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Making it in the Media:

Prototyping and Materialization Processes Among Local Media Houses and Bloggers in Denmark

Maria Eitzinger
PhD Dissertation

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Chapter I: Introduction

This dissertation as well as its empirical foundations fall in two parts, each based on very different kinds of ethnographic engagement, institutional conditions, and fieldwork. Its analysis, theoretical content and conclusions have grown out of these two fields as well as of the changing inter-disciplinary and cross-institutional conditions under which the PhD process unfolded. Let me elaborate by spending some time in this introduction to briefly sum up the process and characteristics of my ethnographic field sites and how they led to the theoretical choices and analytical experiments of this thesis.

This dissertation began with a commissioned collaboration between the Danish School of Media and Journalism, which also funded my PhD, Danish regional legacy media houses and The Danish Agency for Culture and Palace. More specifically, the Danish School of Media and Journalism employed consultants working with design anthropological methods to help media houses improve their understandings of their audiences. I was part of this team of consultants. In the commissioned project, I was tasked to engage in certain predefined approaches to design anthropology around which the PhD project was organized. I was enlisted as part of a collaborative, ready-set team in an applied project involving several local Danish media houses. The project was commissioned by the legacy media houses because of radical changes in the media landscape and as such also in their livelihoods. The media landscape in Denmark (like elsewhere in the world) is presently undergoing substantial changes due to the growth of digital technology and social media. Social media and the development of Web 2.0 (i.e. the possibility of users interacting on the web) has had great influence on the media market[1] and has generated a larger audience group attractive to advertisers. This movement of advertisers away from legacy media to social media is diagnostic of shifts in both consumption and production generally as well as in the economy of legacy media

1 Blogs emerged in 1994 (Rettberg 2014) and Instagram in 2010 (Serafinelli 2018). Those opportunities can create tension for existing business models of media.