

When influencer logic and news media logic converge in the scandalisation of an influencer

The exposure of literary critic and influencer Katherine Diez's plagiarism

NETE NØRGAARD KRISTENSEN & ANNE JERSLEV

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

ABSTRACT

In January 2024, the high-profile Danish literature critic and postfeminist influencer Katherine Diez was scandalised when users on Reddit exposed that she had plagiarised in some of her posts on Instagram and in some of her cultural reviews and columns produced for magazines and news media. In this article, we analyse the unfolding of the scandal across media through a qualitative thematic analysis of the intermingling of three types of media content: news articles, user comments on Reddit, and user comments on Instagram. We argue that two logics – the logic of influencers and the logic of news media – worked together to create an authenticity scandal, compromising not only the main component of the persona construction in influencer culture – that is, the performance of authenticity – but also the foundation of the news media logic – that is, trustworthiness, truth, and fact-checking.

KEYWORDS: authenticity, influencers, metajournalistic discourses, plagiarism, Reddit, scandalisation, socio-mediated scandals

Introduction

In this article, we present and analyse the scandalisation of Danish influencer and literary critic Katherine Diez. In early 2024, Reddit users exposed that she had plagiarised in some of her postings on Instagram and in columns published by professional magazines and newspapers. The scandal soon travelled from Reddit to a variety of news media. Opinions about Diez's plagiarism were divided, and we ask how the scandal unfolded, and how her transgressions were understood by social media users and professional news journalism. We hypothesise that two media logics intermingled in the unfolding of the scandal: the logic of influencers and the logic of news media.

First, we introduce the case and contextualise the article in current research about how the notion of scandal transforms in a digital media environment. Next, we outline the two media logics operating and coalescing in the Diez scandal: When building and sustaining their public presence, influencers need to create and perform an authentic persona (Arriagada & Bishop, 2021) that builds up followers and maintains their attention and loyalty. It is about “being true to one's self and brand and being true to one's audience” (Wellmann et al., 2020: 68). Authenticity scandals (Enli, 2015) thus challenge the main components of the influencer logic and are often detrimental to influencers, and potentially also to the influencer industry as a whole. The professional norms and standards of the news media logic (Asp, 2014), on the other hand, involve thorough research, fact-checking, truth, and trustworthiness (Zelizer, 2004). News institutions therefore turn to metajournalistic discourses as strategies for repairing their institutional image (Carlson, 2016) when they find themselves at the midst of, for example, plagiarism scandals (Blach-Ørsten et al., 2021).

Based on this theoretical framework and a qualitative thematic analysis of three sets of data from Reddit, Instagram, and news media from early 2024, we analyse how Diez's deeds were deemed scandalous by social media users and news media, and how the two media logics worked, separately and together, to make the scandal unfold. We show how Diez's strategy for gaining public visibility since the late 2010s was both criticised and applauded by social media users; how her persona construction and claim to a postfeminist authenticity unleashed some of the reactions across media; and how news institutions used metajournalistic discourses to save their credibility when they unwillingly became accomplices by distributing Diez's content and providing her with a platform that furthered her visibility and brand value. This article thus contributes to influencer studies by showing how different media logics and strategies for authenticity and credibility clash and at the same time intensify the scandalisation of an influencer. In a broader perspective, the article spotlights some of the challenges of the so-far relatively unregulated influencer industry.

The unfolding of the influencer plagiarism scandal

Since the beginning of her career as an influencer and literary critic in the late 2010s, Diez had been a controversial figure, building part of her public persona on her good looks – which she did not hide were partly fabricated – and sharp-cut critical style, her feminist statements and postings on Instagram about invisible women in public culture, past and present. Through partnerships with a hairdresser and an “aesthetic doctor’s clinic”, around whom she built praising narratives, she had continuously insisted that beauty, sexuality, and intellect were not exclusive of each other, and in Instagram posts about literature, she often portrayed herself in sexualised poses while reading a book. She also posted provocative opinions about men, and through her unsubtle opinions about gender, female power, and sexuality invited debate and harsh commenting. However, she was also regarded as a cool feminist role model by her Instagram followers (approx. 60,000 in early 2024), who admired her self-confident writing on gender, politics, and culture, and her apparently unproblematic combination of good looks and a power-attitude. Her participation in a celebrity television show and as a guest on radio programmes provided her with celebrity status. Moreover, she was skilled at authenticating her commercial partnerships by cloaking them in personal stories about, for example, the importance of her hairdresser in her life, or how literature and beautiful objects such as jewellery made her happy. Nonetheless, her brand-building, which thus included the performance of a sexualised bodily self and a range of paid partnerships with the beauty and fashion industry, had primed an image of her as controversial and ambiguous, if not untrustworthy, in parts of public discourse across platforms. This perceived image was confirmed by Reddit users who, on 10–11 January 2024, exposed that Diez had plagiarised in Instagram posts and cultural reviews and columns produced for traditional mass media. The image was also revitalised when the scandal reached the news media a few days later, as news articles contextualised her plagiarism by detailing controversial episodes in her professional career as an influencer and literary critic (Kopping, 2024b).

Subsequently, the scandal culminated with severe consequences for Diez. She was immediately dismissed as a freelance critic and op-ed writer, her articles in the online women’s magazine *Elle* were removed, she lost partnerships and her collaboration with the influencer agency Endorse (e.g., Hellensberg, 2024), her claim to a bachelor’s degree from the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics at the University of Copenhagen was called into question (Kühn, 2024a), and a formal investigation of her work by an external investigative reporter was initiated by the newspaper *Berlingske*, which had published her content from 2018 to 2022. The investigation concluded that she had plagiarised in several pieces and violated the newspaper’s practice for quotation. The editor-in-chief, Tom Jensen, stated that “this is a notch in our credibility”, assuring that “we want and have the ambition that what we publish is original journalism and original thinking” (Kühn, 2024b). Several news media verified the plagiarism originally exposed by Reddit users (Kopping, 2024a; Villemoes,

2024a) by publishing excerpts from Diez's reviews next to text snippets, mostly from international media that she had plagiarised.

