Media and Bureaucracy: Investigating Media Awareness Amongst Civil Servants

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Abstract

Scholars claim that civil servants are increasingly having to engage in media management and be aware of how events are presented in the press, with this media awareness being said to threaten civil servants' traditional bureaucratic values. In this article, we argue that media awareness is unevenly spread in public bureaucracies, and rather is contingent on individual and organizational characteristics. More specifically, we present the hypotheses that media awareness depends on the amount of media related work, the amount of media attention on the organization in which they work, as well as the civil servants' fundamental views on the role of the media in society. To test the hypotheses, the article utilizes a large-N survey of civil servants in Norwegian ministries and agencies. The results show that the vast majority of civil servants care about how issues appear in the press. Further on, we find that civil servants' media awareness coexists with traditional bureaucratic values, offering some relief to scholars who fear the disruptive effects of the media in public administration. As the hypotheses suggest, we find that this media awareness is linked to civil servants' actual media-related work. However, the analysis shows that civil servants working in organizations with a lot of media attention are, in fact, are less aware of the media.

Introduction

In the present age of governance, the media plays a prominent role in shaping policy agendas and governance processes (Peters 2016; Cook 2005). The importance of the media is said to affect civil servants, as their political leaders are often driven by it (Cook 2005), their organisations focus on strategic communication and branding (Eshuis and Klijn 2012), and civil servants and public bureaucracies might be the subject of media scrutiny (Jacobs & Wonneberger 2017). The increasing emphasis on media and strategic communication in public bureaucracies potentially challenges traditional bureaucratic values such as impartiality, legality and loyalty (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Jørgensen & Rutgers 2014). The few studies that explicitly discuss how communication practices challenge bureaucratic values tend to focus on how such practices disturb the public-service ethos. From this declensionist perspective, communication work and media awareness threaten to crowd out established bureaucratic values. Principles of accuracy, impartiality and neutrality – the cornerstones of bureaucratic integrity and trustworthiness – are said to be discarded to the advantage of political opportunism, spin, promotion and branding of political leaders in the press (Aucoin 2012; Gaber 1999; Humphreys 2005; Mulgan 2007; Ward 2007). Although these studies

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make strong rhetorical claims, their empirical foundations rest on single case studies of scandals and misconduct. This makes it difficult to assess whether media awareness is actually pervasive in public bureaucracies.

In this article, we investigate media awareness (Kepplinger 2007) amongst civil servants. More specifically, we address the following questions: First, how aware actually are civil servants actually of the media? Second, how does this media awareness relate to traditional bureaucratic values? Third, what explains the differences in media awareness between civil servants? We identify and address three main factors: the amount of media-related work, the media attention on the organisation, and the respondents' fundamental views on the role of the media in democratic societies.

In investigating these questions, we surveyed more than 3,000 civil servants from various Norwegian ministries and agencies. The survey asked a wide range of questions dealing with media practices, views and the professional values of Norwegian civil servants.

In the following section, we conceptualise how media awareness might relate to established bureaucratic values, and we offer possible explanations for differences in this awareness between civil servants. We then describe the research context, data and methods. The results section shows that media awareness coexists with traditional bureaucratic values and that media awareness is related to civil servants' media-related work and their fundamental views of the media. In the final section, we discuss the implications of these findings for the literatures on values in public bureaucracies, mediatisation and reputation management.

Media Awareness and Its Relationship With Established Bureaucratic Values

Kepplinger (2007) argues that researchers often fail to adequately consider the media's influence on decision-makers such as politicians and bureaucrats. According to Kepplinger, decision-makers are aware of the type and amount of media reports, and have intentions in relation to how it can be used (looking at potential risks and opportunities). This processing of media content, or 'media awareness', in turn affect decision-making-behaviour. The impact media reports have on subjects is called the reciprocal effects of mass media. According to Kepplinger, '[t]he more prominent the outlets are, the more reports about an issue get published, and the more subjects are involved in the topics being discussed, the more intensively subjects will use the media coverage' (2007, 11). Kepplinger's concept of media awareness and reciprocal effects has been utilised in studies of communication professionals (Jacobs & Wonneberger 2017), corporate employees (Korn & Einwiller 2013), and citizens (Kepplinger & Glaab 2007), but not of civil servants.

