

Norwegian news online:

News values in the digital age

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[Master's thesis — Department of Media and
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Abstract

There has been much talk within journalistic circles in recent years of the ever-impending death of print journalism. It's true that print subscription rates have been steadily falling for years, and this holds true even in countries such as Norway, which has enjoyed historically high levels of readership. A measure that has seen growing popularity among newsrooms is the introduction of paywalls to attempt to charge customers for access to digital content. In this thesis, I follow up on Helle Sjøvaag's 2015 study of three Norwegian newspapers in which she analyzed the kinds of content the newspapers placed in front of and behind their paywalls. She looked at *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende*, and *Stavangers Aftenblad*. I examine *Drammens Tidende*, *Gjengangeren*, and *Tønsbergs Blad*. Sjøvaag categorized content in genres such as politics and sports. I perform a similar study and further examine 12 news values, as outlined in Galtung's and Ruge's 1965 article, *The Structure of Foreign News*, to determine which of them appeared in front of and behind the various paywalls. The results show that while there exists a fair amount of variation in the types of genres the different newspapers prioritized in front of and behind their paywalls, the placement of news values is far more consistent. In fact, four news values stand out in terms of where they tend to appear. Stories that affect a large number of people or that constitute breaking news coverage and are reported as they happen appear most often in front of the paywalls. Meanwhile, stories that focus heavily on the perspectives of various individuals and their stories and experiences appear most often behind the paywalls. Furthermore, interviews with staff at each newspaper revealed that other factors beyond the values or genres of a given story— primarily a focus on having a set percentage of stories in front of the paywall and a set percentage of stories behind it — play a role in determining how stories are placed. While paywalls might not be enough to make up for ever-falling print revenues, this study makes it clear that dedicated paywall strategies play a role in how and where editors place their digital content.

Preface

Charles M. Ess served as the adviser for this project during the Spring 2017, Fall 2017, and Spring 2018 semesters. His help has been invaluable in the completion of this thesis, and I cannot thank him enough.

I would also like to thank Janne Sundelius Braathen, Guri Larsen, and Sigmund Kydland for agreeing to interviews for this project and providing me with some incredible insight into their newspapers' digital strategies.

And because my work builds upon the research performed by Helle Sjøvaag, I would like to extend my thanks to her as well.

Finally, I would like to thank Marie Sanna Kihle for both her emotional and mental support over the last two years and her help in translating when my Norwegian was not up to par.

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1 [Introduction]

The year 2013 might have been the year of the paywall (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 304), but four years later, traditional newspapers are still puzzling out how they can profit from online readership as print sales continue to tank (Franklin, 2008, p. 631). Even in Scandinavian countries like Norway, which historically has enjoyed high levels of readership (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 22), readers are less and less likely to peruse ink and paper copies of the daily news. For example, *Aftenposten*, Norway's largest morning newspaper, lost upwards of 147,000 print readers from 1998 to 2017. (Medienorge, 2017).

Of course, claims of a newspaper industry in crisis or of the impending death of traditional newspapers are often exaggerated, and media companies have taken steps to combat the loss of print revenue. Among such steps is the introduction of an online paywall designed to monetize the traffic newspapers get on their websites. But as the *New York Times* learned in 2011 when it erected its paywall, readers used to unrestricted access to online news can be hesitant to start paying for it. According to a survey of 954 U.S. residents conducted in the weeks leading up to and following the introduction of the New York Times' paywall:

Only 7 percent planned to buy or had already purchased a digital subscription. Another 12 percent already had a paper subscription that provided online access and 16 percent were unsure of their response. Of the 65 percent who planned not to pay, 59 percent felt very certain of their response. (Cook & Attari, 2012, pp. 683-684)

While those numbers paint a bleak picture for newspapers hoping to make up for print losses with digital gains, the reality of the situation is far less dire. Ángel Arrese – with three-plus years of hindsight unavailable to Cook and Attari – ultimately deemed the New York Times model a success in his 2015 article and noted that “the expansion of paywalls around the world with the meter model as a kind of standard took place” in the years following the Times' introduction of its own paywall (Arrese, 2015, p. 1061).

This doesn't mean that paywalls are the cure for all that ails the newspaper industry, and companies continue to innovate as the media landscape continues to change. However, the long-

term sustainability of the paywall model as a whole is beyond the scope of this research. There are, after all, a multitude of angles from which to examine online paywalls, and I have focused here primarily on content. I worked as both a newspaper reporter and a news editor for a small newspaper in the United States with a circulation of roughly 9,000 (personal communication, May 8, 2018), and I believe my extensive background in journalism qualifies me to study newspaper content at local newspapers. And while the content available in front of and behind newspapers' paywalls is valuable in understanding their editorial priorities, it is just one approach to paywall research.

As a result of the so-called rise of the paywall, researchers have examined many aspects of the newspaper industry's efforts to refine and refresh increasingly unwieldy business models. I take as my point of departure Helle Sjøvaag's 2015 article studying the differences in content behind and in front of the paywalls of three Norwegian newspapers. Sjøvaag studied three newspapers – *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavanger Aftenblad* – owned by Schibsted Media, the largest media company in Norway (2015). In her analysis, Sjøvaag focused on what sort of news values work best in enticing online readers to pay for access as well as the role each newspaper's market position played in its decisions regarding online content placement (2015). I follow a similar process with three newspapers owned by Amedia, Norway's second-largest media company. For this project, I have chosen *Drammens Tidende*, *Gjengangeren*, and *Tønsbergs Blad*. After all, while Sjøvaag – and others – called 2013 “the year of the paywall” (Sjøvaag, 2015; Pickard & Williams, 2014), Nordicom noted a “sharp increase” of Norwegian newspapers with paywalls in 2015 thanks to the introduction of Amedia's digital strategy for its newspapers (Harrie, 2017). Aside from the company's role in the propagation of Norwegian newspapers with paywalls, there exist a number of differences between Amedia's smaller, local newspapers and Schibsted's larger publications that make them ripe for comparison. The newspapers Sjøvaag analyzed have circulations ranging from 56,590 to 224,249. The Amedia newspapers' circulations range from 6,304 to 26,576 (Medienorge, 2017). I discuss relevant differences and similarities between the newspapers further in the following section.

1.1 Research Question

As I have stated, the goal of this project is to explore which content newspapers place in

front of and behind their paywalls. More specifically, I examine three Norwegian newspapers owned by the same company that have similar paywall structures. My research mirrors that of Sjøvaag with the notable distinction that I look at smaller newspapers operating in smaller markets. The goal then, is to add to Sjøvaag's findings by researching additional newspapers using a similar model. Simply put, my research question is:

How do the paywall strategies used by Amedia's *Drammens Tidende*, *Gjengangeren* and *Tønsbergs Blad* influence the news values present in front of and behind the paywalls of the three newspapers?

While Sjøvaag used the term "news values" in her project, I believe that "news genres" is a more fitting description of the categories she used. She listed categories such as politics, sports and crime (Sjøvaag, 2015). While it is useful to determine the comparative presence of political and sports stories in front of and behind newspapers' paywalls, I believe a deeper investigation of the news values present in stories in front of and behind the paywalls is important in understanding which content goes where and why. While I analyze the same nine news genres as Sjøvaag, my primary focus is analyzing the news values within open (in front of the paywall) and closed (behind the paywall) stories. Also, like Sjøvaag, I discuss the potential role market position plays in how each of the three newspapers prioritize different types of digital content.

In the section that follows, I provide working definitions of the paywall structures and news values I use in this project. I then offer a review of existing literature and outline the methodology used in this research before presenting and discussing my findings.

1.2 Types of Paywalls

A study of how newspapers' paywall structures and market positions affect which content they charge for and which they give away for free would be useless without offering a description of the different types of paywalls newspapers use and the factors that determine a newspaper's market position. In this section I describe the various paywall structures commonly used by newspapers with a focus on the paywalls used by *Drammens Tidende*, *Tønsbergs Blad*, and *Gjengangeren*. I also expand further on the environments in which the newspapers operate and how they compare to the newspapers in Sjøvaag's study.

A variety of definitions and designations for different paywall structures exist, but there are three types that are most often used – hard paywalls, metered paywalls and premium or ‘freemium’ models – in research (Casero-Ripollés & Izquierdo-Castillo, 2013, p. 67). I offer brief descriptions of each now.

Hard paywalls are those that do not allow readers to access any of a newspaper’s online material without first purchasing a subscription (Carson, 2015, p. 1022). While visitors to the newspaper’s website’s front page might be allowed to see headlines, some photos and perhaps the first two or three sentences of a story, they are unable to access full stories without paying. Andrea Carson’s study focused on Australian newspapers, and she found that most favored metered paywalls over hard ones (2015, p. 1022). Norwegian newspapers tend also to shy away from hard paywalls. But many choose premium models instead of metered ones. I offer brief definitions of both models below.

The *New York Times* is one of the most well-known newspapers that uses the metered model, which involves giving readers unfettered access to a certain number of articles every week or month and then requiring the purchase of a subscription to read more than that number (Casero-Ripollés & Izquierdo-Castillo, 2013, p. 67). In Norway, newspapers seem to share their Australian counterparts’ aversion to hard paywalls, but purely metered paywalls are by no means the norm. *Aftenpøsten* was the only newspaper Sjøvaag studied that uses a metered model, and its paywalls is not purely metered (Sjøvaag, 2015). It has elements of the premium model – the model used by *Bergens Tidende*, *Stavanger Aftenblad* and the three newspapers I’ve examined – as well.

While the metered model gives limited access to all of a newspaper’s online content – the reader gets to pick which free articles they read each week – the premium model, also referred to as the ‘freemium’ model, gives unlimited access to content selected by the newspaper and always requires a subscription to access select, premium content (Carson, 2015, p. 1025). Sjøvaag takes the premium concept a step further in relation to the Norwegian media market and differentiates between restrictive and liberal versions. The distinction depends on how much content is available for free and how much content requires a subscription (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 307). *Drammens Tidende*, *Tønsbergs Blad*, and *Gjengangeren* vary in the amount of content they

place in front of and behind their respective paywalls, but only slightly. I now offer some characteristics of each newspaper before delving into a brief discussion of the news values I have used to guide the project.

1.3 The Newspapers

Drammens Tidende is located in the city of Drammen, the fifth largest city in Norway with a population of 115,137. *Tønsbergs Blad* is located in the town of Tønsberg, which has a population of 33,988. *Gjengangeren* is located in the town of Horten, which has a population of 20,301 (Statistics Norway, 2016).

Drammens Tidende is the largest newspaper in my study with a total readership of 26,549 and a purely digital readership of 9,075 as of October 2017, according to staff at the newspaper (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). *Drammens Tidende* implemented its paywall in October 2014 (Olsen & Solvoll, 2017, p. 19). At the time, according to newsroom staff, the paper's strategy was to place 30 percent of the paper's digital content in front of the paywall and 70 percent behind. The paper has since shifted from a more restrictive model to a moderate one, and it now strives to place 50 percent both in front of and behind the paywall (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017).

With about 21,000 total subscribers and 6,000 purely digital subscribers according to staff, *Tønsbergs Blad* is comparable to *Drammens Tidende* in size and circulation (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017). It was also the first paper in this study to implement a paywall, which it did in June 2013 (Olsen & Solvoll, 2017, p. 19). Staff also noted that the amount of content in front of and behind the paper's paywall has changed dramatically over the last few years, going from 80 percent behind and 20 percent in front to 40 percent behind and 60 percent in front (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017).

Gjengangeren is by far the smallest newspaper in this study, with roughly 6,500 total subscribers and 1,461 digital-only subscribers according to staff (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). It was the last newspaper of the three to implement a paywall, which it did in February 2015 (Aaberge, 2017). Like the other two newspapers, its paywall has become less restrictive over the past few years. Staff noted that three years ago, the

dominant strategy was to put everything behind the paywall, but *Gjengangeren* now strives to place 60 percent of its digital content behind and 40 percent of its digital content in front of its paywall (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). Like its sister papers in Drammen and Tønsberg, *Gjengangeren*'s paywall has become less restrictive over time. While staff report that the amount of content behind all three paywalls has decreased in the last three years, the exact ratio of open – in front of the paywall – and closed – behind the paywall – content each paper strives for is different. I return to this finding later, but first it is useful to outline the news values I have utilized in this study.

1.4 News Values

For decades, researchers have striven to create comprehensive lists – some long, some short – of the sorts of values newspaper and TV journalists use to determine what is and isn't newsworthy (Sallot, Steinfatt, & Salwen, 1998; Schultz, 2007; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). Surprisingly, Galtung's and Ruge's 52-year-old article on news values in the coverage of wars in Congo, Cuba and Cypress remains relevant even into the digital age (1965). Galtung and Ruge list 12 news values – eight "universal" values and four culture-based values) that four Norwegian newspapers used in covering conflicts around the world (1965). These are the 12 news values I use for this research. As they are based on Norwegian newspapers, they are especially relevant to this project.

Galtung's and Ruge's eight universal news values include: Frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity and composition (1965, p. 65). The four culture-dependent news values – based on Western culture generally and on Norwegian news practices specifically – are: reference to elite countries, reference to elite people, reference to individuals and negativity (1965, p. 68). I briefly explain each of the news values below, and I further operationalize their use in this study in the methodology section.

Frequency (Immediacy)

The frequency of an event is, in Galtung's and Ruge's terms, the time-span needed for the event to unfold itself and acquire meaning" (1965, p. 66). It is important that the frequency of an event matches the frequency of the media covering it. For example, a mass shooting unfolds

rapidly, and TV and newspaper reporters can create a meaningful narrative within a single news cycle (1965, p. 66). In this project, I prefer the term ‘immediacy’ to describe this value. It is a less ambiguous term that better communicates the idea that the timespan around any given event impacts its newsworthiness.

Threshold

Threshold refers to the magnitude of an event or a story. In other words, the larger the number of casualties, the more focus will be given to a shooting. A single shooting in a small neighborhood will not get as much coverage as a gunman who murders 50 people (1965, p. 66).

Unambiguity

The value of unambiguity is, self-evidently, unambiguous. Gatlung and Ruge argue that readers and journalists alike prefer stories that are easy to digest and that lend themselves to one particular interpretation (1965, p. 66).

Meaningfulness

That an event is meaningful to a reporter’s intended audience is important in the selection of news. Gatlung and Ruge use the term “cultural proximity” to indicate that newsgatherers search for stories that will mean something to their readers based on cultural norms. The celebration of Ganesh Chaturthi in India will, for the most part, not draw much attention from Norwegian journalists and readers, while 17.mai receives plenty of coverage (1965, pp. 66-67).

Consonance

An event’s consonance refers to the ease with which audiences can place it into their existing world view. Galung and Ruge state that the more an event or story fits with what an audience expects, the more likely it will be seen as newsworthy (1965, p. 67).

Unexpectedness

However, events and stories that dramatically conflict with given beliefs or expectations are equally newsworthy, and unexpected or rare occurrences are given precedence over more

common events (1965, p. 67).

Continuity

Drawing from Newton's first law of motion, Gatlung and Ruge note that a story in motion tends to stay in motion, and that an event that has already received coverage will continue to receive coverage as long as it remains relevant (1965, p. 67). This value serves as the inverse to the value of immediacy.

Composition

This value refers to the idea that newsgatherers prefer a variety of topics in the selection of stories. If there are a lot of high profile sports stories, smaller ones will not get attention. But if there are a lot of political stories and none on sports, a sports story that otherwise would be ignored might get covered (1965, p. 67).

Reference to elite countries and elite people

These represent Gatlung's and Ruge's first two cultural news values, and it is easy to see how they affect Nordic countries like Norway. A lot more will likely be written about events that take place in the United States, Britain or Germany than in Romania, Lithuania or Tanzania. Furthermore, the king of Norway's birthday celebration is far more likely to wind up in print than the birthday of an average citizen (1965, p. 68).

Reference to individuals

Gatlung and Ruge offer a variety of reasons why news media tend to focus on people. Such speculation is beyond the scope of this research, and of primary relevance here is that newsgatherers tend towards covering events with human actors and giving primacy to human actors in events. Coverage of hurricanes, for example, will often focus on the victims and the rescuers who save them (1965, p. 68).

Negativity

The authors offer an additional slew of possibilities as to why negative news stories are

common in news coverage, and again the reasons behind the selection are beyond this project. The relevant point is that – whether because negative news is more unexpected or because it conforms with audiences' views of the modern world – negative news is often given priority over other stories (1965, p. 68).

2 [Literature review]

So far, I have referenced a number of scholars who have worked with news values as well as paywalls. While research regarding news values can be traced back more than half a century, paywall research is still in a state of relative infancy. *The Wall Street Journal* is often considered to be the first example of a national news outlet implementing an online paywall, which it did in 1996 (Grueskin, Seave, & Graves, 2011, p. 67). Of course, that's not to say that a healthy body of literature hasn't developed around paywalls. In her article, Sjøvaag lists five aspects of paywalls that have been the focus of research, including business models incorporating paywalls, customers' willingness to pay for online news, user studies, normative concerns, and analysis of paywall content. As Sjøvaag notes, "much of this research is ... focused on paywalls as viable business models, and peoples' willingness to pay for online news" (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 5) These aspects of paywalls are important, and there is a reason so much of the body of paywall research is concerned with them. Falling print sales necessitate an evaluation by newspaper companies of other sources of income, and while unable to wholly make up for print losses, digital paywalls are currently the most popular digital revenue stream for European newspapers (Cornia, Sehl, Simon, & Nielsen, 2017). The future of the newspaper industry is undoubtedly in flux, with the CEO of the New York Times, the newspaper of record in the United States (Gardetto, 2010, p. 225), estimating that printed newspaper products have just a decade before they are obsolete (Ell, 2018). Predictions such as these lend a sense of urgency to research regarding the effectiveness of paywalls and explain the focus on whether audiences will tolerate them and how newspapers can best make money from them. But analysis of the content that appears in front of and behind them is crucial to understanding the "how" of newspapers' paywall strategies. Just as the usefulness of knowing the types of content newspapers designated as open or closed is limited without knowing whether people will pay for online news at all, knowing that it is possible to monetize digital news content is fruitless without knowing how to do it. I now briefly outline the research on the four other areas of paywall studies before turning to the existing literature regarding paywall content. I then offer an in-depth review of Sjøvaag's work in particular.

2.1 *Paywalls as a Business Model*

Despite projections in 2009 that paywalls would never be able to recoup newspapers' losses from shrinking print readership (Langeveld, 2009), they have proliferated since then. Indeed, 2010 (Thompson, 2010), 2013 (Sjøvaag, 2015), 2014 (Steck, 2014), and 2016 (Found, 2016) have all been dubbed "the year of the paywall" by various journalists and scholars. But while many media outlets have implemented paywalls over the last seven years, the scholarly consensus is that paywalls alone are not enough to offset ever-falling revenue streams for newspapers (Grueskin, et al., 2011). This doesn't stop newspapers from trying, and there are those that have found some degree of success. Sjøvaag listed a variety of authors who have written on the business models surrounding newspapers' paywall implementations (Bakker, 2012; Casero-Ripollés & Izquierdo-Castillo, 2013; Collins, 2011; Graham & Greenhill, 2013; Graybeal & Hayes, 2011; Myllalahti, 2013; Pickard & Williams, 2014; Stahl, Schäfer, & Maass, 2004; Thurman & Herbert, 2007). Pickard and Williams list the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and the *New York Times* as examples of "American newspapers often hailed as pioneers and success stories" in terms of paywalls, though they note that even the newspapers most successful in implementing paywalls have "a mixed record" and have "struggled to adapt financially to the new digital environment" (Pickard & Williams, *Salvation or folly?*, 2014, p. 206). And Bakker points out that the existence of free digital news options makes it even more difficult for paywalls to cover losses in print revenue, especially for newspapers with "a general audience and news that can be obtained elsewhere" (2012, p. 632). Graybeal and Hayes agree, and they noted that paywalls had the most potential for success when populated with "micro-local" content for which there are no substitutes (2011, p. 138). Such an observation is an example of the intersection between paywall research on business models and content, and it shows the value of understanding what works behind a paywall and what doesn't.

In their case study of Spanish newspapers, Casero-Ripollés and Izquierdo-Castillo further discuss the inability of online revenues to make up for the continuous decline of newspapers' traditional revenue streams (Casero-Ripollés & Izquierdo-Castillo, 2013), and Myllalahti suggested that efforts to increase audience numbers through lower prices or discounted content – for example, the "5 weeks for 5 kroner" trial subscriptions all three newspapers in this study offer to new customers – can actually cannibalize and decrease digital revenues (Myllalahti, 2013, p. 190). Myllalahti also touches on paywall content when she notes that many paywalls

come down during significant events so that audiences are able to follow important events like Hurricane Sandy or the Boston marathon bombing (Myllalahti, 2013, p. 184).

All in all, the consensus among researchers concerned with paywalls as a viable business models for newspapers in the digital age is summed up nicely by Graham and Greenhill, who found that paywalls lacked “sufficient market presence to break down the highly integrated ‘free’ producer-consumer relationships existing on the internet” (Graham & Greenhill, 2013). That consumers are highly used to reading online news for free is a cornerstone of research focused on readers’ willingness to pay.

2.2 Willingness to Pay

A year and a half after implementing its paywall, The Wall Street Journal saw a steady rise in digital subscribers. While such a result might encourage other newspapers, it was also somewhat misleading in that The Wall Street Journal represents a specialized economic and business newspaper, and many readers could write off a subscription to it as a business expense (Patch, 2014). In a 2005 article, Hsiang Iris Chyi notes that audiences of omnibus newspapers – newspapers that appeal to a mass and not a niche or specialized audience – were far more difficult to convince to pay for online news (Chyi, Willingness to pay for online news: An empirical study on the viability of the subscription model, 2005, p. 133). Chyi points to the notion that most users of general interest online news believe close substitutes are readily available free of charge (Chyi, Willingness to pay for online news: An empirical study on the viability of the subscription model, 2005, p. 133). As Sjøvaag points out, Chyi’s view represents the scholarly consensus among researchers concerned with the willingness to pay question (Chyi, 2012; Goyanes, 2014; Halbheer, Stahl, Koenigsberg, & Lehmann, 2013; Cook & Attari, 2012; Picard, 2014)

Picard’s 2014 paywall study examined willingness to pay for online news in 10 countries – including the Nordic countries of Denmark and Finland, and his findings support Chyi’s (Picard, 2014). While not perfect stand-ins for Norway, which has historically enjoyed higher newspaper readership than even other Nordic countries and western countries in general (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 23), it is worth considering audiences’ willingness to pay in countries with

similar cultural backgrounds. In Denmark, just 10 percent of survey respondents in Picard's study said they were willing to pay for online news in 2014, with 14 percent expressing willingness to pay in Finland. When asked if they would be likely to pay for online news in the future, 11 percent of respondents in both countries said yes (Picard, 2014).

A recent study of local Norwegian newspapers found that, while interest in news was high in Norway, audiences' willingness to pay mirrored those of their Danish and Finnish counterparts, noting that local news is not perceived as valuable, niche content, worth paying for" (Olsen & Solvoll, 2017, p. 15). Olsen and Solvoll further noted that while online payment levels are relatively high in Norway, readers believe that online news should be free (Olsen & Solvoll, 2017, p. 15). It is perhaps unsurprising then that many newspapers today refrain from hard paywalls that block access to any and all content and instead choose a premium model that allows free access to general interest news while requiring a subscription for more exclusive content.

But even audiences interested in news can be difficult to convince to pay, as shown by Cook's and Attari's surveys of *New York Times* customers before and after the newspaper implemented its paywall. Asking customers if they planned to pay for online news after the paywall went up, Cook and Attari found that just 7 percent said they planned to pay, 12 percent had a print subscription that gave access to the digital version, 16 percent were unsure, and 65 percent planned not to pay (Cook & Attari, 2012, p. 684). While just 2 percent of respondents said they would not pay and ended up paying, customers who planned to pay were far less likely to actually follow through, with 6 percent of respondents saying they would pay and failing to do so (Cook & Attari, 2012, p. 684).

2.3 User Studies

If scholars have reached a consensus on paywall business models and customers' willingness to pay, Sjøvaag makes it clear that "User studies of audience adaptation to paywalls are full of discrepancies" (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 309). She notes that while studies have shown that younger audiences are more receptive to receiving their news online, it is unclear whether or not they would be more or less willing to pay for it than other age groups (Sjøvaag, 2015; Chiou &

Tucker, 2013; Goyanes, 2014; Grueskin, Seave, & Graves, 2011; Picard, 2014). Sjøvaag points to Lesley Chiou and Catherine Tucker, who found that readership in local U.S. markets decreased by more than 51 percent as a result of paywall implementation. Of the readership between the ages of 18-24, 99 percent quit reading after paywall implementation (Chiou & Tucker, 2013, p. 63).

But while Chiou's and Tucker's study found that virtually all young readers quit reading after paywall implementation, Sjøvaag notes that Goyanes found that younger readers exhibit a higher willingness to pay than other age groups (Goyanes, 2014, p. 744). Goyanes found three other factors that can predict a reader's willingness to pay as well. In addition to younger people being more willing to pay for news than older people, people who have made software purchases on smartphones are more likely to pay than those who have not; people with higher incomes are more likely to pay than people with lower incomes; and people who use Twitter at least once a week are more likely to pay than people who have never used Twitter (Goyanes, 2014, p. 744). Goyanes' depiction of a user with a high likelihood to pay fits nicely with the 2011 report by Grueskin, Seave, and Graves, who found a fair amount of optimism regarding mobile devices among news organizations (Grueskin, et al., 2011, p. 58). As to why mobile customers exhibit a higher willingness to pay than others, Grueksin, et al. noted that:

For most mobile phones and tablets, a commerce system is already in place, and the transaction is straightforward. Moreover, consumers have shown a willingness to pay for content on mobile devices, whether that involves ringtones or sports videos (Grueskin, et al., 2011, p. 81).

While studies like Goyanes' support the view of an ideal paywall user as a high-income, technically savvy, mobile user, the idea that those with higher incomes enjoy greater access to news has raised a number normative concerns.

2.4 Normative Concerns

A number of researchers have noted that paywalls' potential to contribute to the segregation and segmentation of media markets can be problematic (Picard, 2014; Pickard & Williams, 2014; Grueskin, Seave, & Graves, 2011; Pavlik, 2013). Indeed, as Sjøvaag notes, Pavlik suggests that erecting digital paywalls can damage "the democratic process" itself (Pavlik,

2013, p. 190). Of course, while Pavlik identifies potentially problematic aspects of paywalls, he notes that the underlying thesis of his study “is that innovation is the key to the viability of news media in the digital age” (Pavlik, 2013, p. 190). Pavlik concedes the need to find new, digital, revenue streams, but he, along with others, suggests that paywalls are incongruent with what he sees as newspapers’ civic responsibility to inform the public and foster debate among all interested members of society. (Myllalahti, 2013; Pavlik, 2013; Pickard, 2011). Pickard offers a stark take on the crisis facing traditional print journalism, arguing that “at stake is nothing less than saving the democracy- enabling fourth estate” (Pickard, 2011, p. 74).

While Pickard worries that “market-based initiatives, nonprofit alternatives, or new platforms” are incapable of serving the same public function as traditional print media, Brad A. Greenberg proposes that embracing the free market to an even greater extent is the newspaper industry’s best chance for survival, and he advocates that U.S. newspapers receive a temporary exemption from antitrust laws and be allowed to collude on paywall implementation to limit the amount of free competition newsgatherers face (Greenberg, 2011, p. 459). It is, of course, important to note that the United States and Norway have markedly different media markets. While government support of newspapers in the U.S. exists in the form of subsidies such as discounted postage rates, the idea of government entities interfering in any way in the business of news is highly stigmatized among journalists, many of whom are unaware that such subsidies even exist in the US (Pérez-Péna, 2010). In Norway, on the other hand, it is widely accepted that the government has a responsibility to ensure that newspapers are able to carry out their democratic functions, and state support for the press has been historically high (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). While an important distinction between the two countries, the difference in views regarding state subsidies of newspapers does not diminish the potential of paywalls to create problems of division, unequal access to information, and societal segmentation. It is for this reason that it is important to understand the kind of content newspapers choose to place in front of and behind their paywalls and to determine whether newspapers require would-be readers to pay for the “democracy-enabling” content Pickard discusses (Pickard, 2011, p. 74).

2.5 Paywall Content

As Sjøvaag points out, analysis of the types of articles that tend to appear in front of and

behind newspaper paywalls is one of the newest areas of paywall research. Myllalahti (2017), Sjøvaag (2015), and others have contributed to the topic, but while many researchers use the term “news values” in their work, it is often somewhat of a mischaracterization. For example, Sjøvaag’s analysis concerns what I would call news genres such as politics, crime, and sports. In fact, practically all existing research on newspapers’ online content profiles, even that which invokes the term “news values” as a theoretical jumping off point, focuses on which genres of news articles tend to be in front of and behind newspapers’ paywalls as opposed to the news values present within the articles themselves. Sjøvaag looks at politics, crime, economy, social issues, everyday life, culture, accidents, sports, and other. (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 312). Myllalahti brings up Galtung’s and Ruge’s news values, along with other lists by other researchers, but then proceeds to discuss digital newspaper content in terms of business, economy, politics, markets, tech, opinion, and features (Myllalahti, 2017, p. 467). Barbara Brandstetter and Jessica Schmalhofer discuss two primary aspects of digital newspaper content – uniqueness and use of characteristics of online journalism. While uniqueness is arguably a news value, characteristics of online journalism are simply opportunities such as multimediality, hypertextuality, and interactivity which are associated with digital platforms (Brandstetter & Schmalhofer, 2014).