Following the exposure, Diez posted a comment on her Instagram profile in which she acknowledged that her eagerness to always “deliver as a superstar” and her way of working had been “irresponsible, wasteful and unsystematic. This has caused a range of mistakes which I deeply regret”. She ended the post with the words, “Now I shall sleep, eat, write and heal” (Diez, 2024a). A few weeks later, Diez and her partner, Danish celebrity chef, food critic, restaurant owner, and television personality Adam Price, posted a seemingly joint statement on his Instagram about their decision to go their separate ways; the post was deleted shortly after. In a second post on Diez's Instagram, following the publication of *Berlingske's* investigation, she explained her “mistakes” by presenting herself as an “ordinary girl from the provinces” who “loved to read and write” and dreamt of being “one of the rockstars of culture”. Instead, she had been accused by the cultural public of being a “dumb blonde who used her sex appeal in a cheap way to pave the way to success as a literary critic”. Thus, she explained her “mistakes” as caused by an urgent “need for recognition” (Diez, 2024b) as a professional cultural critic, provoked by being confronted with the harsh cultural elite of the capital. While discreetly positioning herself as a victim of public arrogance, she also blamed herself as being solely responsible for having lost her career, lover, income, and not least “having lost myself”. Diez ended the post by assuring her followers: “If there is any meaning in losing everything, it must be that something new can be found”. Hereafter, Diez was silent for many months – until she, unexpectedly, published an autobiographical book on 1 October 2024 (Diez, 2024c), in which she disclosed parts of her private life that she had not posted about on her Instagram in such intimate detail. On 17 October 2023, for example, she wrote in an Instagram post that she was interested in writing about the personal as political, but living her private life in private. The book immediately stirred immense debate across media. Diez only gave two interviews, however, to – carefully selected – national news brands associated with cultural intellectualism, authority, and trustworthiness. Her Instagram account remained passive, except for one post showing the book cover and a text from the publisher informing about their moderation of comments to the post.

From news-mediated scandals to socio-mediated scandals

Scandal is not a novel but intensified social and cultural phenomenon. Over the past decades, scandals have become the “new normal” (Pollack et al., 2018) in politics, the financial sector, and the cultural industries. The literature has pointed to the chief role of media, and news media in particular, in this development. For decades, investigative and tabloid journalism have been main proponents in deciding what is scandalous by publicly disclosing violations of society's moral and legal order, prompting reactions on behalf of the public. In fact, news media used to not only expose and cover scandals but also actively drive, frame, interpret – or construct – them (e.g., Ekström & Johansson, 2008; Thompson, 2000).

Recent scandal research has argued, however, that the advent of digital media has reconfigured what deeds are considered scandalous. People's actions on social media may turn into a scandal, for example, when the wrongdoings of social media influencers used in strategic communication spill over to the commercial brand (Kintu & Ben-Slimane, 2020), or when attempting image-repair on social media (Benoit, 2014; Choi & Mitchell, 2022). Digital media, participatory journalism, and citizen involvement on social media have also reconfigured where scandals emerge, who drives them, and when they come to a closure (Tumber & Waisbord, 2019). Today, exposure of scandals are not necessarily the result of investigative or tabloid journalism – they may emerge on social media such as Instagram or Reddit, as in the Diez case, and they may extend for longer periods of time or be momentarily intense and vanish as quickly as they occurred with more or less damage done to those scandalised. Scandals are nowadays constructed across platforms and by multiple actors. They are “socio-mediated” (Zulli, 2021). While news media and professional journalists still play a role in the co-construction of scandals, their agenda-setting and frame-building power has been challenged.

Competing media logics: Influencer logic and news media logic

The main focus of the analysis in this article is how an influencer's violation of the different logics of social media and news media escalated the unfolding of a scandal. We depart from Altheide and Snow's (1979) seminal concept of media logic, which encompasses the ways in which media as technology, formats, and grammatical rules in strategic and more implicit ways communicate to an intended audience, and how audiences adopt and adapt to this logic as part of their construction of social life. Originally developed with radio and television in mind, Altheide emphasised in his later writing (e.g., 2014) that the term also includes the working of digital media. Following Hjarvard (2008), Thimm (2018) argued for the importance of contemplating the concept of new media logics within the context of interactive media and the changed role of audiences, and, moreover, that in a networked media system, a plurality of media logics intersect.

Influencer logic in a platform age

Inspired by recent research about new media logic and social media logic, that is, “the strategies, mechanisms, and economies underpinning [social media] platforms' dynamics” (van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 3), we propose the term influencer logic. This is to be understood as the platform- and format-dependent practices of creating visibility and sustaining followers by individuals on social media. Contingent on platforms' technological and communicative affordances, influencer logic encompasses practices of self-branding, performance of authenticity, and what Abidin (2021) – to modernise Horton and Wohl's (1956) famous term para-social relationship – has called constructions of “perceived interconnectedness” for social media communication. Perceived interconnectedness refers to

the creation of feelings of intimacy and closeness with followers. The intersection of these strategies works to maximise visibility and capitalise on attention.

With such self-branding, individuals are locked into a mode of constant promotion (Bishop, 2023; Khamis et al., 2017). Influencer logic advances the commodification and optimisation of the self through creating a reliable and popular persona (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Chen & Kanai, 2022). However, influencer logic is also paradoxical: Creating the self as a brand may be regarded as expressing agency, empowerment, and “self-directed labour” (Khamis et al., 2017: 200). Yet, influencers may also be trapped in a web of constant negotiation of their self-brand with followers and advertisers (van Driel & Dumitrica, 2021). Influencer logic entails the creation of an authentic persona, which must at the same time continuously promote itself and tap into what is trending with followers at any given time (Leaver et al., 2020).

Influencer logic’s most important site for self-branding is the personal profile, the persona (e.g., Marshall, 2016), or the “explicit act of writing oneself into being in a digital environment” (boyd, 2011: 43). Since it is also at the center of the construction of authenticity, the profile is both negotiable and non-negotiable (van Driel & Dumitrica, 2021). Authentic self-expression (Duffy, 2017) epitomises a relatable influencer profile. As Duffy (2017: 135) put it: The authentic self becomes a branding strategy, a “means to an end” – a sellable commodity which creates followers in return. Mediated authenticity is not an outer expression of an inner core but a feeling arising in communication. Authenticity is constructed socially, it is a set of strategies performed and negotiated with an audience that may change with platform, format, and context (Marwick & boyd, 2011). Authenticity may thus be performed “in myriad ways” (Wellman et al., 2020: 70), and therefore, authenticity is always subject to evaluation. Hence, there is always the risk of authenticity scandals (Enli, 2015) inbuilt in influencer logic, that is, deception and breach of trust (Abidin & Ots, 2016) between influencer and followers.

Authenticity essentially involves the perception that there is no difference between the real and mediated person; therefore, claims to authenticity are always in danger of being met with scepticism. For an authentic performance to be communicated convincingly, it must conform to a set of behavioural qualities, namely, as suggested by Enli (2015), trustworthiness, originality, and spontaneity. Trustworthiness in influencer performance may be constructed by communicating a consistent persona; hereby, influencers may give an impression of offering their “true self” to their followers. Trustworthiness may also be enhanced by giving access to influencers’ private and ordinary personal life, showing that they are real persons. Originality means creating a unique persona, which does not copy others. Both originality and trustworthiness signal the genuine and exceptional, which is included in true individuality. Finally, spontaneity refers to the improvised and non-scripted. On the one hand, the improvised is that which is non-posed and non-staged and therefore closer to the real, but on the other, spontaneity must not destroy consistency as a sign of authenticity. As we return to in the analysis, the exposure of Diez’s plagiarism could be understood as an authenticity scandal.

