THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE INTERNET

CHALLENGES FOR RESEARCH

REACH OUT ☺

Center for Tracking and Society, University of Copenhagen

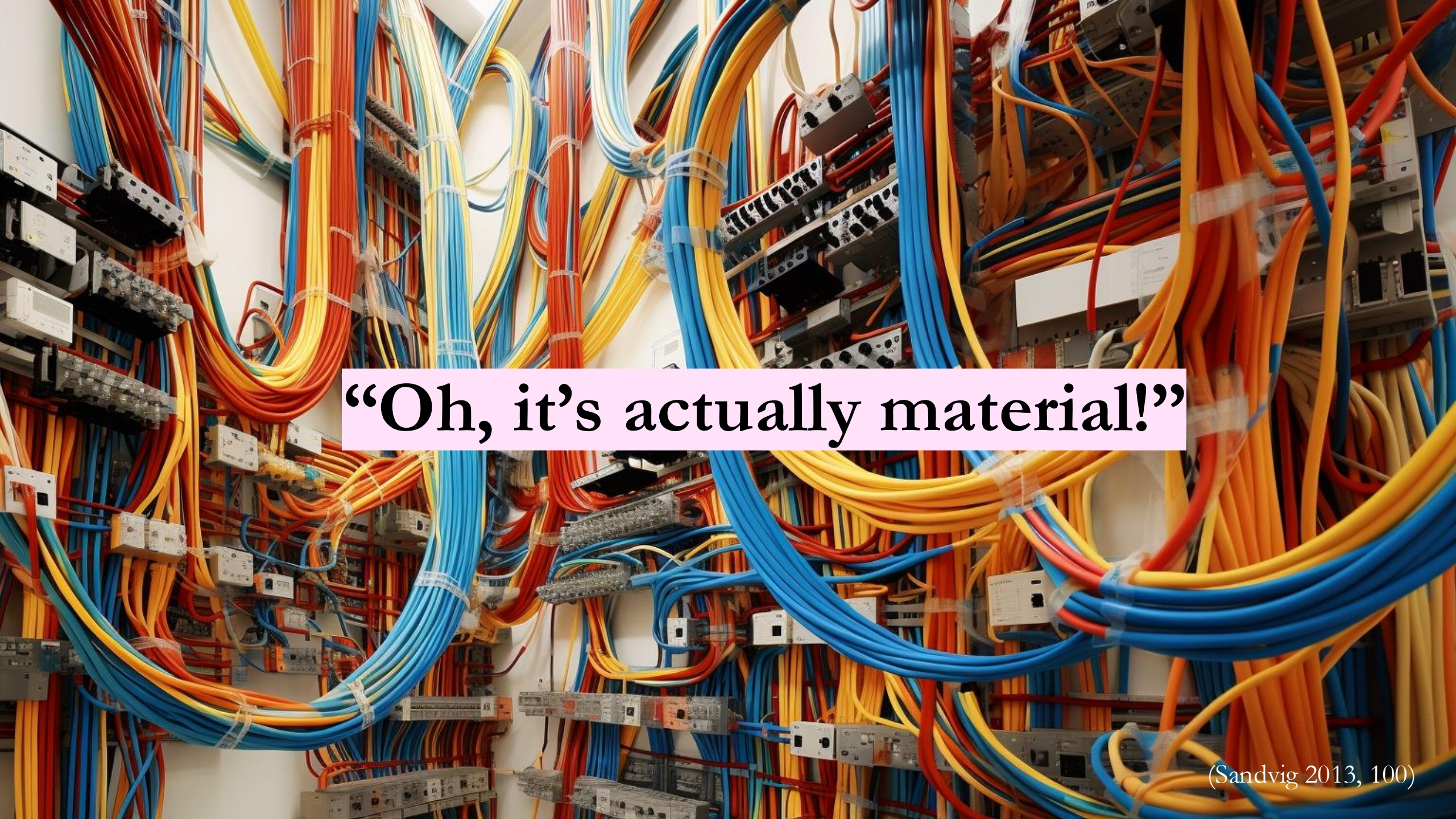**sofie.flensburg@hum.ku.dk / signe.lai@hum.ku.dk**

