

Resett as an alternative news outlet

**A content analysis of Resett and its reporting on immigration and
Islam**

Abstract

Immigration can be a controversial and divisive topic, especially during polarising times like the ones we live in. As a result, some lean towards alternative media outlets that better mirror their worldview. Studies on alternative media reveal that outlets can vary in their publishing style and ideology. Where some may have a more extreme approach, others aim to be seen as professional journalists. With a growing trend of alternative media outlets, right-wing media have particularly attracted attention with their critical views on immigration. Resett is an example of a controversial right-wing media outlet in Norway. This research project focuses on Resett's content on a micro-level. In this study, I explore how much and what is written about immigration, as well as what kind of engagement immigration articles get on Facebook. I ask: How does a semi-professional right-wing outlet like Resett report on immigration? The study was performed using quantitative content analysis over five weeks in 2017, 2018 and 2019. In this thesis, I argue when it comes to immigration content, results indicate that Resett tends to write its content. In contrast, the study shows that Resett depends on news agencies and other resources for content about different topics, which can make the outlet more appealing to a broader audience. Its journalistic choices demonstrate a focus on national issues, significant use of unprofessional and secondary sources, and that anonymous authors write some of its most radical content. The results also show that Resett often shares immigration articles on Facebook, where the outlet also gets the most engagement.

Sammendrag

Innvandring kan være et kontroversielt og splittende tema, spesielt i polariserende tider som nå. Som et resultat, lener noen seg mot alternative medier som speiler deres verdensbilde. Studier av alternative medier viser at de alternative mediene kan variere i publiseringsstil og ideologi. Der noen kan ha en mer ekstrem tilnærming, mens andre ønsker å bli sett på som profesjonelle journalister. Med en økende trend av alternative medier har spesielt alternative medier forankret på høyresiden vakt oppmerksomhet med sine kritiske synspunkter på innvandring. Resett er et eksempel på et kontroversielt høyreorienterte medium i Norge. Dette forskningsprosjektet fokuserte på Resetts innhold på mikronivå. I denne studien utforsker jeg hvor mye og hva de skriver om innvandring og hva slags engasjement innvandringsartikler får på Facebook, der jeg spør: Hvordan rapporterer et semiprofesjonelt høyreekstremer som Resett om innvandring? Studien ble utført ved bruk av kvantitativ innholdsanalyse over fem uker i 2017, 2018 and 2019. I denne avhandlingen indikerer resultatene på at Resett har en tendens til å skrive eget innhold når det gjelder innvandring. Til motsetning viser studien at Resett er avhengige av nyhetsbyråer og andre ressurser for innhold om forskjellige temaer, noe som kan gjøre dem mer tiltalende for et bredere publikum. Deres journalistiske valg viser et fokus på nasjonale spørsmål, betydelig bruk av uprofesjonelle og sekundære kilder og at anonyme forfattere skriver noe av sitt mest radikale innhold. Resultatene i analysen viser at Resett ofte deler innvandringsartikler på Facebook, hvor de også får mest engasjement.

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1. Introduction

Immigration is a controversial and polarising topic in our society. Questions of how immigration and mainly, Islam, affect society have resulted in strong arguments. How the media reports on the issue has also led to conflicts. While some criticise the media for representing immigrants in a negative light by focusing on crime and societal problems, (Eide & Simonsen, 2012), other people believe that the media is not critical enough (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2018). In this paper, I will focus on the latter category, more specifically, what has been called “right-wing alternative media” (Holt, 2019).

Alternative media outlets can be characterised as semi-professional outlets that challenge the boundaries of journalism. (ibid). Alternative media is not a new phenomenon. However, right-wing alternative media has become more prevalent in recent years. A Reuters digital news report from 2019 shows that the use of alternative media in Norway is on the rise, but that they are less trusted than the mainstream news media. (Newman et al., 2019, pp. 99). People have been leaning towards alternative news sources in a time when society is polarised and during significant changes like Brexit, the U.S. presidential election, or the umbrella movement in Hong Kong. (Magri, 2016).

Criticism of immigration and Islam are at the core of right-wing ideology, where right-wing alternative media accuse established media of undermining these issues in their reporting. This criticism can cause fear, distrust, and anger among readers, which can encourage them to question the establishment. Many right-wing alternative media outlets in Scandinavia share similar ideological functions and aim to convince people that Scandinavia is unsafe due to immigration. (Nygaard, 2019, pp. 1149-1155).

In this study, I will conduct quantitative research using content analysis of the alternative media outlet Resett and look at its publishing style regarding immigration and Islam. Resett is a Norwegian alternative media outlet known for having controversial opinions on immigration, Islam and liberal politicians. There have been many discussions about whether Resett can be considered journalism or not. The outlet adopts professional journalistic practices. However, it is not a member of the Association of Norwegian Editors, although it

aims to be a part of it. Some argue that Resett presents hateful and racist content. (Oslo Journalistklubb, 2020, 5:00-8:00). Because of its publishing style, it is identified by some as a traditional news outlet, as it shares similarities regarding the layout and use of statistical content from news agencies. A previous study on Resett shows that immigration is one of the topics it typically writes about using a critical tone. Articles such as "Café owners in London harassed after decorating the food with an English flag" and "Raped sister and force her silence with the Quran" are articles that have raised questions of whether they breach ethical standards. (Bjerke et al., 2019, pp.7-8).

The role and rise of right-wing alternative media fascinate me, because of their semi-professional position by using some traditional practices, but at the same time developing new norms such as using anonymous writers, merging genres, interpreting the news, and making national headlines because of controversial editorial decisions. Therefore, it is especially interesting to see how Resett writes about immigration since it is expected that it is critical and that its writers vary from people with a professional background to amateurs. There has not been any systematic analysis of the immigration content on Resett, and there is a lack of research on new alternative media sites. I believe it is important to learn how much they cover on immigration and Islam, compared to other topics over time. The results could be an indicator of how much they focus on right-wing agendas such as immigration, what particular immigration topics they mostly write about, and if those topics reach extensive engagement on Facebook.

1.1 Research questions

The purpose of this master thesis is to get a better understanding of the right-wing alternative news media outlet Resett and how they report on immigration and Islam. The selection extends over three years, from the start of Resett's production in 2017 to the end of 2019. The study is guided by the following research questions:

Main question: *What characterises the coverage of immigration/Islam in Resett during the period of 2017 to 2019?*

Previous research has shown that right-wing alternative media focus a lot on immigration and Islam on their online platforms. (Heft et al., 2019), (Holt 2019). To explore to what degree such topics are represented on Resett's online platforms, I will investigate the following research question:

1. *How much does Resett publish about immigration/Islam?*

Taking previous research into account, it is interesting to explore how much Resett publishes on immigration. To answer this sub-research question, I will do a content analysis counting how many articles have immigration or/and Islam as the main theme.

As Resett aims to become part of the journalistic field, and at the same time serves as a critical voice to the field, it is essential to look specifically at its journalistic practices regarding one of its main motives, immigration. I have therefore developed the following sub-research questions to look more closely at the immigration-content:

2. *What characterises the journalistic genres of the immigration articles and how are they distributed?*

To explore this research question, all of the articles in the analysis will be divided into the following journalistic genres: News articles, news articles by NTB, opinions and other. Later, I will compare that division of the immigration articles.

Previous studies have indicated that alternative, semi-professional media outlets often rely on content from other sources (Holt et al. 2019). I will, therefore, explore how much of the immigrant content is written by Resett and how much is written by others. I will also analyse how many articles are written by anonymous writers. The third sub-research question is:

3. *Who are the authors of the articles?*

For this sub-research question, the immigration articles are grouped by the authors of the articles, such as Resett employee, contributor, anonymous and news agency (NTB).

Proximity is an important journalistic principle. This is why it would be fair to assume that Resett's content will focus particularly on national and nordic issues. After analysing the

topics they write about when it comes to immigration, it will be useful to look at the geographical scope, which can give an indication of how Resett portrays immigration and what places it focuses on. This way, it will be possible to validate whether their content does indeed relate to national and nordic issues. The fourth sub-research question is:

4. *What is the geographical scope of its immigration coverage?*

To explore this research question, the immigration articles will be divided into one of the following areas: Norway, Nordic countries, Europe and the world.

Research on alternative media shows that they typically use different sources than mainstream media and at the same time have less access to sources. (Holt et al., 2019). It will, therefore, be interesting to see how Resett as a semi-professional outlet solves this issue when writing about immigration. The fifth sub-research question is:

5. *What sources does Resett use?*

To answer this, I will look at how many sources are used and what type of sources are represented, for example, professional sources or unprofessional sources. I will also look at whether the sources are primary, secondary, or tertiary sources.

Previous research has shown that the established news media writes about several issues that fall within the scope of immigration, such as crime committed by immigrants, parallel societies, refugees and integration. (Hovden & Mjelde, 2019). It is interesting to explore how an alternative site like Resett covers this issue and the topics they focus on. The sixth sub-research question is:

6. *What kind of immigration topics are written about?*

To answer this sub-research question, I will separate all of the immigration articles into eleven different categories. It is of particular concern to investigate if they to a higher degree cover problematic sides with immigration, like such as crime, problems with integration and criticism of Islam.

Finally, social media is vital as a distribution platform for alternative media outlets. It is therefore relevant to examine the response various articles have because it indicates what kind of content its audience engages with. To analyse how the immigration articles are received, I have included the following sub-research question:

7. To what degree are articles on immigration/Islam posted on Facebook, and what kind of engagement do they get compared to other content?

To answer the last sub-research question, I will analyse how the articles are received by analysing the number of shares, comments, and likes the Facebook posts get. I will then explore and discuss whether immigration articles get more Facebook engagement than other topics.

1.2 Remarks

In this research, title information from articles and direct quotations from Resett and other sources that are originally presented in Norwegian have been translated to English.

The main scope of this thesis is Resett's coverage of immigration and Islam. However, when I mention the range, I will mainly use the word 'immigration' and exclude the word 'Islam' to avoid being repetitive.

1.3 About Resett

As previously stated, Resett is a controversial but distinct participant in the Norwegian media sphere. In the following, I will briefly describe its history, motifs, and its relationship to press ethics.

Helge Lurås established Resett in August 2017 with the investors Øystein Stray Spetalen, Jan Haudemann-Andersen, Mikkel Dobloug, Monica Staff, and Håkon Wium Lie. Resett began with shared ownership, where chairman Monica Staff is now the largest shareholder.

(Johansen, G, 2018). Resett has nine employees at the moment, all with mixed educational backgrounds and interests. (Resett, no date). Resett does not receive government subsidies and needs to rely on income through advertising, subscriptions, and donations.

The outlet has started a campaign to get more members with three different types of membership, where the most expensive is 5499 NOK a year. Resett also encourages its readers to donate money and to buy the book, *The road to Resett - lies illusions and political correctness*, written by the editor Helge Lurås. An advertisement for the book appears at the bottom of most Resett articles, which has been criticised arguing that it is a breach of the Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press. (Oslo Journalistklubb, 2020, 5:00-8:00). In 2018, Resett expanded its visibility and established Xstra, a lifestyle magazine, connected to the Resett website. Shurika Hansen is the editor of Xstra and also a Resett employee. The content on Xstra is mainly entertainment, celebrity news, health, and food articles. Both the Resett and the Xstra articles have potential to go viral. However, it is essential to differentiate them from what fact-checkers call 'troll factories' or 'lie factories'. Troll factories make up fake stories that have little truth to them. However, according to the fact-checking platform Faktisk.no, those sites usually do not last long and only make income through advertising. (Faktisk, 2018). A lot of those websites have names, titles and layouts that look like legitimate news sites. Even though Resett is not considered a troll factory, it mimics the behaviour and look of traditional news media sites in Norway. (Ihlebak, 2019).

Looking more closely at the stated motifs and ideological purpose, the slogan on Resett's website reads "Uncensored news" and states on its 'about page' that it works for democracy and freedom of speech. It describes itself as critical and an alternative to established media. It also expresses that it is critical to power and is the voice of those who cannot easily express their opinions. Resett describes itself as being politically independent, although some experts disagree. In the Norwegian Encyclopaedia, Resett is described as being anchored on the right side of the political landscape and that "its desire to pursue a restrictive Norwegian asylum and immigration policy was a central theme in the commentary columns." (Garvik, O, 2017, Resett).

The integrity of Resett has been up for debate multiple times after controversial texts about immigration. Resett's criticism of immigration and Islam is evident in the book mentioned above, *The road to Resett - lies illusions and political correctness*. Here Lurås also writes

about politics, the media, and his motivation to focus on immigration and Islam, which he has gained through different experiences.

Stop the migrants in the Mediterranean. Out of sight, out of mind. But for European politics, it was already too late. Immigrations had come too far, and Islam had claimed its place in Europe. Lurås commenting on the immigration movement in Europe 2015. (Lurås, 2019b, pp. 23-24).

Lurås studied at the Norwegian School of Economics and worked for the Armed Forces shortly after graduating. He participated in several foreign missions and got an officer position in war-torn Bosnia. "There he met both multiculturalism, Islam and the shadowy sides of Western naivety" as is mentioned in the book description. (Lurås, 2019b). Later in the book, Lurås continues to criticise the current immigrant situation and also blames the mainstream media for playing a role in not reporting on crimes committed by immigrants, and for showing too much empathy towards refugees. "There has been little focus on the Norwegian victims of Norwegian immigration policy". He argues that Norwegians' needs come second because the needs of immigrants get prioritised. (Lurås, 2019b, pp. 276). The editor discusses the definition of "ethnic Norwegian", arguing the term itself has been under attack, criticising that you could become Norwegian by believing in and internationalising Norwegian values. (Lurås, 2019b, pp. 286-287). His book reflects a lot of Lurås' personal views on issues like immigration. An important question is if Resett's reporting is just as subjective as Lurås' book.

Resett is in a position where it repeatedly challenges traditional media, and as a result, it publishes provocative content and makes disputed decisions. An example of this was in January 2020 when Resett disclosed the identity of an ISIS woman that returned to Norway. That caused negative reactions and a lawsuit towards Resett, which was later withdrawn. (Larsen, 2020). No other media outlets named the ISIS woman since it could be a breach of the woman's privacy rights and her children's rights. Resett justified the identification by saying that the public's need for information outweighed the individual's need for privacy. Do these decisions reflect how it usually reports on immigration?

1.3.1 Press ethics

There have been public discussions about whether Resett can be defined as an organisation of journalists or activists. Journalists are commonly expected to have reasonable judgment when it comes to the choice of sources. "A wise and thoughtful assessment of the source and the source material is fundamental to all journalistic work, even in relatively simple news jobs." (Østlyngen & Øvrebø, 199, pp. 146). Media scholar Svein Burås argues that the goal for journalists is to figure out what is correct and have a fact-based understanding of their reporting. Some expectation of good reporting includes concentration of facts, investigative approach, source criticism, accuracy, objectivity, materiality, relevant and competent sources, and no personal comments or opinions. (Burås, 2014, pp. 51). Resett has been criticised for not reporting on both sides of the stories. It also states that the outlet 'interprets the news' and "points to a solution", which may be assumed as wanting to advance its point of view, rather than including all the facts. (Oslo Journalistklubb, 2020, 3:00-8:00).

One key element in this discussion about Resett concerns press ethics. In a Norwegian context, press ethics is stated through "The Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press", which was written in 1936 and has been revised several times in recent years by the Norwegian Press Association. Their sub-organisations, like The Norwegian Union of Journalists, are required to follow their principals and Ethical Code of Practice. The journalists or media outlets that break these rules can receive a public complaint addressing what was broken and why. (Burås, 2014, pp. 11).

Editors have a lot of room for what to include in their publications; however, anyone who thinks journalists break the ethics rules can complain to the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission (Pressens Faglige Utvalg), and this constitutes the self-regulatory system for journalism in Norway. A news organisation that breaks the ethics rules has to mark the article with the PFU logo and publish the verdict in a visible place. The media outlet does not face sanctions lawfully, but rather embarrassment in the field of journalism. Many outlets choose to publish an apology. However, they are not required to do so. (Burås, 2014, pp. 30-32). In the apology, journalists or the organisation have multiple times referred to the first part of the Code of Ethics, relating to journalistic role and mission in society. Moreover, they did it for the greater good, and the public had a right to know. (Burås, 2014, pp. 37).

Resett states that it follows the Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press (Vær Varsom Plakaten) and the Association of Norwegian Editors: Rights and Duties of the Editors (Redaktørplakaten). However, it is not required to follow it since it is not a member of an established media organisation in Norway. Besides, Resett has developed its own set of rules that its employees are required to follow called Resett rules (Resett-plakaten):

1. Resett will disseminate and interpret the news.
2. Resett should be courageous and courageous in meeting with power. It applies to the power exercised by individuals, institutions, groups and the power hidden in ideology and ways of thinking.
3. Resett will party with the "man in the street" and go against the power when needed.
4. Resett will criticise all forms of political and religious dogma and values to improve and change the values.
5. Resett will reveal misuse of public funds, waste, and corruption.
6. Resett will disseminate knowledge, insight, and reflection.
7. Resett should be based on real politics and realism.
8. Resett should expect improvement and will always try to point to a solution.
9. Resett will fight for freedom and individuality.
10. Resett aims to work for democracy and liberal society based on the best in Western cultural history.
11. Resett will dare to take on the difficult and taboo debates and give most people a platform to express themselves.
12. Resett is politically independent, but we reserve the right to show our preferences in specific cases and elections. (Resett, no date).

This set of rules is not connected or made with the Ethical Code of Practice. It does not lead to any consequences if the writers break them. However, even though Resett does not name it as their 'house rules', it is common for media organisations to have their own rules as guidelines for their journalists. In these guidelines Resett claims that it plays an essential role

in society and that its duty is to inform people. That is also stated in the Code of ethics. Resett's rules share similarities with the first part of the Ethical Code of Practice connected to its role in society.

1.4. It is the right of the press to inform about what is happening in society and to uncover criticism. It is the duty of the press to place a critical focus on how the media themselves fulfil their social role. (Pressens Faglige Utvalg [PFU], 2015).

Its rules mainly state its values and what its responsibilities are like number 3: "Resett will side with the 'man in the street' and go against the power when needed." In the Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press description of the social role they share similar values, however in a different tone: " **1.5.** It is the task of the press to protect individuals and groups from abuse or neglect by public authorities and institutions, private companies or others." (ibid). One of the differences is that Resett adds "...when needed". How does it determine when it is needed or not?

Later in the "Resett rules", the company expresses that it wants to "improve and change values" and " try to point to a solution". It also expresses "Resett aims to work for democracy and liberal society based on the best in Western cultural history." My observation is that Resett does not share the same values of objectivity, but has an agenda to create change and public values in favour of its interests. Its openness in describing itself as working for change can be seen by some as activism. It might be the same for traditional media, that they write their stories in a certain way to promote change. However, they might not clearly admit to that when they discuss their reporting. Resett has applied to be part of the Association of Norwegian Editors two times but was refused because of not following the requirements. The three reasons for the refusal in 2018 were:

- Repeated and clear violations of the "Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press (Vær Varsom-plakaten)".
- Intentions to offer a large amount of money to the desired interview object.

- Call for boycott of other media. (Norwegian Association of Editors [NORED], 2018).

In September 2019, Resett applied again to be a part of Norwegian Association of Editors. In February 2020 the applications were again unanimously rejected with the grounds:

The board believes that Lurås does not meet the criteria for membership. Despite a considerable element of domestic and foreign content from primarily NTB, the board believes that Resett's editor does not adhere to general publisher principles. (Norwegian Association of Editors [NORED], 2020).

In their report, they point out that they have seen improvement in Resett's publishing practices since the previous application:

The board has noted that some improvements have been made in Resett's publishing practices through the application process. It has been a long and demanding discussion with many good arguments, both for and against membership. We have had a dialogue with Helge Lurås along the way and could have seen him become part of an editorial community that brings together members from across the political spectrum - from Klassekampen to Document.no. Nevertheless, the board has concluded that Resett's editor does not meet the requirements for membership, said board chairman of the Norwegian Association of Editors, Hanna Relling Berg. (Norwegian Association of Editors [NORED], 2020).

Another point of criticism against Resett has been that it can be hard to differentiate opinions from news articles, where some news articles include subjective commentary, and that anonymous writers are used. Irene Halvorsen, a board member of the Association of Norwegian Editors, commented in a debate a few weeks later that Resett did not become a member after an overall assessment. One reason was also that Resett uses anonymous writers who make strong personal attacks, and the attacked do not get the opportunity to respond. The anonymous writers have also been names that are made up like 'Kenneth Olsen', which is also a popular name in Norway. In the same debate, Lurås replied that the staff has stopped making up names, but still uses the pseudonym "Mumler Gåsegg", where he argued there are

non-editorial commentators that do not want to be associated with Resett. (Oslo Journalistklubb, 2020, 3:00-8:00).

There are currently few studies that have systematically analysed the content of Resett. A recent study conducted by the media scholars Paul Bjerke, Idar Flo and Birgitte Kjos Fonn points out that it can be challenging to identify whether Resett staff can be identified as amateurs or professional journalists and that Resett might belong somewhere in between. In 2019, they did a quantitative analysis of Resett publications, looking at its reporting in a two-week period, one week in the autumn and one in spring. They questioned if its reporting fell under the definition of journalism, in line with the Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press. (Bjerke, Flo, & Fonn, 2019, pp. 1).

Their findings show that there were 460 news articles and 78 opinion pieces. Sixty-five percent of Resett's news articles are from The Norwegian News Agency (NTB). The majority of the opinion pieces were written by the editor Helge Lurås. The topic that dominated the publication during the two weeks was politics. However, two political scandals were happening during those weeks. The second most reported topic was immigration, which was mostly original content, and then articles about crime. (Bjerke et al., 2019, pp. 4-6). The scholars did not find any breach of the Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press. They scrutinised articles that had titles that they thought could raise ethical concerns, like "Café owners in London harassed after decorating the food with an English flag" and "Raped sister and force her silence with the Quran". The articles were re-written by the British news site Daily Mail. The articles got many negative comments against Islam, and critiques of the political left. Some of the comments were also deleted. (Bjerke et al., 2019, pp.7-8).

They also did qualitative research of the case relating to the leader of the Liberal Party (Venstre) Trine Skei Grande. Resett published an article accusing Grande of having sex with a 17-year-old at a wedding in 2008. The reporting also happened in the middle of the Me Too movement. Resett criticised the mainstream media for not reporting on it in the first place. (Bjerke et al., 2019, pp. 11). The Liberal party is part of the government along with the Conservative Party (Høyre) and the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet). The Liberal Party has a more liberal attitude and policy towards immigration than the two other parties. It is,

therefore, a hypothesis that Resett wanted to cause a big scandal for the Liberal party, so they would have to leave the government. That could be in Resett's interest as the government would have a more conservative policy regarding immigration, which could be argued is part of Resett's agenda.

The researchers argue that this was an amateur campaign to force a politician out of her position. However, the mainstream media has a long tradition of such campaigns, and there are multiple examples where this has happened. The study argues that Resett tried to imitate this tradition to further fulfil its agenda of more conservative immigration policies in Norway. (Bjerke et al., 2019, pp. 19-20). In an interview with the Aftenposten newspaper, the editor of Resett, Helge Lurås, explains why Resett did the reporting:

Partly because it is a type of case that can be used as leverage, it is national interests that play a role. We considered that there was a lot at stake. There was no doubt in my mind that it was accurate, even though Grande did not reply. But I am aware that we broke the Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press, said Lurås. (Aldridge, 2018).

Weeks later, Resett praised the findings of the research by Bjerke et al., 2019. "Now, at least it becomes more difficult for the Editors' Association to say no to the application for membership," Lurås told Klassekampen. (NTB, 2020).

1.3.2 Audiences

In the Reuters Digital News Report for 2019, Norwegians' trust in the media was ranked relatively low, being number 13 out of 38 countries surveyed. Forty-six percent of countries stated they have overall confidence in the news. (Newman et al., 2019, pp. 99). The results show that politics can change people's view of the media, especially for far-right voters.

"Research has shown that trust in journalists' professionalism and biases depend on political preference, with far-right voters and those with strong views on immigration expressing the most mistrust." (ibid).

