

Article

# Comparative Study of Local and National Media Reporting: Conflict around the TV Oak in Stockholm, Sweden

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**Abstract:** The TV oak (Television Oak) conflict concerned felling an old tree in a wealthy area of Stockholm. The case received great public attention in different media formats with different scopes (e.g., newspapers, television, internet). The TV Oak issue involved actors with different, partly conflicting perceptions. Assuming that the relevance of urban tree management issues in particular leads to increased interest among the local audience, this paper compared differences in reporting on the TV Oak case in local and national newspapers. The comparison comprised the actors “speaking” in the newspapers, the interest roles attributed to different actors and the frames used. The empirical materials used were articles concerning the TV Oak published between October 2011 and June 2012 in one local and two national Swedish newspapers. Quantitative analysis of statements in these articles showed that the geographical scope of the newspaper was not the major driving force framing the TV Oak conflict and that variety of framings, ranging from a humanised perception of the oak to a more analytical hazard perception, were used. Differences between the interest roles allocated to different actors (e.g., in terms of victim, causer, and helper in the oak conflict) showed that the framing of conflicts very much depended on single actors, in particular a high profile journalist in the national newspapers and private individuals writing letters to the editor in the local newspaper.

**Keywords:** media analysis; mediated conflicts; framing; newspaper; urban tree cut

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## 1. Introduction

Trees contribute to the delivery of many ecosystem services in urban areas, such as moderation of local climate [1–4], storm water management [5,6], recreation and human well-being [7], and cultural value [8]. Long-term management and renewal of urban trees is crucial for sustainable urban development. However, there are conflicts concerning the management of urban trees as they are associated with multiple values (e.g., cultural, historical, and aesthetic) [8–11]. Such conflicts, with the perceptions and values of the stakeholders involved, are shaped in a certain way when they attract the attention of the media. These ‘mediatized conflicts’ can be understood as a “process, something that occurs through repeated and socially situated interaction between individuals and groups whose perceptions and actions are structured by and expressed through media” [12]. Hence, media reports and constitutes conflicts at the same time [13]. How media depicts a conflict has implications for the way the conflict proceeds and for the manner in which decisions are taken in the conflict [12].

The media is of high importance in contemporary democratic societies around the world and is able to reflect a diversity of possible opinions, providing information and serving as an indicator of public opinion for political decision makers [14]. However, the media also plays a powerful role in

selecting news for publication, a process in which it follows its own logic [15,16]. Actors in various conflicts recognise the central position of the media in influencing decision-making and therefore adapt to this logic in order to compete for public attention [17,18].

The central role of the media is even more obvious in the situation of 'mediated conflicts'. Those actors who have successfully placed their statement in the media have a 'standing' as "an actor with voice, not merely as an object being discussed by others" [19]. Actors with standing have substantial opportunities getting support from advocates and changing the minds of their opponents [20,21]. Hence, they are able to shape the political discussion, for example, on ecological management decisions in a certain direction.

Actors with standing use their power to define the problem by selecting and emphasising specific information [22]. This 'framing' gives meaning to complex situations. Media frames are defined as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events . . . . The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" [23].

One way to analyse the framings used is to differentiate the three different interest positions in the conflict: victim, causer, and helper [24,25]. Diagnostic framing implies the two major roles of actors in a conflict, the causers and the victim. Both are preconditions in order to initiate political action [26]. The former is important, as identifying the source of the problem is necessary if the problem is to be remedied, while the latter attributes a particular situation as a problem from which people suffer and which therefore needs remedying. Prognostic framing contains the problem solving dimension of a problem identifying actors as helpers, in other words, those who can contribute to the solution of a problem.

The interest position attributed to actors can either weaken or strengthen their position in the mediated conflict. According to von Prittwitz [27], and further developed by Krumland [28], the interests of the causer are assumed to benefit from a destroying action and causers only rarely gain acceptance in the public discussion. The interests of the victim are twofold, in that they are often attributed a moral advantage, while they can also be perceived as powerless, unable to resolve problematic situations. The interests of the helper are assumed to solve, or help to solve, the problem. The actors attributed this role gain acceptance and legitimacy.