News media logic and metajournalistic discourses in times of scandal

Scandal has not only become the new normal in politics and the cultural industries. News institutions and their journalists may also find themselves amidst public scrutiny and controversy. They belong to the elite actors experiencing increased media visibility, which Thompson (2000), in his seminal work on political scandals, considered a key trait foregrounding scandal. News media scandals include the public exposure of professional journalists plagiarising content or fabricating news stories, sources, or facts. Blach-Ørsten and colleagues (2021) have argued that such scandals are “critical incidents” in journalism, which D’Angelo (2020: 19) has defined as “incited by an occurrence made scandalous by virtue of journalistic misdeeds and/or ethical lapses that news organisations must subsequently promote as an accident”.

Critical incidents elicit various public repair strategies, since faking news or plagiarising is not only a moral offense of the individual journalist but a threat to the professional norms and standards of the news media logic (Asp, 2014), and thus to journalism as a profession and the news industry as an institution (Waisbord, 2018). The societal position and cultural authority of journalism is based on what Barbie Zelizer labelled its “god terms” (2004): facts, truth, and reality; plagiarism or fabrication signify the opposite. Hartley, Wittchen, and Blach-Ørsten (2020) have shown that drawing the line between rewriting, accrediting, and plagiarising other news media’s content can be difficult because no clear rules exist. These boundaries have only become blurrier with the advent of digital media and the immense amount of content constantly being produced, uploaded, and circulated in the current “age of ubiquitous remix” (Waysdorf, 2021), where the repurposing of content has in many contexts become an accepted digital media and cultural practice.

The literature speaks of these debates as metajournalistic discourses, that is, “public expressions evaluating news texts, the practices that produce them, or the conditions of their reception” (Carlson, 2016: 353). Such discourses can take shape within news institutions’ internal or external inquiries, commentaries, and news stories about the critical incident and measures to avoid similar future occurrences, and so on. When looking at the traditional dramaturgy of scandals (e.g., Thompson, 2000), this is part of the scandal culmination but also a way to bring the scandal to closure and restore the image of the news institution. The literature critically contends that when news media engage in such discursive strategies, they are more often defensive than self-critical, and the measures taken often mainly have consequences for individual reporters, not the news institution (e.g., Blach-Ørsten et al., 2021). Carlson (2016) argued that metajournalistic discourses can arise both from the news professionals themselves and from non-journalistic voices outside of the news institution, for example, on social media or via research publications. They can be reactive, for example, when concerning specific incidents, or restorative, when more broadly stimulating public debate about the current state of journalism. Metajournalistic discourses may also provide transparency in the journalistic work – a strategy that has more broadly become key in journalism in response to declining news

consumption, declining trust in journalism, and the fact that the otherwise quintessential professional norm of objectivity has been challenged (Karlsson, 2022).

Journalism was never a protected title or a profession only performed by those with professional training in the norms, values, and craft of journalism, for example, sourcing or crediting. With the digital turn, producers providing content for news media have significantly diversified. This is not least the case in cultural journalism and cultural criticism, where those producing cultural reviews or cultural commentaries on diverse platforms span a broad spectrum: critics and public intellectuals with aesthetic knowledge and expertise; professional cultural journalists trained in the norms and values of journalism; and a diverse group of “media-made arbiters of taste” (Kristensen & From, 2015), for example, celebrities or influencers, who have gained public visibility and recognition from their work in the cultural industries or on social media and use this capital to gain a critical voice, also in institutionalised news brands. Diez exemplifies the latter type, as she created a public persona as a literary influencer and outspoken cultural commentator initially on social media but soon across a diversity of media and platforms.

Qualitative content analysis across Reddit, Instagram, and news media

This article is based on qualitative content analyses of three sets of data: 1) Reddit comments debating Diez’s plagiarism, 2) Instagram comments by Diez’s followers, reacting to the two posts in which she explained her deeds, and 3) news articles in Danish print and digital newspapers covering the scandal.

We included 323 comments from the subreddit *r/influencergossipDK* and specifically the “Diez mega thread” [“Diez mega tråd”], which gathered many comments on Diez’s plagiarism, flooding Reddit in a short period of time in January 2024. We stabilised the thread as a PDF on 26 March 2024. We also included a short Diez-subthread in which the anonymous Redditor *LittleMissUnperfect* first mentioned Diez’s plagiarism. At this point in time, users were mostly commenting on Diez’s looks and writings, which had long been a topic of unrest in Reddit communities (Mimoun, 2024), mocking her as an “intellectual Barbie”. It was not until *LittleMissUnperfect*, the day after their first post, documented Diez’s plagiarism by visualising her text next to similar parts from an American university student’s writings about feminism that the scandal took off. The Instagram sample consisted of 628 comments to Diez’s two posts from 18 January (217 comments) and 16 February (411 comments), stabilised as a PDF on 20 June 2024. Despite some harsh and aggressive contributions, mostly in the beginning of the first comment thread, comments were by far supportive and overall oriented towards diminishing the gravity of Diez’s deeds. Finally, in addition to gossip magazines (*Se & Hør*), podcasts (e.g., *Genstart*, *Det vi taler om*), metajournalistic television programmes (*Presseløgen*), and so on, a wide range of news media covered and debated the scandal. For reasons of access and availability, we used the largest online media archive in Denmark, Infomedia, to

generate a sample of articles from print and online newspapers targeting different audiences: two tabloids, three national (elite) newspapers, and three niche (elite) newspapers. The timeframe (mid-January to mid-February 2024) covered the period when the scandal reached the national news media – that is, the scandal proper and culmination phases (Thompson, 2000) – until it was wearing off across media. Using the search term “Katherine Diez” produced a sample of 150 articles – 46 in print newspapers and 104 in their online versions, of which several overlapped. Some articles behind a paywall could not be fully accessed, which is a limitation of the analysis. Figures A1 and A2 in the Appendix provide an overview of the coverage.

The qualitative analytical strategy was cross-mediated, discerning the scandal’s development across platforms, and thematic, identifying main themes, or “patterns of meaning” (Neuendorf, 2019: 213). This means that the analysis of the news coverage and social media comments across the three samples was thematically systematised along attitudes of Diez as a scandalous person, opinions on her behaviour, and arguments for the scope of her actions.

Metajournalistic and diagnostic news coverage

The scandal was a topic across the spectrum of print and digital newspapers, driven by news and investigative as well as metajournalistic and diagnostic discourses. Expectedly, the tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* provided the most extensive coverage, but two elite newspapers, *Berlingske* and *Politiken*, also reported intensively on the scandal. Having published several articles by Diez over the years, among them pieces with plagiarised content, *Berlingske* was an implicit accomplice, and widespread coverage was a means to create transparency in internal procedures and functioned as a repair strategy that signaled an effort to investigate the professional transgression and restore the reputation of the newspaper. Covering the scandal also fitted well with *Politiken*’s trademark as a prominent cultural news brand, prioritising investigative perspectives in the cultural domain.