In the same report, Resett is at the bottom of trusted news brands in Norway scoring 4.35 out of 10. However, it has a higher trust rate among its readers scoring 6.75 out of 10. The report shows the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) on top as the most trusted news brand. (Newman et al., 2019, pp. 99). Resett raises much criticism towards NRK and has also encouraged a boycott of the channel. (Norwegian Association of Editors [NORED], 2018). The Reuters report shows that Resett tops the list of use and knowledge of other news brands (alternative media). The results show that 24% of the surveyed have heard of Resett, and 7% have used Resett in the last week. (Newman et al., 2019, pp. 99). The Reuters report also shows that 45% of Norwegians get their news through social media, where Facebook is the most popular platform. However, social media has only 17% trust in Norway as a source for newsgathering. (Newman et al., 2019, pp. 99).

Resett is most visible on Facebook of all the social media outlets, where it has over 30,000 followers. It created its Facebook page in February 2017, before the official launch in August the same year. Unlike established media outlets in Norway, many alternative media outlets are dependent on traffic from social media to reach out to existing and new readers. (Medietilsynet, 2019, pp. 6).

1.4 Structure of the thesis

I have divided the thesis into five chapters. In the first chapter, I have explained the context of the study and the choice of topic. The research questions have also been presented. The following is the theory chapter, where I will include relevant theories on particularly right-wing alternative media and previous studies that have been conducted on the phenomenon. The theories can be put in the context of my thesis. I will first go through literature and theory on the alternative media phenomenon, followed by recent studies of right-wing alternative media and immigration as a motive. At the end of the chapter, I will present research on social media engagement, primarily focusing on Facebook as a platform.

In chapter three, the methodological approach will be addressed. In this section, quantitative content analysis as a research method will be discussed, the selection will be presented, and the validity and reliability of the study will be assessed as well as the limitations and methodological challenges. Chapter four constitutes the study's analysis and findings of the

content analysis. Here I will also present the in-depth analysis of the immigration content. Chapter five is the discussion and conclusion chapter, where I will see the findings considering previous research and theory and make concluding remarks. Opportunities for future research will be proposed at the end of the chapter.

2. Theory

In this chapter, I will address previous research and theoretical perspectives that laid the groundwork for analysing the data and answering the research questions. I will first explain what alternative media is and the recent research on the phenomenon. Then I will shortly introduce right-wing ideology and its goals related to immigration and connect them to research on right-wing alternative media. Research on social media engagement will be presented at the end of the chapter, followed by some expectations of what I will find in the analysis.

2.1 What is alternative media?

To be able to research Resett, it is vital to explore what makes a media outlet *alternative*. I will, therefore, outline different perspectives on the phenomenon and provide a brief history and the motivations of such outlets. The phenomenon can have different names where some refer to it as ‘hyperpartisan media’, ‘fake news’, ‘conspiracy media’, and ‘propaganda’. Media researchers such as Kristoffer Holt criticise the terms "fake news," "conspiracy media", and "propaganda" to describe the media outlets in question. He argues that "alternative media" is more accurate for counter-hegemonic media, for example, media against religious and cultural development in society. (Holt, 2019, pp. 14). Other scholars such as Professor of Communication Anders Olof Larsson define these outlets as "hyperpartisan media". (Larsson, 2019, pp. 721). Hyperpartisan media are media that are extremely biased to one political side, both on the left or right on the political sphere. (Hyperpartisan, 2017).

Alternative media has existed for many years and has got more attention in recent years in a time with low media trust and a polarised society. (Atton, 2002, pp. 2-3). Several scholars

have tried to define alternative media and what characterises their practices in comparison to professional journalism.

Media researcher Chris Atton, who early on described alternative journalism to be radically opposed to hierarchical, elite-centred notions of journalism as a business, is one of the leading scholars on alternative media. (Atton, 2003, pp. 268). In his book *Alternative Media* (2002), he takes past alternative movements like the underground press of the 1960s such as *Village Voice* and *The Rat* into account. *The Rat* was connected to student protests and the U.S. hippie movement, and later became a feminist magazine. (Atton, 2002, pp. 1). Atton describes the 1970s as being the second wave of underground-like publications, now connected to the punk subculture, politics of liberation, anarchism and direct action. He argues that this time period was "the rise of the fanzine as an integral part of the punk subculture". (ibid). A fanzine is an unprofessional magazine aimed at people with the same interests. "Do we use 'alternative' as a catch-all for anything that is not available at our local newsagents? Is it a synonym for 'underground', radical, oppositional - even samizdat?" are some questions he asks. (Atton, 2002, pp. 2-3).

He emphasises that working-class communities and organisations have been producing their own media for centuries. Traditions of socialism and anarchism expanded in the 1980s and 1990s. That resulted in publications of new movements like environmentalism, feminism and the gay and lesbian movement. (ibid). Atton focused most on the 1990s in this book but considered time periods before that. Even though the book was written many years ago, it is essential to understand the development of alternative media. Before the internet, they had to rely on using print which meant that they could not reach out to as many readers as they can now. (Atton, 2002, pp.3).

Atton uses Marxist theorist Raymond Williams' three aspects of democratic communication that he focused on for his realignment: deprofessionalisation, decapitalisation, and deinstitutionalization. (Atton, 2002, pp. 25). Distinguishing alternative media from traditional media, he argues that alternative media must be available to ordinary people without the need for professional training, without too much capital outlay and take place in settings other than media institutions. However, the boundaries of what is considered professional and

alternative are always up for debate. In his research, Atton describes the zine, being produced cheaply, required no professional skills and the editor was usually the sole writer. Comparing that to the recent studies, it can be argued that is not the case, but the editor is the main driver. (Atton, 2002, pp. 23). Atton mainly analysed liberal alternative media. He was early to define these types of media outlets as alternative media and not just radical press, but alternative media as an umbrella definition. (Atton, 2002, pp. 9). The American Librarian, Patricia G. Schuman called alternative media "our modern pamphleteer", implying that they are political activists who spread information to the masses. "The alternative media employ methods of production and distribution, allied to an activist philosophy of creating 'information' for action' timeously and rapidly. As such, they can deal with emerging issues." (Atton, 2002, pp. 12). Atton argues that having emerging issues at heart is crucial, as they act as a response to social problems and wanting change. (ibid).

Where Atton has had a more liberal perspective on alternative media, more recent scholars such as Kristoffer Holt view alternative media from a counter media perspective. "Alternative news media position themselves as correctors of the mainstream news media, as expressed in editorial agendas or statements and are perceived as such by their audiences or third-parties." (Holt, 2019, pp. 11). Holt, along with the media researchers Tine Ustad Figenschou and Lena Frischlich, proposed this non-normative, multilevel relational definition to alternative journalism in 2019. The three scholars argue that alternative media should be considered "(self-) perceived correctives of " 'Traditional', 'legacy' or 'mainstream' news media in a given socio-cultural and historical context" (Holt et al., 2019, p. 860). They define alternative media of being counter-hegemonic (against power) where the goal is to influence public opinion, and of having an agenda that is underrepresented in mainstream media and open discussion. (ibid). They explain their definition as a relational approach, where the quality of the news medium is based on the counter or complementary position to certain hegemony. The definition is constructed as the organising principle behind alternative media outlets. (Holt et al., 2019, pp. 863-864).

The authors argue that the counter-hegemonic and corrective aspiration can be addressed from three perspectives: the self-perception of media owners (interviews, proclaimed agenda, mission statements), the audience perception (survey or interviews) or the perception of a

third party such as competitors or politicians. (ibid). The researchers studied different dimensions of alternative media, where the counter-hegemonic alternativeness can appear on the macro-level of societal function, the meso-level of organisations, and the micro-level of news content and producers. (Holt et al., 2019, pp. 863-864).

The individual micro-level of content producers is composed either by journalists or alternative producers such as activists or citizen journalists. Alternative media producers are often associated with a "bottom-up" inclusion of non-professionals such as fans, marginalised groups, or citizens, where anonymous reporting is also welcomed. The second dimension of the micro-level explores the differences regarding alternative media publishing style, content that provides "alternative accounts and interpretations of political and social events" or uses other formats. The researchers state that the self-perceived corrective function is clearly visible in this dimension where alternative media often publish content that is politically and socially/culturally radical. The mediums often emphasise special interests different from traditional media, regarding core information, metainformation, or the context in which it is embedded. They challenge established news formats and can make up new news genres (e.g. by blurring facts and opinion). (Holt et al., 2019, pp. 863-864).

Differences on the meso-level of alternative media organisations and their production and distribution processes represent another dimension, such as political blogs, compared to traditional newspapers. They are produced at a low cost, where radical progressive media often have a non-hierarchical organisation. (Holt et al., 2019, pp. 863-864). They can advocate for normative ideas such as anti-immigration and anti-capitalism, using different types of sources, like grass-root voices versus the establishment. Alternatively, they establish different audience relations, passive versus participatory. Alternative news media such as Pegida rely on reframing content by mainstream media or news agencies.

On the macro-level, alternativeness can be seen on the level of the entire media system, such as the ecosystem of the right-wing alternative media versus the national legacy media system. However, the two systems can be blended, where there are system-preserving tendencies on both sides. For example, when traditional media invite an alternative media actor to become a part of an event for a media event. The researchers explain that alternative media's relations

to the traditional and professional institutions, like associations and media policies "illuminates contemporary alternative media phenomenon". Including alternative media actors in such associations has caused major debates on who the legitimate journalist actors are. (Holt et al., 2019, pp. 863-864).

Alternative media can be seen as what is alternative to 'mainstream media' often produced by people who are excluded from society. Historically the term 'mainstream media' was used by left-wing debaters like the political activist Noam Chomsky. 'Alternative media' has long been seen as an opportunity for ordinary citizens to speak back to those in power. Alternative media can also be seen as activist news and even mistrustful of the elite in society. Other scholars use terms such as "empowerment of those who in different ways and to various degrees are being marginalised, misrepresented and ostracised by mainstream media." Definitions like this show that the mainstream media does not represent the values of various groups with alternative interests and opinions. Alternative media can, therefore, answer those interests. (Holt, 2019, pp. 17-18).

While some alternative media outlets take more of an activist approach to get their message out, some also aim to become semi-professional by adapting journalistic practices traditional media uses. However, for mediums to be taken seriously and professionally, it is expected that they report based on factual information. Media scholar Matt Carlson argues that a responsible press is not presented in an argumentative form and rarely builds a case to win over an audience but is there to tell us what happened. (Carlson, 2017, pp. 36). He explains that for journalists to be taken seriously, professionally and have a position in society, they need to provide something of social value. (Carlson, 2017, pp. 31). Alternative media often have different views than the mainstream media and represent the groups that usually do not have a voice. They also bring someone's issues up for debate if it reaches a public discussion, which can bring value to society. For the press to have the power to monitor government and businesses, it is a prerequisite that they are independent of those institutions. However, a journalist will always bring roots, values, and cultural and social background to their reporting in different ways. This can stem from what they are interested in writing about and the choices they make in their everyday lives. (Burås, 2014, pp. 50). There is also an expectation for a free and independent press not to accept donations from political actors, or

favour specific ideas. However, journalists have been free to choose their sources but are expected to have a professional distance from their source. (Burås, 2014, pp. 44).

Even though some alternative outlets aim to be part of the professional field, media criticism is one of the core elements of alternative media. The term 'lying press' is not new and has been around for decades. As mentioned earlier, studies on alternative media come formerly from a Marxist position of the press, where they criticised the media for being for the elite, and ordinary people were excluded.

History tells us that political leaders had criticised the press and named it "lying press" when they did not report something that was in their favour. (Holt, 2019, pp. 13-14). There have been leaders on both sides of the political sphere such as Fidel Castro on the extreme left and Adolf Hitler on the absolute right. The term has been used regularly by U.S President Donald Trump, calling multiple outlets "fake news" and "dishonest media". His followers, as well as other politicians, have adopted the rhetoric and beliefs of the media. As mentioned earlier, in polarising situations like these people seek an alternative where they can further express their scepticism of the press. Alternative news media sites do not only criticise the traditional media for being biased but also criticise them for the lack of objectivity, neutrality and verification. (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019).

Alternative media's criticism of traditional media often states that they favour some perspectives and hold back information and control people's opinions and do not let others' opinions be heard. These beliefs portray the idea of a failing democracy where not everyone is allowed to be a part of the free exchange of views. Holt stresses that "it is important to distinguish ideologically motivated and strategically formulated mistrust against the mainstream media", where one side has the belief that the elite holds power over the interpretation of reality and the other experiences uncertainty of whether the news is a reliable source of information. (Holt, 2019, pp. 21). He also argues that it is impossible to achieve perfect coverage of all events, and that if people believe that journalists do not report fairly, it will cause distrust in the media. However, he points out that alternative medias' critique of the media can often be exaggerated, speculative, and unfair. (Holt, 2019, pp. 22).

Alternative media outlets, either if it is on the left or the right side of the political scale, have in common that they are counter-hegemonic and typically have an opinion that is underrepresented in mainstream media. In the next section, I will look more into what it means to be a right-wing alternative media outlet and how they operate.

2.2 Right-wing alternative media

In this section, I will explore the research on right-wing alternative media, what motivates the actors and how they operate. This will set the groundwork and expectations of my research. Most of the research questions will be put into context in this section in terms of the amount of original content, the focus on immigration, challenging the media environment, and taking advantage of social media platforms.

To understand what *right-wing* means in right-wing alternative media, it is necessary to discuss different perspectives on right-wing ideology. The word *right-wing* is often linked to conservative politics that favour a limited state which, to a small extent, has economic equalisation. Right-wing populists often oppose the growth of immigration and culture-mixing, want a law-and-order profile and are against the elite. Many right-wing populists are also sceptical of climate change, opponents of European integration (EU) and defenders of traditional gender roles. Right-wing populist parties have also risen in Europe since the 1990s resulting in a high degree of polarisation. (Jupskås, 2020).

Right-wing media outlets have emerged in recent years at a time where populist right-wing politics is on the rise in many countries in Europe and the U.S. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 1). People within the right-wing movements can sometimes feel left out of the public discourse and feel that mainstream media does not represent them. Then, some can seek out other alternative outlets to make them feel that their voices are heard. (Holt, 2019, pp. 860).

Kristoffer Holt argues that some right-wing actors have a strong agenda where they believe that the majority population is at risk and that specific action is necessary. He also says that one of their goals is to create division and further polarisation. His findings show that the

mainstream media are often unable to read between the lines of the actors' own PR which fuels the polarisation to continue the conversation of topics like gun laws that create division. (Holt, 2019, pp. 1-4).

Polarisation is largely regarded as one of the most salient problems in modern democracies since its effects are manifested so obviously through mainstream news reporting as well as in our social media and alternative providers of news and views, and thus not only involving rational disagreement about opinion but increasingly fuelling unwillingness to compromise. (Holt, 2019, pp. 2).

Even though there are good conditions for expressing different opinions in Norway, there are some restrictions that do not fall under freedom of expression, such as "discrimination, blasphemy, pornography, defamation, and deliberate deception and threatening the security of the kingdom". (Burås, 2014, pp. 27). While right-wing media outlets have argued that they are often excluded from public debates, some outlets have already been included in national television debates. These outlets express sharp criticism of the traditional media's immigration coverage, while the opposition argues they are hateful and should be regulated. (NRK, 2019, Debatten).

2.2.1 Media criticism as a motivator

As previously argued, media criticism is an essential dimension of alternative media. Where distrust and critique of the mainstream media is one result of a more polarised climate, Holt says that it is in particularly polarising times, while there is questioning of bias and distrust of the mainstream media, when the debate about right-wing alternative media comes up. (Holt, 2019, pp. 4). There are two explanatory models where right-wing media tends to be debated. One side believes that mainstream journalism is something good and is threatened by an attack from "evil right-wing politicians and alternative media operations like trolls" who want to divide, inflict propaganda and encourage hatred. The other side argues that the mainstream media act as puppets for particular politician interests and promote liberal values. That side also argues that they ignore issues for ordinary people and try to silence them and criticise them. (Holt, 2019, pp. 4).

A study by media researchers Tine Figenschou and Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk shows that right-wing alternative media's media criticism is mainly a condemnation of journalistic performance and a failing watchdog role. It also shows that the traditional media is not critical enough of power, and are superficial, ignorant, and unprofessional. They researched the content of six different right-wing alternative sites in Norway. (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019).

The analysis identifies six multiple positions of media criticism from right-wing media sites: Victim position, activist position, anti-elitism, insider position, citizen-centric position, and expert position. They argue that these media outlets often express themselves or each other using a victim or insider view of being mistreated by the establishment. The outlet's position as an insider is related to previous insider knowledge from mainstream media. The activist position is referred to as a form of mobilisation as a way of exposing the mainstream media such as calling for boycotts, double standards, and protests. The citizen-centric position is their claim that established journalists are too distanced for the general public. The researchers identify the expert position as actors highlighting in-depth thematic knowledge of issues covered by the established media, like immigration, Islam, and U.S. politics. They do this by providing alternative sources or revisiting the original source, such as statistics and reports. They offer proof of biased coverage with a factual tone aiming to represent a contrast to mainstream media. (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019, pp. 903-904).

Contrary to their research, Kristoffer Holt analysed right-wing alternative outlets aiming to understand the people behind the outlets in different countries. He analysed right-wing alternative news outlets such as Breitbart News in the U.S., Fria Tider in Sweden and Junge Freiheit in Germany. Studying those outlets can tell us much about the present world of media as a whole. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the people that engage with those outlets, what it means to them, what it does to the audiences and how it relates to the broader media world. (Holt, 2019, pp. 7-8). He argues that the research on alternative media is often assumed as being determined by the qualities of "good" or "bad" rather than the curiosity of their existence and the meaning they have in people's lives. Alternative media are often known for what they are against, not what they support. (ibid).

Right-wing alternative media can be categorised as rebelling against the media norms and ethics. Media criticism is considered to be a part of a healthy media climate. However, Holt argues that when those opinions find a place in alternative platforms (counter-public) and not on public platforms, it causes a challenge from a democratic perspective. It gives the idea that some cannot be a part of public opinion on equal grounds. It also prevents the opposition from being a part of their discussion. (Holt, 2019, pp. 30-31). "Being critical to mainstream media is not the same as promoting extreme agendas or the infringement of media freedom." (ibid). Some members of alternative media sites can go to the extreme and threaten journalists or individuals, or lead their followers to intimidate individuals.

(...)when new media enter the arena that promote standpoints considered by others as intolerable and win an audience, the surrounding media are most likely affected by this. If these media, like some parties, can represent positions that are harshly critical of the political establishment and the elites and at the same time express opinions that are very far from other actors in the arena, some specific problems arise. (Holt, 2019, pp. 31).

When alternative media outlets criticise, they are expressing disapproval of the content. "Accusations of deficient performances require the enunciation of corresponding ideals that are not being met." (Carlson, 2017, pp. 165). Right-wing media's criticism of traditional media often contains views that they are overly liberal, lack truthfulness, and on extreme levels, conspire with political actors. (Krämer, 2018). Concerning crime and terrorism, right-wing media often accuse the media of downplaying the acts of minorities and migrants and withholding information. Media scholar Benjamin Krämer states that journalists should admit that they cannot achieve complete objectivity and include right-wing media in debates. (ibid).

Holt explains that one reason for media distrust could be that mainstream media generally represent the liberal elite and fail to pose issues for ordinary people. He claims that right-wing alternative media "should be addressed as any kind of alternative media". He means that alternative media existence is related to the polarised political climate we have today. (Holt, 2019, pp. 25-26).

2.2.2 Right-wing media and their audiences

'The Hostile media effect' is relevant in today's polarised society where right-wing media can have a pre-existing attitude towards certain media outlets and their reporting on immigration and issues that do not represent their values. Holt explains that this shows that it is difficult to change people's opinions if they already have a suspicious and negative attitude towards established media. (Holt, 2019, pp. 26-28).

One example of the hostile media effect was during and after the U.S election in 2016. Many people were surprised that Donald Trump won the U.S presidency and not Hillary Clinton. The media polls showed the opposite. Holt describes it as a rift between the elite and ordinary people and that the elite failed to understand what was important to the grassroots. (Holt, 2019, pp. 28). Many Donald Trump voters say they like him because " he says it as it is" meaning he talks without preparing well-worded sentences with complicated words. By feeding his voters' minds with attacks on mainstream media for being "dishonest" and "fake news", it naturally makes them mistrust them and believe him. The popularity of alternative news sites that favour of Trump, like Breitbart, were higher than journalists expected. Breitbart, along with other right-wing alternative news sites, typically indicates a distrust of mainstream media and calls them out for having a left-wing bias. (ibid).

Right-wing alternative news sites have a broad audience in the U.S. populistic views, and media criticism has flourished since Donald Trump became president. Channels such as Fox News often share the same criticism against the other established media channels, especially CNN, New York Times, and the Washington Post. They blame them for being left-wing, call them "elite media", and believe they systematically work to promote left-leaning policies. (Carlson, 2017, pp. 166-168). Like the other scholars, media scholar Matt Carlson claims that right-wing alternative news sites are "anti-elitist" and believe that journalists in established news organisations are "superior to the public that they are meant to serve". (Carlson, 2017, pp.168).

The media scholars Philipp Müller and Anne Schulz investigated alternative media user predictors of exposure to sites like Breitbart and Sputnik through a large-scale survey on

German internet users. Their research shows that alternative media are often connected with the emergence of grassroots political movements such as the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement and the Arab Spring. (Müller & Schulz, 2019, pp 1-2). Studies also show that support of a populist agenda is linked to low media trust. (ibid).

In 2019, media researchers Anett Heft, Eva Mayerhöffer, Susanne Reinhardt and Curd Knüpfer did a comparative study of 70 right-wing media sites in Austria, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Breitbart was one of them.

The established media in the six countries were confronted with lower levels of trust where right-wing media accuse the established media of being aligned with a political side. (Heft, Mayerhöffer, Reinhardt, & Knüpfer, 2019, pp.2-3). The right-wing media sites included in the study have clear ideological attachments to anti-hegemonic impetus and views associated with right-wing ideology such as nationalism, conservatism, economic liberalism and extreme right-wing positions, as described earlier as xenophobia, authoritarianism, antisemitism, fascism, racism, and islamophobia. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 4-5).

The growth of both right- and left-wing extremism increases the potential of polarisation in politics and the media sphere, where dispersing on social media sites can also increase polarisation when it reaches a broad audience. (ibid). They share the same impression as the other researchers mentioned above that Breitbart is an example of an outlet that has surged in the U.S. in light of the 2016 presidential election. They argue that they function as a bridge between more moderate or mainstream forms of media and the alt-right. (ibid). The researchers claim that the success of right-wing parties can be seen as an indicator that there is a public tolerance toward right-wing positions when they get access to the debate. The U.S. is an example of this. However, their low media trust fuels the demand for alternative news. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 4-5).

It has been claimed that when populist positions are marginalised in public debate, right-wing media are more likely to flourish. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 6). The mainstream media has a critical stance toward right-wing positions in Germany and Sweden, unlike in Denmark where they make room for right-wing voices in the debate, resulting in harsh discussions, especially on topics like immigration and Islam. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 8). Interestingly, the

right-wing media outlets in Germany and Sweden publish more content than the right-wing outlets in Austria and Denmark. The most established right-wing outlets are in Sweden, including the right-wing extremist site Nordfront. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 15-16). The researchers analysed the transparency regarding the organisation and funding of the outlets. The results show that 37% of them are transparent when it comes to organisational and content-related structures. (ibid). The outlets in Sweden and Austria have a broad range of thematic categories, where sites in Germany focus more on thematic categories relating to immigration and Islam. The researchers found that the sites with the most right-wing bias tend to be less transparent. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 19).

The study shows that there is a wide range of different sites among the countries, from the more "normalised" to the more radical ones, and that there are no dominant types in each country. The research concludes that the normalisation of these sites challenges the current digital news environment where it can be harder for the audience to discern hyperpartisan sites to regular online news. The normalisation of right-wing websites might pressure the remaining "pure" right-wing sites to become even more radical, where they have to provide a counterpoint not only to mainstream media but also to the normalised right-wing outlets. (ibid). Their findings also point to the marginalisation of right-wing views in the media, which might make the establishment of a thriving right-wing media more likely. (Heft et al., 2019, pp. 20).

2.2.3 Different motivations by the right-wing media

Kristoffer Holt suggests that right-wing alternative media actors share common motives, opposing immigration and Islam being one of them. They also appear to often be critical to the climate change issue and LGBT rights. (Holt, 2019, pp. 39). Holt interviewed actors that are "active in the Swedish immigration critical alternative media scene", asking specifically about their motives and their view of the mainstream media. The findings show that there is a broad range of right-wing activists, and it is difficult to link them to a specific motive or ideology. (Holt, 2019, pp. 39-42). Something that re-occurred in the interviews was the experience of getting rejected for having their articles published in mainstream media. Because of this, they then leaned towards publishing their content on blogs or their own websites.