Civil servants' responsiveness to public opinion has been studied in the literature on public values. This scholarship specifies a large number of values, different conceptions of what is desirable in giving direction to people's thoughts and actions, and guiding behaviour related to their professional roles (Jørgensen 2006; Rutgers 2015). In bureaucracies, such values have traditionally been connected to core Weberian ideals such as impartiality, legality and loyalty

(Jørgensen & Bozeman 2007; Jørgensen & Rutgers 2014). In recent decades, trends inspired by NPM have brought values such as effectiveness and efficiency to the fore in public administrations (Hood 1991; Jørgensen 2006). Political loyalty is also a classic value in the Weberian mould, although civil servants are no longer loyal only to their political principals but also to 'colleagues, the public good, administrators' consciences, administrators' organizations, the law, and the organizations' clients' (De Graaf 2011, 286). In a sense, their loyalties mirror their external environment and signify which external constituencies are really salient. Jørgensen and Bozeman use the term 'responsiveness,' implying that 'the public administration complies more actively with public demands (2007). Van Thiel and van der Wal (2010) use 'responsiveness' to denote acting in accordance with the preferences of citizens and customers.

Although civil servants' *media awareness* has seldom been studied directly, several scholars argue that the media has become a more prominent factor in administrative life. According to Bovens, '[p]ublic managers [now] have to be constantly alert to the media, because the agenda of the media determines in large part the agenda of their political principals' (2005, 203). Some scholars also claim that civil servants themselves are involved increasingly directly in the branding and advertising of their political leaders (Aucoin 2012; Gaber 1999; Humphreys 2005; Mulgan 2007; Ward 2007). The existing literature on reputation management underlines how public bureaucracies engage in media management and strategic communication for their own sake. Public sector organisations build, maintain and protect their reputations in order to accrue autonomy and discretion from politicians, generate public support and recruit and retain valued employees (Carpenter 2001; Carpenter & Krause 2012; Maor 2014). Overall, this suggests it has become natural and imperative for bureaucrats to attend to the media (Schillemans 2012; Thorbjørnsrud et al. 2014).

How the media has impacted political and bureaucratic institutions has been more explicitly studied in the now expansive literature on mediatisation. Here, different societal institutions are shown to adapt to a media logic (e.g., Altheide & Snow 1979; Schulz 2004; Strömbäck 2008; Hjarvard 2008), signifying specific rules, norms and values. In this process, the media logic competes with established organisational guidelines and influences the actions of individuals (Schrott 2009, 42). The media impact has been described as a process of 'colonisation,' where external media logic colonises other institutional spheres (Meyer 2002). In a sense, the foundation of the extant mediatisation literature has been built on the belief that mediatisation eliminates traditional values, processes and ideas (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999).

Transferred to the study of civil servants' values and considerations, this process would lead to a replacement or substitution (Schulz 2004), in which traditional public values are substituted or crowded out by the increased media awareness of civil servants. However, to what extent this happens is an empirical question. In Figure 1, we present other possible relationships between traditional bureaucratic values and media awareness.

Figure 1. The relationship between media awareness and traditional values

Media awareness

		Weak	Strong
Traditional values	Strong	Lack of media awareness	Addition of media awareness
	Weak	Neglect of all values	Substitution of media awareness

First of all, civil servants might display no media awareness (upper-left box). In this situation, civil servants retain their traditional values and do not include media considerations in their value set. Second, and as elaborated above, media awareness might replace and substitute traditional values (lower-right box). Here, civil servants not only embrace media considerations: They are so strong that they overshadow traditional values. The third possibility is addition (upper-right box). In this case, civil servants have added media awareness to their existing set of bureaucratic values, and these values coexist. This is what Schulz (2004) refers to as 'amalgamation.' The situation of both weak traditional values and low media awareness (lower-left box) suggests the neglect of values and seems less probable, since we would expect all civil servants to always have some set of values that guide their behaviour in public bureaucracies.

Hypothesising Explanations of Media Awareness

Values and norms are rarely distributed evenly within an organisation. Here we elaborate on different factors (functional, organisational and perceptual) that might affect the relative importance of media awareness.

First of all, we expect media awareness to be related to the work of civil servants. Several studies have shown how the type of work is an important explanatory factor for various perceptions of civil servants (Christensen & Lægreid 2008a). Governments in several countries use resources for communication and professionalise their communication work (Heffernan 2006; Strömbäck & Kiousis 2011; Sanders & Canel 2013). Recent studies have also shown that ordinary civil servants spend considerable amounts of time on media-related work (Schillemans 2012; Thorbjørnsrud et al. 2014; Thorbjørnsrud 2015). We do not know, however, how media work affects values in general, and media awareness in particular. We expect that civil servants who spend a lot of time on media-related work are more aware of how things appear in the press. In sum, media awareness is functional and will be most prevalent among civil servants who carry out media-related work (Hypothesis 1).

