

JOURNALISTS' USE OF CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM

ACOMPARISON BETWEEN NORWAY AND ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

A movement of journalists around the world is talking about a new concept called ‘constructive journalism’. But what is it? And how is it practiced? This thesis together with a supplementary documentary examine how journalists talk about the concept, explain it and practice it. This might be helpful since the concept has been criticized for being defuse. It is critical to find out how a concept may inspire journalists because they are to inform and inspire the public. Constructive journalism can be practiced by looking for solutions, being balanced or facilitating debate (Borg, 2018). In the state broadcaster Amhara Mass Media Agency, in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, journalists mostly used constructive journalism to create dialogue via local events. This makes much sense in a culture with a history of high levels of self-censorship, imprisonment of journalists and violence between ethnic and religious groups. Further north, in Norway, journalists at ‘Here and Now’ (NRK) use the same concept but without accompanying events. Since they implemented the constructive journalism as a principle in 2017 many of the journalists at ‘Here and Now’ noticed changes in their news culture. Through the use of qualitative methods, this study includes 13 in-depth interviews from journalists at AMMA and ‘Here and Now’ as well as unstructured observations and content analysis from six media productions. The study found some similarities, but also some differences in the way that two different media companies and media cultures interpret and practice constructive journalism. The findings support the adaption theory which holds that a concept like constructive journalism will be adapted according to a specific environment. Findings show that both agencies sought to create balance in their news framing by using a deliberate and less adversarial approach. Thus, the concept has universal implications.

Acknowledgements

The beginning of this master project actually began more than ten years ago, when I was standing in a ‘forsaken’ church in Rwanda watching old clothes and worn out slippers from people killed in a genocide. Our guide, Martin Garner, a British man, no longer with us, believed in a changed community. Ten years after our trip, I met a Rwandan student during my master’s exchange in Kenya. I was really surprised to hear his stories from a changed Rwanda. “*How could that possibly be?*” I wondered. I want to thank Martin his persistence to spread hope.

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Acronyms

ADP - Amhara Democratic Party

AMMA – Amhara Mass Media Agency

ATV – Amhara Television

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CJN - Constructive Journalism Network

DAB - Digital Audio Broadcasting

DR – Danish Radio

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

EPRDF - Ethiopian People´s Revolutionary Democratic Front

ESA- EFTA Surveillance Authority

GC – Gregorian (European) calendar

GPA – Grade point average

NRK – Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation

PSM – Public Service Media

SD – Secure Digital

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

'I believe that the journalism which succeeds best...is...constructive'

-Walter Williams.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background for this study

Journalists have an obligation to provide people with the information they need to be self-governing by presenting news in a proportional way (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2014, 9). But, what does it mean to truly be proportional in a world divided by us and them, where citizens and opinions appear to be increasingly polarized, the news' value of fairness is considered subjective, and where journalistic independence is considered an *illusion*? Within the profession a seemingly new reporting philosophy, *constructive journalism*, is gaining ground in trying to address such professional dilemmas.

One of the aims of constructive journalism is to redress distorted media narratives. For example, although the world has never been less violent than it is now, the image of a dangerous world has never been mediated so effectively (Rosling, Rönnlund, & Rosling, 2018, p. 114). People often believe that the conditions of the world are much worse than what they really are. Arguably, we are often told a manufactured and manipulated version of the truth (Jackson, 2019, p. 12).

Around 1970, poverty rates decreased so sudden that the total number of people living in extreme poverty fell dramatically, followed by a constant drop for three decades (Roser & Esteban, 2013). There has also been a decrease in the number of natural disasters today than there were in 2015 (Richie & Roser, 2019). Critics say that positive news like these are not covered (Rosling et al., 2018, p. 111). The problem is that such stories often do not qualify as *newsworthy*, since they do not fulfil the criteria of conflict.

When the media portray stories on 'rich versus poor' or 'good versus evil', they add to people's general assumptions. We often draw wrong conclusion and believe that democracy always leads to peace, better health, economic growth, and social progress, but in fact countries which improved mostly on social and economic progress are *not*

formed by democracy (Rosling et al., 2018, p. 200). This indicates that the world is more nuanced than we think.

Occasionally, news organizations supplement with positive feel-good stories in order to balance negative news. But positive reporting is mostly of *secondary importance* – a priority that the audience may not have agreed with from the very beginning (Benesch, 1998).

Since the journalists' first obligation is to serve the truth (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2014, 9) one may ask *what truth?* The danger of expressing a distorted picture of reality can be that people stop believing in solutions, because they wrongly think that the world is not getting any better (Rosling et al., 2018, p. 69). This is what a new movement in journalism is trying to do something about – called constructive journalism.

1.2. A casestudy

What journalists think about *social responsibility* may be colored by their socio-political system and by their media organization. When journalistic autonomy is *low*, it is suggested that there is a higher probability for new journalistic models to appear in everyday language (Amiel & Powers, 2019, p. 236).

Critics have found that concepts like constructive journalism or solutions journalism can be described as a 'Trojan horse'. Apparently, such reporting styles make journalists engage in marketing discourses that were previously viewed as unethical practice. At the same time these new practices are innovative and satisfying to work with (Amiel & Powers, 2019, p. 243). Several factors in the market industry like economic instability, lower status of local journalists, and organizational alterations may likely effect journalistic autonomy (Amiel & Powers, 2019).

In general, there is a necessity to understand the circulation path of journalism models, from origin to appropriation, in order to understand *how* these models may produce convergence or divergence in journalism practice across nations (Amiel & Powers, 2019, p. 244). This equally counts for the model of constructive journalism.

Little has been done to critically examine the convergence of constructive journalism *cross nationally*. Since a multiple-case study can improve theory building (Bryman, 2012, p. 74) this study finds itself unique by comparing two cases and getting access to circumstances in which a theory about the concept will or will not hold (Yin, 2009)

This study mainly emphasizes on the journalists work habits from an organizational point of view. In addition, it looks at produced media content to examine how constructive journalism is used in practice. It seeks to examine the operation of generative causal mechanisms in contrasting contexts (Bryman, 2012, p. 74).

One aspect is to look at one case in Norway, where little research has been conducted on constructive journalism⁴¹ and where the national public broadcaster NRK claims to be using the concept (Ringen, 2017). A contrasting case is Ethiopia where the freedom of speech has been historically low, and where the country went through famine (1983-1985) when Norway was busy digging oil (from 1969 and onward). The two different media environments should presumably cause different ways to approach such a concept as constructive journalism.

1.3. Research objective

The overall objective of the research is to explore the differences in the way constructive journalism is interpreted and performed in two media organizations in Norway and Ethiopia.

1.4. Research questions

- i. *How does each of the media organizations NRK and Amhara Mass Media Agency understand the concept 'constructive journalism'?*
- ii. *How does the practice of 'constructive journalism' differ between NRK and Amhara Mass Media Agency?*
- iii. *Based on research data from Norway and Ethiopia, does the term 'constructive journalism' have a universal application?*

⁴¹ One study has been conducted on the constructive coverage of the drug-situation in Norway (Løkkevik, 2018).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. The origin of the concept 'constructive journalism'

'Constructive journalism' appeared first as a term in an op-ed piece in the Danish newspaper *Politiken* written by Ulrik Haagerup, the former executive director of news at Danish Broadcasting Corporation (Haagerup, 2008). The article discusses the traditional style of news journalism in capturing exposure, victims of conflict and drama in news reporting. In this piece the author encourages journalists to nuance the picture by applying the "Lene-effect". Lene is used as an example of a woman who made a positive impact in a small municipality in Denmark by helping immigrant women getting jobs. The op-ed brings forth a set of new news criteria which Haagerup calls constructive journalism (Haagerup, 2008).

As a result of the technological and financial crisis in media, constructive journalism has sparked a new debate among media practitioners and outsiders (Gates, 2018; Bro 2019). In Norway, the concept was introduced by NRK radio, where it was discussed in the aftermath of the Berlin terror attack in 2016 (Ringen, 2017). Facing increased challenges in the media industry, journalists have started to become aware of their allegedly negative bias, a result from external manipulation and neglect of internal objectivity (Gyldensted, 2011, p. 13). They are switching to alternative ways to practice journalism.

Today one can see a growing global 'movement' of journalists advocating for a concept that offers alternative ways of representing news, where the criteria of conflict are no longer dominating (Weldingh, 2018, p. 88). The opening of the Constructive Institute in Denmark 2017 marked an important achievement for the constructive journalism movement and has initiated academic conversations around the concept's definition. The institute in itself is independent, cooperating with Aarhus University in central Jutland of Denmark. It collaborates with United Nations and International Media Support with a mission to: "*combat trivialization and degradation of journalism*" (Constructive Institute, 2019).

A related term, 'solutions journalism', is similar to that of 'constructive journalism', but is more commonly used in the United States (Amiel & Powers, 2019; Bro 2019).

Solutions journalism typically comprises reports on peace-building progress, a broad response to social problems, including international and local perspectives, initiatives and innovation (Jackson, 2019; McIntyre & Sobel 2017a). Since solutions journalism is used as an umbrella concept for a set of reporting practices (Hermans & Drok, 2018, p. 685)⁴², the terms ‘solutions journalism’ and ‘constructive journalism’ will be used intertwined in this thesis. It is still important to mention that constructive journalism may cover a broader meaning than solutions journalism. Where solutions journalism is primarily about the news angle and finding potential solutions to a problem, the term ‘constructive journalism’ *also* comprises being nuanced and engaging audience by facilitating debates (Borg, 2018). Since both constructive journalism and solutions journalism have been understood and applied differently, it is relevant to look into the meaning of both terms as they supplement and conjunct each other.

2.2. Application of ‘constructive journalism’

Constructive journalism did not appear as an isolated phenomenon (Hermans & Drok, 2018). It is a concept to be contextualized and could be applied either through homogenizing⁴³ or adaption (Amiel & Powers, 2019, p. 235). According to the first mentioned convergence hypothesis, national differences among media are considered to be weakening. Nevertheless, this theory has not quite been substantiated. Another theory that gives a more exact understanding is adaption theory, emphasizing that national contexts shape the way journalism models are applied as a *continuation* of the existing journalistic practice (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 282). Adaption theory will be used in this thesis as a framework to understand the implementation of constructive journalism in countries as for instance Ethiopia.

Moreover, the national context is equally shaped by certain factors and can be influenced by trends such as internationalization, individualization and informalization (Drok, 2017), all of which Drok (2018) describes as typical for the 21st century. Internationalization concerns an increasing movement and growing economic and political interdependence among nations. Individualization is when individuals break away from traditional and social structures as is evident in many places of the world, and lastly there is informalization causing ranked structures to fade away. According to Hermans & Drok (2018), all of these factors have forced journalists to rethink their

⁴² Research on solution journalism is similarly referred to via Constructive Journalism Networks website <http://constructivejournalism.network>.

⁴³ an example is through ‘westernization’.

practice. Movements such as the constructive journalism, as well as other journalistic reform movements, appears on this basis (Hermans & Drok, 2018, p. 679).

2.2.1. The diffusion of a philosophy

One of the ways to rethink journalistic practice has been to emphasize a constructive narrative in news stories. Constructive journalism is practiced by different media houses throughout the world and has become center of attention among researchers (Nørgaard, 2014). It might be called a new 'trend' or even a 'paradigm shift' in journalism. It happens in a time when the journalistic role is changing - in values and in interest. Journalists are less likely than before to obsess over having monopolies and more occupied with building alliances and creating dialogue (Eide, 2009, p. 14). Arguably, the role of journalists as gatekeepers has shifted towards a *monitoring role* of democracy (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). It acknowledges journalists to stand out from other professions in society and offers them *another role*.

In the past, journalists would never raise a question in their stories that they were unable to answer. Instead they would "write around holes" in the stories, to demonstrate that they were rightly so "gatekeepers" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014, p. 118). However, this changed dramatically due to the technology of the twenty-first century, where the 'unbundling' of platforms affected distribution, so that audiences experience less connection to the original source (Jørgensen & Westergaard, 2018, p. 26). But the media crisis is not only caused by digitalization. It can also be viewed as a result of the historical development, which therefore needs more discussion.

2.2.2. The emergence of new ideologies

Journalism practice changed in the early 1900s when a new newspaper ideology arose in the USA. Journalism went from being activating and agitating towards the public into an ideology of professionalism and a quest for the 'objective' (Jørgensen & Westergaard, 2018, p. 22)

A similar change took place in Europe, when newspapers after World War II suffered from serious lack of income (Jørgensen & Westergaard, 2018, p. 22). As a result, newspapers became more dependent on audiences to survive, abandoned their political party affiliation and changed their ambition from a social and collective purpose into a market objective. Journalists changed their values into what Jay Rosen (1999) depicts as "a view from nowhere" reporting mutually disagreeing voices, often initiating more polarization, without real pursuit of truth.

Parallely, a movement of public journalism began in the early 1990s as a result from the decline of journalistic authority (Hardt, 1999, p. 197). Pioneers of public journalism argued that the news media not only should inform the public, but also facilitate public debate and engage citizens (Rosen, 1999; Merritt 1995). As maintained by Herman & Drok:

This type of deliberation □public journalism□ was seen as the foundation of a democratic society. The more groups and layers of society were included in the conversation, the higher its democratic value (Hermans & Drok, 2018, p. 680).

The constructive journalism movement, which emanated a decade later, has a similar purpose in the aim to engage the public more. As upheld by Gyldensted; “*We must invite actors who are not politicians. It is progressive exciting journalistic thinking*” (Gyldensted in Holmaas, 2019, p. 53). But constructive journalism differs from public journalism and does not necessarily focus on a political process (McIntyre, 2015, p. 12).

The thought of journalism being constructive may not be new⁴⁴ (Bro, 2019). As early as 1904 Joseph Pulitzer⁴⁵ described ‘constructiveness’ as an active obligation to ensure ‘the public good’ connecting it with the importance of offering *public service* (Bro, 2019, p. 509). In light of the journalistic history of professionalism there could be objections from journalists to emphasize *the public* and become socially accountable for their impact. These defenses may come as a result from the journalistic value of autonomy (Hermans & Drok, 2018, p. 687), as will be discussed in the following chapters.

⁴⁴The idea of a constructive type of journalism was actually expressed a century ago by the founder of the first American School of Journalism Walter Williams, who solemnly declared the word *constructive* in the Journalist’s Creed (Williams, 1908). It is a creed used by many journalists ever since.

⁴⁵Who established the Pulitzer prize.

2.3. The historical development of journalistic values and dynamics

The ethical concerns in journalism have been under discussion for a long time. Back in 1943, a commission in Illinois, known as the Hutchins' Commission, came together to discuss and answer the question whether the freedom of the press was in danger. This is what they observed:

The press can be inflammatory, sensational, and irresponsible. If it is, it and its freedom will go down in the universal catastrophe. On the other hand, the press can do its duty by the new world that is struggling to be born. It can help create a world community by giving men everywhere knowledge of the world and of one another, by promoting comprehension and appreciation of the goals of a free society that shall embrace all men.

(Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947, p. 4).

The commission held 17 meetings and studied 176 documents. After the discussions, the commission led by Robert M. Hutchins gave their recommendations to the press. The commission criticized the blurring lines between advertising and news, thus recommending the news to serve the public. The question may be, if the discussion is still pertinent today as so many conditions have changed, including the growth of digitalization and new power balances.

In the 1950s, when the party press in Europe declined, the balance within the European media system changed. The division was now between journalistic and commercial logics as opposed to political logics (Hallin & Mancini, 2017, p. 163). According to Hallin & Mancini (2017), the European media systems changed as a result of the development of commercial television. The power dynamic has created the political conflict that we witness today, and it may even increase by some forms of reporting.

Historically, the United States set the standard of ethical codes for journalists when the code of the American Society of News Editors was posted in 1923. The leak of Pentagon Papers (1971) and the Watergate scandal (1972) suggested Western journalists to start using a patriotic style of reporting (Gyldensted, 2011; Jackson 2019). But when journalists report only on scandals, it tends to cause more division in society than progress. It actually causes politicians to worry how to establish contact with the public through media, since contact mostly occurs through mediated conflicts (Haagerup in Holmaas, 2019, p. 42) – even to the degree that some politicians will quit

their jobs or leave politics. While the situation is heading in one direction, it has been described by Peter Bro as a “death spiral” (Bro in Holmaas, 2019, p. 165). Due to these reasons, journalists have started to consider another practice.

2.3.1. Internal disagreements on the practice of news journalism

Up until today, the discussion about news values remains profuse. The introduction of ‘constructive news’ has sparked a debate whether journalism should not only include problems but also find or search possible answers. The purpose of journalism will then become more future-oriented, by including an additional “W” question – asking “*what next?*” (Meier, 2018, p. 776). Asking this question may change the framing of a news story and is therefore likely to be essential.

In order to report constructively, McIntyre and Gyldensted (2017) argue that journalists should make use of alternative interview techniques, that of an *anthropologist* or a *future scientist*. An anthropologist typically asks questions like; “How did this affect you?” and “What is your explanation for A and B?”, while the future scientist would ask more directional questions like; “How would you approach this problem?” and “What action should be taken in order to do A or B?” (McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2018, p. 669).

Asking such alternative questions may provide more context and increase reader reflection.

By asking these kinds of questions, the press can provide service for the local community. Still, there could be a concern with how journalists maintain their autonomy. Constructive journalism may cause new dilemmas, for example when the public expects a journalist to play the role of a *community builder*. The problem typically occurs when the journalist is positioned to become vulnerable towards business promoters. In such situations a level of objectivity is needed but may be particularly hard to attain in transitional societies where press freedom is weak. On the other hand, constructive journalism could play an important role in transitional societies in encouraging the audience and helping raise trust in media⁴⁶ (Allam, 2019). The reporting could be a way for journalists to change their self-censored reporting by

⁴⁶ This was revealed in a research project involving interviews with 21 journalists in Tunisia and Egypt.

highlighting a problem instead of suppressing it (Allam, 2019, p. 1289). To this extent, constructive reporting carries both potentials and dilemmas.

General opinions about to *which extent* a journalist should reflect objectivity is an ongoing discussion. Among a fairly recent survey study at Oslo Metropolitan University of 471 Norwegian respondents from different disciplines⁴⁷, 55 percent agreed that “*it is difficult to be objective, but we should still uphold the ideal of objectivity*” (Krøvel, 2016, p. 261). Even though a minority of journalism teachers were insisting on traditional norms such as detachment and neutrality, journalists were not persuaded to use advocacy journalism. While objectivity has often been interpreted as ‘balance’, it means that a journalist should be able to make judgements and evaluations instead of showing transparency about the evaluations on complex issues. Nevertheless, “balance” can equally be claimed a *myth*, since it often seems to serve the interest of its own media (Schudson, 2001; Wijnberg in Gyldensted 2015).

Promoters of constructive journalism will typically question the balance within the framing of news. Since framing is an active and strategic process, it is important to consider twice the representation of the *whole* news frame. Instead of *only* emphasizing conflict-stories, constructive journalism stresses to balance stories of conflict and obstruction with progress and collaboration (McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2017; 2018). From balancing news stories, the audience will receive a variety of information where different news can potentially construct broader dynamics.

2.4 The aim and reach of constructive journalism

One question that arises is how constructive journalism can practically be implemented. Experiences differ from one media house to another. Some mainstream media have introduced sections in their outlets where they emphasize constructive news. Cases in point are the *New York Times*’ “Fixes” and BBC’s “World Hacks” (Atanasova, 2019). Other outlets have incorporated constructive news into their whole publication, such as the British magazine *Positive News* which was relaunched in 2016 and was later followed by other media outlets.⁴⁸

The difference from mainstream outlets may, however, lay on the *financial aspect*, as publications like *Positive News* will typically be funded by membership fees and crowd-funding campaigns. News outlets that adopt

⁴⁷ 22 teachers, 98 students and 145 journalists.