Holt categorises right-wing alternative actors into three approaches: entrepreneurs, eternal outsiders and legitimacy seekers. The entrepreneurs are less concerned about ideas and public discourse. Instead, they see alternative media as an entrepreneurial project, where the motive is to establish a market for the type of news and views they publish. They believe that there is an audience that is underrepresented by the mainstream media, and therefore alternative outlets fill that gap. (Holt, 2019, pp. 41).

The eternal outsiders are a platform for the voices of the ones that can't get their perspective through in mainstream media. Their goal is not to influence public opinion at large, as it is perceived as unfeasible. Instead, the aim is to "build a long-term cultural acceptance of one's worldview within a circle". They are already suspicious of politicians and the media, which is why they want to spread content to strengthen the critical attitude against immigration, media, or Islam. (Holt, 2019, pp. 40). The legitimacy seekers actively strive to influence a broad spectrum of people and legitimise their views, and because of this they have mainly gotten negative labels. They believe in the need to challenge the establishment and criticise mainstream media for not realistically reporting on immigration issues. The legitimacy seekers think that the immigration debate should be an accurate description of reality, including the uncomfortable questions and unrestricted facts. (Holt, 2019, pp. 41).

One thing right-wing alternative media actors have in common is their critical stance on immigration and the way they establish media reports on the issue. (Holt, 2019, pp. 39). In the next section, I will, therefore, explore how immigration is portrayed in traditional media and what right-wing alternative media base their media criticism on and how the right-wing actors choose to report on immigration issues.

2.3 Immigration in mainstream and alternative media

The main goal of this thesis is to investigate how Resett reports on immigration issues. In this section, I will present studies on how immigration is reported in traditional media, which is

often the target of criticism by right-wing alternative media outlets. I will then explore studies on how right-wing outlets choose to report on the issues.

As previously argued, research shows that issues relating to immigration are a crucial motive of right-wing media outlets. Holt's findings of right-wing alternative media actors' view on media shows that they believe the established media deliberately avoid reporting on problematic aspects of immigration or that they actively distort the image of what consequences it entails. (Holt, 2019, pp. 43). Many of those actors believe the media avoid including the 'original nationality' of those who have committed crimes like rape and that they put them in the same category as the 'countrymen'. They think journalists avoid this because they "are worried that telling the truth would spark hatred towards immigrants". They also believe that they hide statistics such as long-term costs of immigration or the crime rates of immigrants. (ibid). However, research suggests that immigration coverage is more diverse than the criticism presumes. (Hovden & Mjelde, 2019).

Immigration in Norway has increased since the seventies. With that, reporting on topics related to immigration increased. Professor in media science Jan Fredrik Hovden and postdoctoral fellow Hilmar Mjelde did a comprehensive study of the immigration debate in Scandinavian newspapers from 1970 to 2016. The publications included in the study mainly focused on established media outlets and not outlets that could be considered alternative media. (Hovden & Mjelde, 2019). Their analysis concludes that new immigrants arriving in Scandinavian countries often result in debates about who should be admitted or returned, their rights and integration in society.

The results show that the discussion of immigration is widespread through Northern Europe and is not only limited to specific nations. There were differences in reporting in the three Scandinavian countries and overall, and there was more focus on the problems regarding immigration through the later years. The Danish newspapers were increasingly more threat-focused and started to concentrate more on Islam in the later years of the study. The Swedish reporting was more concerned with the humanitarian side of immigration, portraying immigrants as victims. Racism was also an important issue in Swedish reporting. (ibid). The increase of the immigration debate in newspapers seems to be linked to more significant

immigration flows as a result of the displacement of people during wars, unrest, and conflicts. The study shows a steep climb of the topic of immigration around the same time as the migration stream in 2015. Hovden and Mjelde point out that the reporting is mainly connected with the arrival of new ethnic, religious, and social groups, resulting in a stronger episodic character to the immigration debate. (Hovden & Mjelde, 2019).

Xenophobia or fear of the unknown is also not an uncommon phenomenon in society or the media. It operates in different forms, where right-wing alternative media outlets might express it explicitly and with a harsher tone than independent and mainstream outlets. The Norwegian media researchers Elisabeth Eide and Anne Hege Simonsen have systematically analysed Norwegian news coverage of minority groups and immigrants in the last one hundred years. They point out that journalists "lock" the minorities in tight categories defined by the majority of society. (Eide & Simonsen, 2012, pp 9-11).

The results demonstrate that there has been suspicion of minorities for over a hundred years. However, the media coverage has expanded. Their research points out a pattern that shows there is broader coverage about minority groups when the dominant society's conceptions of the minority groups are challenged, such as the time before and after the Holocaust. (ibid). Eide and Simonsen point out that minorities are rarely mentioned from their own perspectives and experiences. They conclude that people from Somalia especially, are often portrayed as dangerous and problematic. They are also the group that scores low on statistics regarding adapting to Norwegian society. The researchers identify that the media often link them to unemployment, crime, poor school performance and social assistance. (Eide & Simonsen, 2012, pp 148-150).

In their research, they have used the term "media shadowing", meaning a situation where the coverage is absent or unilaterally negative. They point out that this is the case in the coverage of Somalis. (ibid). The few times Somalis get to talk as individuals are regarded as conformities. Interestingly, the result shows that the individual reporting of Somalis are "positive" where they are as integrated and often "more Norwegian than the ethnic Norwegians", like a Somali doing cross-country skiing and catching reindeer with the Sámi. (Eide & Simonsen, 2012, pp 147-150).

The Norwegian media often used the frame "the foreign workers" since the immigration increase during the seventies. The term became a common term of immigrants that were not from rich western countries or Norway's neighbouring countries. This was in the period of the party-press in Norway, where the conservative newspapers were more negative towards immigration than the liberal ones. Nevertheless, Eide and Simonsen argue that reporting on immigration was overall based on curiosity and solidarity until the millennium. (Eide & Simonsen, 2012, pp 172-173). The findings show that "refugees" are less mentioned than "immigrants". The reason for that could be that the people who were initially refugees are later treated as immigrants. Crime is the theme that gets the most coverage relating to immigrants and refugees, politics is second, and culture/society and sport share third place. (Eide & Simonsen, 2012, pp 174).

Another study of immigration in the traditional media in Norway was conducted by the media scholars Tine Ustad Figenschou, Audun Beyer and Kjersti Thorbjørnsrud (2015). They did a survey-study regarding a news series showing harassment of people believed to disrespect traditional Muslim norms and what effect that had on the public. They looked at the agenda-setting and framing effects in the coverage. The aim was to see how a concept introduced by the media could make people aware of an issue. The results show a keen awareness in the public of an idea launched by the media, however, portraying a strong agenda-setting effect. The phenomenon affected public opinion, which shows the range of framing elements in media coverage. However, not all responders adopted the media's framing on the phenomenon. The results in the open-ended questions, where they answered on how they interpreted what the issue was all about, show that the phenomenon raised a large number of emotional cues, identification, positioning and activating personal experiences. (Figenschou, Beyer, & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015).

There are not many studies that have looked at immigration coverage in alternative media, but the studies done show that right-wing alternative media actors typically share the same criticism of immigration and how the mainstream media report on the issues. (Holt, 2019, pp. 39). A research conducted by media scholar Silje Nygaard also shares that conclusion. She researched three different right-wing alternative media outlets that are critical of the current

immigration situation. The selection was Document.no from Norway, Fria Tider from Sweden and Den Korte Avis from Denmark. She analysed their ideological function and how they reported the news and how differently they use various journalistic features as modes of public address. (Nygaard, 2019, pp. 1149-1155).

Her findings show that the three outlets share the same ideological functions where they aim to convince their audience that Scandinavian society has become unsafe due to immigration and the political decisions of the left. Document.no is an alternative media outlet that is a member of the Norwegian Association of editors, and they follow the ethical guidelines in Norway and apply professional journalistic ideals to reporting the news. They have a descriptive way of reporting and have more negative coverage than other established news media in Norway which show a more humanitarian perspective. Den Korte Avis has an active and prominent voice with normative judgments on what is right and wrong. On the other hand, Fria Tider has overwhelmingly negative reporting on immigrants, where they are considered 'crooks' and a threat to society. Dokument.no is found in between the two other outlets. (ibid).

With a limitation of resources and the ability to reach out to many people, many right-wing media outlets turn to social media platforms. In the next section, I will explore studies on their use of social media.

2.4 Social media engagement

One goal of this thesis is to investigate what content is shared on Facebook and what kind of engagement immigration content creates. I will, therefore, explain perspectives on social media and engagement in the context of news. Social media falls within the scope of participatory communication, and it enables people to engage, interact and collaborate in the news production. (Hermida, 2016, pp. 83). Social media has not only made it possible for consumers to shape media messages but also reinterpret them, appropriate, or bypass the media. (ibid). People primarily use social media to connect with others and to share experiences, and the news seen on social media channels like Facebook is often incidental. (Hermida, 2016, pp. 90). The Reuters Digital News Report for 2019 shows that 45% of

Norwegians use Facebook for newsgathering. Facebook is the most used social media platform in Norway, where Twitter is at the bottom of the list. (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, & Nielsen, 2019, pp. 99).

Now it is much easier to get your voice heard and engage in the public debate than before. Audiences can comment on journalistic reporting on Facebook, and it is not a requirement to contact the newspaper to get your opinion out in public. "Being an audience is now a much more active and interactive experience. They are collaborators, co-producers and generators, curators, and perhaps even re-mixers." (Wu 2018, pp. 287).

The Norwegian news media sites actively facilitate audience participation on discussion forums and comment sections. (Ihlebak & Ytreberg, 2009, pp. 48). The audience participation on social media and in the comment sections can be seen as an important tool for democratic participation and strengthening of public discussion and democracy. On the other hand, critics argue this could "fragment the public conversation, as that participation helps to polarise the debate and the contributions are characterised by failing quality". (Ihlebak & Ytreberg, 2009, pp. 52). Nonetheless, Norwegians might not be as active in the commentary sections as other countries. The Reuters report shows that only 16% of Norwegians comment on news via social media channels or the news website. The same report shows that Norwegians are slightly more willing to share the news, where 25% share it via social media, messaging or email. (Newman et al., 2019, pp. 99).

Social media has become an important part of journalistic practice today, where it's used to seek new audiences, engage with sources, and promote their coverage. (Wu, 2018, pp. 288). For many alternative media sites, social media is vital to get their message out. PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident) is a right-wing populist movement that mainly communicates through Facebook. The leaders refuse to talk to the established media. The academic researchers Kristoffer Holt and André Haller did a qualitative content analysis of PEGIDA's media criticism on Facebook in Germany, Austria, Sweden and Norway. They looked at how mainstream media are referenced on their Facebook pages. (Holt & Haller, 2017, pp. 42-43).

The PEGIDA Facebook pages and the movement itself is slightly different in the four countries. The biggest one is in Germany where the Facebook page had about 205,000 likes, and the Norwegian version had 5,143 likes. (Holt & Haller, 2017, pp. 46). PEGIDA usually comments and republishes other media sites, both established media and alternative media sites. The results of the study show that there are two types of references relating to media criticism, affirmative references to prove their position and strengthen their arguments, and one contesting references containing criticism of the media. (Holt & Haller, 2017, pp 42).

To reach out to a newer and broader audience on social media, the content might need to have virality potential. Professors of marketing Jonah Berger and Katherine L. Milkman did research questioning "What makes online content viral?". They analysed 7,000 New York Times articles and looked at which types got shared. They also analysed where the articles were placed on the website and how long they were there. The results show that positive articles are more likely to be shared. People share content that is entertaining and funny, or content that is informative and useful. (Berger & Milkman, 2011, pp. 8-10). Their findings also show that content that evokes anxiety and anger goes more viral than sad content. (ibid). Even though this analysis is more from a marketing perspective, it shows some interesting results from sharing content from a mainstream newspaper and a general virality in content that evokes emotions.

Facebook is an essential tool to gain traffic for many alternative media outlets. It is inexpensive, and it does not require much more than merely sharing their article on their Facebook page. Some right-wing alternative media outlets play on people's emotions such as fear and anger. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 725).

2.4.1 Alternative media versus mainstream media on Facebook

Platforms such as Facebook are a vital way today to reach out and engage with the audience. However, the platform has also brought difficulties for media professionals regarding "fake news" and disinformation, sometimes spread from hyperpartisan outlets. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 721-722). Professor in communication Anders Olof Larsson studied the influence of hyperpartisan media outlets in comparison to national and regional news. The selection was 119 regional newspapers, 14 national newspapers and six hyperpartisan media outlets. (ibid).

Facebook is "increasingly functioning as a digital intermediary between news organisations and news users, effectively deciding what type of manoeuvres are allowed at the hands of news professionals - and thereby also their users." (Larsson, 2019, pp. 723). As stated earlier in the chapter, Facebook is a popular social media platform for newsgathering in Norway. Eighty-two percent of the population has a profile on the platform, and 68% of those use it daily. (IPSOS/SOME, 2019).

Facebook users engage with content by sharing, clicking reactions/likes, and commenting. One of the most used feedback options is the 'reaction/like' where the users can show *thumbs up, love, funny, wow, sad, and angry*. It is a less demanding engagement than, for example, commenting. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 724-725). It can be hypothesised that likes/reactions have a higher total number compared to the ones who shared or commented.

Facebook users usually share news content from their personal Facebook profile for their audience to see. (ibid). Larsson argues that news use on Facebook can be seen as having an amplifying effect and serve as a basis for decision-making in the newsroom. (ibid). He presupposed that the results would show that hyperpartisan media stir up emotions and post controversial topics, and that is crucial to their sharing success. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 725).

His results show that hyperpartisan media has a higher amount of engagement per user on Facebook than regional or national news. Resett scores in the top five on sharing, commenting, and reactions per follower. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 728-731). Some interesting findings analysing the hyperpartisan media shows that the content with significant engagement was about immigration. One of the most commented on ones is from the right-wing media outlet, Document.no: "Mainstream media hides immigrant crime" and by unknown: "Should Islamic calls to worship be banned? Post your comments below." (ibid). The most shared post was more implicitly about immigration, where the content was in support of a populist politician that is critical to immigration. The most shared article was by Rapport-X (now called Alternative Media): "Share this call to send flowers to the attorney general". The articles with the most reactions were also by Rapport-X: " Do you think the former attorney general will one day become PM?". (Larsson, 2019, pp. 732).

Overall, the results of hyperpartisan media, national and regional, proves that call-to-action social media posts get more engagement, where the users do precisely what the publisher suggests. The results of the regional and national news show a different result thematically, however, call-to-action social media posts top that list as well but are related to competitions and other topics not related to immigration and Islam. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 737). Larsson researched articles posted within a month, where major political events can dominate the news cycle, and the result might not be generalised. It is, therefore, unclear if the results would have been different if he chose to research a more extended period.

Anders Olof Larsson did similar research along with media scientist Bente Kalsnes. The research was a comparative study of news use on Facebook during the national 2017 election in Norway. Earlier studies show that people have paid more attention to alternative media actors during election campaigns. (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2019, pp. 1-3). Four traditional news organisations in Norway were included in the study, along with three right-wing alternative media outlets in Norway. (The researchers refer to alternative media as hyperpartisan media in this research). They analysed the levels of engagements such as likes, shares, and comments. The alternative outlets in their study were Document.no, Human Rights Service, and Nattnytt. The researchers also point out that earlier studies suggest that controversial or emotional content such as immigration issues lead to a higher degree of sharing. (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2019, pp. 6). They analysed the most engaging news stories in many types of topics using the analytical tool Storyboard for one month before the election. Storyboard gives a picture of the articles that have the most shares in current time.

Their findings show that established media largely dominated with the most engaging news stories during the 2017 election, where alternative media outlets had limited influence, with mixed results regarding different topics. However, they had a more apparent tendency towards political issues and news dealing with the election itself. The researchers categorised that as the "horse race frame", where the focus was the pre-election period, and polls showing disappointing results for the Labour Party (Ap), and better results for the progressive right-wing party (Frp). (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2019, pp. 9-10).

The articles with the most reactions/likes had a tough stance against crime and immigration, topics typically associated with Frp. One article that had a lot of reactions/likes was a "tell-all interview" article by Human Rights Service, an interview with a Swedish police officer discussing the immigration issue. (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2019, pp. 11-12). The articles by alternative media outlets that had the most shares were less focused on polling, but rather potential scandals regarding politicians on the left, such as a revealing article about the leader of Socialist Left Party (SV) by Document.no: "Lysbakken's corrupt past" (ibid). Kalsnes and Larsson argue that sharing news content is not common among general news users, and those who share news content tend to have strong political interests. (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2019, pp. 12). The researchers found that the articles with the most comments were often just tagged names, where the users tag other Facebook friends, usually under typical 'clickbait posts' and whimsical articles. The results also show that alternative media are not as represented among the most commented articles. (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2019, pp. 12-13).

The findings reveal that alternative media can gain visibility on Facebook during an election. The researchers also explain that alternative media outlets have a very active audience, even though the audience is smaller than traditional media sites. They argue that ideology has proven to give a strong willingness to share news and that a strong interest in immigration issues plays a significant role. (ibid).

The media researchers Linn A. C. Sandberg and Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk did a similar study focusing on the Swedish election in 2018. They compared social media engagement between traditional media and ten alternative media outlets. They used the dataset of shared links originating from the outlets. (Sandberg & Ihlebæk, 2019, pp. 427). The results show that alternative media outlets have notable visibility compared to traditional news media. Among the shared links, 28% were from right-wing alternative media outlets, where topics related to immigration and integration issues dominated the content shared by right-wing alternative media outlets. The content with the highest engagement was about topics specifically related to immigration and crime and the conservative-populist party, Sweden Democrats. (Sandberg & Ihlebæk, 2019, pp. 435).

Immigration issues were covered in the majority of the links by the alternative outlets. They also had a large engagement. However, the immigration topic did not evoke the highest engagement scored on average. The mean score was also lower than in traditional media outlets. The findings suggest that the immigration issue was covered in a large portion of links shared from traditional media with a score of 20%. The researchers argue that negative content regarding immigration in traditional media might generate similar engagement to the coverage by alternative media actors. (Sandberg & Ihlebæk, 2019, pp. 435-436). Alternative media content concerned with immigration and crime indicated support for the Sweden Democrats. Some of the content had a sarcastic undertone to possibly undermine political opponents or politicians with an immigrant background. (ibid).

2.5 Summary and expectations

This chapter shows previous research on alternative media, right-wing media, immigration in the media and social media engagement. By outlining these perspectives, it is possible to place my research into a broader context. In summary, I have argued that alternative media outlets are counter-hegemonic with corrective aspirations seeking to influence public opinion. Alternative media outlets often represent marginalised groups that usually do not get their voice heard in the media. A pattern of right-wing alternative media outlets proves that issues relating to immigration and Islam is one of their main drivers. Research shows that alternative outlets often criticise mainstream media's reporting on immigration issues and accuse them of hiding essential facts. The results of an earlier study on right-wing alternative media outlets raise an expectation that an outlet such as Resett mainly focuses on negative parts of immigration such as crime and criticises the traditional media's reporting on the issue and accuses them of undermining it. It is also expected that they raise harsh criticism to politicians on the left that are notably more favourable to immigration. The research by Bjerke et al. also indicates that Resett has limited access to sources and will use a lot of content from news agencies that might give the impression that it also focuses on other issues not related to right-wing ideology. Since Norwegians often use Facebook as a news source and considering that alternative media outlets have limited options to reach out to the public, it is expected that Resett takes advantage of using Facebook as a platform.

In the next chapter, I will present the research method and the guidelines to find the answers to research questions, using quantitative content analysis.

3. Research method

Research is "the systematic process of asking questions and finding answers". (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005, pp. 260). A research method is an academic approach to gain new knowledge on research and to test hypotheses about a topic that the researcher finds interesting. An analysis can also give a better understanding of society as a whole. To be able to answer the research questions, it is necessary to gather data and process it in a way that best answers the research question. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp. 25).

In this chapter, the methodological approach will be presented. I will outline the research design and give a description of what characterises a quantitative analysis. The data gathering process will be addressed, as well as the preparation of the codebook. There will also be a discussion of the quality of the study and the reliability test. In conclusion, I will address the limitations and methodological challenges, followed by a summary of the chapter.

3.1 Research design

The research questions in this thesis are a necessary tool for choosing the right methodical approach and the selection in the selected method, which is quantitative content analysis. The purpose of this study is to get an overview of Resett's coverage of immigration and Islam over a three-year period.

The research is divided into two parts, where all articles will be analysed first, and then the non-immigration articles will be filtered out. The immigration articles will then be analysed in detail with an expansion of new variables. Analysing the articles over weeks within the three years will give a deeper understanding of Resett's reporting and developments over time. The broad range of variables will also make it possible to analyse the relationship between different variables.

3.2 Quantitative content analysis

Quantitative content analysis is used to process and quantify large amounts of data. It is a method where content is systematically categorised and counted. Such a method is often used to examine development trends, see patterns and generalise findings. (Grønmo, 2016, pp.212). Content analysis has been the primary research approach for researchers who have a large amount of data in which they want to measure bias, accuracy, or the objectivity of news. (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005, pp. 179). Media researchers Bertrand & Hughes suggest a fundamental question that content analysis might pose to attempt to understand the texts: "Content analysis: How well does this message capture the real world through codes?" (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005, pp. 175).

The aim for quantitative analyses is to seek a systematic, objective and quantitative description of the content. (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog, Larsen & Moe, 2013, pp. 208). For a systematic analysis, specific rules need to be formulated on how to handle the material. Meaning that it needs to be clear what media to analyse and the time period needs to be fixed. (ibid). To aim for objectivity in a content analysis means to reduce the use of discretion and that of the encoder's own estimates should not affect the material. This requires establishing precise operationalisation of variables, where the results of the coding will match, regardless of whether another person codes the material. (ibid). As stated above, quantitative means that you can quantify the material and the findings. However, the variables and categories can also capture the qualitative characteristics of the text. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp. 209).

A content analysis summarises the content, rather than scrutinising details of the texts. This is also called a nomothetic approach to scientific research, meaning a study where the aim is to identify generalisable findings across a set of messages. (Neuendorf, 2017, pp. 23). In this thesis, it is appropriate to carry out a quantitative content analysis, as the purpose is to uncover trends such as how much Resett writes about immigration, what journalistic genres the content is divided into, what engagement the content gets and who writes the articles.

Choosing quantitative content analysis felt natural when the goal was to investigate the prevalence of its immigration content. Alternative media outlets have also led to some challenges where they have chosen not to follow ethical standards. Considering that Resett is a controversial media outlet, my opinion is that it is crucial to show accurate statistics without any discretion. A quantitative content analysis gives an overview and understanding of how much Resett writes about immigration and Islam compared to other content.

3.3 Selection and Data gathering

In order to conduct a content analysis, a selection must be made. One must first decide which level of text units to register. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp. 212). The researcher must decide how large a population of units one will use. If one decides to make a selection, you have to determine how big it should be and how it should be selected or drawn. (ibid). In this study, online articles are units. There are a total of 1,376 articles that will be analysed. The term 'articles' in this study means all articles within the chosen dates that are clickable on the Resett website. That includes all content from traditional news articles, podcasts, copied and pasted social media posts, videos and even vacant posts. Xstra articles are also included because they are also published through the Resett website.

A fundamental step in the process towards drawing a sample is always to delineate the population. Then one has to ask what population of text do I want to say something about through the content analysis? (Østbye et al., 2013, pp. 215). In this analysis, I will examine Resett's immigration coverage. The selection that is crucial here is that it is impossible to analyse all the articles over three years, but it's important to choose a time period that represents a picture of their coverage.

The data is processed, systematised and registered in a way that it can be used as a data basis in the study. The textual content must be examined from a structural coding scheme consisting of variables and categories which are specified and developed before the collection of the data starts. In the coding process, the variables are added and categories that are relevant to each text unit are counted using a statistical program. (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog, Larsen & Moe, 2013, pp. 206-ff). In this research, the text that is coded is the

online articles from Resett's website. The coding is registered in a codebook developed through Microsoft Excel. As mentioned earlier, this content analysis is divided into two parts, where I decided to first code all the articles within the specific dates. Then the material that falls under the immigration theme was later coded in the same coding scheme.