The coverage across news media involved three overlapping themes, running fairly in parallel. The first theme was a newsy agenda, driven by immediacy and exposure of new information, escalating the scandal especially during the first two weeks, and scandalising Diez for her plagiarism, a fundamental moral and professional transgression in journalism. This also involved a satirical framing, for example, labelling the scandal “Diez-gate” (Dahlager, 2024), alluding to the original scandal suffix from the 1970s’ major political Watergate scandal.

The second theme track was metajournalistic, as both reactive and restorative metajournalistic discourses (Carlson, 2016) emerged almost the minute the scandal reached professional news media. This was the case across the newspaper spectrum, showcasing that the incident was not only newsworthy but also critical to the industry, as such. Reactive pieces dug into the case, involving external juridical experts to explain the boundaries for reusing others’ texts and media scholars to explain Diez’s claim to fame as well as her dethronement (e.g., Berglöv & Bech-Danielsen, 2024; Elmelund, 2024a). Commentators from within the

news industry applied restorative discourses by interpreting the critical incident as a signal of the acute state of the industry per se: Some raised the issue of quality content production at a time of fierce competition between professional news media and content providers on social media (Villemoes, 2024b). Others emphasised the news industry's attraction to people with extensive visibility and a distinct or provocative persona, but also cultural news desks' dependence on a freelancer precariat due to cutbacks (Stockmann, 2024). Others again saw Diez as symptomatic of millennials' strategies for achieving a career in the media industry, based not on professional skill and trustworthiness but on "being themselves" (Giese, 2024), that is, on influencer logic. Diez was also criticised for publicly preying on feminism on social media (Amiri, 2024).

The third theme was diagnostic, moving beyond reactions to Diez as an individual and the plagiarism as a specific case, but also beyond the news industry as a business in crisis and in need of repair and restoration strategies. Instead, analyses, columns, and opinion pieces by journalists and external media pundits and public intellectuals contextualised the case, suggesting that it illuminated broader trends. The case was seen as exemplifying an age of deception and self-deception in terms of credentials and looks (Olrik, 2024); Diez was listed as one of several people recently exposed as plagiarisers (Elmelund, 2024b), and as one of several female influencers scandalised as hypocrites by public opinion due to lack of self-insight or double moral, as they had turned out to be inauthentic (Dreyer, 2024); the case was used as an occasion to scrutinise contemporary Internet culture, exemplified by the community-driven platform Reddit feeding on a mix of gossip and genuine investigation (Berglöv, 2024; Larsen, 2024); and several interpreted the case as symbolic of contemporary public witch-hunting and encouraged public opinion to avoid sexist discourses by conflating the case with Diez's looks (Paludan, 2024), or questioned the vindictive shaming of Diez, bordering on *schadenfreude*, as this, paradoxically, gave attention to those to whom public opinion should not be attentive (From, 2024).

While touching upon themes also addressed in the news-driven and metajournalistic stories, the diagnostic pieces put the case into a bigger picture, considering it emblematic of broader societal problems and moral issues. This at once confirmed professional news media as legitimate providers of content when a scandal rages in today's abundant information society and Internet culture *and* distanced the news industry from the problem at hand. The diagnostic approaches also illustrated that opinions were not only polarised among users on Reddit and Instagram (see below) but also in the mainstream news debate, as journalists, pundits, and commentators, chiefly in elite news media, either shamed or supported Diez and the broader trends that her moral and professional transgressions diagnosed.

Plagiarism, spin, and inauthenticity condemned on Reddit

LittleMissUnperfect's revelation of Diez's plagiarism caused almost ecstatic outbursts by users on Reddit's *influencergossipDK* subthread, praising those who, in the wake of the Redditor's exposure, had successfully been digging for

more “scandalous” examples to substantiate the claim of organised plagiarism. One commenter wrote: “Wow, we are only writing 11 January and the scandal of the year is already home and dry”. Throughout the thread, vehement and concordant critiques of Diez’s plagiarism, her two Instagram posts, and her lack of authenticity were pointed out. Much effort was made to knock Diez off the pedestal she had placed herself on with the help of “the cultural parnas” or “Culture Denmark” consisting of “a small clique of overgrown egos”, “more and more detached and snobbish”. Diez’s deeds were constructed as scandalous by the community through four claims: she was stealing other people’s work, her two Instagram posts were spin, glossing over a real offence, and she was projecting an inauthentic persona. The fourth and final group of comments referred to the Reddit community itself, acknowledging proudly the important investigative work done by Reddit users to reveal a misdeed of public interest.

The first group of comments substantiated the thread’s assertion of Diez’s plagiarism by revealing new examples. Along the same line, comments emphasised the importance of Reddit users in digging out morally reproachable action and bringing it into the open. Commenters praised each other for their “good work”, and eagerly requested more examples. “We must keep this thread going. Really, really smart people in here!!!”, one commenter wrote. Several expressed a sense of relief when realising that their vague feelings of uncertainty regarding Diez were not a result of envy or personal inferiority but proved to be reasonable, for example, put in this way: “Woow, brilliantly spotted! Everything makes sense now! Her strange and inconsistent way of writing and her random use of references!”

The second group of comments – about Diez’s explanations in her two Instagram posts being spin – lamented Diez for naming plagiarism and theft “mistakes” and for trying to position herself as the victim. They shredded her argument about a working archive turned chaotic; Diez’s lack of referencing was “systematic big-time swindling”, proved by the many examples disclosed on the thread. Many commenters argued that referencing properly is learnt in early high school; moreover, it was suggested that her two posts – labelled “non-apologies” – were written by a communication consultant. The unanimous verdict was that Diez’s repair strategy was a failure. Her apology went wrong because there was no real recognition of serious wrongdoing (Kador, 2009) and only evasion of responsibility (Benoit, 2014), according to the users. Hence, commenters saw Diez’s “non-apology” as a second-order transgression (Thompson, 2000) – that is, (re)actions resulting from the initial scandalous deed coming across as scandalous themselves, for example, lying about or playing down the misdemeanour.

Third, commenters considered the two Instagram posts to be proof of Diez’s lack of authenticity. Not only was she not apologising properly, she might not have written the posts herself. She was dismantling influencer logic’s number-one rule – being authentic – and this undermined her very persona: The Reddit community judged Diez to be “empty and untalented” and thus not as wise as she had projected herself to be. She was criticised for her outspoken insistence on being beautiful, sexual, and smart at the same time. Moreover, it was

implied that she was heavily dependent on well-known men for her visibility, not least her 20-years-older partner at the time. He was by some commenters nicknamed “butter daddy” [“smørfar”], referring to his preference for butter in his long-standing cooking programmes on Danish public service television, but also alluding to the pejorative term “sugar daddy”, conjuring up an image of dependency and sexualised femininity close to prostitution.

