

Hyperlocals Matter: Prioritising Politics When Others Don't

Lottie Jangdal

To cite this article: Lottie Jangdal (2020): Hyperlocals Matter: Prioritising Politics When Others Don't, Journalism Practice, DOI: [10.1080/17512786.2020.1739551](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1739551)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1739551>



© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 11 Mar 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 149




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Hyperlocals Matter: Prioritising Politics When Others Don't

Lottie Jangdal 

Department of Media and Communication Science, Institution: Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This study examines the democratic contribution of hyperlocal media in Sweden in an electoral context. A quantitative content analysis of digital news material is used to examine which topics are prioritised, and which actors get to participate in the local public sphere. Political content is further studied to learn whether it varies between a normal news week and a week during the election campaign. The analysis also examines whether there is a relationship between media density and editorial focus. The results indicate that this segment of hyperlocals—online and independent of legacy media—fills an important function on several democratic levels, including an increased level of editorial coverage of political topics towards an election, a wider distribution of sources and the facilitation of forums for debate.

KEYWORDS

hyperlocal media;
democracy; election; political
content; Sweden; media
density

Introduction

Very local news has existed for several hundred years, but not long ago journalism was reserved for only the mainstream players. Now there is a multitude of news providers and platforms in the media landscape that exist parallel with traditional news (Wadbring and Jangdal 2019). One such phenomenon are the so-called “hyperlocals”, a terminology first introduced in the 1990s (Pavlik 2013). Since the mid-2000s, “hyperlocal” has primarily been used to describe new, online approaches to provide local news (Barnett and Townend 2015; Kurpius, Metzgar, and Rowley 2010; Radcliffe 2012). They are becoming increasingly legitimised, not only by researchers, but by policymakers and professional news-making organisations, who are noticing that many hyperlocal sites are attracting large audiences and engaging effectively with their communities (Perrin 2017).

Hyperlocals generally stay true to traditional news values, and offer hope in a time when the traditional media industry is plagued by declining revenues (Deuze 2017). Compared to legacy media, there has been limited research in the field of hyperlocals. According to Williams and Harte (2016), most research on hyperlocal news has been done in the United Kingdom and the United States, concentrated around presence and sustainability (Harte, Howells, and Williams 2019). Some research has approached the democratic aspects of hyperlocals (Harte, Howells, and Williams 2019; Jangdal 2019; Leckner, Tenor,

CONTACT Lottie Jangdal  lottie.jangdal@miun.se

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

and Nygren 2017; Williams et al. 2014), including a survey by Leckner, Tenor, and Nygren (2017) where hyperlocal respondents in Sweden were asked to rank their reasons for starting a hyperlocal operation and also to estimate how their editorial content was divided among topics. Although this provided important understanding of the aims and ambitions of hyperlocal operators, there is a gap as far as understanding how the content can be used to assess the actual democratic contribution, as few content analyses have been carried out so far and none previously in an electoral context. This present study seeks to deepen our understanding of the role of hyperlocal media in the changing media landscape—how they actually contribute—by researching what type of content they produce and which voices are given access to the mediated agenda during a normal news week compared to an election week.

The next section summarises earlier research in the field under two subheadings: *Democratic Aspects of Local Journalism* and *Hyperlocals in the New Media Landscape*.

Democratic Aspects of Local Journalism

The relationship between democracy and the media has been articulated through theories about the public sphere for more than half a century. Recent research has reinforced how the lack of media coverage is ultimately a question of democracy, and that media centralisation poses problems for public dialogue (Dahl 2002; Firmstone and Coleman 2014; Gandour 2016; Nord and Strömbäck 2012). According to (Nielsen 2015a), journalists and journalism scholars characteristically see the most important role of the media as being a liberal representative for democracy, holding power to account and keeping people informed about public affairs.

Having political content is important for fostering community engagement. Studies have shown that the political issues which involve people the most are those that are determined at the local level (Nord, Nygren, and Volny 2019). In addition, local news media have been found to have a positive effect on local election turnout (Baekgaard et al. 2014). Several cities in the United States have experienced significant drops in civic engagement following the closure of local newspapers (Shaker 2014). Shaker (2009) notes that local media is important for local political knowledge, and furthermore that inhabitants who are knowledgeable about local politics do not mirror the profile of those who are knowledgeable about national politics. Also, when there is no permanent presence of journalists, municipalities receive less coverage and institutional actors are quoted more often (Karlsson and Hellekant Rowe 2019). An American study shows that when a local newspaper closes down, expenses increase for local authorities (Gao, Lee, and Murphy 2019). There is hence a direct connection between media presence and the efficiency of local authorities, and also a cost for tax payers. In Sweden, researchers have noted how media development has contributed to a greater division in the country (Nygren and Althén 2014), with the countryside being in both a political and a democratic shadow. This increases the risks of, and paves the way for, undemocratic forces to access space in the local public sphere, the researchers conclude. News consumption has also been found to have a cohesive function in societies—particularly on a local level—as many people receive the same picture of reality (Bergström and Wadbring 2019). This is of particular importance during

electoral movements, when communicative interaction reaches a crescendo between political actors, media actors and residents.

Hyperlocals in the New Media Landscape

Traditionally, the Nordic countries have been characterised by high levels of newspaper consumption, with circulation levels that have sustained strong commercial media enterprises (Ohlsson 2015). Despite a media crisis resulting in revenue loss and decreased circulation, local media has remained remarkably stable, and in Norway is still described as the backbone of the media structure (Mathisen 2010). For decades, Sweden has been one of the leading countries both when it comes to newspaper consumption and to the number of newspaper titles (TU – Medier i Sverige 2018). The country has been known for its long tradition of local journalism with a high level of professionalism and a strong public service presence, a media system characterised as democratic corporative (Weibull, Wadbring, and Ohlsson 2018).

The digital transformation, however, has changed local media habits (Facht and Ohlsson 2019). Today's media system is complex, where different types of media providers and platforms complement each other—a hybrid system where old and new local media live side by side (Nygren 2018), with a definite aspect of interdependence where roles are changing and new patterns are developing in a new local media ecology (Anderson 2016). Nygren (2019) identifies five spheres of local media: local subscription-based newspapers, regional public service media, hyperlocal media outlets, media produced by local municipalities and social media such as Facebook.