Secondly, we expect media awareness to be related to features of the organisation in which the civil servants work. Size, task and geography are features commonly used to explain variations between employees in organisations (Pollit & Talbot 2004; Verhoest et al. 2010). In this article, we

investigate the level of media attention. Former studies have shown how government organisations alter their day-to-day functions according to the relative importance they place on the media (Schillemans 2012, 2016; Salomonsen et al. 2016). Other studies have found no effect of media pressure on internal procedures in agencies (Fredriksson et al. 2015). As a parallel to the above explanations, we nevertheless expect that civil servants working in organisations receiving extensive media attention will be more concerned with how issues appear in the media when compared to colleagues working in organisations with less media scrutiny. In sum, media awareness is also organisational and will be most prevalent for civil servants working in organisations with the most media attention (Hypothesis 2).

Thirdly, we expect that civil servants' media awareness is related to their more fundamental views on the role of the media in society. Some might see the news media as an important component in liberal democracies with its right to access information, reveal failures and malpractices, and investigate powerful actors (Casero-Ripollés et al. 2014; Esaiasson & Narud 2013; Ettema & Glasser 1998). Others might perceive news media as sensational and conflict-oriented, as several studies have recorded the rising level of negativity in contemporary political news (see Lengauer et al. 2011). Schillemans (2016) found that civil servants hold varying but often critical views of the media. We expect that civil servants' media awareness is related to their general views on the media's role, although causality could go in both directions. In summary, media awareness is perceptional and will be most important for civil servants with positive views of news media (Hypothesis 3). We do not consider this tautological, as views on the negativity and sensationalism of the contemporary news media are more fundamental than media awareness. Other attitudes or personality traits could potentially also affect media awareness. For instance, it seems reasonable that extrovert, entrepreneurial civil servants would be more aware and proactive towards the media, compared to civil servants with a more introvert personality. In this article, however, we focus on fundamental views on the role of the media in society.

Methods

In this article, we investigate media awareness amongst Norwegian civil servants. Norway is a parliamentary democracy with a central administration consisting of sixteen ministries and about sixty regulatory, supervisory and service-producing agencies (including universities and research institutes). The ministries have a classic pyramidal hierarchy with four to six expert departments under a political leadership consisting of a minister, one or two state secretaries (junior ministers) and a political advisor. Agencies, on the other hand, are led by non-political director generals. Civil servants are expected to remain neutral with regard to party politics. The narrative of the Norwegian ministries and agencies, however, is that civil servants in ministries are increasingly involved in policy communication, not just policy development (Christensen, 2011). Professional expertise is increasingly found in the agencies responsible for implementing policies and providing knowledge to their mother ministry and the general public. Although survey research worldwide has been marred by low response

rates, there is a long tradition in Norway to conduct surveys on the central administration yielding high response rates. This makes the Norwegian case well suited to investigate media awareness among civil servants.

The main source of data for this article is a survey sent to five ministries and twenty-five agencies in late 2015 and early 2016 (see appendix). We approached all ministries to negotiate access and received e-mail lists from five out of sixteen ministries. For the central agencies, e-mails were mainly available on the websites of twenty-five agencies (universities and research institutes were not approached). Civil servants on all hierarchical levels were targeted. We used online survey tools provided by Questback to design, distribute and collect the surveys. After four reminders, we obtained a response rate of 40 percent (mean) from the ministries and 28 percent (mean) from the agencies. Although the response rates are lower than former Norwegian surveys, they are still acceptable compared to international surveys of political and administrative elites (Bailer, 2014; Hoffman-Lange, 2008). In total, 3,103 respondents answered the survey. Low response rates are mainly problematic if they lead to biased results. Concerning gender and age, the sample was balanced (see Table A4 in appendix). Respondents with high education levels (master's degree or above) were between 9 and 28 percentage points higher in the sample than in the universe. This could be problematic as education often is used as an important demographic variable to explain perceptions amongst civil servants (Christensen & Lægreid, 2008a; 2008b). However, in this paper, we have not included education as an important explanatory variable.

To measure civil servants' different values and considerations, the survey contains questions about the importance of fourteen different values, considerations and loyalties (see Table 1). We did not rely entirely on the extant literature on public values but built on items originally included in the Norwegian Central Administration Survey from 1976 onwards (Christensen & Lægreid, 2009; Egeberg & Trondal 2009). Based on feedback from extensive pretesting, we reformulated the survey questions. Special emphasis was placed on the possible importance and impact of the media.