In contrast to the first group of comments that celebrated the Reddit thread as a community, a final group of metacomments addressed the broader media landscape. These accentuated the soundness of the investigative work done by participants on the thread, Reddit’s importance in exposing unacceptable societal deeds, and the public responsibility undertaken to reveal and debate a misdeed of public interest. Commenters argued that the mere number of posted examples and disclosures of plagiarism proved that the Diez subthread r/influencergossipDK was more than hearsay or a “slough of unconfirmed gossip from anonymous users”, as otherwise suggested by a professional journalist in a conservative, quality newspaper (Villemoes, 2024b). Commenters expressed a lack of understanding of the ignorance by professional news media, which did not take up debatable subjects already highlighted on Reddit – for example, the lack of proof that Diez had the bachelor’s degree that she invoked. Commenters were diligently posting links to news articles about Diez, published days after examples of her plagiarism appeared on Reddit, and anxiously called attention to upcoming podcasts and television or radio programmes about the Diez scandal.

The drivers of engagement on the r/influencergossipDK subthreads were thus manifold. Users either performed or applauded proper investigative work and hereby confirmed with proof a disgraceful deed. Moreover, the thread reinforced the scandal affectively by maliciously but also speculatively, and in a gossip-oriented way, dismantling the image of a powerful influencer with outspoken opinions on gender and highbrow opinions about culture.

Consolation and solicitude on Instagram

Whereas the Reddit comments unanimously constituted plagiarism as a first-order transgression and interpreted Diez’s Instagram responses as a second-order transgression (Thompson, 2000), the majority of Instagram comments endorsed her two posts as reparations proper. Commenters addressed Diez directly and embracingly and used an abundance of heart emojis to create an atmosphere of closeness and interconnectedness (Abidin, 2021), contrary to the Reddit comments, which addressed and constituted a community “in here”. Moreover, many Instagram comments expressed solidarity with Diez through a mimetic vocabulary. The wish for Diez to “heal” and the assurance that she would “come out stronger on the other side” were recurrent phrases, imitating the final sentences in Diez’s first post.

In general, comments expressed affection, consolation, and solicitude by giving “lots of hugs” and urging Diez to “take care of herself”. Sincere hopes

were expressed that Diez would recover as a whole and more authentic person and that her “journey” towards healing would lead her to a “new place”, as she herself also concluded in her second post. Another way of expressing support was to blame the media, hoping that the “public shaming will stop”; “no one deserves the treatment you have been subjected to”. A recurrent advice for Diez to overcome the crisis was to continue writing, which many users found that she did so wonderfully. Her two posts were seen as proof that she did not need to “borrow/steal/whatever”. Lastly, a large group of comments claimed that “this will pass” – “it takes time but it does not last forever. Come again”.

Most comments expressed the view that Diez’s fault was not that severe and recurrently added dryly: “After all, you haven’t killed anyone”. On the contrary, comments emphatically supported Diez by identifying with her. Often used phrases of consolation were “we all make mistakes”, “we are all just humans”, and “no one is perfect”. Hence, these comments argued that Diez had not transgressed social norms or acted scandalously for real. Failing is inherent in human nature – and, consequently, she did not deserve the media blitz. The performance of intimate communication on Instagram humanised Diez and put faith in her ability to learn and grow as a person.

Conclusion

In this article, we have shown that the scandalisation of Danish influencer and literary critic Katherine Diez was an authenticity scandal (Enli, 2015). We have also shown that authenticity can be understood in different ways. By plagiarising in some of her posts on Instagram and in columns published by magazines and news media, Diez violated a trustworthiness contract by pretending to be someone she was not; an originality contract by copying other people’s work; and a spontaneity contract by arguing that she had lost control of her work process. As an authenticity scandal, Diez’s plagiarism infringed two logics – the logic of influencers and the logic of news media – which escalated the unfolding of the scandal. The essence of the news media logic is trustworthiness and credibility based on the dissemination of reliable information, facts, and truth to serve democratic goals, whereas coming across as an authentic, consistent persona is essential to the influencer logic to create closeness and familiarity with followers. The two logics worked together in diffusing the scandal: While covering the scandal in detail was a reparation strategy for the news media, this coverage also helped spread knowledge of and interest in an influencer scandal instigated on Reddit. The social media community, on the other hand, fuelled popular cultural coverage in the news media with sensational or tabloid twists. The moral transgression considered scandalous across media was, of course, the plagiarism per se, but the scandalous deed was also the offense towards the explicit and implicit communicative rules underlying news media and social media, respectively. The Diez scandal could thus be seen as undermining the trustworthiness inherent in distinctive media logics.

For the same reasons, the scandal became an important site for metadiscourses. Applying institutional and structural perspectives, metajournalistic discourses in the news media served as reactive and restorative attempts to repair the image of an implicit accomplice in the scandal – *Berlingske* and, more broadly, the news industry as an important democratic institution in crisis – and to diagnose the broader social and cultural trends that the transgressions signified. On Reddit, metadiscourses asserted and praised the community’s efforts and success in disclosing the scandal, thus legitimising users’ engagement in and investigation of gossip about the misdeeds of a public figure. The metadiscourses on Reddit also served to criticise professional news media for neglecting their societal obligations and to challenge the traditional communicative hierarchy of professional journalism and user efforts on social media. On Instagram, on the other hand, metadiscourses criticised public opinion in the media as such – news media as well social media – for their uniform scandalising of deeds that this community deemed minor, in an attempt to support, comfort, and restore what united them – an influencer.

While Diez’s followers did not necessarily approve of her plagiarism, they did not consider it an expression of inauthenticity either. Most commenters sided with influencer logic’s understanding of authenticity as created through consistency, uniqueness, and spontaneity: Diez had built a consistent and unique persona and a spontaneous way of expressing her unambiguous opinions. Moreover, she was honest and open about her bodily procedures. Thus, her sponsored posts and claim to an Instagram persona as “Diez” were regarded as part of her authenticity, and so was her cosmetically aestheticised body and her penchant towards luxury goods. Supported by her followers, Diez incarnated influencer logic. On Instagram, books and writing critically and intellectually about literature were props in her construction of a sellable, unique self. In the Reddit community, however, these very trademarks of authenticity occasioned strong feelings of *inauthenticity*, which in the end elicited the scandal. Finally, her claims to authenticity as an influencer literary critic initially gave her access to institutionalised news brands, also trying to capitalise on her unique selling points. But a literary critic in a daily news brand exposed for plagiarising is scandalous. This suggests that it is not possible to juggle two logics at the same time.