Selecting news for publishing is a central instrument in mediated conflicts. Media studies have identified different factors affecting this selection [29,30]. These news factors are elements that should safeguard the attention of a lay audience in particular. A major assumption in the theory is increasing the number of news factors that can be attributed to a news item increases the probability of it being published and being placed prominently in the media [29]. One of the factors adding value to news is the geographical nearness of the audience to the event reported, with increased interest among an audience in events that are occurring locally. This raises the question of whether there are differences between local and national newspapers in reporting certain events, for example, events with a narrow scope could be assumed to be mainly relevant for local newspaper reporting.

On 24 October 2011 a large oak in Stockholm that was due to be cut down was rescued by a group of demonstrators. The tree was first called the 'Radio Oak' and later on the 'TV Oak' because of its close proximity to the Swedish radio and TV building. This example of urban tree management gathering media attention can contribute to understanding whether resources (e.g., financial or human resources) are the most relevant factor to explain the chance of actors to shape media reporting and whether this influence changes with the scope of the media. Hence, the aim of this paper is to assess how different actors shaped the media debate about the TV Oak conflict in local and national newspaper reporting. This topic is of high relevance not only for the specific situation in Stockholm, but as a phenomenon appearing in many cities in Europe (e.g., 2015 in Sheffield, United Kingdom, where there were protest against the felling of urban trees) but also around the globe (e.g., 2016 in Perth, Australia, where protesters tried to save an old tree from being felled). Hence, the results of this study give implications beyond the specific case of the TV Oak, shedding light on the possible

influence of different actors in shaping the media debate and thus influencing the management of (urban) green spaces.

Based on the aim of this paper the following research questions were examined in a comparative analysis of media with different scope (local and national):

- (a) Who are the main actors with standing in the mediated conflict of the TV Oak?
- (b) Which actors have been attributed the role of causer, victim, and helper in the problem?
- (c) Which additional frames were used in the mediated conflict of the TV Oak?

## 2. Experimental Section

The media analysis was limited to newspapers, although the TV Oak conflict has also been reported in magazines and on TV and discussed on the internet (e.g., in the comments field for the different newspaper articles and on Facebook). Despite the current digital trend, newspapers can still be considered relevant as they are generally recognised as having a major influence on public opinion. In particular, political decision makers rely on newspapers when searching for indicators of public opinion [14]. A total of 165 articles were included in this media analysis (60 from *Dagens Nyheter*, 17 from *Svenska Dagbladet*, and 88 from *Östermalmsnytt*). The articles were thereby rather evenly distributed between national (*Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*) and local neighbourhood (*Östermalmsnytt*) newspapers, with 77 and 88 articles, respectively.

The newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* (hereafter DN), which is based in Stockholm, is Sweden's largest quality newspaper (with a 'quality newspaper' referring to a publication which is well-perceived by other journalists and political decision makers), with a readership of around 824,500 people each day. DN is published every day of the week and is politically independent. The newspaper readership is spread over the whole of Sweden, and thus DN is regarded as a national newspaper.

The newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* (hereafter SvD), which is also based in Stockholm, was selected because it is another national quality newspaper with broad scope (daily readership 500,000), but also has a specific section dedicated to Stockholm news. Like DN, SvD is published every day of the week and is politically independent.

The newspaper *Östermalmsnytt* (hereafter Ösn) is a local newspaper and was selected because it covers the city area of Östermalm in Stockholm, where the TV Oak is located. Ösn is published one day a week (40,900 copies) and is distributed free of charge to all households within the city area of Östermalm. The newspaper is of unknown political opinion.

A media search was conducted on 1 June 2012 on the websites of these three newspapers, using the single search term "TV-eken" (the TV Oak). The majority of the articles found were within the period of 15 October 2011 to 1 June 2012. One article dated June 2010 was excluded from the analysis because it did not relate to the TV Oak conflict.

A quantitative content analysis was carried out on the 165 selected articles. Bryman [31] defines content analysis as an "approach to the analysis of documents and texts ... that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner". Content analysis employs a category system, which allows material relevant to the problem dimensions to be coded, thereby reflecting the theoretical considerations. In the present study, two units of analysis were considered: the entire newspaper article and the statements of speakers in the article. With respect to the entire article, the formal categories used included "date of publishing", "author", "section in which the article appeared", and "style of article".

The statements of different speakers were used as the propositional units of analysis. Statements were taken as being all those claims presented as either direct or indirect quotes made by one person or entity in one article, with claims in statements by other people counted as different statements. Consequently, the number of statements was the same as the number of speakers.