⁴⁸ *Sparks News, Incline, Perspective Daily, South Africa: The Good News, Reporters d’Espoirs, Yes!, Orthos Logos and Noticias Positivas* (Green, 2019)

constructive journalism in their regular work will typically implement training programs for journalists to learn how to incorporate it into their daily work. For instance this is practiced by The Danish Broadcasting Service, that has made constructive news a daily priority (Haagerup, 2017).

When adding constructive elements in their daily coverage, several broadcasters have reported increased traffic (Gyldensted in Heslof, 2015). In 2014, Cathrine Gyldensted, journalist and author of a handbook in constructive journalism, announced that constructive journalism was “*on the edge of a breakthrough*” (Nørgaard, 2014). The movement mostly received attention in Northern European countries where several media houses gradually have either started to change their practice or include constructive elements with their existing journalistic practice. To Drok & Herman (2018), it comes as no surprise given the stronger traditions of public service in Northern Europe as well as the high interest in civic journalism (Hermans & Drok, 2018, p. 687).

Constructive journalism was once associated with a small group of practitioners, but has now grown into a movement (Gyldensted in Holmaas, 2019; Atanasova 2019). In 2017, the founder of Constructive Institute, Ulrik Haagerup, said he aimed to change news culture within five years. This goal will be attempted by being present with hubs (with or without any partners) in places of Europe, North America, Asia and Africa⁴⁹ (Haagerup, 2017, p. 152).

2.5. Local difficulties when applying constructive journalism

Although constructive journalism has become a popular concept worldwide, there may in some cases be structural problems requiring other types of reporting than constructive journalism. It can in some cases worsen the media-society situation and add to unbalanced power dynamics (Amiel & Powers, 2019, p. 235). This seemed to be the case on St. Maarten, a small island in the Caribbean. Here, journalists sought to involve different groups of islanders by using constructive journalism principles. A research done Rotmeijer (2019) found that the practice had counterproductive effects. Critical issues failed to be addressed and gave local elites freedom to serve their own

⁴⁹ Together with Constructive Institute Haagerup plans to offer training in Africa (personal interview, Ulrik Haagerup, January 2019).

interests in the name of nation-building. Maintained by Rotmeijer, a careful analysis between ‘economic development interests’ from that of ‘market-led intentions’ should be considered, before implementing such concept into a transitional community (Rotmeijer, 2019, p. 10). Constructive journalism should not be obscured by financial interests. Finally, constructive journalism is not to be mixed with *advocacy*, because it obliges to apply a certain level of objectivity (Lough & McIntyre, 2018). Constructive reporting may nevertheless embrace the serving of *sustainable businesses*, securing the benefits of the broader community (Atanasova, 2019, p. 708).

Constructive journalism could be a form of ‘reorientation’ while it changes the way journalists view and reevaluate their work⁵⁰ (Amiel & Powers, 2019, p. 245). For example, as Ciftci points out, the solutions journalism network points towards possible *revenue generation* (Ciftci, 2019, p. 6). Because constructive journalism has been connected to the so-called labs⁵¹ it may be understood as a way of extracting *public relations*⁵². Resuming, constructive journalism can *potentially* be understood as a way to run political or commercial influence (Rotmeijer, 2019; Meier, 2018).

2.6 The potential impact of constructive stories

Solutions stories are told to have a significant impact about the narratives in the world (Jackson, 2019, p. 13). The constructive stories by nature challenges the well-known slogan “*if it bleeds, it leads*” (Haagerup, 2017) and some reporters do get surprised when reality looks better than expected (Gyldensted, 2015). Tom Kristiansen⁵³, a NRK correspondent locally known as “The voice from Africa” applies constructive journalism techniques. He was surprised when he visited Rwanda 10 years after the genocide and found reconciliation between tribes. Rather than reporting stories capturing bloody stories on conflict he reported a beautiful story of reconciliation (Holmaas, 2019, p. 153). However, what seems apparent in today’s news scene is *lack*

⁵⁰ However, this criticism refers to the potential risks when applying the practice and therefore not the theory behind it.

⁵¹ Labs are meant for journalists to stay more in touch with their audience.

⁵² This was discovered through a research project in France (between 2015 and 2016), conducting interviews among six daily local newspapers observing that constructive journalism may be used as a mere way of extracting business objectives (Amiel & Powers, 2019, p. 240).

⁵³ Tom Kristiansen recently won a broadcasting speech price for bringing ‘Africa closer’ (Christiansen, 2020)

*of interest in international news*⁵⁴ (Moeller, 1999; Mitchell, Simmons, Matsa, & Silver, 2018). According to Moeller, this will typically tempt Western media to exaggerate news stories to attract more audiences, by for instance referencing certain metaphors or using certain imagery that local audience will easily understand (Moeller, 1999). The problem seems to be that these news stories will typically create more distance and less understanding.

Constructive journalism provides space for a 'counter-narrative' with the potential to create a nuanced and less stereotypical picture. In the Central African Republic, where Western and Chinese media were covering the outbreak of Ebola virus, a multiple-case study involving Chinese and British media found that it is typical for international media to use techniques like 'othering' to blame victims. This can potentially create unnecessary stereotypes. On the other hand, constructive journalism principles practiced by *China Daily* contributed to a more effective outlook on health than the Western media did mainly because they avoided stereotyping (Zhang & Matingwina, 2016). Findings meanwhile reveal that BBC, which also covered the outbreak of Ebola virus, recently shifted media approaches from only broadcasting negative stories to a mixture of stories including constructive journalism narratives and lesser use of 'othering'.

2.6.1. Providing audience with different news to make a change

Utilitarianism – doing what benefits the highest number of people – is often proposed as a rationale to why journalists should start applying methods such as constructive journalism. The following examples are mentioned because they show, in numbers, how different research projects have come to the conclusion that constructive journalism provides people with a better narrative and that those exposed to these narratives feel better after the exposure.

For instance, a survey research conducted at the University of Texas (2014) by The Scientist Group Engaging News Project presented 755 U.S. readers with one of six

⁵⁴ According to a study made by Pew Research Center, 37 of 38 countries surveyed are less likely to closely follow international news, than they are to follow local or domestic news. A global median of 57% apparently say they follow international news closely, yet only 16% monitor international news *very* closely (Mitchell, Simmons, Matsa, & Silver, 2018)

news articles focusing on three different issues; homelessness in urban America, lack of clothing among poor people in India and the effect of traumatic experiences on children in American schools. One of the articles focused exclusively on the problem and the other article was similar but added a possible response to solve the problem. Readers of solutions articles reported differences in three areas; they perceived to have more knowledge about the issue, they showed increased interest and believed that the issue could be resolved (Curry & Hammonds, 2014, p. 1)

Yet another example, a dissertation based on positive psychology tested readers' affects and effects of positive emotions and solution information in news stories, found that people who read news story with a solution felt better (McIntyre, 2015).

...The result of the one research question in this study suggests that journalists can indeed include more positive emotion in their stories without individuals perceiving the stories to be less valuable or impactful (McIntyre, 2015, p. 61)

In 2017 a study conducted by McIntyre and Sobel asked participants to read 'shocking stories' and exposed them to graphic about the psychical, mental and sexual abuse that sex trafficked girls experienced. Substantial differences were located between the 'shocking story' and the 'solution story'. Participants reading a 'solution story' felt better than those reading a 'shocking story'⁵⁵ (McIntyre & Sobel, 2017a, p. 45). The findings altogether give an indication that the audience by reading solution stories can feel better and more informed.

2.6.2. Lack of evidence on changed audience behavior

As proposed by Curry & Hammonds (2014) constructive reporting might also support the relationship between audiences and the news organization. They suggest that solutions journalism could have significant effects on readers with the prospective of *impacting society in general*. Undoubtedly, this seems critical in a time of fake news where polarization affects people's lives negatively (Wenzel, 2018).

⁵⁵ Findings additionally revealed that the kind of the story did not inspire readers to share it on social media and neither was it proved that stories changed the motivation of readers intentions into making a pledge (McIntyre & Sobel, 2017a, p. 49).

But constructive journalism may not *necessarily* lead to any great transformation. So far researchers have not been able to measure any *actual behavioral* change among audiences exposed to the solution-based narratives (Meier, 2018; McIntyre 2015). Nonetheless it is likely to cause the audience to *identify* with a solution-oriented photo or story, which then may persuade them to act⁵⁶ (Dahmen et al., 2019).

As mentioned earlier, the Solutions Journalism Network and the Engaging News Project made a study from six news articles. The study suggests that audiences of solution stories will be more likely to share the content with friends and family or on social media (Curry & Hammonds, 2014). This is probably because virality is connected with psychological arousal, as explained by Gyldensted (2015);

Content that evokes high-arousal positive (awe) or negative (anger or anxiety) emotions is more viral.
Content that evokes low-arousal, or deactivating emotions (e.g. sadness) is less viral

(Gyldensted, 2015, p. 22).

From the same study, it has been suggested that stories can affect the relationship between media and their audience (Curry & Hammonds, 2014). The study revealed that 'solution readers' more than 'non-solution readers' will feel better after reading a story, but they will also be prone to read more articles by the journalist and continue reading the same newspaper where the story appeared. This may change the reading habits for the readers, who may feel a stronger attachment to the particular news source (New, 2008).

From another study, Meier arrives at a different conclusion:

The finding that constructive reports tend to be shared more often in social networks where they also receive more "likes" promises short-term effects for a media brand. However, such an experiment is not really suitable for measuring the loyalty to the media company that publishes the constructive report

(Meier, 2018, p. 777).

⁵⁶ This aspect of *identification* was discovered in a study on solution-oriented photos (Dahmen, Thier, & Walth, 2019).

Along this line of thought, emotional response will not necessarily guarantee a loyalty attachment.

The question remains open as to whether short-term, positive emotions can produce a rational effect in the medium-term through repetition or whether a brand be perceived by the audience as positive, helpful and socially responsible by regularly producing constructive reports

(Meier, 2018, p. 777).

From his quantitative research, Meier found no significant changes in rational responses from the audience except from radio features, where audience expressed a wish for more frequency (Meier, 2018, p. 777). The problem is *digitalization*, while distribution of many detached news items on different platforms has caused source unawareness among audience (Jørgensen & Westergaard, 2018, p. 27).

Journalists may still believe solution-oriented journalism causes changes in terms of audience loyalty. A recent research conducted by Alvsen (2018) at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation found that solution-oriented journalists experience it easier to build *trust* with their audience⁵⁷. Furthermore, journalists understood stories to be more *liked, discussed and shared on social media*⁵⁸ (Alvsen, 2018).

2.7. Framing methods in constructive journalism

In journalism there are different ways that a journalist can portray news stories (Bro, 2008). Firstly, a journalist can use information by *passively* or *actively distributing it*. In the last case, the journalist tries to ensure action by others and the degrees to which the journalist shows concern for sustainable problem-solving is individual. Secondly, a

⁵⁷ after they started applying constructive elements to their stories.

⁵⁸ For the first time in ten years, a representative sample of the population associated words such as *trustworthy, relevant, informative, constructive, useful, solution-oriented* and *socially responsible* with the 9:30 p.m. TV avisen (News program). In 2017 the news program was considered the country's most trusted news (Haagerup, 2017, p. 89).

journalist can use sources the way she/he chooses. This can either be by focusing on attitudes and actions among the public (having a *deliberative approach*) or by interviewing more prominent people representing the public (having a *representative approach*). A deliberative approach emphasizing the public can in itself be argued as a means to an end, but not necessarily (Bro, 2019, p. 513). The representative approach will represent the authorities or a spokesperson instead of focusing on local citizens. Journalists practicing solutions journalism may use mutual approaches within the same case.

In a recent report by Constructive Institute, three models are used to determine what constructive journalism may look like in practice. Among those three is *the angle*, where the journalist emphasizes solutions and not only problems (Borg, 2018). But there are additionally two *other* ways to practice constructive journalism; one by viewing stories nuanced and balanced (“*looking for the best obtainable version of the truth, and looking at the world with both eyes*”) and another by facilitating debates where audiences can become more involved (Borg, 2018).

Constructive reporting may be a *genre* of its own. Based on a study on solutions stories, Walth, Dahmen and Thier (2019) found that for instance *investigative reporting* was used as a frequent element in solutions stories but tended not to be adversarial:

Solutions stories often identify a risk as well as a problem response. In that way, solutions stories tend not to be adversarial toward officials, but instead toward the more abstract notions of community inaction and inertia. The one aspect of solutions journalism that showed up in investigative stories more often than others was identifying the response to problems (26.1%). There are two potential reasons for this. First investigative stories sometimes establish the possibility of solutions as another way to hold people in authority accountable. Put another way, investigative stories can document officials’ knowledge, awareness and inaction in the face of potential solutions as yet another way to establish accountability

(Walth, Dahmen, & Thier, 2019, p. 187).

According to their study, solutions stories may not always be the most efficient way to hold people in power accountable. Yet a combination of investigative journalism and solutions stories may be a way to create a meaningful impact and positive reader experience (Walth et al., 2019, p. 187).

As suggested above, solutions stories may include different approaches and characteristics. In general solution narratives tend to have a *forward tilt* and an investigative element (Walth et al., 2019). Yet there are several ways to frame a story with a solution. In 2016 the Journalism Department at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands identified six categories of constructive journalistic elements. These can be used in order to classify the framings in solutions-oriented journalism through the following principles:

- 1) Solutions: When reporting problems add a solution-oriented framing;
- 2) Future orientation: Add a “What now?” question to allow possible productive perspective about the future and about our ability to get there;
- 3) Inclusiveness and diversity: Include more perspectives than usually;
- 4) Empower people: Ask new questions and include a variety to empower so-called victims and experts;
- 5) “The Rosling”⁵⁹: Explain the news and give context by using infographics explaining facts (the point is to cover contexts instead of “incidents”);
- 6) Co-creation – also called The “*De Correspondent*”⁶⁰ where subscribers become “members” (Gyldensted, 2015; Hermans & Gyldensted 2019).

These elements of framing will be used to categorize content in the forthcoming analysis.

⁵⁹ The word “Rosling” origins from the Swedish statistician Hans Rosling who started the organization *Gapminder*. The organization addresses negative media bias (Jackson, 2019, p. 47).

⁶⁰ “De Correspondent” is named after a successful online platform for un-braking news. After only one week the platform had many members and subscribers (Gyldensted, 2015, p. 34)

INTRODUCING THE ETHIOPIAN AND NORWEGIAN MEDIA CULTURES

2.8. The Scandinavian media landscape

Scandinavia has a Northern European Democratic Corporatist media system, which according to Hallin & Mancini (2004) is characterized by a high readership of newspapers, a strong party-political press that has become more and more commercial, a high level of professionalization and institutionalized self-regulation. In order to ensure media diversity and freedom of speech for all, there is generally a strong degree of state intervention through regulations and subsidies.

A high circulation of newspapers is a characteristic for the Norwegian media system (Ohlsen, 2015, p. 18). Regulations and subsidies are to assure the freedom of press in Norway, yet most media operations are self-regulated. In the editorial *rights and duties of the editor*⁶¹ it is stated that it shall be up to the owner to define the purpose of the media outlet (Kulturdepartementet, 2007-2008). Journalists are obligated to follow *the Ethical Code of Practice for the Norwegian Press*⁶² which is a form of ethical guidelines guarded by the *Norwegian Press Complaints Commission*⁶³.

Journalism in Norway is under economic pressure, according to a recent released report by the Norwegian Media Authority (2018)⁶⁴. In 2017 approximately 32.250.000 USD disappeared from the newspapers revenues (Velsand, 2018, p. 5). From 2018 to 2019 the Norwegian government increased the innovation support from approximately 753.000 USD to 1.075.130 USD as a progressive tool to secure newspapers (Velsand, 2018, p. 5).

One thing that binds Nordic countries together is public service (Ohlsen, 2015, p. 62). NRK, the public service broadcaster in Norway, was in 2012 considered the largest Norwegian media company in terms of employees (employing 1700 journalists)

⁶¹ Redaktørplakaten

⁶² Vær-Varsom plakaten

⁶³ Pressens Faglige Utvalg (PFU)

⁶⁴ Medietilsynet

(Hovden, 2012). A majority of 87 percent (above the age of twelve) daily tap into NRK on one of its platforms (NRK, 2018). Furthermore, NRK is listed the third on the Ipsos MMIs list over companies with best reputation in Norway⁶⁵ (NRK, 2018). By use of the so-called ‘arm’s length principle’ (Nissen, 2013, p. 15) politicians agree to keep a certain distance on daily editorial decisions, but are entitled to interfere in principal questions. NRK has a broadcasting council selected by the Government and the Parliament (Moe, 2012, p. 57). Since 1996 NRK has been a State Corporation under the Ministry of Culture⁶⁶ and is regulated by The Norwegian Media Authority⁶⁷. The responsibility of the body is to increase critical awareness among media users and to enable and inform them. Audience have the right to complain. In 2018 NRK received 62 complaints (in radio/TV) through the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission, but none of them led to an adjudication in disfavour of NRK, except one which led to so-called validated criticism⁶⁸ (Medienorge, 2018). The Norwegian Media Authority is responsible to ensure that regulations are followed and supervise the broadcasting law and law about openness in ownership of media (Velsand, 2018, p. 6).

NRK is organized into 17 district offices spread out in the country with its headquarter in Tyholt Trondheim (which is in the middle of Norway) (Kulturdepartementet, 2019a). The organisations operational measure is *functional*, consisting of nine separate divisions (NRK, 2019). In terms of viewership, NRK1 is the leading tv channel in Norway (NRK, 2018). Subsequently, NRK has a dominant position which makes commercial broadcasters compete more internally against each other than against NRK (Velsand, 2018, p. 6). By declaration from The Norwegian Media Council (2018) NRK fulfils substantial criteria to deliver content that adds to the country’s media diversity (Velsand, 2018, p. 6). To propose more nuanced news framing, NRK has since January 2019 been considering constructive journalism a new strategy which entails journalists to use “hope” as a slogan (Hovstad, personal communication, January 2020).

⁶⁵ Four years before 2018, NRK was number one on the Ipsos MMIs list (NRK, 2018)

⁶⁶ From 1933-88 NRK was under the church and education-department and from 1988-96 NRK was a state foundation.

⁶⁷ The Norwegian Media Authority is the administrative and supervisory body for the state serving under The Culture of Ministry to protect freedom of speech, secure legal protection and democracy.

⁶⁸ This criticism was not a direct breach on the rules.

Numbers from the 2018 annual report of NRK reveals that 88 percent of its audience find that NRK offers accurate news, information and documentaries (NRK, 2018). By January 2020, the Norwegian government has decided to abolish the license fee and adopt the Finnish model of progressing tax. This model regulates the financing of public broadcasting through taxes and should generate a fairer solution for lower- income families and households (Helle & Eckblad, 2019).

As a public service institution NRK has to continue justifying their advantaged position acknowledged and granted by the Norwegian government. According to the earlier mentioned report from 2018, NRK succeeds in fulfilling this assignment (Medietilsynet, 2018, p. 119). In 2007 the Parliament decided on a 'NRK poster'⁶⁹ a political management instrument, not as a law, but as a *supplement* to the statute, defining the state's expectations to the state broadcaster⁷⁰.

Since the liberalization of Norwegian broadcasting sector in the 1990s, the state broadcaster found goodwill among most politicians, perhaps with the exception of one party, the right-winged *Progress Party*⁷¹ which has criticized the license fee and claimed that NRK in reality has been a mouthpiece of the social democratic ideology (Wold, 2019; Nord, 2012). Nevertheless, financing public service in Norway has mainly been portrayed as uncontroversial (Moe, 2012)

The legitimizing will depend on audience view on broadcasts. As regulations change into annual amounts, experts find that NRK potentially will receive more attention regarding their community engagement (Rimmerreid et al., 2016, p. 9). One argument for the justification of public service broadcasting is their position to air controversial programs that might offend advertisers (Engblom, 2013, p. 64). This can at best contribute to opposition against a strong market ideology that would otherwise be lost.