The different ways of understanding authenticity also show that (authenticity) scandals are polysemantic (Lull & Hinermann, 1997: 17). Discourses on Reddit and Instagram represented relatively homogenous groups of opponents exposing, documenting, and accelerating the scandal, and proponents downplaying the gravity of Diez’s misdeeds and thus decelerating the scandal. Polysemantic interpretations were also visible in the news discourses, as some criticised Diez’s transgressions while others considered them symptomatic of the contemporary media industry and society more broadly. This shows that it is no longer mainly investigative or tabloid journalism that define the scandalous, as this is co-constructed by social media users and news media (Zulli, 2021), but also that there is not one shared interpretation of what is or who are scandalous.

Diez responded to what she on Instagram called her “biggest professional

lesson so far” by withdrawing completely from public visibility – until the publishing of her autobiography (Diez, 2024c) approximately nine months after the scandal peaked. In the immediate aftermath of the scandal culmination, she responded to the vehement criticism with silence; she did not try to repair what the Reddit community criticised as her inadequate apology or react to Reddit accusations of her apology being ghostwritten. This silence may be regarded as a way for Diez to authenticate herself and her Instagram message about “finding herself again” by “sleeping, eating, working and healing”. Silence may also be taken as a strategy to prevent further acceleration or prolongment of the scandal by not fuelling more gossip or speculation. Finally, silence may be a radical way of opposing the logics that paved the way for Diez’s public visibility and crossmedia presence in the first place. The communication about her book in late 2024 in paradoxical ways continued this strategy of authentication by silence. The book was not a response to the exposure of her plagiarism or to the criticism by Reddit users and the news industry – it was not an apology or, in that sense, a repair strategy. It was (framed as) an “authentic” self-revelation and a step on her personal journey of finding herself and healing.

Scandalous incidents like the Diez case are critical for the individual influencer, exposed as inauthentic and disobeying the influencer logic, and for the news industry, exposed as infringing the news media logic of fact-checking and credibility. They may also be critical to the influencer industry as such, however, as they spotlight potentially serious communicative actions among a newer, highly influential type of public figures who have so far operated in a relatively unregulated field (Abidin et al., 2020). Influencer scandals may thus have broader public value by spurring debates about the durability and working of influencer logic and entailing efforts to create more transparency in the influencer industry.

Acknowledgements

The article is an outcome of the research project “EXPOSING: The Public Value of Socio-Mediated Scandals in the Digital Age”, funded by Independent Research Fund Denmark (2024–2028), grant ID: 10.46540/3097-00035B.

References

- Abidin, C. (2021). Mapping internet celebrity on TikTok: Exploring attention economies and visibility labours. *Culture Science Journal*, 12(1), 77–103 <https://doi.org/10.5334/csci.140>
- Abidin, C., Hansen, K., Hogsnes, M., Newsland, G., Nielsen, M. L., Nielsen, L. Y., & Sihvonen, T. (2020). A review of formal and informal regulations in the Nordic influencer industry, *Nordic Journal of Media Studies*, 2(1), 71–83. <https://doi.org/10.2478/njms-2020-0007>
- Abidin, C., & Ots, M. (2016). Influencers tell all? Unravelling authenticity and credibility in a brand scandal. In M. Edström, A. T. Kenyon, & E.-M. Svensson (Eds.), *Blurring the lines: Market-driven and democracy-driven freedom of expression* (pp. 153–165). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4686>
- Altheide, D. (2014). *Media edge: Media logic and social reality*. Peter Lang.
- Altheide, D., & Snow, R. P. (1979). *Media logic*. Sage.
- Amiri, G. (2024, February 4). Geeti Amiri: Diez har snyltet på ligestillingskampen [Geeti Amiri: Diez has been a parasite on the fight for equality]. *Berlingske*. <https://www.berlingske.dk/kommentatorer/geeti-amiri-kathrine-diez-har-snyltet-paa-ligestillingskampen>

- Arriagada, A., & Bishop, S. (2021). Between commerciality and authenticity: The imaginary of social media influencers in the platform economy. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 14(4), 568–586. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcab050>
- Asp, K. (2014). News media logic in a new institutional perspective. *Journalism Studies*, 15(3), 256–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.889456>
- Banet-Weiser, S. (2012). *Authentic: The politics of ambivalence in a brand culture*. NYU Press.
- Benoit, W. L. (2014). *Accounts, excuses, and apologies: Image repair theory and research*. State University of New York Press.
- Berglöv, E. (2024, January 23). De fældede Diez: Reddit er en ryggebørs, et sladderhjørne og en seriøs researchmuskel [They felled Diez: Reddit is a rumor mill, a gossip corner, and a serious research muscle]. *Politiken*. <https://politiken.dk/kultur/medier/art9719632/Reddit-er-en-ryggebørs-et-sladderhjørne-og-en-seriøs-researchmuskel>
- Berglöv, E., & Bech-Danielsen, A. (2024, January 17). Ekspert efter plagiatsag: Det er blevet lettere at finde dem, der pynter sig med lånte fjer [Expert after plagiarism case: It has become easier to find those who adorn themselves with borrowed feathers]. *Politiken*. <https://politiken.dk/kultur/art9717632/Det-er-blevet-lettere-at-finde-dem-der-pynter-sig-med-lånte-fjer>
- Bishop, S. (2023). Influencer creep: How artists strategically navigate the platformisation of art worlds. *New Media & Society*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461448231206090>
- Blach-Ørsten, M., Hartley, J. M., & Wittchen, M. B. (2021). Fabrication and erroneous information: Exploring two types of news media scandals as critical incidents in journalism. *Journalistica*, 15(1), 139–164. <https://doi.org/10.7146/journalistica.v15i1.125395>
- boyd, d. (2011). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites* (pp. 39–58). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203876527>
- Carlson, M. (2016). Metajournalistic discourse and the meanings of journalism: Definitional control, boundary work, and legitimation. *Communication Theory*, 26(4), 349–368. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12088>
- Chen, X. S., & Kanai, A. (2022). Authenticity, uniqueness and talent: Gay male beauty influencers in post-queer, postfeminist Instagram beauty culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 25(1), 97–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549421988966>
- Choi, G. Y., & Mitchell, A. M. (2022). So sorry, now please watch: Identifying image repair strategies, sincerity and forgiveness in YouTubers’ apology videos. *Public Relations Review*, 48(4), 102226. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2022.102226>
- Dahlager, L. (2024, January 19). 2010’erne har ringet, Frederik, og du ved godt hvorfor [The 2010s have called, Frederik, and you know why]. *Politiken*. <https://politiken.dk/ibyen/art9716327/2010erne-har-ringet-Frederik-og-du-ved-godt-hvorfor>
- D’Angelo, P. (2020). Critical Incident as a construct in journalism studies. In E. Tandoc Jr., J. Jenkins, R. Thomas, & O. Westlund (Eds.), *Critical incidents in journalism: Pivotal moments reshaping journalism around the world* (pp. 15–27). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003019688>
- Diez, K. [@katherine_diez]. (2024a). No title. [photo of text]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/C2PKXwpsSiR/?hl=da&img_index=1
- Diez, K. [@katherine_diez]. (2024b). No title. [photo of text]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/C3Z9rvEN6_c/?hl=da&img_index=1
- Diez, K. (2024c). *I egen barm* [Grasping one’s own bosom]. People’s.
- Dreyer, P. (2024, February 10). De tjener penge på den perfekte virkelighed: Men man kan ikke lægge et filer på hykleri [They make money on perfect reality: But you can’t put a file on hypocrisy]. *Berlingske*. <https://www.berlingske.dk/eksistens/de-tjener- penge-paa-den-perfekte-virkelighed-men-man-kan-ikke-laegge-et>
- Duffy, B. E. (2017). *(Not) getting paid to do what you love*. Yale University Press.
- Ekström, M., & Johansson, B. (2008). Talk scandals. *Media, Culture & Society*, 30(1), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443707084350>
- Elmelund, R. (2024a, January 19). Katherine Diez’ “kulturelle kapital krakelerer” efter afsløringer om afskrift fra andre tekster [Katherine Diez’s “cultural capital is cracking” after revelations about plagiarism]. *Information*. <https://www.information.dk/kultur/2024/01/katherine-diez-kulturelle-kapital-krakelerer-afsløringer-afskrift-andres-tekster>
- Elmelund, R. (2024b, January 26). Norsk forfatter efter plagiatsager: “Vi lever i kopismens tid” [Norwegian author after plagiarism cases: “We live in the age of copyism”]. *Information*.
- Enli, G. (2015). *Mediated authenticity: How media constructs reality*. Peter Lang.