We consider media to refer to the overall media coverage by national broadcasters (TV and radio), as well as national and local newspapers. In the survey, 'media' was used without specifying the type of outlet. The term was only specified related to items on social media.

The survey also contains measures to assess civil servants' daily work, including their contact patterns and relationships with politicians, communication workers and journalists. The level of media-related work (H1) is measured through one survey item: how often they have direct contact with journalists. The measure was dichotomised because of skewness (0 = seldom, some times a year; 1 = monthly, weekly, daily, several times a day).

To investigate the effect of media attention on the organisations (H2), we first separate the types of organisations (i.e., ministries and agencies), as we expect ministries to be under more media scrutiny than agencies. To measure the amount of actual media attention, the total number of news articles mentioning each ministry and agency was counted from October 2014 to October 2015. Printed national, regional and local newspapers were included in the search in the Retriever database, the media-monitoring company. Huge differences exist

between the media appearances of the organisations (see Table A5 in appendix). To avoid this skewedness, the measure was normalised by using the logarithm of the scores in the empirical analysis. In the analysis, the valence of the coverage was not taken into account, as we were mainly interested in the amount of media attention.

The civil servants' fundamental perceptions of the media (H3) are measured through two indexes based on four claims in the survey; a positive media view index ('media plays an important role showing the fate of individuals'; 'media plays an important role uncovering critical/blameworthy issues) and a negative media view index ('media is too sensational'; 'media focuses too much on disclosures and conflict'). The two indexes are negatively correlated, suggesting that that respondents can have a positive view on the role of the media in society, and at the same time be aware of the negative sides (see appendix A3). Note, however, that the relationship is quite weak.

As control variables we include age (centred) and gender, both measured through direct questions in the survey. See Table A1 in the appendix for all descriptive statistics.

Results

The empirical analysis is divided in two main parts. We begin by investigating the level of media awareness amongst civil servants, and then explain variances in media awareness.

Media Awareness in Bureaucracies: Existence and Relation to Established Values

Table 1 reports the relevant values and considerations of all civil servants in ministries and agencies combined. On the whole, considerations related to the media and public opinion are deemed less important than other types of bureaucratic values. Values related to lawful proceedings and professional standards, are deemed extremely important by almost all civil servants. A large proportion of our respondents also report loyalty towards their immediate superior as important, reflecting the traditional hierarchical structure of public bureaucracies. The effective use of resources and achievement of goals are also seen as very important. To a lesser extent, civil servants agree about the importance of political loyalties towards the political leadership, cabinet and parliament.

Table 1. The relative importance of values, norms and considerations amongst civil servants

	Not important			Very important		
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Mean**
Lawful proceedings	0	0	1	6	94	**4.93**
Professional standards	0	0	1	10	90	**4.89**
Loyalty to the immediate superior	0	1	3	25	71	**4.65**
Effective use of resources	0	0	3	29	67	**4.62**
Effective goal achievement	0	1	4	34	60	**4.53**
Transparency in decision-making	1	3	11	37	49	**4.30**
Loyalty to the parliament	2	4	13	29	53	**4.27**
Consideration of auditing and supervisory bodies	2	5	17	36	41	**4.09**
Loyalty to the political leadership	3	7	16	31	44	**4.06**
Personal desire to contribute to public policy	4	7	15	30	44	**4.04**
Loyalty to the cabinet in office	3	7	17	31	42	**4.02**
Consideration of user groups and interest organisations	2	6	15	41	35	**4.01**
Consideration of how a case may appear in the media	4	15	22	40	20	**3.57**
Consideration of public opinion	5	16	31	35	12	**3.33**

Frequencies and means: N = 2874–3051
Question: How important are the following values, norms and considerations for you as a civil servant? Answer on a five-point scale (not important at all, less important, neither/nor, quite important or very important).

There is disagreement amongst civil servants concerning the importance of the media and public opinion. However, more than half of the respondents still find these considerations quite or very important, suggesting that media awareness is indeed part of the value set of civil servants in public bureaucracies.

Table 1 gives a first indication that traditional bureaucratic values are not crowded out by media awareness. To scrutinise this further, we investigate the underlying dimensions of these different values and considerations. A factor analysis, with a principal component strategy and an open solution, results in four dimensions.