2.8.1. A brief history of Norwegian broadcasting

The institutions of public services were originally inspired by Reithian values based on a social ethos (Nissen, 2013, p. 11). Within the confines of a nonprofit principle, public

⁶⁹ 'NRK-plakaten'

⁷⁰ The target document was revised in 2014 and 2017.

⁷¹ Fremskrittspartiet.

service developed from public trust and a resistance to esteem institutional authorities (Nissen, 2013, p. 11). In Norway, the radio has been seen as an important instrument for the nation-building project; to bring education and to reach and inform remote areas in the countryside (Nissen, 2013, p. 12).

NRK had monopoly from 1933 to 1981 (Østbye, 2007, p. 160), The monopoly broke when the first commercial radio channel became established. Between 1981 and 1992 several local radio and television appeared (Eide, 2009; Østbye, 2007). In the 1980s, access to international tv channels were made available via satellite cable, which made distribution of tv cheaper. When the monopoly broke, local radio and tv channels expanded. In 1984 NRK opened its second radio channel, P2, a twin channel to P1 (Hujanen, Weibull, & Harrie, 2013, p. 21). The difference between P1 and P2 is that P1 emphasizes regional reports, music and current affairs where P2 emphasizes more on culture, analysis, social commentary and debate programmes⁷². In 1993 the national covering privately owned commercial financed channel P4 (later with Channel 24 □Kanal 24□) became national competitors of NRK (Hujanen et al., 2013, p. 17) The same year as P4 opened, NRK started a three-channel-system with P3 producing programs targeting the youth.

During the 1980s, broadcasting media were legally commercialized as a result of media privatization gaining momentum. The owners demanded that they would make profit from their own investment (Eide, 2009, p. 103). Commercialization, in this case, meant that media were more driven by profit than led by their own policies. Between 1990 to 2007 the consumption of TV was 2 to 2.5 hours daily for a Norwegian citizen. The advertising market fourfold and the prizes arose by approximately 40% (Eide, 2009,p. 115). By 2009 television advertising dropped 18 percent in Western Europe as a result of the financial recession (Pichard, 2012, p. 30), but Norway managed to recover better than the other Scandinavian countries and is today considered the wealthiest nation among the Nordic countries (Ohlsen, 2015, p. 15). Finally, the market situation has forced the government to consider financial support for public services, and while the public service institutions no longer have monopoly, NRK must justify its market advantages from other private companies.

⁷² P2 also has children's programs.

In 2000, NRK received a granted permission to publish advertisement on the websites but when they in 2003 published commercials online, the commercial broadcaster TV 2 made a complaint to the EFTA⁷³ Surveillance Authority (ESA) of unfair competition (Moe, 2012, p. 59). Following this complaint, NRK voluntarily stopped publishing advertisements online. In a hearing (2007-2008) suggestions came from the Culture Department to a 'NRK-poster' build on five pillars to discuss the formal status of NRK. Among the pillars was mentioned; "*NRKs public broadcasting offers should be noncommercial*" (*St. meld. nr. 6 (2007-2008): NRK-plakaten - «Noe for alle. Alltid»*, 2007-2008). Later this was changed to; § 44 *NRKs editorial decisions should not be driven by commercial consideration* (Regjeringen, 2017). The commercial broadcaster TV 2 showed skepticism towards NRKs obligations to produce content on all media platforms. However, The Norwegian Media Authority found that this pressure from NRK towards other commercial actors is limited and therefore acceptable (Velsand, 2018, p. 6).

In 2017, Norway became the first country in the world to digitalize radio and shutdown the FM network in order to shun space for competition (Kulturdepartementet, 2019b)

The five national FM channels were replaced by 30 DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting) channels. Switching from FM to DAB radio could, however, seem as a bad move for NRK as the percentage of listeners from traditional radio channels went down by 8,8 percent as most of the viewers switched into newly launched channels (Norsk Telegrambyrå, 2017).

2.8.2. The Scandinavian media system in transition

In Europe, trade regulations have raised questions over state intervention in media sector because such intervention may undermine freedom of expression (Krumsvik, 2013). Tendencies towards a liberal media market model could affect the diversity and have politicians debating how to secure openness and diversity in public opinion forming (Lund, 2007, p. 123).

⁷³ EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) is an independent organization, enabling states to partake in the European internal market of the European Union. They monitor that rules are kept to the European Economic Area Agreement.

In *Comparing Media Systems*, Hallin and Mancini (2004) categorized Scandinavia as being part of the Northern European Democratic Corporatist media system, characterized by a strong degree of state intervention through regulation and subsidies (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). However, ten years after Hallin & Mancini wrote about the three media models, scholars found substantial evidences for greater convergence toward the liberal model due to rising influence of commercial media (Umbricht & Esser, 2014).

2.8.3. The Norwegian media market in change

Norway remains a largely democratic country. Journalists have been able to perform their professional duties freely from a combination of “common culture” and the “common public sphere” (Lund, 2007, p. 123) From this environment and these regulations, journalists have been able to perform their professional duties freely. But there may still be problems connected with journalists’ way of evaluating their work and the fact that they are politically targeted. Stated by Vigdis Holmaas, a journalist and editor at NRK, journalists tend to use a language similar to a salesman saying things like “to sell” □“å selja inn”□ or “the case is going well” □ “saka går godt”□ (Holmaas, 2019, p. 22). Eide (2009) similarly problematizes that evaluations of *profit* now are shown greater consideration than internal control of media which will consequently affect how the journalists identify themselves and their audience.

In her recent book “*Constructive journalism – critical and solution-oriented*” (the first published book in Norwegian about constructive journalism) Holmaas (2019) points towards the lack of connection between the media and the audience leading to social exclusion among Norwegian audience groups (p.21). Subsequently, there are different segments of audiences that feel excluded (p.19), namely “the suffering”; audiences with high levels of empathy who find themselves hopeless when they read the news. Another group “the disconnected” find little interest in watching news and typically partake a low political engagement. The last group mentioned is “the strategist” who will only spend time engaging with media when it is beneficial in connection to their job or education. The point is that it may become a democratic problem when a great percentage of the population don’t follow the news and when the

⁷⁴ ‘Medborgerpanelet’ is an online public opinion survey conducted in 2018 by Bergen University among 7000 Norwegians. Several in the panel mentioned that they felt left out in media and their views were not represented. Those who felt left out were typically from a lower education background.

young generation has a tendency not to subscribe to online newspapers as Bjørnstad & Leknes (2017) point out. It may equally be a problem when ethnic minority groups sometimes are underrepresented in public service television, as mentioned by Rydin (2013). What might come as no surprise (from information given in this chapter) is that the traditional media possess capital but need new ways to reach the public (Bjørnstad & Leknes, 2017, p. 98). This is where constructive journalism may supplement useful inspiration.

2.9. An introduction to the media landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa

No doubt, there is a long journey between Nordic and African media systems. However, the idea of Public Service is not limited to Scandinavia. Attempts to export elements from the Nordic Public Service Media (PSM) models to countries in Asia, Africa and South American countries have been expanded by experienced journalists from the Nordic countries (Nissen, 2013, p. 10). A typical African media house generates less capital and is shaped by other political factors than in Scandinavia. During the postwar era, broadcasting was used as a medium to spread Christianity among Africans, teach English, improve the life of women and interpret government policies to people (van der Veur, 2002, p. 84). African broadcasters received training by British and French radio broadcasters in rules of conduct distinctive of colonial broadcasting (Wilkinson, 1972). Broadcasting was seen as an instrument of advanced administration for enlightenment and education for more backwards sections of the population (van der Veur, 2002, p. 83). Between 1948 and 1953, more than forty broadcast systems were situated in twenty-seven colonial territories in Africa primarily run by BBC (Briggs, 1979). Broadcasts to Africa were then seen as privileges being provided by the state, but when specific goals of government were met, funding stopped.

Today broadcasting can be used for peacebuilding efforts, for example in Rwanda where it in 1994 was used for spreading hatred and today has become a bridge for nation-building (McIntyre & Sobel, 2017b). History proves many years of self-censorship both in government-run and privately-owned radio stations (Ibelema & Bosch, 2009). In the face of history, journalists started to write stories to help opening up discussions considered sensitive. This is demonstrated by a case study (2016) from Kigali, where 24 journalists were interviewed about their perception of their role in society (McIntyre & Sobel, 2017b; Waldorf 2007). Ethnicity in reporting for many years has been subject to self-censorship (Waldorf, 2007), but now Rwandan journalists express that they seek to cover stories beyond breaking news. They apply constructive

journalism techniques and believe it has a positive impact on individuals and society (McIntyre & Sobel, 2017b).

It has been claimed that journalists in Africa were trained not to contextualize and thereby misrepresenting one side as ‘victims’ and the other side as ‘winners.’ Dr. Fredric Ogenga who is a senior lecturer and head of the Communication, Journalism and Media Studies Department at Rongo University College in Kenya maintains it has created more conflict even when journalists had intentions of peace in their reporting (Ogenga in Youngblood, 2017, p. 232). Nevertheless, it is possible to avoid *victimization* in reporting, as demonstrated by Rwandan journalists.

2.9.1. The media environment in Ethiopia

Broadcasting in Ethiopia is both different and similar to that of other African countries. Similar to many other countries in Africa, radio is still considered the most important media in terms of figures and reach (MoI, 1969 ; Tallert, et. al. 2017). There are 13 commercial radio stations and 40 community radios of which 12 are owned by community associations and seven others are owned by local universities (Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, 2019, p. 12).

The print media in Ethiopia face difficulties due to low literacy rates, poor distribution outside of the capital of Addis Ababa and low economy from low readership. Therefore, Ethiopia has only 13 newspapers and 10 magazines (owned by the federal state/regional states) and 11 newspapers and 13 magazines and 10 online print publications which are privately owned (Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, 2019, p. 12). Historically, Ethiopia has been dominated by strong state media institutions where approximately 80% of the journalists in 2017 worked for state media institutions (Skjerdal, 2017).

Ethiopia has been unfamiliar with democracy until recently though the country is still defined as *marginally* democratic (Ibelema & Bosch, 2009; Freedom House, 2019). During the time of the communistic inspired Derg regime (1974-1991) liberalization of media was unstable, but when the coalition EPRDF came in power, journalists

from the state media opened up to training inspired by Western philosophy⁷⁵ (Skjerdal, 2012, p. 39). In 1995 the Ethiopian constitution guaranteed people to freely express their opinions and support to show diverse opinions in media (Ibelema & Bosch, 2009, p. 310), but although the constitution guaranteed individual freedom of speech, it also prohibited public expressions intended to injure human dignity, thus actually nullifying freedom of speech (Ibelema & Bosch, 2009, p.310).

Despite the attempts to professionalize media, it was still common for journalists to experience different kinds of abuse and violence. It became difficult to realize professional practice and journalistic independence.

Recently introduced laws guarantees formal freedom, for instance the broadcasting law (2007) and the most recent media law (2008) represented a formal liberalization of the media sector (Skjerdal, 2011a, p. 732). Nevertheless, despite the change of legislative laws, journalists would still perceive a favorable relationship with government officials in order to acquire information from the government (Skjerdal, 2010, p. 101). When covering ethnic or religious conflicts, they would choose to impose self-imposed self-censorship (Skjerdal, 2010, p. 104). The journalists would perceive to hide information, because they were afraid of losing their positions (Skjerdal, 2010, p. 116). Overall the Ethiopian media sector has been characterized by lack of ethical responsibility and wide practices of self-censorship (Skjerdal, 2017).

In transitional societies, journalists will typically not only have one view, but many views on their profession (Voltmer, 2012). Since in a society like Ethiopia there are different power divisions and fragmentations between political and ethnical groups (Skjerdal, 2012, p. 52), the journalist will be more likely to prioritize public interest, minority rights, national security and privacy before promoting freedom of speech (Voltmer, 2012, p. 234). Understanding these principles can help explain how journalists work, while the conflicts in a transitional society are not a matter of gains and losses between 'left and right' winged politics but of identity and perception of truth according to religion or ethnic affiliation. Since religion and ethnicity play a significant role in Ethiopian culture, the nature and the degree of political conflict is what matters (Voltmer, 2012, p. 229). The solutions discovered by Ethiopian journalists will therefore likely differ from Western solutions.

⁷⁵ Journalists employed at state media have not only considered knowledge from Western media but also from non-western countries from India, Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, Tanzania and Kenya (Skjerdal, 2012, p. 39).

2.9.2. Historical perspectives from a transitional society

A political conflict came to the fore during the election campaign in Ethiopia in 2005. Prior the campaign relative freedom existed to publicize and support different oppositional groups. In months after the election, 14 media workers and many actors were arrested (Abbink, 2006). In October 2016 the Ethiopian government tried to stop anti-government protests by restricting internet access and the use of social media (Freedom House, 2017). Subsequently, the government led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi used the 2009 anti-terrorism law to restrict journalists from interviewing someone affiliated with terrorist groups (Freedom House, 2017).

Public information in practice has been restricted and editors have functioned as gatekeepers to censor critical questions raised by journalists. Different from Western philosophy, Ethiopian journalists have been loyal towards authorities and owners of the media (Skjerdal, 2012). But journalism practiced by the online diasporic media has nevertheless been characterized as activism and favoritism (Skjerdal, 2011b, p. 740). According to a fairly recent report from Freedom House (2016), Ethiopia has one of the continents' most progressive freedom of information laws, but there still often remains a big gap between theory and practice. The tradition that only state-owned media outlets have been allowed to cover official events has created tremendous problems for developing democracy and accompanying barriers of distrust with the public (Freedom House, 2016).

2.9.3. Transitions in Ethiopian journalism culture

Paradoxically, the media played an important role in the collapse of pre-Abiy Ahmed EPRDF (Abiy Ahmed was elected leader of the party and hence Prime Minister of Ethiopia in 2018). The rise of social media, citizen journalism and the TV broadcasts by the diaspora made information available and created more space for public discussion on controversial issues (Ghenna, 2019, p. 7). As a response to three years of protests, the monopolistic ruling party has begun to loosen its grip by installing a reform-minded prime minister. The prime minister Abiy Ahmed, leader of what is now called Prosperity Party (Piene & NTB, 2019), received the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2019. One of the reasons he won the prize, was his liberal attitude to journalists and the media. He has played a central role in creating space for more public discussion on sensitive political matters (Freedom House, 2019, p. 8).

Although free debate has become a liberal tactic in Ethiopia, Freedom House still lists Ethiopia as a ‘non free’ country regarding freedom of speech (Freedom House Freedom, 2019, p. 6). Nevertheless because of the new government, there are new efforts to liberalize the media through reforms. Latest was the draft policy from April 2019 (likely to become an official policy) produced for Ethiopian Broadcast Authority and supported by United Nations Development Program. The draft policy was produced in light of the worrying media situation, which according to the World Press Freedom Index was ranked lower in 2017 than in 2013 (Reporters without borders, 2019)

Ethiopia is currently in political transition from being under an authoritarian rule towards becoming a competitive political environment. The media reflect the political situation by an equally fragmented media (Giorgis, 2019, p. 20) with 10 commercial TV-stations and equally 10 state and regional state-owned broadcasters (Authority, 2019, p. 12). Seven of these state-owned TV-broadcasters broadcast via satellite and six by terrestrial transmission. The difference between privately owned and publicly owned media is the level of self-censorship which traditionally has been greater in the state-regulated media (Skjerdal, 2010, p. 102)

Traditionally, the Ethiopian media have been characterized by strong state control and a weak commercial media market (Skjerdal, 2012; Ward, 2011). The EPRDF government has promoted development journalism as a vehicle to stimulate national growth and cohesion, which arguably has led to a mediated paternalistic view on the public (Giorgis, 2019, p. 21). Since 2008, development journalism became a key concept in official policy documents (Skjerdal, 2013, p. 58), starting from the aim that Ethiopia should become a middle-income country by the next 30-40 years with media partaking this process. The Ethiopian version of development journalism states the following definition:

Development journalism is a journalism that makes people understand, accept and actively participate in the implementation of appropriate development ideas that may extricate people from poverty and backwardness by bringing about rapid national change and building on positive values of development and democratic change

(Ethiopian policy document on development journalism, Agency, 2008)

This policy document was according to Skjerdal (2013) influenced by poverty critical towards both authoritarian and libertarian media systems, in favor of success stories rather than critical reporting. Development journalism has overall been

criticized because it claims ideological contestations rather than a genuine care for society (Skjerdal, 2013, p. 3), though ideally it should emphasize long term development (Kunczik, 1988) and empowerment of ordinary people to improve their own lives and community (Romano & Hippocrates, 2001).

Today, the media landscape has changed, while the government has opened up for private media which means that there are more citizens engaged watching TV programs from private media than from the state-owned media. This transition was recently discovered in a study made by GeoPoll ⁷⁶/Kantar Media for the Fojo Media Institute (Tallert, Jacobsson, Romare, & Karlén, 2017, p. 7). However, Ethiopian government channels still dominate the market.

Despite new transitions, one may argue that both state and private media are still not in a position to report and interpret political and economic changes objectively. The problem, according to some scholars, is that the free flow of information is hindered by journalists polarizing towards either state or private media (Mohammed, 2018). This is a structural problem.

At the federal level, the Ethiopian media laws have emphasized the independence of mass media, which is in accordance with the Constitution. These laws have been forbidding censorship and the closing down of media outlets (Ghenna, 2019, p. 7). Since the laws were not emphasized at a judiciary level, they were yet too weak to stay reinforced. Nevertheless, uproars at the federal levels have created a growing expectancy amongst media professionals towards the implications of a new media reform, that will in the end have to nullify the previous media laws characterizing former political leaderships in Ethiopia. In order for this to change, Dr. Mohammed (2018) proposes a structure change according to the media ownership from a state driven media towards a public service media, where the public will then have the full access and opportunity to participate in public discussion.

The answer to this could be the recent National Media Policy (2019), which is different from the previous policies, while it takes into consideration the public service media as a prospect to ease internal conflicts and tensions. The new aim is to make a

⁷⁶The world's greatest real-time mobile survey platform.

collaboration between the state, the media and the public (Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, 2019, p. 7). This policy was also proposed in light of the new digital structure which opens up possibilities for new cooperation between different stakeholders. The policy is a conceptual framework of the first wide-ranging and coherent media policy in Ethiopia covering the future progression of new technology in terms of Digital Terrestrial Television.

It is essential that public service and commercial broadcasters as well as print media commit to serving the interest of the whole population. They must prioritize also giving voice to marginalized groups and the rural population and ensure that these groups have access to media. This obligation should be supported by the state and taken into account in connection with future infrastructure projects for power supply and internet cabling.

(Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, 2019, p. 25).

Among political reforms made by the new prime minister is the freeing of political prisoners and lifting bans on exiled groups (Jeffries, 2019). The situation has worsened internally and there is a disagreement between those who want unity and those who want ethnic federalism (Tronnvoll in Piene & NTB, 2019).

In the Amhara region, which is home to the Amhara Mass Media Agency, the subject of this study, the situation is rather complicated. Amhara constitutes the second-largest ethnic group in Ethiopia and is also the stronghold of the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) which together with three other parties constitutes the ruling coalition government (Jeffries, 2019, p. 20). It is in this particular area that solutions journalism is assumed to be practiced.