While research such as this touches on news values tangentially, there is a dearth of studies examining the news values that lie within digital newspaper content. The research is fairly consistent in showing that content that works behind paywalls must be of a high quality and exclusive (Sjøvaag, 2015; Myllalahti, 2017; Kvalheim, 2013), but the news values outlined by Galtung and Ruge can provide a much more in-depth analysis of what kind of content works best in front of and behind newspapers’ paywalls.

2.6 Introducing the Paywall

While she does not look at news values – at least not in the same sense as I define them in this study – Sjøvaag’s work informs this project, and it is therefore worthwhile to discuss her findings in more detail before moving forward. Sjøvaag described her 2015 study of the three Schibsted-owned Norwegian newspapers *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende*, and *Stavangers Aftenblad*, as follows:

What this study primarily seeks to do is to provide data that can help describe if and to what extent news content changes with the introduction of a paywall, and what type of content is reserved for paying customers only. This should in turn serve as a baseline from which to analyse what type of content is monetized in the digital environment in which these newspapers operate. (2015, p. 311)

Sjøvaag did this through a comparative analysis of the three newspapers digital front pages over the course of a year and a half. She used a week of continuous coverage from June 2012, January 2013, and January 2014 from each newspaper. She selected to analyze the front page in favor of the entire digital product “to reflect the news agenda as it is presented on the main online domain of the newsrooms (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 311). She identifies the structure of *Aftenposten*’s paywall – a metered model compared to the premium model used by *Bergens Tidende*, *Stavangers Aftenblad*, and the three newspapers in this study – as a limiting factor in comparing it to the other newspapers she examined (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 312).

Indeed, Sjøvaag found that *Aftenposten*’s digital content profile did not change significantly after it introduced its paywall. She credits this to the fact that a metered model makes no particular distinction between open and closed content. Instead, the first eight articles a given user selects during a given week to read are open, regardless of which one the user selects. All other articles are closed. In other words, a user who reads an article after reading eight other articles will be required to pay, while a different user reading the same article before reading any other articles will be able to see it for free. For this reason, my comparison to her findings will focus primarily on the results obtained for *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad*. These two newspapers and the three newspapers in this study all have paywalls of the premium variety, which allow unlimited access to some content while always requiring a subscription for other content. Furthermore, all five fit more nicely into the category of regional newspapers and can thus be seen as more comparable in terms of their market positions. *Aftenposten* is technically a regional news, but as previously stated, it has the highest readership of any morning newspaper in Norway (Medienorge, 2017).

Sjøvaag’s findings from her analysis of *Bergens Tidende* revealed that it utilized a relatively liberal paywall model, with just 18 percent of its content locked behind the paywall.

According to Sjøvaag, “most of the paywalled content consists of local, political stories” (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 313). At the same time as *Bergens Tidende* required readers to pay for local, political content, the newspaper reduced its coverage of sports. Sjøvaag noted that before the paywall, sports coverage made up 22 percent of *Bergens Tidende*’s online content. After the implementation of the paywall, sports coverage made up just 10 percent. She found also that all sports coverage on *Bergens Tidende* post-paywall implementation was in front of the paywall (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 313). Accidents and crime also tended to appear in front of the wall, and Sjøvaag attributed this to “a principle present in the Norwegian media landscape that news that concerns health and safety – stories about extreme road conditions, weather hazards, fires and natural disruptions – should be openly accessible to all” (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 315), citing Sigurd Høst’s 2013 report on Norwegian newspaper markets (Høst, 2014, p. 20).

Sjøvaag found similar trends in *Stavangers Aftenblad*’s digital content, although she noted that it operated in a less liberal manner than *Bergens Tidende*, opening just 66 percent of its content to nonsubscribers and closing off 34 percent – twice as much as *Bergens Tidende* (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 315). Aside from the differences in the amounts of content both newspapers locked behind their paywalls, Sjøvaag found that *Stavangers Aftenblad*’s digital front page underwent similar changes regarding types of content, with local, political coverage increasing behind the paywall and sports coverage decreasing (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 315).

In comparing the closed content of *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad*, Sjøvaag found that politics, social issues, economy, and culture were the four genres found most often behind the paywalls at each newspaper with *Bergens Tidende* closing 32 percent, 39 percent, 29 percent, and 20 percent of these categories respectively. *Stavangers Aftenblad* closed off more of all types of content – excluding accidents, of which it closed 0 percent while *Bergens Tidende* closed 4 percent. *Stavangers Aftenblad* closed 56 percent of political coverage, 48 percent of economic coverage, 60 percent of coverage of social issues, and 49 percent of cultural coverage (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 316). While Sjøvaag suggests that these categories are closed more often than others as a result of the higher amount of resources required for their production, she admits that “these categories also contain cheap agency clips and quick news updates” (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 319). So, while an analysis of news genres located in front of and behind newspapers’ paywalls can shed light on general trends, it makes no real distinction between types of content within genres. It is

in this regard that analysis of news values can be of assistance, though it should be noted that even news values do not offer a complete picture of where and how newspapers place different content.

It is with this notion in mind that I will now turn to the methodology used in this project.

3 [Methodology]

As I have previously noted, my work follows the rubric Sjøvaag used in her own study. I will now outline the methodology used in this project, taking care to note where my methodology differs from Sjøvaag's. My research consists of two primary components – a set of content analyses and a series of semistructured interviews.

Like Sjøvaag, my content analyses consist of comparisons of the digital front pages of three Norwegian newspapers owned by the same parent company. Whereas she examined three of the largest regional newspapers in Norway, all owned by Schibsted, I look at three with much smaller circulation figures – *Drammens Tidende*, *Tønsbergs Blad* and *Gjengangeren*. All three are owned by Amedia.

Also like Sjøvaag, I perform a content analysis of online articles on each of the newspapers' digital front pages. However, Sjøvaag took samples from 2012, 2013 and 2014 in real time. Sjøvaag's study took place during the newspapers' implementations of their paywalls. Performing such a content analysis in this project is impossible, as the newspapers in this study have had paywalls active for a number of years. According to staff at all three newspapers in this study, stories are often "opened" – placed in front of the paywall – after a period of time, and some stories that were originally open get closed depending on the amount of web traffic they generate. This factor makes it practically impossible to determine with a sufficient degree of certainty where the newspapers placed past stories (Braathen; Larsen; Kydland, 2017, personal communication).

To get around the above issue, I have selected to perform a content analysis on just one week of online coverage in real time. The semistructured interviews with staff at each newspaper regarding their respective paywall strategies will give a sense of how each newspaper has historically handled online content in relation to the paywalls. While not a perfect picture of the differences between open and closed content, personal interviews provide the best approximation of the kinds of content the newspapers have historically used in front of and behind their paywalls and how the newspapers' strategies have evolved over time. I now outline the methods used in this study, beginning with content analysis. In addition to discussing the specific methods

used in this project, I offer background on content analysis and semistructured interviews as general research methods.

3.1 Content Analyses

Kimberly Neuendorf notes that “content analysis may be briefly defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (2017, p. 1). Content analysis should follow the scientific method as closely as possible, and good content analyses strive for objectivity or intersubjectivity, an a priori design reliability, validity, generalizability, and replicability (Neuendorf, 2017, pp. 20-21). Regarding objectivity and intersubjectivity specifically, Neuendorf turns to Berger and Luckman’s *The Social Construction of Reality* to argue that “all human inquiry is inherently subjective” (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 18). Because this argument makes it difficult to achieve true objectivity regarding practically anything in which human coders are placing units into categories based on variables, she turns to what she and other researchers refer to as intersubjectivity (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 18; Babbie, 1986, p. 27). In other words, Neuendorf states that, because facts are “what are socially agreed upon,” it is vital to “strive for consistency among inquiries” (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 18). This facet of content analysis is directly related to the process of coding, as we shall see now.

According to Neuendorf, content analysis involves selecting variables in an effort to measure the content of particular messages and conceptualizing, defining, operationalizing, and coding these variables to fit the study. She says also that the actual coding process should “use at least two coders to establish intercoder reliability” (Neuendorf, 2017, pp. 40-41). Using multiple coders and ensuring that they agree on how units are coded goes towards the creation of intersubjectivity. And using intersubjectivity allows for content analyses to be applied to a variety of topics not inherently quantitative. For example, according to Neuendorf, content analyses can be used to study newspaper content, winery websites, and even the vocal patterns of the cartoon character Porky Pig (2017, pp. 1-2).

In terms of measuring the effectiveness of a content analysis, Neuendorf brings up several threats to the method’s ability to achieve reliable results, specifically: a poorly executed coding scheme, inadequate coder training, coder fatigue and coder drift, and the presence of a

rogue coder (2017, p. 170). Of particular note for this study is coder drift, which Neuendorf defines as “the general phenomenon of coders changing their habits of coding over time” (2017, p. 170). I will return to this threat and other points of Neuendorf’s below after outlining the method used in this study’s content analyses in more detail.

Regarding the content analyses performed for this project, I have selected to use the same software as Sjøvaag to capture screenshots of the front page of each newspaper’s website between 08:00 and 24:00 over a weeklong period, with screenshots collected on average every hour. Data collection began at 08:00 on Monday, February 19, 2018, and ended at 24:00 on Sunday, February 25, 2018. This resulted in a total of 357 screenshots, 119 from each newspaper. I focused specifically on the number of unique stories present at each newspaper. Unique as I use it here refers to individual stories. The same stories appeared multiple times across multiple screenshots, but each one was counted only once at each newspaper. However, if a story appeared on the digital front pages of more than one of the newspapers in the study, it was counted at each one.

In other words, the units of data collection in this study are digital front pages from each newspaper, and the units of analysis are the individual stories that appear on each front page. Analysis of the data includes quantitative aspects such as the average percentages of the content available freely and that which is locked behind the paywall, as well as the percentages of different news values found in front of and behind the paywalls. In order to get a clearer picture, I duplicate Sjøvaag’s method of analyzing news genres as well in an effort to reveal how the genre of a story and the news values within it interact to determine its place in relation to the paywall. Sjøvaag utilized nine categories in her analysis which include: politics, culture, everyday life, sports, economy, social issues, crime, accidents and other (Sjøvaag, 2015), and I use these same categories.

These news genres and values represent variables in this study and are attributed to the articles found on the digital front pages of each newspaper. Each article is marked with one genre and one value.

The genres are, for the most part, relatively apparent, though some overlap can exist between them. For example, businesses protesting a tax increase could be classified as a politics story or

an economy story. If it affects consumers, it could also be part of everyday life. For the purposes of this study, I count the story in the genre in which it best fits as determined by factors such as the headline, lead paragraph and sources present in the story. Of course, this potential for ambiguity and uncertainty in classifying stories under a single genre highlights the need to dig deeper. News values cross genres and are not tied to any one type of story. For example, stories of all genres should be unambiguous and meaningful to readers, and it is for this reason that I believe an examination of the underlying news values of open and closed stories is so valuable. Of course, the same overlap exists in relation to news values as well. A story can reference individuals, be negative in nature, and represent continuing news coverage at the same time. Regarding coding, Sjøvaag used a “statistical program based on a coding scheme of over 60 variables designed to register stories according to topical content” (2015, p. 311). I elected to use human coding in this study, though I utilized a coding scheme similar to Sjøvaag’s regarding the news genres variable. My reason for choosing human coding over computer-aided text analysis (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 40) relates back to the ambiguity inherent in many stories. Sjøvaag noted that her coding scheme served to place stories in “broad, topical categories” based on story content. She identified keywords – such as terrorism and war in the political category, and education and immigration in the social issues category – that would determine where the program placed each story (2015, p. 19).

While Sjøvaag’s is a perfectly reasonable approach, I believe it has the potential to fall short when classifying more complex stories – for example, politicians discussing immigration reform as a result of an act of terror. Furthermore, I believe that my background in journalism as both a reporter and an editor equip me to determine stories’ genres and values. Of course, human coding can still result in unreliability thanks to the aforementioned threats, and I accounted for that in this study through the use of two additional coders apart from myself. More ambiguous stories especially were coded multiple times to ensure that they were coded correctly. I do, however, recognize that issues with reliability might persist, given that many stories could fall under multiple categories. Out of necessity, I select only the primary news genre and news value present in each story. While a more thorough analysis would be beneficial and more enlightening, restrictions on time and resources make it impossible to dig deeper for purposes of

this study. I address this limitation – along with opportunities for further study – again in the discussion section.

One additional alteration to Sjøvaag’s content analysis worth mentioning is my analysis of “top” stories for each newspaper. I classify top stories as those that appear at the very top of the newspapers’ digital front pages. In cases where two or more stories appear at the top, I classify the leftmost one as the top story, given that Norwegian writing is read from left to right. It is important to note, of course, that hourly screenshots do not necessarily capture each and every top story. A news story appearing at the top can be replaced minutes after it is placed in the event of breaking news that staff deems more important. While it is unlikely that the screenshots capture each and every story that appeared at the top of the newspapers’ digital front pages, I believe an analysis of the top stories found in the screenshots provides a more precise view of the newspapers’ general strategies regarding selection and placement of different kinds of content. To borrow from Sjøvaag, the newspapers’ digital front pages were selected for analysis “not only collected to ascertain editorial priorities, but also to reflect the impression given to both regular and occasional visitors as to what kind of content the online papers offer for free and what content comes at a cost” (2015, p. 311). I believe that the stories at the top of the websites give the best impression of these editorial priorities, as they are the first – and often largest – articles readers see upon visiting the websites.

3.2 Semistructured Interviews

According to Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale, qualitative research interviews are used “to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (2015, p. 3), and semistructured interviews are those “with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena” (2015, p. 6). They note that interview questions “should be brief and simple,” and that “open questions provided the fullest answers” (2015, p. 160). A key component of semistructured interviews is the interviewers ability to fill in gaps in questioning throughout the interviewing process and to ask follow-up questions. In other words, semistructured interviews use general outlines as interview guides and it is up to the interviewer to pose additional follow-up and probing

questions based on the conversation with the interviewees (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 161).

Regarding the quality of semistructured interviews, Brinkmann and Kvale list six criteria which include the extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers; short interviewer questions and long subject answers; the degree and relevancy of follow-up and clarification questions; the interview being interpreted throughout the interview; attempts by the interviewer to verify his or her interpretations of the subject's answers; and the interview creating a self-reliant story (2015, p. 192). The interview guides for this study were created in accordance to these criteria, and all three interviewees met the qualifications of good subjects in that they were "cooperative and well-motivated", "eloquent and knowledgeable", and "truthful and consistent" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 193). All three interviewees in this study can be considered elites, which Brinkmann and Kvale describe as "persons who are leaders or experts in a community, usually in powerful positions" (2015, p. 171). All three serve as leaders of their respective newspapers and are integral in the everyday decision making process and longterm strategic planning that occur at each newspaper. A background in journalism is especially helpful in this project, as Brinkmann and Kvale note that "the interviewer should be knowledgeable about the topic of concern and master the technical language, as well as be familiar with the social situation and biography of the interviewee" (2015, p. 171). The interviewees' status as elites also helps allay potential concerns regarding the "prevailing power asymmetry of the interview situation" (2015, p. 171) when non-elites serve as interview subjects. On the other hand, elite interviews have the potential to raise concerns regarding anonymity and confidentiality. The interviewees' status as elites and the fact that the newspapers at which they are employed are named make it difficult to disguise their identities. This situation is remedied in this study by gaining consent from all three interviewees to use their full names and job titles in reference to their responses, and appropriate authorization was received from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). The letter of authorization, along with all three consent forms and the interview guide, can be found in the appendix.

Regarding the specifics of the interviews in this study, all three were conducted over the course of two days in October 2017 and lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and 20 minutes. They covered topics related to the original implementation of the newspapers' paywalls, the strategies used in creating both open and closed content, and the evolution of those strategies

over time. Respondants also were asked about certain news values – primarily immediacy, continuity, reference to individuals, and negativity. While the full interview guide can be found in the appendix, I think it is useful to outline briefly the areas on which I focused during the interviews. Given the interviews' semistructured nature, most of the questions resulted from interviewees' answers, and the interview guide contained questions related to three general topics: individuals' backgrounds at their newspapers of employment; technical information regarding the implementation, structure, and use of the paywalls; and interviewees' interpretations of news values and newsgathering techniques.

It is important to note that the interview guide lists reference to elite countries and people, reference to individuals, and negativity as the four news values interviewees were specifically instructed to discuss, however interviewee input showed that immediacy and continuity played a much larger role than any of these four, and these two news values were substituted for the original four in the second two interviews.

Also of note is that interviewees were not asked specifically about the market position in which their newspapers operate. The differences in the market positions of the three newspapers is determined primarily from circulation data, although the interviewees were asked questions about allocation of resources in different communities as well as which communities they considered to be their primary audiences.

As previously stated, I chose to conduct interviews to compensate for the impracticality of performing a content analysis on articles from previous years using the same method as I did for the content analysis from this year. Interviewees provided examples of stories that worked exceptionally well behind the paywalls, stories that worked exceptionally poorly behind the paywall, and general trends and guidelines in how and why some stories are opened and some are closed. While not a complete representation of the papers' historical content profiles since the introduction of the paywalls, the interviews are a solid approximation of the newspapers' strategies in relation to their paywalls and, more importantly, they provide insight into how those strategies have evolved. That said, I believe that the interviews go a long way in informing the content analysis.

With the methods of this study clear, I now provide a brief operationalization of each

news genre and news value along with some hypothetical examples to clarify their meaning as used in this project. These operationalizations serve as my coding scheme for the content analyses and inform the semistructured interviews. I then move on to the findings obtained from both methods.

3.3 News Genres

In operationalizing the nine news values I use in this study, I rely for the most part on Sjøvaag's operationalizations so as to better compare my findings to her work. Because of the hyperlocal nature of the three newspapers I analyze, certain aspects of her operationalizations are incongruent with my approach. I expand on these operationalizations – and outline the areas where mine differ from Sjøvaag's – below.

Politics

For most of the genres, I utilize Sjøvaag's categorizations. In terms of politics though, this is not practical for analyzing the hyperlocal coverage at the three newspapers in this study. Sjøvaag uses the keywords “war, terrorism and political violence, demonstrations and state administration” to mark stories as political (2015, p. 322). These topics are uncommon at the local level at which these newspapers operate, and so do little to assist in categorizing their content. I define political coverage simply as coverage of mayors, town councils, political parties, and other government agencies and state actors.

Culture

Culture is a rather complex term and requires simplification for use in this study. For the purposes of this study, culture refers primarily to art, music, royalty, and other forms of entertainment other than sports (2015, p. 322). Stories that discuss Norwegian culture as opposed to cultures from other countries are also counted as cultural stories. This definition is by no means comprehensive, but it helps to clarify an otherwise somewhat abstract category.

Everyday life

Everyday life as a genre refers to stories that provide useful information about daily

existence. Sjøvaag uses the keywords “family issues and religion, leisure, hobby and consumer issues, traffic and infrastructure stories, and weather” (2015, p. 322). Stories focused on individuals talking about their lives also are counted under this category if they do not fit well into other genres.

Sports

While this category includes coverage of football matches and international sporting events, it also includes less traditional sports stories about the struggles, triumphs, or experiences of individual athletes, even if the story is not about the athlete’s performance during a specific match. While Sjøvaag does not outline keywords for the sports category, I believe it is reasonable to include coverage of athletes, sports teams, and leisure activities such as skiing in which professional athletes compete.

Economy

Economic stories are varied in nature and include regulations or notices of interest to businesses, announcements of bankruptcies, closings, or new businesses, and other stories related to business or finance. Sjøvaag’s keywords are “business and industry, markets, the energy, agriculture and tourism sectors, personal economy, science and industry” (2015, p. 322).

Social issues

Social issues is another somewhat abstract genre that requires specification. For the purpose of this study, coverage of social issues refers to coverage of topics such as the environment, public health, and education. In other words, social issues are those issues important to society as a whole.

Crime

Crime is a seemingly simple genre that in actuality spans a variety of different types of coverage. Reports of specific criminal activity such as vandalism, assault, and drunk driving are crime stories, but so are stories about public safety in general. Warnings from the police about computer viruses or phone scams, advice about how readers can protect themselves from criminal activity, and announcements about new police initiatives all count as crime coverage.

Sjøvaag's keywords are murders, violence, crime of gain, police matters and trials" (2015, p. 322).

Accidents

While coverage of accidents includes traditional stories about car crashes and accidental fires, they also include coverage related to technical malfunctions that lead to disruptions of some kind. A story about a bus breaking down and blocking a road, while not a crash or a wreck, is still considered an accident for the purposes of this study. Sjøvaag does not list keywords for accidents, and I believe my definitions are sufficient.

Other

Simply put, the "other" category is reserved for stories that do not fit nicely into any of the other eight categories. Given that this category is reserved simply for stories that do not fit elsewhere, it is difficult to operationalize it any further. Sjøvaag does not list keywords for this category, so again, this loose definition will have to suffice.

3.4 *News Values*

As previously stated, I use Galtung's and Ruge's 12 news values (Galtung & Ruge, 1965) in analyzing the stories found on the digital front pages of the three newspapers in this study. I have already provided descriptions of these values, and I now operationalize them further as I use them in my analysis.

Frequency/Immediacy

As I use it in this study, immediacy might be a more appropriate label for this news value. I judge immediacy based on the timeframe around the events portrayed in each story. A story about a fire that took place the same day it was written about would meet the criteria for immediacy, while a follow-up on a fire that happened years ago would not.

Threshold

As threshold relates to the number of people affected by a given story, it is important to

account for the size of each newspaper's readership. While it is not possible to get an exact count of the number of readers affected by any given story, stories about items of general public interest that go towards creating an informed public – for example, stories regarding changes to city tax codes, road closures, and new businesses – meet the threshold requirement. Stories about the struggles of one particular family do not. However, if the family's situation were endemic of many residents in the papers' areas of coverage, it would.

Unambiguity

While unambiguity is easy to define, it is more difficult to operationalize. For my purposes, a story is considered unambiguous if there is just one side. Employees protesting an employer while the employer defends itself is not unambiguous. Employees of a particular company coming together to raise money for a cause is.

Meaningfulness

While the case could be made that a newspaper should make every one of its articles meaningful to its audience, that does not go very far in operationalizing this value for practical use. I define a meaningful story as one that is of cultural interest to the newspapers' audiences but not necessarily to a wider audience. While road closures are meaningful in the sense that residents have an interest in knowing about them, there is nothing about them that makes them meaningful in a cultural sense. In this project, a *Gjengangeren* story is considered meaningful if it relates to the culture of Horten, a *Tønsbergs Blad* story is meaningful if it relates to the culture of Tønsberg, and a *Drammens Tidende* story is meaningful if it relates to the culture of Drammen. This can include prominent local individuals or events; historic businesses, buildings, and places; and local sports teams and clubs.

Consonance

Consonance is a somewhat obscure value and is by far the most difficult to operationalize. I have chosen therefore not to focus on it, as it could be said about nearly every story any given newspaper produces. Should it present itself as a compelling news value during the study, I will address it then.

Unexpectedness

While unexpectedness is the inverse of consonance, it is much easier to operationalize. Simply put, a story is considered unexpected when it focuses on something outside what would be considered the norm for everyday life. Traffic accidents, businesses closing, and a resident winning millions in the lottery are examples of unexpectedness. Coverage of the latest football game or city council meeting is not. Of course if two city councillors get in a fist fight, the city council coverage would have an element of unexpectedness.

Continuity

One of the easier values to operationalize, continuity as I use it refers to a story about which the newspapers have already written or a story about an event that has happened and that continues to develop. Follow-ups on accidents or crimes and developments in longstanding debates are examples of continuous stories. The second factor is important in that a story can be continuous even if a newspaper has not previously written about it. A story about a conflict between two parties that has been going on for a year without being covered can be considered continuous as well.

Composition

As with consonance, this value does not readily lend itself to operationalization. It is problematic to examine it within individual stories, as it, by definition, relates to a diverse number of subjects. I therefore do not use it in reference to the individual stories I analyze.

Reference to elite countries

Reference to elite countries deals with coverage of countries other than Norway. In this project, I use it to refer specifically to the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council – The United States, China, Russia, France and Great Britain. I also include neighboring countries like Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, along with Germany, as it is the largest European economy (Eurostat, 2017). This list is by no means complete, I believe it suffices for this project.

Reference to elite people

As with threshold, it is important to keep the size of each newspaper's audience in mind when operationalizing reference to elite people. For the purposes of this project, "elite people" refers not only to prominent Norwegians like Erna Solberg or King Harald, though they certainly count. It refers also to locally important people like Petter Berg and Are Karlsen, the mayors of Tønsberg and Horten respectively.

Reference to individuals

Reference to individuals relates to human faces. I do not believe it requires much in the way of operationalization. Suffice it to say that a story that embodies this news value is one that focuses primarily on people.

Negativity

Negativity is another seemingly self-evident value that requires some clarification. The employees criticizing their employer is not representative of negativity, and as it is used in this study, negativity refers specifically to bad news. Death, bankruptcy, accidents, fires, and similar events are what constitute negative news coverage. In other words, it is not coverage that is negative in nature, but coverage of negative events.

4 [Findings]

Before entering into a discussion and analysis of the data collected during this project, I detail the findings of both the content analysis and the interviews. The findings from the content analysis focus primarily on the percentages of open and closed stories and the percentages of the previously listed news values and news genres placed in front of and behind the newspapers' paywalls. The findings from the interviews focus primarily on respondents' use of news values in determining story placement in relation to the paywalls and the evolution of the newspapers' paywall strategies since the paywalls' implementation. This section is broken down into six subsections: Content analysis of *Drammens Tidende*, content analysis of *Gjengangeren*, content analysis of *Tønsbergs Blad*, interview with Janne Sundelius Braathen of *Drammens Tidende*, interview with Guri Larsen of *Gjengangeren*, and interview with Sigmund Kydland of *Tønsbergs Blad*. The sections on the content analyses provide the findings from the overall content analyses as well as from the analyses of the top stories identified for each newspaper. I go into further detail regarding many of the findings later on in the discussion section that follows.

On a final note, due to the fact that all three newspapers in this study are owned by Amedia, they are free to use one another's stories as well as stories from other Amedia newspapers. In cases where stories from outside newspapers are used, the stories must appear in the same place as they do at the newspaper of origin. For example, if *Gjengangeren* uses a story from *Moss Avis* that appears behind *Moss Avis*'s paywall, it must also place the story behind its own paywall. In addition, all three newspapers used stories from news wires such as NTB, the Norwegian News Agency. These stories appear exclusively in front of the paywalls at all three newspapers.. A study of the proportion of original content to content from outside sources on the newspapers' digital front pages would be of interest, though it is outside the scope of this project. I return to this point again in my conclusion. In this project, I make no distinction between a newspaper's own stories, the stories of other Amedia newspapers including the ones in this study, and wire stories. The figures instead represent the total story counts including all three categories of stories. Larger iterations of all figures referenced can be found in the "Figures" section of this thesis. With these points in mind, I turn now to the results of the content analyses.

4.1 Content Analyses

Regarding the news values that appear in the figures, it should be noted that for a news value to be listed, it must have been present as a primary news value in at least one story in at least one newspaper. For this reason, the values of composition, consonance, reference to elite nations, and unambiguity are not listed in the graphs that can be found in the Figures section. I previously addressed why composition and reference to elite nations were unlikely to appear as primary news values, and unambiguity and consonance were not present in any story as the primary news values. These two values are abstract and are difficult to call the primary value in any story in which they might appear. For example, a story in *Gjengangeren* about the Horten Vinmonopolet being named store of the year – “Årets butikk” – could be said to be unambiguous (Broms, 2018b). However, the story also used quotes from the manager along with a photo of him and some employees. This resulted in the story being marked with reference to individuals over unambiguity. Before discussing the news values found in stories at each newspaper, I first outline some general statistics regarding total open and closed content and the distribution of stories among Sjøvaag’s news genres at each newspaper, beginning with *Drammens Tidende*.

Drammens Tidende

The content analysis showed that *Drammens Tidende*, the newspaper with the largest circulation of the three in this study, has the most lax paywall strategy of the three newspapers. *Drammens Tidende*’s digital front page had an average of 60 stories per day, with 63.33 percent (38) of them located in front of the paywall and 36.67 percent (22) located behind the paywall. The percentages of top stories followed this trend as well. *Drammens Tidende* averaged 8 top stories per day with 75 percent (6) open and 25 percent (2) closed.

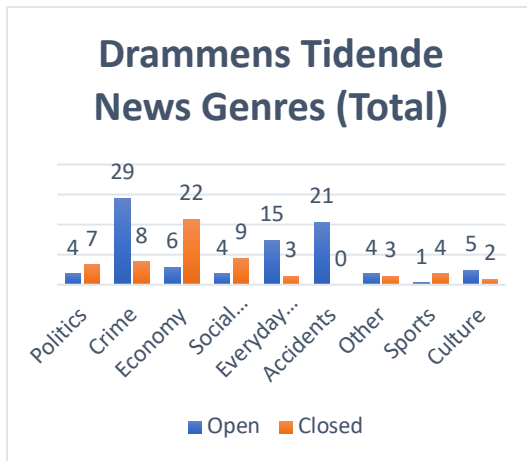


FIGURE 1 — *Drammens Tidende* News Genres (Total)

Regarding the news genres present on *Drammens Tidende*'s front page, Figure 1 shows that crime stories were the most prominent with a total of 37 crime-related stories throughout the week. Of these, 78 percent (29) were open and 22 percent (8) were closed. Stories related to economics and accidents were also prominent, totalling 28 and 21 respectively. But while 79 percent (22) of the 28 economic stories were closed, there were no closed accident stories. This point about accidents held true for all three newspapers and is consistent with reports from the interviewees that accidents are never placed behind paywalls. At *Drammens Tidende*, accident stories ranged from simple reports of police and fire department responses to calls – such as the story detailing the fire department response to a report of smoke coming from a dumpster (Christoffersen, 2018) – to coverage of more unusual accidents – such as the story about police finding a car engine several meters away from its vehicle as they responded to a crash involving a visibly drunk 20-year-old (Røkeberg & Moen, 2018). Economic stories were similarly varied. They included, for example, coverage of the Vatican Library's decision to hire a Drammen company to digitize and store what the Vatican considers the 500 most important documents in the world (Moen, 2018d), as well as coverage of local business owners such as the story about an accountant quitting her job to open up a bakery (Havnaas, Sa opp jobben og startet gårdsbakeri, 2018a), both of which were closed.