The starting assumption of the analysis was that the media pays attention to conflicts. The subjects of the analysis were the actors gaining media representation and the frames attributing different roles

to actors. For this reason, we recorded the following three attributes for each statement: (1) Speakers, defined as the person or entity appearing in the article and making the statement; (2) actors identified by the speakers as causer, victim, or helper; and (3) frames used for describing the central perspective of the conflict.

The different actor roles (speaker, causer, victim, and helper) fell within the categories: Scientists, experts, arborists, politicians, administration, police, judiciary, journalists in own media, journalists from other media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), companies, private individuals, and others (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Definition of the different actors.

Actor	Examples and/or Definitions
Scientists	Scientists, persons from universities or academic degrees (e.g., researcher and professor).
Experts	People referred to as experts (e.g., tree expert and municipalities tree expert).
Arborists	All persons called arborist.
Politicians	Political speakers (e.g., persons referred to as coming from a political party).
Administration	The municipality's administration and local government.
Police	The police.
Judiciary	Lawyers and attorneys.
Journalists in own media	Journalists from the newspapers.
Journalists from other media	Journalists from the other media (e.g., other papers, TV, and radio).
NGO (Non-governmental organization)	Different types of NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) (e.g., friends of different parks and associations of arborists).
Companies	Different types of companies (e.g., smaller arborist companies and consultant companies).
Private individuals	Letter to the editor and persons being interviewed by the media.
Others	All other speakers.

The causer, victim, and helper roles contained two additional categories concerning those who could not appear as speaker. If they did not have the ability to speak they were categorised as "nature", while if they did not form an actor consistently speaking with one voice they were categorised as "society". However, it was possible to identify them as causer, victim, or helper.

The framing categories were identified inductively from the material [32], by observing particular storylines in the text and combining them into larger categories. The framing categories were: Cultural-historical, art, anthropomorphism (humanisation of the oak), technology, science, hazard, power play (measure of power), and not recognisable.

A coding manual was developed in which all categories and sub-categories were defined, operationalized, and illustrated with examples. Prior testing was carried out to test and improve the coding manual, and two coders were trained to code the articles using the manual. The data obtained were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet (Microsoft Corporation, Washington, DC, USA). Intercoder reliability was continuously confirmed during coding by contact between the two intercoders and between the intercoders and the second author where definitions and interpretations was discussed. The Excel data documents allowed further processing and interpretation of the data.