Gathering the Resett articles within the dates was unproblematic, as Resett categorises its articles by date, which makes it easy to find all of the articles it published that particular day. All of the articles were gathered from its website, www.Resett.no. To include a variable that categorises the journalistic genres has been important to identify genres that also are hard to define, where it otherwise could be excluded. However, on a couple of articles where the content was partly missing, it was impossible to define if it was about immigration or Islam, those were counted as a whole, but were not included for the further analysis, where immigration is specified.

3.3.1 Time period

There are many ways to make a selection of the units in content analysis. A constructed week is considered a good alternative to get a representative picture of the "regular" news coverage, where, for example, an event does not dominate the result. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp.161-162). Resett publishes many articles every day and also writes about major events. To limit the amount of data, and to get a representative picture, I have made the systematic selection in which articles I have included in the data gathering. In this case that means that every week of the year is equally likely to be chosen. (Hellevik, 2019, pp. 115-116). I had therefore concentrated on one constructed week in 2017, and two constructed weeks each year in 2018 and 2019. The weeks were randomly selected through *Google's number generator*. The first weekday for each week starts on a Monday, followed by Tuesday the week later, Wednesday the next and so on. Articles published on the weekends were not included.

The first randomly selected week was week 42 for the first year, 2017, where the first day coded was Monday, 16 October, and then Tuesday, 24 October 2017. I initially thought one week each year was sufficient. After coding a week each year, it turned out that it would not be enough. To also broaden the topics of the articles and not have one topic dominate the

results, I decided to do one week in spring and one week in autumn for 2018 and 2019. The first selected date for 2018 was 19 March 2018 (week 12), and 17 September 2018 (week 38) for the autumn section. The first date for 2019 was 28 January 2019 (week 5) and 11 November 2019 (week 46).

Since Resett has only existed for less than three years, I cannot do a study of its development in the reporting longer than that time frame. Taking into consideration that Resett was launched just a couple of weeks before the Norwegian parliamentary election on 11 September 2017, I avoided the week before and after that. The reason for that was not to get an unbalanced type of articles where most could be about the election itself. If I decided to code one more week for 2017, it would be very limited and the chances of the same weeks to be coded were therefore high.

3.4 Variables and operationalisation

A requirement for quantitative analysis is that the units can be placed into unique categories. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp.161-162). Variables are specific characteristics that describe the form or content of the text. The variables can be constructed first after making decisions of what is discussed above, such as the selection of study, time frame and how big that selection is.

Content analyses can typically have variables that describe the form and content of the text. The form can be classified by journalistic genres or how many sources are used. The content can be categorised after themes such as politics or immigration or related to a tendency or answers to questions like how the theme is presented or whether it is positive or negative to certain actors. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp.212-217). To make it possible to measure or classify the features of Resett's publishing, I have set up a set of variables that describe the form and the tendency.

Most of the variables describe the form, such as the genres and if it is within a specific theme. The variables related to the theme of the study, ask the question of whether the content has immigration or/and Islam as the main theme, where the value will be either yes or no.

The chosen variables in this thesis have to be relevant to the research questions and are also influenced by past research in the area and the theory in the study. To run a successful content analysis, it was important to have the coding scheme ready, before starting the full analysis, and to secure high validity.

One of the most important variables in this analysis is the variable 5: *Is immigration or Islam the main theme?* The criteria are that the text about immigration/Islam needs to be worded explicitly, meaning that the text has to include specific words relating to immigration. In content analysis, this is called *manifest content* which refers to specific words that are coded in the same way as they appear in the text. The coding then becomes routine where data programs can identify and register certain letter combinations. The registrations of those words are done manually in this research. (Grønmo, 2016, pp. 217). A problem with manifest content is that one word can have different meanings, depending on the context. In this analysis, I rely on specific words being mentioned in the title, introduction and tags. (Grønmo, 2016, pp. 217).

Due to a large number of variables, I have organised them under each research question, where the purpose of each variable can be presented. The full coding scheme is placed under "attachments" after "references" of this thesis.

3.4.1 Essential variables

The essential variables tell you important information to be able to have a well organised coding scheme, where you can easily go back to the article. (Østbye et al. 2013, 163-165). The date-coded variable is useful where some of the values of the engagement variables can change from day-to-day. The essential variables are presented in the variables article number, title, date, date coded, link to the article and link to the Facebook post. (1,2,3, 16,17, and 18 in the coding scheme in attachments).

3.4.2 Variables describing the immigration content

The variables about immigration are divided into two parts, the first seeks to find out how much of the contents is about immigration, and the second part is what specific immigration topic is written about.

3.4.3 Operationalisation of variable: *How much does Resett publish about immigration/Islam?*

The variable is presented as *variable 5* in the coding scheme. The variable is dichotomous, meaning it has only two values, either *yes* (value 1) or *no* (value 2). (Østbye et al, 2013, 178). For an article to fall under as *yes*, immigration or Islam needs to be formulated explicitly. To make the distribution easier, at least one of the following words need to be present in the title, first five sentences or/and tagged by Resett: "immigration", "Islam", "Muslim", "refugees", "asylum", "migrants", "minority" or "integration", "immigrant children", "Islam critique", "Islamophobia", "asylum politics", "immigrant women", "multi-culture", "foreign fighters", "Muslim", "Quaran", "Quaran school", "Quaran burning", "Mosque", "jihad", "SIAN", "racism", "Islamism", "reception centre", "Islamization", "UDI", "expulsion", "hijab", "imam", "mulla", "border control", "young guns", "foreigners", "circumcision", "ISIS", "Islamist", "honour culture".

Other articles coded as *yes* are articles about Islamic terrorism and articles that accuse immigrants or Muslims of being behind criminal actions. Articles about "racism towards white" are also included. However, articles about warfare in the middle east without explicitly mentioning Islam, refugees or immigration are not included.

Using a dichotomous variable limits errors and misunderstandings and strengthens the reliability. The disadvantage is that some articles can be missed because specific words do not occur in the title, introduction or in the tags.

3.4.4 Operationalisation of variable: *What characterises the journalistic genres of the immigration articles and how are they distributed?*

The variable describing the journalistic genre is presented as *variable 4* in the coding scheme. The values are news articles as value 1, meaning the news written by Resett and that are not marked as opinion, even though the content is opinionated or biased. Value 2 is the opinion articles, meaning all opinions that are marked as opinion or commentary by Resett. Value 3 is news articles that are written by the news agency NTB. Value 4 is all articles that do not fall under any of the genres mentioned above, which could be social media posts, podcasts or videos.

3.4.5 Operationalisation of variable: *Who are the authors of the articles?*

The variable is posed as variable 7 in the coding scheme. This variable shows how much of the content is written by Resett, contributors, NTB or anonymous writers. The Resett employees have to be one of the people listed in its “about us page” or described as a previous employee. They have the value 1. Anonymous writers with nicknames such as ‘Mumler Gåsegg’, ‘Kenneth Olsen’, ‘redaksjonen’ etc., have the value 2. Contributors have the value 3, which are non-employees but named contributors, or can also be politicians or regular fans. Articles written by NTB are coded as the value 4.

3.4.6 Operationalisation of variable: *What is the geographical scope of its immigration coverage?*

The variable is presented as variable 8 and labelled geographical scope in the coding scheme. There are five different values in this variable: Norway, Nordic countries except Norway, Europe, world, and none/unknown. This variable will show how much Resett focuses on national, Nordic, and international issues. I believed it was useful to separate *Nordic* and *Europe*, since I had the impression that Resett often writes about Sweden.

3.4.7 Operationalisation of variable: *What sources does Resett use?*

The variables under this research question are divided into three different variables to describe the sources. The variables related to sources can show how far Resett goes to present different sides of the reported information or if they highlight only one side. The variable is presented as variable 9 in the coding scheme.

What is the number of sources in the article? The values are from 0 to more than three. The sources can be a person, media source quote, etc.

The variable posed as variable 10 in the coding is ***What type of source is cited?*** This variable describes if the source is an expert (1), unprofessional (2), politician (3), traditional media source (4), or another alternative media source (5).

The variable presented as variable 11 in the coding scheme is *Is it primary, secondary, or tertiary source?* The amount of first, second or tertiary sources demonstrates how much work Resett has done itself and how much it refers to others.

3.4.8 Immigration topic

The variable about the immigration topic is inspired by variable 12 in the coding scheme in the research conducted by Jan Fredrik Hovden and Hilmar Mjelde: *Immigration debate in Scandinavian newspapers 1970-2016*, (Hovden & Mjelde, 2019). However, since this analysis is smaller than theirs and used in a different context, some of the variables were adjusted or excluded in this study.

Operationalisation of variable: *What kind of immigration topics are written about?*

The variable is presented as variable 6 and labelled Immigration Topic in the coding scheme. All of the topics have their own value from 1 to 11.

Integration (Value: 1)

The articles under *integration* are a combination of many topics in the coding scheme by Hovden and Mjelde such as integration, social care/healthcare/welfare state, education, and work. The themes could be language training, poverty, work training, work rights, or kindergarten, etc. (Hovden & Mjelde, 2019).

Attitudes towards immigration/immigrants (Value: 2)

Articles that fall under the value *attitudes towards immigration/immigrants/asylum seekers/refugees* are explicit attitudes the majority group has of immigration. This is not to be mixed with racism/discrimination, where this is not using the words racism/xenophobia or accusing anyone of being racist or xenophobic. Criticism of Islam is not included.

Racism/ discrimination (Value: 3)

To differ from the topic above, *racism and discrimination* need to be explicit by using tags or titles using those words. The text needs to include mentions or discussions of

racism, xenophobia, or/and extremist attitudes towards immigrants/asylum seekers/refugees. Racism or discrimination against the majority group is included.

Criticism of Islam (Value: 4)

The articles that are coded as *Criticism of Islam* are criticism of immigrants' religion and Islam practices, Muslim leaders, Islam laws, norms and typical clothing such as the hijab. Criminal acts such as Islamic terrorism is not included in this but in the next topic, crime/terrorism.

Crime/terrorism (Value: 5)

Articles that are coded as *crime/terrorism* are texts mentioning immigrants/asylum seekers/refugees, both nationally or internationally in relation to crime, as victims, suspects, or perpetrators. Discussions of harassment, violence, threats, and rape are included. Islamic terrorism goes under this topic.

Immigration as a political issue (Value: 6)

The texts that are coded as *Immigration as a political issue* are texts that focus on immigration in relation to party politics, parties' programs/policies on immigration, electoral campaigns, the importance of immigration to voters and parties' strategic use of the immigration issue. Criticism of politicians, parties and policies are included. Texts about politicians that mention immigration are included here.

Arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers (Value: 7)

The articles that are coded as *arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers* are texts about the arrival/ residence/ return of immigrants—statistics about arrival and return of immigrants and size of the immigrant population in the country. Articles about immigrants and asylum seekers' travel route are also included.

National identity/values and parallel societies (Value: 8)

The texts that are coded as *national identity/values and parallel societies* are articles about what it means to be Norwegian, and the effects of immigration on the traditional Norwegian cultures and values. Texts related to parallel societies are

included, meaning texts about immigrant communities existing next to the majority population, immigrants grouping together in some geographic regions and immigrant groups not interacting with the majority population.

Sweden (Value: 9)

The texts that are about *Sweden* are the articles that mention issues in Sweden, parallel societies and the political situation relating to immigration. Crime and terrorism done by immigrants in Sweden are not included but are under as crime/terrorism.

Media criticism (Value: 10)

The texts that are coded as *media criticism* are articles about the role of the media in the coverage of immigration/Islam and all evaluations of the media and how they fulfil their role. Criticism towards social media sites and censorship goes under this value.

Other (Value: 11)

The articles that fall under *other* are articles that do not cover any of the previously mentioned topics.

The last category in the coding scheme is focused on the response that the content has. All articles are included to make a comparison of whether the immigration articles have higher engagement than other topics.

3.4.9 Operationalisation of variables under the research question: *To what degree are articles on immigration/Islam posted on Facebook, and what kind of engagement do they get compared to other content?*

There are four variables in this section, each describing different types of engagement making it possible to analyse each of them and compare them. The variables are presented as variables 12,13,14, and 15 in the coding scheme. The results will show what content they

choose to share and give an overview of how viral their content goes. I will also compare if immigrant content gets more engagement than other content.

The four variables are:

Is it shared on Facebook? Yes (1), No (2).

What is the number of comments on Facebook? (Value: 0-801)

What is the number of likes on Facebook? (Value: 0-801)

What is the number of shares on Facebook? (Value: 0-801)

The variables are written in the coding scheme (attachments) along with carefully formulated instructions for any other coder to be able to do the coding the exact same way as me. The results are presented graphically and by text in the findings chapter.

3.5 The quality of the study: Validity, reliability and generalisation

Almost all observational methods contain deviations between reality and the content being analysed. These deviations are called measurement errors. The measurement will not be flawless. However, it is how significant the errors are that makes it critical. If a project has high validity, reliability, and generalisation, it will limit measurement errors and ensure high quality and accuracy of the study. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp. 26).

3.5.1 Validity

"Measuring what one aims to measure" is a simple way to explain validity in academic research. (Østbye et al., 2013, s.26). Validity means how valid, credible and how good the data material is and how well it corresponds to the research questions. The validity is high if the data gathering and the process corresponds to data relevant to the research questions. (Grønmo, 2016, pp.241-242).

Validity is connected to the reliability, and to ensure high validity, high reliability is essential. They both refer to different assumptions of good data quality. "A data material cannot be valid or relevant to the research question if the material is not reliable." (ibid). However, high

reliability is not enough for data to have high validity. Even though the data is gathered correctly and precisely, there is no guarantee that it can answer the research question. (Hellevik, 2011, pp. 53). The requirements of validity and reliability can get into conflict with each other. In some situations, you have to choose between an approach that secures high reliability, but measures outside of the point of interest, or an approach that is less valid, and makes a more direct attempt to measure the traits. (ibid).

The variables in this study are based on the research questions, which makes it possible to answer them. After conducting a test coding to assess the validity of the analysis and see if the variables respond to the research questions, I noticed that several of the variables did not explain what I wanted to investigate and therefore I had to adjust some of the variables. The validity of the project is considered high since the database makes it possible to answer the research questions.

3.5.2 Reliability

Reliability signifies how reliable the research is and applies to the quality of the data gathering process and the analysis of the data. (Østbye et al., 2013, s.27). There are different types of reliability. In relation to this research, it is important to identify two types, *stability* and *equivalence*. (Grønmo, 2016, pp. 242). An equivalence test is when two or more researchers are coding the same material at the same time. High equivalence means that the intersubjective is good. In this analysis, there will be two stability tests, and the results are presented below. Stability refers to the degree of correlation between data, if the same phenomenon is gathered at different times, gives the same result, by using the same research process. Stability points to the consistency of a result and the degree of correlation if the same study is done at different points of time. (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014, pp. 58). The reliability is high if the content is stable and not changed between the different research times. (ibid). This type of stability is especially important in studies that show development trends or changes in society. This type of testing is also referred to as the "Test-retest method". It is usually a small portion of the units that are randomly selected using the same coding instructions; that way, the selection can represent the study as a whole. (Grønmo, 2016, pp. 245).

3.5.3 Test-coding

To clarify the research questions and to make findings that correspond to them, I decided to do a test coding to see if I had chosen the correct variables that can give me the results that could best answer the research questions. The test coding scheme had 17 variables.

After the test coding, I realised that some of the variables were unnecessary and did not apply to my research questions or that they could be merged into another variable. For example, the variable named 'author' meaning the person who wrote the text, was later changed to what type of author and not the name of the author. I also thought of having a variable about the length of the articles but found that it was not relevant to my research questions.

After test coding the social media variables, I realised that it is useful to include 'date coded' as a variable since comments, likes and shares on social media as well as comments on the website can change from day to day, even though the article and Facebook post are from 2017. Having variables that included the links was necessary if I had to go back and also to make the second part of the coding less demanding.

3.5.4 Reliability test

"Reliability testing is an assurance that coding is the result of the individual researcher or encoder's prejudices and idiosyncrasies, but of course, there is no guarantee of meaningfulness in the sense of reality." (Østbye et al., 2013, pp. 222). After the data collection and processing has been completed, and before analysing the data, the researcher will check the data reliability. The test is to see if there are random or systematic errors that occurred when the researcher measured the data. As mentioned above, reliability aims for accuracy. The test can be done by comparing independent measurements of the same phenomenon and examining the compliance. (Hellevik, 2019, pp. 183-184). Having only one coder in the analysis can leave it vulnerable to errors and subjective interpretations. To calculate if the data is reliable in this study, I first randomly selected 10% of the content using Microsoft Excel. Then an independent coder did the stability test of the selected data material on variables 6 through 11. The coding scheme is very specific and detailed to limit misinterpretations and errors. Furthermore, it includes instructions and rules to be aware of such as (*Only use 2. when Resett marks it as "opinion" or "commentary" otherwise, choose news articles.*)

I originally thought of doing the reliability tests myself after one month from the original coding; however, after getting so familiar with the immigration articles, it would not have given an intersubjective result. Having an independent coder was, therefore, necessary in all of the variables except 6 through 11. In order to compare the reliability between the two results, the correlation in each variable is examined. If the population and the sample size is large, the margin of error is lower, and the opposite is true if the size is smaller. (Hellevik, 2019, pp. 183-184).

3.5.5 Stability test part one

The stability test part one contained all of the articles and assessed what articles were considered immigration articles, looked at Facebook engagement and determined the genres. The population size in the first stability test was 1,376 articles, and the sample was 138 articles (10%). The goal of the tests was to get at least 80% compliance in each of the variables. If there was high stability between the two measurements, it meant that the study had satisfactory intersubjectivity. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp. 221). One disadvantage of a stability test is that the phenomenon of the study may change. Change can cause the intersubjectivity to be underestimated. However, such tests are relevant in studies of available materials such as content analysis. Since this is a content analysis of an online source, some of the content can change, such as higher engagement on social media posts, comments being deleted or changing the actual article.

Genres

The result in the variable *What characterises the journalistic genres of the immigration articles and how are they distributed?* showed a 3% difference. The differences show that there could be some typing errors, where some of the NTB articles were coded as an opinion by the second coder. The reason it could be a typing error is that the rules are strict in this variable where all articles written by NTB fall under that genre, and the opinion articles need to be marked as "opinion" by Resett. Since there was a 97% match, it means that the reliability is high in this variable.

Immigration/Islam as the main theme

The result in the variable "if it was about immigration/Islam or not" showed a difference of 4%. A match of 96% means that the reliability is high in this variable. The articles that showed differences had in common that the immigration-related words and tags such as "multiculturalism" were overlooked. Two of the articles had the tags "refugees" which is very different from the Norwegian word "flyktninger". It can be assumed that it can be hard to remember all of the keywords in this variable, and by that easier left out.

Facebook engagement

Even though I expected more changes in the variables related to Facebook engagement, the results of the reliability test showed that there were little differences with less than 2% difference in the variables "is it shared on Facebook", "how many Facebook comments" and "how many shares". The variable related to the amount of Facebook likes had a 2% difference. The Facebook posts that had differences had mainly a higher amount of likes, shares, or comments. There is a possibility that the posts got more engagements between the tests, especially in the more recent posts. However, that is hard to prove. Since all of the Facebook variables had compliance around 98%, those variables have high reliability.

Comments on the website

The variable with the most differences was *Variable 6: How many comments does the article have on the Resett website?* The results showed a 7% difference. Half of the ones that were different rose in the number of comments, while the other half shrank. Some of the ones that shrank were controversial articles, and some of the comments could, therefore, have been deleted by the editors or the commentators themselves. Ninety-three percent is still considered compliance. However, after assessing the variable's lack of relevance to the research questions and that the variable had low validity, the variable was removed from the analysis.

Most of the differences were typing errors or forgetting some of the rules in the coding instructions. To sum up, all of the differences showed that there was a total 13.7% difference. Since the aim was at least 80% compliance, a result of 86.3% compliance showed that the

first stability test had high reliability, and the result was considered stable. This reliability test strengthened my original coding.

3.5.6 Stability test part two

Due to time constraints, I conducted a second stability test. The variables in this test were the ones going into more detail in the immigration articles (variables 5-11). The test was done one month after the original one to limit the possibility of remembering the different values. The second stability test had a population size of 231 articles and a sample size of 35 articles (15%). The goal of the test was to get at least 80% compliance in each of the variables, and because of the small size, the margin of error was larger.

Authors

The result in the variable about the authors showed a difference of 5.7%. The two differences were similar. The author was originally coded as a "Resett employee" and the reliability test as a "contributor". A possible reason is that the author was in many articles, and I, therefore, recognised the name, but I failed to click on the name and read their profession. This variable had a 94% match, so the reliability is high.

Geographical scope

The variable related to the location focus of the articles had one error (2.8%). The article was initially coded as "world" and as "Europe" in the reliability test. Since the article had the word "Europe" in the title, it could be a typing error. This variable had a 97% compliance, and the reliability is therefore high.

Number of sources

The variables related to "the number of sources" showed an 8.5% difference. All three mistakes had a lower number of sources in the reliability test. The reason could simply be that I failed to see all of the sources in the reliability test. Since the match was 91.5%, the reliability is high in this variable.

Type of source

The result in the variable about the "type of source" showed a difference of 11%, which is one of the highest differences in both tests. All of the errors were related to if it was an unprofessional source or not. An explanation is that I failed to double-check the profession in some of the articles. An 89% compliance is still considered reliable in this analysis.

Primary, secondary and tertiary source

The result in the variable about the sequence of sourcing shows a difference of 8.5%. All of the differences were related to if the source was secondary or not. One example is an article that was originally coded as secondary, and in the reliability test it was coded as tertiary. One reason could be that I missed that it was an NTB article, since NTB referred to another source. This variable had a 91.5% compliance, and the reliability is therefore high.

Immigration topics

The result in the variable about the immigration topics showed an 8.5% difference. The differences occurred in political articles. One example was the article: "The parliamentary mismanagement of Norway over the past 30-40 years has serious consequences for native Norwegians" that was originally coded as "Attitudes towards immigration/immigrants" and in the reliability test as an "immigration as a political issue". (Næss, 2019). This one is especially difficult, as the article is an opinion article, and I would have been more aware of that in the original coding since the genre was coded at the same time. Since there was a 91.5% match, the reliability is still high in this variable.

To sum up, all of the differences in the second stability test showed that there was a total of 15% difference. Since the aim was at least 80% compliance, a result of 85% compliance shows high reliability, and the result is considered stable.

3.5.7 Generalisation

Generalisation in research projects indicates whether the findings of the analysis show generality. (Østbye et al., 2013, pp.124). This means that the findings can be put in a larger

population than the one studied. This is a study of one particular right-wing alternative media outlet. The question is if the findings of this study can be applied to other studies of other right-media alternative media outlets. Right-wing media outlets share a right-wing populist ideology, which means that they are specifically sceptical towards immigration. However, the outlets can differ, where one can be radical and encourage violence and another could be more moderate. Some could also be more professional than others. Therefore, the findings of this study are thus not directly transferable to a larger or different population than the one studied. However, the method and the dataset can be transferred to similar studies, where the result could differ.

3.6 Limitations and methodological challenges

An issue that researchers often find while doing a content analysis is identifying the units and defining how values should be assigned to the variables. (Hellevik, 2019, pp. 174). At first, I wanted to include articles that implicitly mentioned immigration. However, I realised that it could lead to lower reliability where the content could be interpreted quite differently. I then decided to include the articles that explicitly mention immigration and Islam, in their title, first five sentences or in the tags in the online article. The Resett articles often have a mix of topics, where the main news topic could be a political event, and the underlying issue is immigration. Choosing to code only when immigration and Islam are mentioned explicitly, can result in overlooking some texts. One text can also have multiple topics, or immigration can still be the sub-topic, even though it has the specific words in the title/first five sentences or/and tags.

The introduction was often missing in the earlier Resett articles. Therefore, I decided to change the selection to include the first five sentences. Another problem relating to Resett's journalistic practices was that it tends to mix news articles and opinion articles, where it is often the case that news articles include subjective comments from the author. One example of a news article that uses opinionated language within the text is "Quran burning: repentant sinners in the debate". The language is negatively charged against one side. This is also evident in the subtitles such as "Weak by the Minister of Justice", and "a violated Muslim". The news article includes open questions that are negatively charged against Islam. Taking

that into consideration, I made the decision that articles are only coded as "opinion" when Resett itself has marked it as an opinion.