Table 2. Dimensional analysis with a principal component strategy

	1	2	3	4
Loyalty to the cabinet in office	.93	.08	.06	.04
Loyalty to the political leadership	.91	.07	.08	.02
Loyalty to the parliament	.79	.18	.04	.15
Loyalty to the immediate superior	.32	.18	.29	.11
Consideration of public opinion	.12	.74	.15	-.19
Consideration of how a case may appear in the media	.11	.70	.15	-.21
Consideration of user groups and interest organisations	.00	.70	.01	.12
Consideration of auditing and supervisory bodies	.15	.64	.05	.20
Transparency in decision-making	.00	.50	.24	.24
Personal desire to contribute to public policy	.11	.44	.02	.10
Effective use of resources	.06	.11	.90	.08
Effective goal achievement	.09	.13	.90	.05
Lawful proceedings	.09	.08	.08	.79
Professional standards	.11	.06	.08	.77
Eigenvalue	3.67	1.89	1.49	1.27

Varimax rotation

As Table 2 shows, the first dimension relates to various types of political loyalty towards the political leadership, parliament and ruling cabinet. Judging by the unclear factor structure, loyalty to the nearest superior seems to be viewed as something different. The second dimension relates to media considerations, more specifically civil servants' considerations of public opinion and how a case will appear in the media. Also connected to this dimension are considerations related to user groups and interest organisations as well as independent auditing and supervisory bodies. This dimension thus resembles what previously has been called 'responsiveness' (Jørgensen & Bozeman 2007; Van Thiel & van der Wal 2010). Transparency in decision-making is also related to this dimension. The third dimension is related to the typical NPM-value of 'efficiency,' containing the two items of 'effective goal achievement' and 'effective use of resources.' The fourth dimension consists of lawful proceedings as well as standards and norms related to their profession; considerations that can be called traditional, Weberian values.

To investigate the relationships between the four dimensions, we establish four indexes. The media-publicity dimension originally consisted of four items, but Cronbach's alpha reveals that the internal consistency of the index is higher when only two items, 'media considerations' and 'public opinion considerations,' are included (Alpha .78 compared to .69)

In other words, there are empirical reasons for narrowing the broad dimension into a smaller index, which we call media awareness. It is also conceptually more consistent, as we are mainly interested in media awareness, not responsiveness. For the 'political loyalty' index, we include loyalty to the

political leadership and cabinet in office (alpha is lower if we include parliament (Alpha .92 compared to .88).

For the last two indexes, 'Weberian values' and 'NPM values,' we include the two items that load on each dimension. With the chosen variables, the internal consistency of all four indexes is satisfactory, and the variables represent four distinguishable dimensions (see Table A2 for Cronbach's alpha).

Table 3. Correlations between value indexes of all civil servants in the sample

	Political loyalty	Weberian values	NPM values
Media awareness	.19**	.04*	.23**
Political loyalty		.17**	.17**
Weberian values			.16**

$*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01$
$N = 2733–2959$

As Table 3 shows, media awareness is positively correlated with the other bureaucratic value indexes. Media awareness is most strongly correlated with NPM values and political loyalty. These relationships are understandable as goal achievements and effective use of resources are something that pubic bureaucracies often are measured by in the press. Further on, political loyalty (to the political leadership in the ministry and cabinet) goes hand in hand with awareness of how things appear in the press, as the possibilities to loyally execute the decisions of their political masters and implement public policies can be shaped by how politicians appear in the media. It is not the case that media awareness comes at the expense of lawful proceedings and adherence to professional standards. Although weak, the correlation with traditional Weberian values is positive and significant.

Overall, our analysis does not support the notion that media awareness directly replaces other values. Rather, we find that consciousness of the media and public opinion exists as a widespread concern in addition to traditional bureaucratic values. Media awareness is distinguishable from other values, yet generally related in a positive way, which means that civil servants with higher media awareness manage a more diverse 'value portfolio.'

Explaining Media Awareness: Functions, Organisational Factors or Fundamental Views?

As shown above, the media awareness of civil servants is unevenly distributed. Some civil servants are strongly aware, while others do not find the media important. Our second effort in this article is to explain variances in media awareness. To this end, we formulated three hypotheses relating to functional, organisational and perceptual antecedents of media awareness among civil servants. To test the hypotheses, we investigate the relationships between media awareness and explanatory variables in multivariate analyses. For media-related work (H1), we include variable direct contact with journalists. For media attention (H2), we include the type of organisation and actual media appearance in the written press (log transformed to avoid skewedness). Finally, for media views (H3), we include indexes on positive and negative views of the media.

Age and gender are included as control variables (see Table A1 in the appendix for descriptive statistics). Table 4 reports the results of the multilevel analysis.