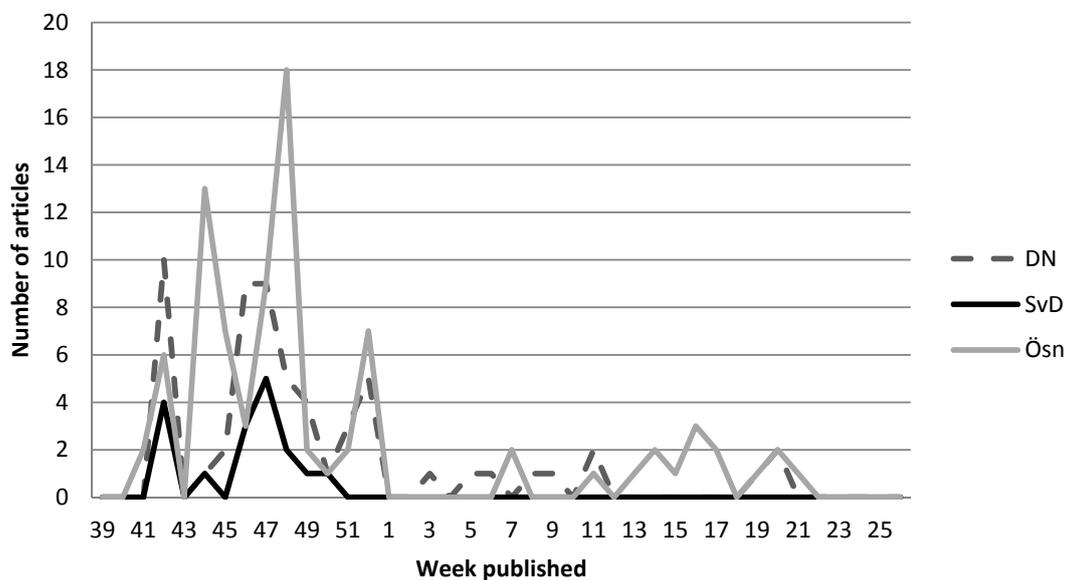
### 3. Results

The prominence of the newspaper articles in the different newspapers generally followed a similar trend (see Figure 1). In the following, the major peaks in attention and the reasons for these are described. The timeline of the conflict on the TV Oak is summarised in Table 2. The media attention started with a first peak in week 42 in all three newspapers. That was the first time cutting of the tree was stopped by protesters. In the following period, the peaks of attention varied between the newspapers. Ösn had a second peak in week 44, when a large number of letters to the editor were published. In weeks 46 and 47, there was another peak in attention in all three newspapers after a second attempt to cut down the tree was stopped, an independent Norwegian arborist was contacted, and the tree was finally cut down during a night-time intervention. DN and Ösn had their respective third and fourth peak in attention in week 52, in articles summarising the main events of the year.

DN and Ösn continued reporting, although on a lower level, until the end of our search for articles referring to the TV Oak on 1 June 2012 (Table 2, Figure 1).

**Table 2.** Calendar week and date of important events surrounding media attention to the TV Oak.

Week and Date	Date and Event
<b>2011</b>	
Week 41, 15 October	News about planned felling of the TV Oak reaches the media.
Week 42, 17 October	Protesters occupy the site around the TV Oak.
Week 43, 24 October	The first attempt to fell the TV Oak is stopped by protesters.
Week 43, 27 October	The second felling is stopped by protesters and the city authorities decide to bring in an arborist from Norway for a second opinion.
Week 45, 9 November	The Norwegian arborist arrives and examines the tree.
Week 46, 17 November	After further investigation by the city authorities, it is decided to cut the tree down anyway, without having received the report from the Norwegian arborist.
Week 47, 21 November	The independent arborist reports that the tree is in no immediate risk of falling.
Week 47, 25 November	The tree is cut down in the middle of the night by the city authorities, accompanied by a large group of police officers.
<b>2012</b>	
Week 9, 28 February	Three experts are flown in from Germany, Denmark, and England. Together they carry out further investigations of the tree trunk and the cut remains.
Week 11, 14 March	The city authorities reveal two proposals for a new development at the site of the TV Oak. Both propositions include a tram track straight over the site of the TV Oak.
Week 16, 20 April	Closing day for responses in public consultation on the city's development plan.
Week 18, 4 May	The planning proposals are handed over to the city board for a final decision.



**Figure 1.** Number of articles per week including the term “TV-eken” (the TV Oak) in the newspapers *Dagens Nyheter* (DN), *Svenska Dagbladet* (SvD), and *Östernsnytt* (Ösn) during the search period.

### 3.1. Speakers

The 165 articles found contained 470 statements, 204 in DN, 65 in SvD, and 201 in Ösn. Major actors appearing as speakers in the media discussion were journalists, private individuals, city administration officials, experts, and NGOs. In both the national newspapers, the journalists themselves appeared as the major representatives of the ‘speaker’ category. In the case of DN, the category ‘journalist’ was

mainly represented by one specific person (41% of DN statements). In contrast, private individuals dominated the discussion on the TV Oak conflict in Ösn and journalists were in second place. This was mainly the result of a large number of letters to the editor. In the national newspapers, administrations were seen as representing the speaker category, with the second largest number of statements. A major actor within this group giving an opinion in the media was Stockholm Parks and Streets Department, which is responsible for urban trees and safety issues relating to traffic. Other speakers given a high degree of attention in the national newspapers were experts and NGOs. Those appearing as experts were assigned this title by the journalist in question and they were often individuals specifically dealing with trees in the urban area. The NGOs comprised a variety of groups, from those working more generally on environmental and aesthetic issues to those formed only for the sake of the TV Oak (e.g., Friends of the TV Oak). In the local newspaper, the main speakers in TV Oak reporting were administration and experts, followed by private individuals and journalists. NGOs did not appear often as speaker in this forum (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Total number of speakers in the newspapers DN, SvD, and Ösn and percentage distribution in different speaker groups.