2.9. 4. The structure of Amhara Mass Media Agency

Amhara Mass Media Agency (AMMA) is a state-owned media agency headquartered in Bahir Dar, the capital of the Amhara people. The agency started in 1995 first with printing, later followed by radio and tv (. Since 2004 the TV and radio production at AMMA has increased (Diana, 2004, Ward 2011). In 2011 there were 138 full time journalists (Ward, 2011, p. 12), today there are around 730 media workers employed at AMMA, where only 60 journalists have laptops (Yemisrach, 2019). In a normal day a journalist works approximately for eight hours. AMMA broadcasts 24 hours on the

Amharic radio/Amhara FM, and 18 hours a day on Amhara Television. The agency owns an FM transmitter, which covers a radius of 60 km from Bahir Dar. Amhara Television is both local and international on Nilesat. AMMA competes with both other regional TV broadcasters (Oromia broadcasting network, Tigray TV, Addis TV and Southern TV) as well as the national broadcaster Ethiopian Television. Since 2016, AMMA has faced more competition, as entertainment outlets started to get licenses (Busch, 2017, p. 7). In addition to its engagement in broadcasting, AMMA publishes four different newspapers; *Bekur* twice a week in the Amharic language. The following three are two-weekly newspapers; *Chir bewa* in Awigna language, *Hirkoo* in Oromiffa language and *Himte weke* in Himtagna language (these languages are local languages in the Amhara region).

English language is primarily used in selected TV programs. AMMA is committed to the National Building Program which is mentioned under their ‘mission and vision’;

The Amhara Mass Media Agency is among the Regional Stakeholders to The Regional Governments’ new National Building Program started in 1991. This program includes promotion of development, sustainable peace and democratization.

(Amhara Web, 2019)

The organizational structure of the Amhara Mass Media Agency is *vertical* which means that the roles of the employees are well-defined and there is centralized decision-making. The journalist must possess an education⁷⁷. According to an insider source at AMMA, the requirements have recently changed while there used to be less requirements regarding formal education⁷⁸. The managers encourage journalists to find and present solutions for their local community. According to editor and coordinator Amadi, who has worked more than four years at AMMA, the journalists receive gradings every month.

⁷⁷ The entry requirement for reporters is a bachelor’s degree with a GPA of three point and above.

⁷⁸ The informants who participated in this project possessed a bachelor’s degree or above, but not all possessed a degree in journalism. One informant possessed a BA in Business and Administration, another a BA in English Language and Literature.

In fact, we do a kind of evaluation criteria or programs we have done. Based on the evaluation, we will be measured by the end of each month. Everybody will receive a grade for what they have done from high level to medium level and low level. You can be placed among those three levels.

(Amadi, personal interview, December 2018).

As majority of the journalists at AMMA know the term “solutions journalism”, though fewer are familiar with the term “constructive journalism”. Hence, “solutions journalism” will be used in this chapter. AMMA is known as a state media, because the agency is financed by the regional state, which collects money through public taxes. The agency is accountable to representatives of the regional public. Content is produced by AMMA and through quarterly reports the content is discussed by the regional Parliament (Moges, personal correspondence, 2019).

The broadcaster is accountable to the public through their representatives at the regional Parliament where they present them quarterly reports. The reports are then being discussed. If the focus is in conflict with the professional values, the organization can raise awareness of their professional obligation to the profession. AMMA has their own code of conduct visible on a sign in the stairway of the main building (figure 1). The code is a combination of the international codes and codes used at the Ethiopian Broadcasting Cooperation (Yemisrach, 2019).

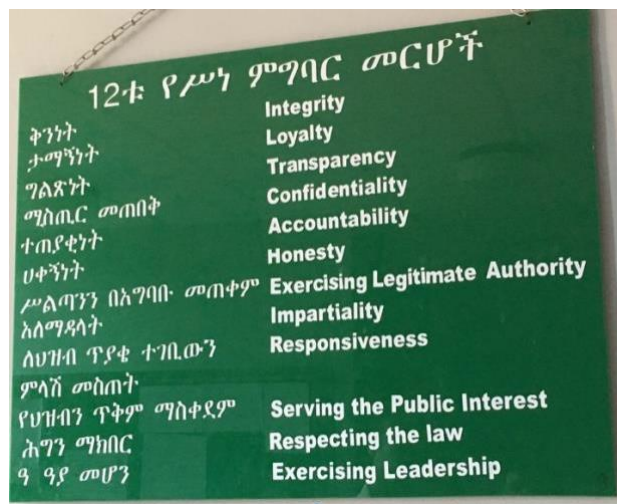


FIGURE 1: NEWS VALUES AT AMHARA MASS MEDIA AGENCY

In terms of programs broadcasted by AMMA, there are no limits to *outsourced programs*⁷⁹ at AMMA (Mohammed 2018, 7). This may be problematic in terms of journalistic content. Yet according to Vice Manager Dereje Moges, outsourced programs are only produced by ATV and no one else is permitted to broadcast such programs. That means that the content must finally be approved by AMMA (Moges, Facebook correspondence, 2019).

To meet its audience's needs in the Amharic region, AMMA produces 28 radio programs (Botawlanchi, 2020) in three different local languages; Awigna, Himtegnä and Oromigna, in addition to Amharic which is the main regional language. The programs emphasize development, politics and entertainment, and has a weekly TV airtime of two hours per language. The airtime on the radio is up to four hours a week per language (apart from Amharic).

In the Amhara region, two other governmental organizations, besides the mass media agency, are in charge of disseminating and developing content; the regional Bureau of Information and the regional AIDS Secretariat (Diana, 2004, p. 8). Among these, the regional mass media agency has been described as a “*major role player in content development and dissemination in the Amhara region*” (Diana, 2004, p. 8).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to test the existing theory of ‘constructive journalism’ against cross-cultural differences and inconsistencies. The research design consists of a comparative case study that could help prevent false generalizations (Hallin & Mancini, 2017, p. 167). By combining methods, this study included unstructured observations with semi-structured in-depth interviews and content analysis to analyze how

⁷⁹ An outsourced program is a program which is produced by a government public relations office and then broadcasted by a state media with only slight technical changes.

journalists at AMMA (Ethiopia) and 'Here and Now' (Norway) interpret and apply constructive journalism. In the previous chapter, I addressed journalistic knowledge concerning 'constructive journalism'. Further on will be a demonstration of the 'coherence' between two country cases to find whether constructive journalism is applicable across cultures.

Constructivism is where categories are produced and revised by social actors and where knowledge is viewed upon as unspecified. The epistemology suggests that the categories or concepts people use in helping them to understand the social world are *products* (Bryman, 2012, p.34). This study seeks to find out how constructive news is produced in two different cultures. Since the organizational structures are the conditions for producing news, I looked into the social knowledge determined by the organization.

3.2. Location and research environment

3.2.1. Visiting AMMA, an unknown environment

My contact with Vice Manager Dereje Moges from Amhara Mass Media Agency in Bahir Dar was initiated through Professor Terje S. Skjerdal from NLA University College in Kristiansand. The invitation was to come to Amhara Mass Media Agency for eleven days and observe the work situation in December 2018.

When I arrived at the premises in Bahir Dar, I was stopped by the security guards before I entered the agency to be searched for SD cards. However, I was approved since I had arrangements with the vice manager. With the knowledge I had attained beforehand, my outline was a *critical* narrative, based on what I knew about constructive journalism combined with what I had read about the restrictive freedom of speech situation among journalists in the Ethiopian state-affiliated media. I based my outline on negative expectations which perhaps is a typical journalistic attitude. Instead, I could have expected a more nuanced narrative, reflecting future opportunities at the Ethiopian regional state broadcaster. However, the outlook changed as I worked on the production, which attempted to reflect current realities instead of historic ones.

The political situation in the country had recently changed, and journalists seemed reflective and opened up to me about critical questions. The media workers welcomed me to ask any questions and there were no expressed concerns speaking openly at the vice manager's office where in-depth interviews were conducted. I made it clear to the

informants that the reportage was separate from the research interviews. Nevertheless, my presence and carrying a camera could have made them view me as ‘a colleague’ which again could affect the responses.

I later became aware that participants of the project may have had an interest of personal gain, since many Europeans are seen as providing opportunities that do not exist locally. Whether informants accepted my invitation to participate in the research on this basis, however, remains in the unknown.

My preconceptions of Ethiopian society and culture were adjusted when I was confronted by the everyday reality, that seemed much less static than my expectations. In fact, the environment seemed more open for change than I had expected it to be. This opened for reflections on my behalf towards my own bias and the hopeless image of Ethiopia that I had attained from typical NGOs campaigns of hunger disasters. It confirmed the prejudice that is typical for a Westerner entering an African country, for instance, to think that everyone would be poor, which was clearly not the case. Another cultural surprise was the level of trust, which I initially expected to be low. I found that people trust “who they know” (a culture of ‘brotherhood’) which became apparent to me through different social settings and arrangements.

The original story outline of the reportage was to show potential dilemmas of journalists becoming ‘too involved’ and maybe even ‘less objective’. I could have made the reportage more dramatic in view of past historical conflicts but found that it would make a dishonest framing of Ethiopia. The filming aims to provide authentic accounts from Ethiopian journalists considering constructive journalism as a tool in their daily work.

3.2.2. Visiting ‘Here and Now’ a more familiar environment

The contact with the editor-in-chief of ‘Here and Now’, Kristian Hovstad, was initiated through a personal phone call. I found out about the ‘pioneer newsroom’ (Holmaas, 2019, p. 115) through an online article at *Journalisten.no*, which described their pilot project with constructive journalism in 2017 (Johansen, 2018).

In December 2018, I was invited to Tyholt, the main base for the district division in Trondheim, where the ‘Here and Now’ production takes place. The research and filming were conducted over a three-day period. I may have suspected that ‘Here and Now’ would see this as a chance to promote their own use of constructive journalism.

Nevertheless, the image of Norwegian broadcast journalists became more nuanced as I spent time in the newsroom in Trondheim.

The journalists at NRK seemed much free to choose between a constructive story or a traditional news story, which made the situation less 'static' than I had first anticipated. Nevertheless, I found that the journalists discussed much on *how* to produce constructive news, which could also be triggered by my presence as a researcher and the journalists' awareness of the camera (one of the journalists expressed that a camera was unusual to them since they normally work with radio).

3.3. Justification of method

By choosing a comparative research approach I aimed to establish validity of interpretations derived from single-nation studies (Hanitzsch, 2008, p. 95). As far as my knowledge goes, no comparative research has yet been conducted with the intention to compare constructive journalism practices in a developing country and a Western country.

Another reason for choosing a comparative study is to "denaturalize" a media system that seems familiar (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 2). Since most research about constructive journalism so far obviously has been conducted in Western and Nordic countries, there are reasons for choosing a different context like Ethiopia to provide a comparative case.

To investigate the interpretation and application of constructive journalism, this study uses an inductive approach (Bryman, 2012, p. 26). Based on observations and cross-cultural findings the research should add to existing theory on constructive journalism.

3.4. Samples of the study

This case study used a purposive sampling method to ensure heterogeneity in the data material. I chose the method of snowball sampling by contacting people who had knowledge related to the research questions. The sampled informants then recommended other journalists who had much or little experience applying constructive journalism (Bryman, 2012, p. 424).

The choice of sample was Ethiopia and Norway, because the two countries differ in their media systems, as explained in chapter two. By choosing a comparative research approach I aimed to establish validity of interpretations derived from single-nation studies (Hanitzsch, 2008, p. 95). Since one of aims is to make this concept global, it was relevant to question the application and theory in different contexts, as many previous journalistic concepts tend to come and go.

Since most research about constructive journalism so far obviously has been conducted in Western and Nordic countries, there were reasons for choosing another socio-political context in order to test the theoretic understanding behind this. By choosing a

comparative study there was equally the opportunity to “denaturalize” a media system that seems familiar (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 2).

Secondly, the choice of institutions was based on information on editorial guidelines made by the media outlets. The institutions AMMA and NRK were purposefully chosen based on a smaller research prior the fieldtrips. Both of the editor-in-chiefs (in December 2018) had been introduced to the same theory in the book “Constructive News” (written by Ullrik Haagerup, published in 2017). Thus, the editors had a common theoretic understanding which gave the basis for this investigation.

Thirdly, the choosing of journalists was based on a pre-consent in Norway. This was nevertheless not possible to carry out in Ethiopia, as Ethiopians will typically prefer oral agreements. The weakness from this method was that I had somewhat less control of the sampled population since, for instance in Ethiopia, I relied on one single journalist who had limited knowledge about solutions journalism/constructive journalism but knew most of the journalists well. He was given further information and instruction, which then made him able to locate co-workers who were familiar with this concept. The method of snowball sampling was chosen above other sample methods because it was less time-consuming and relevant in terms of reaching key informants. The sampling was primarily made out of convenience because it came across more successful than asking journalists myself. This, however, was my initial method which had to be readjusted.

Another reason was the issue of getting official consent from the informants to participate in the research. Because journalism in Ethiopia has a strong history of self-censorship, it is socially more acceptable to ask for oral consent instead of written. This approach was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data and was conducted in this way to respect the wishes of the journalists (cf. appendix 4).

In Norway, on the other hand, the journalists signed a written consent form before my arrival. Thus, the arrangements were already made through e-mail correspondence with the responsible manager, whose name is Kristian Hovstad. The sampling of journalists was made by the editor-in-chief Kristian Hovstad, which of course could cause some bias, since he was in charge of sampling the journalists which eventually could affect the answers.

The sampling additionally consisted of official documents and examples from media productions, which were available either publicly or through an agreement with the official managers. These arrangements were made through e-mail correspondence or via social media.

In Ethiopia, the sampling of journalists was made by a single journalist working at AMMA, possessing knowledge about solutions journalism. This could also cause a

certain level of bias, as this person was in charge of the sampling where only male journalists were depicted. The same happened to be the case in Norway. This could cause problems with the presentation of both male and female journalists, as only male journalists were represented (although both male and journalists were employed by both media outlets).

Based on observations and cross-cultural findings the research should add to existing theory on constructive journalism. To investigate the interpretation and application of constructive journalism, this study used an inductive approach (Bryman, 2012, p. 26).

3.4.1. Unstructured observation

This study used unstructured non-participant observations, with the purpose of narrating accounts, taking scratch notes, referring to relevant words or quotes combined with video recording. Non-participant meant that I, as a researcher, would not participate in the social setting (Bryman, 2012, p. 273). Instead, I would try to stay as much in the background as possible.

The strategy was to wait for situations where constructive framing was sought used and record this observation. This could, for instance, be incidents when the journalist reported from the field or when co-workers together evaluated a solution-oriented program. Several of these observations were used in the supplementary reportage where the journalists for instance were discussing what cases to choose. Using a video camera could potentially affect the observation and therefore had to be limited. It would therefore only be used when the situation was permitting it and when the observed were familiar with the reason. I considered this research topic less personal and therefore found it ethically reasonable to be using a video camera.

I chose this method over the structured observation because it was less time demanding and generated less redundant data. Since the objectives were limited, there was little reason to get a high saturation of data. Conducting structured observation in Ethiopia would be problematic since I know little Amharic and would require constant interpretation. I found it most helpful not to be restricted by a certain frame, while this equally could give me the opportunity to discover unexpected behavior.

In order to generate more precise questions in the interview part⁸⁰, the observations took place in the first part of the research. Since the observations combined analysis with other forms of qualitative data, I found it sufficient to use observation only as a supplement to the existing methods.

3.4.2. In-depth Interviews

The study used semi-structured in-depth interviews by means of an interview guide. In order to ensure cross-case comparability, my study followed certain structures (Bryman, 2012, p. 472) to analyze answers given from journalists working at AMMA and 'Here and Now'. I used both introductory questions for the sake of the situation and follow-up-questions (Bryman 2012, p. 476) to contract answers as close to my research questions as possible. These questions regarded the informant's interpretations of news values, of journalistic challenges and perceptions of the constructive journalism concept. Further categories were then added as the journalists provided more answers.

I made the interview guide partly based on previous research done by Alvsen (2018) with a total number of 32 questions. Instead of emphasizing the process of implementing the concept, I emphasized the role of the journalist. This was my primary concern of research.

Questions 21-23 in the interview guide (cf. appendix 2) regarded implementation and practice of constructive journalism and were therefore relevant for both the responsible editor and the journalist applying constructive journalism. Questions 24-31 were made partly from SWOT analysis⁸¹ including further recommendations. The decision to make different questions for the managers was due to the relevance of editorial decision making.

⁸⁰I base this information on the experiences of Professor Kenneth Andresen at the University of Agder while conducting observation among journalists in Kosovo.

⁸¹SWOT is commonly used to determine strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

I conducted 13 semi-structured interviews from the two news organizations, presenting radio and tv journalists, editors, chief editors, vice content managers, tv program producers, and a chief documentary editor. The total number of interviews were seven from 'Here and Now' and six from AMMA. Any informant chosen for the sample had to be involved in broadcasting (either radio or tv). The interviews lasted between 28 minutes up to one hour and four minutes. I chose semi-structured interviews over unstructured interviews to ensure that all types of questions could potentially be asked. Having an interview guide (cf. appendix 1) would ensure good flow in the interview situation. Secondly, it would ensure that the focus of the informants remained on the objective topic. Getting too narrow answers would be problematic for the sake of comparison and getting too broad answers, could distract the main topic of constructive journalism. However, subjective opinions were included as long as they included ideas of constructive journalism.

The interview guide had similar wording in English and Norwegian. I used the Norwegian language in Norway to create trust and 'getting as close as possible' to the experiences of the informants. The interview guide in Ethiopia was in English since I do not speak Amharic⁸². I was aware that the English language could create some distance in the interview situation since it was not the informants' first language. However, the journalists chosen for the interviews were overall well versed in English.

3.4.3. Content analysis of media programs

Since I was interested in finding out about the outcome of constructive news production, I also took a look at broadcasted content from each of the two media houses. The selected content was from programs on radio and tv and was either in the form of a reportage, a debate, a forum or an interview. The examples were mentioned by journalists themselves during their interview, when they were asked to clarify examples of what they understood as constructive journalism. The selection of content was based on theoretic criteria defined as constructive journalism. The content analysis was limited to analyze *themes, wording or news angles* that could somehow reveal intentions made by the production team towards constructive journalism.

⁸² Amharic is the national language in Ethiopia.

The analysis of each program includes a small summary, patterns, similarities and differences as well as the impression of the overall representation. The theoretic categories of solution-based journalism were determined by Windesheim University (cf. 2.10). In order to get enough (and fairly recent) samples, the content analysis included radio and tv broadcasts from 2017 to 2019.

3. 5. Limitations of the study

Since comparative cross-cultural studies may result in overwhelming information on many different levels and domains (Rosengren, McLeod, & Blumler, 1992; Hallin & Mancini, 2017), the thematic analysis (Johannesen, 2018), made before the interview was boiled down to topics that could have any relation to constructive journalism. These themes were carefully found from relevant literature and discussion based on the concept of constructive journalism. The topics chosen regarded the journalist's perception, motivation, understanding of news values, ideology, news criteria, journalistic practice, trends, technique, framing, expectations from other media, role expectations and future prospects.

It was difficult to determine whether the analyzed output (the analyzed programs) was typical for the overall media production or not. That could be an issue for the sake of representativeness (Bryman, 2012, p. 553) especially in the case of Ethiopia, since I, as a researcher, was unfamiliar and new to this environment. However, I am familiar with Norwegian public broadcasting and have a sense of what is 'typical' from what is 'less typical'. The timescale of eleven days of fieldwork in Ethiopia also seemed much too short to become entirely familiar with the media environment. This timeframe should ideally have been much longer in terms of finding locations and for informants to become familiar with me and must be considered longer for any future research

As I carried out my observations on my field studies, I had to rely on my own lens of understanding. That might be a problem according to the level of confirmability (Bryman, 2012, p. 390), while two observers could have attained more consistency than I was able to make on my own. In addition, the observations should ideally have been conducted over a longer timespan to confirm consistency as well and to find out more about working routines, approaches, newsroom culture etc. However, this was not possible due to the timespan of my project. To ensure more internal validity, I have then used a combination of methods.