Table 4. Multilevel analysis of media awareness, estimates of fixed effects

	Estimates (std. error)
Intercept	3.01*** (.47)
Individual variables (model 1)	
Age	.03*** (.00)
Gender (female =1)	.47*** (.07)
Contact journalist	.40*** (.11)
Positive media view	.20*** (.03)
Negative media view	.07*** (.03)
Organisational variables (model 2)	
Media Attention	–.29** (.13)
Type of organisation (ministry =1)	-.30 (.18)
Intraclass correlation (model 0)	4.15
Residual	3.49*** (.09)
Intercept	.15*** (.05)
Variance between organisations as a share of total variance (model 2)	2.59
–2LL (model 2)	9789.89
Change –2LL (from model 1 to model 2)	9.25**

Note. $N = 2,848$; $n = 30$ ministries and agencies.
*$p < 0.10$. **$p < 0.05$. ***$p < 0.01$.

The empty baseline model (model 0) showed that 4 per cent of the total variation is at ministry or agency level (intraclass correlation). This suggests that we are on the margins of when multilevel analysis is required. Our first hypothesis was that varying media awareness amongst civil servants can be functionally explained, in the sense that the respondent's contact with journalists, are likely to provide some explanation for the differences. This is supported by the analysis. Having direct contact with journalists is positively related to civil servants' media awareness.

Our second hypothesis proposed a positive relationship between the level of media attention focused on an organisation and the strength of media awareness held by that organisation's civil servants. The change in log likelihood (–2LL) from model 1 to model 2 shows how additional variables at the organisational level improve the fit of the model (compared with a model with only individual-level variables). The fit improves statistically significantly at the 5 per cent level when the two organisational level variables are introduced. However, H2 is not supported in the analysis: The opposite relationship seems to exist. Civil servants in organisations who are frequently in the press are less aware of the media. This goes against our initial expectation. There is no significant effect of the type of organisation (ministry or agency).

Our third hypothesis shifts the focus from organisational and work-related factors to civil servants' ideas and views. Earlier, we hypothesised that media awareness is positively related to civil servants' general views about the media. The multivariate analyses partly support this hypothesis, as there is a positive

relationship between media awareness and positive media views. However, there is an unexpected twist as negative media views also increases the levels of media awareness. However, the effect is not very strong.

There is a positive effect of age, suggesting that older employees are more concerned with the media than their younger colleagues. The effect is not very strong, however. Female civil servants are also more concerned with the media. A bit surprisingly, perhaps, the effect is quite strong.

Discussion

Public organizations are increasingly paying attention to strategic communication (Nielsen & Salomonsen 2012), and there is an emerging awareness of reputational and crisis issues, for instance in municipalities (Frandsen, Johansen & Salomonsen 2016). Scholars have claimed that it has become natural and important for bureaucrats to attend to the media (Schillemans 2012; Thorbjørnsrud et al. 2014) and that civil servants increasingly spend time on media management and government advertising (Aucoin, 2012). These developments represent a contemporary challenge to traditional values in public bureaucracies. In this article, we have studied the extent of media awareness amongst civil servants, and tested the hypotheses that functional (work characteristics), organisational (media pressure) and perceptual (ideas) factors affect the relative importance of media awareness for civil servants.

First, the present study shows that classic Weberian bureaucratic values are still essential for almost all Norwegian civil servants. Civil servants also emphasise NPM-inspired values such as effectiveness and efficiency (Jørgensen 2006), and they have many masters and a mix of possible loyalties (de Graaf 2011). Our findings are thus in line with former research on the Norwegian civil service (Christensen & Lægreid 2009; Egeberg & Trondal 2009). We found that media awareness is considered less important than these traditional values, but nevertheless, it is very important for the majority of Norway's civil servants. The present study thus suggests that media awareness is an established component of civil servants' complex 'portfolio' of values. In this study, we did not separate between civil servants' awareness of the *type* of reports or the *amount* of reports. According to Kepplinger, the use of mass media reports depends on the characteristics of coverage (source, topic, and tone) and the quantity of reporting (in number and length) (2007: 11). Future studies should elaborate on how civil servants might be attentive to different types of media reports.