Speakers	DN	SvD	Ösn	Mean
<i>Total Number of Speakers</i>	204	65	208	159
Administration	16%	18%	13%	15%
Arborist	8%	5%	4%	6%
Experts	10%	9%	9%	9%
Journalists in own media	26%	29%	21%	24%
Journalists from other media	2%	8%	1%	2%
NGO (Non-governmental organization)	11%	8%	5%	8%
Politicians	8%	3%	6%	6%
Scientists	2%	1%	1%	2%
Private individuals	4%	8%	31%	17%
Other	13%	11%	9%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### 3.2. Interest Positions

#### 3.2.1. Victim

A victim of the TV Oak conflict was mentioned in 187 statements. The most frequently mentioned victim in all newspapers was the TV Oak itself (141/187, 75%): “Ancient oak threatened” (Kristoffer Törnholm, SvD journalist, SvD 23 October 2011). In DN, the notion of the oak as the victim prevailed (86%), in comparison with 77% in SvD and 63% in Ösn. In all newspapers, private individuals were also named as victims in the case. However, SvD most often referred to private individuals as potential victims, taking into account that falling tree branches could injure bystanders and citing: “The tree is rotten, completely dead and may fall at any time and it is thus lethal” (Mats Frej, spokesman at Stockholm Parks and Streets Department, SvD 18 November 2011).

In contrast, Ösn presented administration as victims (in 15%), referring to a case in which city staff had been threatened (e.g., in the article “Tree hugger under attack” (Hanna Svensson, Ösn 10 December 2011).

#### 3.2.2. Causer

Causers were mentioned less often (110 times) than victims in the reporting about the TV Oak, perhaps because the allocation of this role was less obvious than in the case of victim. The actors most commonly mentioned as causers of the problem were the city authorities (38 times), nature (25 times), and the oak (13). DN (43%) and Ösn (30%) mainly referred to administrations as those causing the problem as they were the ones who planned to cut down the oak: “The Traffic office takes the easy

way out and levels the tree to the ground. I think this is euthanasia, instead of offering the help needed.” (Maria Antinsson, private individual, interviewed in Ösn 29 October 2011). SvD mentioned administrations as causer in 19% of statements. In contrast, SvD cited nature as the main causer (50%), drawing attention to fungi attacking the oak by including the statement: “According to measurements on the amount of decay in the tree, it is in danger of collapsing” (Britt-Marie Alvem, Stockholm Parks and Streets Department, SvD 23 October 2011). However, DN and Ösn also mentioned nature as causer (20% and 16% of statements, respectively). DN and SvD directly depicted the oak as the causer of the problem too (16% and 19%, respectively), referring to problems with traffic, as the roads were closed down because branches or the whole tree could fall down.

### 3.2.3. Helper

Most statements did not pinpoint a helper in the TV Oak problem. A helper was named in only 29 of the 470 statements, and the most frequently mentioned helper in these were politicians (31%) and experts or private individuals (10% each). Most statements mentioning a helper were published in DN, with 17 statements, where the most frequently named helper was from the politicians category (29% of relevant statements). Politicians were most frequently mentioned as the helper in Ösn too, in 33% of the total of nine statements mentioning helpers. Administrations were the second most mentioned helper, with 22% of the 470 statements. SvD contained only three statements mentioning a helper, the dominant helper mentioned being private individuals (67%) and politicians (33%).

### 3.3. Framing the TV Oak

In the following, we only present the results from the three frames most often used in the discussion about the TV Oak. The main framing was hazards, which accounted for 40% of statements. The cultural-historical perspective was the second most common frame, with 36%, and anthropomorphism third, with 17%.

The hazard framing was type most commonly used in DN (46% of statements) and SvD (52%), but only ranked third in Ösn, with 28%. In DN, cultural history was the second most common framing, with 3%, while anthropomorphism accounted for 8%. In SvD, cultural history was ranked second, with 28% and anthropomorphism was third, with 12%. In Ösn, the most common framing was cultural history (40%) followed by anthropomorphism (31%) and hazards (28%). In the following we describe these frames in more detail (Table 4, also see Appendix A for the number of statements for the different article styles).

**Table 4.** Number of statements in each newspaper and framing of the statements, shown as a percentage for each framing.