The findings can neither be generalized across social settings since they were taken from a small case research. Unlike other research methods, I was unable to freeze the situations because they were played out in real life. That could be a problem for the external reliability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). However, since this study combines interview responses with observations and content analysis, it will, to some extent, give an indication of different implications within the two different cases.

As a Westerner in two different cultures, I may have judged the observed processes from an ethnocentric perspective. That is indeed a common problem in comparative research (Hanitzsch, 2008, p. 96).

Since most of the literature written on constructive journalism is from the West, it is easy to lean towards this tradition, instead of remaining open towards other traditions. This bias mostly occurs towards Western literature and research tradition (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 2) and for this reason I had to be self-reflexive, challenging my own cultural view.

While journalism research is no longer confined to national boundaries (Weaver & Löffelholz, 2008, p. 8) it must carry a broader perspective. In this research, it was important to take into account the diffusion across cultures caused by globalized media production (Scheuch, 1990). Equally it was important not to understate any heterogeneities within the culture (Rosengren et al., 1992) as there are various sub-cultures, especially within the Ethiopian context.

3. 5. 1. My role as a researcher

In terms of my second case (of Ethiopia), I was aware that my role as a researcher may have triggered some methodological challenges since I was an 'outsider' to the studied environment. In the research, I drew on my previous experience as a part-time journalist. This could both be helpful in my understanding of the newsroom but may also have made me biased towards a Western way of approaching news. Since my nationality is Danish, I considered myself as an outsider to both the Norwegian and the Ethiopian case. Although the Danish culture is much more similar to the Norwegian culture and my residence has been in Norway for several years, my background is after all slightly different.

Cultural differences may have affected the data analysis, since the informants may have given me more socially desirable answers than they would to a person from their own cultural background. I do, however, consider the cultural gap to be much wider between my own cultural background and Ethiopia compared to my own background and Norway. This may have affected the socially desirable answers to be less of an issue in Norway than they could be in Ethiopia. In addition, since I am liberal in whom I accept on social media, I accepted some friend requests on Facebook, which could potentially influence the research. However, I aimed to keep the communication with the informants professional and focused on the research.

3. 6. Working with personal data

This project includes personal information about informants who work with constructive journalism. During sampling, I was given e-mail addresses, phone numbers, full names and positions in order to plan, conduct and complete the interviews. The names were not mentioned in the research, but since the newsrooms are relatively small, the characteristics given may reveal the person interviewed. In the research report, I use fictional names made up of typical names in the concerned culture. In this case, the fictional names were; Peter, Hans, Jan-Erik, Bård, Ole, Jens, Nils, Amadi, Kofi, Amir, Sami, Yonas and Mekonnen⁸³.

Because information given could potentially reveal the person, and since personal data were used, I found it necessary to ask for permission to complete this research at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (cf. appendix 1).

The informants had to consent to the use of personal data. During the research period, data were only available to me and my supervisor. The data were kept on a computer or hardware requiring a password to unlock the data⁸⁴. All personal identification will be anonymized after the research by the end of 2020. Video observations in the newsroom were only accompanied by permission from managers, who gave the journalists notifications prior to the take. Quotations from Norwegian journalists were translated into English and some words may have lost some of their original meaning

⁸³ NB. names from participants who are not anonymous will not be mentioned by surname, as this is not costume in the Ethiopian culture.

⁸⁴ One of the interviews went missing (the file broke) and was replaced by supplementary information.

in translation. Quotations from Ethiopian journalists were corrected from grammarly mistakes but without changing the spoken meaning or overall expression⁸⁵.

3. 7. The journalistic production

As a supplement to my MA thesis, I chose to make a TV reportage. The purpose of the reportage is to “highlight, exemplify [and] discuss the theoretical issue of the thesis” (cf. course outline, GJ 323 Practical-Theoretical MA Thesis). Since my topic is how journalists use constructive journalism in practice, I found it only natural to look at practical, real-life examples. These examples are illustrated in the reportage which consists of interviews, broadcast examples and voice-overs. During the construction of the reportage, I used locations in Bahir Dar in Ethiopia, Trondheim and Kristiansand in Norway, Geneva in Switzerland, and Aarhus in Denmark. Since constructive journalism is a worldwide concept, more locations could easily be added, but due to time and budget limitations, this was not viable.

3.7.1. The purpose of the documentary

The documentary has a local focus, asking how solution-based journalism may contribute to create change within a smaller community. I listened to opportunities and challenges told firsthand by the local journalists. The purpose was to listen to what the journalists told me and communicate it to the audience, for them to make up their own opinion about the general and broader concept of constructive journalism.

The objectives of the documentary were: 1) to know reasons why journalists engage with concepts like constructive journalism and hear the journey they have taken, 2) to understand better how constructive journalism is expressed and talked about in different cultures, 3) to expose how media companies using constructive journalism define themselves and keep themselves relevant

The subjects in the reportage were journalists applying the concept, editors possessing knowledge about the concept, important spokespersons of the concept, and audience who found news contribute to ‘compassion fatigue’.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ For instance, when Ethiopians say ‘most of’, they usually mean ‘many’. Mistakes like these were corrected.

⁸⁶ Or a public apathy towards human tragedy (McIntyre, 2019).

3.7.2. Limitations of the production

The purpose of the reportage was to illustrate how constructive journalism is practiced and interpreted in Norwegian and Ethiopian culture. Equally, it was meant to discuss issues concerning the media's relationship with Norwegian and Ethiopian audiences based on knowledge of the media situation. However, because of the timescale and scope, the documentary mainly focused on the concept itself.

Another idea behind the production was to ask general questions regarding the future of journalism. Since the reportage was meant for a general audience, I made a choice to focus on concrete examples instead of problematizing the media situation too much. This, nevertheless, seemed more appropriate to keep in writing.

Before I made the production, I considered looking into disagreements between traditional journalists and constructive journalists. It would certainly have given attention to the more critical voices among journalists afraid of losing their autonomy, and who maybe narrated the concept differently. However, I found this disagreement to be too wide-ranging for the project and kept the reportage to the issues defined by the research questions.

3.7.3. Technical reflections and challenges

Except for some technical assistance, I did all parts of the media production myself. Working alone meant less opportunities to control the camera, angle, lighting and sound. This possibly affected the quality of the final product. These limitations were, however, from time to time eased by assistance from volunteers or media workers. However, I still found myself limited in controlling the actual quality and outcome. The dilemma was how to focus on the interviews and the technical details simultaneously. This caused some difficulties that could have been eased with having more people on the crew.

With assistance from one cameraman on the crew in Trondheim, it was easier to 'catch' situations naturally than in Ethiopia where filming situations mostly had to be planned in advance. The setting in Ethiopia created fewer 'natural situations' since I was in need of either translation or English-speaking subjects. This created a degree of distortion in 'reality construction', while I could not 'catch' conversations as natural and freely. This limitation must be taken into consideration in the way AMMA is presented in the final

reportage. The video cameras also had a different technical quality which could make an impact on the picture and the sound. I was also personally limited in this regard to influence the actual outcome. Despite these limitations I still believe the media production creates a fair insight into constructive journalism practices in two different media cultures.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF AMHARA MASS MEDIA AGENCY AND 'HERE AND NOW'

4.1. The interpretation of solutions journalism at Amhara Mass Media Agency

The in-depth analysis at AMMA shows that the journalists characterize solutions journalism as “different from propaganda”. Only two out of six interviewed journalists appeared to have an in-depth understanding of this type of journalism. However, many of the informants do stress an emphasis on the public when asked about their journalistic ideals. Sami, a program producer who has worked six years at AMMA, defines solutions journalism this way;

I define the solutions journalism as responsible journalism (...) In the previous years, every journalist or Ethiopian media agencies applied the propaganda – not only the solution or interest in the public (...) In solutions journalism, everything is based upon the idea of the public.

(Sami, personal interview, December 2018).

According to the vice manager Yonas, solutions journalism emphasizes *less* on conflicts and more on finding solutions.

During conflicts and wars, every one of the journalists sees the blood and there is a popular quotation which says that “when it bleeds, it must be a lead”. This is different in constructive and solution-oriented journalism. In solutions journalism the role of media must be constructive, providing a solution to a problem or an issue.

(Yonas, personal interview, December 2018).

Many of the informants connects solutions journalism with another concept, that of “development journalism”, which may be because the agency was inspired by the Nation Building Program from 1991.

4.1.1. ‘Solutions journalism’ not mentioned in the newsroom

Though the journalists show an understanding of solutions journalism as a concept, most of them say they never talk about ‘solutions journalism’ in the newsroom. Two say they practice solutions journalism unknowingly. In other words, the journalists may talk about what *solutions* a journalist (or media house) can bring to a community, without necessarily using the term actively.

Similar to development journalism, solutions journalism can be understood as a ‘method for nation building’. In fact, two of the journalists in AMMA mention that journalism should change the society for the better. Kofi, a chief documentary editor who has been with AMMA for seven years, says:

I think that solutions journalism is based on social mobilization to cause economic progress and solutions for the community. Solutions journalism is very important, and we practice this journalism.

(Kofi, personal interview, December 2018).

The journalists at AMMA face problems at both local, regional and national levels. The problems reported are typically regarding health issues, lack of clean drinking water, poor infrastructure, corruption, maladministration, boundary issues, unemployment and financial problems. The people experiencing these difficulties demand urgent action. Mekonnen, a vice producer of Amhara TV documentary and investigation team

who has worked seven years at the agency proposes that solutions journalism can be a ‘mean to treat a problem’;

Solutions journalism in my understanding is (like) a doctor who medicate an illness, an ill person. But development journalism is just from the beginning about caring for the healthy one.

(Mekonnen, personal interview, December 2018).

The problem for Ethiopian journalists may be for journalists to get a case elevated to a higher political level, since the tendency at this level has been to emphasize the government’s agenda (through ‘development journalism’ as mentioned in previous chapter). When the journalist tries to elevate a problem and emphasize the solution, they may face harassment. Yonas, who has worked at the agency for the last ten years states:

When we talk about solution-oriented journalism, we must expose problems to find solutions. So, when we expose or uncover problems, mostly the problems are related to different groups, for example parties or government officials or maybe investors or investor groups who has some interest in the public. Anyway, it is related to some groups or some persons, so we are trying to expose or uncover such kinds of problems. After that, we will try to find solutions of those problems. Oftentimes, a person or a group or a party who has an interest on the issue, try to harass a journalist. They may harass a journalist by phone calls, writing letters or exposing the name of the person in public or on Facebook.

(Yonas, personal interview, December 2018).

4.1.2. Solutions journalism – a way of promoting peace?

Solutions are sometimes unobtainable. A journalist may struggle to ‘be met’ by a key stakeholder. That will bring about some dilemmas in the news reporting which were described by a journalist at AMMA this way:

If you report well and go into details about a problem, somebody (...) should make a step towards a solution from your reporting. If the solution provider brings nothing about, your report will be nothing.

(Kofi, personal interview, December 2018).

Putting the public agenda first may also be done to entertain different views and facilitate peace. In fact, several of the journalists mentioned *peace journalism* as

another reporting style they could relate to. According to Kofi, peace journalism has been in practice at the agency since 2007:

Our politics (in Ethiopia) is not something that you solve in a single night (...) There is a good thing in our country right now, but, as you know, education and political mobilization is not an overnight work - its continuous (...) More than 80 percent of the population is illiterate, so peace journalism, for instance, is important.

(Kofi, personal interview, December 2018).

According to Kofi, solutions in transitional communities are usually not a matter of a 'quick-fix' but depend on longer processes. Peace journalism can, in that sense, be an important journalistic practice in a country where many people are currently displaced. Solutions journalism, on the other hand, has the potential to open up public discussions about laws and policies. By facilitating debate, the journalist has a chance to create a *general openness* in the society. That should undoubtedly be important in a diverse society like Ethiopia, where (informal) censorship has been the norm.

Amir, a television show producer who has worked for seven years at AMMA with a special emphasis on *reality show* on rural farmers⁸⁷, expresses that many problems (or misunderstandings) in society occur because of high levels of illiteracy. In this case, it can be well important to point towards people with solutions.

If we have a disagreement on political participation or on political independence for instance, (...) we can deviate (...) having researched the problems and the conflicts, we can find people, professionals, researchers, political leaders, civil society, activators and we can engage them into discussion.

(Amir, personal interview, December 2018).

Presenting solutions from public representatives can bring new perspectives on otherwise exacerbated problems. As shown, journalists at AMMA commonly understand that 'solutions journalism' is about finding solutions through *dialogue*.

⁸⁷ most of them uneducated.

4.1.3. Uneven levels of engagement

The analysis, however, revealed different understandings according to the journalist's level of *engagement*. This creates uncertainties *if* the journalist is supposed to participate in problem-solving or remain far in the background. Amadi, a reporter with a university degree in English language and literature, says:

We participate (...) Even as journalists we are part of the solution. For instance, when there is some kind of program to manually get rid of wheat, our journalists participate.⁸⁸

(Amadi, personal interview, December 2018).

As a potential weakness of solutions journalism, Amadi mentions that *losing your independence* could be one.

You may lean toward yellow journalism or you may be very sensitive to the issue. Then being a part of that, maybe you may take some wrong ways to find out the truth (...). If you are going to work with the authorities, you may wrongly or aggressively go to those people to find out the truth, which may result in some aversive effects as well.

(Amadi, personal interview, December 2018).

Yet most of the informants express an understanding of 'solutions journalism' pointing towards people *with* a solution, rather than being a participant of solutions themselves. Another journalist rather recognizes the journalist primarily as a *mediator*:

The role of the journalist is bringing people together to explain their attitudes, their responsibilities, their views, the solution, their problems (...) The journalist is a mediator (...) to the people (...) by facilitating, asking questions and by making responsible those who are not responsible.

(Amir, personal interview, December 2018)

⁸⁸ Among other concrete ways of participating, Amadi mentions fundraising an author who was suffering from an illness, as well as fundraising for machines in efforts to minimize wheat infection in Lake Tana (Amadi, personal interview, December 2018).

An example of mediation, mentioned by several of the journalists, is the City Forum Program. The program started 2-3 years ago and is a program for which the media are known. According to Haileyesus Alelegn, a director of News and Sports Department at ATV, the City Forum Program aims to get the station closer to the public by making Vox pop interviews from the people involved at the forum. As a result, from public expressing their concerns, people in power positions have ‘lost’ their formal authority and had to step down and listen to regular citizens. According to Haileyesus this is exactly the intention of the program:

People know that the media can bring change. They are expected to appeal to the original authorities, but they believe that they cannot find a solution there

(Haileyesus, personal interview, December 2018).

In the City Forum Programs, the journalist is positioned as a facilitator in front of the public and the officials. The journalist takes on a more passive role as a *moderator* who tries not to interrupt. Playing the role as a moderator or facilitator enables the journalist to create a balance between those offended and those accused. This makes the audience feel like ‘members’, similar to the model of *De Correspondent* emphasizing un-braking news (cf. 2.7.)

This type of forum is good because the people raise all the questions, all the problems of the public and we need a quick answer to our question

(Resident of Worreta on ATV, December 2018).

Similarly, the journalistic platform is used to provide a more *holistic* presentation of a case, including *all* perspectives (though in this case the platform is not online, but typically arranged at a city hall).

A downside may be resistance from officials to provide anything other than “lip-service”⁸⁹ and therefore solutions may at times not become a fact. Because of “lip-service”, not all journalists were positive towards the potential of this program. Sami found the connection between media and politicians problematic: “In some way the mass media do not meet with the politicians” (Sami, personal interview, December 2018).

⁸⁹ “Lip-service” is when the officials promise something without keeping their word.

4.1. 4. The practices of following up a case

When they cover a story, the journalists at AMMA are supposed to follow a procedure to ensure that solutions will be generated.

The process is presented by Vice Manager Dereje Moges in the documentary accompanying this thesis. The Vice Manager mentions the following seven points:

- 1) Make a research; identify real problems.
- 2) Identify stakeholders; the stakeholders who are affected by these problems and who have the potential to solve such kinds of problems.
- 3) Organize a forum, for example a town or city hall meeting, including all stakeholders and officials.
- 4) The participants discuss everything freely in regard to the identified problem.
- 5) The stakeholders give a solution to the problems according to their understanding.
- 6) A follow-up program will identify if the officials kept their promise or not.
- 7) The journalist at AMMA will report the problem if the case is not followed up upon.

The AMMA journalists may also pose critical questions regarding the *time aspect* of a forthcoming solution (to ensure that it is going to be implemented). Recently they were assigned to ask politicians “*When* will you give a solution?” (Sami, 2018). Eyayou Melese, a TV reporter working five years at AMMA, mentions how he asked critical questions about the implementation process in regard to the new policy called the new educational roadmap (Eyayou, 2018).⁹⁰ Concerning this case, there were disagreements between the visibility of the politicians and the scholars. Asking such questions could be considered controversial (Eyayou, video interview, December 2018). Nevertheless, the journalist can show the public that he has made efforts to follow up the case - even when no solution was found.

The follow-up practice has been practiced at AMMA for the last five to six years (Yonas, 2018), yet several of the informants expressed that this was not applied consequently. According to Yonas (2018) a follow-up should depend on the nature of the case. Vice producer Mekonnon, who personally has been following up cases for the last four years, says it usually takes up to three months before he goes out and follow

⁹⁰The new educational roadmap has been proposed because of weaknesses in the previous educational policy not measuring up to international standards. The new educational roadmap is considered to be a new solution but was not (yet) implemented (Eyayou, *correspondence*, January 2019).

up the solution (Mekonnen, 2018). Sami, who mostly makes follow-up on his own initiative, sometimes follow the case after one week. He says that follow-up mainly happens in relation to The City Forum Program (Sami, 2018)

Another challenge for the journalists can be that other Ethiopian media houses may not share this practice or the continuity of the practice. This may offer them little support or less inspiration to *continue* the practice. Although solution providers may provide useful perspectives, they may also be difficult to find.

Finding rational people to provide a good solution to be accepted by all parties and the society may be difficult (...) These people are few (...) You know, freedom of expression is very important in any journalistic work in any country - so if your political system is developed, if you are living in a democratic situation in a democratic nation (...) And if your right to self-expression is respected - no problem you will get many people. But such rights are not respected sometimes, so people are getting fewer to provide, to explain their views, to criticize (...) because they worry after speaking, explaining and criticizing they will be affected by it

(Amir, personal interview, December 2018).

The journalist expresses the problem of self-censorship, which remains a major issue in Ethiopia, not only for journalists, but also for sources prevented from openly expressing themselves (Skjerdal, 2010). Solutions providers may lack personal interest in giving solutions (Amir, 2018). As shown, journalists at AMMA have different experiences following up cases and solutions may not at all times be found.

4.1 .5. Practical examples of solution-oriented journalism at AMMA

The following section will demonstrate how constructive journalism is applied in three different programs on AMMA. The first two examples are drawn from the ‘Farmers Talk’ program, while the last one is a City Forum program.

The program ‘Farmers Talk’ (in Amharic ‘Ye arso aderoch wog’) is a discussion platform situated at a local level and mentioned as an example of solutions journalism by one journalist during the in-depth interview. The program occasionally invites government officials or stakeholders to join the show and bring solutions to the problems that farmers are facing. Sometimes the journalists will only involve local citizens in the debates.

4.1.5.1. A solution to future practice: The case of farmers wearing shoes

The episode “*Why Ethiopian farmers hate wearing shoes*”⁹¹. was broadcasted on 20th of January 2017. In Ethiopia, especially in rural areas, some farmers do not wear shoes on a usual day and some of them do not wear shoes at all. The program aims to change the attitude of the farmers to start wearing shoes.