Second, we investigated if media awareness is integrated with traditional values or if it substitutes traditional values. Our results showed that media awareness coexists and correlates positively with traditional Weberian values, efficiency concerns and political loyalties. This suggests that concerns about how issues appear in the media, or consideration of what the public might think, do not lessen civil servants' adherence to traditional bureaucratic values. We do not know, of course, how these values relate to specific civil servants' day-to-day behaviour. Nevertheless, our conclusions should offer relief to scholars who fear the disruptive effects of the media in public administration (Aucoin 2012; Humphreys 2005; Mulgan 2007; Ward 2007). Our conclusions also tie in with

other empirical studies, demonstrating that the media has a profound impact on public policy yet not necessarily the negative impact feared in declensionist accounts. Political and administrative actors are not passive victims of mediatisation but actively shape the integration of the media into their traditional work (Landerer 2014; Fredriksson et al. 2015; Djerf-Pierre & Pierre 2016). Although civil servants might explain and defend government policies, they might do this in non-partisan ways, in line with traditions of merit bureaucracy (Grube & Howard 2016, 522). Our initial expectation that media awareness could possibly *crowd out* traditional values has been refuted. Our analysis suggests the opposite, as media awareness is *crowded in.* Schulz (2004) distinguished 'amalgamation' from 'substitution,' where amalgamation describes the process in which media activities becomes amalgamated with the traditional functions of organisations, while substitution refers to the replacement of unmediated activities with mediatised activities. Our study suggests a related integration of media awareness in public bureaucracies. This conclusion further increases scholarly knowledge of how media affects the values and norms of civil servants; this is important, because these informal values and norms influence and guide behaviour and decisions in public bureaucracies (Egeberg & Trondal 2009).

Finally, we investigated how functional (work characteristics), organisational (media pressure) and perceptual (ideas) factors affect the relative importance of media awareness for civil servants. Our analyses suggested that media awareness seems to be functional and related to the amount of media work performed by civil servants (H1). This insight is important given that ordinary civil servants, and not just communication experts, increasingly spend time on media-related work. Civil servants' positive views of the role of the media are important and closely related to their media awareness (H3). The analysis showed, however, that negative views also increase media awareness. Civil servants who think the media is too sensational and conflict-oriented are aware of how things appear in the press. In other words, they might be aware of the media beast (Schilemans 2016). The survey did not include questions about personality, but future research should investigate how media awareness can vary according to different personality traits (extrovert/introvert, entrepreneurial/traditionalist). This is important, at least in systems where it is common for civil servants to have a clear voice in the public debate (Grube 2016).

Our study shows that civil servants in organisations who are frequently in the press in fact are less aware of the media. H2 was therefore refuted. This surprising result goes against our expectations. The dissociation between media attention and media awareness confirms similar findings by Fredriksson, Schillemans and Pallas (2015) for Swedish agencies. Our findings suggest that media awareness in bureaucracies is probably not a direct response to media attention and media pressure, as the simple version of mediatisation theory suggests. Instead, the already discussed factors determine media awareness in bureaucracies.

Of the controls, gender is a strong predictor of media awareness. Although the effect was surprisingly strong, our findings resonates well with former research finding that female senior local government managers differ from their

male counterparts on values such as responsiveness (measured as the importance when making major decisions about public services) (Hamidullah, Riccucci, & Pandey, 2015). Future research should look closer on gender differences in media awareness.

Studying the media and bureaucratic values in a single country does not provide a firm basis for generalising the impact of the media. Nevertheless, the insights from this article should be of value, at least in countries with similar system characteristics (merit-based bureaucracies, democratic corporatist media systems). A large share of civil servants are highly aware of the media, and this coexists with a complex portfolio of values. We expect, however, that the emphasis placed on the media and its relation to traditional bureaucratic values might shift over time and in different contexts.

Conclusion

In this article, we have studied the extent of media awareness amongst civil servants, and investigated how does this media awareness relate to traditional bureaucratic values. Further on, we have tested if functional (H1), organisational (H2) and perceptual (H3) factors affect the relative importance of media awareness. Drawing on a large-N survey to Norwegian civil servants, we have found that media awareness is an aspect of civil servants' value 'portfolio.', and that media awareness coexists and correlates positively with, efficiency concerns, political loyalties and traditional Weberian values. Further on, we found that media awareness amongst civil servants had functional (H1) and perceptual (H3) explanations.

This article expands the empirical scope of work that studies how the media drives changes in organisational structures and staff, priorities of tasks, relations with political superiors and the allocation of internal resources (Deacon & Monk 2001; Djerf-Pierre & Pierre 2016; Fredriksson and Pallas 2013; Head 2007; Pallas and Fredriksson 2010; Maggetti 2012; Nielsen 2012; Schillemans, 2016 Ward 2007).

The insight from this article also speaks to the literature on public values. Here, listening to public opinion is seen as a form of bureaucratic responsiveness (Jørgensen & Bozeman 2007; Liao 2018). To be aware of mass media reports, however, expands beyond being responsive. Considerations for how a case might appear in the media and concerns for a positive image might be seen as less in line with the traditional mandate of civil servants. Being visible in the media might be important for civil servants, because a positive image of the organisation can be used to accrue autonomy, generate public support and recruit and retain valued employees (e.g., Carpenter 2001; Carpenter & Krause 2012; Maor 2014). The reputation management literature has focused on various strategies undertaken by public agencies, paying less attention to individual civil servants. This study shows that civil servants are aware of the media, suggesting that reputational concerns can have both individual and organisational explanations.