In addition to stories about crime and accidents, everyday life stories were primarily open, with 83 percent (15) appearing in front of the paywall. The story explaining that Nettbuss would be closing two local bus stops out of safety concerns related to ice is a good example of an

open everyday life story on *Drammens Tidende* (Moen, 2018a). Meanwhile, stories about social issues joined economic stories as the other genre *Drammens Tidende* closed the most, with 69 percent (9) social issues stories appearing behind the paywall. Social issues, contained a wide variety of stories. Stories such as the one detailing a report by a male government employee that he was sexually harrassed (Bergaplass, 2018) as well as that which detailed a teenager's struggle with an eating disorder (Torgersen, 2018) were classified under the umbrella of social issues. Both of these stories were closed.

The wide variety of stories that fall into each of the nine genres highlight the importance of digging deeper into the news values within stories across all genres. Understanding which genres end up in front of and behind the paywall more often is informative, but it alone is not enough to give a clear indication of the types of content newspapers place in front of and behind their paywalls. Accidents might always be open, but it is important to know what it is about those 8 crime stories that led to them going behind the paywall. Looking at genres alone cannot differentiate between the story about arme police responding to a report of a shooting (Moen, 2018b) and the profile of a serial burglar who came to Norway in 2002 and whom Norwegian authorities have had difficulty removing from the country since then (Havnaas, 2018b). The former was open and the latter was closed. And why were 21 percent (6) of the economic stories left open? What is the difference between the closed story about the accountant-turned-baker and, for example, the open story about the Norwegian tax administration sending letters to the roughly 175,000 Norwegians who receive their tax reports both digitally and on paper (Urstad, 2018a)? The need to analyze news values becomes even more apparent when considering the genres with a high amount of variation not only in the kinds of stories they include, but in where they were placed in relation to the paywalls as well. Stories about politics, sports, culture and other topics often end up on both sides of the paywall. Within these four categories, 14 stories appeared in front of the paywall and 16 appeared behind the paywall.

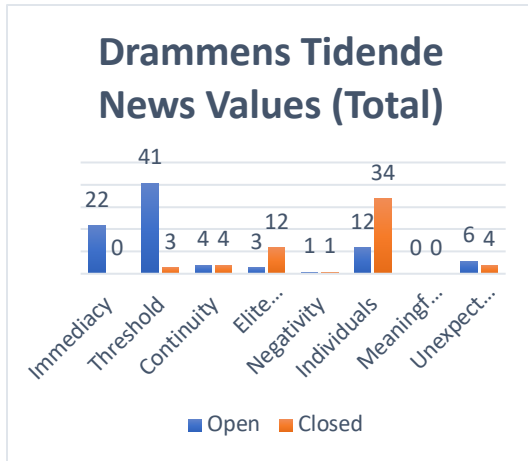


FIGURE 2 — *Drammens Tidende* News Values (Total)

Analysis of the news values helps in this respect, and Figure 2 shows that stories where the primary value was immediacy or threshold were almost exclusively placed in front of the paywall. In fact, none of the 22 stories tagged with immediacy appeared behind the paywall while just 7 percent (3) of the threshold stories were closed. Meanwhile, stories with a strong focus on individuals and elite individuals were far more likely to end up behind the paywall. Out of 15 stories about elite individuals, 80 percent (12) were closed, and 74 percent (34) of the 46 stories referencing individuals were closed. Values like continuity, negativity, and unexpectedness were more evenly distributed in front of and behind the paywall, with continuity and negativity appearing half the time in front of and half the time behind the paywall. Unexpectedness appeared in front of the wall in 60 percent of the stories in which it was the primary value.

But more than anything else, the analysis of news genres and news values in a vacuum shows that neither of them are sufficient to completely explain where and why certain stories are placed where they are. But by looking at them together, it is possible to get a much better idea of the types of stories for which *Drammens Tidende* charges readers. While sorting the content in front of and behind the paywall on both genres and values is somewhat messy, it offers a better look at what types of stories are open and which are closed within each news genre.

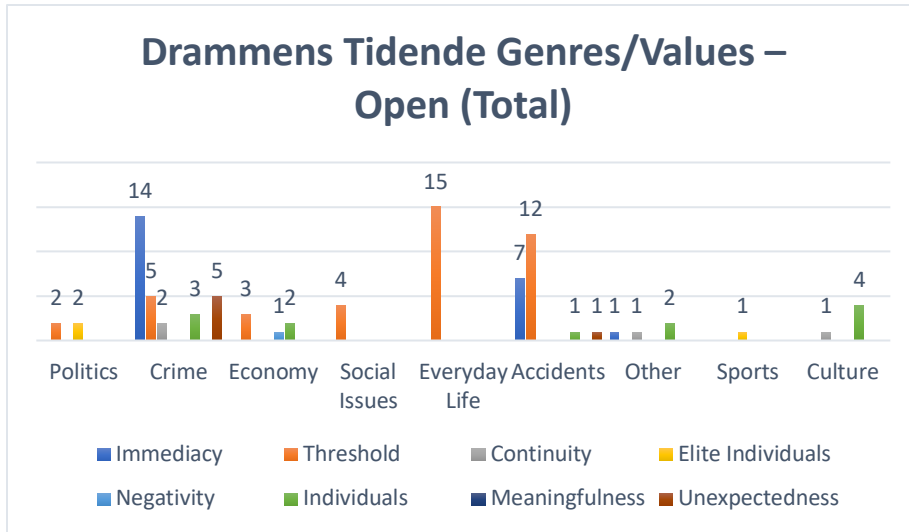


FIGURE 3 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Open (Total)

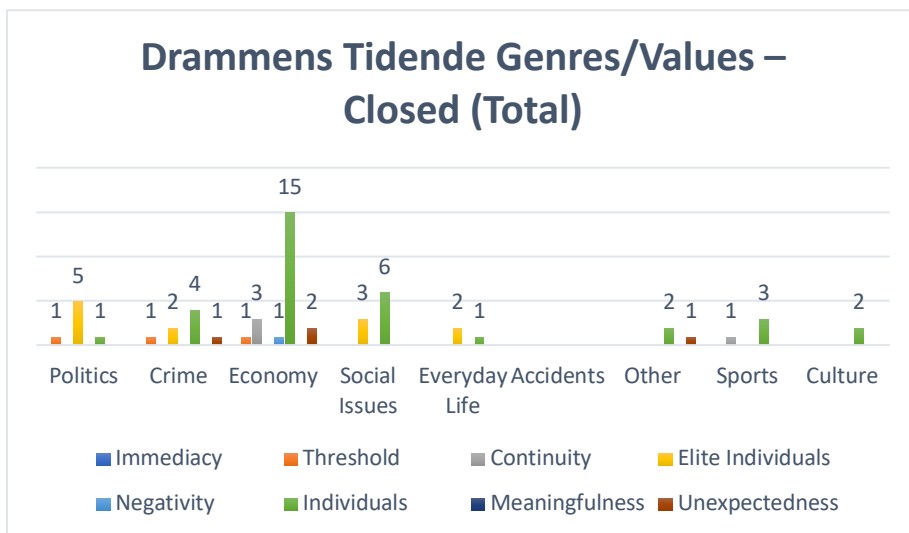


FIGURE 4 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Closed (Total)

A cursory glance at Figure 3 reveals that everyday life and accident stories with threshold as their primary value, along with crime and accident stories with immediacy as their primary value, are by far the most likely to appear in front of the paywall. In fact, crime and accident stories made up 21 (95 percent) of 22 of the stories with immediacy as their primary value. And Figure 4 shows that stories about economic and social issues featuring reference to an individual as their primary value are most likely to be closed, with these two genres making up 21 (62 percent) out of 34 stories with reference to individuals as their primary value. Reference

to elite individuals, the other value most likely to end up behind the paywall, was attributed primarily to stories about politics and social issues. Of particular note is that all 6 crime stories that had reference to an individual or an elite individual as their primary value appeared behind the paywall.

In other words, a crime story such as the one about the serial burglar – categorized under the crime genre and with reference to individuals as its primary value – is likely to be closed, while stories like the one detailing police handing out fines to residents who don’t fully scrape their windshields in wintery weather (Johansen, 2018) – categorized as crime and with threshold as its primary news value – are likely to be open. I delve further into the interplay of news genres and news values in the discussion section that follows. For now, I turn to *Drammens Tidende*’s top stories.

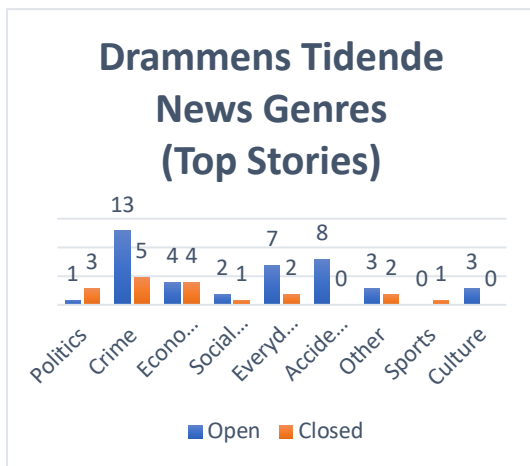


FIGURE 5 — *Drammens Tidende* News Genres (Top Stories)

Regarding the genres of top news stories at *Drammens Tidende* and the news values within them, the analysis revealed that top stories tend to follow the same general trend as the digital product as a whole. This was especially true regarding the genres. Figure 5 shows that the three biggest categories of open genres were crime, everyday life and accidents. These three genres respectively made up 32 percent (13), 17 percent (7), and 20 percent (8) of the 41 top stories in front of the paywall. However, crime stories were also the largest category of closed top stories, making up 28 percent (5) of them, with economy making up 22 percent (4) of closed top stories.

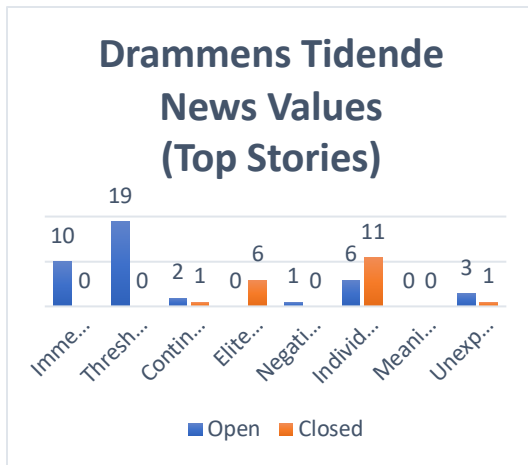


FIGURE 6 — *Drammens Tidende* News Values (Top Stories)

As regards news values present in the top stories, the primary difference between them and the total digital product was the range of news values found in top stories, as demonstrated by Figure 6. While closed stories were still primarily those focusing on references to individuals and elite individuals, which made up 11 (58 percent) and 6 (32 percent) of the 19 total, closed, top stories respectively, just two other news values were present among top stories locked behind the paywall. These values were continuity and unexpectedness, with each one appearing in just 1 story. The news values present in open stories were more varied, and again, immediacy and threshold were by far the most prevalent, constituting 10 (24 percent) and 19 (46 percent) of the 41 total, open top stories respectively.

Just as with the total digital product, looking at the genres and values of *Drammens Tidende*'s top stories together offers a better view of the types of content *Drammens Tidende* prioritizes at the top of its web page. It is perhaps even more essential in understanding how top stories are placed given that crime stories were the most prominent top stories in front of and behind the paywall. Figure 7 shows that crime stories featuring immediacy as their primary value and everyday life and accident stories featuring threshold as their primary value were the biggest categories found as open stories at the top of the page.

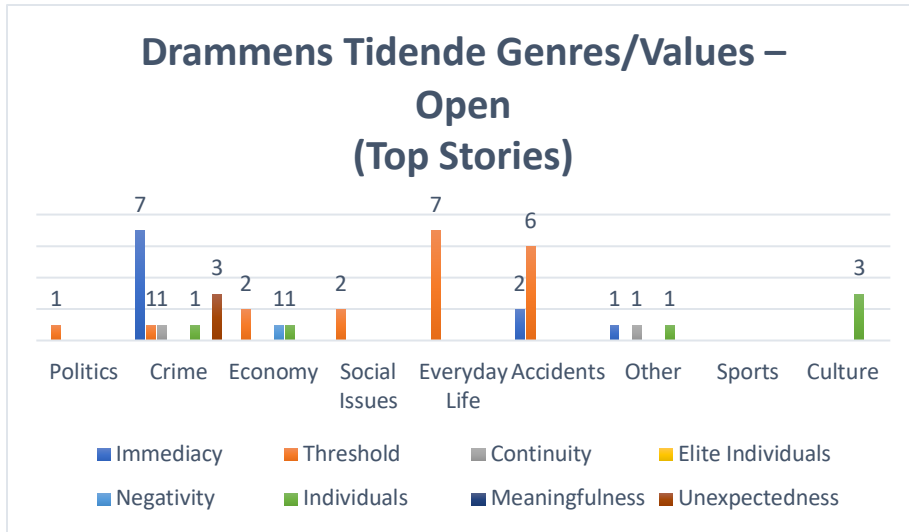


FIGURE 7 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Open (Top Stories)

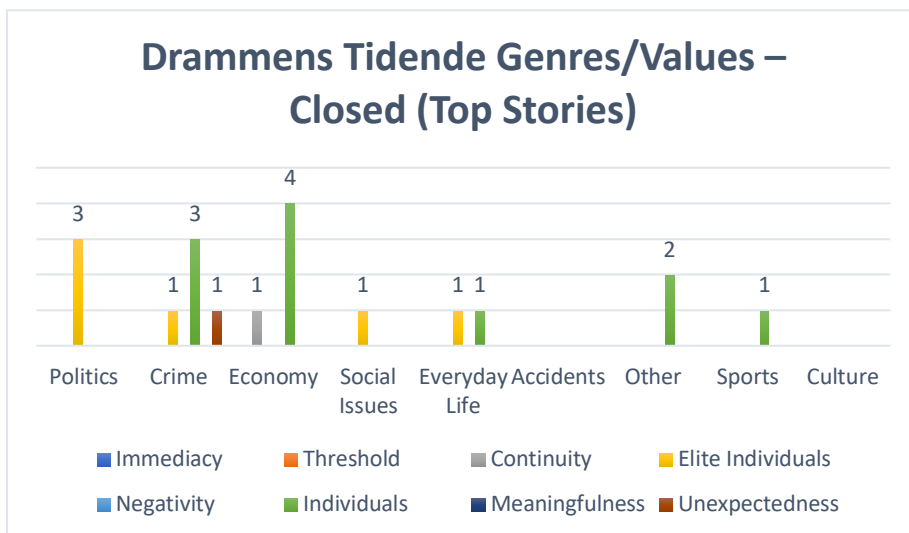


FIGURE 8 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Closed (Top Stories)

Closed stories, as shown in Figure 8, featured far fewer news values at the top of *Drammens Tidende*'s web page. The bulk of closed top stories were political stories about elite individuals, and crime and economy stories about individuals. So, while an analysis of news genres can reveal that crime ends up in front of the paywall more than behind it, it cannot explain the differences between an open and closed crime story. By looking at genres and values together, it becomes clear not only that *Drammens Tidende* values crime stories at the top of its website, but that crime stories with immediacy as their primary value – such as the one about

armed police responding to a reported shooting – are likely to be open, while crime stories focusing heavily on the stories or viewpoints of individuals and elite individuals – such as the serial burglar story – are likely to be closed.

Before moving forward, it is worthwhile to point out that this study is not well equipped to weigh the emphasis of different top stories. The data collection showed, for example, that *Drammens Tidende* left an open story about the beginning of a trial for two teenagers charged with attacking a 17-year-old who died of a drug overdose at the top of its website for more than nine hours. (Havnaas & Christoffersen, 2018). Whether *Drammens Tidende* left this story up for so long because it was important to readers, because it was driving traffic to the website, or for another reason or combination of reasons is difficult to say without a follow-up interview after the data collection, which was not possible in this project due to limitations on time and resources. Focusing specifically on top stories would serve a valuable purpose in further understanding how newspapers prioritize content, and I return to this point in my conclusion.

Gjengangeren

Gjengangeren's strategy, based on the content analysis, was opposite *Drammens Tidende's*. *Gjengangeren*, the newspaper with the smallest circulation of the three in this study, was by far the most restrictive with its digital content. It averaged 64 stories on its digital front page each day with 40.63 percent (26) open and 59.37 percent (38) closed. Just as *Drammens Tidende's* top stories followed the trend of its total front page, so too did *Gjengangeren's*. *Gjengangeren* averaged 8 top stories per day with 37.5 percent (3) open and 62.5 percent (5) closed.

Regarding news genres, *Gjengangeren* focused the least on crime and accident stories, which totalled 17 and 7 for the week respectively. Conversely, while *Drammens Tidende* had just five sports stories, *Gjengangeren* published 20.

Furthermore, most of *Gjengangeren's* sports stories were locked behind the paywall. This represents a major difference from Sjøvaag's finding that *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* not only cut their sports coverage following the implementation of their paywalls, but also placed it exclusively in front of the paywalls (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 313). I return to this point

again in the discussion section.

Figure 9 shows that, along with sports, which made up 20 percent (17) of *Gjengangeren*'s 83 closed stories, stories about the economy and culture were most prevalent behind the paywall, numbering 23 percent (19) and 18 percent (15) respectively. Politics also appeared most often in front of the paywall, with 69 percent (9) of the 13 political stories being closed. And while just 7 stories were placed in the other genre, 86 percent (6) of them were closed. In contrast, stories about everyday life were the biggest category of open stories, making up 38 percent (24) of the 64 open stories. Accident and crime stories were the other two largest categories of open stories, comprising 11 percent (7) and 17 percent (11) of the open stories respectively. The social issues genre was more equitably distributed, with 60 percent (6) of the 10 social issues stories appearing behind the paywall.

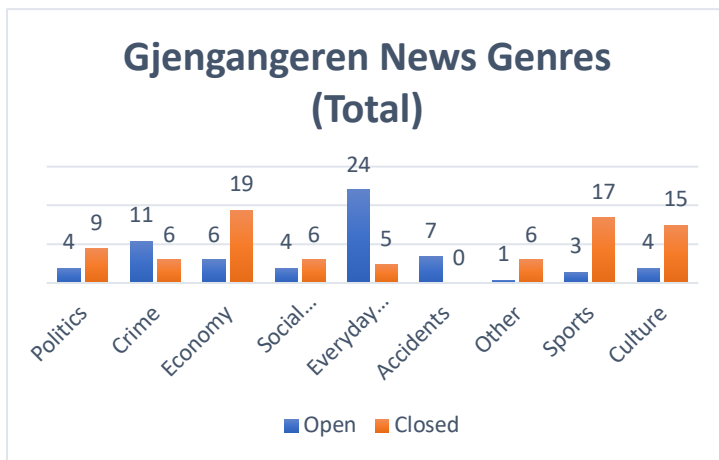


FIGURE 9 — *Gjengangeren* News Genres (Total)

Just as *Drammens Tidende*'s digital front page featured a variety of different stories within each genre, so too did *Gjengangeren*. This variation was especially pronounced in the everyday life category, which included information useful to everyday life such as the story about an increase to the price of tolls on E-18 (Rugsveen, 2018) as well stories such as the one about a local resident living for years on a street without a name (Broms, 2018a). Given that it published a greater number of sports stories than the other two newspapers combined, *Gjengangeren* serves as the best case to examine the variation among sports stories in particular. Sports stories at *Gjengangeren* fell into three primary categories during the week of study –

coverage of local sporting events; coverage of local athletes in international events; and profiles on local athletes. Local sports coverage focused on specific events, for example the handball match the local team lost by three points (Limkjær, 2018e). International coverage consisted primarily of stories focused on local athlete Anna Ulvensøen's performance in the Orienteering World Cup (Limkjær, 2018f) along with a feature on a local man who served as a cheerleader in the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea (Hettervik, 2018). Profiles were by far the most diverse among the three categories of sports stories, ranging from stories such as the one about a local footballer turned skateboarder (Råen, 2018) to those such as the story about the Ørn-Horten football club signing a new player (Kalnes, 2018). It is worth noting that some of the stories about international sporting events could be considered profiles as well, though I believe their international focus differentiates them enough from coverage of local athletes in local sporting events to warrant a separate category.

As for news values, *Gjengangeren* displayed the same general trend as *Drammens Tidende* with immediacy and threshold stories being primarily open and stories about individuals and elite individuals being primarily closed. While Figure 10 shows that 33 percent (2) of the 6 stories marked with immediacy were closed, it is worth noting that these articles were links to live streams of local sporting events as opposed to text-based stories (Limkjær, 2018a; 2018b). These, along with photo galleries were placed exclusively behind the paywalls at all three newspapers. Meanwhile, 96 percent (43) of the 45 threshold stories — such as the story about a local area where many drivers break the speed limit (Johannessen, 2018b) — were open, and 90 percent (44) of the 49 stories marked with reference to individual — such as the story about a local businessman discussing the difficulties of renting office space to businesses (Bergman, 2018) were closed. Stories marked with reference to elite individual also tended to be closed, with 85 percent (29) of the 34 of them appearing behind the paywall. Unexpectedness, negativity, and continuity all were less predictable, with half the continuity and negativity stories appearing on either side of the paywall and 60 percent (3) of the 5 unexpectedness stories appearing in front of the paywall.

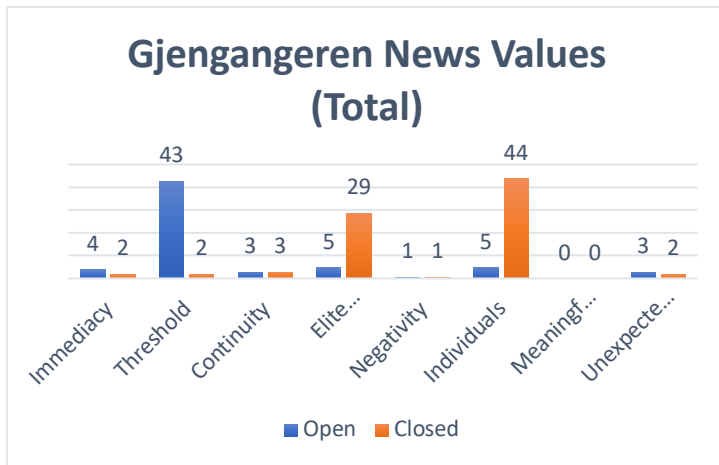


FIGURE 10 — *Gjengangeren* News Values (Total)

As stated, *Gjengangeren* differs from *Drammens Tidende* in regards to the news genres that appear in front of and behind the paywall. But the two newspapers are more similar regarding the placement of news values. Once again, a comparison of open and closed stories’ genres and values together is useful, and Figure 11 shows that everyday life stories with threshold as their primary news value are the most prominent stories in front of *Gjengangeren*’s paywall, totalling 21 stories. In fact, all three other genres with the highest number of open stories – crime, economy, and accidents – have high numbers of stories – 6, 5, and 4 respectively – marked with threshold. The same trend can be seen in Figure 3 with *Drammens Tidende* with the exception of the crime category, which is dominated by immediacy at *Drammens Tidende*.

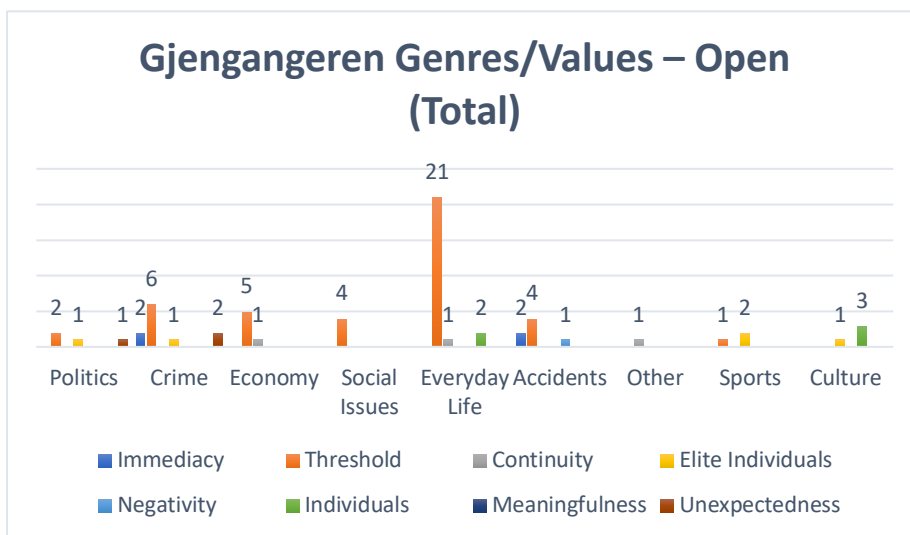


FIGURE 11 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Open (Total)

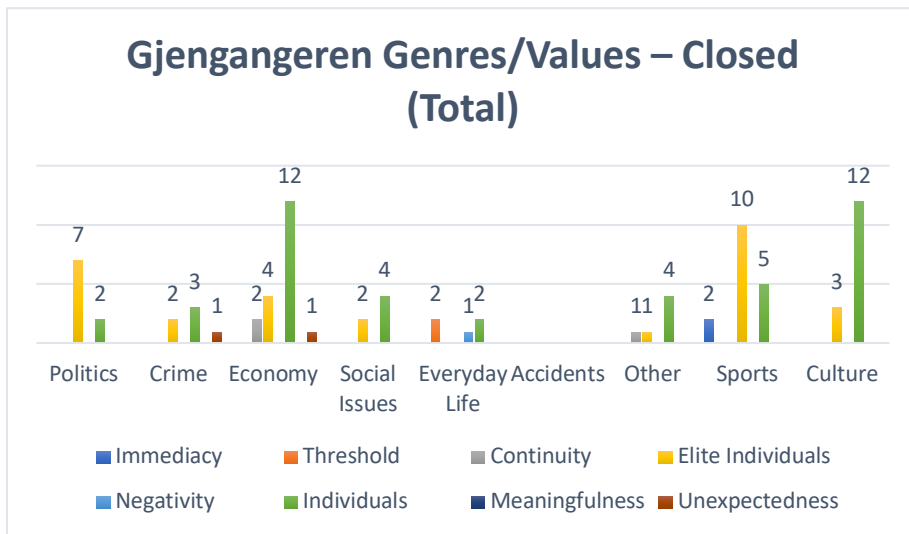


FIGURE 12 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Closed (Total)

While *Gjengangeren* and *Drammens Tidende* differ somewhat in the distribution of values and genres among open stories, they differ even further in the distribution of the various news genres and values behind the paywall. Figure 4 showed that *Drammens Tidende*'s closed stories were often economic and social issue stories featuring individuals and political stories featuring elite individuals. Figure 12 shows that while the values of reference to individuals and reference to elite individuals are similarly prominent, the genres most represented in *Gjengangeren*'s closed stories are economy, sports, and culture. That the values stay more or less consistent between the two newspapers while the genres differ is telling, and I return to this point again in the discussion. Suffice it to say that stories that had the perspective of an individual or an elite individual as their primary focus — for example, Ørn-Horten's new football player — were far more likely to be behind the paywall regardless of news genre, while stories pertaining to large segments of the newspapers' readership — such as the story about increasing tolls on the E-18 — were primarily open to all readers.

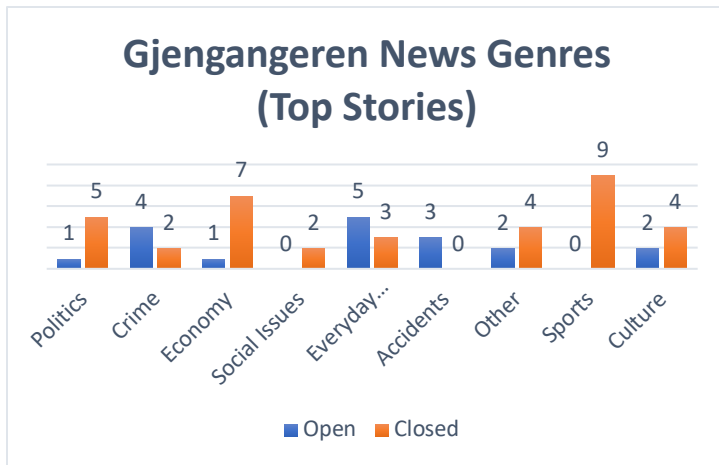


FIGURE 13 —*Gjengangeren* News Genres (Top Stories)

Turning briefly to *Gjengangeren*'s top stories, Figure 13 shows that, regarding top stories, *Gjengangeren* and *Drammens Tidende* are similar in the stories they choose to keep open. Crime, everyday life, and accident stories were the most likely to be closed at the top, although they numbered far fewer total top stories than the same three genres did at *Drammens Tidende*. Crime, everyday life, and accident stories accounted for 25 percent (4), 31 percent (5), and 19 percent (3) respectively out of a total 16 open stories. *Gjengangeren* was somewhat of an outlier in the sports category both in the total digital product and in top stories, and every single sports story at the top of the website was closed. In total, sports stories represented 9 (25 percent) out of 36 closed top stories. Regarding the other two primary genres of closed top stories, *Gjengangeren* was once again similar to *Drammens Tidende*, though it is worth noting that the former closed far more stories than the latter. Stories about economy and politics were the second- and third-most prominent closed genres at the top of the website, totalling 19 percent (7) and 14 percent (5) respectively.