The chosen style of the program is a debate. This example shows an exchange of ideas between two groups. On one side, we see farmers who wear shoes. On the other side, we see those who are holding on to their traditional mindset of not wearing any shoes. One of the farmers gives his perspective of wearing shoes:

We have not experienced wearing shoes before, so we think it is uncomfortable when we are in the field (...) and we are economically poor. We can't buy shoes for ourselves and our families.

(Farmer in the TV-program ‘Farmers talk’, January 2017).

At the end of the program, the farmers accept the idea of wearing shoes. The farmers who disagreed at the beginning all changed their mind. The same farmers who were against wearing shoes concluded that; “*it is a traditional way of thinking, but now we have to wear shoes and make ourselves healthy*” (farmer in ‘Farmers Talk’). The farmers changed their minds from listening to advantages brought forth by other farmers sharing their experiences.

The role of the journalist, in this case, is to be a *facilitator* and one who challenges the farmers’ traditional views. The journalist challenges the farmers to re-think *if* this problem is really caused by their financial situation;

I have an evidence some farmers even they brought shoes and they left them at home because they are not interested in wearing shoes.

(Journalist in ‘Farmers talk’, January 2017).

⁹¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q7jkwCgoE&fbclid=IwAR2QDbtmAa9PTVQgnV2lb4ywWgK6anN3JeodXZ52Wxss0tVhPfjg-U529RQ>

The broadcast fulfills the “*what now?*” criteria by asking, what could be better regarding the health of the rural farmers. The journalist gives the farmers a voice to express themselves and learn from others.

4.1.5.2. Solutions to develop gender equality: The case of women attending conferences

This program was broadcasted on 17th of March 2019 and is also from ‘Farmers Talk’. It is about work division, rights and education.

The program discusses the roles between men and women. In the past, there were more burdens on females during their pregnancy. In addition to carry the child, the woman had to take care of her husband by washing his legs and cooking food. Today the roles between men and women are changing. Women have gradually started to gain more rights, especially the right of education. The work division in the home is changing as well.

The style of the program is a debate where both male and female participants share their individual experiences on work division in the home. The males share experiences of how they may have helped the wife in the home and how they understood the role of women: “*Even I didn’t allow my wife to go outside and participate on conferences based on her education*” (Male participant in “Farmers talk”). The women are equally sharing how they tried to gain more independence: “*Husbands are not allowing us to participate at local conferences because of traditional thinking and lack of awareness*” (Female participant in “Farmers talk”).

The male journalist is a *facilitator* of a conversation about women’s changing role and what could lead to better decisions in the home based on the female’s higher levels of education.

The journalist uses the criteria of “*what now?*” (cf. 2.7.) while he emphasizes women’s development and how things have recently started to change. In Ethiopia, women are usually less exposed in media than men. For this reason, it could be helpful for women that the journalist brings light on this discussion. It shows the reporters’ resistance to follow stereotypical patterns, and willingness to challenge the existing culture.

To resume, the two above mentioned examples all uses a *passive-deliberative journalism*, while the journalist seeks to include citizens from the countryside in public deliberation (Bro, 2019, p. 513). User engagement is, as earlier mentioned, more often what characterizes constructive journalism (Holmaas, 2019, p. 75), which have been confirmed through these cases.

In the program “Farmers talk” the journalist mostly works to include citizens applying an *anthropologist approach*, asking questions that look back to seek answers for the current situation. The anthropological questions are often more multifaceted than the questions from a detective approach, because they explore relations, difference in opinion and create a context (Gyldensted, 2015, p. 99).

In the following, there will be an example where stakeholders are invited to participate in solutions at a *regional* level.

4.1.5.3. Solutions to prevent corruption and violence: The case of maladministration and boundary issues

The City Forum Program (in Amharic ‘*Yeketmoch medrek*’) was broadcasted on 19th of December 2018 in several parts ⁹²⁹³ and mentioned as examples of solutions journalism by two journalists during their in-depth interviews. Journalist Setegn Abuhay from AMMA is the facilitator of broadcast. We can see him writing down the questions from the participants of the program. At the end of the meeting, he raises the citizens questions for the concerned body. The concerned body can answer whether the objections are true or not.

⁹² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUGy_EiBoww&fbclid=IwAR3k9d4BJvoSc6K6QVE-4SytTVtOzBlp1g5NAgjnjIP08O1ZC0Mb6csV6GQ

⁹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zxt-RMuLYdc&fbclid=IwAR133ms9m3aPYIpnUNdi9MqDz5mTryLFhMcMmUUG8GTP_4FoOLuVMMTN5gI

The concrete content example is built up by a debate, revealing problems from public audiences in Woreta and Forega, two small towns based in the Amhara region. Problems of corruption in the public administration have been observed by citizens. These problems are brought into the notice of the new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who is trying to unite the people of Ethiopia. 15 million Birr (about 500.000 USD dollar) are missing in the local administration of Forega. The money which was allocated for improving infrastructure was never found during a probe. The speculation of corruption could be caused by a problem of nepotism. The suspicion is that leaders, who are interconnected, may receive mutual benefits.

The second concern in the program is boundaries. There are non-defined boundaries between the regions and people may get killed because of that. Since the questions concern boundaries, a participant stresses a solution to be found at national level. At the end of the program, both the police and the regional officials acknowledge that there are problems in the cities in regard to the regional administration. The police promise to uphold the law to fight corruption. The institution leader from Amhara Democratic Party admits that they have a problem. He promises to provide solutions. The South Gondar zone vice administrator also admits that there is a problem:

All the questions you raised are correct, there is still a problem, we know that. We have to make efforts to resolve the problems. We didn't leave the problem intentionally (...) it is true that there is a problem, we know that.

(Ato Awoke Zemene, Vice Administrator, South Gondar zone Administration⁹⁴)

None of the officials provide answers *how* the problems will to be solved, but they admit that they have a problem, and that efforts should be made to solve them.

The program can be compared with “De Correspondent” where the journalist becomes a *conversation leader* and engages the audience in the creation of journalism (Wijnberg, Editor-In-Chief, De Correspondent in Gyldensted, 2015, p. 37). The journalist treats his audience as ‘members’ and equal, thereby avoiding victimization. The reporter in this case intervenes very little in the conversation.

⁹⁴ Broadcasted on ATV channel on YouTube.

The framing seems more familiar to public journalism that engages the citizens. In constructive journalism, however, media should do more than engaging citizens. According to Gyldensted, it should also be related with positive psychology or another behavioral science giving the audience a direction (Gyldensted, 2015, p. 25). Nevertheless, this facilitating program was later followed up by a news broadcast⁹⁵ providing some context. The news broadcast showed the pre efforts made by AMMA. Before the event, the journalist conducted an investigation to find out whether these problems in Woreta were true. AMMA then arranged a forum because of the citizens' concern and the problem was emphasized because the officials refused to answer the concerns of the public.

After the event, the residents however seemed grateful.

The discussion was good because the concerned body gives the answer and it is an information to be taken serious for the public and the leaders - for accountability of the public.

(Resident of Worreta on ATV).

The citizens appreciate the local broadcaster and request that a follow-up program should be broadcasted until the actual problem will be solved. The program seeks to provide *balance* and *fairness* and has a representative approach, while it seeks answers from people in authority. This may give the viewers hope that things can change for the better.

4.1.6. Difficulties when practicing solutions journalism in AMMA

The content analysis reveals that some journalists during their program focus more on *events* than on long term projects. This could probably be due to the lack of resources and lack of knowledge/training, which several journalists more often mentioned.

⁹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EqiXfIDWUo&fbclid=IwAR2Czh1q2-qlwcb6TJmmJ-bJBHYr1TrXkoD3l8tXkHTEo9QuDDVXXUvSSUI>

Another challenge is that at times, officials of the small council will try to prevent the City Forum Programs arranged by AMMA.

Many of the officials try use their influence in order to make the meeting unsuccessful in their area, for example, they didn't provide a small hall for the discussion program for us in that area or that town (...). We have an interest to announce it to the public by car (...) driving around in the city. They tried to stop us.

(Yonas, personal interview, December 2018).

Implementing a new concept like solutions journalism can be challenging, but it can also bring new opportunities. Some practical challenges at AMMA is lack of training (in solutions journalism), since there has been none (Dereje, video interview, December 2018). Journalistic training at AMMA may in general be more theoretical and less practical (from personal observations at AMMA, December 2018). When practicing solutions journalism, the journalists may in turn encounter practical problems concerning bad infrastructure, lack of equipment, getting a driver etc.

Another challenge may be finding those who carry potential solutions to ideas.

Who gives the solution? Who has this idea? What kind of people are they? Such kind of problem is very challenging in solutions journalism.

(Amir, personal interview, December 2018).

Since solutions journalism encourages the journalist to find solutions, the journalist may also have to look for opposing views and deal with issues concerning their personal security⁹⁶. These problems can prevent journalists from mobilization and effectiveness, and therefore, may affect their practice of solutions journalism.

⁹⁶ After the recent reforms in Ethiopia, there have been attempts from the government to cooperate with the media and provide them independence. This reform continued after the fieldwork was conducted and should be taken into consideration.

Lack of journalistic training may give journalists impressions from other normative aspects, for instance solutions may not be to simply *fight corruption*, but to *differentiate* between people, systems and cultures. Differentiating may require training skills about how the political system works, equipping the journalist to know *when* and *how* to ask constructive questions. Without any training the journalist may side to the interest of politicians or stakeholders (as was the case on the island St. Maarten).

4.2.1. Introduction to the program ‘Here and Now’

Broadcasting for almost 40 years, ‘Here and Now’ was the greatest news magazine program on P1, NRKs main radio channel. The program was closed in December 2019 and is being replaced by ‘Dagens’ which is broadcast from 1-2 pm every day with Mathias Nylenna⁹⁷ as host (Andreassen, 2019). ‘Dagens’ emphasizes less on the local perspective than the former program ‘Here and Now’ did (Hovstad, personal communication, January 2020).

‘Here and Now’ was a program with news, debates, reportages, traffic overviews, and sports. In later years, it was broadcasted for Monday to Thursday from 5-6.30 pm with approximately 500.000 daily listeners⁹⁸. The program was first aired in 1981 on the sister channel P2 to provide “*a living and direct form of service radio with people, cases and things where it happens when it happens*” □my translation□ (First Editor-in-chief at “Here and now” Richard Hermann in Hovstad, 2018, p. 1). ‘Here and Now’ was meant to create journalistic counterbalance from the capital of Oslo (Andreassen, 2019). Although ‘Here and Now’ was a *local* radio program, the special aim was to bring the local up to a *national perspective* (Hovstad, 2018). In 1993 the program was moved to P1, which is NRK’s main radio channel for a general audience.

NRKs decision to close down ‘Here and Now’ in 2019 was based on a *comprehensive listening survey* conducted by NRK in 2018⁹⁹. The survey compared P1s broadcasts with the demands from the audience and revealed 1) Listeners were more receptive towards verbal content in the morning and had more interest in listening to music after

⁹⁷ Nylenna was part of the former program ‘Here and Now’.

⁹⁸ Information was given by Hovstad via personal communication (Hovstad, January 2020).

⁹⁹ This document has not been published and was for internal use.

5 o'clock 2) P1 did not meet their target group age 40-54 (the average listener appeared to be older) (Hovstad, personal communication, January 2020). Based on the survey, P1 attempts to reach a younger segment with another program containing 10% more music (Hovstad, personal communication, January 2020)

The main audience target at P1 is “Mona 42”, a woman 42 years old with a lower educational background who appreciates ‘simple background information’. One of the aims at ‘Here and Now’ was seeking to inform and enlighten this target group, was through news perspectives containing stories of *hope* (Hovstad, 2018). In 2018 Hovstad argued the need for more enlightenment based on a study made by Norad (Johansen, 2018)¹⁰⁰.

The reason why ‘Here and Now’ started to practice constructive journalism was mainly to retain legitimacy (Hovstad in Holmaas, 2019, p. 119). When the concept was implemented in 2017, the program was in need of some fresh perspectives. The implementation of constructive journalism was, therefore, an attempt to make listeners more interested and save the existence of the program. Nevertheless, the audience study, made by NRK, showed that the format of some reports still did not catch many listeners’ attention (but the reasons could just as well be the format)¹⁰¹.

When human resources manager Kristian Hovstad first launched constructive journalism in 2017 (Holmaas, 2019, p. 115), it was a decision commenced top-down from the NRK leadership. While NRK is making *hope* the main principle, ‘Here and Now’s reporting’s may have served as an example for the entire organization. This makes the case of ‘Here and Now’ unique for future of NRK news and is therefore worth looking into.

In daily speech, the journalists at ‘Here and Now’ related more to the term “constructive journalism” rather than “solutions journalism”. “Constructive journalism” will, therefore, be referred to in this section.

¹⁰⁰ The study by Norad was published in August 2018 and revealed that a large percentage of Norwegians show little knowledge of positive developments in the world (Holmes, 2018)

¹⁰¹ At least not in the segment of people between 40-55 years.

4.2.2. Changes in the news culture since 2017

The in-depth analysis of 'Here and Now' reveals that there has been a cultural change among the journalists lately. Although it may at times have been difficult to implement constructive journalism in the newsroom¹⁰² a majority of the journalists mentioned that they noticed a change in the production culture after the concept was introduced.

I believe that there has been a culture change. I believe that people more often consider relevant news angles where you look for solutions and answers, but whether it shows in journalism every day is more difficult to attain. It is very difficult to achieve something that signalizes changes every day. What is a basic problem with constructive journalism (...) is that it appears as a slightly diffuse size. It is...not...so...measurably, right? (...) What is most important to us is probably the culture change that it has led to.

(Jens, personal interview, December 2018)

Constructive journalism may not easily be determined in practice but the *mindset* of the journalists. It may give journalists new ideas and approaches. Peter, who was fairly new at 'Here and Now', experienced the change this way:

I do not have the impression that all cases have to be either constructive or give hope (...) I experience that people are encouraging it by suggestions, so what I think is, that there may be low expectations about constructive journalism, but a newsroom that is very good at helping each other see other sides of the case.

(Peter, personal interview, December 2018).

According to the Kristian Hovstad, who introduced constructive journalism in the newsroom, it was a challenge to implement it, because it is like "starting anew" every time a new co-worker begins (Hovstad, personal communication, January 2020). According to Hovstad, it could seem like an advantage for journalists to have this mindset taught from the beginning of their education.

¹⁰² Personal communication (Hovstad, January 2020).

4.2.3.A matter of 'smaller' adjustments

Although there may have been a 'cultural change', three of the informants expressed that implementing constructing journalism (in a practical sense) has only been a matter of 'smaller adjustments' from the previous reporting style. According to Hovstad (2018), the adjustment was *to make less but better news stories*. This application was confirmed by one of the journalists during their interview (Bård, 2018).

The aim to make constructive news was kept by a reminder list in the newsroom expressed as such: "*Look for a bigger picture that creates new understanding*" (Hovstad, 2018). Other reminders were to look for courage and creativity in 'victims' and for those who find a breakthrough where others fail.

De-victimization could, for instance, be to ensure less digital class distinctions, as was discussed between the journalists during a morning meeting¹⁰³. In this meeting, the editor asks the journalists if they know about any municipalities who may have found a solution (observations at 'Here and Now', December 2018). At NRK, this is a typical way that the journalists will explore and help each other discover alternative cases. They would typically *first* classify the cases collectively and *then* look into the possible solutions individually. According to Hovstad, the way of including constructive perspectives will in the future become a 'normal' way for journalists to operate:

Constructive journalism is not a new direction, but a necessary development of journalism. A development that is essential for the trustworthiness of news journalists. The word journalism will in the future get the same content as constructive journalism has today.

(Hovstad in Holmaas, 2019, p. 119).

When the informants were asked about what they do to create constructive news, a majority mentioned that they, in general, try to generate a more 'holistic picture' of a

¹⁰³ The concern about digital class distinction was brought to attention by the Norwegian Ministry of Education.

case. When explaining the application of constructive news, the informants either mentioned:

- 1) their choice of sources (mainly expert sources were mentioned);
- 2) the nature of their questions (for instance “is there a potential solution?”); or
- 3) the use of framing (mentioning ‘the good example’ after explaining ‘the problem’)

Two cases may be used against each other or in parallel. The journalist can for instance mention one *classic* case next to a *solution* case (Peter, 2018).

The journalists talk about constructive journalism in an *indirect* way. This was confirmed by personal observations (December 2018), when journalists mostly discussed it in connection to relevant themes.

4.2.4. Constructive journalism – a new representation of the world?

The in-depth analysis at NRK showed that the journalists interpreted constructive journalism in similar ways. Nevertheless, some journalists, more than others, emphasize bringing hope, providing the audience with a ‘different perspective of the world’. The differentiation comes down to the individual understanding of the media’s representation of the world. Jens, a managing editor who has worked for ten years at ‘Here and Now’, argues that constructive journalism should cause civic engagement:

I understand it as journalism which has a goal and a purpose, and which builds. Journalism which has an intention to create change through conveying as true a picture as possible, that can give people tools and hope and meaning to understand the world around them and (...) create engagement.

(Jens, personal interview, December 2018).

According to Nils, an editor-in-chief who has been with ‘Here and Now’ for two months, constructive news does not necessarily mean ‘being positive’:

We should use another word, it is maybe ‘upbuilding journalism’ then, and it is a bit inside of this that one is not necessarily positive, but that one is solution-oriented, then, and that journalism leads somewhere – it’s not just ascertaining that things are bad, that things are as they are – but that it leads to a place then, that it points the way further.

(Nils, personal interview, December 2018).

Peter, another journalist, describes constructive journalism as finding ‘the good example’;

It is simply the search for solutions and the search for hope that a case is not over after you pointed to a problem and told about someone suffering from it. That one doesn’t end the questioning there, but that one looks further for someone who has resolved a problem another place or some that can be an example to follow.

(Peter, personal interview, December 2018).

Although most of the journalists agreed that constructive journalism can be about telling reality differently, constructive journalism can also be a way of *providing information on how society is already connected*. Bård, who worked nine years as a journalist at ‘Here and Now’, takes notice that there is a difference between *providing information* and *changing perception*. He views constructive journalism as one way of the telling reality in a world with *many* variations of telling the reality.

You can also look at it as (...) to give people more information about how society is connected is also constructive (...) I think that this part is most appealingly to work with (...) Some will probably say that...it might be about giving...people another impression of the world – that it is not so bad as say for instance usual journalism gives an impression of (...) I do not agree with the thought that we only give people misery and death (...). There has been a diversity throughout the years.

(Bård, personal interview, December 2018).

Although journalists at ‘Here and Now’ work towards *common goals*, they may have their reasons for being engaged in constructive journalism. Among those reasons can be a motivation to move away from the negative reporting into finding solutions and to give a more holistic picture of reality. Among those who believe in ‘giving people a broader perspective’ is Ole, an editor-in-chief with a technical background. He has worked one and a half years at ‘Here and Now’.

I think that constructive journalism (...) tries to make it a bit broader and show more perspectives of the case by also representing that which could be a solution to a problem - that you are not in a way, stopping halfway, but that you complete it, and make it a little broader

(Ole, personal interview, December 2018).

This emphasis of 'seeking a broader picture' could, however, be an indirect criticism of the way media currently portrays the world. Most of the informants from NRK highlighted *ideological reasons* as a main motivational reason for engaging with constructive journalism.

