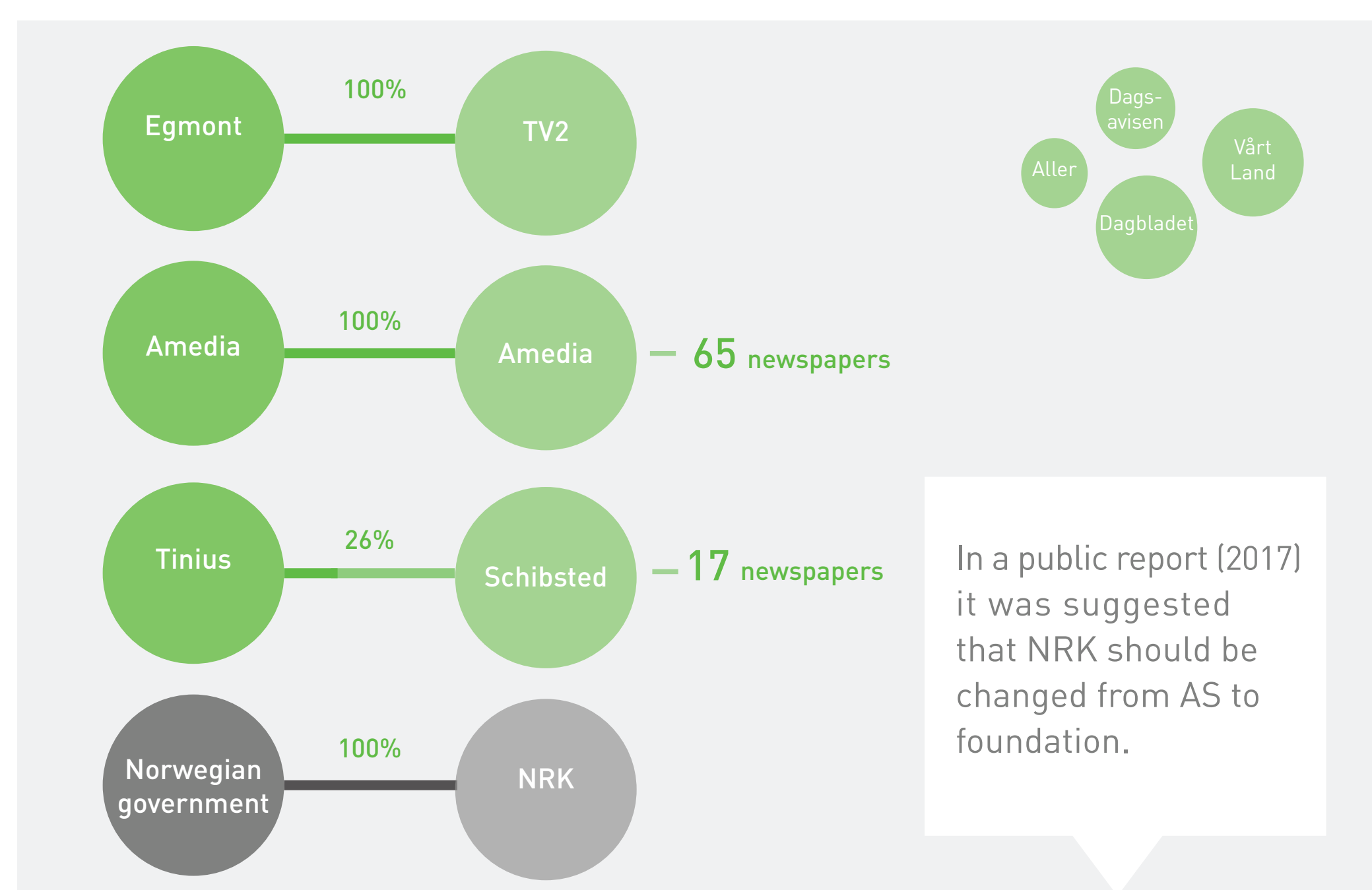


# Foundations in Norwegian media

Foundations has recently become the dominant form of ownership in major Norwegian media. Will this bring stability for the future?



## Historical background

Norwegian newspapers were mostly owned by or affiliated to political parties from 1884 until the 1970-ies. As profit normally not was the main goal and not expected from owners, in effect newspapers were in foundation-like state of ownership.

This radically changed in the 1980-ies, as the link between parties and press had been weakened, newspapers were up for sale. Major national media corporations emerged, acquiring most of the newspapers, making profit an important goal and for a few years experienced strong growth, also internationally, as newspaper-based companies, publicly listed. The downturn of print has radically changed the scene – making foundations now a critical part of ownership of Norwegian news media.

Regulation of ownership was established for all media, not least because of strong concentration of ownership. Specific media regulation has been completely removed and today is carried out by general law of competition.

## The Current Situation

Norwegian press in 2017 are dominated by two major media corporations: Schibsted and Amedia. Schibsted owns the largest Norwegian newspapers, but is mostly focused upon international online classified advertising. Amedia is focused upon local media in Norway. Foundations are critical in the current corporate structure of both Schibsted and Amedia, directly and indirectly.

The private PSB TV 2 is owned by Egmont (Denmark), which is controlled by a foundation. In 2017 a public report also suggested the state PSB NRK should again become a foundation. Should this happen, foundations would completely dominate as way of ownership in Norwegian media, as NRK is by far the largest Norwegian media corporation.

## Importance of project

Concentration of ownership in the 1990-ies was a big issue in media policy discussions as well as in media research. Ownership by foundations was considered a better way of keeping arms length distance between control of media and political control. Now technology and market forces have lead to foundations dominating media ownership, thus media research should look into foundations, and do transnational comparisons.

## Expected output

There is no doubt that the global technologically driven forces of new media are reshaping both local and national media in ways that were hard to foresee for media corporations and in media policy.

Does the previous expectations for foundations keep up with reality? Have we reached a new balance and understanding of what media ownership should be? And is a foundation-structure stable and strong?



**Johann Roppen**  
Professor, dr.polit,

+47 70 07 50 20  
jr@hivolda.no

## References

- Høst, Sigurd: Avisåret (1994 [...] 2016, Høgskulen i Volda / Institutt for journalistikk, Volda / Fredrikstad [annual report].
- NOU 2010:14 Lett å kome til orde – vanskelig å bli hørt. En moderne mediestøtte.
- NOU 2017:7 Det norske mediemangfoldet – en styrket politikk for borgerne.
- Roppen, Johann (2001): "Med stiftelser kan det gå lukt i fortapelsen", side 67-73 i Grafiana.



**HØGSKULEN I VOLDA**  
Volda University College