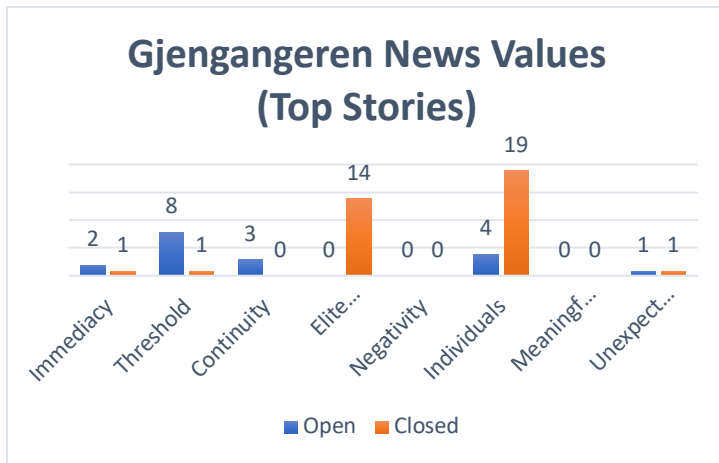


FIGURE 14 — *Gjengangeren* News Values (Top Stories)

As Figure 6 showed, *Drammens Tidende*'s top stories were primarily open and overwhelmingly marked with immediacy and threshold. Figure 14 shows that *Gjengangeren*'s top stories, wthe majority of which were closed, were marked overwhelmingly with reference to elite individuals and reference to individuals. Just 3 closed top stories were marked with other values, meaning 92 percent (33) referenced either individuals or elite individuals. This finding supports the idea that stories marked with immediacy and threshold tend to be open while stories marked with reference to individuals and elite individuals tend to be closed. Of course, while threshold is the most prominent value among open top stories, with 44 percent (8) of 18 open top stories marked as such, 22 percent (4) were marked with reference to individuals. This suggests that, in addition to references to individuals working exceedingly well behind the paywall, this value also works well in top stories in general. Many of the stories marked with reference to individuals feature a photo of a person, suggesting that *Gjengangeren* strives to feature faces at the top of its web page regardless of whether the story is open or closed.

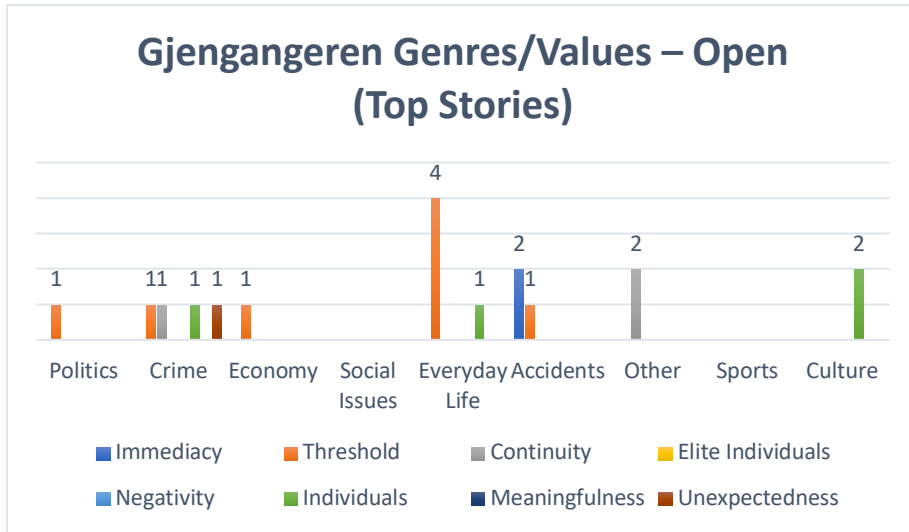


FIGURE 15 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Open (Top Stories)

Figure 15 offers a further breakdown of *Gjengangeren*'s top open stories by genres and values. It shows that everyday life stories marked with threshold were the most common among the newspaper's top open stories. Examples of such top stories include a notice that one of the Bastø ferries was having technical problems (Limkjær, 2018c) and an announcement that the old 100 and 200 kroner notes will be invalid at the end of May (Hømanberg, 2018). These types of stories have the potential to impact all readers' everyday lives either immediately or in the near future, and it thus makes sense that *Gjengangeren* staff both want to feature them at the top of the website and leave them open to all readers.

As for closed top stories, Figure 16 shows that economic stories featuring reference to individuals and political and sports stories featuring reference to elite individuals were the most common, together making up 15 (42 percent) out of 36 closed top stories. Stories across all genres referencing individuals and elite individuals made up 34 (94 percent) of the 36 top closed stories, and just two other values – threshold and immediacy – were represented among *Gjengangeren*'s top closed stories. Each of these accounted for just one story. As previously stated, the story marked with immediacy was a live stream of a local handball team's match (Limkjær, 2018b). Furthermore, *Gjengangeren* took the story marked threshold from *Moss Avis*, another Amedia newspaper, and therefore did not get to choose whether it was open or closed (Urstad, 2018b). It bears reiterating that looking at genres and values together offers a much

clearer picture of how different stories are placed in relation to the paywall. The story about the Olympic cheerleader was marked with sports and reference to individuals, both of which seem to be priorities for *Gjengangeren* both at the top of its website and behind its paywall.

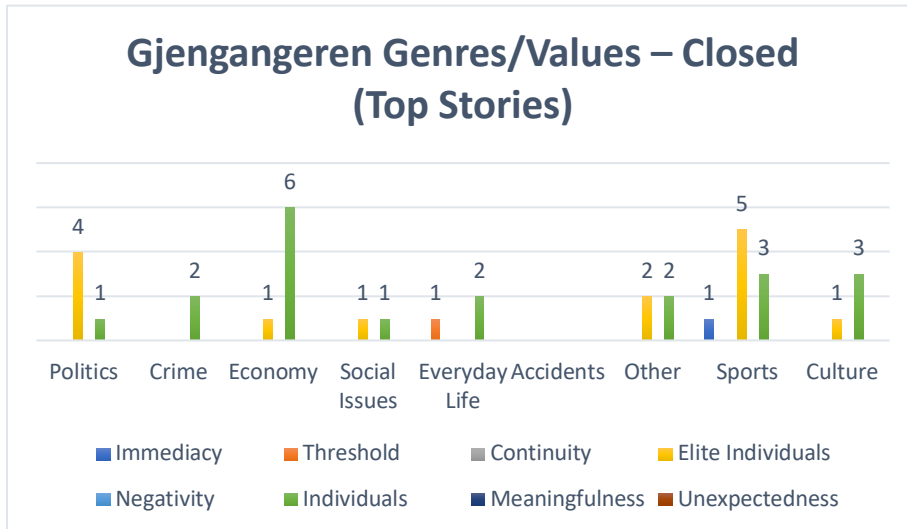


FIGURE 16 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Closed (Top Stories)

Tønsbergs Blad

According to the content analysis, *Tønsbergs Blad* had the most balanced paywall strategy of the three newspapers in this study. It averaged 65 stories per day with 50.77 percent (33) open and 49.23 percent (32) closed. *Tønsbergs Blad*'s top stories – it averaged 10 per day – mirrored this trend, with 60 percent (6) open and 40 percent (4) closed.

And just as *Tønsbergs Blads*' paywall strategy was the most balanced of the three, so to was its distribution of news genres. It had 37 crime stories –just as many as *Drammens Tidende* – and it had 39 everyday life stories – more than *Gjengangeren*. It should be noted, of course, that *Tønsbergs Blad* had more total stories as well. It displayed roughly 200 stories online throughout the week while *Drammens Tidende* and *Gjengangeren* both displayed about 150. Exact numbers are difficult to come by, as some stories were taken down, reposted, or changed after the fact.

As seen in Figure 17, stories about crime, everyday life, and accidents made up the bulk of *Tønsbergs Blad*'s 91 open stories, totalling 34 percent (31), 23 percent (21), and 18 percent (16) respectively. Just as *Drammens Tidende* opened its coverage of fires, so too did *Tønsbergs*

Blad, as can be seen in its coverage of a small fire in an apartment building (Kristoffersen & Lahn, 2018). Open crime stories were, for the most part, brief updates about criminal activity and police action, such as the three-sentence story regarding a man fined for possession of narcotics in Tønsberg (Finsrud, 2018c). Similar to its counterparts in Drammen and Horten, *Tønsbergs Blad* published a variety of stories under the umbrella of everyday life. These stories ranged from announcements about a new Facebook page where residents can keep up-to-date with the impending merging of Tønsberg and Re into a single municipality (Skavhellen, 2018) to warnings about a possible streak of cold weather (Finsrud, 2018b). Also in keeping with *Drammens Tidende* and *Gjengangeren*, economy stories were the most prevalent behind *Tønsbergs Blad*'s paywall, totalling 26 percent (23) of the 89 closed stories. But while *Drammens Tidende* focused on social issues and politics and *Gjengangeren* focused on sports and culture behind their paywalls, the everyday life and other categories made up the second- and third-most closed stories at *Tønsbergs Blad*, totalling 20 percent (18) and 16 percent (14) respectively. Examples of closed economy stories include a profile of a local company's growth and speculation that a decision by local politicians could mean the loss of up to 400 million kroner per year for a local company (Munkås, 2018). Of course, sports, culture, and politics all were also present behind *Tønsbergs Blad*'s paywall in substantial numbers, totalling 11 percent (10), 11 percent (10), and 10 percent (9) of closed stories respectively. This reinforces *Tønsbergs Blad*'s position as the most balanced of the three newspapers in terms of its closed content.

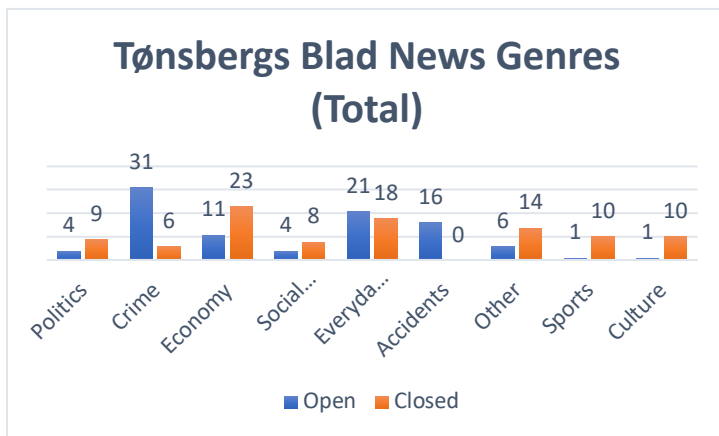


FIGURE 17 — *Tønsbergs Blad* News Genres (Total)

As stated previously, the content analyses showed that the three newspapers focused on different genres, especially when it comes to the stories they place behind their paywalls. However, as shown in Figure 18, the news values of open and closed stories were far more stable across all three newspapers. *Tønsbergs Blad* opened all 15 of its stories marked with immediacy and 94 percent (68) of the 72 stories marked with threshold. Meanwhile it closed 93 percent (13) of the 14 stories marked with reference to elite individuals and 90 percent (72) of the 80 stories marked with reference to individuals. It followed the same trend as the other two newspapers regarding continuity and unexpectedness, opening 57 percent (4) and 40 percent respectively, though it tended to open negativity stories more than its counterparts in Drammen and Horten, opening 88 percent (7) of the 8 negativity stories. Also of note, *Tønsbergs Blad* was the only newspaper in the study to publish stories marked with meaningfulness. These two stories were photo galleries of pictures from around Tønsberg that did not include individuals but rather landscapes and scenery, and both of them were closed.

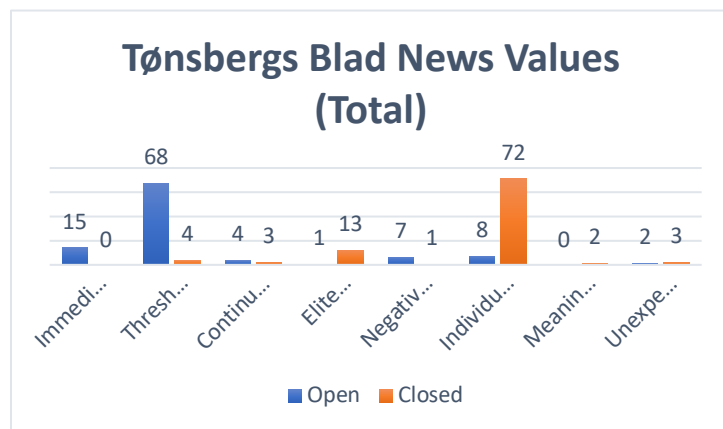


FIGURE 18 — *Tønsbergs Blad* News Values (Total)

Viewing the genres and values of open and closed stories is especially helpful with *Tønsbergs Blad*. This becomes clear upon consideration of the everyday life category. *Drammens Tidende* and *Gjengangeren* both opened 83 percent of their everyday life stories while *Tønsbergs Blad* opened just 54 percent (21) of the 39 it published. This finding gives little insight into how Tønsberg Blad prioritizes everyday life stories, and it seems at odds with the paywall strategies of the other two newspapers in this study. But this seeming discrepancy makes more sense when taking into account Figures 19 and 20, which show that 91 percent (20) of the

22 everyday life stories marked with threshold were open and all 13 everyday life stories marked with reference to individuals were closed. So, while *Tønsbergs Blad* published more everyday life stories than *Drammens Tidende* and *Gjengangeren*, it followed the same general rule that stories marked with threshold are open and those marked with reference to individuals are closed. This assertion is most clearly supported by looking at the politics and economy genres as well. Out of 13 politics stories, 31 percent (4) were marked with threshold, 62 percent (8) were marked with reference to elite individuals, and 7 percent (1) were marked with referenced to individuals.

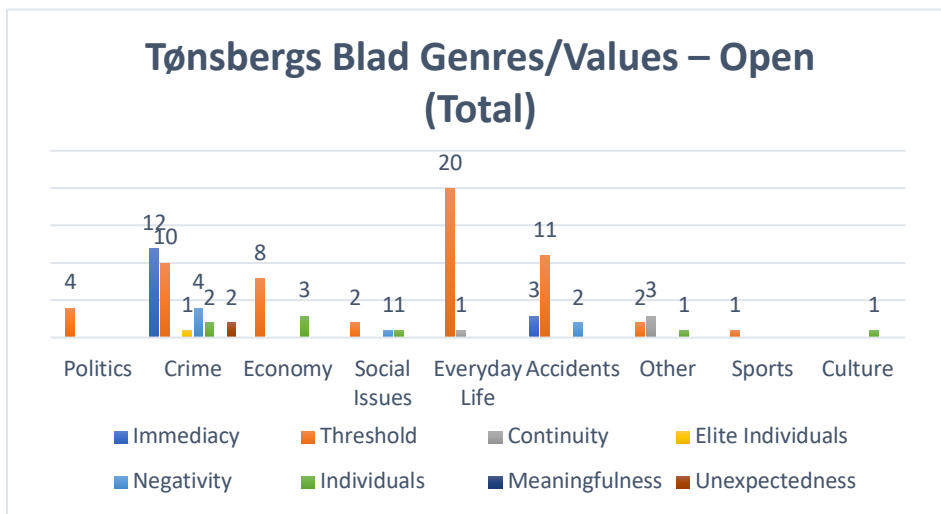


FIGURE 19 — Tøndbergs Blad Genres/Values – Open (Total)

Those marked with the latter two categories — such as the story about local politicians supporting the construction of a tunnel that would connect the island of Nøtterøy to the mainland (Lien, 2018) – all were closed while the 4 threshold stories – such as the story about the local government’s decision regarding the name of a new municipality (Franer-Erlingsen, 2018) – were open. Similarly, all 8 economy stories marked with threshold were open and 86 percent (19) of the 22 economic stories marked with reference to individuals were closed. In addition to supporting the findings from the other two newspapers that threshold and immediacy go most often in front of the paywalls while references to individuals and elite individuals are found most often behind them, these distributions also show that threshold going in front of the paywall is a more stringent rule than reference to individuals going behind the paywall. In other words, it is more common to find a story marked with reference to individual in front of the paywall than it

is to find a threshold story behind it. I return to this point again in the discussion.

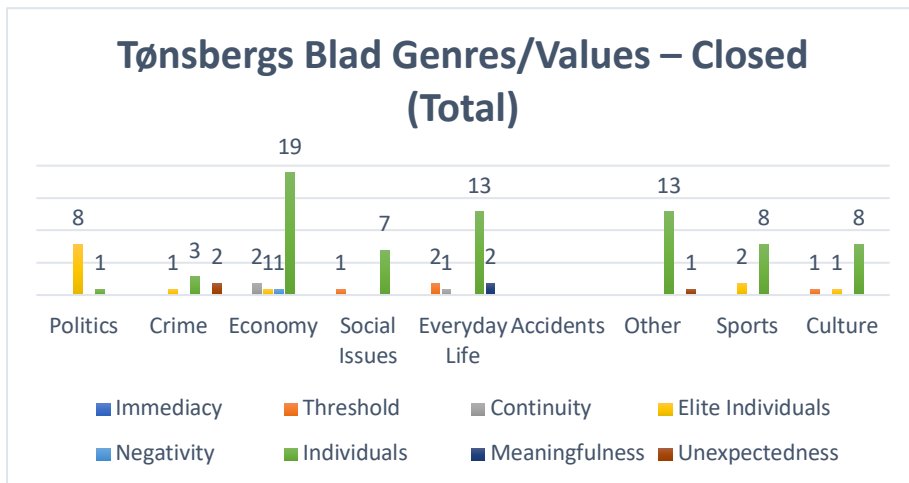


FIGURE 20 — *Tønsbergs Blad* Genres/Values – Closed (Total)

Turning now to *Tønsbergs Blad*'s top stories, the distribution of genres of the newspaper's top open stories are the same, consisting primarily of crime, everyday life, and accident stories, which make up 33 percent (16), 23 percent (11), and 17 percent (8) of the total 48 open top stories. *Tønsbergs Blad* often placed short crime stories such as the one about the man charged with drug possession at the top of its website. Other crime briefs that appeared at the top include a notice that 13 drivers were caught speeding in the area (Kristoffersen, 2018) and an update about a situation involving armed police officers on Nøtterøy (Finsrud, 2018a).

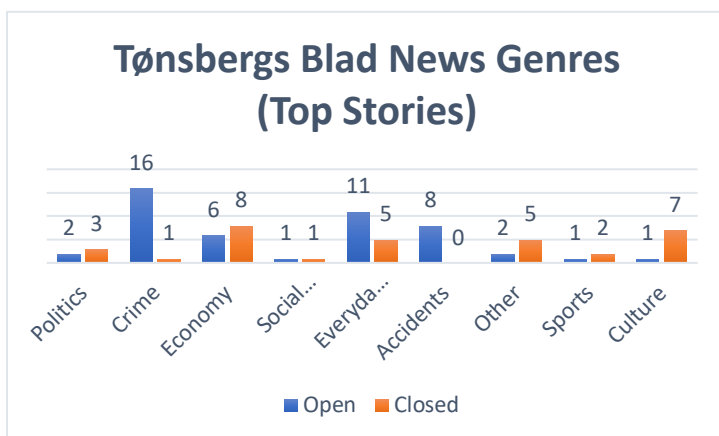


FIGURE 21 — *Tønsbergs Blad* News Genres (Top Stories)

Economic stories were more likely to go on either side of the paywall if they were top stories though, with 43 percent (6) open and 57 percent (8) closed at the top of *Tønsbergs Blad*'s website. After economy stories, culture stories were the most likely to be closed at the top, with 88 percent (7) out of the 8 top culture stories appearing behind the paywall. Many of *Tønsbergs Blad*'s top economic stories in front of the paywall were articles produced by NTB and other news wires and were thus readily available from other news agencies with subscriptions to these agencies. Examples of such stories include one about a snus manufacturer losing a case about snus packaging (NTB, 2018b) and a story about how more than half the Norwegian population does not believe their pension will be enough to cover their financial needs after they retire (NTB, 2018c). On the other hand, closed, top economic stories tended to focus on local issues – such as the story about a local realtor discussing the trends he has seen regarding Oslo residents buying homes in an area of Nøtterøy (Lahn, 2018).

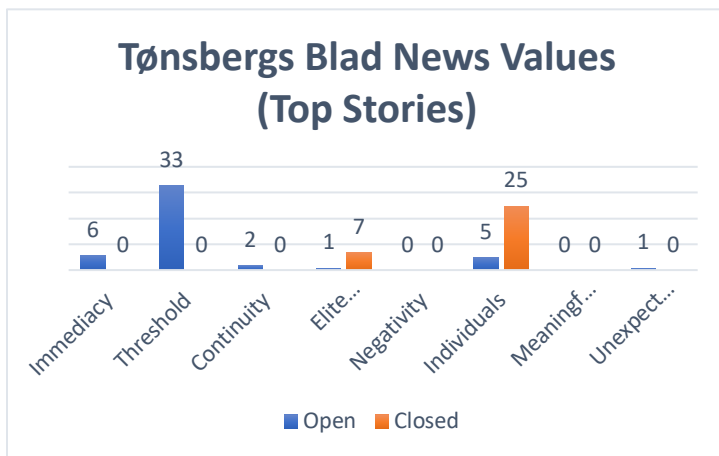


FIGURE 22 — *Tønsbergs Blad* News Values (Top Stories)

Regarding news values found among *Tønsbergs Blad*'s top stories, the trends described thus far are even more clear, especially regarding open stories. To elaborate, all top stories marked with immediacy or threshold, which together accounted for 49 percent (39) of the 80 total top stories, were open, just as with *Drammens Tidende*'s open top stories. Meanwhile, 88 percent (7) of the 8 stories marked with reference to elite individuals and 83 percent (25) of the 30 stories marked with reference to individuals were closed. In fact, all closed top stories were marked with either reference to individuals or reference to elite individuals.

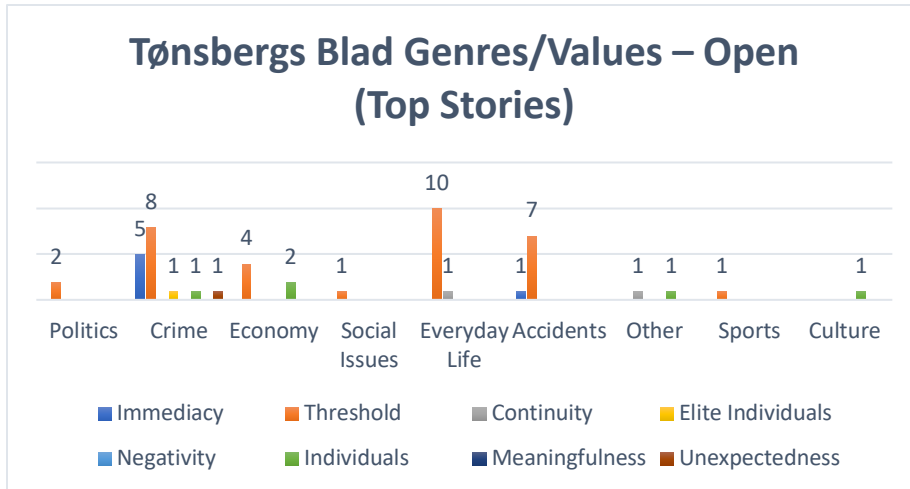


FIGURE 23 — *Tønsbergs Blad* Genres/Values – Open (Top Stories)

Figure 23 details the genres and values of *Tønsbergs Blad*'s top open stories together and shows that everyday life, crime, and accident stories marked with threshold were most likely to appear open at the top of the newspaper's website, numbering 21 percent (10), 17 percent (8), and 15 percent (7) respectively of the 48 open top stories. Economy stories marked with threshold and crime stories marked with immediacy were also relatively common as open top stories, totalling 8 percent (4) and 10 percent (5) respectively. As stated above, reference to individuals and reference to elite individuals dominated the closed top stories, and the economy, culture, everyday life and other genres were among the most common closed top stories, numbering 25 percent (8), 22 percent (7), 16 percent (5), and 16 percent (5) respectively of the 32 closed top stories.

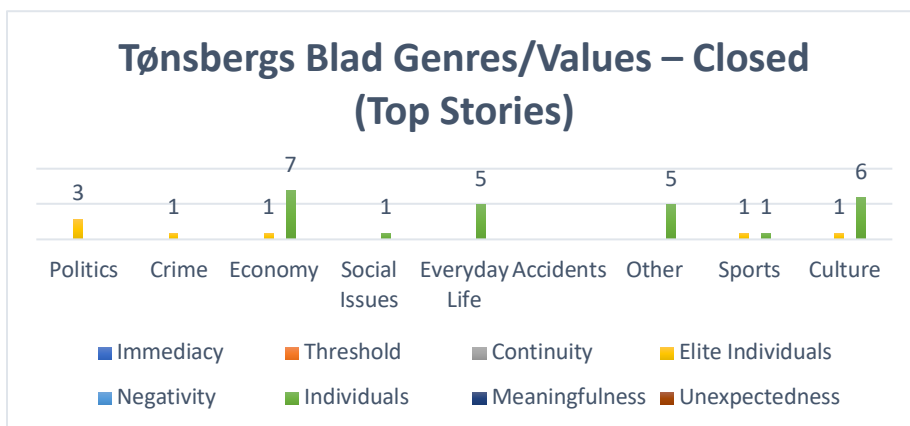


FIGURE 24 — *Tønsbergs Blad* Genres/Values – Closed (Top Stories)

All things considered, the content analysis makes it clear that, while news genres play a role in where and how certain stories are placed – seen most easily with accident stories – analyzing the news values that underlie stories from all genres gives a much more consistent picture of the types of stories prioritized behind the paywall across all three newspapers. For example, looking exclusively at news genres reveals that *Tønsbergs Blad* placed more political stories behind its paywall than in front of it. But analyzing the news values of *Tønsbergs Blad*'s stories reveals that it placed all of its political stories which had threshold as their primary news value in front of the paywall. And while stories about everyday life were common both in front of and behind the paywall, everyday life stories with threshold as their primary news value were almost all in front of the paywall, while everyday life stories focusing on individuals were exclusively behind the paywall.

There are, of course, exceptions to all the trends described thus far. Some stories with threshold as their primary value were closed while some stories about elite individuals were open. I delve into this finding further in the discussion section.

4.2 *Semistructured Interviews*

Drammens Tidende

Janne Sundelius Braathen is the publishing editor at *Drammens Tidende*, and she works with both the print and digital news products. The interview took place on October 26, 2017, and lasted approximately 45 minutes.

According to Braathen, the process of implementing *Drammens Tidende*'s paywall spanned from 2012-2015. She noted that in the years since then, specifically from May 2016, *Drammens Tidende* has used a “digital first” approach when it comes to how and what kind of content journalists create (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). She described the first months of 2015 as difficult in part because of lower numbers of page views for articles placed behind the paywall.

It was really hard for the people working on the online newspaper, because we'd been chasing numbers, page views. And we were supposed to have 30 percent [of digital

content] behind the paywall. Now it's 50-50 usually. But 30 percent back then was horrible for a front-page editor. (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

The content analysis showed that *Drammens Tidende* tends, at least on average, towards more open stories, but that does not necessarily mean the newsroom isn't working towards a 50-50 split. I detail the potential reasons regarding this sort of discrepancy further in the discussion section.

Regarding the kinds of content that go in front of and behind the paywall, Braathen shared a simple given by Amedia to determine whether a story should be open or closed. It is by no means exhaustive and serves primarily as a baseline in determining certain, essential qualities to stories that go behind the paywall.

A story can be open if:

- The case is a new event happening now or in the near future
- The case is based on basic information about infrastructure that affects a large part of the community (weather, work, accidents, power outage, the municipality closes the water)
- You have competition from other media or information that the reader can easily find elsewhere, such as Twitter or yr.no (e.g.: Local artist nominated for Spellemannprisen)

A story can be closed if:

- The case is timeless or brings new information about something that has happened before
- The matter is important to a narrow audience, but does not engage widely in the community
- The case is processed and is exclusive to the newspaper's readers
- Exclusive follow-ups on open things (events, weather, accidents)
- It's a streaming video (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

As previously stated, these represent little more than rough guidelines in how Amedia

newspapers determine which content is open and closed, but it identifies the news values of immediacy and continuity as two of the biggest qualities, alongside exclusivity, that factor into whether a story is in front of or behind *Drammens Tidende*'s paywall. Threshold can also be considered to play a role as well in that Amedia's guidelines state that stories that affect large numbers of readers should generally be open.

As for the role that quality itself plays in determining where a story might be positioned, it's more complicated than popular sentiment might suggest. Cook and Attari found that readers who said they would be willing to pay for online news also thought people should pay for quality content (Cook & Attari, 2012, p. 685). However, Braathen said *Drammens Tidende* had originally tried locking all quality content behind the paywall and pushing lower-quality pieces such as press releases out in front of it:

Now we're more eager to make good content both [in front of and behind the paywall]. That's a big difference between now and then. Because throughout 2016, we were just chasing the paywall numbers. That was the only thing we were focusing on, and now, we're thinking about the non-subscribers too. (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

In other words, the formula that goes into deciding what goes in front of and behind Drammen Tidende's paywall is not as simple as placing the more in-depth, quality journalism behind it and pushing the rest in front of it. And the guidelines Braathen presented make no mention of specific news genres, relying instead on more abstract news values.

This is not to say, however, that analysis of which news genres tend to end up in front of and behind paywalls is useless. Braathen revealed that she often considers both values and genres in determining the kinds of stories that work behind the wall:

Business [stories work well behind the wall]. When a company's shutting down, also when people do good business, are successful, that's almost always behind [the paywall] I think. Also new shops, restaurants, reviews of food, always [closed]. Reviews of concerts, stuff like that. And really touching stories. When someone tells their story about anything horrible or good, like a family losing their child presenting their story. All of

that is exclusive. (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

So business stories, which fit into Sjøvaag's economy genre, work behind the paywall. Braathen noted also that accidents, sports, and crime were rarely placed behind the paywall (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). This analysis is in line with Sjøvaag's finding that 0 of 47 sports stories and just 3 of 77 accident stories were she analyzed from *Bergens Tidende* were placed behind the paywall. Sjøvaag found also that 15 of 38 economy stories were closed (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 314).