Although the internet provides an opportunity to easily access global news, studies have shown that local media still has a central position in the media landscape (Mathisen 2013; Nielsen 2015b). Twitter, municipality websites and local bloggers are now also part of the local media ecology but at significantly lower levels (Nygren and Tenor 2019). For people under the age of 50, local groups on Facebook are equally or more important for gathering local information than the local newspaper, and people contribute to these groups much more than to legacy media (Nygren and Leckner 2016). Researchers have recognised that hyperlocals differ from established local traditional journalism in being citizen-led, participatory and largely independent (Turner 2015, 48), and its content concentrated to “a town, village, single postcode or other small geographically defined community” (Radcliffe 2012, 9). A comparison in Sweden found that there is a higher proportion of local news in hyperlocals compared to all other media forms in the country (Jangdal 2019).

It is important to note that hyperlocal *content* can be provided by several types of media actors, even if they do not qualify as a hyperlocal media outlet. For example, a large media house can from time to time produce very local news from a geographically well-defined area, without having a local editorial presence. This differs, however, from the scholarly definition used here by Metzgar, Kurpius, and Rowley (2011, 774): “Hyperlocal media operations are geographically-based, community-oriented, original news-reporting organisations indigenous to the web and intended to fill perceived gaps in coverage of an issue or region and to promote civic engagement”. Some academics have challenged this definition, including Leckner, Tenor, and Nygren (2017, 4) who argue that a narrow focus runs the risk of “not giving the whole picture of the current media landscape”, and they therefore suggest widening the definition beyond the online platform.

Hyperlocals in Sweden generally have fewer resources, and are produced by a mix of professional journalists and non-professionals (Leckner and Nygren 2016), which mirrors the situation in the UK (Williams et al. 2014). Another aspect of hyperlocals that has attracted scholarly attention is whether they have the potential to fill news gaps when legacy media is declining (Downie and Schudson 2009; Freedman et al. 2010; Jangdal 2019; Radcliffe 2012; Williams et al. 2014; Williams, Harte, and Turner 2015). Radcliffe (2015) suggests that hyperlocal media plays an important democratic role in helping people root themselves in the local community, and that hyperlocals provide their geographic location with meaning. Researchers have also noted how local perspectives are gaining momentum, and how there is a general increased appreciation of the local, in contrast to uniformity and globalisation (Waschková Císařová 2017, 19). In recent years, scholars have shown an expanding interest in local journalism both in Europe and the United States (Nielsen 2015b). Sweden has been compared to the UK, the Netherlands, France and Belgium, as they have similar hyperlocal media landscapes with regard to growth, challenges and innovation (Cook, Geels, and Bakker 2016). A new study comparing hyperlocals in five different countries, including Sweden, found no clear national differences (Cook and Bakker 2019). In Sweden, hyperlocal media is growing (Nygren 2019, 65), and contributes to the local media ecology in areas where traditional newspapers are weak.

Most hyperlocal operations in Sweden are less than ten years old. The founders range from journalists to “non-professional amateurs and enthusiasts” (Leckner, Tenor, and Nygren 2017, 4) but have in common that they consider their role in society important (Jangdal, Cepaite Nilsson, and Stúr 2019). Some predict growth in this sector by anticipating that layoffs in legacy media could mean more journalists may venture into their own independent digital news start-ups (DeRienzo and Smith 2016).

One of the recurring findings of the few studies that have been undertaken about hyperlocal *content* is their common orientation towards producing news about local politics and civil society (Williams and Harte 2016). In the UK, they found that although official news sources such as local politicians, business representatives and authorities retain a strong voice, members of the public have more of a platform in hyperlocal content than in many mainstream local newspapers.

A recent study in Finland, where publishers were asked to self-categorise their publications, indicates a strong desire to engage people in community building and ambitious goals of covering local issues (Hujanen et al. 2019). In Sweden, a survey by Leckner, Tenor, and Nygren (2017) showed that hyperlocal operators aim to support and foster citizenship, strengthen democracy and mirror the local community. The study included an element of content, where media outlets were asked to estimate how their editorial content was divided into different kinds of news. Their self-categorisation indicated that local activities receive most coverage, followed by culture and entertainment, and in third place municipality and local politics (Leckner, Tenor, and Nygren 2017).

To conclude, we know from earlier research about hyperlocals that they have ambitions and prerequisites to contribute democratically in the local public sphere, but do they put their principles into practice? The recent dramatic changes in media development have created new democratic challenges, which warrants taking a closer look at hyperlocal media outlets. Chadha and Harlow (2018) have claimed that there is a need for a more nuanced approach to independent news start-ups. This study will take the knowledge

about hyperlocal content a critical step forward by researching their actual contribution to the democratic process from several vital perspectives.

Objective of the Study

This quantitative content analysis will investigate which topics that independent online hyperlocals prioritise, whether they vary between on- and off-election seasons, and if they make a democratic contribution to the local public sphere by providing an arena for a diversity of voices and for public debate. The study will also examine whether the media content varies depending on media density in the municipality. The following research questions are asked:

RQ1: What type of media content do digital independent hyperlocals in Sweden prioritise?

RQ2: Does hyperlocal media content vary depending on media density in the municipality—low, moderate or high—i.e., does competition appear to be of significance?

RQ3: Which actors get to participate in hyperlocal *political* media content, and to what extent do political stories include a forum for debate?

RQ4: How does hyperlocal *political* media content differ between a normal news week and in an electoral context?

Method and Material

This study uses a quantitative content analysis of hyperlocal news articles. The selection of hyperlocal operators is based on a previous mapping (Jangdal 2019), which identified 75 digital, independent hyperlocal media outlets, distributed across 59 of the 290 municipalities in Sweden. As the sampling for this content analysis builds on the previous study, the same definition of hyperlocals is applied. The prevalent hyperlocal definitions referred to earlier presuppose independent operations, and so does this study. It thus excludes legacy media with very local content and “alternative media” with a set agenda. The article presents a comparative and quantitative content analysis of *online-only* content by hyperlocals, although some of them may have additional platforms for news such as print, radio or television. Whereas the hyperlocals in this study vary in geographical location, scope and aims, they are similar in terms of geographical reach and by providing independent media content.