Other motivational reasons mentioned were to 'provide people with more information' (Bård, 2018) or to 'create a better product' (Jan Erik, 2018). Other motivations may be connected to how journalism was practiced in the past. Hans, a journalist who was working for 'Here and Now' in the 90s, points out that journalism may have changed parallelly with the political environment:

Journalism was probably more conflict-oriented ten years ago than it is today (...) in the old days, then there were for example newspapers, well the press was linked to...to the parties, right (...) when right was in opposition, then 'Aftenposten' was in opposition to the government, meanwhile when 'Aftenposten' and 'Arbeiderbladet' were clapping – suddenly no one was clapping any longer. Everything was wrong (...) and if everything is wrong then no one wants to defend the government and say, 'actually this was a good idea'.

(Hans, personal interview, December 2018).

Constructive journalism could be a reaction towards the past tendencies of 'flaw finding' and can make compliance towards the practice of *servicing* a community in a way that considers several aspects of a matter.

I think it feels right because you create an impression with some people that everything is so terrible – and it is not. It is good in a lot of areas so that I think it is quite important then, that we don't create that impression that everything is terrible.

(Hans, personal interview, December 2018).

4.2.5. Constructive reporting – a way to establish trust?

How the journalists apply constructive journalism varies from case to case. Sometimes constructive journalism is mentioned in the early process of initiating contact with sources:

I think that it is very nice to make cases where you don't just focus on problems and make people yell at each other, but simply stand in a position to say that, we would like to demand a proposal for a solution here. That gives you simply the opportunity to for example pitch in interviews or debates in a pretty different way. When you sit on the phone and you are able to say; "Yes at 'Here and Now' we want our journalism to be constructive, therefore we want to ask you, not only about what you think is bad but also what should happen for us to find a solution here." That often gives you some interesting answers that you would not be able to attain without it.

(Peter, personal interview, December 2018).

In this example, the journalist uses the word "constructive" to disarm his sources from thinking he is 'out to get information from them', as most often can create distance.

Practicing constructive journalism may therefore provide the journalist with *different* answers from sources. Several of the journalists explain that many external agencies, including themselves, dislike the name constructive journalism while it can give people the wrong idea of their journalistic practice:

It can in a way be misinterpreted and it can in a way be misused and it can be that now we should only make happy stories. Now we shall only make...yes...Then it will be in a way a complete mistake.

(Ole, personal interview, December 2018).

Despite the misanthropy of the name, journalists at 'Here and Now' have mostly got positive responses from journalists in other media agencies. Two of the journalists said constructive journalism is not a "new" thing but was already practiced by 'Here and Now' before the pilot project began. Yet constructive journalism has been a term articulated more lately, namely by the leadership.

NRK and others experience that they have a need to...to probably be a bit more positive, I don't know, well...spread out a bit, create width, well it has a need to renew itself a bit, has needed to shift the focus a bit...

(Ole, personal interview, December 2018).

According to several of the journalists at 'Here and Now', they receive little feedback from their audience. This could probably have to do with the fact that radio journalists generally receive less feedback than online reporters.

4.2.5.1. Getting real answers requires critical questions

According to Jan Erik (2018) who worked five years at 'Here and Now', constructive journalism matches well the profile of the existing radio program, which seeks to provide people with background information. He mentions that asking questions about solutions is something that the journalists consider more often and for that reason, they are going to the expert sources possessing real solutions:

I think maybe we are looking more for some scientists, right. And then there are environments that try to find solutions to problems and organizations that try to find solutions to problems. And maybe also challenge politicians also and people in administration if they know this criticism, but what is the solution? What do you think now is the solution? What do you do so there will be a solution to this? It is more that kind of questions.

(Jan-Erik, personal interview, December 2018).

Despite the fact that constructive journalism may be understood as "positive news" may lead to diffusion, the journalists at 'Here and Now' shared a common understanding of news balance. Despite the aim to be objective, all of the informants responded that complete objectivity is difficult to attain. As an alternative, many of them stressed the importance of creating *balance*. But what is striking is that nearly all the interviewed journalists mentioned that constructive journalism is in risk at becoming *too* positive:

It's very often easier to make a case about a nice grant for a good purpose, than if in some way ask questions about, but yes it is nice that you in a way grant the money for an elderly, minister, but what you might need is a billion.

(Bård, Personal interview, December 2018).

It is important to mention that the journalist may find it insufficient to only represent one solution. It may be relevant to present listeners with *several* solutions over time, while problems may require *several* solutions (Bård, 2018). Paradoxically, constructive journalism may also require *more* critical questions than less, because solutions may require more from politicians:

It is not a problem for a politician to criticize another party or something that has been done to another party. But say, what should you have done or what do you think should have been the solution? Then they get more difficulties answering.

(Jan-Erik, Personal interview, December 2018).

Peter says that he will typically ask officials or stakeholders about solutions towards the end of an interview, unlike sources who are less familiar with media exposure. In that case, he will typically use it in the beginning as an ‘assuring factor’. The approach will, in other words, depend on who the source is. The *way of questioning* and *who to question* were both essential elements in reflections on constructive reporting at ‘Here and Now’ where different approaches were used in order to follow the editorial guidelines.

4.2.5.2. Constructive reporting – a matter of different news framing?

When emphasizing solutions, the journalist should not forget to be critical of their own solutions (Eriksen, video interview December 3, 2018). A challenge can arise, as mentioned if the journalist becomes too focused on solutions that he forgets to ask critical questions (Peter, 2018).

If the framing of a solution becomes too positive, the case becomes unauthentic and uninteresting. The journalist makes the case relevant by including all necessary details. If a journalist becomes too positive, he can easily become a target for politicians’ mediation (Bård, 2018). Mentioning several aspects of a case is equally important in terms of foreign news reporting, which often has a tendency towards negative framing.

According to a journalist at 'Here and Now', the coverage of especially Africa has suffered from notorious imbalance:

Almost all news from Africa is...most often horrible war and disaster and hunger and...then there is very few positive news from Africa, there is no doubt about that

...You should be careful not to walk into a trap (...) that you walk into the ditch on the other side, but that you...that one...yeh well, paint a rosy picture of the world, because that is not what this is about. It is about bringing more elements that give a weightiness and width to journalism.

(Jan Erik, personal interview, December 2018).

In terms of international coverage, the 'Here and Now' news team also reflected on how they wanted to cover foreign news. Two of the interviewed journalists mention that they now interview less sources from NGOs since such sources tend to emphasize problems instead of solutions¹⁰⁴. The journalists do not only want to emphasize on what has gone wrong in the world. This also became apparent in an internal discussion:

Previously we had a correspondent (...) he made well many stories that were a bit well...yes, when there was a civil war in Iraq, right...then it was one misery and Mosul here and... Iraq there and...it was well very much well...sadness. Then there was a discussion if we wanted that? Like every day? (...) listeners turn off – what then?

(Hans, personal interview, December 2018).

The responses from journalists at 'Here and Now' show that framing is part of their reflection on how they practice constructive journalism.

4.2.6. Practical examples of constructive journalism at 'Here and Now'

The following is a closer analysis of three content examples from Here and Now where constructive journalism has been applied.

¹⁰⁴ However, one journalist mentions that he experienced NGOs to recently change towards emphasizing solutions.

4.2.6.1. Promoting depolarization: The case of windmills in Fitjar and Smøla municipality

The report “*The case of windmills in Fitjar and Smøla municipality*” was broadcasted on the 4th of December 2018¹⁰⁵. The reporter Siri Løkken visits *Midtfjellet* with 44 windmills¹⁰⁶. Years have gone since it was first built, and many people have an opinion about it. The journalist is asking open questions about what happened¹⁰⁷. The question of this report (based on the two cases) is whether windmills are “hot” or “not”. A question is also on the financial benefit versus nature preservation.

The report fulfills the criteria of impact, timeliness, proximity and identification. It is made up of three sound bites; the first two consisting of arguments mostly *for* wind farms (with one farmer *against* them), the last one representing people who may have their reasons to be *against* them.

This case demonstrates a *deliberate approach* (reaching the public, i.e. passengers in Fitjar) and a *representative approach* (representing authorities, i.e. mayors). The first presentation is about two wind farms that were recently established the Fitjar municipality in North Hordaland and in Smøla municipality at Nordmøre. According to the leader of the National Association for Norwegian wind municipalities and mayor in Fitjar municipality Wenche Tislevoll, outdoor activity has risen 90% ever since the construction of windmills (NRK, 4th of December 2018). At the end of the report, the concerns against windmills are represented. Per Hanasand, present Chairman at the Norwegian Trekking Association worries about the future prospect because 43 nature areas in Norway are considered for wind farms.

The reporter enhances *building arguments* where arguments are developed along the way; first we meet the citizen, then the two mayors, then the spokesperson for the Norwegian Trekking Association, then the farmer who dislikes the view, etc.

¹⁰⁵ <https://radio.nrk.no/serie/her-og-naa-hovedsending/DMTN01024118#t=4m51s>

¹⁰⁶ The greatest windfarm in Norway.

¹⁰⁷ Many other areas in Norway have been preserved for nature.

The tone and the style of the program is open and investigative. The reporter uses a narrating voice, as we follow her into different scenery from the park into town. The case displays the conflict without taking a position.

By the use of framing, this report exposes different nuances of opinion. This makes a broader coverage than a typical reporting where mostly one view is represented. *“If we had only chosen those cuts about how nice it is to have windmills, then we would have lied to people”*, says Jens (2018) who reveals that truth to him is an important news value.

As a follow-up, ‘Here and Now’ made a podcast from the Norwegian Island *Frøya*. This reportage informs the listener how a wind farm was prevented (*“To fight against windmills”* reportage, Mathias Nylenna, 27th of March 2019¹⁰⁸). Different from the case on *Mittfjellet*, the tour areas were prioritized for passengers instead of wind farms.

Together, the two different cases demonstrate the journalists’ engagement for *depolarization* and broader coverage, using the element of *Inclusiveness and diversity* (where more perspectives are included more than usually). It gives a more holistic picture of the reality, which should include several civic opinions both for and against the building of windmills.

It may, however, be difficult to tell whether the audience will be more uplifted after listening to the program, but given the many arguments, the audience will probably feel more *informed*.

This case does not actively ensure action by others, instead, it provides information on possible advantages/disadvantages of wind farms thereby providing a broader picture of reality. This gives people a more factual impression of what can be achieved by building wind farms or avoided by for instance voting against them. Some people are accepting of with wind farms – other people were against them before the decision of establishing them. Arguably, it positions the audience with information to make choices based on different perspectives.

¹⁰⁸ <https://podtail.com/fi/podcast/nrk-her-og-na/a-kjempe-mot-vindmoller/>

4.2.6.2. Finding a best-practice example: One training establishment broke the code
The program “*Companies rarely lose their approval of trainee positions*” was
broadcasted on the 5th of November 2018¹⁰⁹ and produced by reporter Aleksander
Båtnes. This case was mentioned by two of the journalists at ‘Here and Now’ as an
example of successful constructive journalism during the in-depth interviews.

Today there are 19.000 companies in Norway who are approved for apprenticeship and
only two of them have lost their licence. However, many students are unhappy with
their trainee period. The Ministry of Education shows little concern, and little is done
to withdraw grants. The Ministry of Education says it is the responsibility of the
municipalities.

Five sources are used for this report: a former trainee, a current trainee, two
spokespersons and the supervisor of a trainee. Again, this reportage enhances both
deliberate and *representative* approaches and is similar in style to “*The case of
windmills in Fitjar and Smøla municipality*”.

Tina Poulsen, union representative at YOUNG¹¹⁰, and Sigrid Isdahl, the Ombudsman
of “Student and apprenticeship in Hordaland”, are both concerned about the working
environment of the youth. The question from the program leader is: “*Have we become
too focused on educating people that we stopped claiming demands from the certified
companies?*”. A “best-practice example”, ‘Veidekke Bygg Trøndelag’, that won a price
in 2016 is used as an example to display a company who found good solutions for
trainees.

¹⁰⁹ <https://radio.nrk.no/serie/her-og-naa-hovedsending/DMTN01022018#t=4m5s>

¹¹⁰ UNG

Similar to “*The case of windmills in Fitjar and Smøla municipality*”, “*Companies rarely lose their approval of trainee positions*” covers the ‘ordinary citizens’ who possess a different experience from the majority of people.

The first source addresses ‘the problem’: hairdresser Susanne Liendahl in Kristiansand had a bad experience during her time as a trainee where she was much left to her own devices. The second source, Niklas Engen Nyhus from the company Veidekke Bygg Trøndelag, reveals ‘the solution’ in terms of his time as a trainee. Opposite to Liendahl who had a bad experience, is Nyhus who had a different experience of being followed up.

The two examples represent two different professions from two different geographical parts of Norway. The diversity of experience, age and geography creates understanding of the local on a national scale and creates proximity and closeness between trainee’s situation. The tone of the program is troubled to the situation of youth.

Towards the end of the report, the story presents the listener with a solution and therefore also expresses hope for a change. In addition to the problem the reporter asks new questions as to how youth can get better apprenticeship. This makes the reporting different from a traditional reporting that would oftentimes end with a problem.

Bringing a solution to the youths’ situation could potentially make the listener feel better, however, it is difficult to know if people will notice and if the case ensures more or less action by the Ministry of Education, which should be a consideration. The case can potentially inspire other trainee establishments to follow in the footsteps of Veidekke Bygg Trøndelag, but without political restrictions, the training establishments may continue without adjustment. Asking new questions regarding learning and recourses can be seen as a strategy to “*kill your victim*”, but whether it creates political attention is still questionable.

4.2.6.3. Empowering people: The cleaner of the year

This interview was broadcasted on the 4th of December ¹¹¹ between reporter Elin Aandal-Herseth and cleaner Unni Valand. Valand from Hardanger has won a prize

¹¹¹ <https://radio.nrk.no/serie/her-og-naa-hovedsending/DMTN01024118#t=1h5m54s>

from the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees ¹¹² because she managed to reduce absence among her staff. This case is represented in the content analysis, while it was mentioned by one journalist at 'Here and Now' and different in style from the mentioned news stories.

Aandal-Herseth asks Valand questions about how the industry used to be like, what the status is now and what other people might learn from their experience. Valand shares how working methods have changed since she in 1986 began her career in the cleaning industry. Valand makes a *good example* of a responsible leader (of eight nationalities) who was active providing employees a healthy working environment. The tone of the problem is light and similar to the style of the other two mentioned programs; first presenting the cleaners responsibility (maintaining clean facilities), then the problem (absence) and lastly the solution (being seen in the job place).

The interview naturally focuses on Valand, the person winning the prize and why she was worthy of receiving it. The problem (also presented) is that the absence due to illness is greatest among cleaners in the municipal sector. The percentage of absence among cleaners on a national scale is 12% but Valand got it down to 4% among her staff. The example shows *significance* – not in great numbers but according to national statistics which makes it a case.

“The cleaner of the year – Unni Valand” is similar in style to *“Companies rarely lose their approval of trainee positions”*, while it emphasizes knowledge sharing and improvement amongst a *minority group*. It shows a *deliberate* approach, which can potentially inspire people working in the cleaning industry.

During the briefing the journalist and the editor discuss to which degree this case is relevant or not. The journalists mention: 1) She works to reduce absence due to illness due to many strains 2) Several foreigners have chances to get jobs 3) She will soon retiree (from observations, December 2018).

By choosing a minority profession, the reporter shows awareness of the polarizing role he or she may encounter as a news journalist. This case is therefore also an example of depolarization and makes an example of the journalist serving the local community. In the journalist's own words; *“it is a very small case from a very small place”* (journalist Malvin Eriksen, from the documentary *“How journalists use constructive journalism”*, 2020). The journalist empowers people in the cleaning industry by giving voice to a woman who helped employees feel better about their jobs.

¹¹² Fagforbundet

4.2.7. Potential downfalls in the application of constructive journalism at 'Here and Now'

It may be difficult for listeners to hear the actual difference in the constructive news story from the ordinary news story. Since the journalists at NRK receive little feedback themselves, the actual outcome from constructive journalism is difficult to measure. A general question will be whether the cases will put more pressure on politicians or stakeholders since they (from these observations) tend to focus more on the citizens' view.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of study

This study intended to explain how constructive journalism is used and understood by journalists from two different media outlets, examining the convergence of constructive journalism *cross-nationally* (cf. 2.2). The aim was to answer the following questions:

- i. *How does each of the media organizations NRK and Amhara Mass Media Agency understand the concept 'constructive journalism'?*
- ii. *How does the practice of 'constructive journalism' differ between NRK and Amhara Mass Media Agency?*
- iii. *Based on research data from Norway and Ethiopia, does the term 'constructive journalism' have a universal application?*

To study how constructive journalism is understood and practiced, I employed a qualitative method. I sought to reveal journalists' practice and understanding of

constructive journalism with analysis from 13 semi-structured in-depth interviews, unstructured observations and content analysis of six media productions looking at themes, wording (e.i. what kind of questions they asked) and news angles. The themes were categorized by Gyldensted (2015) (cf. 2.7). The analysis from the interview-respondents was summoned up by dividing answers into the following categories; *the journalist's motivation for using constructive journalism, understanding of the concept of constructive journalism, the perception of objectivity, the perception of news criteria and the journalist's knowledge regarding other journalistic styles.*

An annual report (2017-2018) by The Constructive Institute has summoned up the practice of constructive journalism into three models; *the angle* (focus on solutions), *the view* (being nuanced and balanced) and *the role* of the journalist (engaging media users) (Borg, 2018) (cf. chapter two). Solutions journalism can also be viewed as a *genre* (cf. chapter two) which partakes a *less adversarial approach* than a classic news story and is moreover *characterized as investigative* (Walth et al., 2019) (cf. chapter two).

Findings show that AMMA often *facilitate debate* (engaging media users) whereas the previous radio program 'Here and Now' emphasized more on a specific *news angle* (emphasizing solutions) and *the view* (being nuanced and balanced). This was confirmed through observations, interview responses and content analysis. Journalists from both media outlets, whom practice constructive journalism, use questions *directed towards the future*, which is typical in constructive reporting.

5.2. The motivation for this study

The motivation of the study was to look at the differences between a concept and real-life practice. Having difficulty defining the concept academically may be one aspect of this case - another question is how it is practiced. By comparing contrasting contexts, I wanted to explore underlying applications. The contrasts were supposed to reveal *whether this theory is generative or not*. Since I selected contrasting cases, the study could potentially reveal some contradictions.

5.3. The main findings: How the journalist understand constructive journalism

Findings reveal that journalists at both AMMA and NRK use a combination of a passive-deliberate approach and a representative approach when applying constructive journalism. However, there is a tendency towards a more deliberate approach at both outlets (cf. chapter four). Emphasizing a more deliberate approach, correspondents with

Gyldensted's thoughts on solutions-oriented journalism (Gyldensted in Holmaas, 2019, p. 53) (cf. chapter two).

Findings reveal that Ethiopian journalists at AMMA rarely mention the term 'constructive journalism' (or 'solutions journalism') in the newsroom. However, one key principle at AMMA (written on a board in the hallway) is *servng the public* (see figure 1). The use of this value is displayed in programs like 'Farmers Talk' and 'City Forum Program'. In these programs, journalists from AMMA works towards *finding solutions*. The programs exemplify how journalists practice 'solutions journalism' instead of 'government-say-so-journalism'.

The more deliberate approach has in theory long been a tradition at AMMA because the agency was inspired by the National Building Program. When journalists were interviewed about their conception of solutions journalism, they often mentioned development journalism and to some degree peace journalism as other styles that they can relate to. This upholds the adaption theory that a concept is adapted into a given culture *as a continuation of the existing practice*.

The journalists at 'Here and Now' were already well-familiar with constructive journalism when I entered the newsroom. Since 2017 it has been used *actively* in the newsroom (although less outspokenly and more *indirectly*) (cf. 4.2.1.). The incitement for journalists employed by NRK may vary; some journalists emphasize *hope* while others emphasize providing citizens with *nuanced and balanced information* (cf. chapter four).