Beyond news genres, it would seem from Braathen's analysis that negativity plays a role as well, though rarely if ever in a vacuum. Braathen noted that car accidents, fires, crimes, and other negative news items are almost exclusively in front of the paywall, at least when they are first reported. This suggests that the immediacy or continuity of a negative news story plays a role in determining its placement. When asked about stories that have worked exceptionally well behind the paywall, Braathen pointed to stories about families dealing with tragedy:

A couple weeks ago, we had a story about a young couple losing the baby right after the birth. The hospital did everything wrong, and the baby died after one hour. That worked well [behind the paywall] ... And also last year, we had a story of a family in one of the nearest communities to Drammen. They had three children, and the smallest one died. And then the wife died one week after the baby died. So, the guy sitting with the two children told his story. I think that's the best story in Amedia ever. I think we sold 160 subscriptions, and then the numbers were fantastic. If you can say fantastic about something like that. So that kind of story always works. (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

The stories Braathen mentioned can certainly be considered negative, and they also fall well outside the realm of what happens in everyday life, making them unexpected as well. Additionally, they are both continuous in that they are not coverage of the deaths as they happen but rather coverage of the aftermath. (Ellingsgard, 2016; Ondrckova, 2017).

Another major finding from Braathen's interview was the unimportance of references to elite countries. Braathen noted that, in the rare event *Drammens Tidende* covers international

events, it is almost exclusively in front of the paywall unless there is a local angle:

Our readers don't come to us for the international news. If we have the NTB (Norwegian News Agency) story, it's just for background. We don't see that our readers click on it at all. If we don't [have the NTB story], we'll have a lot of angry readers. They'll yell at us, "Don't you know that there's been a terror attack?" ... So, we usually do it, but it doesn't work. Our readers don't want it. (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Gjengangeren

Guri Larsen is the news editor at *Gjengangeren*, and like Braathen, she works with both the print and digital news products as well. The interview with Larsen took place on October 26, 2017, and lasted approximately 70 minutes.

Regarding *Gjengangeren*'s relatively late adoption of the paywall model compared to *Drammens Tidende* and *Tønsbergs Blad*, Larsen reported a high degree of uncertainty among *Gjengangeren* staff concerning paywalls in the early days:

We were very skeptical. ... [The editor at the time] decided to be a dinosaur in the room when the concern was discussing who was going to be trying out these things, and I think that was a good thing to be. Because we are small. We have an incredibly strong, good standing in our community. But we are vulnerable. (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

The vulnerability Larsen refers to is primarily *Gjengangeren*'s significantly smaller circulation of 6,300 compared to *Drammens Tidende*'s 26,500 and *Tønsbergs Blad*'s 22,000. Larsen added that waiting until early 2015, a few years after other Amedia papers, allowed paywalls to become more normalized by the time *Gjengangeren* went behind one. However, she noted that the paper still lost readers and dealt with customer dissatisfaction during its transition (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). Furthermore, Larsen noted that the need to keep current subscribers satisfied made it difficult to prioritize *Gjengangeren*'s digital offerings over its print product, whereas Braathen emphasized the "digital first" strategy at *Drammens Tidende*.

As far as the approach to *Gjengangeren*'s digital content, Larsen revealed that the newspaper has changed its tactics significantly since the paywall went up:

[*Gjengangeren*] realized that journalism online is very different than journalism in print. ... The difference is that, when you're sat with your morning coffee and your paper, you are looking for good stuff. And if you don't find it, you turn the page. And if you don't find it there, you turn another page. When you go online, you scan, you scroll, and if you haven't found anything in 15 seconds, you go to another paper. That's the difference. I have to reel you in on something that interests you, concerns you, that you find intriguing, and I have to do it fast. Within seconds. (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Like Braathen, Larsen said that quality journalism was just as important in front of the paywall as it was behind it, and that striking the right balance between open and closed stories was an ongoing process:

If we were having this conversation three years ago, everybody thought that everything [should go] behind the paywall, absolutely everything, without really thinking of the consequences of that. Now I have to give you something, so you understand you can get it, but that if you pay, you get all the other good stuff too. If everything is behind the paywall, you're not going to be interested. But if I can give you something that you can read and at the same time signal to you that behind this paywall, you can learn even more, then that's going to interest you. But three or three-and-a-half years ago, everything was supposed to be closed. And boy did we hear it. ... We had to open up. And so ever since, it's been like a constant battle really of how many and what sort of pieces can we have open, and if we close those two, can we have these two open? (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

According to Larsen, *Gjengangeren* strives to place 60 percent of its digital content behind the paywall and 40 percent in front of the paywall. This lines up with the content analysis, which found an average of 40.63 percent open and 59.37 percent closed stories each day.

As for the types of content *Gjengangeren* places behind and in front of its paywall, Larsen said the only hard and fast rules regarded initial coverage of accidents and incidents, which she said are almost exclusively placed in front of the paywall, and that “everything else is a matter of seeing what the webpage looks like at any given time” (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). Among the values and genres she said worked well behind the paywall were pieces featuring information that people didn’t need to know like photo galleries and profiles of local celebrities. Larsen also confirmed that she doesn’t think of values and genres in a vacuum, and that if a local celebrity were involved in a scandal or other incident, “incident cancels out celebrity ” and the story would be open (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017).

Larsen touched also on the values of immediacy and continuity and noted that *Gjengangeren* shared a similar philosophy with *Drammens Tidende* regarding which values work where. She talked specifically about Åsgården barneskole, a primary school in Horten which burned down in 2010 (Kristiansen, 2010):

Of course, the fire was up front. We don't put that behind the paywall. But then who did this? What are the police saying? How are they investigating this? That's behind the paywall. I remember the discussions we had about, "Well obviously now the council has to find another place for these kids to go. Is that behind the paywall?" And we said. “No, that's not behind the paywall.” And I think that's the right decision because that's something that impacts your life. (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

This focus on the number of people impacted by a story highlights the role threshold plays in decisions about content placement. Larsen is saying that stories with a high threshold, in other words, those that affect a large number of people, are not likely to go behind the paywall even if those same stories also have elements of continuity. This further emphasizes the notion that news values do not operate in a vacuum. While a story that was negative and immediate like an accident would be open with the continuing coverage closed. However, taking away the value of negativity might make the immediate story closed, as Larsen said was the case with coverage of King Harald’s visits to Horten:

The King of Norway regularly comes to Horten because he loves sailing, and he really likes Åsgardstrand. And the first few times, he was behind the paywall. But now he comes so regularly that we've raised the bar as to do we report this, and, if we do, it will probably be up front and not behind the paywall. Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

In this case, the king's visits became so routine that *Gjengangeren* now faces the question of whether it should report on them at all. I return more to the role of continuity in different types of stories again in the discussion section.

Returning to news genres briefly, while accident stories tend almost exclusively to go in front of the paywall, other genres are more complicated to place. And Larsen noted that in most cases, she and her staff rely on the underlying values of a given story:

It depends on individual stories. It always depends on individual stories. Politics, sports, culture, those are some of the trickier arenas for us now. We know that the story about the well-known sportsman who was telling us how, "Yea I'm successful now, but when I was 13, I was overweight and full of pimples, and this is my story," that goes well online, behind [the paywall]. But it differs very much from what a traditional sports story is. Traditional sports coverage is: There was a match. This happened, these many goals, etc. That does not go online, and the main reason is because people have already shared it. People are online when it happens, so when we come and report it, people already know. (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

In other words, a straightforward sports story that consists solely of game coverage is unlikely to appear behind the paywall while a sports story with a heavy focus on an individual might, and Larsen noted that culture stories tend to follow similar rules. While a story about an artist or a musician coming to Horten would likely go in front of the paywall, unexpected stories might not. She talked specifically about a story featuring a man whose broken knee led to the signing of a popular music artist at a festival in Horten (Larsen, 2017):

The story was that he saw this artist perform last year, and he was so elated he was jumping up and down and broke his knee. And somebody took a picture of this, and the

agent, who knew the person who was taking this picture, showed it to the artist. And she said, “Oh my God, I hope he feels better. Would you like me to come and do my show in Horten?” That’s a great story about a knee injury. Who would have thought? And teasing that with the right photo of a man lying on the ground with a busted knee and the right title? It took off. Whereas if we had a picture of the artist with the headline, “Guess who’s coming to Horten?” Not so much. (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Tønsbergs Blad

Sigmund Kydland serves as the editor in chief and managing director of *Tønsbergs Blad* and works extensively with the newspaper’s print and digital products. He described the initial implementation of the paywall as a process of trial and error:

We made [the paywall] too complicated. The editor at the time, he was like, “Even if you have a paid subscription, you should pay some more at the same price as someone who does not have a subscription.” So, we had a sort of three-tier system which was horribly complicated. And there was outrage on social media. There was a lot of trouble, a lot of noise. But then 3 or 4 years later, everybody else was coming along. And by then the noise was almost over. Today, it’s like nothing. ... Today our audience is, I would almost say happy to pay. Like most of the papers in Amedia, we have a rise in paid subscriptions. Today we have almost 22,000 paid subscribers which is about 1,000 more than it was one year ago. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

And as far as the types of content that tend to appear in front of and behind the paywall, *Tønsbergs Blad*’s strategy seems similar to that of *Gjengangeren*:

We have some simple rules. We say that if it’s something that affects infrastructure, if it’s problems with the water, if it’s evacuation for something, we keep it open. We like to be an institution in the town. ... What we usually do if we have a big news story, something breaking which is affecting infrastructure, a big fire, a big traffic accident, whatever, the main story is open. You can see what is happening. But then we go more in-depth, we

meet the people affected by it, we look at the consequences, and that may be a closed story just for our subscribers. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Kydland spoke specifically of the July 2015 fire in Tønsberg in which Basa-Huset AS, a large storage facility, burned down. Stories like the one that detailed the need for families near the blaze to evacuate were kept in front of the paywall (Kristoffersen, Moskvil, Rugsveen, & Grading, 2015), while an article from a few months later telling about people searching for any surviving belongings in the ruins of the building remains behind the paywall nearly three years later (Hope, 2015). This conforms with Larsen's statements regarding coverage of incidents as well as the general Amedia guidelines regarding immediate and continuing news coverage.

Tønsbergs Blad's approach to the different news genres also bore strong resemblances to those of *Drammens Tidende* and *Gjengangeren*. For the most part, Kydland noted that it was not the genre of a news story that determined whether it would go in front of or behind the paywall but rather how the story was constructed, especially when it comes to sports:

We have learned that sports are a good thing to make special stories about and close up. Making picture albums, making special sections, making live video coverage and then closing it to subscribers is very viable for us. ... Sports stories can really sell subscriptions if they're made the right way. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

He noted that *Tønsbergs Blad's* approach to economic stories followed a similar logic. Just as stories about an athlete's personal struggles are not necessarily traditional sports coverage, Kydland noted that the genre of economics covered a wide range of topics, and that whether they were open or closed depended more on the news values inherent in individual stories:

What we call financial sections aren't really financial. They're so local. They could be a new store opening, it could be a local business going down or up. And people tend to like that. "Oh, local hero makes good." If someone makes a success with a new shop or something, it's more likely to be read than a story with someone going bankrupt. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Here Kydland hints again at the interplay between various values. References to elite people and negativity work together, but not as well as when local elites find success. And, he added, whether these stories would go behind or in front of the paywall is further dependent on an interplay of threshold, immediacy and continuity (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017).

Regarding the value of reference to elite countries, Kydland reported, like Braathen and Larsen, that international news and events were not major presences in the newspaper. He added that international events were only covered if they had an extremely high threshold and were of a highly unexpected nature, and that they appear almost exclusively in front of the paywall:

On 9/11, it was our front page. But then things are out of scale, and it would be horrible if we didn't reflect it. But otherwise, no. If we would bring international news on the front page, that would have to be really huge. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

When it comes to more local negative news, Kydland's strategy resembles those of Braathen and Larsen. He talked specifically about a motorcycle accident in July 2017 in which a 17-year-old died. The initial stories covering the accident (Kristoffersen & Lien, 2017) and plans for a memorial (Rønningen, 2017) were open while stories like the one covering Tønsberg's mayor's efforts to install new safety measures in the area was closed (Lien, 2017)

But while the content placement strategies of all three newspapers are relatively similar, the prioritization of digital versus print products is an area where market position seems to play an important role. Larsen revealed that *Gjengangeren*'s small size necessitates a print-first approach, while Braathen noted that the far larger *Drammens Tidende* focuses primarily on its digital offerings. According to Kydland, *Tønsbergs Blad* does the same:

We are really digital first, so we are not trying to save anything for the printed paper. And you will find stories in the printed paper that have been on the website two days ago or three days ago. And there are also quite a few stories in the online version which never make it to the printed paper. This weekend, we had a lot of stuff happening, and I think 75 percent of the content that was produced during the weekend never made the printed

paper. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

This does not mean that *Tønsbergs Blad*'s digital strategy is the same as *Drammens Tidende*. In fact, Kydland noted that he aims to have 60 percent of the digital content open and 40 percent closed, the exact opposite of *Drammens Tidende*. He revealed also that those percentages represent a shift from years past, when the desire was for 80 percent closed and 20 percent open (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017). The content analysis showed that *Tønsbergs Blad*'s ratio of open to closed content for the week recorded was around 50-50. As noted earlier, I examine potential reasons for this seeming discrepancy further in the discussion section that follows, where I also address the differences in market positions of the three newspapers in more detail.

5 [Discussion]

Now that I have presented the findings from the content analyses and interviews from each of the three newspapers, I discuss the similarities and differences among them and attempt to reconcile certain discrepancies between the results of the content analysis and the data obtained from the interviews. I also compare my findings to the results from Sjøvaag's study, specifically looking at the potential role of market position in the digital content profiles of the three Amedia newspapers compared to the three Schibsted newspapers she analyzed. Before moving further, I briefly aggregate the findings from all three newspapers to further highlight the most notable overarching trends among them.

5.1 News Values in Front of and Behind the Walls

As the content analysis made clear, threshold, immediacy, reference to individuals, and reference to elite individuals were the most reliable markers of whether a story would go in front of or behind each newspaper's paywall. All three newspapers placed the majority of stories marked with threshold and immediacy in front of their paywalls, while the majority of stories marked with reference to individuals or elite individuals appeared in front of the paywalls.

Drammens Tidende placed 93 percent (41) of its threshold stories in front of the paywall while *Gjengangeren* opened 96 percent (43) of its threshold stories and *Tønsbergs Blad* opened 94 percent (68). Stories with immediacy as their primary news value were exclusively in front of the paywall at *Drammens Tidende* and *Tønsbergs Blad*, which published 22 and 15 immediacy stories respectively. *Gjengangeren* published just 6 stories with immediacy as their primary news value, and 33 percent (2) were located behind *Gjengangeren*'s paywall. But again, it is important to note that the two immediacy posts behind the paywall were links to live streams of local sporting events (Limkjær, 2018a; 2018b).

Reference to individuals was slightly less indicative of a story's placement, though a majority of stories which had reference to individuals as their primary news values were closed at each newspaper. *Drammens Tidende* closed 74 percent (34) of these stories while *Gjengangeren* closed 90 percent (44) and *Tønsbergs Blad* closed 90 percent (72). This trend was

similarly found in regards to stories which had as their primary news value reference to elite individuals. *Drammens Tidende* closed 80 percent (12) of these stories, *Gjengangeren* closed 85 percent (29) of these stories, and *Tønsbergs Blad* closed 93 percent (13) of these stories.

From these findings, two general trends appear. First, stories marked with threshold or immediacy are highly likely to appear in front of all three newspapers' paywalls, and second, stories marked with reference to individuals or elite individuals are highly likely to appear behind all three newspapers paywalls. These trends conform with what all three interviewees reported, especially in regards to threshold and immediacy. The genres of crime, everyday life, and accidents featured a total of 104 and 40 stories marked with threshold and immediacy respectively. Accidents blocking major roads, technical difficulties with trains and ferries, and changes to local ordinances or information about taxes that affect large segments of the local populations all were exclusively left open to all readers. And while the trend is for stories featuring reference to individuals or elite individuals to appear behind the paywalls, this second trend is not nearly as universal as the first. Stories marked with threshold were exceedingly rare behind the paywall with just 8 closed threshold stories across all three newspapers. On the other hand, 24 stories marked with reference to individual appeared in front of the paywall across the newspapers. Most of these appeared in the crime, economy, everyday life, and culture genres.

There are a variety of factors that might explain why reference to individuals appears in front of the paywalls more than threshold appears behind them. As Kydland said, he prefers stories featuring faces and eye contact on both sides of the paywall. And Braathen reported that she preferred to find human connections even in stories where specific individuals were not necessarily the primary focus. (Personal communication, October 2017). And Braathen reiterated the point made by all three interviewees that any story that works behind the paywalls would work equally well in front of them. She noted that it was always a matter of trying to fit the desired ratio of open to closed stories:

I would argue that you have to look at the individual case and see what other pieces you have today. If you have three other pieces that you really believe [should go] behind the paywall, then you keep [another piece] open. You have to see this piece by piece but also see the bigger picture. ... The only thing that does not go behind the paywall ever is the

accidents and the incidents. Accidents and incidents. Everything else is a matter of seeing what the webpage looks like right now (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Larsen's observation addresses both trends mentioned above, and through it she reveals that while she thinks of stories about accidents and incidents – often marked with threshold and immediacy – in terms of their news genres, she focuses on stories marked with reference to individuals or elite individuals in terms of those specific values. The other interviewees displayed similar thought patterns, which goes to reinforce the importance of the interplay between values and genres. Accidents and incidents can be thought of as inherently immediate and affecting a large number of people, especially if they block roads, cause traffic delays, or create hazards. And keeping these types of stories open affirms Høst's assertion regarding a principle among Norwegian news outlets to provide important health and safety information for free (Høst, 2014, p. 20). Meanwhile, any story can potentially reference individuals, meaning that whether a story marked with reference to individuals or elite individuals appears in front of or behind the paywall is often dependent on other factors such as the ratio of open to closed stories at the time of its publishing.

Returning to immediacy, while this value featured prominently in determining whether a story would end up in front of or behind the newspapers' paywalls, continuity – at least on the surface – did not. Just 18 stories across all three newspapers had continuity as their primary value. This might seem strange given that all three interviewees – along with Amedia's guidelines for opening and closing stories – talked about continuity as an important factor in determining where stories were placed. All three interviewees reported that, while breaking, immediate, news coverage would usually be left open, continuing coverage of a story was more likely to go behind the paywall. But *Drammens Tidende* and *Gjengangeren* both left half of their continuity stories open, and *Tønsbergs Blad* closed just 43 percent. While this might seem like a contradiction, it is not necessarily so. Instead, there are two potential explanations for why continuity does not appear to be an influential factor in a story's placement.

First, it bears reiterating that most news stories contain a variety of values. Just because there were only 8 stories marked with continuity on *Drammens Tidende*'s website, it should not

be assumed then, that *Drammens Tidende* offered continuing coverage about only 8 stories throughout the week. Instead, the stories with continuity as their primary value were marked that way because they made connections to events of weeks, months, or years past and did not fit primarily into other categories. The story commemorating the Winter Olympics events held in Drammen's Marienlyst Sports Park 66 years ago (Lie, 2018) was one example. The lack of stories marked continuous does not say that there existed no continuing coverage of previous events, but instead that most stories about such events contained other news values in places of primacy. Another prime example is *Drammens Tidende*'s story about the beginning of the trial of two teenagers charged with assaulting another teenager. In fact, not only did *Drammens Tidende* cover the original incident with an open story on June 12, 2017 (Røkeberg & Angeltveit, 2017), it also covered the memorial service for the victim in a closed story on June 23, 2017 (Havnaas, 2017). Continuity is clearly a value in *Drammens Tidende*'s February 2018 story, but it is difficult to call it the primary value when the photo features a portrait of the victim, the victim is mentioned in the lead sentence, and the prosecutor and defense attorney for one of the accused teenagers are quoted in the story. Instead, the story was marked with reference to individuals.

In other words, continuity tends to serve as more of a background value than a primary one. To take an example from *Gjengangeren*, the newspaper published three different stories about the Royal Norwegian Navy Music Corps over the course of the week of study. But none of these stories were marked with continuity. While technically continuing coverage of a single group, the three stories featured different topics – an upcoming concert, illegal downloading of the group's music, and a question of funding for the group– and contained the perspectives of the producer, the conductor, and a local politician. Therefore, none of the three stories were marked with continuity but were instead marked with reference to individuals or elite individuals. To a degree, immediacy can be considered a secondary value as well. While it was the primary value more often than continuity, there were also multiple news stories written about for the first time that were not marked with immediacy. Immediacy has more representation primarily as a result of breaking updates about crimes, accidents and other events that the newspapers wrote about as they unfolded.

5.2 What About Genres?

Just as Sjøvaag found in her study, the results of the content analysis revealed that certain news genres were more likely to end up on certain sides of the paywalls. At each newspaper, accidents were exclusively found in front of the paywall. This supports Sjøvaag's findings for *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* (Sjøvaag, 2015, pp. 314, 317) as well as the data collected from the interviews. Stories about crime and everyday life were also found most often in front of the paywalls. *Drammens Tidende* placed 29 of 37 (78 percent) of its crime stories and 15 of 18 of its everyday life stories in front of its paywall. *Gjengangeren* placed 11 of 17 (65 percent) of its crime stories and 24 of 29 (83 percent) of its everyday life stories in front of its paywall. *Tønsbergs Blad* followed this trend with its crime stories, 31 of 37 (84 percent) of which were located in front of the paywall. But *Tønsbergs Blad* was more balanced when it came to stories about everyday life, with just 21 of 39 (54 percent) in front of its paywall. Sjøvaag found similar trends at *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad*, which placed 96 and 88 percent of their crime stories and 79 and 75 percent of their everyday life stories respectively in front of their paywalls (Sjøvaag, 2015, pp. 314, 317).

The obvious outlier among the group is *Tønsbergs Blad*, which had closer to a 50-50 split regarding everyday life stories. It should again be noted that *Tønsbergs Blad* published more everyday life stories – as well as more stories in general – than the other two newspapers, but the percentages still do not follow the general trend. As discussed in the findings section, this seeming incongruity can be explained by analysing the news values found in *Tønsbergs Blad*'s everyday life stories. As shown in Figures 19 and 20, 20 out of 22 everyday life stories containing threshold as their primary value open and all 13 everyday life stories containing reference to individuals as their primary value closed.

However, this should not be taken to mean that all three newspapers have the exact same paywall strategy. That *Tønsbergs Blad* focuses more on everyday life stories than *Gjengangeren* which in turn focuses more on sports stories than *Drammens Tidende* does reveal how each newspaper prioritizes different kinds of news., and it bears reiterating that my intent in this study is not to say that analysis of news genres can tell us nothing or is not worthwhile. Analyses of news genres found in front of and behind newspapers' paywalls is valuable. It's a good start in determining the kinds of content for which newspapers believe they can safely charge their readers. But by itself, it leaves questions unanswered. Knowing that 96 percent of *Bergens*

Tidende's crime stories were placed behind its paywall is useful, but it says nothing about the types of crime stories the newspaper might consider worthy of closing. On the other hand, knowing that all 6 crime stories with threshold as their primary news value were in front of the wall at *Gjengangeren* while all 3 crime stories with references to individuals as their primary news values were located behind the paywall gives some insight into the differences between them and can be used to predict how other stories outside of the crime genre are placed.

For example, stories about Facebook viruses (Angeltveit, 2018), mobile phone scams (Mæland, 2018), and ways to avoid being burglarized during winter vacations (Røsholt, 2018) affect all readers and are thus kept open. Meanwhile, stories like the one about a man being arrested after drinking two liters of vodka and driving (Bjerkaas, 2018) focus solely on the individual being arrested. Carrying this logic over to stories about the economy, it makes sense that a story detailing a local business owner's thoughts on a building project (Johannessen, *Småbedriftene sliter: – Bromsjordet kan ikke bygges ut stykkevis*, 2018a) is closed and a story about bank shutting down a local ATM (Broms, 2018c) is open. Of note is that the ATM story quotes a bank employee and features a photo of her as well. However, given that anyone who has used the ATM in question would potentially be affected by the story, it was marked with threshold. These examples are meant to illustrate that while crime stories might be more likely to be open, crime stories with reference to an individual as their primary value are more likely to be closed. And conversely, economic stories are more likely to be closed, but if those economic stories concern a large number of people, they are more likely to be open. These trends are unobservable just by looking at news genres, and they serve to highlight the usefulness of looking both at genres and values together.

That the ATM story has a photo of an individual in it highlights once again that most stories contain multiple news values. After all, it is possible to argue that the drunk driving story could serve as a warning to all readers about the dangers of drunk driving and therefore contain the value of threshold. And many of the threshold crime stories quote police officers and other individuals. There is undoubtedly overlap among news values. The same could be said of genres as well, as the ATM story could potentially affect readers' everyday lives if they are used to stopping at that particular location. It is for this reason that I focused solely on the primary news genre and value of each story in this study. A more thorough, comprehensive study detailing all

genres and values each story contains, while enlightening, would take far greater time and resources than available for this project. I return to this opportunity for further study, among others, again in the conclusion that follows this section.

5.3 Amedia vs. Schibsted: Same Same but Different?

In this section I offer a more in-depth comparison of the results of this study to those obtained by Sjøvaag in her study of Schibsted newspapers. This comparison focuses primarily on news genres since that is what Sjøvaag looked at. I also discuss the role of market position as it relates to the similarities and differences between the newspapers. I use *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* as my primary basis for comparison since they share the same basic paywall model as the newspapers in this study. As Sjøvaag pointed out, it is impossible to precisely identify which *Aftenposten* stories are open and closed because any one of them could fall into either category depending on the order in which a reader clicks on them (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 312). Because this study used only a week's worth of data from a single year, I compare the results to those of the final year in Sjøvaag's study, 2014. Finally, it should be noted that *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* both posted far more stories (upwards of 400 each) than any of the Amedia newspapers in the week of study (Sjøvaag, 2015, pp. 13, 15). Whether the numbers in Sjøvaag's study represent the number of unique stories across the week or the total number of stories from all the screenshots taken – meaning that the same story could be counted multiple times depending on how many screenshots it appeared in – is unclear. If it is the latter, the numbers would not be comparable to those in this study in terms of volume of stories published, as I counted each individual story just once regardless of how the number of screenshots in which it appeared. It is also worth noting once again that Sjøvaag's study took place during the newspapers' transitions to paywall models, while this study took place years after each newspaper implemented its paywall. There is always a possibility that the weight *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* give to each genre has changed in the years since Sjøvaag's analysis.

For the most part, the three newspapers in this study bore more similarities to *Stavangers Aftenblad* than *Bergens Tidende*. This is perhaps unsurprising given that Sjøvaag found that *Bergens Tidende* had a much more liberal paywall than *Stavangers Aftenblad*. In turn,

Stavangers Aftenblad, which closed 34 percent of its digital content (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 315), closed less content on average than *Drammens Tidende*, which closed 37 percent of its digital content. *Drammens Tidende* was the newspaper with the least restrictive paywall in this study. The most noticeable difference between the three Amedia newspapers and the Schibsted ones is the treatment of sports coverage. *Drammens Tidende*, *Gjengangeren*, and *Tønsbergs Blad* closed 80 percent, 85 percent, and 91 percent of their sports coverage respectively. Meanwhile, *Bergens Tidende* left 100 percent of its sports content open and *Stavangers Aftenblad* closed just 4 percent of its sports stories. Sjøvaag notes in her study that *Aftenposten* continued to publish a high volume of sports stories after it implemented its paywall, hinting that the newspaper believed sports to be “valuable subscription content” (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 314). She offers two possible explanations, one explaining why sports coverage at *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* not only decreased in volume but was also found almost exclusively in front of the newspapers’ paywalls:

Centralized production in the sports and lifestyle sections has moved production of these valuable content areas away from the separate production units to a higher editorial level where all journalists working for the so-called “100% Sports” division produce stories catering to all four newspapers. ... This consolidation measure could have inspired these chain-affiliated newspapers to divert fewer resources to covering sports online. (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 314)

Her second explanation refers to the fact that sports stories at both Schibsted newspapers appeared primarily in front of their paywalls. Sjøvaag suggested that “because *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavanger Aftenblad* both face competition from local tabloids without paywalls—*Bergensavisen* and *Rogalands Avis*, respectively—walling up local sports content would simply drive readers to these competing brands” (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 314).

These hypotheses could explain why *Gjengangeren* is able to confidently wall off the bulk of its sports articles, as it has little competition in regard to local sports coverage. However, *Tønsbergs Blad* and *Drammens Tidende* both face competition from local, albeit online-only, news outlets. According to Braathen though, Drammen Live24 reports primarily “on crime and accidents and fires” (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017). That the Amedia

newspapers do not face the same level of competition locally as *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* could explain why they are able to close off more of their sports content.