This study adds to previous research by first categorising media density in the municipalities where the hyperlocals are located. The municipalities were researched online to determine media existence, and then compared to a continually updated open source database (Institutet för mediestudier 2019) which lists all media presence Sweden. The comparison reveals significant differences, with a range from 0 to 40 editorial newsrooms, including legacy media, *in addition* to the hyperlocals. The respective municipalities were divided into three categories of media clusters as evenly as possible for a future comparison, based on the following media density categorisation:

- (1) Low (0–2 additional newsrooms)
- (2) Moderate (3–6 additional newsrooms)
- (3) High (7 or more additional newsrooms)

To obtain a representative selection, ten hyperlocals were selected in each media cluster according to a systematic, standardised procedure: first their activity level was controlled, verifying that the hyperlocals had published at least one new news story a week prior to the first data collection week. Those that lacked publishing the previous week were omitted. Among those that were active, the following sampling process was used: the first hyperlocal for each level of newsrooms was selected until each of the three media clusters contained 10. A total of 30 hyperlocals would allow for a potential loss of media outlets due to circumstances beyond the control of the study, such as closures, but still yield sufficient material for a methodologically sound content analysis without doing a total sample.

As 2018 was an election year in Sweden—local, regional and national—the study took the opportunity to collect data from two separate weeks, in order to include a comparison between a normal news week and an election week. Data collection was performed during two separate weeks: the Monday-Sunday leading up to the Swedish election on 9 September 2018, and a corresponding week exactly half a year prior. On each day of both collection weeks, at a set time, a screen print was manually taken of each start page, showing the three top teasers, i.e., the summaries of the three lead stories, for the 30 hyperlocals included in the study. The 90 articles were digitally accessed and screen printed for digital storage. They were also printed out, identified and categorised for later coding.

The first data selection week yielded the planned 630 articles (30 sites \times 7 days \times 3 articles per day). Prior to the second data collection two hyperlocals in the high media-density cluster had ceased operations. To ensure an accurate and comparable collection, the equivalent analysis units in the low- and moderate-density media clusters were cancelled for both weeks. This study thus includes 1008 articles (24 sites \times 7 days \times 3 articles per day \times 2 weeks). Eventual duplicates of stories (if included among the top three teasers more than once) were included but controlled against all variables again, in case of editorial updates. Each article is a single analysis unit.

Prior to the final coding, a code book with instructions was developed and the coding scheme tested. One trained coder coded the data. The following variables were included: data collection week, media cluster, genre, visual component, main topic, main perspective, journalistic approach, number of identified sources, main source, function of secondary source, dominant political party, and the presence of the following as sources: men, women, youths, anonymous sources, national politicians, regional politicians, local politicians, health care council politicians, journalist/media, inhabitants, municipal/health care employees (civil servants). The coding also included whether the article contained links to social media and if it included a commentary function. The scope of the text-based approach to the analysis units integrated all components of the articles, including headlines, body text, fact boxes, visual elements, photo captions, social media links and commentary fields. The quality of the writing was not assessed in this study, nor were the journalists/authors identified or whether the content consisted of contributed material.

An intracoder reliability test was carried out for a random selection ($n = 48$, one article per hyperlocal media company for each data collection week, corresponding to 5% of the corpus). The intracoder reliability test showed an overall reliability of (Holsti) 0.9.

Results

The results are presented in two sections: first which topics that were covered by the hyperlocals and how media density applies (RQ1 and RQ2); thereafter the findings of the political media content including the variations between off- and on-election (RQ3 and RQ4).

Politics—a Main Topic of Hyperlocals

The main topic was coded according to what dominated the article, particularly in the headline and lead-in. The results show that there is a wide variety of topics, with a clear emphasis on local material (85%) as opposed to regional or national.

When taking into account all the articles collected and coded in this study, regardless of week and media density, the main topic covered is clearly politics—one in five articles (see Table 1 below). A single story can obviously include several issues and topics, and the categories might not always be mutually exclusive. The coding definition for politics included articles about the election, reporting about the local council and the political process, the working environment for politicians, and stories with a clear political content, but not articles limited to potential political implications, or those that may have been proceeded by a political process, or hypothetically could lead to one. Whenever an article had another clear topic it was thus coded accordingly. For example, if the government implemented a taxation change and the article addressed how retirees were impacted, the topic was coded business/economy. This means that the dominance of politics as a topic could have been even greater if the coding process had been less specific.

The second most frequently covered topic is crime. Reports about court rulings or about crime in general, such as statistics, efforts to manage crime and so on, are included in this category. The fifth most common topic, accidents/disasters, accounts for 10% of the total data. This category is frequently labeled “bluelight”, referring to when rescue units such as police, ambulance or fire department respond to an emergency call. Such calls can later

Table 1. Main topics.

Main topic	Percentage total per topic (%)	Percentage off-election (%)	Percentage on-election (%)
Politics/election	20	7	33
Crime	14	17	12
Infrastructure/transport/ population	12	14	9
Culture/entertainment	11	12	11
Accidents/disasters	10	9	12
Business/economy	10	13	8
Sports	6	8	5
Leisure/lifestyle	5	5	4
Environment/climate	3	4	3
Social issues	3	4	2
Health care	2	4	1
Education	2	2	2
Weather	1	1	0
Immigration	0	0	0
Media	0	0	0
Not possible to determine	0	0	0

Note: $N = 1008$.

develop into a criminal investigation, for which the reporting would consequently be coded as crime. The two categories are closely interrelated, and in other studies sometimes joined. If the percentages were combined, this would be the most common topic (see [Table 1](#)).

Articles about infrastructure, transportation or population are also common topics, with a clear affiliation to politics, although not coded as such. These municipal issues are commonly dealt with on a local government level and are of great relevance for inhabitants. This includes matters pertaining to traffic, snow clearing and public areas, for example. Articles about culture and entertainment, which includes events, are almost as frequent. Business and economy share fifth place with accidents/disasters. All other topics are in one-digit percentages, including education, which in earlier studies of local legacy media was one of the dominant subjects, alongside politics (Nygren 2003). Another topic that stands out is immigration, which was widely covered by legacy media during the election year in Sweden, but is so infrequent in this study that articles about immigration do not even add up to 1% of the topics coded. These findings mirror a recent study of local and regional news in Norway, where politics was found to be the second most covered topic after emergencies, and where immigration was also at the bottom of the list (Mathisen and Morlandstø 2019).

As this study includes collections of articles during two separate weeks, the election week and a week exactly half a year prior, the distribution of topics can be compared. During the off-election period, the subject of crime is most common, followed by infrastructure and business. Politics is in seventh place during the off-election period, representing 7% of the articles. During election week, however, politics is clearly dominant, making up a third of all articles.