Digital Infrastructure Think Tank

lai@dig-in.dk / flensburg@dig-in.dk
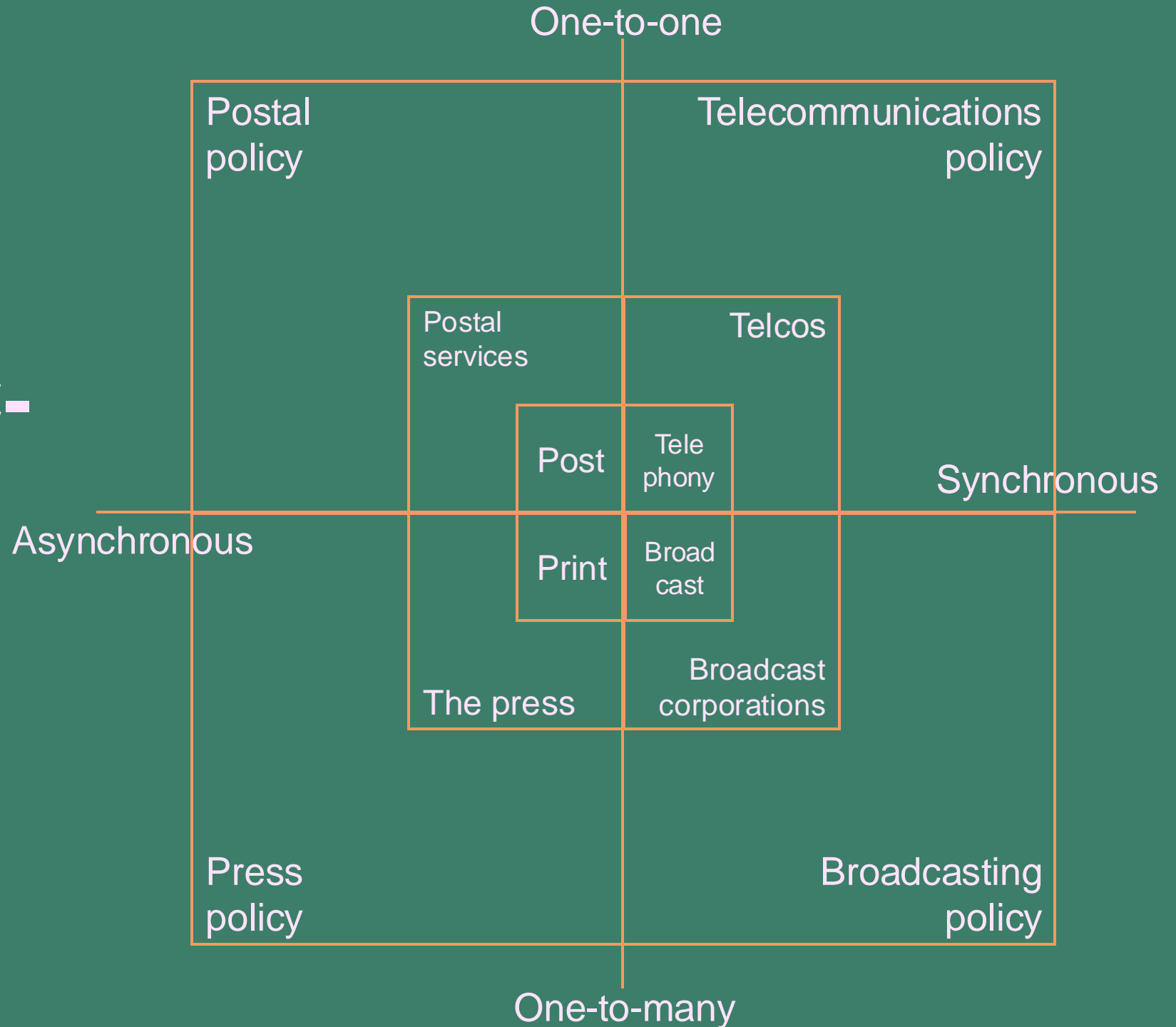
UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Tænketanken
Digital Infrastruktur
OІІOІOOІ

"Oh, it's actually material!"