As for the joint sports desk to which Sjøvaag referred, Kydland revealed that *Tønsbergs Blad* had a similar set-up regarding more general news:

What's a bit special [at *Tønsbergs Blad*] is that we have a joint news desk for paper production together with three other printed papers. And at the moment we also have a joint digital desk where six different newspapers are managed. That will be terminated on the first of January. We're all going more local. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

It was unclear whether sports were a part of the joint news desk, but the content analysis showed that each newspaper primarily covered teams in Drammen, Horten, and Tønsberg respectively, along with some coverage of local athletes in international events. Coupled with Kydland's point that the joint news desk was dissolved early in 2018, this suggests that each newspaper is largely focused primarily on local sports. But while the three Amedia newspapers were relatively similar in the percentage of sports coverage they closed, *Gjengangeren* was a clear outlier in terms of the volume of sports coverage it produced. Based on Larsen's comments regarding personal profiles of local athletes overcoming struggles in their personal or family lives as a new form of sports coverage, it is unsurprising that *Gjengangeren* publishes sports stories at a relatively high volume compared to its Amedia counterparts. She gave as a hypothetical example, a now-successful athlete who was "overweight and full of pimples" as a teenager:

We're being asked now to reconsider the sports coverage online. And this is going to be a challenge in the years to come, because you have also got to find the balance between traditional coverage. Because the traditional sports reader will think "He was overweight and full of pimples when he was 13? I don't care. ... Whereas you might possibly reel in people who might think, "Oh, that's a good story," and they might not even realize that they're reading sports coverage. (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Kydland also discussed this kind of sports coverage in particular as having a lot of potential behind the paywall:

What we have learned last year actually, is that sports are a good thing to make special articles on and close them up. Making picture albums, making special sections, making live video coverage and then closing it to subscribers is very viable for us. ... Sports in Norway have a good readership. I would say about one-third of the readers are interested. And they are very interested. Two-thirds aren't. But these guys [who are interested], they want to pay for it. Sports stories can really sell subscriptions if they're made the right way. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Regarding the genres that *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad* prioritized behind their paywalls, Sjøvaag suggested that placing content behind the paywall was a way of protecting newspapers' investments in resources (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 314). In this case, resources refers primarily to the time and energy reporters spend in the creation of different types of stories. She notes that "politics, social issues, economy and cultural features are some of the most resource-demanding journalistic areas that a newspaper covers. The paywall therefore works as a mechanism that also protects the editorial investments of these papers" (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 314). While it is unclear what lead Sjøvaag to determine that a political story requires more resources than one about everyday life, her point makes sense. It is possible that she did not mean these four as an exhaustive list, and that everyday life could be included among them, especially given that *Bergens Tidende* closed more everyday life stories than culture stories and *Stavangers Aftenblad* closed a relatively high number of everyday life stories as well (Sjøvaag, 2015, pp. 314, 316). While viewing the paywall as a way to protect a newspaper's investment in resources makes sense, it is difficult to support this claim using only news genres. Sjøvaag notes that "although these categories also contain cheap agency clips and quick news updates ... reportage, features, interviews and investigative stories in these content areas are potentially some of the most resource-demanding aspects of news production" (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 319). However, stories about crime and sports can be features and involve interviews. Analyzing news values present in stories across genres lends more support to Sjøvaag's claim. Crime stories involving in-depth

interviews with police representatives or victims are more likely to go behind the paywall, and this could very well be because they cost more in the way of resources than coverage of petty theft or vandalism.

On a final note, it is worth reiterating once more that – outside of accidents, perhaps – there is no genre or value that can be said to constantly be placed in front of or behind a paywall. The content analysis showed that multiple stories referencing individuals went in front of the paywalls and that a handful of stories featuring threshold as their primary news value went behind them. The interviews in particular made it clear that factors behind news genres and values went into decisions about where to place different content. I return to this point in my conclusion, but first I offer a more in-depth comparison specifically of the three interviews.

5.4 Comparing the Interviews

As previously stated, all three interviewees reported that they used values of immediacy and continuity in determining where to place various news digital content. They also highlighted a focus on individuals, specifically faces of local residents, as something for which they believed readers would pay. While the results of the content analyses bore this claim out, Kydland reported that he prefers stories both in front of and behind the paywall to contain references to individuals:

We like to make most of our stories individual. We like to get a face to everything. And quite literally a face is working well. ... Eye contact helps, so that works in general.
(Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

This statement might seem to contradict the practice at *Tønsbergs Blad* and the other newspapers given that stories with reference to individuals and elite individuals as their primary values overwhelmingly appear behind the paywall. And perhaps it would if the primary news values were the only ones present in the stories. But as has been mentioned, this is not the case, and nearly every story has multiple news values. In fact, many of the stories marked with threshold as their primary news values contained photos of faces and references to individuals. For example, the story about the tax administration sending letters to 175,000 Norwegian

citizens who receive their tax reports both digitally and on paper has threshold as its primary value, but it features a photo of a Skatteetaten employee and references her in the article as well (Urstad, 2018a). By interpreting Larsen's claim that "incident cancels out celebrity" (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017) to mean threshold cancels out reference to individuals – an interpretation supported by the content analyses – the take away is that in cases where threshold is present, it is almost exclusively the primary news value and result almost exclusively in open stories.

Apart from the uniform response that accidents and incidents never go behind the paywall, all three interviewees said that it was difficult to say exactly what makes a story work behind a paywall. As discussed in the comparison to Sjøvaag's findings, all three interviewees reported that they relied heavily on their preferred ratios of open to closed content to determine where a story might go.

If we think, "Oh, now we have a really good closed story," then we try to find a really good, traffic-driving, open one as well. We like to keep that mix, and we work on that through the day. We want to recruit, so you have to have some good open stories to get new people into the page. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Of course, Kydland also made it clear that while any closed story could work as an open story, the reverse was not always true. This is evidenced by accidents showing up exclusively in front of the paywall while more in-depth stories about people sharing their experiences could end up in front of the paywall if there were already enough closed stories at a given moment. As Kydland notes:

If we try to find the differences between an open story which gets us a lot of readers and a closed story? It's not really [possible]. We just look at what we have, and we decide. We choose. And a great closed story would be a great open story as well. So, we just try to get the mix right, to have both at the same time. And as I said, a good story locally is a story where we have a face, we have a human who something has happened to, and there are consequences for a single human being we have talked to and who tells us about it. Either good or bad, that's a good story. ... But a car accident? Not really. But if we then

have a victim, someone who saw it and tells a human story, then it's a great online story. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Larsen went more in-depth into how news values play into decisions surrounding different stories, and the idea that “incident cancels out celebrity” (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017) can be seen clearly in the placement of stories featuring references to the local fire marshal and a Vestfold police inspector. The fire marshal, for purposes of this study considered an elite individual in the local community, was quoted in a story about a water heater catching fire (Limkjær, 2018d), while the police inspector was quoted in a story about a man defrauding Nav for more than 60 million kroner (Løsnæs, 2018). The former story was left open despite featuring quotes from a high-ranking public official with the local fire department. In this case, the immediacy of the incident and the need to remind readers to be careful with appliances cancel out the celebrity of the fire marshal and result in the story being open. Meanwhile, the story quoting the police inspector was closed, as it was not an immediate threat or concern to readers, and most readers do not need to be cautioned against defrauding government agencies.

It should be noted, of course, that the story quoting the inspector originated from a journalist working for *Østlands-Posten* in Larvik, and therefore *Gjengangeren* did not have any say in whether it was opened or closed. That the story did not originate from *Gjengangeren* does not diminish the results of the analysis, of course. Many stories appearing on the digital front pages of the newspapers in this study come from other Amedia newspapers as well as NTB. The important point is that *Gjengangeren* chose to use the story. And given that both *Gjengangeren* and *Østlands-Posten* papers are owned by Amedia and serve small communities – *Østlands-Posten* had a circulation of 11,395 in 2017 (Medienorge, 2017) – it makes sense that there would exist some overlap in their paywall strategies.

But while all three interviewees agreed that their paywall strategies shared elements in common, there was one area in particular where all three interviewees saw their newspapers as different from the other two – market position.

According to Larsen, *Gjengangeren* was the outlier of the three newspapers as far as circulation and market position were concerned, and based on Medienorge’s figures, her assessment is accurate (Medienorge, 2017). Larsen spoke specifically on the topics of clickbait

headlines – headlines that highlight certain, often irrelevant or misleading facts of a story in an effort to get readers to click on them – and the effect of proximity to readers:

I constantly am irritated when *Dagbladet*, *VG*, or *Aftenposten* – and they do it quite regularly – say, “This is something you have to know, or you could die,” and it's behind the paywall. To me, that is not something we can do. And that is a difference between what they do and what we do. I think, if we did things like that, we would be called out on it pretty quickly. They do it, and they thrive on it. Because their distance to the readership is so great. But distance to our readership is so small that if we did something like that ... Well, if I didn't work here, I would be at the door there saying, "What are you doing? Why are you doing this? This is unfair. You're making money out of my fear of dying.” (Larsen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Of course, *Tønsbergs Blad* and *Drammens Tidende* are much smaller than *Dagbladet*, the smallest of the three Larsen mentioned, which had 72,679 total circulation in 2017 (Medienorge, 2017). And Braathen and Kydland both saw their newspapers as much closer to their readers than national newspapers. But while *Drammens Tidende* is a regional newspaper, Braathen reported that she thought of *VG* as its biggest competition online. According to Braathen, this competition used to result in headlines that verge on clickbait in an effort to draw readers, but she added that clickbait headlines have been abandoned since the implementation of *Drammens Tidende*'s paywall:

We used to have some clickbait titles, but we don't anymore. We're trying never to trick the reader. ... We tend to be more honest I think. And we've seen that the [amount of time readers spend on an article] will be better when we're honest. Otherwise they might click on it, and then they'll just immediately click to exit. (Braathen, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

It might seem as though the amount of clickbait headlines would have little to do with paywall strategy given that clickbait stories are, by their definition, meant to drive traffic and therefore would most likely always be open. But, as the heavy focus on ratios of open to closed

stories implies, all three newspapers take both open and closed stories into account in carrying out their paywall strategies. Kydland specifically talked about the importance of open stories to *Tønsbergs Blad*'s strategy:

You have to have some good open stories to get new people into the page. They can come for a free story, and then they should see "Oh, here's a closed one I really want to read, but I can't. Oh well, I have to subscribe then." And I would say that between 80 to 90 percent of the subscriptions that we sell are sold through the stories. ... Five years ago, almost all our subscriptions were made by phone. Today it's almost 100 percent digital. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Kydland noted also that geographic position played a role in crafting paywall strategy. While Drammen is just 46 kilometers outside of Oslo, Horten is 97 kilometers away and Tønsberg is 107 kilometers away.

We are kind of exclusive. There's a reason to buy us because 80 to 90 percent of the stuff that we do, you won't get any other place. Of course, we have competition. There's a small free paper in town, and then, of course, you have the Norwegian broadcasting company, which has quite a big presence here. They have a big office, lots of journalists, and so on. But they're not big competition in local news. (Kydland, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The interviewees from all three newspapers – along with much of the research on paywalls (Sjøvaag, 2015; Myllalahti, 2017; Kvalheim, 2013) –agree that exclusivity is a vital component in a good behind-the-paywall story, and Braathen, Kydland, and Larsen all noted that any story covered by a competing news agency would automatically go in front of the paywall unless they had an exclusive source or angle on the story that made their article different. Braathen reported that many stories covered by national newspapers or the NTB were not even particularly useful for driving traffic as open stories, and that the main reason to publish them was that people missed them only when they weren't on the website:

If we have same story as *Aftenposten*, we have it in front. Our readers don't come to us for the national or international news. If we have the NTB story, it's just for background. We don't see that our readers click on it at all. But if we don't do it, we'll have a lot of angry readers. They'll say, "Don't you know that there's been a terror attack?" and we'll get a lot of [flak]. So, we usually do it, but it doesn't work. Our readers don't want it. (Braathen, personal communication, October, 26, 2017)

In other words, even copy-pasted stories from international news wires can factor into paywall strategies, if only indirectly. Having such stories – whether they're detailing international terrorist attacks (NTB, 2017) or a looming shortage of teachers in Norway (NTB, 2018a) – despite them serving neither to drive traffic nor to boost subscription rates fulfills the public service aspect of journalism by giving the audience what it needs to know regardless of whether readers want it or whether it is profitable to do so (Deuze, 2005).

Before moving into further discussion, it is worthwhile to address the ratio of open and closed stories for which each newspaper strives in greater detail. All three interviewees emphasized the importance of striking a balance between open and closed content. Braathen said *Drammens Tidende* tried to have 50 percent of its content open and 50 percent closed. Larsen said *Gjengangeren* strove to have 40 of its content open and 60 percent closed, and Kydland said *Tønsbergs Blad* strove to have 60 percent of its content open and 40 percent closed (Braathen; Kydland; Larsen, personal communication, 2017). According to the content analyses, the actual percentages for the week were different for *Drammens Tidende* – which had roughly 60 percent open and 40 percent closed – and *Tønsbergs Blad* – which had roughly 50 percent open and 50 percent closed. *Gjengangeren* achieved Larsen's desired ratio for the week with roughly 40 percent open and 60 percent closed.

While this might seem like a discrepancy, this is not necessarily the case. A number of possible explanations exist as to why the actual ratios were different from the ideal ratios listed by the interviewees. The most likely explanation is that the ideal ratios are just that – ideal. All three interviewees made it clear that these ratios, like the suggestions from Amedia, were general guidelines meant to drive the newspapers overarching digital strategies. It is unsurprising then that each and every week does not line up exactly with the ideal ratios at each newspaper. An unusually high number of accidents on a given day could easily sway the number of *Drammens*

Tidende's open stories and throw off the ratio. And while some stories might later be closed to account for a high number of open stories, the methods used in this project are not well-suited to identify changes to stories after they are published. This is due to the original analysis of these ratios being performed based on the screenshots collected during the analysis. Reexamining a number of stories after the fact revealed that some were closed and some were opened after their initial publication. In some cases, it was difficult to tell which ones, as the newspapers sometimes changed headlines as well. This was most notable in an article about a social debate in *Drammens Tidende* originally titled "Hylletsamfunnsdebattanter på «meningenes festaften»" (Moen, 2018c). Some time after the screenshot was collected, the headline of the story was changed to "Fiender i spaltene ble venner på do" and it was placed behind the paywall. This change suggests that the process of achieving and maintaining a newspaper's preferred balance of open to closed content is ongoing.

It is worth discussing the ratios of open to closed story even though the relative success each newspaper has at achieving its desired balance of open to closed content is not the primary goal of this study. The interviews revealed that these ratios play a big role in determinations of what is open and closed, and that a story that might otherwise have been closed might be open depending on the ratio at any given time. Again, this study is not well-suited to precisely identify the long-term ratios of open to closed stories at the newspapers. While these ratios are an important part of the newspapers' paywall strategies and are undoubtedly worth taking into consideration, a more in-depth, longitudinal study capable of capturing each and every story along with edits to various aspects of said stories would be required to get a more accurate picture of longterm ratios of open to closed content.

6 [Conclusion]

In this section, I briefly summarize the most notable findings of this study before offering some suggestions for further research.

6.1 Summary

As I believe has been made clear, the two primary findings of this study regarding news values can be summarized as follows: Immediacy and threshold work best in front of the paywalls and references to individuals and elite individuals work best behind the paywalls. Neither of these findings is absolute, and exceptions exist. This is especially true of reference to individuals and elite individuals, which appeared relatively often in front of the paywalls compared to the frequency with which immediacy and threshold appeared behind them. These findings support Sjøvaag's suggestion that paywalls serve to protect newspapers investments of their reporters' time and energy, especially when considering that stories featuring reference to individuals or elite individuals often – though not always – involve interviews with the individuals referenced. The news values of continuity, negativity, meaningfulness, and unexpectedness were relatively evenly distributed behind and in front of all three newspapers' paywalls, and the values of consonance, composition, reference to elite countries, and unambiguity did not appear as primary news values in any story at any of the three newspapers.

In terms of news genres, crime and accidents were the primary genres of open news stories at *Drammens Tidende* and *Tønsbergs Blad*, while at *Gjengangeren*, the two genres with the most open stories were everyday life and crime. But even at *Gjengangeren*, accidents were placed exclusively in front of the paywall. This supports Sjøvaag's findings regarding *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavanger Aftenblad* in terms of crime and accidents, but all three Amedia newspapers differed from the two Schibsted newspapers in their treatment of sports coverage, electing to place the majority of their sports coverage behind their paywalls. This could be a result of the three Amedia newspapers operating in smaller markets with less competition in covering local news.

As for the genres the Schibsted newspapers prioritized behind their paywalls – politics, economy, social issues, and culture – the Amedia newspapers exhibited similar trends, though they were less pronounced. As I have demonstrated, the primary news value of a story was a more reliable predictor of whether a story appeared in front of or behind a paywall than its genre. While political stories appeared more often behind the paywalls of all three Amedia newspapers than in front of them, all political stories with threshold as their news values appeared in front of the paywalls. Similarly, just one economy story marked with threshold appeared behind the paywall. This suggests that stories featuring threshold, regardless of their genre, are more likely to appear in front of the paywall. The reverse is true – albeit to a lesser extent – of stories featuring reference to individuals or elite individuals as their primary values, which are more likely to go behind the paywall regardless of genre.

Of course, as all three interviewees in this study reported, there are other factors that go into decisions about where content is placed. All three stated that they use preferred ratios of open to closed content in determining where to place new stories in relation to their paywalls. Coupled with the content analysis, this revealed a sort of two-step process in determining a story's placement. After determining whether or not a given story could work behind the paywall based on its genre and values, the interviewees considered the existing ratio of open to closed content on their digital front pages and placed the story accordingly. This means that even if a story is well-suited to go behind the paywall, it might end up in front of it if there are already a high number of closed stories on the front page. Similarly, a story published behind the paywall might move in front of it to make room for another closed story and vice versa. All in all, the interviews and content analysis combined to paint a picture of a complicated – and extremely fluid – process regarding where stories are placed in relation to the paywalls of all three newspapers in the study.

6.2 Opportunities for Further Study

As Sjøvaag pointed out, there have been “a scarcity in studies analysing the content found on paywalled newspapers” (Sjøvaag, 2015, p. 310). Further research into the kinds of content newspapers prioritize in front of and behind their paywalls would be beneficial in

understanding whether paywalls are a viable business model for traditional print newspapers as they continue to adapt to the digital age. In this project, I have already mentioned a number of areas that would benefit from further research, and it is worthwhile to reiterate and expand on them now.

The most obvious area upon which could be improved in this study is the interviews. Specifically, follow-up interviews after the data collection would have allowed for more insight into the decision-making process behind the placement of specific stories. As it was, the interviews focused more on hypothetical examples of stories with different genres and values. That's not to say they weren't useful, and many of the stories collected during the content analysis matched the genres and values of hypothetical examples. Furthermore, the interviewees all provided examples of stories that have worked well in front of or behind their paywalls in the past. However, conducting follow-up interviews and discussing a pre-selected sample of stories would be of great interest. For example, discussing *Drammens Tidende's* story about the trial of two teenagers that stayed on top of its website for nine hours could offer a great deal of insight into the newspaper's content placement process.

Another improvement that could be made to this study is a longitudinal approach. Using just one week of coverage is limiting in several ways, as it simply gives a snapshot of that particular week. While there was no news coverage that suggested it was an atypical week, it is difficult to be certain without comparing it to other samples. Following Sjøvaag's method more closely would be of great help in this area and studying three weeks of coverage over the course of several months or years would offer a much better understanding of how the newspapers place their digital content.

In addition to improvements to this study, several other areas of further research became apparent throughout the course of the project. Chief among them were more in-depth studies of the whole range of news values present in stories analyzed and an in-depth analysis specifically of top news stories.

Performing a more in-depth analysis of the news values present in the stories on the newspapers digital front pages was not feasible in this project, but it would go a long way in revealing more about how the news values interact with one another. The findings of the content

analysis and interviews suggested, for example, that threshold overrides most other news values and results in stories being open. By analyzing stories based not only on their primary news values but by the two or three most notable news values, a more concrete picture of how and why different stories appear in front of or behind the paywalls might emerge.

As for top stories, the analysis in this study was cursory in nature and ultimately, top stories were not weighted or treated any differently than any other story. This was a matter of practicality in this case, focusing exclusively on the stories that be seen on the digital front pages without scrolling would be helpful in understanding how newspapers select and place what they deem their most important, need-to-see content.

Finally, there was one area ripe for further study that came up during this project but did not relate specifically to its goals: An analysis of social media's role in paywall strategies. The interviews revealed that all three newspapers shared stories on Facebook. They discussed how and why they chose to share some stories and not others, readers' reactions to clicking on a shared story only to be blocked by the paywall, and the role of Facebook likes and comments and how they related to traffic and clicks to the newspapers' websites. As Kydland said, the majority of *Tønsbergs Blad's* new subscribers subscribe online. A study of how effective sharing a closed story on Facebook is at attracting new subscribers would be of great interest to newspapers of all sizes, though this – and many other studies that seek to gauge the effectiveness of paywalls – would require access to the newspapers' data on page views, subscriptions, and similar statistics, which is not necessarily easy to gain.

In conclusion, my findings support Sjøvaag's conclusion that small, local newspapers with solid paywall strategies such as those in this study – in addition to large, legacy media organizations with a high degree of brand recognition like the New York Times – might be best equipped to take advantage of the opportunities paywalls offer. As she notes, “free alternatives are likely to remain in markets where people do not exclusively seek niche publications such as local news” (2015, p. 318). Luckily for *Drammens Tidende*, *Gjengangeren*, and *Tønsbergs Blad*, they face relatively little competition compared to *Bergens Tidende* and *Stavangers Aftenblad*. And the interviewees from all three newspapers reported that they are pleased with the growth

they have seen in digital revenues, though they agreed that new challenges, opportunities, and strategies to deal with them emerged constantly.

7 [Figures]

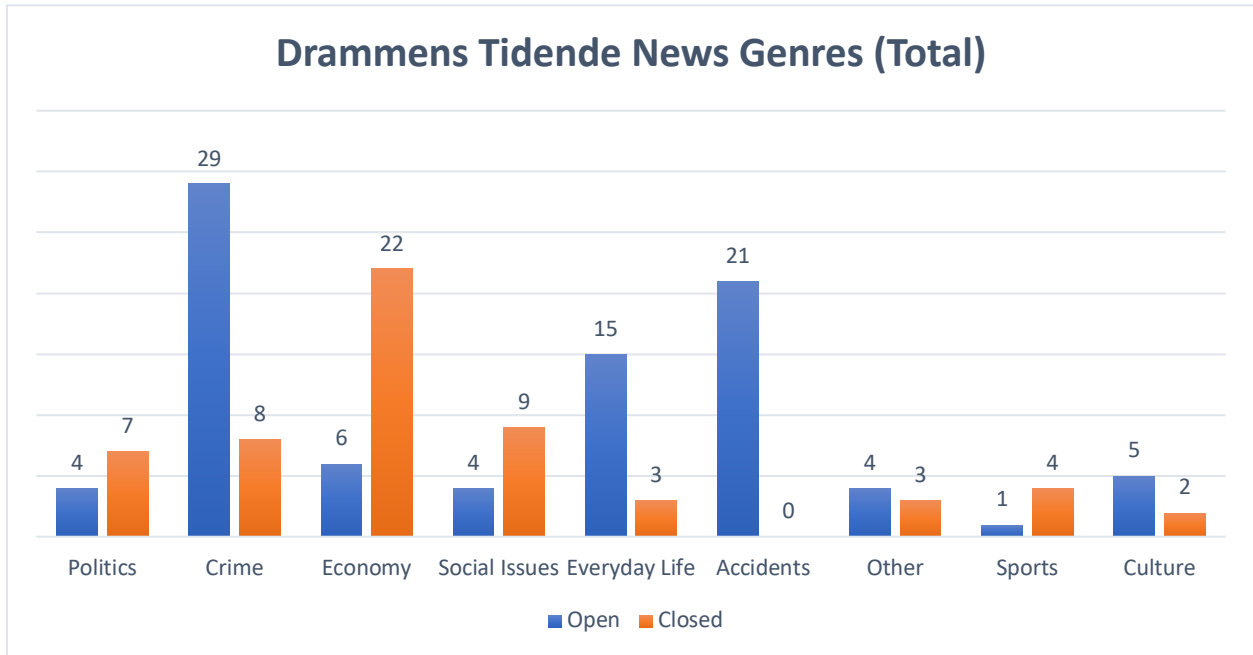


FIGURE 1 — *Drammens Tidende* News Genres (Total)

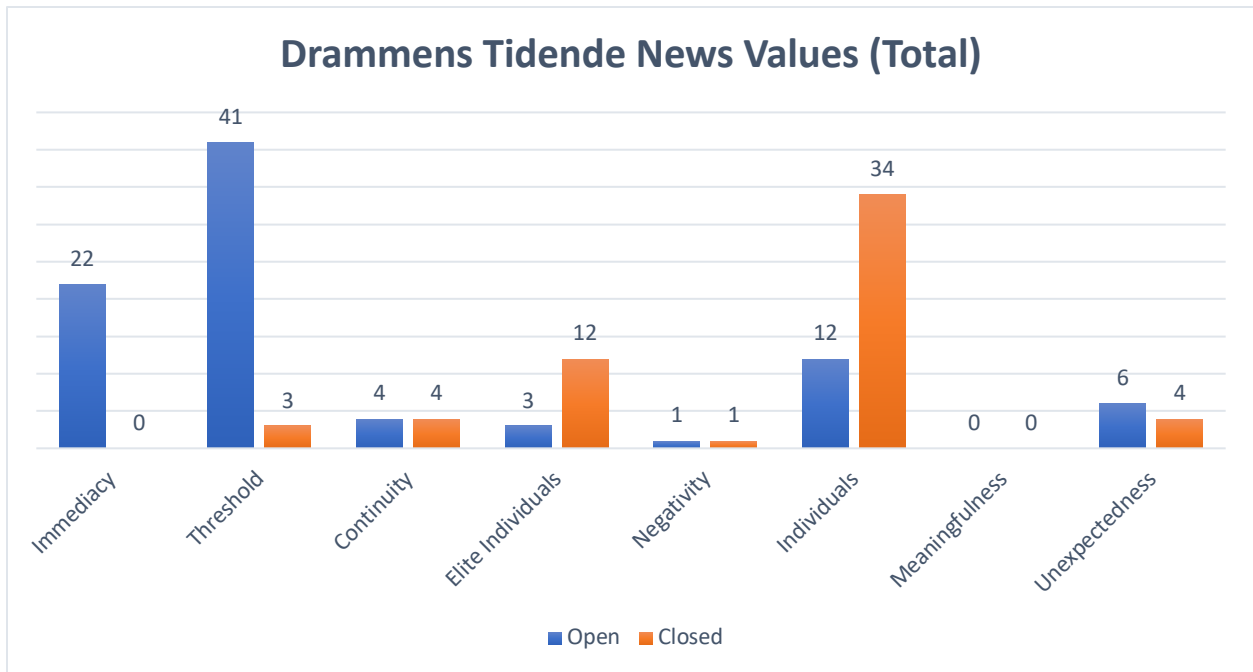


FIGURE 2 — *Drammens Tidende* News Values (Total)

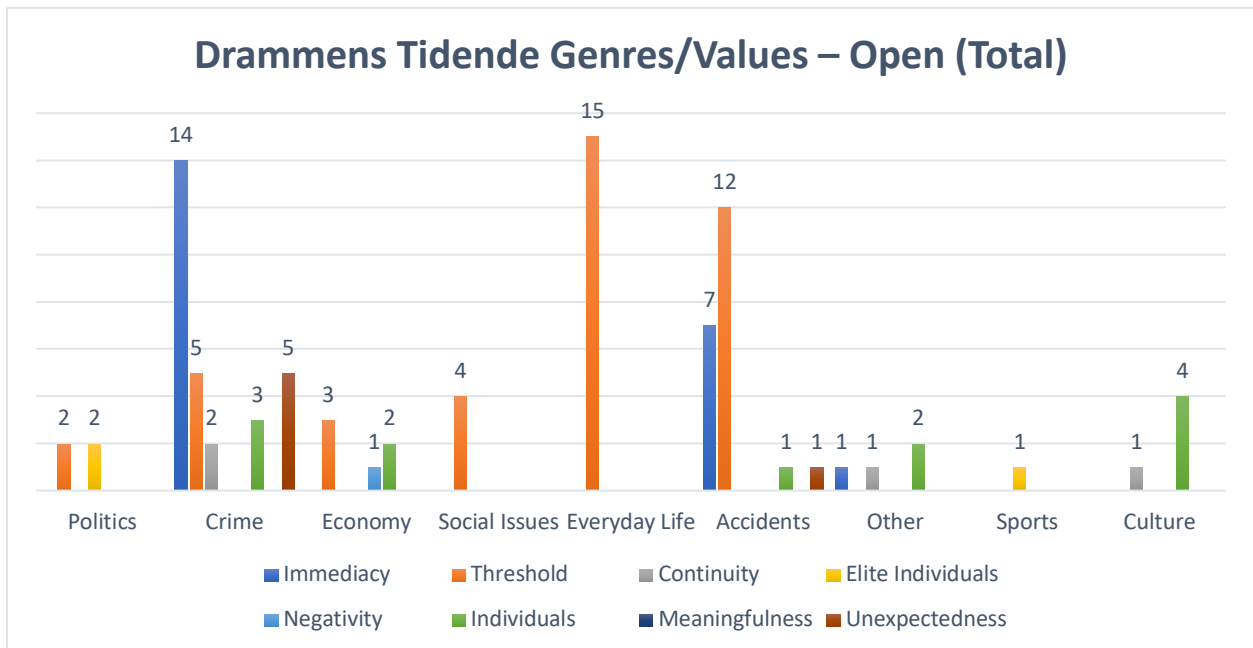


FIGURE 3 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Open (Total)