The articles were also coded according to journalistic approach. Almost nine out of ten articles have a descriptive approach, which is when a journalistic news article focuses on objective reporting as opposed to the subjective evaluation found in a chronicle, analysis or review, which can include personal interpretations by the writer and/or evaluative words. Only 4% of the articles take an interpretive approach, which differs from traditional media, where journalism is increasingly becoming more interpretive (Roosvall and Widholm 2019). The low number of articles with an interpretive approach corresponds well with the limited existence of opinion editorials and debates/ letters to the editor among the articles analysed herein. The coding of the genre reveals that news articles dominate, with 88%. Analysis/opinion editorial/chronicles make up 5% of the material, and debate/letters to the editor the remaining 7%.

Since this study takes into account the presence of other media in the municipalities where the hyperlocals are located, the distribution of topics can further be analysed according to low-, moderate- or high-media density (see [Table 2](#)). Here we can note that politics is in the top three topics for all three media-density categories, although it is more common among the hyperlocals in areas of low-media density than in the other two. Crime is not in the top three in the low media-density category, as opposed to the two other media clusters.

An analysis of traditional media coverage (Nord, Nygren, and Volny 2019) shows “fairly substantial differences” between different regions and municipalities. The disparities appear to depend on a combination of media structure and political context. For

Table 2. Top 3 main topics according to media density.

Media density	Top 3 main topics	Percentage of articles (%)
Low	Politics	26
	Culture/entertainment	17
	Infrastructure	14
Medium	Crime	24
	Politics	15
	Accidents/disasters	15
High	Politics	18
	Crime	16
	Culture/entertainment	13

Note: $N = 1008$.

example, freesheets can be important in places where other media does not exist. Their study does not include hyperlocal media, due to the selection of areas for the study. The table below thus provides insight into how hyperlocal media prioritise politics in different media density contexts.

Dramatic Increase of Political Articles During Election

198 of the 1008 articles in total, 20% of the total analysis units, had politics as the main topic. The vast majority were published during election week, as [Table 1](#) showed. This study also examined whether there are any differences between low-, moderate- and high-media density, particularly when it comes to political articles.

Since there is an equal number of hyperlocals in each media-density category, and an equal number of analysis units in each category, the number of political articles can be compared. [Table 3](#) shows that regardless of time of year, hyperlocals in low-media density, where there is little other media presence, proportionally prioritise political material more than the other two categories. The content analysis found that it is more common for political articles than for other topics that hyperlocals provide space in the news column for letters to the editor. All three categories of media density increased the number of political articles during the election week compared to the normal news week. Similar escalated election monitoring is also seen in legacy media (Nord, Nygren, and Volny 2019).

Dominant Political Party

It is of democratic relevance that different voices are heard in the political debate. The dominant party refers to which party with a mandate in the Swedish parliament is given dominance in the text. If two or more are given equal presence, the article is coded as “not possible to determine”. This study shows that among the articles with politics as

Table 3. Number of political articles according to media density off- and on-election.

Media density	Total	Off-election	On-election
Low	88	17	71
Medium	51	5	46
High	59	12	47

Note: $N = 198$.

the main topic, more than one in four articles actually do not mention a party at all. These may be articles about the upcoming election, for example. In another 25% of the articles it is impossible to determinate which political party dominates. This may apply when several parties are mentioned but no particular party is given more space in comparison to the others. This leaves about half of the 198 political articles distributed among the parties with a mandate in Swedish parliament, in addition to local parties.

As Table 4 shows, the Social Democrats is most often the dominant party in the political articles, which can be explained by the fact that it was the main party ruling the government leading up to the election in September 2018. The political representation in the articles follows the distribution of mandates in the Swedish government relatively evenly (*Valresultat 2014*). The two largest parties most often appear as the dominant party, but after that there is an interesting discrepancy. The Sweden Democrats, which was the third largest party in the 2014 election and substantially increased their mandates from 49 to 62 in the 2018 election (*Valresultat 2018*), was less often the dominant party in hyperlocal articles than the Liberals, which had 19 and 20 mandates in the two respective elections. The two most dominant political parties are also most frequently referenced in local legacy media during the election (Nord, Nygren, and Volny 2019). As in this study, the researchers (Nord, Nygren, and Volny 2019) found that the Sweden Democrats were not included in the local reporting in parity with being the third largest party nationally. Interestingly, compared to the other parties, Sweden Democrats dominate on Facebook, where local groups can represent a valid complement to the local media, providing information and opinion exchange in an arena for inhabitants, politicians and other actors—particularly in areas that lack media coverage.

This study reveals that the political party representation differs off- and on-election. In an electoral context, the two most common options are actually “Not possible to determine” and “No party” in the article. This could indicate that hyperlocals include several parties in the political articles nearer the election, or that the political coverage tends to be more about the electoral process. During election week, all parties with a mandate in the Swedish parliament were sometimes the dominant party, whereas during off-election the Left party, local parties and the Sweden Democrats received no coverage at all.

Table 4. Dominant political party in political articles.

Political party	Number of articles (percentage of total)	Number of articles off-election	Number of articles on-election
No party in the article	52 (26%)	8	44
Not possible to determine	48 (24%)	1	47
Social Democrats	37 (19%)	12	25
Moderate Party	16 (8%)	3	13
Liberals	11 (6%)	5	6
Sweden Democrats	9 (5%)	0	9
Christian Democrats	7 (4%)	2	5
Local party	6 (3%)	0	6
Green Party	5 (3%)	2	3
Left Party	4 (2%)	0	4
Centre Party	3 (2%)	1	2
Total	198 (100%)	34	164

Note: $N = 198$.

Sources

The representation of sources is naturally of democratic importance. The media would be providing an unfair picture if certain groups were favoured while others were excluded. This dataset is therefore extensively coded when it comes to sources.

Aside from “Dominant political party”, the articles are coded with an additional 14 variables in direct relation to sources: main source, number of sources, function of secondary source, and whether any of the following appear as sources: anonymous sources, national politicians, regional politicians, local politicians, health care council politicians, journalist/media, inhabitants, municipal/health care employees (civil servants), men, women and youth. The purpose of this is to obtain a picture of who is able to participate in the local public sphere.