(Sandvig 2013, 100)

INFRASTRUC-TURES HAVE ALWAYS MATTERED

(Flensburg, 2021, inspired by Bar & Sandvig, 2008)

One-to-one

Postal policy

Telecommunications policy

Postal services

Telcos

Post

Tele phony

Synchronous

Asynchronous

Print

Broad cast

The press

Broadcast corporations

Press policy

Broadcasting policy

One-to-many

THE INTERNET AS GPT (Bresnehan 2010; Naughton, 2016)

FOLLOW THE DATA

Access networks

Backbone networks

Applications
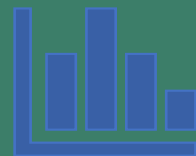
Data

(Flensburg & Lai, 2019)

MAPPING DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
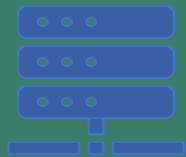

(Flensburg & Lai, 2019)
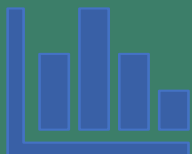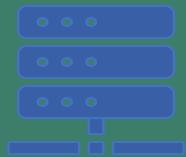
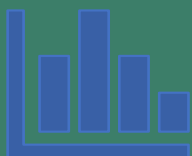# MAPPING DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Infrastructures

What are the existing access networks for digital communication?

What are the existing backbone networks for digital communication?

What are the existing applications for digital communication?

What are the existing tools for collecting and distributing digital communication data?
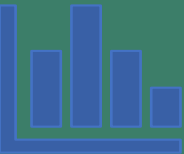
(Flensburg & Lai, 2019)

MAPPING DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

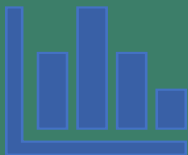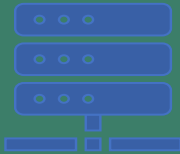|	Infrastructures	Markets
	What are the existing access networks for digital communication?	Who owns and controls digital access networks?
	What are the existing backbone networks for digital communication?	Who owns and controls digital backbone networks?
	What are the existing applications for digital communication?	Who owns and controls digital communication applications?
	What are the existing tools for collecting and distributing digital communication data?	Who owns and controls the tools for collecting and distributing digital communication data?

(Flensburg & Lai, 2019)
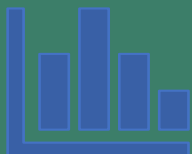
MAPPING DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

	Infrastructures	Markets	States
	What are the existing access networks for digital communication?	Who owns and controls digital access networks?	How does the state regulate digital access networks?
	What are the existing backbone networks for digital communication?	Who owns and controls digital backbone networks?	How does the state regulate digital backbone networks?
	What are the existing applications for digital communication?	Who owns and controls digital communication applications?	How does the state regulate digital communication applications?
	What are the existing tools for collecting and distributing digital communication data?	Who owns and controls the tools for collecting and distributing digital communication data?	How does the state regulate the collection and distribution of digital communication data?

(Flensburg & Lai, 2019)