Initially, I wanted to include photos in the coding scheme by counting how many photos were taken by Resett and how many were stock photos or photos from a news agency. I also thought it would be interesting to analyse how immigrants were represented in the photos. However, this decision was put aside since a search of a broad range of the articles showed that the photos were mainly by news agencies. Analysing the representation of immigrants in the photos can also be challenging in a quantitative analysis, as it would be a discretionary analysis since the researcher's position and background would play a role in defining the results.

In the coding process, I had "do not know" as an option in variable 5: *Is immigration/Islam the main topic?* There were very few coded like that, since I had such strict rules in terms of if it was immigration/Islam or not. At the end of the coding, there were less than 15 of those values. I went through all of them and re-coded them; most of them were coded at the end as a "no". The articles that typically fell into that category were a few where some of the content was missing, articles about Israel-Palestine conflict, U.S.-Mexico border wall, and one about a criminal act done by a person from a specific developing country. Most of them were implicitly about immigration.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have explained the methodological approach I have used to be able to answer the research question. I have presented the variables, process and issues that have occurred. I have also explained the validity and reliability in this research, including the results of the reliability tests. The first quantitative analysis of all of the content gives an overview of the material as a whole. The second part where I filter out topics other than immigration made it possible to go deeper into that topic and explore how Resett reports on it. In the next chapter, I will present the results from the analysis, and then discuss it in relation to the theory from the second chapter.

4. Findings and analysis

In this chapter, I will present the findings of the content analysis of this thesis. The findings are based on a statistical analysis of Resett's coverage between 2017 and 2019. I have chosen to divide the chapter into several sub-categories, answering the sub-research questions. I will first present the overall results, followed by an analysis of the number of immigration articles. After this it will be a presentation of what characterises the journalistic genres of the immigration articles. The next section is a presentation of the results of Resett's journalistic practices, such as the authors of the articles, the geographical scope and the use of sources. This is followed by a demonstration of specific immigration topics. At the end of the section about immigration topics, I will combine some findings from earlier and analyse the results of topics and authors, topics and geographical scope and topics and sources. The last section is the analysis of how the immigration articles are received by the audience on Facebook.

This analysis aims to answer the following main research question: *What characterises the coverage of immigration/Islam in Resett during the period of 2017 to 2019?*

4.1 Overall results

There were a total of 1,376 articles coded in the content analysis in 50 days in constructed weeks. The number of articles varied from 40 to 90 articles a day. The table in figure 1 shows that there was a growth in the number of articles each year.

Number of articles		
2017	2018	2019
174	555	647

Figure 1. The total number of articles each year.

As mentioned in chapter 3, I coded only one week in 2017, which explains the lower number in 2017. However, if the number were doubled, the table would still show an increase. Resett

had access to the news agency NTB in 2017, meaning that it would have had access to a broad range of news articles that the staff did not have to write themselves as the outlet tried to establish itself.

4.2 How much does Resett publish about immigration/Islam?

The goal of the first part of the analysis is to get an overview of Resett's coverage of immigration and Islam. The media scholars Kristoffer Holt and Silje Nygaard (2019), agree that one thing the right-wing alternative media outlets have in common is their 'critical stance on immigration'. (Holt, 2019, pp.39). Taking that into consideration, it can be expected that they often write about immigration and Islam.

To be able to answer the research questions, I had to find out how much Resett published about immigration, compared to all other topics between 2017 and 2019. The pie chart in figure 2 shows the percentage of articles about immigration versus other topics. The results show that 16.8% (n=231) of the articles were about immigration and 83.2% (n=1145) about a preponderance of other topics. It is unclear whether that can be seen as a low or high percentage since there are no similar results to compare to, as there is a lack of quantitative research on the immigration coverage by alternative media outlets like Resett. However, there is still more likely a higher proportion of immigration articles in right-wing media outlets such as Resett, than in the established media.

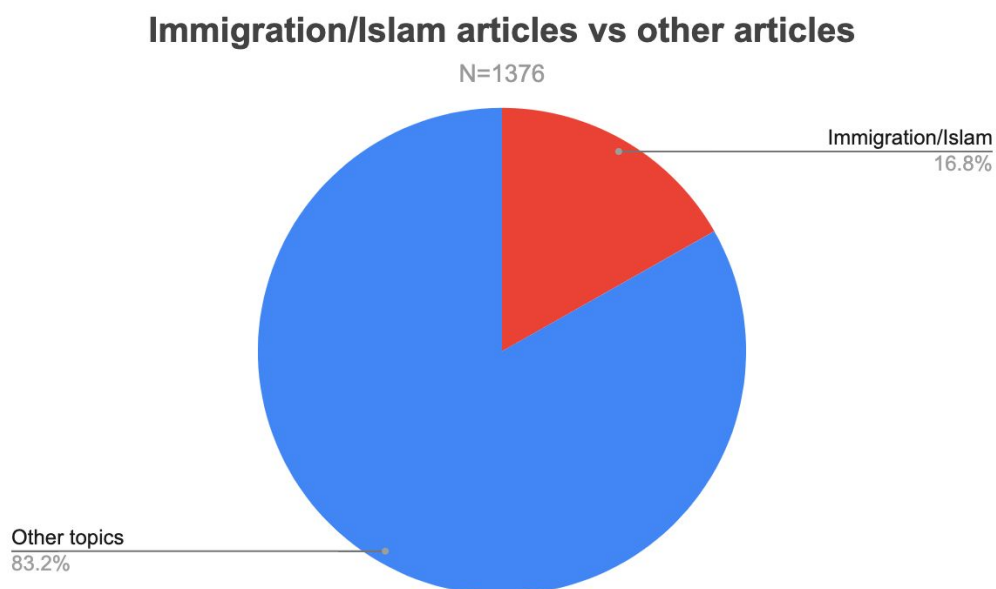


Figure 2. Results in the percentage of Resett articles about immigration or Islam compared to other topics, from 2017-2019.

Figure 3 shows the number of articles divided by the two different topics distributed over the years in the study. The results show there were 25% of articles about immigration in 2017. The numbers went down to 15% in 2018, and slightly up to 16% in 2019.

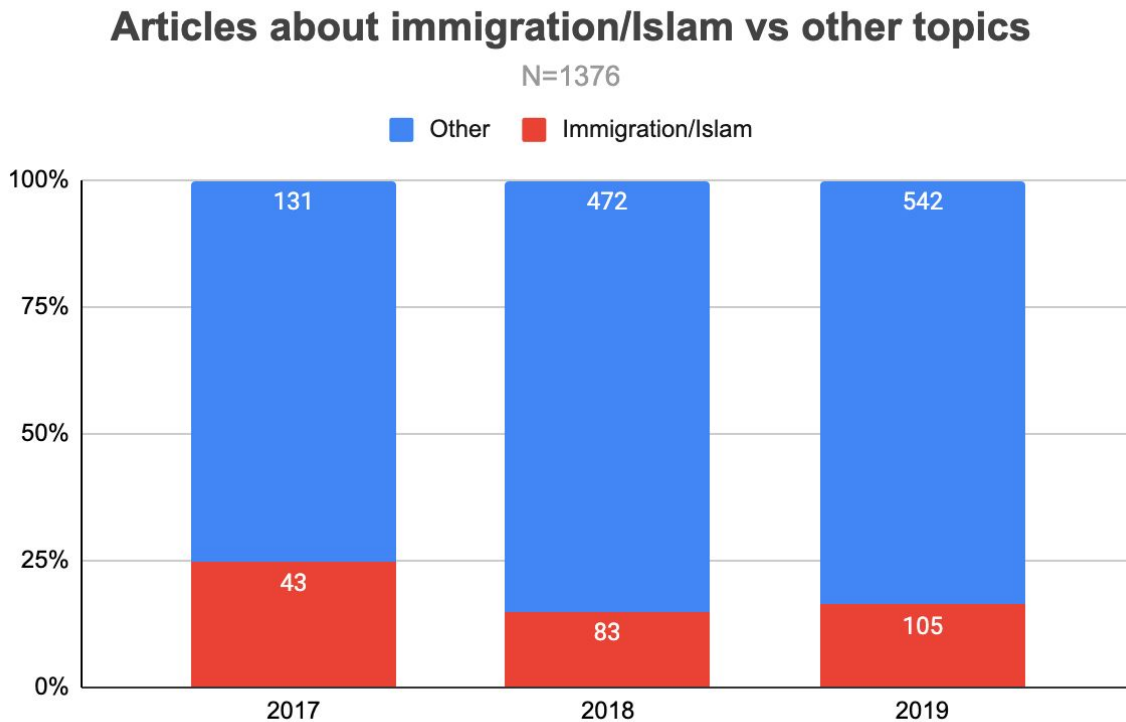


Figure 3 shows the number and the percentage of articles about immigration versus other topics each year.

These results might show that Resett tried to appeal to a broader audience and appear as a more legitimate news outlet, since it not only had articles where the topic fit its agenda but also articles about accidents, the stock market, sports, and international affairs. Resett publishes many articles per day, and on average, it publishes nine immigration articles daily. In figure 4 we can see a roller-coaster development in its reporting on immigration. Some days it released three immigration articles, where at the most, it shared 18 immigration articles. However, on days with many immigration articles, Resett also had a more significant number of articles with other topics as well. The majority of the immigration articles those days were written by NTB. That may indicate a relatively slow news day, with little content and no major news events those days. (Begivenheter i 2019, 2020).

Immigration/Islam Articles by Date

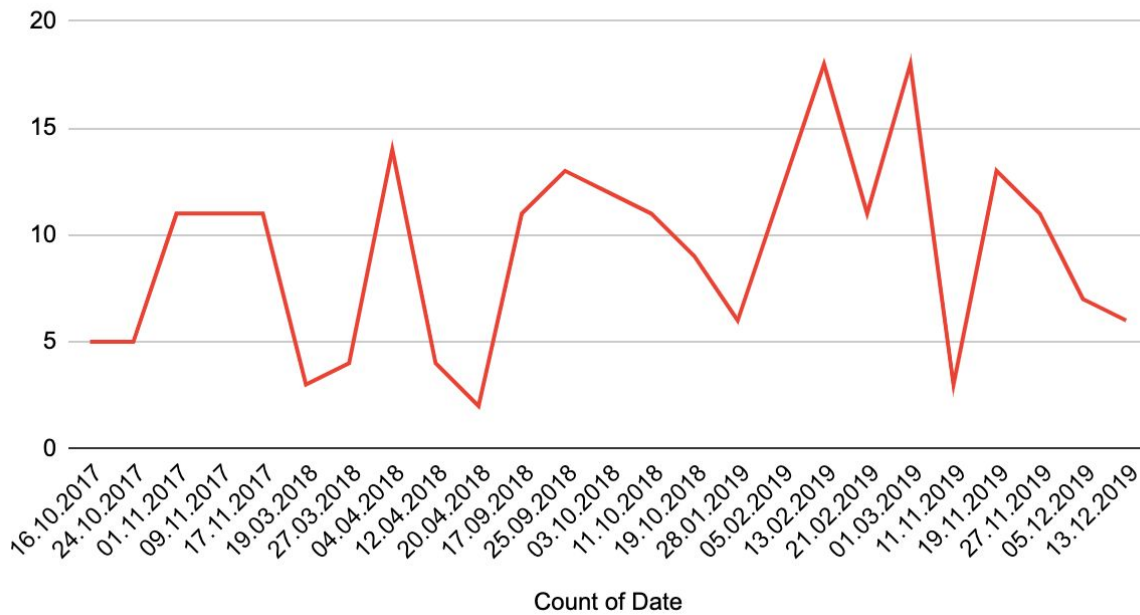


Figure 4 shows the amount of immigration/Islam articles per each day in the study.

So far, the study has shown that Resett wrote more about immigration in the beginning. The decline in the later years could mean that it tried to appeal to a broader audience. In the following sections, I will go further into how Resett writes about immigration.

4.3 What characterises the journalistic genres of the immigration articles and how are they distributed?

Analysing how much of Resett's content can be characterised as news and opinion and to what extent it differs between immigration and other content, it is important to be able to understand how the staff writes about immigration. Resett's agenda and views might come through in its opinion articles, where news articles and especially NTB articles are expected to be more objective and cover a broad range of topics. In total, it is expected that it would be a large percentage of news articles, mainly because the NTB articles are included.

In the overall results, we could see the growth of the total amount of articles and growth in the number of news articles, especially when immigration was the topic. The graph in figure 5 shows how growth is distributed into news articles, opinions NTB articles and other. *Other*

were articles that do not go as news or opinion articles, such as social media posts, podcasts or videos.

In total, the results showed that 31.6% of the immigration content was news articles written by Resett, while 22% was opinions, and 40.6% was news articles written by NTB. However, 44% of all of the opinion articles were about immigration. Figure 5 shows that twenty-three percent (n=10) of the immigration articles were news articles in 2017, and only 8.4% (n=11) were news articles when Resett wrote about other topics. In 2018, 30% (n=25) of immigration articles were news articles, and 6.1% (n=32) were news articles for other topics. In 2019, 36.1% (n=38) of the immigration articles were news articles, and 15.8% (n=86) were news articles for other topics.

On the other hand, the results of the distribution of opinion articles clearly show that there are much more opinion articles about immigration than any other content.

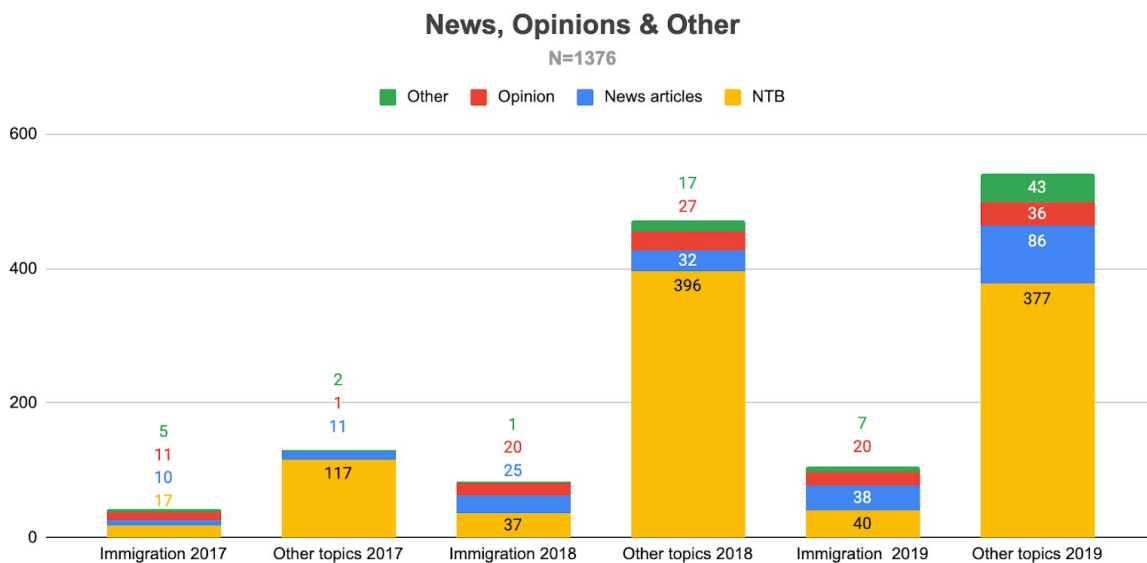


Figure 5 shows the number of news articles, opinion pieces, NTB-articles and other distributed by immigration and other topics, from 2017-2019, in absolute numbers

The results show that there is a large amount of NTB articles, where in 2017, 39.5% (n=17) of the immigration-articles were produced by NTB and in 89.3% (n=117) of the other

articles. In 2018 there were generally larger numbers of articles. However, 44.5% (n=37) of the immigration-articles were produced by NTB, and in 83.9% (n=396) of the other articles. In 2019, 38% (n=40) of the immigration-articles were produced by NTB and 69.5% (n=377) of the other articles.

The results demonstrate that Resett more often used NTB when writing about other topics than immigration. The outcome indicates that Resett is more willing to write about immigration and that other content could perhaps be served as a fill-in, where NTB articles are news that can be easily gathered.

4.4 Who are the authors of the articles?

Graph 6 shows the distribution of the number of news articles and opinion articles among the various authors. Analysing the amount of news and opinion articles and the different authors who write about immigration can give a picture of whether it is more important for Resett to get views on immigration through, rather than fact-based information and events.

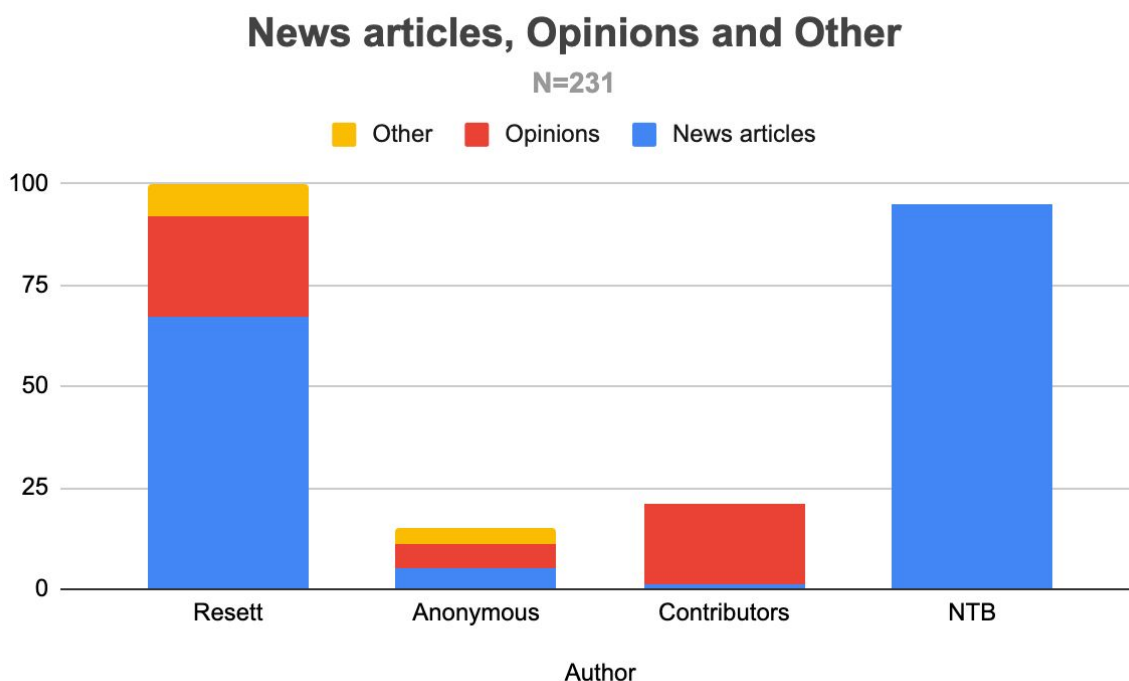


Figure 6 shows the total numbers of news articles, opinion articles and other written by the various authors.

A breakdown of the authors in the immigration articles will show how much is written by Resett employees, contributors, NTB and anonymous authors. Figure 7 shows that Resett wrote more articles themselves in 2019 than in the beginning. There is also an increase in the use of unknown authors throughout the years. From 2018 on there is a large increase in articles written by NTB.

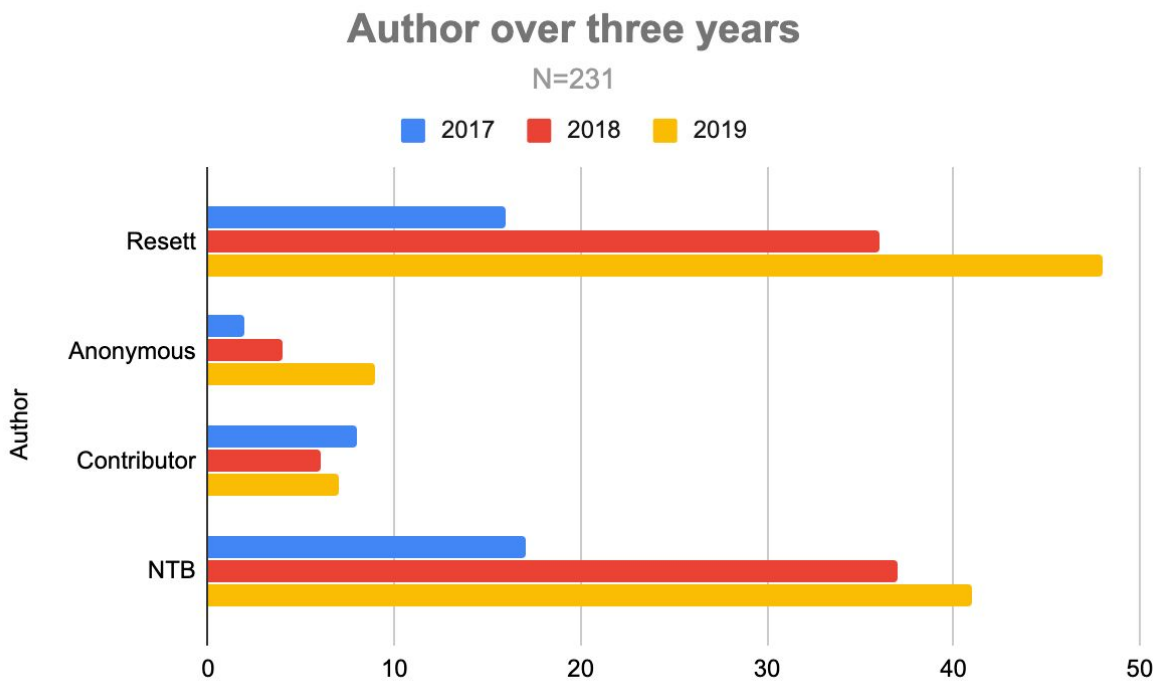


Figure 7 shows the distribution of how often each type of author has written a piece about immigration.

Based on the results shown above, we can conclude that Resett employees wrote 43% of the immigration-articles, where twenty-nine percent were news articles, and 11% were opinions.

Contributors wrote 9% of the immigration articles. All except one were opinion articles. An example is an article titled "Immigration and the rape increase in Sweden are related. Do we see the future for Norway as well?", where the writer claims that Norwegian authorities and the media are trying to hide the negative crime trend for several years, as they do in Sweden. (Brandt, 2017).

Six-and-a-half percent of the articles had anonymous writers with pseudonyms, such as Mumler Gåsegg, and Kenneth Olsen. However, in 25% of these articles the "author" was named as "editorial". Twenty percent of the articles with an anonymous author were opinion

articles, and 17 % were news articles. Five news articles had anonymous authors, which could be seen as more radical than others, such as the article: "Killed by Quran burning: Kill him please!" (Redaksjonen, 2019). and "Norwegian school cancelled Easter term because it was a Christian tradition" (Olsen, 2018). This shows that Resett not only uses anonymous writers when opinion writers want to be anonymous, as they stated in a media debate in February (Oslo Journalistklubb, 2020, 3:00-8:00). It is important to mention that pseudonyms, such as "Mumler Gåsegg" and "Kenneth Olsen" were not used since March 2019 in this research, however, the most recent use of the pseudonym "editorial" was in November 2019. NTB wrote 41% of the immigration articles. The NTB articles were often short, objective information from police reports or trials, e.g., "The UDI granted over 10,000 Norwegian citizenship in 2018" (NTB, 2019c), and "Somalis most satisfied among immigrants" (NTB, 2018c).

To sum up, the results indicate that Resett has a large proportion of news articles. At the same time, there are fewer articles written by Resett than others under the umbrella of contributors or the news agency NTB.

4.5 What is the geographical scope of its immigration coverage?

Analysing the geographical scope gives an idea of what area Resett focuses on in its reporting on immigration. It shows how much Resett focuses on national, Nordic and international issues. The Nordic countries are divided into their own value and not in 'Europe' to see whether Resett concentrates more on domestic issues and issues Nordic countries because of the proximity.