Eighty-eight per cent of political articles in this study contain identified sources. The use of one source is by far most common, which earlier studies also have shown (Nygren 2003). More than half of the stories rely on one source, 16% of the articles use two sources, and 19% of the political articles have three or more sources. The function of the secondary source is coded in this study as either corroboratory (in broad agreement with the primary source), contextual (adding further information to that provided by the first-quoted source), oppositional (expressing disagreement with the first source), or not possible to determine/not applicable. The analysis shows that a secondary source is most commonly oppositional among political articles. This may be indicative of a journalistic ambition to allow both sides a voice.

More than half of the political articles use a politician or political party as the main source, but does that differ between on- and off-election times? How are the main sources distributed? The results reveal that there is a big difference. During a normal news week, there are only three main source types for political articles: politician/political party, authority or expert—in addition to no source at all. During the election week, the main sources are more diverse. Politicians or political parties account for 50%, and the remainder is divided between journalist/media, organisations, authorities, businesses and inhabitants, in that order, as Table 5 below shows.

This study shows that local politicians are by far more common than regional or national politicians for political articles, with over 93%. These results mirror other studies of legacy media. Traditionally, local government has been considered the single most important news source for local newspapers in Sweden (Tenor and Nygren 2017).

Table 5. Main sources in political articles.

Main source	Total	Off-election	On-election
Politician/political party	100	19	81
Journalist/media	25	1	24
No source	24	7	17
Authority	19	7	12
Organisation	16	0	16
Corporation/business	8	0	8
Inhabitant	6	0	6
Expert	0	0	0
Anonymous	0	0	0
Total	198	34	164

Note: *N* = 198.

Local politicians tend, in fact, to dominate as sources for most issues in municipalities (Nygren 2003). Politicians can naturally be used as sources for a variety of matters, not only when the topic is politics. The Swedish findings correlate with a study in the United Kingdom (O'Neill and O'Connor 2008), where politicians and government officials are found to be the most frequently cited local sources, with local businesses coming second, community activists much less often, and very few members of the public cited at all. The study by O'Neill and O'Connor (2008) shows that local journalism in general is mostly reactive and often based on single sources. A new study, the biggest content analysis of Swedish news media ever, with 20 000 articles, shows that spokespeople and PR professionals have become three times more common in media since 2007 (Truedson and Karlsson 2019).

It is necessary for the media to include sources other than politicians and political parties in political articles, in order to provide a wide representation in the local public sphere. As a journalistic source the category "inhabitant" is applied when someone is affected by an occurrence, or speaks on behalf of their role as such. From a democratic perspective, it is important that inhabitants are included in journalistic reporting. This is one way for politicians to learn how community members feel about important issues and it can put decisions in a valuable context. This study shows that inhabitants only appear in 5% of the political stories, compared to 9% in all articles. The fact that inhabitants are less present as sources than politicians is nothing new, and has also been found in studies of legacy media (Johansson 1998; Nygren 2001, 2003). The use of civil servants and health care council politicians as sources in hyperlocal political articles is also low. Of the sources coded, there is one category that hardly exists: youth.

The last two coded variables for sources concern gender. Proportional gender representation in media overall is skewed, as studies have repeatedly shown. In 2015 the proportion was 69% versus 31% for men and women in Sweden (Edström and Jacobsson 2015). New data shows that women are now seen more often, but there are still almost two men for each woman in the media (Hirdman 2019). Not surprisingly, this study shows that men also appear more often than women as sources in hyperlocal news as well. Men and women are proportionally represented in political articles at 65% to 35%. The results further reveal that it is more common for women to appear in articles where male sources *also* exist than the other way around.

Two thirds of the political articles contain links to social media, for sharing or commenting, whereas it is a bit higher for articles on all other topics: 81%. It is worth noting that a recent mapping (Jangdal 2019) showed that amongst the vast options of platforms today, the hyperlocal choices are concentrated on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and only about half of the digital independent hyperlocals in Sweden have accounts on all three.

As far as commentary functions, where readers can participate in the discussion in the local public sphere, 29% of the political articles have a commentary field and the figure is slightly higher for all other topics: 33%. Considering that about half of the hyperlocals in Sweden have a commentary field option on their web sites (Jangdal 2019) this could indicate that hyperlocals are selective in which stories they allow readers to comment on. Despite the digital development, it is primarily during personal meetings that inhabitants discuss local politics with local representatives (Nord, Nygren, and Volny 2019).

Discussion and Conclusions

RQ1 asked what type of digital media content the independent hyperlocal media located in Sweden prioritise. The results show that they offer a diverse range of topics, providing inhabitants with a wide variety of information about what is happening in their communities, and with a clear emphasis on local material as opposed to regional or national material, which shows that they stay true to their very local focus. Hyperlocals are by no means alone in prioritising local content, although there is a higher proportion of local news compared to all other media forms in Sweden (Jangdal 2019). Several regional and national traditional media outlets in Sweden, with a wider geographic focus, have also increased their attention on local markets, which may be partly explained by new media subsidy schemes to strengthen local journalism (“New Media Subsidy Scheme Suggested in Sweden”, 2018). Another possible explanation is that local information is a competition advantage and a way for media outlets to attract unique readers.

Politics was found to be the most common topic overall. With an orientation towards producing news about local politics and civil society, hyperlocals are relevant to inhabitants and have the ability to provide them with important political information. This is vital, as previous studies (Nord, Nygren, and Volny 2019) have shown that the political issues which involve people the most are those that are determined at the local level. The hyperlocals thus appear to fulfil the vital task of informing about local government and affairs, which is one of three main tasks assigned to the media in a democratic society, in addition to scrutinising power and acting as a forum for debate (Weibull, Wadbring, and Ohlsson 2018). The fact that hyperlocals prioritise politics is a key factor when assessing their democratic value. Earlier studies (Jangdal 2019; Leckner, Tenor, and Nygren 2017) have shown that hyperlocal operators value their democratic contribution highly, and assess the extent of their coverage of municipality and local politics as among the top three most common topics (Leckner, Tenor, and Nygren 2017). It is interesting to note that the findings regarding politics, crime and immigration are almost identical to a similar study in Norway by Mathisen and Morlandstø (2019).

Since this study measures political content through a quantitative content analysis, rather than through qualitative interviews or surveys, the findings are more reliable, as self-assessment could potentially contain blurred lines between motivation and aims on one side and actual measures on the other. It is therefore encouraging from a democratic viewpoint that this study strengthens earlier indications of hyperlocal democratic contribution. This study hence *confirms* earlier indications and evaluations. The democratic potential of a media outlet partly depends on the scale of coverage of politics and civic life, and consequently how much their readers know. The wider the editorial scope, and the more diverse the voices, the more democratic is the content.