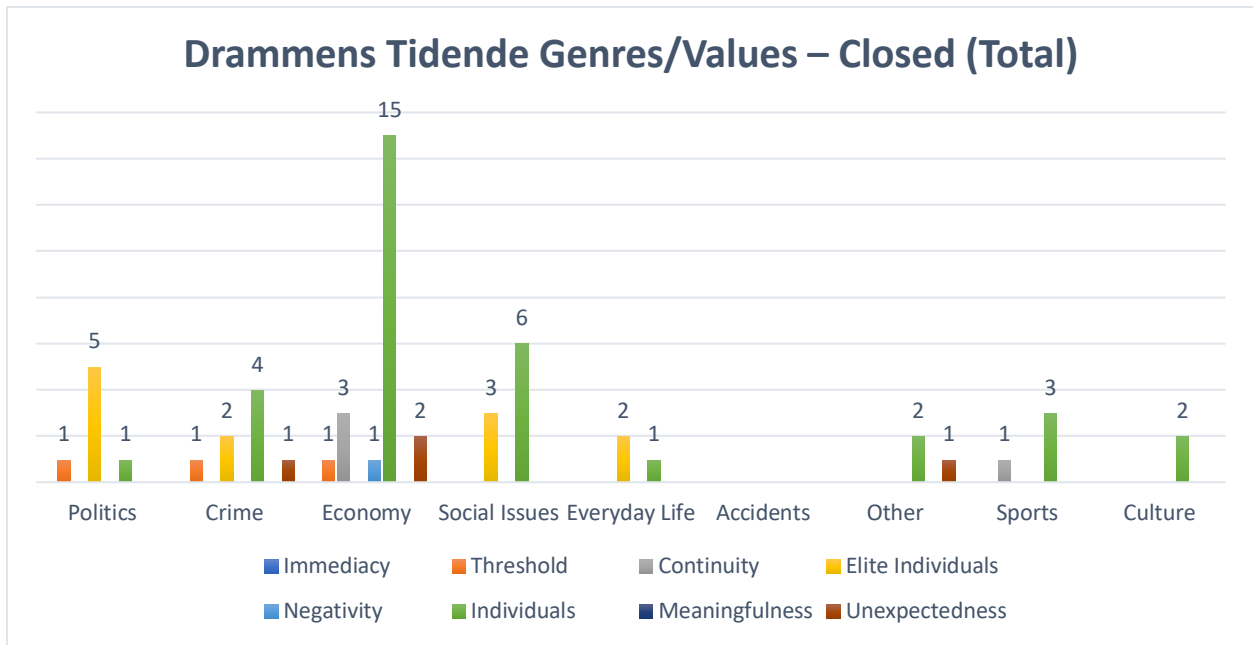


FIGURE 4 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Closed (Total)

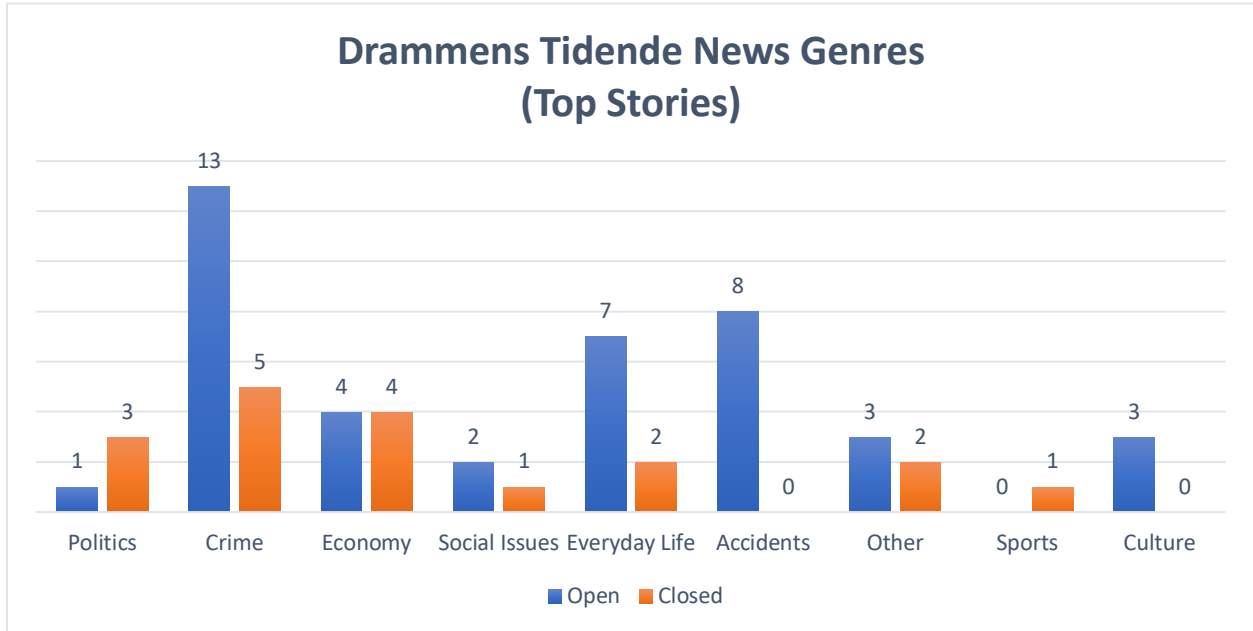


FIGURE 5 — *Drammens Tidende* News Genres (Top Stories)

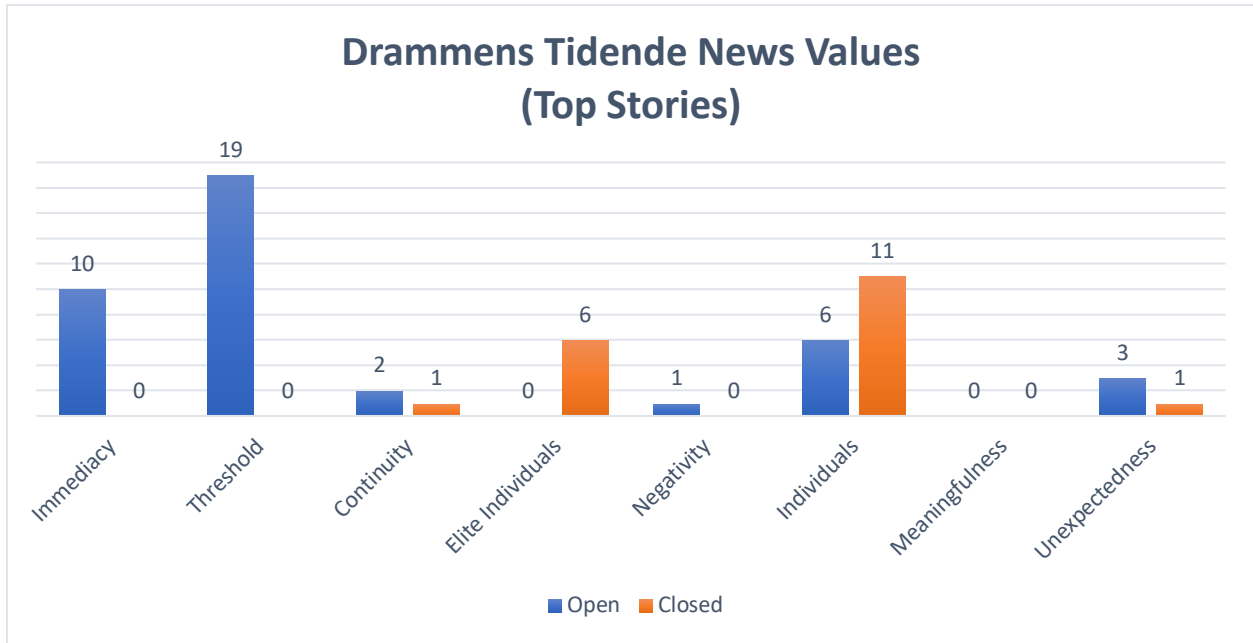


FIGURE 6 — *Drammens Tidende* News Values (Top Stories)

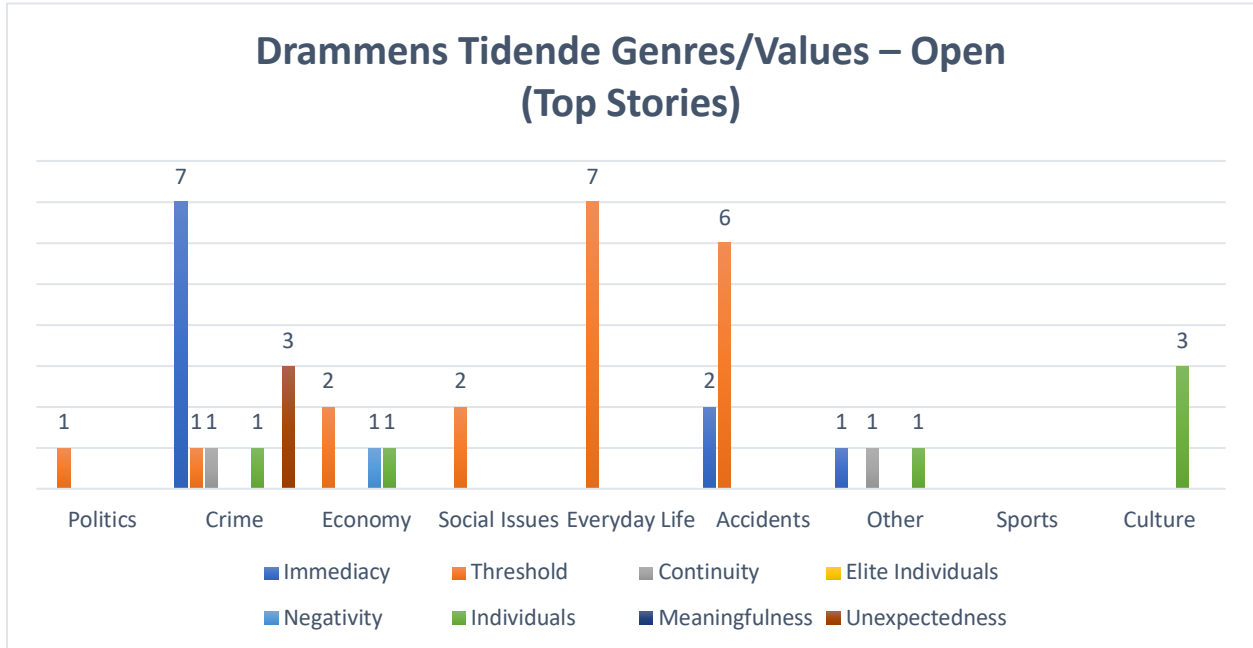


FIGURE 7 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Open (Top Stories)

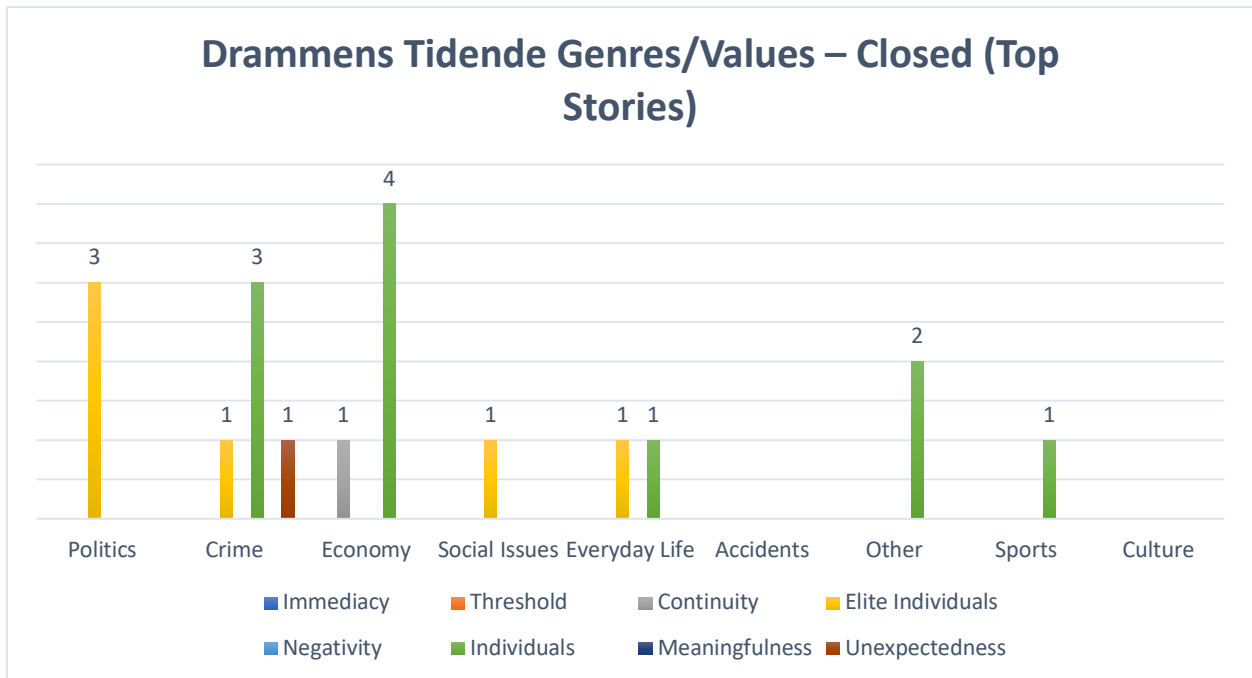


FIGURE 8 — *Drammens Tidende* Genres/Values – Closed (Top Stories)

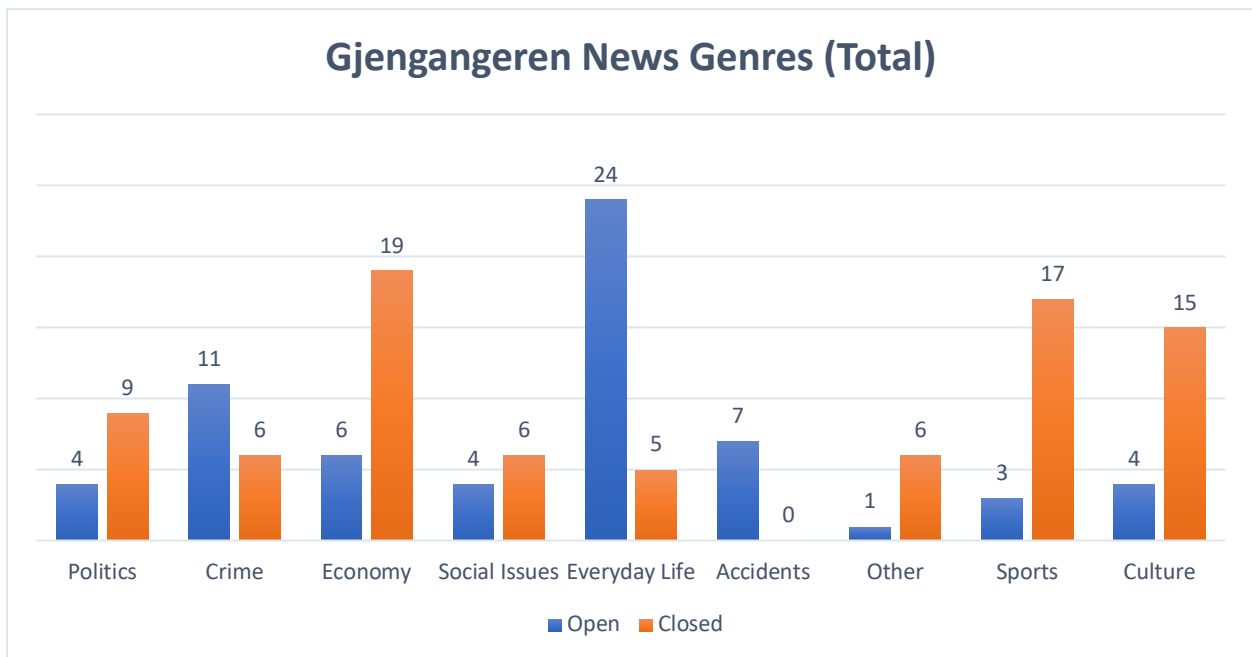


FIGURE 9 — *Gjengangeren* News Genres (Total)

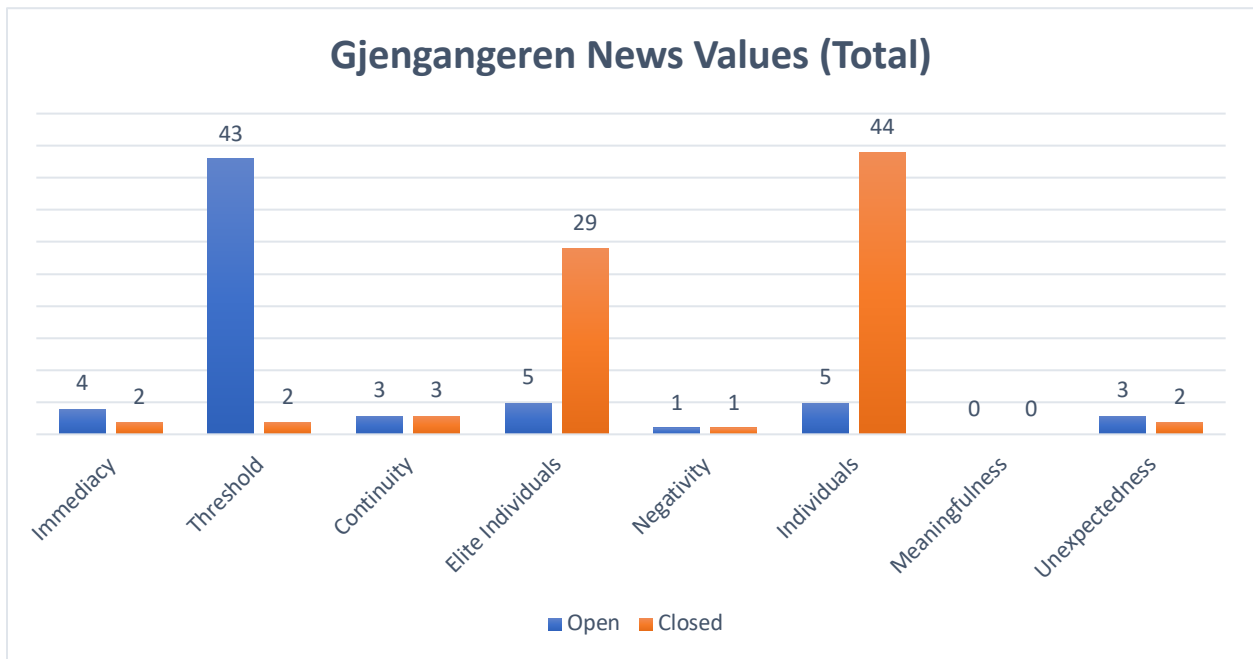


FIGURE 10 — *Gjengangeren* News Values (Total)

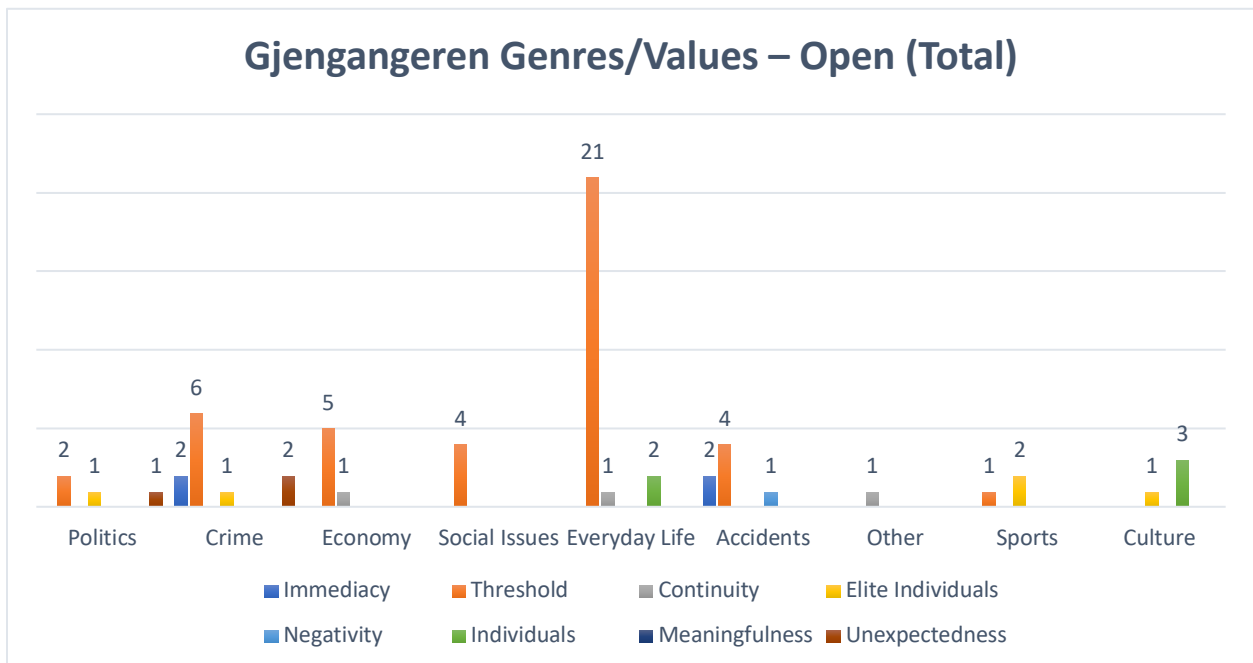


FIGURE 11 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Open (Total)

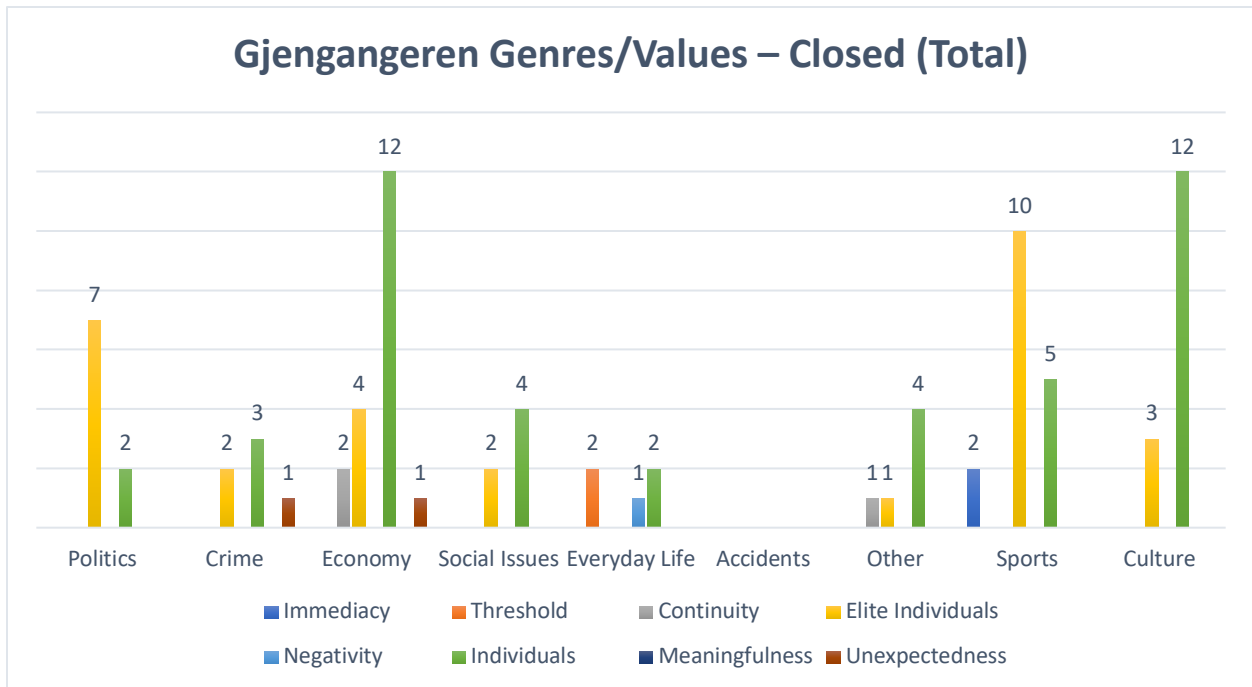


FIGURE 12 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Closed (Total)

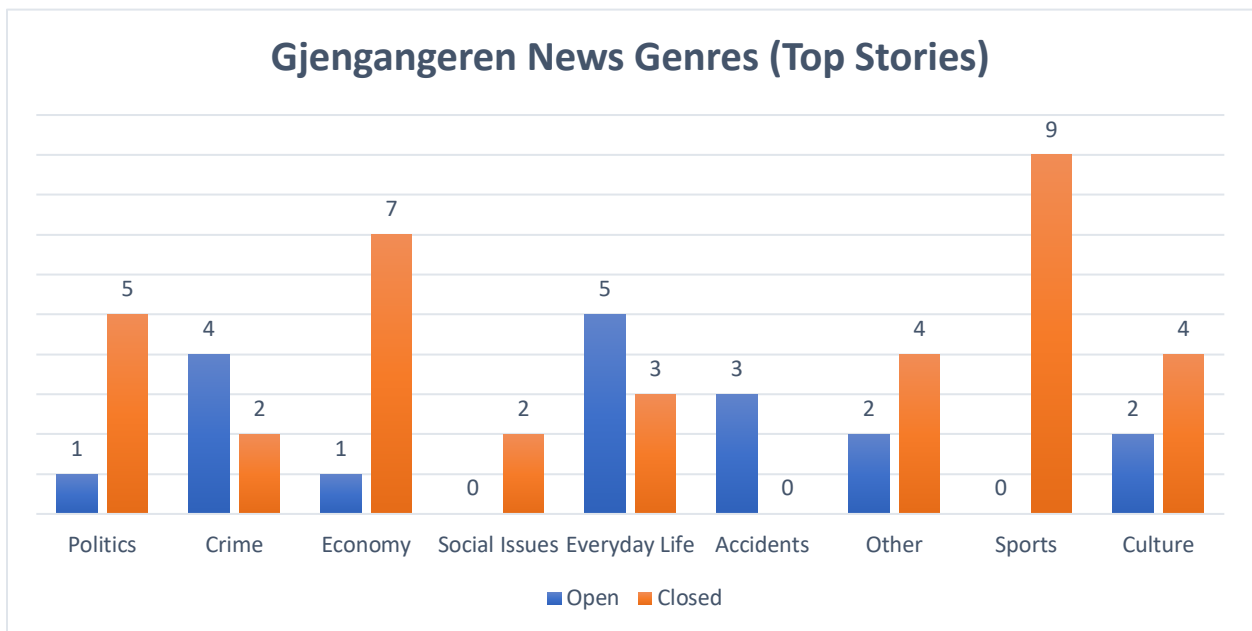


FIGURE 13 — *Gjengangeren* News Genres (Top Stories)

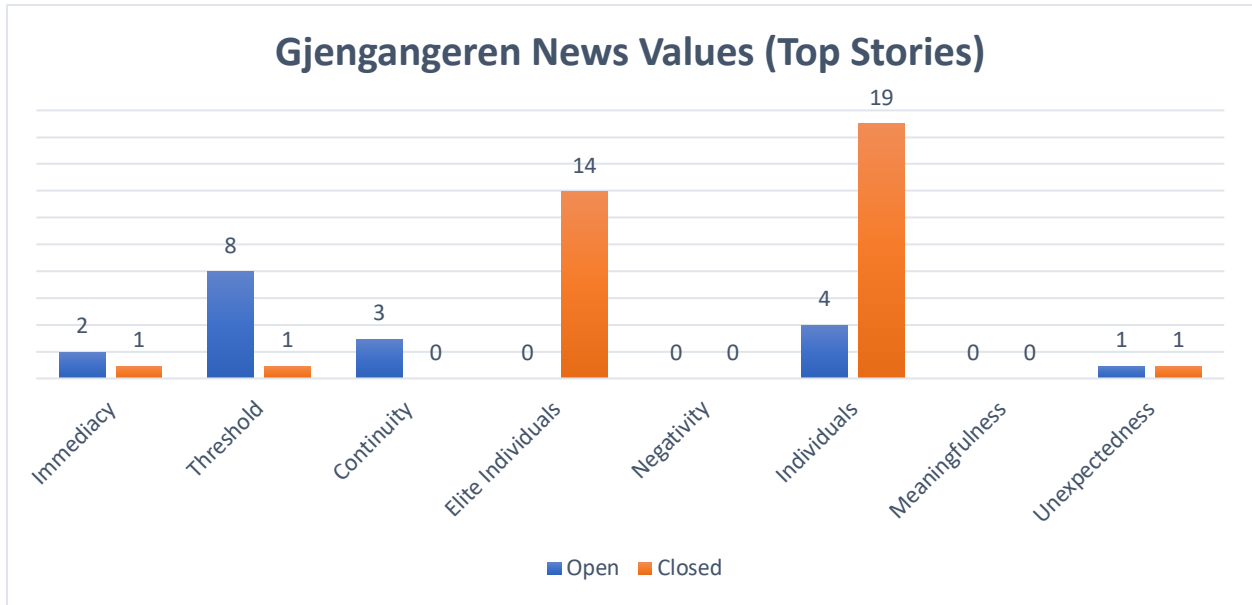


FIGURE 14 — *Gjengangeren* News Values (Top Stories)