Framing	DN ( <i>Dagens Nyheter</i> )	SvD ( <i>Svenska Dagbladet</i> )	Ösn ( <i>Östermalmsnytt</i> )	Mean
<i>Number of statements</i>	83	25	65	58
Art	1%	8%	4%	3%
Cultural-historical	24%	24%	29%	26%
Anthropomorphism	8%	12%	31%	17%
Power play (measure of power)	10%	4%	0%	5%
Hazards	46%	52%	28%	40%
Science	3%	0%	0%	1%
Technology	8%	0%	8%	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### 3.4. Hazard Frame

The hazard frame used mainly referred to the risk of injuring people and sometimes human-made objects (cars). In comparison, loss of culture was not described as a risk. One of the main arguments

put forward by administrations to justify felling the TV Oak was that hazards were associated with not felling it. The administrations, and more specifically the Parks and Streets Department, argued that the amount of dead wood and major fungal infection had made the oak a hazard and this was the reason why it was finally cut down.

When analysing the statements in the newspapers, 77 (40%) of all statements on framing mentioned the presence of a risk. Of these, 61% stated that there was a risk (DN 41%; SvD 80%; Ösn 68%), for example: “According to the Parks and Streets Department, the oak poses a dangerous risk and must therefore be cut down” (SvD 17 November 2011) and “The traffic department’s tree expert Björn Embrén says that the TV-oaks status is worse than he first thought and that it needs to be cut down immediately since it poses a threat to the public” (DN 17 November 2011). The remaining 39% of the statements referring to a hazard stated that there was no risk (DN 59%; SvD 20%; Ösn 32%), for example: “Experienced arborists: The TV Oak will not collapse” (header, DN 20 November 2011). In DN this resulted mainly from a series of articles (28% of all relevant articles published in DN) published by one specific journalist.

### 3.5. Cultural-Historical Perspective

As Table 4 shows, 26% of the framings used concerned the cultural-historical background of the TV Oak (DN 24%; SvD 24%; Ösn 29%). According to these statements, the TV Oak spanned more than three centuries of history and was therefore a contemporary witness of important historical events: “The experiences of the TV Oak”, SvD 24 November 2011. Beyond this historical perspective, the oak was also presented as a rare object in the city environment, not least because of its shape: “The oak is a piece of art” (Åke Askensten, politician, SvD 3 November 2011). This framing resulted in the claim “Leave it in place and declare it a culture heritage!” (Rolf Lindell, politician, DN 21 October 2011). The cultural-historical frame also included references to similar past events, where trees had been at the centre of urban management conflicts, for example, in the past demonstrations concerning the elms in Kungsträdgården: “The Elm Battle in Kungsträdgården showed the ruling government in 1968 that there was a civil movement to be reckoned with. In 2011, the parallel is of course the somewhat pathetic TV Oak” (Joakim Högström, The Year’s Events, Ösn 17 December 2011).

### 3.6. Personification of the Oak

The TV Oak was framed in some statements as a human being, in particular in Ösn (31% of all framings). This framing was mainly used by those who opposed cutting down the tree. However, even those in favour partly framed the tree in a humanised way, for example, by referring to sickness in the tree: “But it (*oak*) feels really sick” (Björn Embrén, Stockholm Parks and Streets Department, DN 25 October 2011), and asking for it to be cut down in a respectful way: “The oak feels better where it belongs” (Louise Treschow, private individual, Ösn 5 November 2011). The anthropomorphism (humanisation) framing of the oak was even more prominent after it had been cut down. The newspaper reporting referred to the felled tree as if it were a dead human being, for example, by discussing what to do with the wood “The TV Oak’s last resting place” (Susanna Baltscheffsky, SvD 02 December 2011). This perspective was supported by an event at the site of the oak after it had been cut down: “When the action group on Saturday held a “memorial” with light (!), placement of flowers (!! ) and a minute’s silence (!!!), we experienced Stockholm’s most bizarre event in a long time” (editorial column, DN 02 December 2011). As the oak was described as a dead person, the administrations that had it cut down were referred to as murderers. Furthermore, the oak was described as a person with family: “Born: A Radio Oak, March 2012. The little baby is the child of the 800-year-old Radio Oak, also called the TV Oak or Vädlaeken, which the Parks and Streets Department killed in November” (Kerold Klang, opinion column, Ösn 7 April 2012).

During the conflict threats were aimed at different city officials. One example is “The Parks and Streets Department have charged an environmental politician for threatening a city official” (DN 17 December 2011).