As noted in the section Method and Material, who *produces* hyperlocal content was not assessed in this study. Since there are many different types of hyperlocal operations—some more professional and some run by idealistic individuals with no journalistic experience—the type and quality of the published content obviously varies. By using a standardised sampling method, however, variations among the hyperlocal operations are accounted for.

RQ2 examined whether hyperlocal content varies depending on media density in the municipality—low, moderate or high—in order to gauge whether competition appears to

be of significance. In municipalities with low media presence, politics was in fact more common than in moderate and high media-density areas. This suggests that hyperlocals tend to prioritise politics even more when nobody else, or very few others, do. A potential explanation could be that the coverage of politics increases the less competition there is in the area. These smaller media outlets may thus be more grassroots media in that sense.

RQ3 examined which actors were able to participate in the *political* media content, and the extent to which those stories include a forum for debate, as diversity of sources is another way of assessing democratic value. It is very relevant in today's diverse media landscape to study whose voices are given access to the mediated agenda of political articles, when legacy media is centralising and reducing the number of editorial newsrooms, and new media actors provide alternative content.

The results show that the presence of politicians and political parties fairly evenly match the distribution of mandates in the Swedish government, which suggests proportional representation in coverage, with the exception of the underrepresentation of the right-wing Sweden Democrats. It is very interesting to note that the same applies in local legacy media, as found by researchers Nord, Nygren, and Volny (2019).

In addition to the editorial sources, the study also found that almost a third of political articles include a commentary field, allowing anyone to participate in the public discussion. Two thirds of the political articles contain links to social media, where the matter could also be discussed. The hyperlocals thus provide ample forums for debate. This is an important finding in today's diverse media landscape, where the roles of media makers and media audiences are changing. The Swedish findings mirror research in the UK, where Williams and Harte (2016), as previously mentioned, discovered that members of the public have more of a platform in hyperlocal content than in many mainstream local newspapers.

RQ4 asked whether the *political* content varies during on- and off-election periods. The results showed that there is a big difference between a normal news week and an election week. During the off-election period, the topic politics is the seventh topic of all editorial categories, whereas it totally dominates during election week, with 33% of the coverage. This shows that hyperlocals in this study are able to boost their political content during an election. This is yet another aspect of democratic contribution which has not previously been examined for these media outlets, and as such provides an important empirical finding.

This study also compared sources between a normal news week and an election week. Although politicians or political parties dominated as the main source in both cases, the results show that more diverse sources are invited to partake in political articles in an electoral context. There is thus less of an elite-oriented pattern as far as sources are concerned, during intense political times. This is of democratic importance, as various voices need to be heard in the political debate.

To conclude, this study makes an empirical contribution concerning hyperlocals, since most of the previous studies have centred around sustainability, and very few have looked at what they actually produce. This new knowledge about hyperlocal content is valuable information in order to assess their contribution, particularly in an electoral context. Their democratic role varies of course, not only due to content and sources, but also by their geographical location and adjacent media market. The findings are internationally relevant, as recent research (Cook and Bakker 2019) has found that hyperlocals in different countries face more or less the same issues.

A future study could potentially look at the quality of hyperlocal material—for example to what extent they engage in investigative reporting, and how critical and objective their reporting is—and discuss the concept of what journalism is today, and what role the hyperlocals play in the media ecology. The public perception and interaction with hyperlocals are also of relevance to further study. This could potentially add to the understanding of how local media, with the help of the surrounding community, could remain sustainable and relevant in local markets.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the Fru Berta Kamprads Stiftelse, Sweden [grant number 20160046].

ORCID

Lottie Jangdal  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8591-5108>

References

- Anderson, Chris W. 2016. "News Ecosystems." In *The Sage Handbook of Digital Journalism*, edited by Tamara Witschge, C. W. Anderson, David Domingo, and Alfred Hermida, 410–423. London: Sage. Reference. doi:10.4135/9781473957909.n28.
- Baekgaard, Martin, Carsten Jensen, Peter B. Mortensen, and Søren Serritzlew. 2014. "Local News Media and Voter Turnout." *Local Government Studies* 40 (4): 1–15. doi:10.1080/03003930.2013.834253.
- Barnett, Steven, and Judith Townend. 2015. "Plurality, Policy and the Local." *Journalism Practice* 9 (3): 332–349. doi:10.1080/17512786.2014.943930.
- Bergström, Annika, and Ingela Wadbring. 2019. "Människors Mediekonsumtion [People's Media Consumption]." In *På Väg Mot Medievärlden 2030*, 291–312. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Chadha, Monica, and Summer Harlow. 2018. "Bottom Lines and Deadlines: Examining Local Digital News Startups' Content Across Different Revenue-Earning Sites." *Journalism Practice* 13 (6): 723–741. doi:10.1080/17512786.2018.1551729.
- Cook, Clare, and Piet Bakker. 2019. "Viable, Sustainable or Resilient? Understanding the Hyperlocal Business System." *Nordicom Review* 40 (2): 31–49. doi:10.2478/nor-2019-0032.
- Cook, Clare, Kathryn Geels, and Piet Bakker. 2016. *Hyperlocal Revenues in the UK and Europe: Mapping the Road to Sustainability and Resilience*. www.nesta.org.uk.
- Dahl, Robert A. 2002. *Demokratin och dess Antagonister* [Democracy and Its Antagonists]. Stockholm: Ordfront i samarbete med Demokratiakademien.
- DeRienzo, Matt, and Dylan Smith. 2016. *If Gannett Buys Tronc and Cuts, a New Crop of Grassroots Sites Could Follow*. <https://www.poynter.org/newsletters/2016/if-gannett-buys-tronc-and-cuts-a-new-crop-of-grassroots-sites-could-follow/>.
- Deuze, Mark. 2017. "Considering a Possible Future for Digital Journalism." *Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación* 8 (1): 9–18. doi:10.14198/MEDCOM2017.8.1.1.
- Downie Jr, Leonard, and Michael Schudson. 2009. "The Reconstruction of American Journalism." *Columbia Journalism Review* 48 (4): 28–51.
- Edström, Maria, and Josefine Jacobsson. 2015. *Räkna med Kvinnor* [Count on the Women]. https://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2015/national/Sweden.pdf.