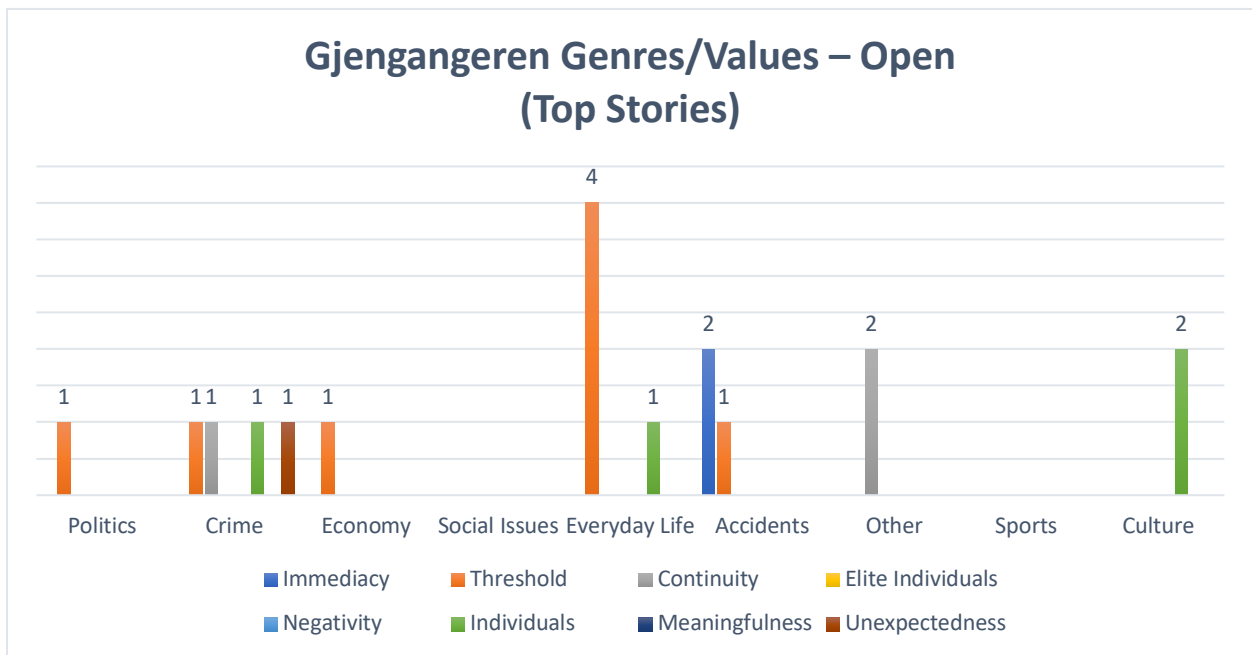


FIGURE 15 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Open (Top Stories)

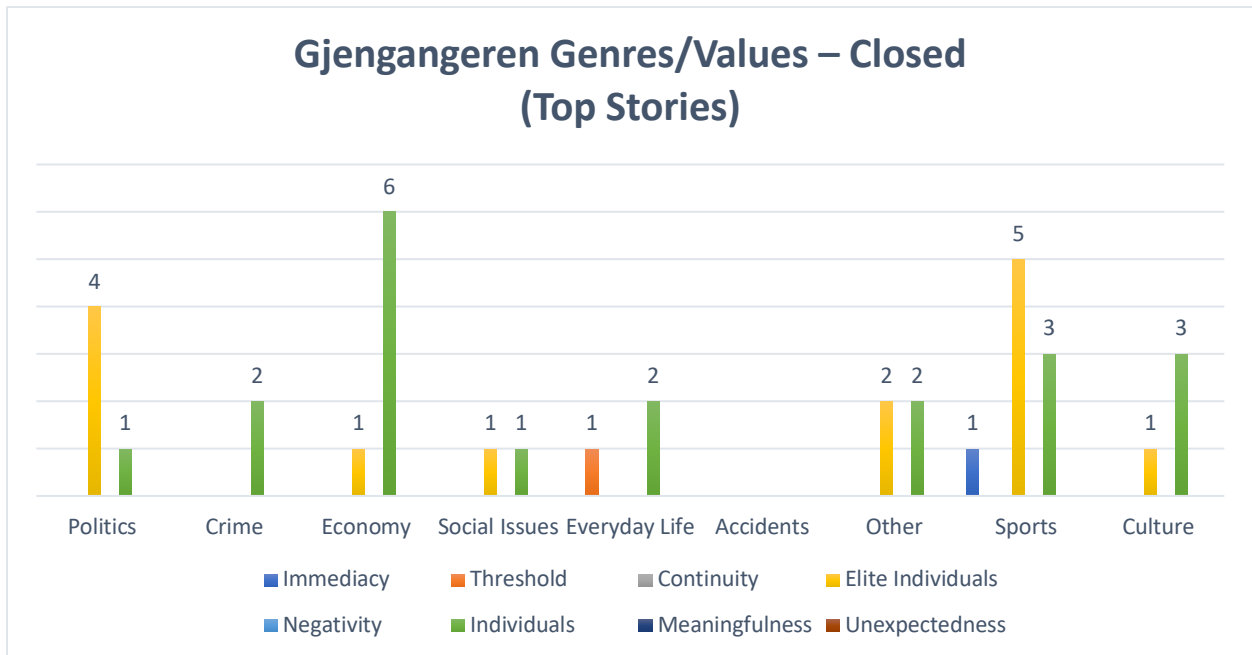


FIGURE 16 — *Gjengangeren* Genres/Values – Closed (Top Stories)

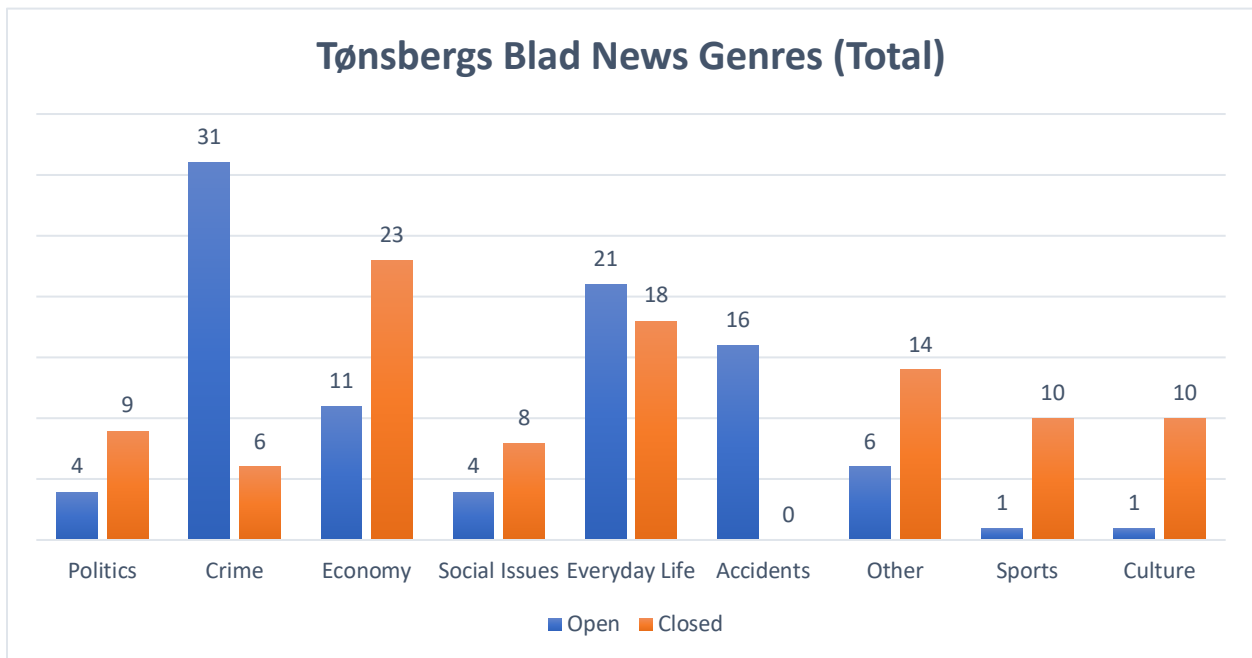


FIGURE 17 — *Tønsbergs Blad* News Genres (Total)

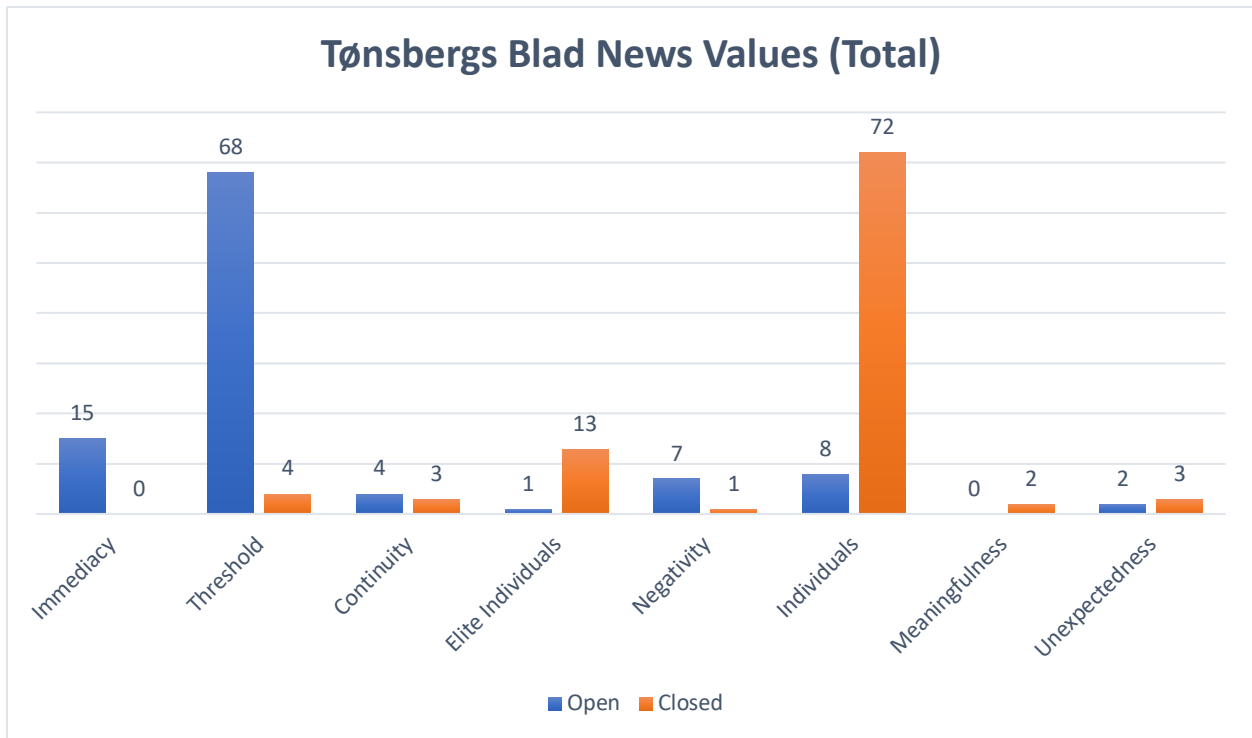


FIGURE 18 — Tønsbergs Blad News Values (Total)

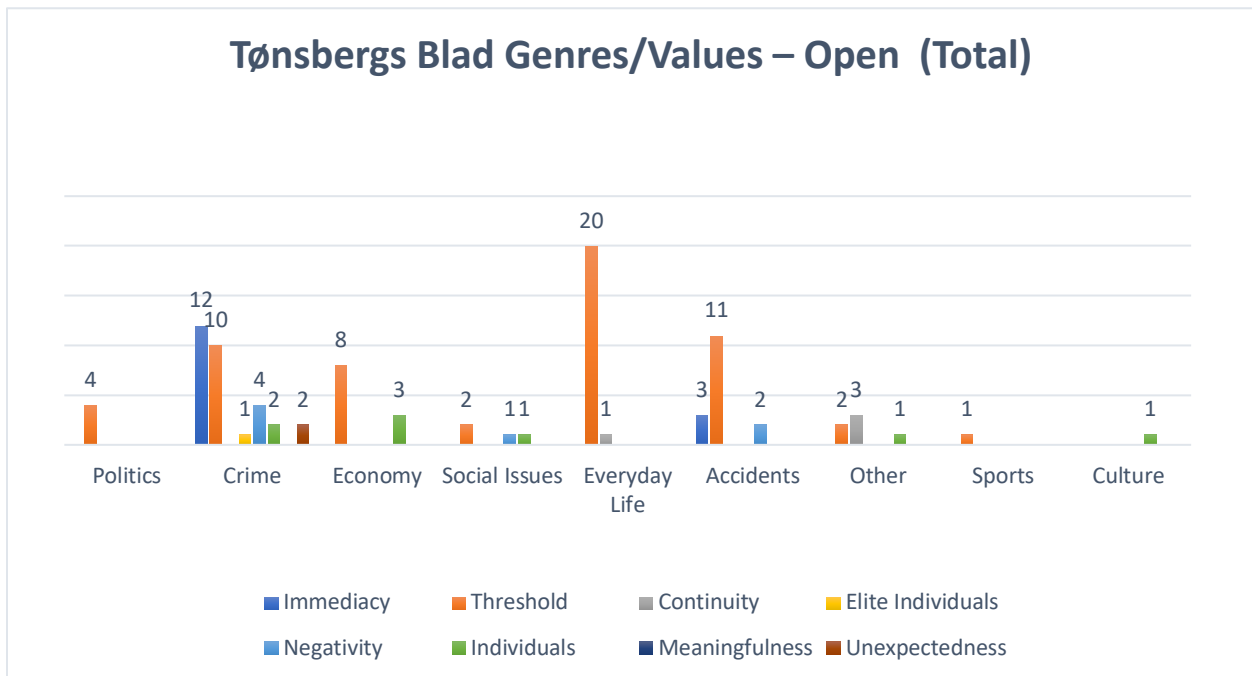


FIGURE 19 — Tønsbergs Blad Genres/Values – Open (Total)

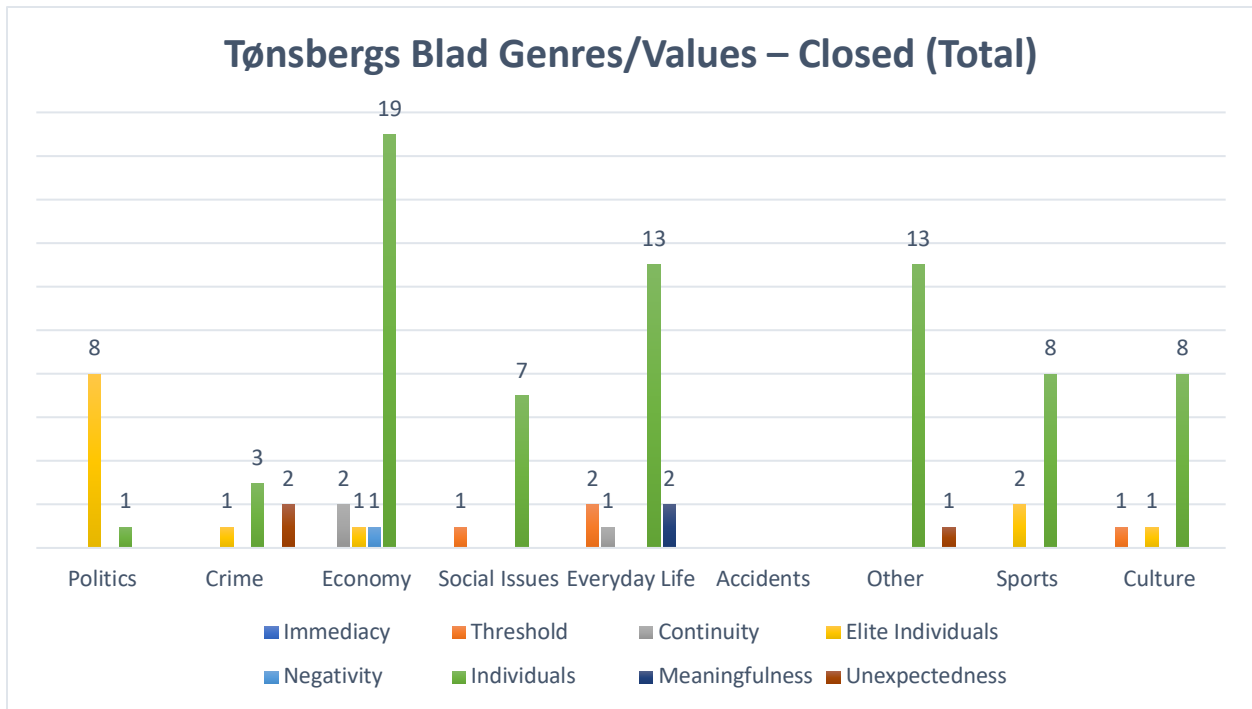


FIGURE 20 — Tønsbergs Blad Genres/Values – Closed (Total)

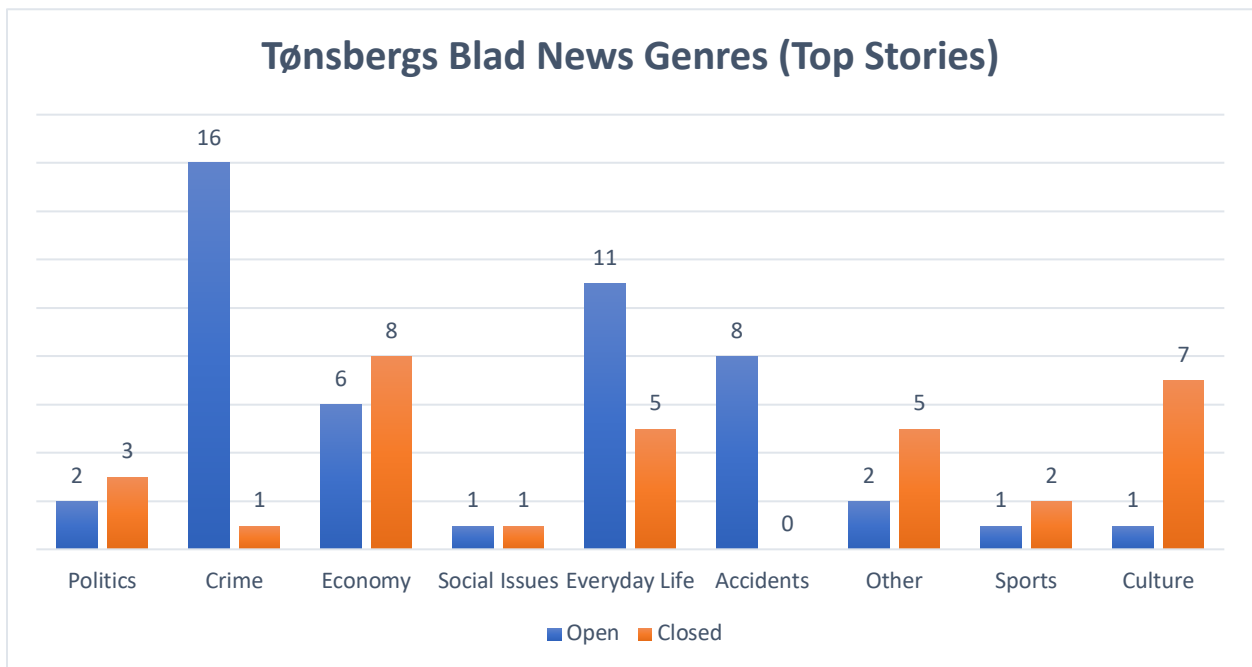


FIGURE 21 — Tønsbergs Blad News Genres (Top Stories)

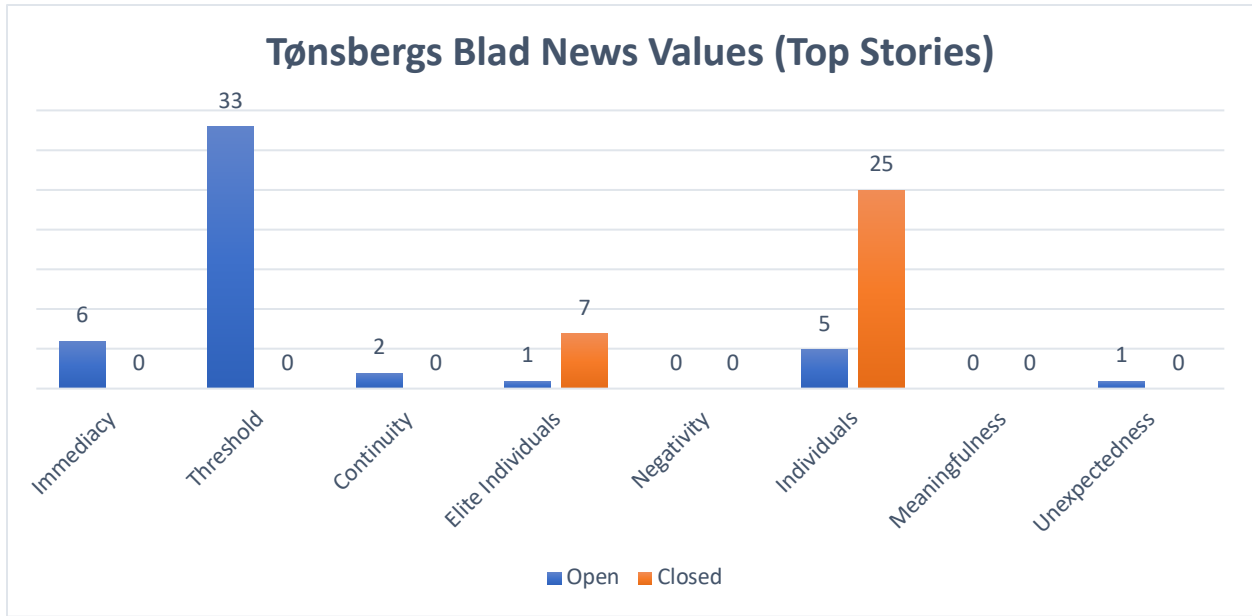


FIGURE 22 — *Tønsbergs Blad* News Values (Top Stories)

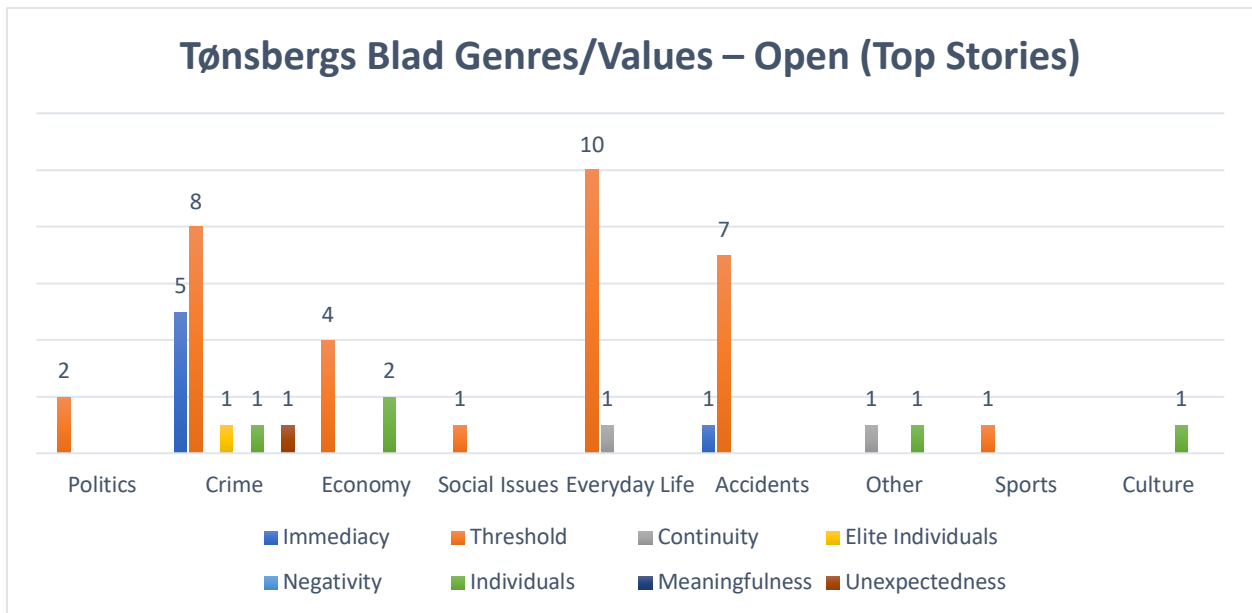


FIGURE 23 — *Tønsbergs Blad* Genres/Values – Open (Top Stories)

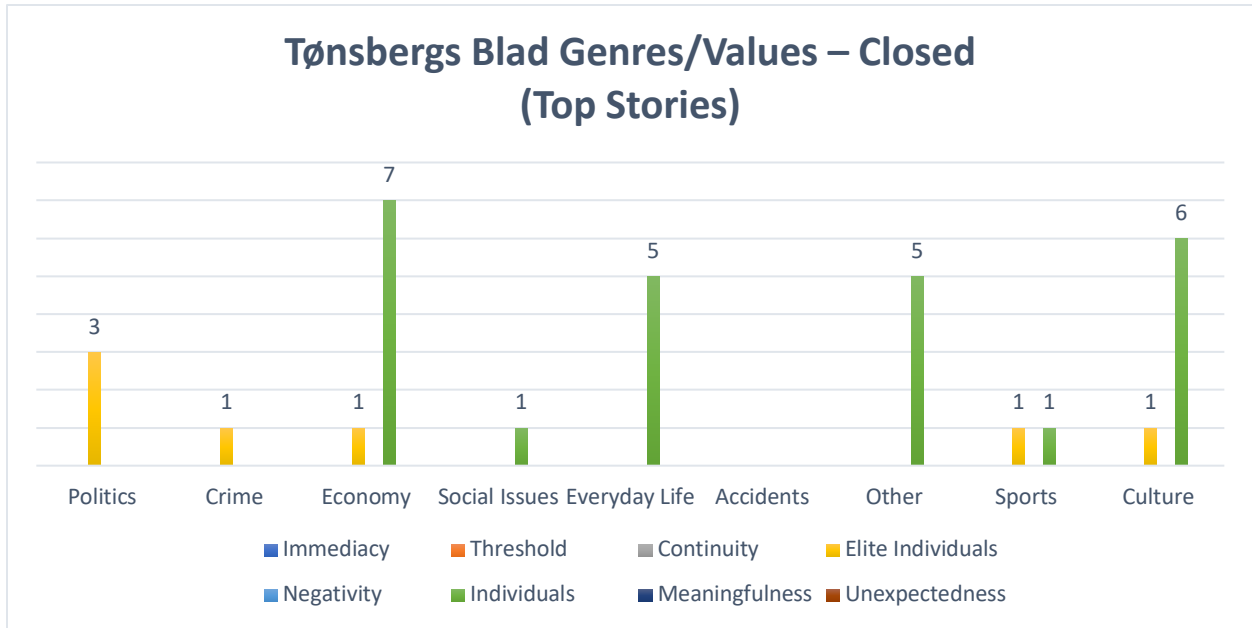


FIGURE 24 — *Tønsbergs Blad* Genres/Values – Closed (Top Stories)

8 [Appendix]

8.1 NSD Approval Letter

NSD received the revised copy of the letter of consent subjects signed before it was sent out.



Charles Melvin Ess
Postboks 1093 Blindern
0317 OSLO

Vår dato: 21.02.2018

Vår ref: 58729 / 3 / AGL

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

Vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning § 31

Personvernombudet for forskning viser til meldeskjema mottatt 26.01.2018 for prosjektet:

58729	Norwegian news online: News values in the digital age
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Charles Melvin Ess
Student	Zachary Potter

Vurdering

Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon finner vi at prosjektet er meldepliktig og at personopplysningene som blir samlet inn i dette prosjektet er regulert av personopplysningsloven § 31. På den neste siden er vår vurdering av prosjektopplegget slik det er meldt til oss. Du kan nå gå i gang med å behandle personopplysninger.

Vilkår for vår anbefaling

Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:

- opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon
- vår prosjektvurdering, se side 2
- eventuell korrespondanse med oss

Vi forutsetter at du ikke innhenter sensitive personopplysninger.

Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet

Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke [endringer](#) du må melde, samt endringskjema.

Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet

Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i [Meldingsarkivet](#).

Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt

Ved prosjektslutt 31.05.2018 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

8.2 Letters of Consent

Project information

This interview will be a part of a master's thesis for the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo.

The thesis will be completed in May 2018 and will be presented to members of the department.

The project relates to the relationship between news values and newspapers' digital paywalls. You will have access to the thesis once it is turned in, and you will have the opportunity to review any material directly quoted from your interview before the project is handed in. You have the right to refuse to participate, refuse to have your personal information used, and to withdraw your consent at any time while the project is ongoing. Participation in the project is voluntary.

Contact information


If you have any questions or concerns, you can email Zachary James Potter at zjp14@gmail.com or zacharyp@student.media.uio.no, or call at +47-48439622. The supervisor for this project is Professor Charles M. Ess. He can be reached through email at c.m.ess@media.uio.no or by phone at +47-22850404.


Access to data

The data generated from this project will be treated confidentially, with access limited to Zachary Potter and Charles Ess. It will be kept secured for up to two years for potential use in follow-up research and will be anonymized no later than May 31, 2020.

Consent

I, the undersigned, understand that my name, job title, and other information related to my employment with Drømmens Tidende will appear unanonymized in Zachary James Potter's master's thesis for the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo, and that it will be anonymized no later than 31.5.2020.


 Interviewer Date 12/13/18


 Interviewee Date 12/13-18

Project information

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Consent

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 Interviewer 12/3/18
 Date


 Interviewee 12/3-18
 Date

Project information

This interview will be a part of a master's thesis for the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo.

The thesis will be completed in May 2018 and will be presented to members of the department.

The project relates to the relationship between news values and newspapers' digital paywalls. You will have access to the thesis once it is turned in, and you will have the opportunity to review any material directly quoted from your interview before the project is handed in. You have the right to refuse to participate, refuse to have your personal information used, and to withdraw your consent at any time while the project is ongoing. Participation in the project is voluntary.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, you can email Zachary James Potter at zjpotter14@gmail.com or zacharyjp@student.media.uio.no, or call at +47-48459622. The supervisor for this project is Professor Charles M. Ess. He can be reached through email at c.m.ess@media.uio.no or by phone at +47-22850404.

Access to data

The data generated from this project will be treated confidentially, with access limited to Zachary Potter and Charles Ess. It will be kept secured for up to two years for potential use in follow-up research and will be anonymized no later than May 31, 2020.

Consent

I, the undersigned, understand that my name, job title, and other information related to my employment with Tønsberg Blad will appear anonymized in Zachary James Potter's master's thesis for the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo, and that it will be anonymized no later than 31.5.2020.


 Interviewer Date 22/3/18


 Interviewee Date 22/3/18

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