#### 4. Discussion

The TV Oak conflict raised public attention in the media, perhaps partly as a result of the appeal of conflict issues in reporting [17]. However, the broad attention it raised beyond the local level is surprising for a local conflict such as the TV Oak. There are several possible reasons for this high media attention. First, the oak, with its close proximity to the national radio and TV house, was highly visible to journalists. Although the DN and SvD offices are not located in the direct neighbourhood of the oak, the media attention drawn to this issue by radio and television journalists might have led to a multiplier effect, resulting in increased attention among other media sources too. Furthermore, even the name “TV Oak” hints at a specific relationship between the media and the tree. Reporting the conflict about this issue allowed journalists to refer to “their own” tree, in this way being self-referential [28]. This argument is supported by the fact that in radio reporting the tree was referred to as the Radio Oak. Secondly, the media interest in the TV Oak conflict might have originated from one specific journalist with a particular interest in the issue. Evidence of this is provided by the minor number of articles published in SvD (total of 17 articles), in comparison with the 60 articles published in DN, 17 of which were written by one particular journalist.

The attention of the media changed with events connected to the TV Oak and there was no difference between the national and local neighbourhood newspaper in this respect. According to literature on media attention, after an event the discussion can be expected to abate [33]. However, in the present case the discussion about the TV Oak continued, although on a lower level. Even now, reference is made to the TV Oak conflict in the media (e.g., in an article on demolishing an old staircase in Stockholm (DN, 15 February 2013)). This shows that conflicts on urban tree management, though no longer active, are reproduced in media reporting for a long time, as also seen with the Elm Battle in Stockholm, and thereby kept in people’s minds. This is important to acknowledge from an urban tree management point of view since the media will reproduce previous conflict on urban tree management when a new conflict arises, and this thereby, to some extent, might shape the framing of the new conflict.

In the national media, journalists were the main speakers in the discussion on the TV Oak. This result is supported by other studies of conflict issues in quality newspapers (e.g., [24]). The high number of journalists among the speakers resulted from them introducing an issue, leading from one argument to another and then giving final statements and their own opinions in reports and commentaries. This dominant position indicates that if there is a specific journalist in charge for a specific issue, a certain bias might be created. Private individuals were the main speakers in the local newspaper, as a result of letters to the editor. The amount of direct experience increases with proximity to the site of an event and allows private individuals to share their experiences and values. Furthermore, free local newspapers such as Ösn usually do not have the resources to contract journalists for all reporting issues and instead they depend on contributions from other sources. Because of the dominance of private individuals, the strict differentiation between journalists and letter writers is not reflected in local reporting any more [34]. In such cases, journalists become the managers and coordinators of information rather than seeking the information themselves.

The TV Oak was most often mentioned as a victim of the conflict. This is not surprising, as the oak was the main subject of the conflict. Attributing the role of victim includes two perspectives: first, a problem has mobilisation potential if someone is already suffering; and second, the role as a victim can lead to an actor being characterised as weak and lacking the ability to help itself. If the tree is attributed the role of victim according to the first interpretation the mobilisation potential is retained, but in the second it becomes a factor that can be disregarded.

The major difference between the national and local newspapers was that the latter more often named the authorities, and in particular the Parks and Streets Department, as a victim of the problem. This resulted from stressing the topic of attacks on officials from the Parks and Streets Department in reporting. This issue was the focus of three major articles, including interviews with those threatened. In comparison, the national newspapers just reported once about the threatened attacks. It can be

assumed that the reason for weighting the threats differently lay with the relationship between the media and their informants. Given the detailed information about the threat and the fact that it was the first newspaper to report about it, despite being a local weekly publication, Ösn appears to have had good contact with the Parks and Streets Department, which offered the latter an opportunity to gain acceptance for its position. These contacts can therefore be of importance when urban tree managers want to gain acceptance for specific management actions. Contact between the media and the political administration system, in this case the Parks and Streets Department, is generally a phenomenon that benefits the media too, as there is plenty of information that can be assumed to be trustworthy and might become relevant for publication [35].

In regards to causers, the newspapers referred to different sources. DN and Ösn cited the authorities as causer, while SvD referred to fungi. It can be assumed that the first increases the mobilisation potential of the conflict more than the latter, as it identifies the source of the problem to remedy. However, depicting the authorities as causer does not pinpoint a specific authority, but puts the blame on them in general.

Helpers of the problem were only mentioned in 6% of all statements, while all other statements did not mention any solutions to the problem. This means that prognostic framing was not used to any great extent in the reporting, as those statements referring to helpers mainly named politicians as those who could help solve the problem. The finding that problems described in the media are meant to be solved by politicians has also been made in previous media studies [24].