According to Kepplinger, the awareness and processing of media coverage will affect decisions and have consequences (2007). Given the nature of our inquires, we do not know how values affect decisions or which values will assert

themselves most forcefully in real decision-making situations where civil servants are confronted with conflicting demands. This ambiguity might not only stem from the limitations of our data but also reflect the inherent tension in civil servants' roles in modern bureaucracies. The extent to which media awareness is prioritised and influences behaviour most likely depends on the saliency of such considerations in decision-making situations. Hence, a media-oriented minister or proactive communication department might make media awareness more salient for civil servants, thus affecting decision-making in public bureaucracies. The next step in studying the impact of the media on public bureaucracies would be the study of how conflicting values, including media awareness, play out in real-life decision-making situations.

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Appendix

Table A1. Descriptive statistics

	Min	Max	Mean	St. dev	N
Media awareness index	0	8	4.89	1.92	2848
Political loyalty index	0	8	6.08	2.05	2875
Weberian values index	0	8	7.82	.54	3022
NPM values index	0	8	7.16	1.16	3001
Age (centred)	0	54	27.68	10.86	2975
Gender	0	1	.55	.50	3066
Contact with journalists	0	1	.14	.35	3103
Type of organisation	0	1	.21	.41	3101
Actual media attention (log)	1.38	3.69	3.00	.58	3037
Positive media view	0	8	6.16	1.29	2853
Negative media view	0	8	6.19	1.47	2857

Table A2. Variables and internal consistency of indexes

Index	Variables	Cronbach's alpha
Media awareness	Consideration of public opinion Consideration of how a case may appear in the media	0.78
Political loyalty	Loyalty to the political leadership Loyalty to the cabinet in office	0.92
Weberian values	Lawful proceedings Professional standards	0.60
NPM values	Effective use of resources Effective goal achievement	0.85

Table A3. Bivariate correlations independent variables

	Gender	Media-related work	Contact with journalists	Media attention	Positive media view	Negative media view
Age	-.13**	.03	.02	-.02	-.05**	.03
Gender		-.01	-.07**	.03	-.01	-.01
Media-related work			.17**	.11**	-.02	.07**
Contact with journalists				.06**	.04*	-.02
Type of organisation				.15**	-.01	.03
Media attention					-.02	-.04*
Positive media view						-.14**

Entries are b-coefficients.
*$p < 0.05$ (2-tailed); **$p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)
$N = 2746$–3103

Table A4. Information about the sample (shares)

Organisation	Population	Sample	Difference
Ministry			
Age (30-39)	24.2	27.1	-2.9
Age (40-49)	29.2	27.3	1.9
Age (50-61)	30.0	28.0	2.0
Gender (female)	55.8	55.5	.3
Education (master or above)	71.5	80.8	-9.3
Agency			
Age (30-39)	23.5	24.4	-.9
Age (40-49)	31.4	32.4	-1.0
Age (50-61)	29.1	28.2	.9
Gender (female)	56.5	54.3	2.1
Education (master or above)	38.0	66.2	-28.0

Numbers on population from Statistics Norway (SSB).

Table A5. Ministries and agencies included in the study

Ministry of Defence (1535)
Ministry of Education and Research (1839)
Ministry of Health (1080)
Ministry of Justice and Public Security (958)
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (362)

Directorate of Public Roads (1301)
Agency for Public Management and e-Government (504)
Directorate for Building Quality (194)
Directorate for Emergency Communication (56)
Financial Supervisory Authority (978)
Norwegian Agriculture Agency (635)
Norwegian Climate and Pollution Agency (3536)
Norwegian Communications Authority (317)
Norwegian Competition Authority (1250)
Norwegian Consumer Ombudsman (577)
Norwegian Data Protection Authority (755)
Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (430)
Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2184)
Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries (1562)
Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (3001)
Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (1275)
Norwegian Food Safety Authority (4928)
Norwegian Gaming and Foundation Authority (116)
Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management (24)
Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (108)
Norwegian Maritime Authority (475)
Norwegian Media Authority (434)
Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (443)
Ombudsman for Children (919)
The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (3721)

Number in parenthesis denotes the number of times the organisation was mentioned in printed national, regional and local newspapers from October 2014 to October 2015.