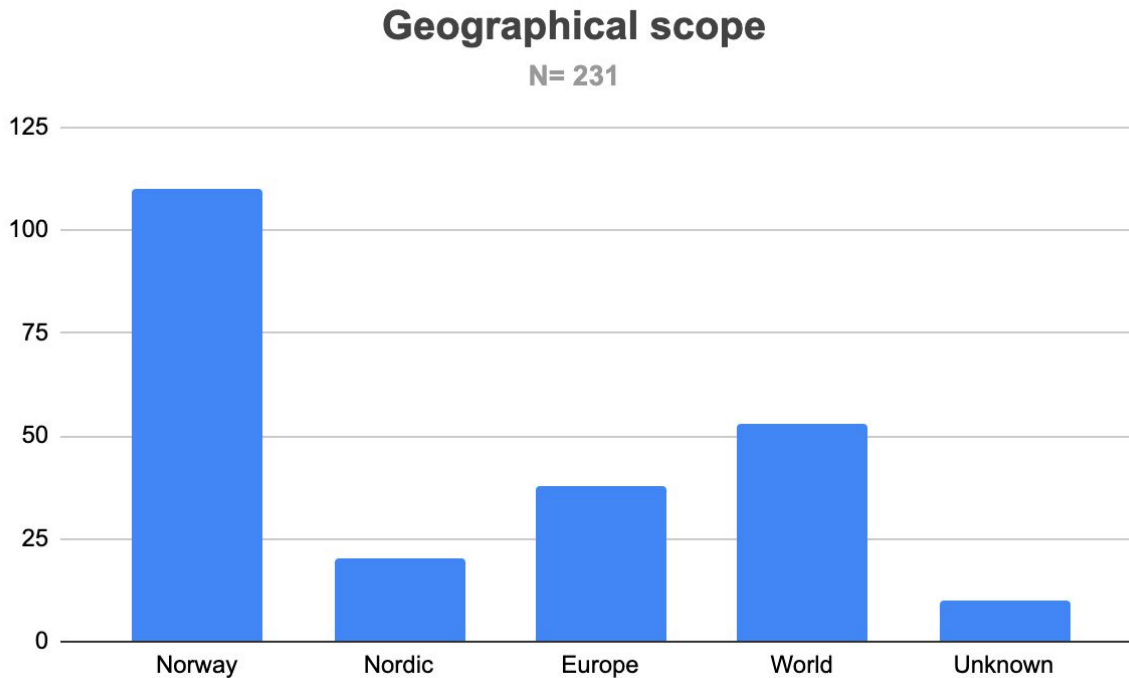


Figure 8 shows the number of immigration articles related to the geographical scope.

The findings show that 48% of the immigration articles were about national issues. Sixty-two percent were written by Resett or their contributors, while NTB wrote thirty-seven percent.

There were 8% of the immigration articles that focused on issues in the Nordic countries excluding Norway. Resett wrote 70 % of the articles, and NTB wrote only two. Forty percent of the articles were about immigration issues in Sweden. Examples of the articles that focused on other countries except for Norway and Sweden were positive developments and measures against immigration, such as "Icelandic politicians are in favour of banning circumcision" (Zähler, 2018d) and "New austerity in Danish immigration policy". (Zähler, 2019a)

Sixteen percent of the immigration articles focused on issues and happenings around Europe. Resett wrote 10% of the articles about issues in Europe, while contributors and NTB wrote only one article each. One example of an article that focused on Europe is the article: "Radical Islamists are allowed to go free despite possible links to IS" where they cited the Italian newspaper La Repubblica was cited. (Zähler, 2017). Twenty-three percent of the

immigration articles were topics related to issues and happenings around the world, except for European countries. Resett wrote only 5,6%, while anonymous writers wrote two, and NTB wrote 16%.

4.6 What sources does Resett use?

Analysing Resett's use of sources is a reflection of its journalistic practices and choices when dealing with immigration issues. To get a legitimate view of Resett's use of sources, I have excluded the articles written by NTB. I will breakdown the results of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, and then present the findings of the types of sources.

The overall results show that 71% of all of the immigration articles had at least one source, where 48% of the articles had one source, 16% had two sources, 7% had three or more sources, and 29% of the articles had no sources.

4.6.1 Primary, secondary, or tertiary sources

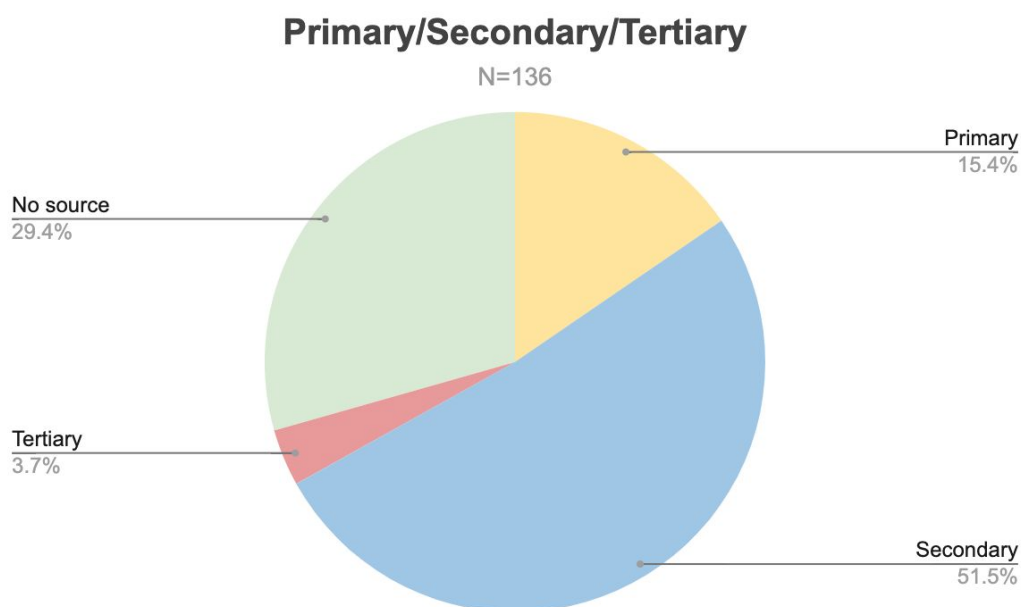


Figure 9 shows a breakdown of Resett's use of primary, secondary or tertiary sources.

The results show that 51.5% of the sources Resett used were secondary sources, which means the article referred to another source. There were 15.4% of the articles with primary sources, where almost 79% of those were news articles and the rest were opinion articles. Third-party

sources were present in 3.7% of the articles, referring to another news source, and 29.4% of the articles had no source at all. If the NTB articles were included, the percentage of secondary and tertiary sources would be a little higher.

4.6.2 Type of sources

As shown in figure 10, we see that Resett uses multiple types of sources, but mainly unprofessional sources.

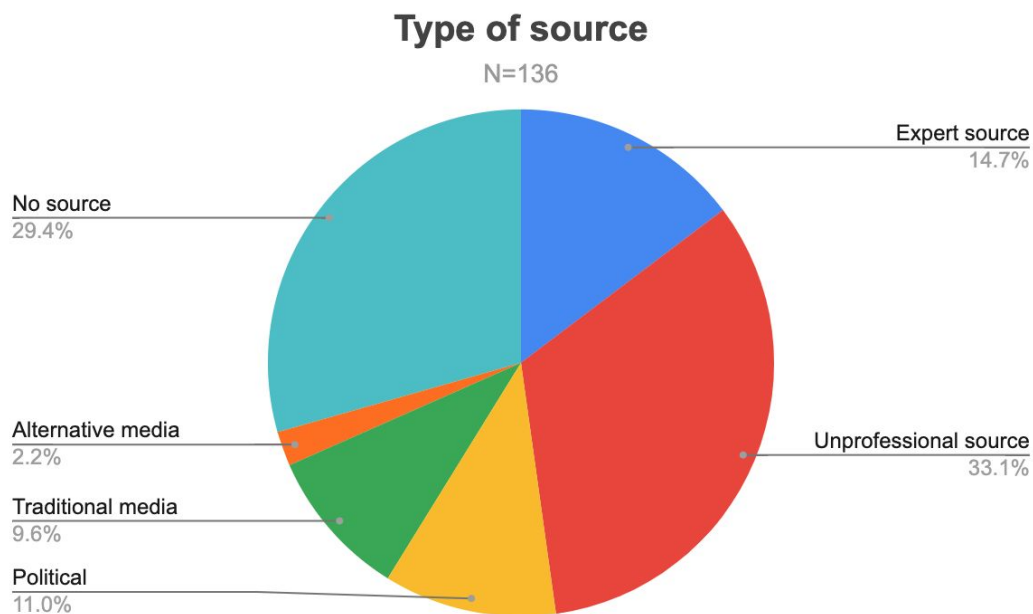


Figure 10 shows a breakdown of the type of sources Resett uses in their immigration articles.

4.6.3 Expert sources

Of the articles, 14,7% of the articles had an expert source, such as professors, doctors, police, or a similar source. There were only six primary-source articles that used an expert source, where the majority were academic sources and researchers on immigration on terrorism. Thirty-five percent of the expert sources were related to cases in Norway, 30% in Sweden, 15% in Europe, and 10% in the rest of the world.

4.6.4 Unprofessional sources

There was 33.1% of the articles with an 'unprofessional source', such as a regular person with no specialisation mentioned. Thirty-three percent of those were primary sources and 67% secondary sources. Fifty-eight percent of the unprofessional sources were related to cases in

Norway while 7% were related to cases in Sweden, 24 % in Europe, and 11% in the rest of the world.

4.6.5. Political sources

There was 11% of the articles with political sources. None of the articles had primary sources, but 87% had secondary sources and three had tertiary sources. Seventy-three percent of the political sources were used in news articles, 13% in opinion articles, and 13% in social media posts.

4.6.6 Traditional media sources

There were 13 articles (9.6%) that had traditional media sources. Since NTB is excluded in the analysis of the sources, the traditional media sources here are other established media sources around the world. Ten of the articles were news articles, one was opinion and one was an Xstra article. One of the articles focused on issues in Norway, where six focused on Europe, two focused on Sweden and four focused on the rest of the world. The one article that focused on issues in Norway had the topic of media criticism. This demonstrates that Resett avoids using national sources and shows low trust in the established media. The use of international media sources can be necessary as Resett might have limited resources to reach out to its own sources abroad.

4.6.7 Alternative media sources

A surprising finding in this analysis is that alternative media sources were used only three times (2.2%). That could indicate that Resett sees other alternative media sources as competitors and that it aims for authority in the alternative media field. An example of this is the news article: "A minor asylum seeker tried to force 13-year-old to oral sex - avoids jail time." (Zähler, 2018). The Swedish alternative news medium Fria Tider was used as the source. (Fria Tider, 2018).

By analysing the source usage among the authors, the results show that seventy-six percent of the articles written by Resett had at least one source, and surprisingly 81% of the anonymous articles had also at least one source. However, the immigration articles written by Resett only contained 15% expert sources, while there were 64% unprofessional sources.

Analysing the geographical scope and the source usage, we see that there were 13% primary sources and 52% secondary sources used in articles focusing on issues in Norway. 79% of the articles about Nordic matters had at least one source, where 31% were expert sources, and 26% were unprofessional. The results about articles focusing on issues in Europe shows that 79% of the articles had at least one source, where 80% of those were secondary sources. 37% of the sources were unprofessional and 21% established media sources, most of them used by Resett.

4.7 What kind of immigration topics are written about?

In investigating the sixth sub-research question, the aim is to analyse the specific topics Resett writes about because that informs the discussion about what Resett focuses on and what topics that are important to the outlet. Later in the chapter, I will present the popularity of the different topics on Facebook.

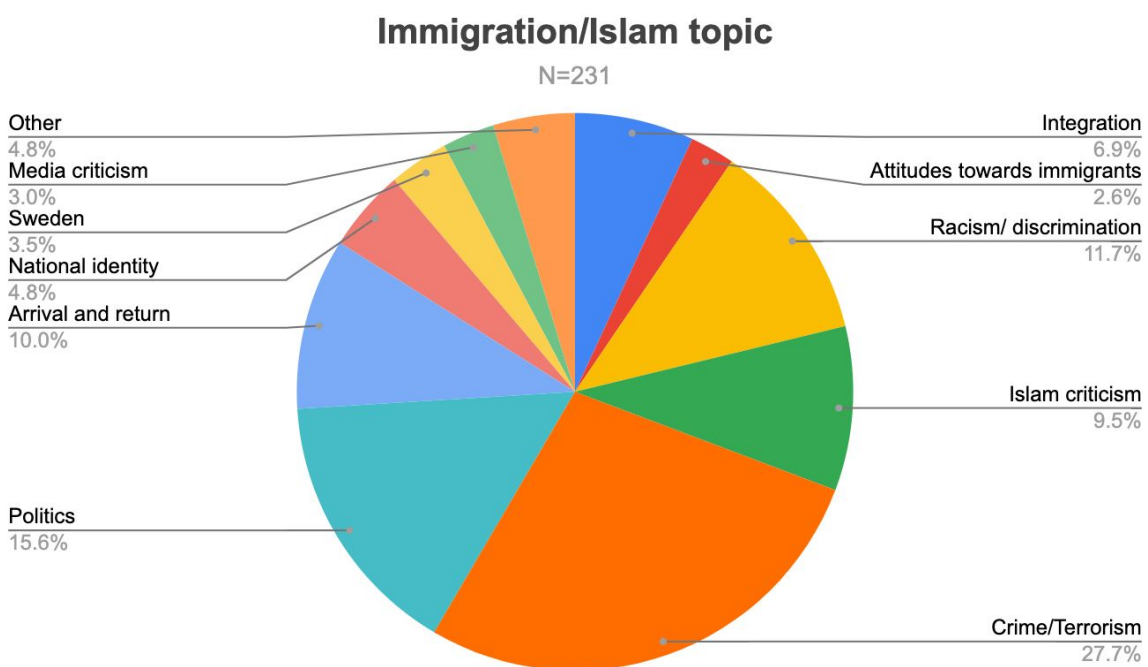


Figure 11 shows the total distribution of the different immigration topics within the articles about immigration.

As shown in figure 11, we already know that crime, politics, and criticism of Islam are among the most written about topics on the Resett website. Interestingly, if we look at the distribution of immigration topics over time (figure 12), we see that there is an increase in articles regarding racism/discrimination in 2019. The figure also shows a slight increase in articles about integration in 2019.

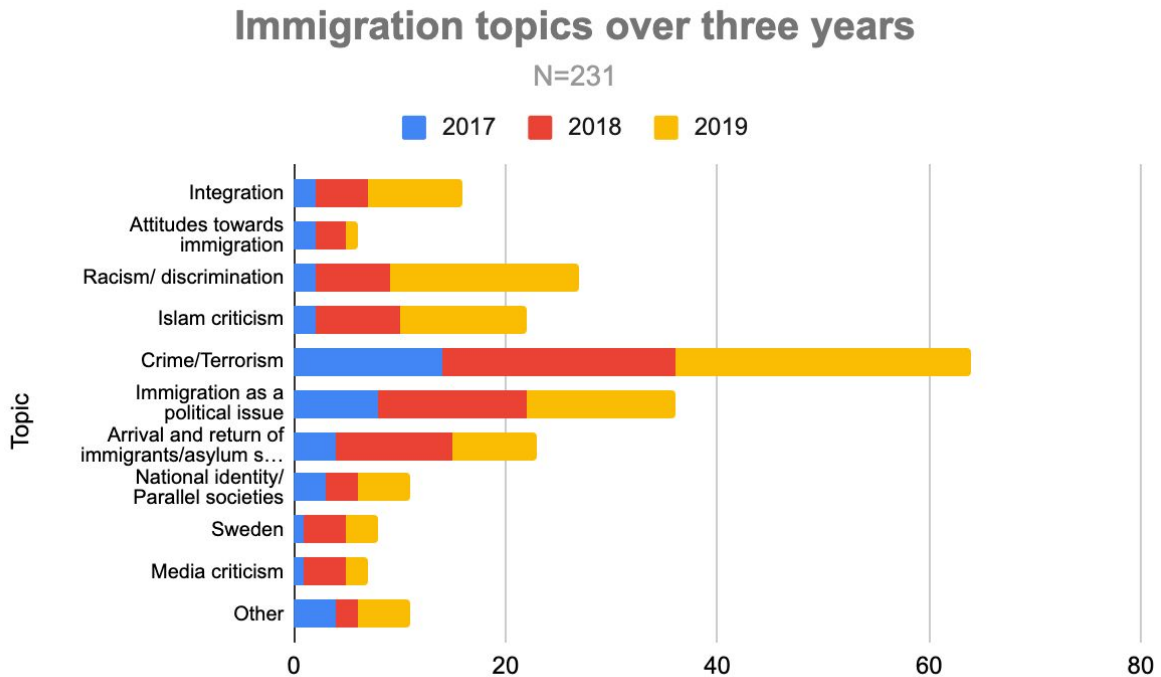


Figure 12 shows the distribution of immigration topics over the three years.

4.7.1 Crime/Terrorism

The study shows that Resett covers a wide range of topics about immigration and that it predominantly focuses on what can be characterised as negative issues regarding immigration. There was 27.7% of the immigration articles about crime and terrorism, where NTB wrote 67% of the crime/terrorism articles. Resett wrote 28% of the crime/terrorism articles. All of the articles were news articles except one. There were only two that had primary sources. One of them was about Islamic terrorism in France: "Is France near the boiling point?" where Resett interviewed Associate Professor in French Politics Frank Orban. (Werenskiold, 2018).

Forty-eight percent of the articles focused on issues in the world, while 30% focused on issues in Norway and other Nordic countries. A recurring matter is Resett siding with the organisation, Stop Islamisation of Norway (SIAN). One example is "Video: Pakistani "hulk" with threats to Lars Thorsen and Norway: - I want to tear you to pieces." The video has been deleted, and Resett does not use other sources in that article. (Zähler, 2019b).

4.7.2 Immigration as a political issue

The topic that scores second highest with 15.6% of the immigration articles were the articles where immigration is portrayed as a political issue. Resett wrote 53% of the articles, and NTB wrote 33%. Seventy-two percent of the articles were about politics in Norway. Some of the articles that were about political issues outside of Norway were more optimistic for change, where the country or institution "found a solution to the immigration problems", e.g., "German University bans facial veils, receives criticism from the Green Party, but support from Alternative for Germany". (Simonsen, 2019). A recurring impression is that Resett frames the political parties on the left as being the ones to blame for the immigration problems and as an obstacle for change, e.g., "Labour party's new top candidate in Bergen is pushing for more liberal asylum policy"(Akerhaug, 2019). Resett often writes about the Progressive party (FRP), and a politician that it repeatedly mentions is Sylvi Listhaug (FRP), who is known to be critical of immigration.

4.7.3 Racism and discrimination

There was 11.7% of the immigration articles about racism and discrimination, and 52% were about issues in Norway. Resett wrote 52 % of the articles, and 25% were written by NTB. It is important to note that many of the immigration articles were not racist or discriminatory towards immigrants, but racist and discriminatory against the majority group of the country where it was distributed. One example is the article: "British authorities exclude ethnic Brits from poverty efforts" , where a governmental report is cited. Even though it is not an opinion article, the framing is quite one-sided: "The money will be used to improve the job prospects of blacks and other ethnic minorities in the UK. Ethnic Britons are excluded from the scheme." (Zähler, 2018a). Resett argues that there is little focus on racism towards white people. In one article, the writer accuses an anti-racism organisation of constructing racism issues: "Anti-racist centre constructs racism to survive."

If anyone contributes to more divisiveness, then it is the *Anti-racist centre* with its well-chosen focus on racism when it targets the dark-skinned and Muslims. They smoothly overlook racism against white and ethnic Norwegians, and again and again, I ask this question to their organisation, but the answer is always just absent. Does racism only go one way for the Anti-Racist Centre? (Hansen, 2018).

Interestingly, the article is an opinion piece where Resett criticises the organisation for using a local newspaper as a source. Another type of article about racism is the more whimsical type of articles, where celebrities are accused of racism, e.g. "Katy Perry apologises after criticising "racist" shoes", Resett calls these cases "racism hysteria". (Xstra, 2019).

4.7.4 Arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers

Ten percent of immigration articles were about the arrival and return of immigrants and asylum seekers. Fifty-two percent of the articles had one or two sources. Forty-eight percent of the articles focused on arrival and returns in Norway, while 22% focused on issues in Europe and 26% focused on issues in the world. Seventy percent of the articles were written by NTB, where most were about arrival and returns related to locations outside of Norway, such as: "Ocean Viking has picked up 94 migrants in the Mediterranean" (NTB, 2019d). The articles where the topic focused on issues in Norway, were often about statistics of forced returns and new citizenships. There were also articles about reception centres for asylum seekers. One example is a news article written by Resett, that can also be understood as a support for its views on the immigration issue, where a large group on Facebook protested against the asylum centre: "Neighbours relieved after a long battle at Kongsberg. There will be no asylum centre at Raumyr." (Zähler, 2018).

4.7.5 Criticism of Islam

Resett's views on Islam are quite overall visible in its articles. Nine-and-a-half percent of the immigration articles were about criticism of Islam and 41% of those were opinion articles. Twenty-five percent of the articles are focused on issues in Norway, while 22% are focused on issues in Europe and 22% are focused on issues in the world. A repeating topic is the use of the hijab. Some of the articles also portray Islam and Muslims as a threat to the majority,

e.g. "A Muslim preacher in the UK: - We may be in the majority one day". Resett siding with SIAN also occurs in this topic: "Muslims on Twitter are raging against Norway", including Twitter messages where it is criticising Norway after SIAN's burning of the Quran. (Resett, 2019d).

4.7.6 Integration

The results show that there were only 6.9 % of the immigration articles under this topic. Articles about healthcare, the welfare state, education and work also fall into this category. Something typical of the integration articles is the inclusion of statistics of unemployment and poverty among immigrant groups. I expected that there would be a more significant number of articles about integration after having the impression that Resett focuses on such issues. An explanation could be that some would instead go under parallel societies or immigration or immigration as a political issue. All of the articles were focused on issues in Norway. Fifty-six percent of the articles were either opinion or news articles by Resett. Ninety-four percent of the articles used at least one source, where half of the sources were "unprofessional". NTB wrote 44 % of the articles; those articles were either about statistics or integration politics. An interesting finding is that four of the articles were personal stories, such as the article "My father" about a son who tells the story of his Norwegian father who has worked his whole life, and is furious that immigrants and Muslims have more advantages than him.

As an electrician for over 50 years, where he has cared for and handled his job impeccably, always set up and done his job regardless of the weather, illness or other ailments, he will experience that refugees who condemn Norway and Norwegians get rights, opportunities and even more money from the state than what he gets in retirement. (Johansen, 2018b).

The text is indirect without any direct quotes by the father. The author uses one traditional media source to show an example of an immigrant who quickly received a mortgage while the wife of the "father" did not. (Aarmo, 2016).

4.7.7 National identity and Parallel societies

Only 4.8 % of the immigration articles were about national identity/parallel societies. Interestingly here, none of the articles were written by NTB, where Resett wrote nine of the eleven articles, and two others were by a named person, but not a Resett employee. Fifty-five percent of the articles had one or more sources. Sixty-four percent of the articles were opinion pieces, where only two had sources. These articles show racist perspectives, opposing cultural mixing, such as the article: "Now the Belgians are a minority in Antwerp". (Zähler, 2019). My impression is that this is the topic with the most radical articles, especially the opinion pieces which paint immigration as a considerable threat to society and ethnic Norwegians. One example is an opinion article by a non-employee: "This is our country, something even the king seems to have forgotten", where the author criticises a speech where the King praises diversity in the society and argues that Norway is becoming more like Sweden, where "ethnic Norwegians is not the priority".

(...)These are the *benefit-people* we are against, those who serve in Norway "internationally subordinate", meaning all of us "ordinary others" converted almost to domestic workers. That in our own country, our Norway with a state and state apparatus that does not even defend us. With a politicised Supreme Court that fails the Constitution. Democracy has ceased to function because it is capped by the benefits of people with irresponsible political people like Støre and Solberg at the head. It goes towards dictatorship as the only solution to gain order power over the liberalists. (Odfjell, 2019).

Another example is an opinion article by Lurås: "Do you want to be a part of keeping sense in this country?" where he begins with "Violence, murder, immigrant gangs that threaten both the youth and the elderly have become daily news items now. Oslo has become a divided city with a growing number of non-westerns in the majority." He ends the article by asking for donations. (Lurås, 2019a).

4.7.8 Sweden

Eight articles had Sweden as the immigration topic. I expected that it would be higher, where I have the impression that Resett regularly criticises Sweden's handling of immigration. Another surprise was that NTB wrote only one of the articles. Five of the eight articles were

news articles, where all except one had at least one source. Most of the articles were about Swedish politics or statistics. An interesting article was "22% of Sweden's 45-year-old men have not become fathers." The article is citing a study done by Anne Boschini, docent in the national economy. The link source was broken. The author of the article uses many direct quotes from the study, but not when immigration is mentioned. This could be seen as a commentary within the news article: "The high immigration to Sweden in recent years, which is largely made up of young men, does not help the problem either. On the contrary, the result of this has been that Sweden has shifted its gender distribution, with a growing number of men." (Zähler, 2018). After a search for the original article, it seems like the study does not even mention immigration. (Boschini & Sundström, 2018).

