark as 11 (see http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII).
5. The articles were coded for thirteen pre-determined themes: 1) Personal testimony/witnesses' stories, 2) Political activism/social movement, 3) Organisational reactions and solutions, 4) Political reactions and solutions, 5) Feminism, 6) Sexual harassment in the workplace/workplace culture, 7) Rape culture, 8) Gender (in)equality/gender justice, 9) Human rights, 10) Technology/social media, 11) (Lack of) men's legal rights (social media as vigilantism, slander, etc.), 12) Other critique of #metoo, 13) Men's reactions/men's testimonies.

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Appendix

1. Ekstra Bladet (18/10/2017). Alle skriver #metoo – men ingen ved, om han er skyldig
2. Expressen (18/10/2017). Fyra av fem svenska kvinnor har utsatts för sexuella trakasserier
2b. Expressen (18/10/2017). Förtal i sociala medier – det här säger lagen
2c. Expressen (18/10/2017). Undersökningen bekräftar bilden av alla vittnesmål
3. BT (18/20/2017). Ny V-ordfører: Debat om sexchikane ligner den om vold mod børn
4. Berlingske.dk (18/10/2017). Frankrig vil straffe piften efter piger med bøde
5. Ekstra Bladet (18/10/2017). Tabu-emnet alle taler om: Nu står ti danske kvinder frem
6. Berlingske.dk (18/10/2017). OL-guldvinder står frem: Jeg blev misbrugt af holdlægen
7. BT (18/10/2017). OL-guldvinder blev voldtaget siden hun var 13: Nu står hun frem med sin historie
8. Berlingske.dk (18/10/2017). Svensk toppolitiker kræver handling efter seksuel chikane
9. Aftonbladet (18/10/2017). Fler svenska kvinnor berättar om övergrepp
10. Politiken.dk (18/10/2017). Fra Weinstein til # MeToo
11. Ekstra Bladet (18/10/2017). Natasha bryder tabu: I det mindste brugte han kondom
12. BT (18/10/2017). Stem i, træd frem og sig fra
12b. BT (18/10/2017). Er vi hårde nok til at gå efter magtfolks sexchikane?
12c. BT (18/10/2017). Afstemning. Har du været udsat for sexchikane?
13. Expressen (18/10/2017). Fina killar – det handlar om oss
14. Aftonbladet (18/10/2017). Nu är det nog – vi måste förstå
15. Expressen (09/10/2018). Larmet om eleven – innan misstänkta lärarvåldtäkten
16. Expressen (18/10/2017). Straffskärpningar är så idéfattigt
17. Expressen (18/10/2017). OS-hjälten avslöjar läkarens övergrepp
18. Expressen (18/10/2017). "Jag delar #Metoo – så att ingen mer ska behöva"
19. Berlingske.dk (18/10/2017). "Jeg er (også) blevet groft krænket og godt udnyttet. Af kvinder".
20. Ekstra Bladet (18/10/2017). Derfor kører #MeToo af sted
21. Ekstra Bladet (18/10/2017). Twerkqueen bidrager også om sexovergreb: "Du grinte da jeg sagde stop".
22. Expressen (19/10/2017). Högervänsterkängan mot Stefan Löfven: Skärpta straff är idéfattigt
23. Expressen (17/10/2017) Världsstjärnorna träder fram efter sexövergreppen
23b. Expressen (17/10/2017) Världsstjärnorna träder fram efter sexövergreppen
24. Expressen (17/10/2017) Kändisarnas stöd till #metoo
24b. Expressen (17/10/2017) Anja Pärsson trakasserad. "Jag slutade helt gå ut"
24c. Expressen (17/10/2017) Stenbergs uppmaning till männen: Ta ansvar
25. Aftonbladet (18/10/2017) Han vägrade lämna mig i fred
26. Expressen (10/10/2017) Carola berättar om övergreppet som barn
27. Expressen (18/10 2017) Stefan Löfven frågades ut i direktsändning
28. DN (18/10 2017) #metoo
29. DN (18/10 2017) Kvinnor runt världen hela världen: jag också!
29b. DN (18/10 2017) Hollywood vill avsluta sin "äldsta sträckstory"
30. DN (18/10 2017) Stanna inte vid empati – det behövs handling
31. Expressen (15/11 2017) Nisha Besara. Det spelar ingen roll hur många fajtar vi fortsätter ta, om inte fler män är med på resan
32. Expressen (15/11 2017) Travoltas hemlighet avslöjad efter 17 år
33. Expressen (15/11/2017). Vi måste prata om könsordsattacken
34. Expressen (15/11/2017). Tafs och takt
35. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). Evelyn Schreiber: Välkommen in i matchen, Svenska fotbollförbundet
36. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). MTG:s vd: Jag ska gå till botten med det här
37. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). Fler sångare ansluter sig till uppropet
38. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). Jösses pojkar, de säger emot oss!
39. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). Tusentals juristkvinnor i nytt upprop
40. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). "Svensk man kommer skjuta kvinnor med maskingevär"
41. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). 14 ljusglimtar: "Har aldrig upplevt något liknande".
42. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Kulturrådet skärper kraven efter metoo
43. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Efter avhoppen – Ohly tänker sitta kvar
44. Expressen (15/11/2017). Detta är värre än larmen från andre branscher
45. Expressen (14/11/2017). Reuters karriärs – Beslut – därför trappar hon ned
46. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Sandra Johansson: Valskräll skulle krypa under skinnet på Trump
47. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Ungdomskultur i topp bland söktrender
48. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Tio punkter ska stoppa sextrakasserier i kulturen

49. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Vad menas med manliga strukturer?
50. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Nya C-förslag efter metoo-uppropen
51. Svenska Dagbladet (15/11/2017). "Dickpics är vår tids största kommunikationsmiss"
52. Svenska Dagbladet (15/11/2017). En genikult med för stor prislapp
53. Svenska Dagbladet (15/11/2017). Musiksverige i krismöte om sextrakasserier
54. Svenska Dagbladet (15/11/2017). Vittnesmål om sexism samlas in i flera branscher
55. Svenska Dagbladet (15/11/2017). Johanne Hildebrandt: Den tafsande chefen fick sparken
56. Svenska Dagbladet (15/11/2017). Domstolsverket välkomnar juristupprop
57. Svenska Dagbladet (15/11/2017). Många chefer kan inte hantera sextrakasserier
58. Svenska Dagbladet (13/12/2017). Tiotusentals i nytt metoo-upprop
59. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Vi män ska hålla käft och lyssna
60. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Vänsterpartiets krav: Inrätta en kriskommission efter MeToo
61. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). God morgon! Det här hände medan du sov
62. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Lööf: Metoo-uppropen är en revolution
63. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Regnér: Metoo blottlägger mäns vardagsmakt
64. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Kvinnliga komiker i upprop
65. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Stor enighet när metoo-upprop mötte Regnér
66. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Vill att Trumps påstådda trakasserier utreds
67. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). Stjärnan hyllar MeToo: "Hösten 2017 kommer att gå till historien"
68. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). Branschorganisationen Musiksverige kallar till krismöte
69. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). Teaterstjärna portas från Stadsteatern
70. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). Hyckleri att säga att Stadsteatern avbryter samarbetet.
71. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). Domstolsverket välkomnar juristupprop
72. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). SVT-experten sparkad av förra arbetsgivaren – anklagad för övergrepp
73. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). Kritiken efter galan: TV4-profilerna skämtade om # metoo
74. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). David Hellenius svarar på kritiken: "Var inte meningen"
75. Aftonbladet (11/12/2017). #metoo och konsten
76. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). Fler kvinnor anklagar Ed Westwick för övergrepp
77. Aftonbladet (15/11/2017). Inte alla (M)än
78. Berlingske (11/12/2017). Valggyser om Trumps sexanklagede kandidat i Alabama
79. Berlingske (11/12/2017). Journalist ud af Aftonbladet efter MeToo-anklager
80. Berlingske (15/12/2017). Noget stort er på vej. Vi ser det bare ikke
81. BT (11/12/2017). Stalker har 'hænderne alle vegne' på Lise Nørgaard
82. BT (13/12/2017). Dansk skuespillerinde blev låst inde og overfaldet
83. BT (13/12/2017). "Derfor fyrede jeg Kevin Spacey"
84. Ekstra Bladet (11/12/2017). Spids læberne: Nu kan du vinde et snav med dansk topmodel
85. Ekstra Bladet (11/12/2017). Alt er som det plejer: Sexchikanekampagne ændrer ikke noget hos danskerne
86. Ekstra Bladet (11/12/2017). Han er så vild efter at røre mig - Lise Nørgaard har to stalkere
87. Ekstra Bladet (13/12/2017). Trump sviner toppolitiker: Hun 'vil gøre alt' for penge
88. Ekstra Bladet (15/12/2017). Uffes ligestillingsordfører erkender: Nu efterlyser han sine ofre
89. Berlingske (15/11/2017). Kronik: Så blev den heks brændt. Og om lidt bliver her stille, og hvad så, #Metoo?
90. Berlingske (15/11/2017). Sizemore beskyldes for overgreb
91. BT (15/11/2017). Danske mandlige komikere bryder tavsheden: Står frem med deres ubehagelige oplevelser
92. Berlingske (11/12/2017). 100 vidnesbyrd om sex, magt og knuste drømme
93. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). "Min lillebror ska inte få möta könsord i idrotten"
94. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). TV4 lägger ner "Äntligen hemma"
95. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). Metoo-uppropen sprids till nya områden.
96. Dagens Nyheter (15/11/2017). Djurgårdsstjärnan: Bort med fula ord på planen
97. Dagens Nyheter (12/11/2017). Peter Wolodarski: Vi har bara sett början av Metoo i Sverige
98. Dagens Nyheter (12/12/2017). Lööf (C) vill se hårdare tag mot sexuella övergrepp
99. Dagens Nyheter (13/12/2017). Ledare: Alabama ger trubbel för Trump
100. Dagens Nyheter (13/12/2017). Regeringens tio åtgärder för att motverka trakasserier
101. Dagens Nyheter (13/12/2017). Förundersökning mot Kulturprofilen pågår
102. Dagens Nyheter (13/12/2017). Ledare: Bevare oss om barn får ta ansvar!