Constructive journalism is now one of the three elements of journalistic aims at NRK, next to 'Braking news' and 'Investigative journalism' (cf. appendix 1). According to research findings, a cultural change took place in the newsroom (cf. 4.2.1.). Though Kristian Hovstad, the then-leader of 'Here and Now', said it took much effort to implement the idea of constructive journalism (Hovstad, personal communication,

January 2020), these efforts could potentially serve as a ground stone in the future reporting at NRK¹¹³.

A deliberate attempt gives more space for the ‘small’ cases, like for instance Unni, ‘the cleaner of the year’. This case uses the element of *empowering citizens* as mentioned by Gyldensted (2015) (cf. chapter two). Another similar topic, about working conditions for a trainee, exemplified through two cases; one with a solution and one without a solution (beginning with the problem first). The solutions in the end can help to *minimize victimization* (although a person has a problem). This is a framing pronounced as *kill your victim* by Gyldensted (2015) (cf. chapter two) or said differently a *best-practice example* as mentioned by Haagerup (2017) (cf. chapter one). In their reporting, the NRK journalists has created space for multifaceted cases viewed from local perspectives. This is exemplified in the case about windfarms. In the report, the reporter uses *inclusiveness and diversity* in her framing (Gyldensted, 2015 see chapter two).

Green energy could be a typical topic in constructive reporting because it is complex and often separate opinions. Therefore, it might be critical for public citizens to receive this information.

5.4. Main finding: How journalists practice constructive journalism

In solutions-oriented journalism there are arguably six ways to frame a solution-oriented story (cf. chapter two) - by: *finding solutions, being future-orientated, emphasizing inclusiveness/diversity, empowering people, using facts covering contexts instead of ‘incidents’* (*The Rosling*) or by *facilitating debate* (Gyldensted, 2015).

In the TV program ‘Farmers Talk’ the journalist seeks to *inform* rural farmers by applying the news value of *human interest*. The content analysis from ‘Farmers talk’ presents a future orientation because the journalist is asking “what now” questions. This can potentially help families or farmers develop (cf. 4.1.1.). This framing was also mentioned by Gyldensted (2015) as a typical case in solutions-oriented reporting.

¹¹³ Hildegunn Amanda Soldal, web-responsible for ‘nrk.no’, confirms that the practice of constructive journalism continues at NRK (personal communication, January 2020).

In the broadcast ‘The City Forum Program’ both public citizens and officials are presented. The *deliberate approach* is exercised by journalists through a combination of debates and Vox pop interviews. Here the audience has a chance to participate and air their opinions. The journalist takes the role as a *facilitator* between citizens and authorities but without making any active statements. This program can be compared to that of ‘De Correspondent’ (cf. 2.7) as the framing is undefined and being co-created. The solution is to be found ‘there and then’ between citizens and officials who are engaging in the debate (this was exemplified in the example in chapter four where the Vice Administrator admits that they have a problem and promises to solve it). The event can *indirectly* lead to action, as broken promises will most probably bring public displeasure. However, there is no indication of insurance towards action ¹¹⁴ and information was *passively* being distributed. This *less adversarial and investigative approach* can nevertheless potentially lead to a public beneficial outcome (Walth et al., 2019).

Findings show that journalists at AMMA may encounter some difficulties when they practice solutions journalism. When making attempts to elevate a case, they may face harassment (4.1.1) and sometimes they struggle to find solutions providers because of self-censorship (cf. 4.1.4). Because of limited resources, it may at times be difficult for journalists at AMMA to follow up a case (cf. 4.1.4). For this reason, the cases often evolve around events which may not complete and satisfy a public answer on the long term. What may be needed is the *journalist’s capacity to follow up cases* that may lead to more sustainable economic and political development (cf. quote by Kofi 4.1.2). The question is also if a less adversarial approach will hold authorities responsible as questioned by Walth et.al. (2019). Nevertheless, findings reveal several examples of solutions fulfilled hindsight of the ‘City Forum Program’ (claimed by Haileyesus cf. 4.1.2.3).

The journalists at AMMA have individual applications in terms of practice, though overall, they view the journalist as a *mediator* (cf. chapter two). The content analysis shows that journalists from AMMA apply the same principles of framing as presented by Windesheim University, though it is sometimes questionable to see the intentions or the direction behind a program which may leave questions unanswered. The journalists

¹¹⁴ Except maybe a follow-up program to bring more attention to the issue.

use a combination of approaches, but mostly a deliberate approach, granting space for public voices.

To practice constructive journalism, the journalists at 'Here and now' in Norway aim to find experts with a solution (cf. chapter four). Those solution providers may be easier to find in Norway than in Ethiopia where access to information is a scarcity. But because of the pressure to perform well on the public arena, the journalists at NRK are well aware that more solution-oriented reporting could potentially lead to misuse and political mediation (cf. 4.2.5).

Findings show that journalists at 'Here and Now' look *for good examples oftentimes beginning with a conflict*. This conflict could be anything from sick leave to bad working conditions or the noise from windmills. By mentioning a good example after explaining a problem, they would *show the entire specter of the case*. The journalists equally used *best-practice examples* to inspire *hope*. Lastly, the wind farm case demonstrates that the journalist made a report about a controversial issue that they did not necessarily agree on (see supplementary documentary). The way the NRK journalists typically engage with constructive journalism is by *discussing the cases first and collaborating towards finding an appropriate approach*. This was different at AMMA, where journalists talk less about 'constructive journalism' or 'solutions journalism'. Journalists at 'Here and Now' have the language to develop solution stories together by using methods, because they already know constructive journalism techniques (cf. 4.2.2).

5.5. Is constructive journalism a universal concept?

The findings show that journalists at AMMA and 'Here and Now' have some motives in common, but the situation for the two media companies were different. Problems in Ethiopia are no doubt different compared to Norway, while in Ethiopia, solutions may depend on saving lives. Nevertheless, both companies were seeking to establish more trust with their audience. The motivation at AMMA was *giving the public a voice and finding solutions via dialogue*. At AMMA the audience rate was *increasing*, unlike the situation at 'Here and Now', where the main target audience had not been fully reached. The utility from a local-based media in the Amhara region was appreciated. Instead of 'switching off' the public started to acknowledge the media as a potential gamechanger. Since problems in Ethiopia are usually more urgent, solution-oriented journalism was *applied differently and adapted accordingly* (as demonstrated in chapter four). In this regard the companies naturally had different emphasis.

The journalists at AMMA were found to be *more focused on development* than the journalists at NRK. This was revealed in the in-depth analysis combined with the content analysis. The journalists at AMMA faced other difficulties such as censorship etc. The pressure on the journalists to find solutions was probably more demanding as well.

However, based on the theory from both Windesheim University in Holland and Constructive Institute in Denmark, constructive journalism may carry different implications and be practiced differently.

Constructive journalism could mean three things; *focusing on solutions, being nuanced and balanced* or *making room for debate* (Borg, 2018). The main difference between the case in Norway and in Ethiopia **was the role of the journalist**. Findings revealed more examples of cases in Ethiopia where *the* journalist functioned as a facilitator of a debate.

The main differences are summoned up in the following;

- 1) At AMMA there were indications that journalists work towards creating dialogue by facilitating debates. This, however, was not the case at 'Here and Now'. They did not facilitate a live debate. Instead they facilitated debates on the radio.
- 2) By giving space to oppositional voices, both of the media outlets sought to be *nuanced and balanced*.
- 3) Lastly, the journalists both at AMMA and at NRK were not only looking for problems, but also for possible solutions to solve the problems. In other words, they were equally *focusing on solution strategies*.

From the broader definition of constructive journalism, both AMMA and 'Here and Now' are perceived to practice constructive journalism yet expressed differently and adapted to their individual context. The natural limitations of this study were cultural inconsistencies which makes it difficult to generalize from the findings and the fact that sampling depended much on one person in Ethiopia. More research should be conducted to confirm the generalizability of the concept of constructive journalism. Nevertheless, one may claim, based on these findings, that *constructive journalism exists cross-culturally as a universal and broader concept*.

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NRKs journalistikk: **Tre elementer**

	BREAKING NEWS	UNDERSØKENDE JOURNALISTIKK	LØSNINGSORIENTERT JOURNALISTIKK
Tid	Nå	I går	I morgen
Mål	Hastighet	Ansvar	Håp/inspirasjon
Spørsmål	Hva/når	Hvem/hvorfor	Hva nå/hvordan
Rolle	Opplyser	Vaktbikkje	Tilrettelegger
Fokus	Drama/konflikt	Ansvarlige/ofre	Løsninger

FIGUR 1: THE THREE JOURNALISTIC ELEMENTS AT NRK FORMULATED IN THEIR PUBLIC STRATEGY

Interview guide for semi-structured inte Interview guide for semi-structured interviews

Questions to the journalists

Questions regarding background

1. How long did you work at AMMA/’Here and Now’?

How many years did you work as a journalist?

What type of media did you work with before you were employed? (was it private/public)

RQ1: How does AMMA/’Here and Now’ understand the concept of solutions journalism/constructive journalism?

Questions regarding motivation

2. What are journalists’ primary reason to be engaged in solutions journalism/constructive journalism?

Category A: “to make a difference” (ideological reasons)

Category B: “to create change” (media and technology)

Category C: “because of personal reasons in the job as a journalist”

Category D: “because of ethical reasons/obligation”

Category E: “to create a better product”

Question regarding perception

3. How do you understand the concepts solutions journalism/constructive journalism?

Category A: “It is a method for media to get closer to a true picture of reality”

Category B: “It is a way to improve society where there is for instance sickness or war”

Category C: “It is a way to create consensus between different institutions and organizations in society”

Category D: «it is a way to accommodate what the listeners want»

Category E: «it is a way to place responsibility and become more critical»

Category F: «It is a method to reduce conflict»

Questions regarding news values (generally)

4. How do you understand the news value ‘objectivity’?

Category A: “It is difficult today to be objective, but it must still be perceived as an ideal”

Category B: “Independence and neutrality is less important today. What is important is to create solutions and network”

Category C: “Objectivity must be seen as an important method because we cannot trust human neutrality”

Category D: "Objectivity is an illusion. All journalism is a product of subjective human beings who are producing news"

Questions regarding ideology (generally)

5. What would you say today is the most important criteria for quality journalism?

Category A: "That today we as journalists take responsibility for society. It is more important to find solutions than to become too obsessed with what independence should be used for"

Category B: "That we fulfill the requirement of being professional in terms of objectivity to fulfill the role of a watchdog"

Category C: "It is equally important to both fulfill the role of a watchdog as to be solution oriented"

Questions regarding news criteria (generally)

6. What is the most important news criteria for you (and why)?

A: Objectivity

B: Impartiality, neutrality and fairness

C: Independence

D: Actuality (sudden events)

E: Solutions/public interest

F: Verification

G: Transparency (in method)

H: Information(also regarding your personal background as journalist).

I: Importance

J: Identification

K: Consonance (stories that fit with the expectations of the media)

L: Sensation

M: Conflict

N: Continuity (stories that are already in the news)

7. What other movements/trends/directions do you identify yourself with?

A. Civic journalism

B. Advocacy journalism

C. Development journalism

D. Explanatory journalism

E. Slow journalism

F. Prospective journalism

G. Peace journalism

H. Restorative journalism

I. Constructive journalism

J. Campaign journalism

K. Society journalism

L. Investigative journalism

RQ2: How is the practice of solutions journalism/constructive journalism at AMMA/'Here and Now'?

Questions regarding journalistic practicing

8. Why work as a journalist (in general)?

A: "You must earn money. Journalism has always been an important part of the market"

B: "It creates satisfaction for others and your own curiosity"

C: "It creates satisfaction for my own vanity"

D: "It is about being the first one present, informing people about the latest news"

E: "It is about offering variety"

F: "It is about offering entertainment"

G: "It is about giving good advice on the market, health and care"

H: "It is about giving people something to talk about"

I: "It is about a social mission of society to guard the free debate and democracy"

Questions regarding technique and framing of solution journalism

9. What do you do to create solution news?

Category A: "I add a solution angle at the end of the program"

Category B: "I ask questions that points towards the future (not just what, when and why but also how?)"

Category C: "I have begun to ask entirely different questions than what I would usually ask"

Category D: "I ask questions regarding education, so that people have an opportunity to get empowered"

Category E: "I ask questions to reveal how one succeeds through trials"

Category F: "I ask questions to encourage arbitration in political debates"

Category G: «I have started to invite other types of guests than previously»

Questions regarding news values

10. What values are personally most important to you in your job as a journalist?

A: Autonomy

B: Influence

C: Technical competence

D: Trust

E: Protection of sources

F: Insight

G: Networking

H: Security

- I: To give people a good watching experience
- J: Being professional
- K: To contribute with solutions
- L: To give people the chance to cooperate
- M: Image (that we are innovative and foremost in development).
- N: Openness

Questions regarding expectancies from other media outlets

11. What statements have you encountered from other media outlets about AMMA's/'Here and Now's' use of solutions journalism/constructive journalism?

- A: "Solutions journalism/constructive journalism is uncritical"
- B: "Solutions journalism/constructive journalism excludes conflicts"
- C: "Solutions journalism/constructive journalism is not hard news"
- D: "Solutions journalism/constructive journalism is not objective"
- E: "Solutions journalism/constructive journalism can both be critical and objective"
- F: "Solutions journalism/constructive journalism is a good initiative and something that other media could be using more"
- G: «I do not like the word solutions journalism/constructive journalism»
- H: "What is this concept about?"
- I: I received no feedback from other media outlets

12. What are the challenges with the use of solution journalism?

- A: It takes too long
- B: There are no challenges
- C: It creates conflicts with other media
- D: To be misunderstood in your intention
- E: The feeling of losing your legitimacy (power)
- F: You can become too focused on finding solutions so that you forget to be critical
- G: Lack of knowledge/skills
- H: Finding people who provide the solutions

Questions regarding role expectations

13. What expectations does your newsroom have to the content you are to produce?

14. How strongly do you identify yourself with the role as a solutions journalist/constructive journalist?

15. What kind of norms/sanctions have you been met with a 'solutions journalist'/'constructive journalist'?

16. What kind of reaction have you encountered from your audience?
17. What type of reactions have you encountered from other journalists within the profession?
18. What did you have to learn in your role as a 'solutions journalist'/'constructive journalist'?
19. Do you feel that you can live up to your role as a 'solutions journalist'/'constructive journalist'?
20. Are there any conflicts between different role expectations a journalist can have?

Questions to the editor/journalist

21. Has there been any changes in the journalistic practice since solutions journalism/constructive journalism was introduced or did you work like you did previously?
22. Is solutions journalism/constructive journalism something that you discuss in the newsroom?
23. Can you mention some specific examples where you used solutions journalism/constructive journalism elements in practice?

Questions to the editor

24. What is the primary reason that you use solutions journalism/constructive journalism?
25. How familiar are your journalists with using principles from solutions journalism/constructive journalism?
26. Have the editorial changes something to do with a dropping number of audiences?
27. What are the strengths about solutions journalism/constructive journalism?
28. What are the weaknesses about solutions journalism/constructive journalism?
29. How are you going to improve on producing solution driven news?
30. What will be the most important aspect of journalism in the future?
31. How do you use solutions journalism/constructive journalism in practice?
32. Do you have any recommendations for other journalists or editors?

APPENDIX 3

Verbal agreement to participants in research project regarding Solution journalism at AMMA (Amhara Mass Media Agency)

Introduction

I am a graduate student in Global Journalism at NLA University College and I am currently working on my master thesis. The theme of this thesis is Solution Journalism. Would you like to participate in this research?

Purpose of study

I am going to look into how two different groups from two different redactions are applying the same concept across two different cultures. I am interested in finding out if there are differences or similarities between the two redactions and between journalists' opinions and methods of using Solution Journalism/Constructive Journalism.

Responsible institution

NLA University College.

What the information will be used for

As part of this project, I will try to find out what the reasons for the potential differences or similarities that appear from findings – for example if certain methods can be connected to certain contexts.

Methods used to gather information:

I am going to interview 8-12 persons from redaction including journalists, including editors, bosses, production- and program managers. The questions will be about opinions and different views on news values, news angles, case management, etc. I will be using a sound recorder on my mobile phone and taking notes when we are talking together. The interviews will take no more than an hour, and we will agree on time and place. The interviews will be followed up by observation and content analysis from official documents and mass media productions. The observations will be made without participating in the daily routines. The observations will take place in the first week and interviews will be conducted in the following week.

Who will have access to this personal information: The people who will have access to the personal data is me and my supervisor.

How the information will be treated:

The information given will be pseudonymized and treated confidentially.

The legal basis for this research

The treatment basis is due to a signed declaration agreement with Deжере Moges, manager at Amhara Mass Media Agency.

Your rights as a participant

You have the right to ask for access, correction, deletion, restriction and data portability of your personal data. You also have the right to make any complaints to the NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data). It is voluntary to participate in the interviews, and informants can withdraw from this project anytime, without explaining any further. If you decide to withdraw all the collected data about you will be anonymized. Information will be dealt with confidentially, and none of the informants will be able to recognize themselves in the finished assignment unless they wish to and an agreement has been made.

Contact information in case of any questions

You are free to contact Professor in Journalism, media and communication, Terje Skjerdal or ask any questions to the institutions safety representative NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

How the data will be treated at the end of the research

All data will be anonymized, and the recordings will be deleted when the thesis is completed before the end of 2019. If the project is delayed a notice will be given.

Research license

This study has applied for a research license from the University of Bahir Dar in Ethiopia.

Information about financial support

This study is sponsored by the NORPART Exchange program.

APPENDIX 4

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

09.02.2020, 11(09)



NSD sin vurdering

Prosjekttittel

Journalists' use of constructive journalism

Referansenummer

268582

Registrert

07.11.2018 av Mai-Britt Sørensen -
maibritt_sorensen@hotmail.com

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

NLA Høgskolen AS

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Terje Skjerdal, terje.skjerdal@nla.no, tlf: 91194995

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Mai-Britt Sørensen, maibritt_sorensen@hotmail.com, tlf:
91194995

Prosjektperiode

01.09.2018 - 30.04.2020

Status

24.01.2020 - Vurdert

Vurdering (3)

24.01.2020 - Vurdert

NSD har vurdert endringen registrert 13.01.2020. Ny dato for prosjektslutt er satt til 30.04.2020.

Side 1 av 4

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger 09.02.2020, 11(09)

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 24.01.2020. Behandlingen kan fortsette.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Karin Lillevold Tlf.

Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

22.05.2019 - Vurdert

NSD har vurdert endringen registrert 13.05.2019. Ny dato for prosjektslutt er satt til 01.01.2020.

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 22.05.2019. Behandlingen kan fortsette.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Karin Lillevold Tlf.

Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

18.01.2019 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen, så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet 18.01.2019 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

MELD ENDRINGER

Dersom behandlingen av personopplysninger endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. På våre nettsider informerer vi om hvilke endringer som må meldes. Vent på svar før endringen gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om etnisitet, politisk oppfatning, religion, filosofisk overbevisning, fagforeningsmedlemskap, helseopplysninger og alminnelige personopplysninger frem til 30.06.2019. Vi forutsetter at behandlingen av særlige kategorier av personopplysninger er nødvendig for formålet, og ber deg samtidig vurdere om det er mulig å begrense behandlingen av denne typen opplysninger.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering

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Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger 09.02.2020, 11(09)

er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og art. 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes uttrykkelige samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a), jf. art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a, jf. personopplysningsloven § 10, jf. § 9 (2).

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen:

- om lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene til behandling av personopplysninger utenfor EU (personvernforordningen kapittel 5).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Øivind Armando Reinertsen Tlf.
Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

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Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger 09.02.2020, 11(09

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