COMPARING ACCESS NETWORKS

COMPARING BACKBONES

COMPARING APPLICATIONS

COMPARING DATA SERVICES

COMPARING BROADBAND MARKETS
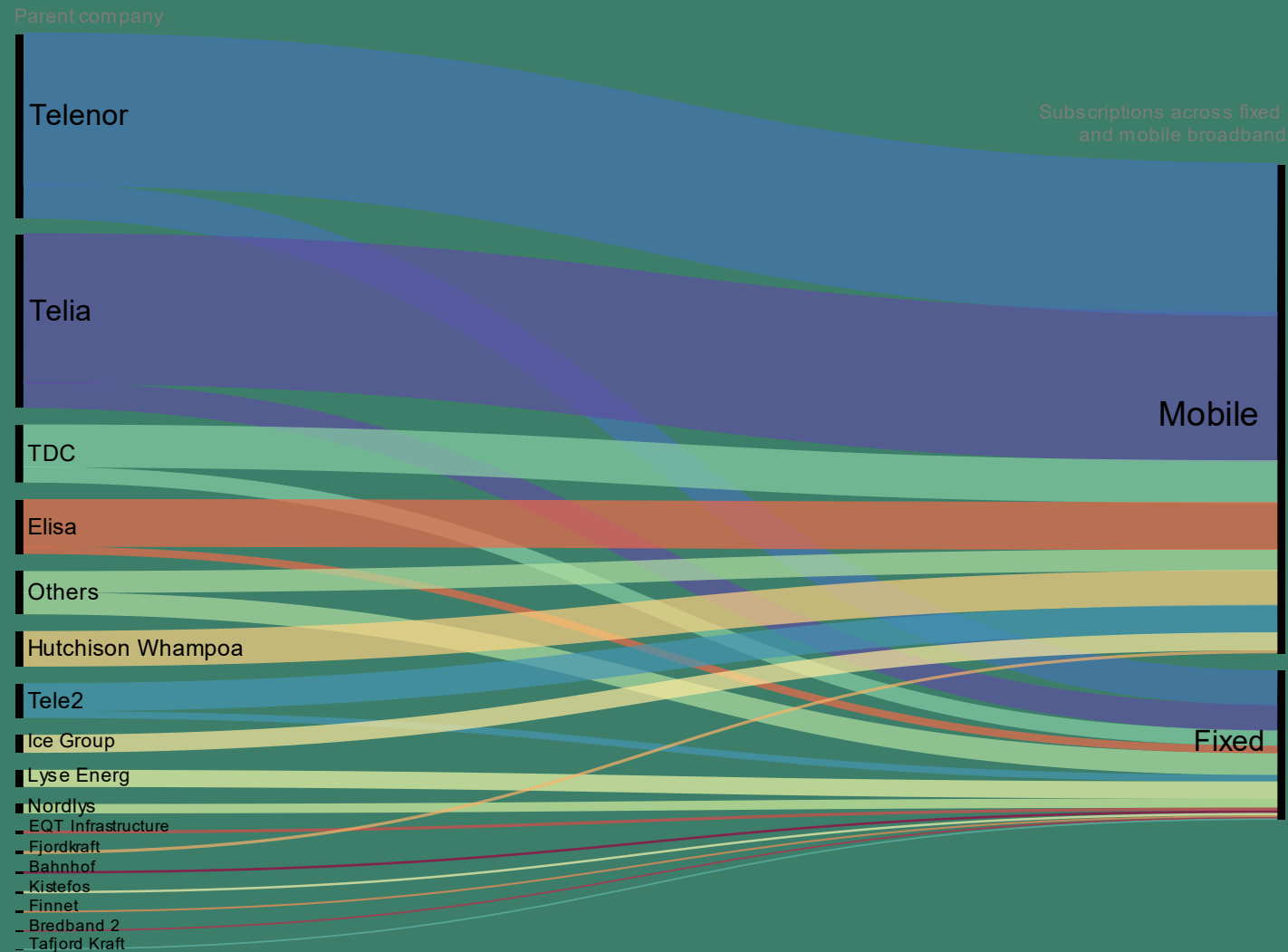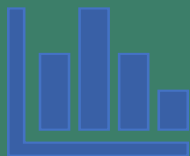
COMPARING BACKBONE MARKETS

Submarine cables

Internet Exchange Points

COMPARING APPLICATION MARKETS

Country — Infrastructures — Parent

Country: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland

Infrastructures: app, website

Parent: Alphabet, Microsoft, Meta, Danish state, Samsung, Norwegian state, Schibsted, ByteDance Ltd., Netflix, Snap Inc, Spotify, Amazon, Swedish state, Alma Media, Finnish state