The most often used frame was that associating the oak with hazards, with some reported as claiming that there was a risk and others denying the risk. However, our analysis revealed that DN was the only newspaper in which the majority of the statements claimed that there was no risk. This perception resulted mainly from one journalist advocating the no risk case. This is further evidence of the fact that the media highly influences processes by the way in which it describes them. According to media theory, this means the media is not an independent but an intervening variable, providing an additional dynamic and can influence the reporting in a certain direction [21]. The finding in the present case that a frame can depend on one journalist further highlights the powerful position of the media. The dominant perspective of the other two newspapers in the hazard framing context was that the TV Oak presented a hazard. Thus, the local-national newspaper dichotomy did not explain the difference in reporting, but rather the approach taken by one specific journalist.

Speakers use different strategies to increase acceptance of their position. In particular, collective symbols and metaphors are used in the media, as they help simplify the content. Attributing importance to the cultural-historical aspect of the TV Oak assisted in adaptation to existing patterns of interpretation in the culture of the media and the audience [28]. This meant that the TV Oak was linked to existing cultural and historical ideas, such as the Elm Battle. Based on this interpretation, the cultural-historical aspects cannot be assumed to be the reason for the reporting, but were used as an instrument to gain attention and acceptance. The cultural or historical aspects highlighted depend on the position, subculture, and values of the respective speaker [36].

The anthropomorphism of the tree by those who were against cutting it down appeared as a dominant rhetoric in the reporting, especially by those articles published in Ösn. Whether this has been a strategy to gain acceptance for a specific position in the TV Oak conflict or if this is an expression of the relatedness to the nonhuman environment remains an open question. In general, the perception of an object as humanlike allows for the potential to evoke feelings of empathy and by doing so, allows for moralization [37]. The fact that one of the DN editorials made fun of the personification of the oak shows that the anthropomorphism of a tree is not undisputed in a society which is mainly dominated by the program of modern science [37].

## 5. Conclusions about Local-National Reporting

The local newspaper, in this study Ösn, was characterised by the dominance of letters to the editor. In general, this allowed a more open discussion and showed the diversity of possible opinions in the

local community. In contrast, the national newspapers depended very much on a single journalist for the story, framing the reporting in a specific direction. However, despite the huge range of letters to the editor in the local newspaper, the specific interest roles allocated to different actors involved in the TV Oak conflict were similar in the national and local newspapers when it came to causers and helpers of the problem. One exception was statements naming private individuals as causers and complaining about protesters being responsible for traffic problems in the area. In regards to allocating the role of the victim, the empirical results revealed that the local newspaper represented the city authority in question (Parks and Streets Department) as being threatened. The results of this study can be used to gain a deeper understanding of conflicts surrounding urban trees around the world. The results indicated good contact between the local newspaper and the authorities, resulting in a specific direction of the reporting. The results of the framing analysis identified different priorities of perspectives in the local and national newspapers. The national newspaper devoted more attention to the hazards associated with the TV Oak, whereas the local newspaper tended more towards an anthropomorphism of the oak, owing to the tone taken in many letters to the editor.

**Author Contributions:** For research articles with several authors, a short paragraph specifying their individual contributions must be provided. The following statements should be used “Johan Östberg and Daniela Kleinschmit conceived and designed the experiments; Johan Östberg performed the experiments; Johan Östberg and Daniela Kleinschmit analyzed the data; Johan Östberg and Daniela Kleinschmit wrote the paper.” Authorship must be limited to those who have contributed substantially to the work reported.

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## Appendix A

**Table A1.** Number of statements for the different article styles and framing of the statements, shown as a percentage for each framing.

Style of Article	Front Page	Report	Announcement	Interview	Reportage	Letters to the Editor	Editorial or Comment	Other
<i>Number of Statements</i>	2	101	11	14	1	26	8	10
Art	0%	4%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Cultural-historical	0%	23%	18%	21%	0%	38%	50%	30%
Anthropomorphism	50%	11%	18%	21%	0%	31%	25%	30%
Power play (measure of power)	0%	7%	9%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%
Hazards	50%	48%	45%	29%	100%	19%	13%	40%
Science	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Technology	0%	7%	9%	14%	0%	8%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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