- Facht, Ulrika, and Jonas Ohlsson. 2019. *Mediesverige 2019* [Media Sweden 2019]. Göteborg: Nordicom.
- Firmstone, Julie, and Stephen Coleman. 2014. "The Changing Role of the Local News Media in Enabling Citizens to Engage in Local Democracies." *Journalism Practice* 8 (5): 596–606. doi:10.1080/17512786.2014.895516.
- Freedman, Des, Natalie Fenton, Monika Metykova, and Justin Schlosberg. 2010. *Meeting the News Needs of Local Communities*. <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/14353>.
- Gandour, Ricardo. 2016. "Journalism and Democracy Facing Common Risks and Challenges." *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies* 5 (1): 71–77. doi:10.1386/ajms.5.1.71_1.
- Gao, Pengjie, Chang Lee, and Dermot Murphy. 2019. "Financing Dies in Darkness? The Impact of Newspaper Closures on Public Finance." *Journal of Financial Economics*, doi:10.1016/j.jfineco.2019.06.003.
- Harte, David, Rachel Howells, and Andy Williams. 2019. *Hyperlocal Journalism: The Decline of Local Newspapers and the Rise of Online Community News*. London: Routledge.
- Hirdman, Anja. 2019. "Kön, Källor och Ämnen i Nyhetsjournalistiken [Gender, Sources and Topics in News Journalism]." In *Nyheter – Allt Mer en Tolkningsfråga*, edited by Lars Truedson and Michael Karlsson, 86–98. Stockholm: Institutet för mediestudier. News – More a Matter of Interpretation.
- Hujanen, Jaana, Katja Lehtisaari, Carl-Gustav Lindén, and Mikko Grönlund. 2019. "Emerging Forms of Hyperlocal Media." *Nordicom Review* 40 (2): 101–114. doi:10.2478/nor-2019-0029.
- Institutet för mediestudier [The institute for media studies]. 2019, June. 742 Redaktioner Finns i Landets Kommuner [742 Newsrooms Exist in the Municipalities of the Country]. <https://kommundatabas.mediestudier.se> 2019-06-12.
- Jangdal, Lottie. 2019. "Local Democracy and the Media: Can Hyperlocals Fill the Gap?" *Nordicom Review* 40 (2): 69–83. doi:10.2478/nor-2019-0027.
- Jangdal, Lottie, Asta Cepaite Nilsson, and Elisabeth Stúr. 2019. "Hyperlocal Journalism and Pr: Diversity in Roles and Interactions." *OBS - Observatorio* 13 (1): 1–20. doi:10.15847/obsOBS13120191278.
- Johansson, Bengt. 1998. *Nyheter Mitt Ibland Oss: Kommunala Nyheter, Personlig Erfarenhet och Lokal Opinionsbildning* [News among Us: Municipal News, Personal Experience and Local Opinion Advocacy]. Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet.
- Karlsson, Michael, and Erika Hellekant Rowe. 2019. "Local Journalism When Journalists Leave Town: Probing the News Gap that Hyperlocal Media Are Supposed to Fill." *Nordicom Review* 40 (2): 15–29. doi:10.2478/nor-2019-0025.
- Kurpius, David D., Emily T. Metzgar, and Karen M Rowley. 2010. "Sustaining Hyperlocal Media." *Journalism Studies* 11 (3): 359–376. doi:10.1080/14616700903429787.
- Leckner, Sara, and Gunnar Nygren. 2016. "Det Lokala och Hyperlokala Medielandskapet: Nyhetspublicering Utanför de Etablerade Medierna [The Local and Hyperlocal Media Landscape: News Production Outside of Established Media]." In *Mediestudiers årsbok – tillståndet för journalistiken 2015/2016* [Mediestudier's Year Book 2015/2016: The State of Journalism], edited by Lars Truedson, 42–85. Stockholm: Institutet för mediestudier.
- Leckner, Sara, Carina Tenor, and Gunnar Nygren. 2017. "What About the Hyperlocals?" *Journalism Practice* 13 (1): 68–89. doi:10.1080/17512786.2017.1392254.
- Mathisen, Birgit Røe. 2010. *Lokaljournalistikk. Blind Patriotisme Eller Kritisk Korrektiv?* Kristiansand: IJ-forlaget.
- Mathisen, Birgit Røe. 2013. *Gladsaker Og Suksesshistorier: En Sosiologisk Analyse av Lokal Næringslivsjournalistikk i Spenning Mellom Lokalpatriotisme Og Granskningsoppdrag* [Happy Things and Success Stories]. Bodö: Universitetet i Nordland.
- Mathisen, Birgit Røe, and Lisbeth Morlandstø. 2019. *Blindsoner Og Mangfold - en Studie av Journalistikken i Lokale Og Regionale Medier*. Stamsund: Orkana forlag.
- Metzgar, Emily T., David D. Kurpius, and Karen M Rowley. 2011. "Defining Hyperlocal Media: Proposing a Framework for Discussion." *New Media & Society* 13 (5): 772–787. doi:10.1177/1461444810385095.
- New Media Subsidy Scheme Suggested in Sweden. 2018. <https://www.nordicom.gu.se/en/latest/news/new-media-subsidy-scheme-suggested-sweden>.

- Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis. 2015a. "Introduction: The Uncertain Future of Local Journalism." In *Local Journalism: The Decline of Newspapers and the Rise of Digital Media*, edited by Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, 1–25. London/New York: I.B. Tauris & Colorado.
- Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis. 2015b. "Local Newspapers as Keystone Media: The Increased Importance of Diminished Newspapers for Local Political Information Environments." In *Local Journalism: The Decline of Newspapers and the Rise of Digital Media*, edited by Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, 51–72. London: I.B. Tauris & Colorado.
- Nord, Lars, Gunnar Nygren, and Sanna Volny. 2019. *Medierna och Lokalvalen 2018: Gamla Aktörer På Nya Digitala Arenor* [The Media and Local Elections 2018: Old Actors on New Digital Arenas]. Stockholm: Södertörns högskola, Mittuniversitetet.
- Nord, Lars, and Jesper Strömbäck. 2012. "Demokrati, Medier och Journalistik [Democracy, Media and Journalism]." In *Medierna och Demokratin* [Media and Democracy], edited by Lars Nord and Jesper Strömbäck, 2nd ed., 9–45. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Nygren, Gunnar. 2001. *Medier och Medborgare i Den Digitala Kommunen: En Undersökning om Lokal Politisk Kommunikation i Medier och På Kommunala Webbplatser* [Media and Citizens in the Digital Municipality: A Study About Local Political Communication in Media and on Civic Web Sites]. Stockholms universitet, Stockholm.
- Nygren, Gunnar. 2003. *Granskning med Förhinder: Lokaltidningarnas Granskning i Fyra Kommuner* [Scrutiny with Prevention: The Local Newspapers' Scrutiny in Four Municipalities]. Rapportserie nr. 4 ed. Sundsvall: Demokratiinstitutet.
- Nygren, Gunnar. 2018. "En Komplicerad Lokal Medieekologi: Facebook Den Nya Lokala Offentligheten? [A Complicated Local Media Ecology: Facebook the New Local Public]." In *Sprickor i Fasaden* [Cracks in the Facade], edited by Ulrika Andersson, Anders Carlander, Elina Lindgren, and Maria Oskarson, 195–212. Göteborg: SOM-institutet.
- Nygren, Gunnar. 2019. "Local Media Ecologies: Social Media Taking the Lead." *Nordicom Review* 40 (2): 51–68. doi:10.2478/nor-2019-0026.
- Nygren, Gunnar, and Kajsa Althén. 2014. *Landsbygd i Medieskugga – Nedmonteringen av Den Lokala Journalistiken och Bilden av Landsbygden i Dagens Nyheter* [Countryside in Media Shadow]. Stockholm. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:761560/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.
- Nygren, Gunnar, and Sara Leckner. 2016. "Facebook och Hyperlokalt i de Lokala Mediernas Ekosystem [Facebook and Hyperlocals in the Eco System of Local Media]." In *Ekvilibrium*, edited by Jonas Ohlsson, Henrik Oscarsson, and Maria Solevid, 329–348. Göteborg: SOM-institutet.
- Nygren, Gunnar, and Carina Tenor. 2019. "Vita Fäckar och Svarta Hål i det Lokala Medielandskapet [White Spots and Black Holes in the Local Media Landscape]." In *På Väg mot Medievärlden 2030* [On the Way to the Media World 2030] (6:1 ed.). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Ohlsson, Jonas. 2015. *The Nordic Media Market 2015: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden*. Göteborg: Nordicom.
- O'Neill, Deirdre, and Catherine O'Connor. 2008. "The Passive Journalist: How Sources Dominate Local News." *Journalism Practice* 2 (3): 487–500. doi:10.1080/17512780802281248.
- Pavlik, John V. 2013. "Trends in New Media Research: A Critical Review of Recent Scholarship." *Sociology Compass* 7 (1): 1–12. doi:10.1111/soc4.12004.
- Perrin, William. 2017. *Hyperlocal Blog Can Help Hold Power to Account in Tower Block Blaze*. <https://talkaboutlocal.org.uk/hyperlocal-blog-can-help-hold-power-to-account-in-tower-block-blaze/>.
- Radcliffe, Damian. 2012. *Here and Now: UK Hyperlocal Media Today*. www.nesta.org.uk.
- Radcliffe, Damian. 2015. *Where Are We Now? UK Hyperlocal Media and Community Journalism in 2015*. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3045571>.
- Roosvall, Anna, and Andreas Widholm. 2019. "Allt Mer Tolkande Journalistik [More Interpretive Journalism]." In *Nyheter – Allt Mer en Tolkningsfråga*, edited by Lars Truedson and Michael Karlsson, 16–31. Stockholm: Institutet för mediestudier. News – More a Matter of Interpretation.
- Shaker, Lee. 2009. "Citizens' Local Political Knowledge and the Role of Media Access." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 86 (4): 809–826. doi:10.1177/107769900908600406.
- Shaker, Lee. 2014. "Dead Newspapers and Citizens' Civic Engagement." *Political Communication* 31 (1): 131–148. doi:10.1080/10584609.2012.762817.

- Tenor, Carina, and Gunnar Nygren. 2017. "Local Public Communication Filling the Gap for a Vanishing Local Media. A Dilemma for Democracy in Sweden." In *Voice of the Locality: Local Media and Local Audience*, edited by Lenka Waschková Císařová, 215–237. Brno: Masaryk University.
- Truedson, Lars, and Michael Karlsson, eds. 2019. *Nyheter – Allt Mer en Tolkningsfråga* [News – More a Matter of Interpretation]. Stockholm: Institutet för mediestudier.
- TU – Medier i Sverige. 2018. *Marknadsstruktur* [Market Structure]. <https://tu.se/mediefakta/branschfakta/struktur/>.
- Turner, Jerome. 2015. "Good Dog, Bad Dog: Exploring Audience Uses and Attitudes to Hyperlocal Community News Media Through the Prism of Banal Pet Stories." *Anthropological Notebook* 21 (3): 39–50.
- Valresultat. 2014. <https://www.val.se/valresultat/riksdag-landsting-och-kommun/2014/valresultat.html>.
- Valresultat. 2018. <https://www.val.se/valresultat/riksdag-landsting-och-kommun/2018/valresultat.html>.
- Wadbring, Ingela, and Lottie Jangdal. 2019. "Det Journalistiska Innehållet [The Journalistic Content]." In *På Väg Mot Medievärlden 2030*, 189–210. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Waschková Císařová, Lenka. 2017. "Voice of the Locality." In *Voice of the Locality: Local Media and Local Audience*, edited by Lenka Waschková Císařová, 19–38. Prague: Masaryk University.
- Weibull, Lennart, Ingela Wadbring, and Jonas Ohlsson. 2018. *Det Svenska Medielandskapet: Traditionella och Sociala Medier i Samspel och Konkurrens* [The Swedish Media Landscape: Traditional and Social Media in Interplay and Competition]. Stockholm: Liber.
- Williams, Andy, Steven Barnett, Dave Harte, and Judith Townend. 2014. *The State of Hyperlocal Community News in the UK: Findings from a Survey of Practitioners*. <https://hyperlocalsurvey.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/hyperlocal-community-news-in-the-uk-2014.pdf>.
- Williams, Andy, and Dave Harte. 2016. "Hyperlocal News." In *The Sage Handbook of Digital Journalism*, edited by Tamara Witschge, C. W. Anderson, David Domingo, and Alfred Hermida, 280–293. London: Sage. Reference. doi:10.4135/9781473957909.n19.
- Williams, Andy, Dave Harte, and Jerome Turner. 2015. "The Value of UK Hyperlocal Community News." *Digital Journalism* 3 (5): 680–703. doi:10.1080/21670811.2014.965932.