4.7.9 Media criticism

There were seven of the immigration articles that had media criticism as the topic. Five of them were opinion articles. Six of the articles were about issues related to the Norwegian media. Not surprisingly, NTB wrote none of the articles. Five of the articles had at least one source.

One opinion article was written with the pseudonym "Kenneth Olsen" and had the title: "VG identifies Norwegian perpetrator in a murder case but hides the identity of an asylum seeker with a murder charge". The article criticises the national newspaper VG and argues that the editor Gard Steiro thinking that a murder was committed by a Norwegian is of "serious character", but a murder committed by an asylum seeker is not. Resett did not reach out to VG for an answer. Another opinion article by a contributor has the title: "Mainstream media and politicians now label an ever-growing part of Norway's population as racists - but we are not". The article claims that people are getting sick of the established media and fleeing to Resett. The author criticises the established media for "framing and adorning the truth rather than presenting pure hard facts". They ask for donations and subscriptions at the end of the article: "if you want Resett to act as a counterbalance to the established and state-supported media in Norway". (Alm, 2018).

4.7.10 Attitudes towards immigration/immigrants

Six articles had attitudes towards immigration/immigrants as the topic. These are the articles that display a strong orientation towards immigration without mentioning racism. Five of the six articles were opinion articles. Resett employees wrote half of the articles, while contributors wrote the other half. Only two of the articles had one source, both of which were unprofessional sources. Four of the articles focused on issues located in Norway and the other two focused on European issues. One example of an article in this topic is: "Permanent residence permits must be fought with beak and claws", where the author argues that asylum seekers serve a high risk to the Norwegian society. Stating that some have committed murder as a result of Norway's asylum policies and because they have not been granted permanent residence. "Volunteers and other social workers now say that these asylums kill each other, in addition to beating and raping Norwegians and others, because they "do not know if they will be allowed". (Zähler, 2018c).

4.7.11 Other/none

Eleven articles were categorised as other or none. NTB wrote eight of the eleven articles, and eight of the articles had at least one source. Typically, immigration was the main topic of these articles, but the focus was on other topics such as foreign relations issues such as the Israel-Palestine conflict or refugee assistance within a specific country. One other example is the article: "The man behind the immigration accounting is not allowed to do research for Statistics Norway", an NTB article informing that the Research Leader Erling Holmøy was relocated and felt unfairly treated. He was known for his projections of the economic consequences of immigration to Norway. (NTB, 2017a).

4.8 Authors and immigration topics

Looking at how the different authors use the various topics, the overall results show that Resett-employees covered the majority of the immigration-topics, but especially immigration as a political issue, criticism of Islam, crime and terrorism. Contributors covered a broad range of topics, most of the articles focused on negative issues related to immigration and policies. Contributors mainly focused on topics such as attitudes towards immigration/immigrants (17%), immigration as a political issue (17%), and media criticism (17%). There were a variety of immigration topics in the articles written by anonymous

writers. Most of these articles are critical and focused on negative issues related to immigration. Thirty-one percent of them were related to racism/discrimination, 19% criticism of Islam and 19% topics related to national identity and parallel societies.

4.9 Geographical scope and immigration topics

Typical for the articles focusing on issues in Norway are immigration topics related to politics (26%), integration (14%), racism/discrimination (13%), and crime/terrorism (13%). Thirty-six percent of the articles that focused on issues in Europe were about crime and terrorism, criticism of Islam (13%), racism/discrimination (13%), and arrival and return of immigrants (13%). Twenty-three percent of the immigration articles were on topics related to issues and happenings in the world. Fifty-eight percent of these were articles about crime and terrorism, and 11% were about arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers. The articles about world issues were focused mainly on refugee routes, refugee camps, terrorist organisations, conflict areas, and decisions by world leaders such as U.S. President Donald Trump.

4.10 Sources and immigration topics

The results of the analysis on source usage distributed into different topics shows that 60% of the articles that had political sources were naturally about topics regarding politics. However, 27% of the articles using political sources had topics related to racism and discrimination. Most of the expert sources were within the topics (15% each): Racism/ discrimination, politics, criticism of Islam, crime/terrorism and media criticism. Unprofessional sources were used in most of the immigration topics, 20% in racism and discrimination, 20% in criticism of Islam, 18% in crime and terrorism, and 15% in integration.

So far, we have seen what Resett typically focuses on in their articles, who the authors are, and what kind of sources they use. In the next section, I will outline the results on how the audience receives the articles and whether the topics they mostly write about are the same topics that get the most engagement.

4.11 To what degree are articles on immigration/Islam posted on Facebook, and what kind of engagement do they get compared to other content?

Research on alternative media shows that they often rely on social media to reach out to audiences. (Holt, 2019, pp. 11-13). Facebook is the social media platform that Resett uses the most. Facebook engagement is an indicator of what the readers love reading about, which again can influence Resett's decision of what to publish. To be able to answer the main research question, it is important to map out Resett's Facebook engagement.

In this section, I will first present the overall findings for each year. Then I will explain the results of the different types of Facebook engagement metrics such as likes/reactions, comments and shares. I will also present the engagement within each immigration topic. The overall results show that 24 % of all of the articles in the study were shared on Facebook, where 36% of those were about immigration. Eighty-three percent of the shared immigration articles had more than 100 likes on Facebook. This means that Resett does not necessarily share everything about immigration, but the shared articles get a considerable response by its audience. The articles that went viral on Facebook were either news or opinion articles written by Resett.

Immigration articles vs other articles shared on Facebook

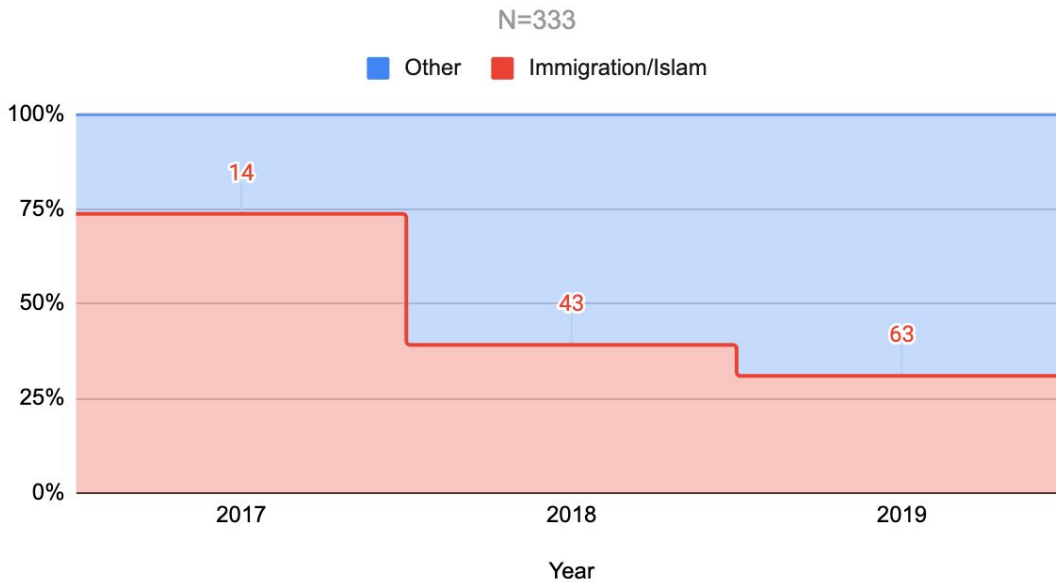


Figure 13 is a demonstration of the numbers and percentages of immigration articles shared on Facebook versus other shared articles from 2017 to 2019.

4.11.1 Facebook engagement types

There are three types of engagement on Facebook: likes/reactions, comments, and shares. Likes are less demanding, and it is expected that there would be a higher number of likes than shares and comments. Comments make people participate more actively and are more time-consuming. Sharing makes the content visible to others. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 724-725).



Image 1. All of the likes/reactions types such as "like", "love", "care", "haha/laughing", "wow/surprised", "sad" and "angry", are all counted as "likes". (Facebookbrand, no date.)

4.11.2 How many likes do the article have on the Resett Facebook page?

The "likes" on the Facebook posts shared by Resett, had the most significant amount of engagement of the different types of engagement. One reason could be, as media researcher Anders Larsson says, it is less demanding to click like, than to share or comment. (Larsson,

2019, pp. 724-725). Sixty-seven percent of the Resett articles had more than 100 likes on Facebook, where eight articles had more than 800 likes, half of those were about immigration. All of them also had a large number of comments and shares.

4.11.3 How many comments do the article have on the Resett Facebook page?

All the Facebook comments on each post are counted, including comments to comments. Many of the Facebook posts could have a large number of likes, but a low number of comments. This could mean that the audience often agrees with the content and does not have the need to discuss it further.

The results show that 74% of the articles shared on Facebook had more than 10 comments. Two articles had more than 300 comments. Interestingly, there were also a similar amount of likes. One of the articles with the most comments was an opinion article about immigration with the title: "Hijab legitimises a patriarchal manner". On the Facebook post, Resett wrote "Do you think hijabs belong in Norway? Say your opinion". (Resett, 2019a). As Professor Larsson's study says, posting a call-to-action type post results in the audience doing exactly what they ask. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 737). That is the case here, where many of the comments were "No". The goal of this type of article is to cause reactions that are core to right-wing beliefs where people oppose the use of a hijab in a western country.

The other article was an NTB article with just ten less comments than the other one. The title was "High poll numbers for the Communists in Red" referring to the Red party in Norway. The article is objective with the original content and facts from the NTB article. (NTB, 2019a). In the Facebook post, Resett wrote "Do you understand why the communists are winning throughout Norway?" This article was not considered an immigration article in this analysis. However, it can be argued that it is implicitly about immigration, where the Red Party has a positive view on immigration and multiculturalism.

4.11.4 How many shares does the article have on the Resett Facebook page?

Shares on the Facebook posts had the lowest number of types of engagements, where only 13% had more than ten shares and 11% of those had more than 100 shares. However, 63% of

the Facebook posts with more than 100 shares were about immigration. In general, the posts that got the most shares also had large numbers of comments and likes.

The post with the most shares was a news article about climate activists: "Students are paid to star as climate activists in commercials during school hours with the principal's blessing". In the Facebook post, Resett included the call-to-action text "Is this perfectly okay or some form of indoctrination?". Interestingly, the post got more shares than comments. (Resett, 2019b). The second most shared was the Facebook post with the most amount of engagement in total; it was also about immigration. "I am angry. Can we sue those who tacitly allow this to happen?" (Resett, 2017a). Since both of these articles got more shares than comments, it could mean that the people sharing agreed with the article and want to show it to their friends on Facebook.

4.11.5 Facebook engagement in 2017

Sharing on Facebook increased over time. The results from 2017 show that Resett only shared 10% of the total amount of articles on Facebook, where 8% of the shared articles had immigration as the central theme. That means the majority of the immigration articles did not get shared on Facebook that year. As figure 11 shows, of the articles Resett shared on Facebook that year, almost 75% were about immigration. The rest were news and opinion articles mainly about politics.

Only one of the shared articles was from the news agency, NTB. That could mean that they were wary of sharing articles written by a news agency on Facebook that year. Interestingly, that article was about Islam and had the title: "Trump addresses IS after the terrorist attack in New York". It got almost 70 likes, which is lower than its news articles or opinion articles in 2017. (NTB, 2017b).

The article that had the most engagement on Facebook during the three years was an opinion article from 2017. It had the title: "I am angry. Can we sue those who tacitly allow this to happen?" The author is anonymous and had the alias "Dad to a soon-to-be grown girl". The photo in the article is of the leader of the Norwegian Labour Party, Jonas Gahr Støre.

The article had over 913 likes, 125 comments, and 213 shares. (Resett, 2017a). The contributor criticises and blames the Norwegian Labour Party for the harm immigration has caused. The article concludes by saying "Can my daughter report the state of Norway if a person that Norway has taken in, or failed to evict rapes her?" The article triggered many emotions from the readers, and it got a lot of "angry" reactions on the Facebook post. The comments are mixed and show frustration, worry, and anger. Many of the readers praise the article in the comment section. Articles that typically had low engagement in 2017 were articles where the topic was unclear in the title; one was the news article titled "The end of the end of the history." The article was complicated and cited the hypothesis of "liberal internationalism". (Werenskiold, 2017).

4.11.6 Facebook engagement in 2018

In 2018, 20% of Resett's articles were shared on Facebook. Sharing on Facebook increased by 10% from 2017 to 2018. Thirty-nine percent of the shared articles in 2018 were about immigration. NTB wrote 20 % of those. This suggests that it might have become more willing to share articles written by others. Some of those also had a lot of engagement, which could mean that Resett saw the value of sharing those articles as well as the articles written by its staff or contributors. The article with the most engagement in 2018 was also an opinion article about a politician who has a positive view on immigration. The title is "Hareide is in the process of writing KRF out of Norwegian politics". Knut Arild Hareide was the leader of the Christian Democratic Party (KRF). (Johansen, 2018a). The article had 836 likes, 134 comments, and 132 shares. Compared to the most shared article in 2017, this one has more positive reactions with many "love" and "happy" reactions, indicating support for the decrease of Hareide and his party. The text on the Facebook post is a piece from the article:

John M Johansen: Listhaug has said that and I like to say so; in Norway, we eat pigs, drink alcohol, dress sexy and we do not distinguish between girls and boys when there are swimming lessons at school. If you don't accept it, that's not our problem. It should have been so easy. (ibid).

Already here it shows a critical view on Islam, suggesting that is not how the culture is in Norway, mentioning Sylvi Listhaug, a politician from the Progress Party (FRP), who has had

a critical view on immigration. Interestingly, the article with the second highest engagement in 2018 was a news article written by Lurås about a support rally for Sylvi Listhaug the day before. It is worth noting that this article has more likes than the other one. The article has the title: "A person speaking for the people is born". The engagement seems unanimous where it does not stir much emotion, but rather a lot of likes and "love" likes. (Lurås, 2018). Articles that typically had a low engagement in 2018 were articles by NTB that did not relate to immigration. One was titled "Labour party and Centre Party will force the government to publish drug prices" (NTB, 2018a). Another example was "Michael is the most violent hurricane in the United States since 1969" (NTB, 2018b).

4.11.7 Facebook engagement in 2019

From 2018 to 2019, sharing on Facebook increased by 12%, where 32% of the total articles written were shared. Thirty percent of the articles shared in 2019 were about immigration. In total, 22% of the articles shared were written by NTB, which is a significant increase since 2017. These numbers show that Resett started to share a broad range of articles, where 8% of the news and opinion articles about immigration were shared on Facebook. NTB wrote 80 % of the immigration articles that were not shared. That might show that Resett had developed its own voice, possibly seeing the value of addressing that topic through its own news articles and opinions, rather than objective NTB articles.

The article with the most engagement in 2019 was another immigration news article about Sylvi Listhaug, with the title: "Listhaug post scores high on social media". The post that scored high is her critique of the Swedish Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, and his handling of a challenging situation in Sweden, where he said "It has nothing to do with immigration". The Listhaug social media post is suggesting the otherwise, listing criminal acts such as bombing, robbery and murder. The title was "How many bombs have to blast in Swedish neighbourhoods before you wake up?" Resett states that this was a clear message to the leader of the Norwegian leader of the Labour party, Jonas Gahr Støre. The social media post by Resett got more than 1000 likes, with many "love" reactions, showing substantial support of Listhaug's opinion. (Johansen, 2019).

Articles that typically had a low engagement in 2019 were the Xstra-articles. Four articles had less than 11 likes, shares, and comments on Facebook. None of them were about immigration. One was about happiness with the title: "Scientists: At this age, we are happiest" and two were from the Xstra magazines' Christmas calendar that the authors believe deserves attention, such as politicians.

As shown in figure 13, we see that Resett shared fewer immigration articles on Facebook in later years. The changes show that Resett started to write and share articles within other topics as well as no longer sharing NTB articles on Facebook.

4.11.8 Facebook engagement divided into the immigration topics

Analysing the Facebook engagement on the immigration topics demonstrates how the audience responds to the different topics and which topic gets the most engagement. In the discussion section, I will debate the correlation between the topic Resett writes most about and the topic with the best engagement.

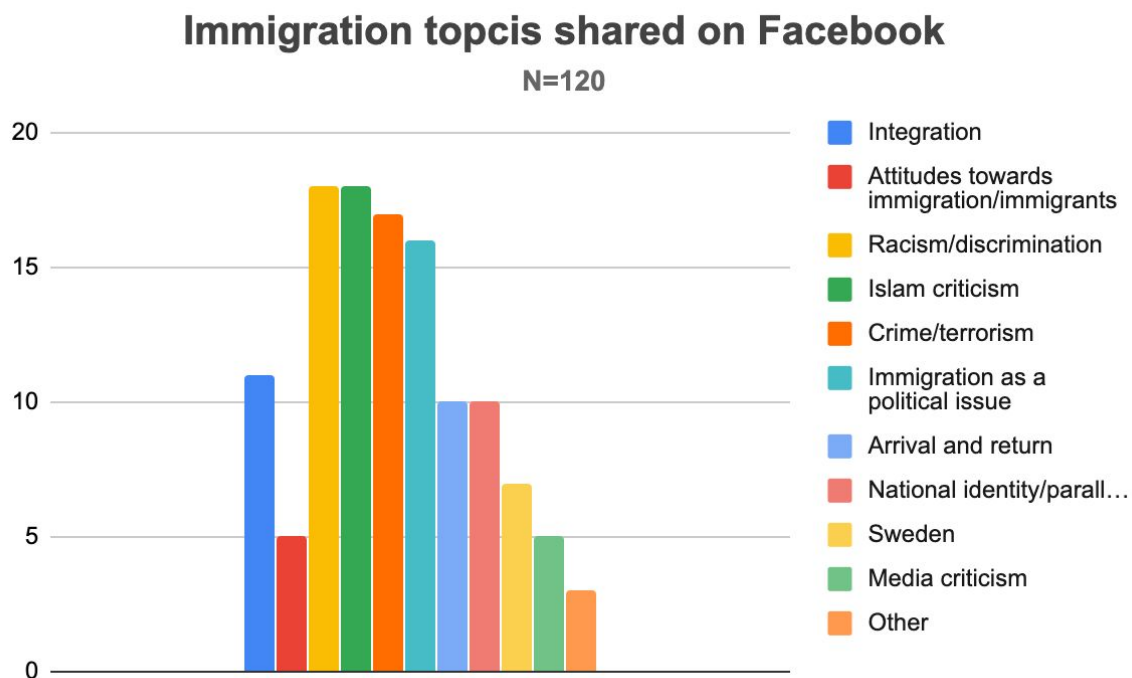


Figure 14 shows the number of articles shared on Facebook divided into the different immigration topics

Integration

Sixty-eight percent of the 16 integration articles were shared on Facebook. Thirty-one percent of the articles went viral, with more than 100 comments and likes. The most popular one was "Shurika Hansen and Abida Akhtar meet Listhaug ". (Resett, 2017b). Shurika Hansen is now the editor of Resett's entertainment website, Xstra. In the text on the Facebook post, Resett wrote "Both of these women have taken their activism against the culture of honour to the public, and have given a voice to the many we never hear anything about. Today, the two women met with Minister of Immigration and Integration Sylvi Listhaug."

Attitudes towards immigration/immigrants

All except one of these types of articles were shared on Facebook. All five of the shared articles got more than 100 likes. The most viral one was the article: "The parliamentary mismanagement of Norway over the past 30-40 years has serious consequences for native Norwegians". (Resett, 2019e). In the Facebook post, Resett wrote "Is the Norwegian population served by a democratic system that provides poor governance and operation of Norway?"

Racism/ discrimination

Sixty-seven percent of the 27 articles about racism and discrimination were shared on Facebook. Ninety-four percent had more than 100 likes. The most popular one was "Iranian Foreign Ministry with threats of "serious consequences" after the Qur'an burning". (Resett, 2019c).

Criticism of Islam

Eighty-one percent of the 22 articles about criticism of Islam was shared on Facebook. 88% of those had more than 100 likes. The most viral one was "Muslims on Twitter are raging against Norway". (Resett, 2019d).

Crime/Terrorism

Despite being the most common topic Resett writes about (64 articles), only 27% of the articles were shared on Facebook. Resett wrote the majority of the ones shared. Sixty-five percent of the articles shared had more than 100 likes. The most popular

one was "Video: Pakistani "hulk" with threats to Lars Thorsen and Norway: - I want to tear you to pieces". (Resett, 2019h). As it was largely NTB that produced these articles, it was no surprise that 45% of the shared immigration articles written by NTB were about this topic. Among them were articles that could stir emotions such as "Imam in Drammen sentenced to prison for violence" and "Norwegian Police Security Service does not know how threatening foreign fighters can be after imprisonment".

Immigration as a political issue

Forty-four percent of the 36 articles about immigration as a political issue was shared on Facebook. All of those were written by Resett. Eighty-one percent of the shared articles had more than 100 likes. The most popular one was also the most viral in 2018 and 2019.

Arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers

Forty-three percent of the 23 articles under this topic was shared on Facebook. Seventy percent had more than 100 likes. Thirty-six percent of the immigration articles written by NTB that were shared were about this topic. NTB also wrote the most popular one: "The UDI granted over 10,000 Norwegian citizenship in 2018" (Resett, 2019g). In the Facebook post, Resett wrote "Somali citizens top last year's list of 1,900 granted citizenship. Then comes Eritrean citizens with 1,100 admissions, 700 stateless, 600 Iraqis, 450 from Afghanistan and about as many from Pakistan."

National identity and Parallel societies

All articles except one of the eleven articles in this topic were shared on Facebook. All of the articles had more than 100 likes. There were also more comments and shares on this topic than all of the other topics combined. The most viral Facebook post within this topic was also the most viral throughout the years in this research: "I am angry. Can we sue those who tacitly allow this to happen?". (Resett, 2017a).

Sweden

Seven of the eight articles on the topic were shared on Facebook. Six (86%) of those had more than 100 likes. The most popular one was "The Swedish Democrats can double their support". On the Facebook post, Resett wrote "Do we need a party like the Sweden Democrats here in Norway too?" (Resett, 2019f).

Media criticism

Five of the seven articles that had media criticism within the immigration topic were shared on Facebook. Fifty-seven percent of those had more than 100 likes. The most popular article was "VG identifies Norwegian perpetrator in a murder case but hides the identity of the murder victim asylum seeker" (Olsen, 2018). Interestingly, the author of the article was the anonymous "Kenneth Olsen". On the Facebook post, Resett wrote:

VG editor Gard Steiro thus claims that "the serious nature of the case was crucial". Why did they choose to identify the accused Glomma man by name and image? Does Steiro think that the brutal killing in Vadsø of an innocent Norwegian is not of a "serious character"? (Olsen, 2018).

4.12 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the findings in the content analysis. The results show that only 16.8% of the articles were about immigration. Over 70% of the total amount of articles were from the news agency NTB, where NTB wrote 41% of the immigration articles. By using NTB, Resett can get a vast number of topics in its reporting. The immigration topic that Resett wrote most about was crime and terrorism. Resett mostly focused on immigration issues in Norway, and Resett wrote 43% of the immigration articles.

Seventy-one percent of the immigration articles had at least one source, where 51.5% of the immigration articles had secondary sources. Resett mainly uses unprofessional sources. Resett has shown an overall growth of shared articles on Facebook, and the most viral articles were about immigration. Resett's news articles and opinions are the genres that get the most

engagement and have a higher chance of getting shared. The topic with the most Facebook engagement was national identity and parallel societies. In the following chapter the findings will be discussed in light of previous research and existing theory.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, I will present the answers to the research questions and discuss the findings in a wider theoretical context. I will discuss the findings of the analysis in the previous chapter in relation to the prior research addressed in the theory chapter. This thesis aims to answer *what characterises the coverage of immigration/Islam in Resett during the period of 2017 to 2019*. To answer the research questions, I have used quantitative content analysis.

As recent research of alternative media shows, Resett would be categorised as a counter-hegemonic alternative media outlet, with corrective aspirations that seek to influence public opinion. (Holt et al., 2019, p. 860). The outlet describes itself as being a voice for the voiceless that points to a solution. (Resett, no date).