- From, R. (2024, February 1). Hvis man for alvor fryder sig over Katherine Diez nu, har man nok altid haft et horn i siden på hende [If you're really excited about Katherine Diez now, you've probably always had a crush on her]. *Berlingske*. <https://www.berlingske.dk/kommentatorer/hvis-man-for-alvor-fryder-sig-over-katherine-diez-nu-har-man-nok>
- Giese, D. (2024, January 26). »De vil helst møde kl. 10 og gå igen kl. 14. Ikke fordi de skal hente børn, men fordi de skal til keramik og lave kimchi« [”They prefer to meet at 10 am and leave again at 2 pm. Not because they have to pick up children, but because they are going to pottery and make kimchi”]. *Politiken*. <https://politiken.dk/debat/klummer/art9730334/»De-vil-helst-møde-kl.-10-og-gå-igen-kl.-14.-Ikke-fordi-de-skal-hente-børn-men-fordi-de-skal-til-keramik-og-lave-kimchi«>
- Hartley, J. M., Wittchen, M. B., & Blach-Ørsten, M. (2020). Peeling or plagiarizing? A Danish media scandal as an incident of re-instating boundaries in the grey zones of “good” journalistic citing practices. In E. Tandoc Jr., J. Jenkins, R. Thomas, & O. Westlund (Eds.), *Critical incidents in journalism: Pivotal moments reshaping journalism around the world* (pp. 45–56). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003019688>
- Hellensberg, L. A. (2024, January 23). Katherine Diez fjernes fra hjemmeide og mister samarbejde [Katherine Diez removed from home idea and loses cooperation]. *B.T.* <https://www.bt.dk/danske-kendte/katherine-diez-fjernes-fra-hjemmeside-og-mister-samarbejde>
- Hjarvard, S. (2008). The mediatization of society. *Nordicom Review*, 29(2), 105–134. <https://doi.org/10.1515/nor-2017-0181>
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049>
- Kador, J. (2009). *Effective apology: Mending fences, building bridges, and restoring trust*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Karlsson, M. (2022). *Transparency and journalism: A critical appraisal of a disruptive norm*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429340642>
- Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, ‘micro-celebrity’ and the rise of social media influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 8(2), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1218292>
- Kintu, B., & Ben-Slimane, K. (2020). Companies responses to scandal backlash caused by social media influencers. *International Journal of Market Research*, 62(6), 666–672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470785320957577>
- Kopping, K. D. (2024a, January 16). Katherine Diez i modvind: Beskyldes for plagiat [Katherine Diez in the crosshairs: Accused of plagiarism]. *Ekstrabladet*. <https://ekstrabladet.dk/underholdning/dkkendte/katherine-diez-i-modvind-beskyldes-for-plagiat/10094737>
- Kopping, K. D. (2024b, January 19). Katherine Diez’ møgsager: ‘Jeg går i seng med mit arbejde’ [Katherine Diez’s bullshit: “I go to bed with my work”]. *Ekstrabladet*. <https://ekstrabladet.dk/underholdning/dkkendte/katherine-diez-moegsager-jeg-gaar-i-seng-med-mit-arbejde/10096376>
- Kristensen, N. N., & From, U. (2015). From ivory tower to cross-media personas: The heterogeneous cultural critic in the media. *Journalism Practice*, 9(6), 853–871. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2015.1051370>
- Kühn, S. W. (2024a, Janary 23). Katherine Diez siger, at hun har en bacheloruddannelse – men det kan Københavns Universitet ikke bekræfte [Katherine Diez says she has a bachelor’s degree – but the University of Copenhagen cannot confirm this]. *Berlingske*. <https://www.berlingske.dk/kultur/katherine-diez-siger-at-hun-har-en-bacheloruddannelse-men-det-kan>
- Kühn, S. W. (2024b, February 16). Berlingskes plagiatundersøgele af Katherine Diez er nu afsluttet. Her er resultatet [Berlingske’s plagiarism investigation of Katherine Diez has now been completed. Here are the results]. *Berlingske*. <https://www.berlingske.dk/kultur/berlingskes-plagiatundersoegelse-af-katherine-diez-er-nu-afsluttet-her-er>
- Larsen, T. L. (2024, February 2). Mediet Reddit har afsløret Katherine Diez og givet kapitalfonde milliardtab – men hvad der det social medie for noget? [The media outlet Reddit has exposed Katherine Diez and caused billions in losses for private equity funds – but what does that social media do?]. *Børsen*.
- Leaver, T., Highfield, T., & Abidin, C. (2020). *Instagram: Visual social media cultures*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Lull, J., & Hinerman, S. (1997). *Media scandals: Morality and desire in the popular culture marketplace*. Polity Press.
- Marwick, A., & boyd, d. (2011). To see and be seen: Celebrity practice on Twitter. *Convergence*, 17(2), 139–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856510394539>
- Marshall, P. D. (2016). *The celebrity persona pandemic*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Mimoun, K. M. (2024, January 20). Katherine Diez – kan man kritisere det perfekte/upperfekte menneske? [Katherine Diez – can you criticise the perfect/imperfect person?]. *POV*. <https://pov.international/katherine-diez-kritik-perfekte-upperfekt-menneske/>
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2019). Content analysis and thematic analysis. In P. Brough (Ed.), *Advance research for applied psychology: Design, analysis and reporting*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315517971>
- Olrik, J. (2024, February 4). Sexolog: Historien om Katherine Diez er historien om os. Vi lever i bedragsnets tidsalder [Sexologist: The story of Katherine Diez is the story of us. We live in the age of deception]. *Berlingske*. <https://dd-berlingskedk-origin.berlingske.dk/kronikker/sexolog-historien-om-katherine-diez-er-historien-om-os-vi-lever-i>
- Paludan, T. (2024, January 25). Forfatter: Hold øjnene på bolden og udelad Diez' udseende fra debatten [Author: Keep your eyes on the ball and leave Diez's appearance out of the debate]. *Politiken*. <https://politiken.dk/debat/debatindlaeg/art9726718/Hold-øjnene-på-bolden-og-udelad-Diez-udseende-fra-debatten>
- Pollack, E., Allern, S., Kantola, A., & Blach-Ørsten, M. (2018). The new normal: Scandals as a standard feature of political life. *International Journal of Communication*, 12, 3087–3108. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/7099/0>
- Stockmann, C. (2024, January 20). Camilla Stockmann: Katherine Diez er ikke kun et råddent æble. De gamle mediehuse har et medansvar [Camilla Stockmann: Katherine Diez is not just a rotten apple. The old media houses have a shared responsibility]. *Politiken*. <https://politiken.dk/kultur/art9723443/Katherine-Diez-er-ikke-kun-et-råddent-æble.-De-gamle-mediehuse-har-et-medansvar>
- Thimm, C. (2018). Media technology and media logic(s): The media grammar approach. In C. Thimm, M. Anastasiadis, & J. Einspänner-Pflock (Eds.), *Media logic(s) revisited: Modelling the interplay between media institutions, media technology and societal change* (pp. 111–132). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65756-1_6
- Thompson, J. B. (2000). *Political scandal: Power and visibility in the media age*. Polity Press.
- Tumber, H., & Waisbord, S. (2019). Media and scandal. In H. Tumber, & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to media and scandal* (pp. 10–21). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351173001>
- Van Dijk, J., & Poell, T. (2013). Understanding social media logic. *Media and Communication*, 1(1), 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v1i1.70>
- Van Driel, L., & Dumitrica, D. (2021). Selling brands while staying “authentic”: The professionalization of Instagram influencers. *Convergence*, 27(1), 66–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856520902136>
- Villemoes, S. (2024a, January 17). Katherine Diez' litterære genbrug er mere omfattende end først antaget [Katherine Diez's literary recycling is more extensive than first thought]. *Weekendavisen*. <https://www.weekendavisen.dk/2024-3/boeger/katherine-diez-litteraere-genbrug-er-mere-omfattende-end-foerst>
- Villemoes, S. (2024b, January 18). Blev lånte fjer til fem høns? [Were feathers borrowed for five chickens?]. *Weekendavisen*. <https://www.weekendavisen.dk/2024-3/boeger/blev-laante-fjer-til-fem-hoens>
- Waisbord, S. (2018). Truth is what happens to news. *Journalism Studies*, 19(13), 1866–1878. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1492881>
- Waysdorf, A. S. (2021). Remix in the age of ubiquitous remix. *Convergence*, 27(4), 1129–1144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856521994454>
- Wellman, M. L., Stoldt, R., Tully, M., & Ekdale, B. (2020). Ethics of authenticity: Social media influencers and the production of sponsored content. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 35(2), 68–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23736992.2020.1736078>
- Zelizer, B. (2004). When facts, truth, and reality are god-terms: On journalism's uneasy place in cultural studies. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 1(1), 100–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1479142042000180953>
- Zulli, D. (2021). Socio-mediated scandals: Theorizing political scandals in a digital media environment. *Communication Theory*, 31(4), 862–883. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/ctaa014>