COMPARING DATA MARKETS

Country · Website/app · Parent company
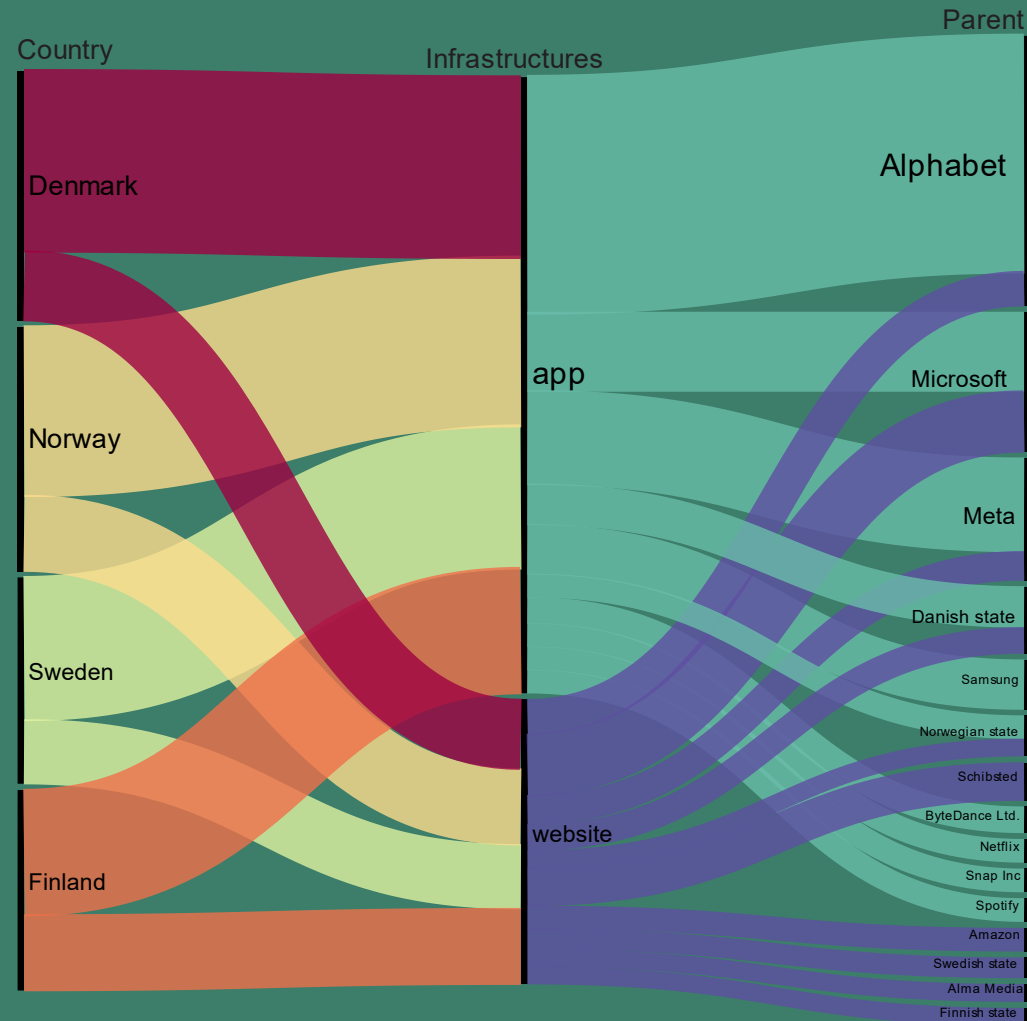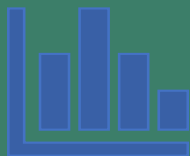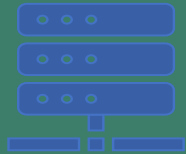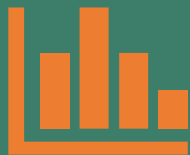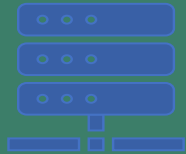
AT THE MERCY OF THE OBJECTS, WE STUDY

Volatile data sources

Designed for purposes other than ours

Pre-defined indicators & variables

THANK YOU

sofie.Flensburg@hum.ku.dk &

signe.lai@hum.ku.dk

Center for Tracking and Society
University of Copenhagen

Digital Infrastructure Think Tank

UNIVERSITY OF
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Tænketanken
Digital Infrastruktur
OIIoIoOl