Resett can be described as a right-wing outlet. The word *right-wing* is usually linked to conservative politics, where right-wing populists typically oppose the growth of immigration, culture-mixing and are against the establishment. (Jupskås, 2020). Resett shows right-wing tendencies by advocating for normative ideas, especially anti-immigration, where it also uses grassroots voices and outsiders to go up against the establishment, without letting the establishment answer the critique. Resett shares similar views with other right-wing alternative news media sites, in that it is critical to the traditional media's coverage of immigration, and wishes to correct it. (Ihlebak, 2019). This is evident in Resett's reporting and accusations of the media for mainly hiding identities of crimes committed by immigrants but identifying crimes committed by "ethnic Norwegians". (Olsen, 2018).

The first sub-research question was: ***How much does Resett publish about immigration/Islam?***

Research on alternative right-wing media has proven that issues regarding immigration are one of the central motifs; it was, therefore, an expectation that it had an extensive amount of

articles regarding those issues. (Holt, 2019, pp. 39). In this quantitative content analysis, I have calculated the number of immigration articles Resett published during five weeks in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Overall, the analysis shows that Resett wrote a smaller proportion of immigration articles in the last year of the study than it did the first year. Summing up all of the articles over the three years, we see that 16.8% of the content was about immigration, and on average, Resett publishes nine immigration articles a day. In 2017, it published more immigration content than the other years. In 2018, it published 10% less immigration content and had an increase of other content, including a significant increase of NTB articles.

Resett applied for membership to the Association of Norwegian Editors in 2018. However, it is unclear if that has any correlation to the increase of other topics to make it appear more legitimised as a result of appealing to a broader audience. In 2019, Resett had a 1% increase in immigration articles. Whether this is considered a large amount of immigration content or not is unclear, as there is no comparable research to this. However, it can be speculated that it might be low if it was compared to immigration coverage by other alternative right-wing media outlets.

Resett aims to be a part of the professional journalistic field, but at the same time be a critical voice to the field. (Holt et al., 2019, pp. 863-864). Resett is adapting its practices so it, for some, can look professional. To look more at its journalistic practices, I analysed its editorial choices in the immigration articles.

The second sub-research question was: ***What characterises the journalistic genres of the immigration articles and how are they distributed?***

To understand how Resett writes about immigration, it has been necessary to analyse how much of the content can be characterised as news and opinion and to what extent it differs between immigration and other content.

By looking at the different genres Resett uses, we could see the growth of the total amount of articles and growth in the number of news articles, mainly when immigration was written about. Overall, 40.6% of the immigration content was news articles written by NTB, 31.6% was news articles written by Resett, and 22% was opinion articles mostly written by

contributors. However, the results show that 44% of the opinion articles were about immigration. These results indicate that Resett is willing to produce its own content when writing about immigration, compared to other topics. This could mean that Resett still holds onto their views on immigration and the NTB content could be speculated as filling in other content to make the outlet look more appealing to a broader audience that might not share the same ideology.

The third sub-research question was: *Who are the authors of the articles?*

As research conducted by Kristoffer Holt shows, alternative media outlets represent marginalised groups and include voices that do not get their opinions through traditional media. (Holt et al., 2019, pp. 863). It was, therefore, an expectation that the number of contributors and anonymous authors would be high. Resett welcomes non-professionals and anonymous writers in its reporting. However, 43% of the immigration articles were written by Resett employees. Sixty-four percent of the articles written by Resett had unprofessional sources and the articles covered a broad range of immigration topics, where 19% were about political issues, 15% of the articles were about criticism of Islam and 15% were about crime and terrorism.

Contributors wrote 9 % of the immigration articles: all of them were opinion articles. Many of them had a more critical tone and focused on negative issues related to immigration. The topics that occurred the most were attitudes towards immigrants/or immigration, political issues and media criticism. Six-and-a-half percent of the immigration articles had anonymous authors, of those 20% were opinion articles and 17 % were news articles. There were a broad range of topics covered by the anonymous writers: 31% were related to racism and discrimination, 19% were criticism of Islam, and 19% were about national identity and parallel societies. The articles written anonymously were sharp criticisms of immigration and could be seen as more radical than the other articles. Studies on other right-wing alternative news outlets might have shown a more substantial portion of anonymous authors. However, as Resett aims to become more professional, it still uses anonymous writers in news articles, where the identities of the author are rarely unknown. This comes after Resett expressed that it has decreased the use. (Oslo Journalistklubb, 2020, 3:00-8:00). However, over time, we see

that Resett more often has a by-line on various articles than in previous years. At the same time, there is a small increase in the use of NTB.

The fourth sub-research question was: *What is the geographical scope of its immigration coverage?*

The geographical scope gives an idea of how Resett portrays immigration, and if it is mostly focused on immigration causing issues nationally. Proximity is an important journalistic principle, and this study also shows that this is important for Resett. The results showed that 48% of the immigration articles were focused on cases and issues in Norway. Twenty-six percent of those were about politics, 14% about integration and 13% about crime and terrorism. Eight percent of the articles were focused on other Nordic countries, where 40% were about immigration issues in Sweden. The articles that concentrated on other Nordic countries typically showed 'improvement' on immigration issues and restrictions. This can demonstrate that Resett is generally critical to the development immigration has in Norway and Sweden.

Sixteen percent of the articles focused on issues in Europe, where 36% of those were about crime and terrorism. Other topics that were represented were criticism of Islam, racism/discrimination and arrival and return of immigrants. This could show that Resett is critical to the changes in Europe as it focuses on crimes committed by minority groups, previous members of ISIS, and ISIS sympathisers. Twenty-three percent of the immigration articles were on topics related to issues and happenings in the world. Fifty-eight percent of these were articles about crime and terrorism, and 11% were about arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers. The world articles were largely focused on conflict areas, refugee issues, ISIS and decisions by world leaders. NTB wrote 72 % of the world articles. This also answers the expectation that Resett has limited access to foreign sources and relies on second-hand sources.

The fifth sub-research question was: *What sources does Resett use?*

Previous research on alternative media highlights that they prefer to use different types of sources than traditional media, like grassroot voices standing up to the establishment. They also have less access to sources. (Holt et al., 2019). Other studies point out that they typically use original sources for statistics and reports. That increased the expectations that this would be the case with Resett as well. By analysing Resett's use of sources, I looked at the number of sources, type of sources and if the sources were primary, secondary, and tertiary. The overall results showed that 71.1% of the immigration articles had at least one source, where 48% had one source, 16% had two sources, 7% had three or more sources, and 29% had no sources. When the NTB articles were excluded, the results showed that 15.4% of the sources were primary sources, 51.5% were secondary sources, and 3.7 % were tertiary sources. That indicates that Resett is mostly dependent on information from other platforms.

The findings of the immigration articles show that 33.1% of the types of sources were unprofessional, 14.7% were expert sources, and 29.4% of the articles had no source at all. Thirty-three percent of the unprofessional sources were primary sources, while 67% were secondary sources. Only six primary-source articles had expert sources. The expert sources were mainly academic, referring to research on immigration and terrorism, either showing a correlation between crime and immigration or criticism of the research. Eleven percent of the articles had political sources, although none of them were primary sources. However, 87% were secondary sources. The majority of the political sources appeared in news articles about immigration as a political issue. 9.6% of the sources that were traditional media sources (NTB excluded). Most of those sources were international news sources.

This shows that Resett mostly refuses to use traditional news sources in Norway, and it is expected that it needs to use international news sources as it has limited access to sources abroad, when writing about global issues. Only 2.2% of the sources were alternative media sources, which could mean that Resett limits the use of those sources to show that it has authority to get that information itself, in turn reflecting an authority in the field of alternative media. The extensive use of unprofessional sources is not uncommon for traditional media outlets, as it is expected that they represent ordinary people. However, in Resett's use of expert sources, or in articles where it shows harsh criticism towards someone or an organisation, it often drops the response to the criticism. This was also expressed as one of

the reasons Resett has been denied membership of the Association of Norwegian Editors. (Oslo Journalistklubb, 2020, 3:00-8:00).

To be able to answer the main research question, I had to explore the immigration topics Resett writes about. The sixth sub-research question was: *What kind of immigration topics are written about?*

As concluding remarks and impression of Resett motifs, the specific immigration topics Resett writes about can reflect what topics it believes are important. It can also mirror its view on immigration as a whole. Resett, as an alternative media outlet, presents alternative interpretations of political and social events where it tries to influence public opinion with an agenda that is critical of immigration politics. The overall result of the content analysis shows that there are no topics that are overrepresented, which could mean that its views on immigration are complex and that there is not only one reason that causes problems. Resett might also aim for authority in the alternative news field, by broadening the audience by including a variety of different topics.

By looking at the use of topics over time, we see that Resett has generally started writing more about crime, criticism of Islam and racism and discrimination. The topic that appeared the most through the three years was crime and terrorism with 27.7% of the immigration articles. The majority were written by NTB, with the inclusion of statistical facts and information from the police. Forty-eight percent of the crime articles focused on issues in the world and 30% on issues in Norway and the rest of the Nordic countries. Previous research of right-wing media shows that the outlets often accuse mainstream media of downplaying the acts of minorities and migrants and withholding information. (Krämer, 2018). It is, therefore, no surprise that Resett focuses more on crimes committed by immigrants, and possibly poses as a 'corrector' of the mainstream media.

The second most common topic was "immigration as a political issue" with 15.6% of the articles. Seventy-two percent were about political issues in Norway, and Resett wrote the majority of the articles. Research on right-wing alternative media shows that these outlets tend to favour politics on the right and that they show hyperpartisanship. (Larsson, 2019, pp.

721). Resett shows hyperpartisanship in that it repeatedly mentions right-wing populists and expresses support for politicians such as Sylvi Listhaug from FRP, and it shows harsh criticism of the politics on the left, often blaming them for immigration problems. The articles that focused on issues outside of Norway praised political changes with restrictions on immigration.

There was 11.7% of the immigration articles about racism and discrimination. Most of the articles were about issues in Norway and were written by Resett. In the articles where Resett talks about racism, Resett portrays immigrants or Muslims as being racist towards the majority group and taking advantages away from them. In the articles where the majority is portrayed as racist, they are often described as being wrongly accused, where Resett uses words like "racism hysteria". Ten percent of the immigration articles were about "arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers". NTB wrote 70 % of those, and 48% focused on issues in Norway and often included statistics of forced returns and new citizenships.

Studies on right-wing outlets in Scandinavia have shown that they typically aim to convince their audience that Scandinavian society has become unsafe due to immigration. (Nygaard, 2019, pp. 1149-1155). This is visible in some specific topics, but not the topics that were mostly written about. Topics that were not often present were "integration", "national identity and parallel societies", "Sweden", "media criticism" and "attitude towards immigrants". Something typical of the integration articles was the inclusion of statistics of unemployment and poverty among immigrants. The articles about national identity and parallel societies were the most radical ones, showing a racist focus arguing that the minority pose a threat to the majority, such as "Now the Belgians are a minority in Antwerp". The majority of these articles were opinion pieces with little use of sources, and two had anonymous writers. The articles were often written by Resett or its contributors; NTB wrote none. Even though these articles only represent 4.8 % of the immigration articles, they could mirror Resett's "true self". These articles also reflect on some of the views expressed in Helge Lurås' book, *The road to Resett - lies, illusions and political correctness*.

The articles about Sweden portray Sweden as not handling immigration issues that well. Research on media criticism by right-wing alternative media shows that the established media

does not represent values of the right-wing, and they accuse established media of hiding the truth. (Holt, 2019, pp. 26-28). This is evident in the topics about media criticism.

These articles are mainly critical towards established media in Norway and their lack of identifying crimes committed by immigrants, while they identify crimes conducted by ethnic Norwegians. Some of the articles also accuse the established media of portraying the majority in Norway as being racist. These articles often include sentences that Resett is a better alternative for facts about immigration, where it asks for donations and subscriptions.

Attitudes towards immigration had the lowest score of immigration topics. One explanation could be that Resett's views are more often present in national identity and parallel societies articles or its views might be apparent within other texts, especially the opinion articles.

The last sub-research question was: ***To what degree are articles on immigration/Islam posted on Facebook, and what kind of engagement do they get compared to other content?***

Research on alternative media shows that they rely on different publishing routines than the established media, and they use social media to reach out to their audiences. (Holt, 2019, pp. 11-13). Taking that into consideration, it was expected that Resett would use Facebook to excite its audience and possibly spread its agenda. The results showed that 24 % of all of the articles were shared on Facebook. Thirty-six percent of the shared articles were about immigration. Eighty-three percent of the shared immigration articles had more than 100 likes on Facebook. The articles that usually went viral were either news articles written by Resett or opinion pieces. That demonstrates that the readers of Resett like the way it writes about immigration. The results show that Resett shared more content over time. In the first year, it shared more immigration content than other content, compared to the two later years of the study. In 2018, it increased sharing NTB articles.

The Facebook posts with the largest engagement all of the years were political articles. These articles were either blaming politicians on the left for the immigration problems or applauding the decrease of an immigration-friendly party, as well as praising the popularity of the right-wing populist politician, Sylvi Listhaug (FRP). She is repeatedly mentioned in many of the articles shared on Facebook. It is therefore evident that Resett can be seen as a partisan outlet that believes that left-wing politicians cause immigration problems and

right-wing populists politicians have the solutions. The engagement also suggests that the audience agrees and perhaps expects Resett to have these views.

Overall, by comparing the engagement of immigration articles to other articles, immigration articles have the most engagement, whereas other articles, especially the ones written by NTB, have low engagement. As research by Larsson proves, the audience often responds to what the publishers ask for. (Larsson, 2019, pp. 737). In this research, 'likes' were the most popular of the type of engagement, and the posts with the most comments were typically call-to-action posts. Analysing how the engagements were on different topics shows quite interesting results. The immigration topic with the most engagement was not the topic that Resett mostly wrote about. The topics that had the largest engagement of all the engagement types were *national identity and parallel societies*. However, there were only eleven articles within that topic, which is less than 5% of the total of immigration articles.

The study concludes that Resett has a diverse way of reporting on immigration issues, where the numbers of different immigration topics and the amount of content by NTB portrays an aim for professionalism. Although the results show that it is more willing to write its own content regarding immigration, its journalistic choices demonstrate significant use of unprofessional and secondary sources and a few uses of anonymous writers in some of the most controversial articles. The engagement response shows that Resett still holds onto right-wing populist beliefs which are shared by its audience.

As mentioned in the findings, Resett focuses more on immigration topics such as crime, racism and criticism of Islam. It is unclear why there is an increase in precisely these topics. However, it caters to their audiences and confirms their role as a news medium that is critical towards immigration and that offers alternative representations on this issue. At the same time, Resett is an example of an alternative medium where it adapts and behaves more like professional media. It shows the two attempts to join the Association of Norwegian Editors and how their attempts at professionalisation have so far failed. This study shows that Resett does not write as much about immigration as one would think based on how Resett appears in traditional media, which is often about its atypical journalistic decisions, political scandals

and focus on immigration. It is uncertain whether there will be a growth in new alternative media sites such as Resett in Norway. In some areas, Resett may be getting closer to the professional field. For this to happen, they might need to leave behind the most controversial approach and opinions. If the professional field finally welcomes them, I believe we might see changes in expectations for professional journalists where it becomes more open to a subjective view on topics such as immigration.

6. Further research

Even though immigration is one of the main motives of right-wing alternative media outlets, there is still a lack of comparable research looking at the immigration reporting among multiple right-wing outlets. It could also be valuable to conduct a comparative study between immigration coverage in semi-professional alternative media outlets like Resett and the traditional media. There are many ways to continue research on Resett specifically.

Qualitative studies could be relevant, especially by looking deeper into the news and opinion articles and studying what opinionated commentaries are included in the news articles. It can also be useful to investigate how much of NTB content it uses and what content it typically excludes, as well as whether the text itself is changed. Other topics Resett writes about that could be analysed are its reporting on climate change, where it seems to be a growing aim of criticism by Resett.

Another research path that would be valuable is an in-depth look at Resett's audience, in terms of who they are, if they are loyal readers and what other news media they follow. Additionally, it can also be valuable to analyse the comment section to identify common behaviours and patterns and assess audience recurrence.

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Attachments

Coding instruction

All articles within the dates selected:

Variable 1: Number of the article

Variable 2: Date:

(DD.MM.YY)

(One constructed week in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Monday first week, then Tuesday the week after..., only weekdays)

Variable 3: Title: Title of the article as originally published.

Variable 4: Journalistic genre:

(Only one can be selected)

1: News Article and "News overview" (must be written by Resett)

2: Opinion

3: News agency (NTB)

4: None/ Other/unknown, Xstra articles or copy and pasted social media posts or videos without texts.

(Only use 2. when Resett marks it as "opinion" or "commentary" otherwise, choose news articles.)

Variable 5: Is immigration or Islam the main topic?

1: Yes, **2:** No

- Immigration or Islam formulated explicitly. **All immigrants to the western countries**, including refugees, asylum seekers, work migration, second-degree immigrants and family reunification.
- Need any of these words in the title or/and first five sentences, or/and in their chosen tags:
- "Immigration", "Islam", "Muslim", "refugees", "asylum", "migrants", "minority" or "integration".
- All words that are connecting to those words are included, such as "immigrant children" "Islam critique", "Islamophobia", "asylum politics", "immigrant women" etc.
- Words often related to immigration or Islam are included such as:
- "multi-culture", "foreign fighters", "Muslim", "Quaran", "Quaran-school", "Quaran burning", "mosque", "jihad", "SIAN", "racism", "Islamism", "reception centre", "Islamization" "UDI", "expulsion", "hijab", "imam", "mulla", "border control", "young guns", "foreigners", "circumcision", "ISIS" "Islamist", "honour culture" and words relating to returning immigrants.
- Articles about Islamic terrorism are included (ISIS, Taliban, Al-Qaida), can be terrorist acts in any country.
- Articles that accuse immigrants or Muslims being behind criminal acts are also included, in any country.
- Articles about "racism towards white" are included.
- Articles about warfare in the middle east without explicitly mentioning Islam, refugees or immigration are **not** included.

(Hovden & Mjelde, 2019).

Only immigration/Islam articles:

Variable 6: Immigration topic

What specific topic related to immigration is clearly present in the **titles or/ first five sentences/Tags**) **Only one** can be selected. Coding based on how you read the text, not how you think others would have read it. Note that 5 and 6 are similar. 6 is only selected when if racism and discrimination is a theme, you should not determine if the text is racist or not.

1. Integration (Social care/Healthcare/ Welfare state, Education, Work)
2. Attitudes towards immigration/immigrants
3. Racism/ discrimination
4. Criticism of Islam
5. Crime/Terrorism
6. Immigration as a political issue
7. Arrival and return of immigrants/asylum seekers
8. National identity and Parallel societies
9. Sweden
10. Media criticism
11. Other

1. Integration (Mentions or discussions of policies, including language training for adult immigrants, workforce training, introductory programs, naturalisation policies and citizenships. Topics mentioning the **Welfare state** are included here (Mentions or discussions of immigrants in relation to welfare/social and health programs and policies. Topics mentioning **Education** are included here (Mentions or discussions of immigrants in relation to kindergarten, primary, secondary, and higher education, including language training for children. Topics mentioning **Work** are included here. (Mentions or discussions of immigrants in relation to workforce participation, workplace conditions, wages, the need for labour, the right to work, unions, discrimination of immigrant workers, exploitation of immigrant workers, unregistered/illegal labour, stories about successful immigrants.

2. Attitudes towards immigrants/ immigration (Mentions or discussions attitudes to immigration/immigrants/asylum seekers/refugees. Not using the words racism/xenophobia.

3. Racism/ discrimination To differ from the topic above, racism and discrimination need to be explicit by using tags or titles using those words. The text needs to include mentions or discussions of racism, xenophobia, and extremist attitudes towards immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers. Racism or discrimination against the majority group/whites/ethnic Scandinavians are included.

4. Criticism of Islam(criticism of immigrants' religion and Islam practices, Muslim leaders, Islam laws and norms. Criminal acts such as Islamic terrorism is not included in this.

5. Crime/terrorism Articles that are coded as crime/terrorism are texts mentioning immigrants/asylum seekers/refugees in relation to crime as victims, suspects, or perpetrators, criminal investigations, crime statistics, criminal court cases, etc. Also discussions of harassment, violence, threats, rape are included. Nationally or internationally. Islamic terrorism goes under this topic.

6. Immigration as a political issue (Mentions or discussions of immigration in relation to party politics, parties' programs/policies on immigration, electoral campaigns, the importance of immigration to voters, parties' strategic use of the immigration issue. Politicians that mention immigration are included here.

7. Arrival and return of immigrants or asylum seekers (Mentions or discussions the arrival/ residence/ return of immigrants e.g. refugees, asylum seekers, labour immigrants, family migration and reunion and enforcement, statistics about arrival and return of immigrants, size of the immigrant population in the country), articles about immigrants and asylum seekers travel route is also included here.

8. National identity and parallel societies The texts that mention or discuss what it means to be Norwegian, the role of ethnicity in national identity, the effects of immigration on the traditional Norwegian cultures and values. Texts related to parallel societies are included that means texts about immigrant communities existing next to the majority population as parallel societies/immigrants grouping together in certain geographic areas, and immigrant groups not interacting with the majority population.

9. Sweden (mentions issues in Sweden, parallel societies, Rinkeby and the political situation relating to immigration.) Crime and terrorism done by immigrants in Sweden are not included here but under number 5.

10. Media criticism (Mentions or discussion of the role of the media in the coverage of immigration, all evaluations of the media and how they fulfil their role. Also include critique towards social media sites.

11. Other (When none of the other themes is present).

(Hovden & Mjelde, 2019, V12).

Variable 7: Who are the authors of the articles?

1. **Resett employee** (one of the eleven listed on about us, or previous employee)
2. **Anonymous** (Mumler Gåsegg, Kenneth Olsen, redaksjonen, other nicknames,)

3. **Contributor**, named, but not an employee
4. **NTB**

Variable 8: What is the geographical scope of its immigration coverage?

1. Norway
2. Nordic country, except Norway
3. Europe
4. World
5. None/unknown

Variable 9: What is the number of cited sources in the article

(a specific person, quote)

- 0:** 0,
1: one,
2: Two to three,
3: More than three

Variable 10: What type of source is cited?

1: Expert source (specializes in a field for example or serves as an authority: psychology, doctor, professor, police)

2: Unprofessional source (regular person, a witness of an event, commentaries, celebrities goes under this if no specialisation)

3: Politician (local, national and international politicians)

4: Traditional media source (mentioned explicitly in the text)

5: Another alternative media source

6. No source

Variable 11: Is it Primary, secondary or tertiary sources?

(Primary source if the source had an interview with Resett, direct and indirect quote, secondary if referring to an interview with another outlet, tertiary if referring to another referring in an outlet).

1: Primary

2: Secondary

3: Tertiary

4: None

Facebook engagement (all articles):

Variable 12: Is the article shared on Facebook?

(Must be found through the search bar on their Facebook site, from 2019-links use Crowdtangle tool).

1. Yes, 2. No

Variable 13: How many comments does the article have on the Resett Facebook page?

(*Facebook count, replies to comments are therefore included).

1. 0-10,

2. 11-20,

3. 21-30,

4. 31-40,

5. 41-50,

6. 51-60,

7. 61 -70

8. 71-80

9. 81-90

10. 91-100

11. 101-200

12. 201-300

13. 301-400

14. 401-500

15. 501-600

16. 601-700

17. 701-800

18. 801+

Variable 14: How many likes does the article have on the Resett Facebook site?

(Facebook count*, all types of emoji-likes included). (write the date when coded, per date, numbers can change from day to day.)

1. 0-10,
2. 11-20,
3. 21-30,
4. 31-40,
5. 41-50,
6. 51-60,
7. 61 -70
8. 71-80
9. 81-90
10. 91-100
11. 101-200
12. 201-300
13. 301-400
14. 401-500
15. 501-600
16. 601-700
17. 701-800
18. 801+

Variable 15: How many times is the article shared on Facebook? (Facebook count*).

(write the date when coded, per date, numbers can change from day to day.)

1. 0-10,
2. 11-20,
3. 21-30,
4. 31-40,
5. 41-50,
6. 51-60,
7. 61 -70
8. 71-80

9. 81-90

10. 91-100

11. 101-200

12. 201-300

13. 301-400

14. 401-500

15. 501-600

16. 601-700

17. 701-800

18. 801+

Variable 16: Date coded

Variable 17: Link to article

Variable 18: Link to Facebook post