Appendix

Figure A1 News articles by outlet

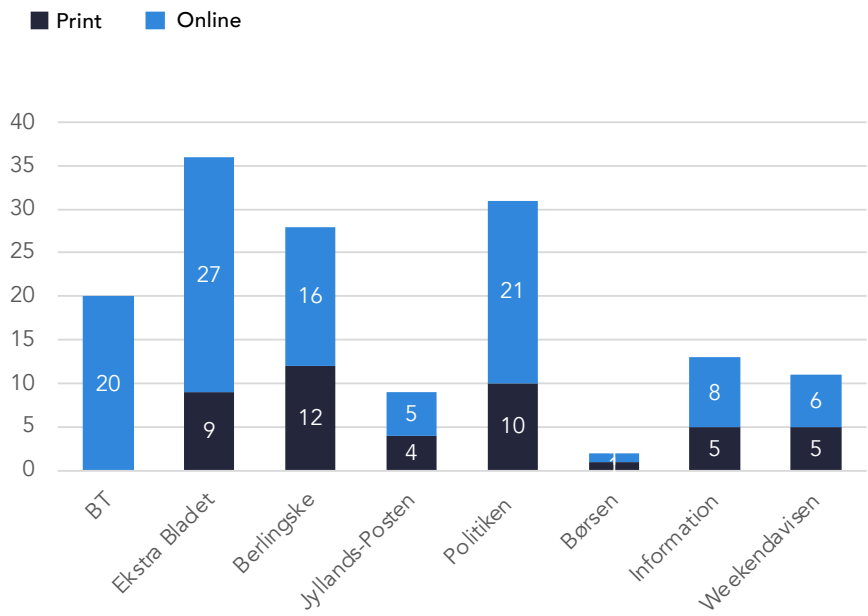
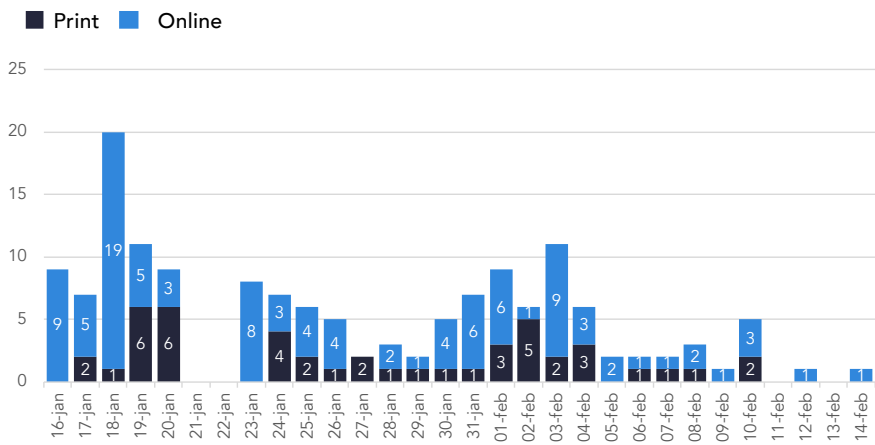


Figure A2 Number of news articles, 16 January–14 February 2024



© 2025 Respective authors. This is an Open Access work licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Public licence (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). To view a copy of the licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>