



Laura Ahva

MAKING NEWS WITH CITIZENS

Public Journalism and Professional
Reflexivity in Finnish Newspapers



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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University of Tampere

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

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Foreword

I first heard about a phenomenon called "public journalism" in 1997 at a lecture that was part of the introductory course to studying journalism at University of Tampere. I remember that the lecturer was enthusiastic about the idea and that the central point of public journalism was to consider citizens as important sources in news journalism. But I also remember realizing that public journalism seemed like a reaction to some of the certainties of "regular journalism". Therefore the idea was difficult for a first year student to grasp because those certainties were still as new to me as the claims of public journalism.

The next time I came across with the idea of public journalism in 2002 when I was starting to plan my master's thesis. I spotted an announcement on a mailing list about a research assistant position in a public journalism project to be carried out together with an NGO and a local newspaper. The announcement was posted by the same enthusiastic researcher from the introductory lecture, who was by now a professor.

I got the job as a research assistant and was pleased with the opportunity to write a thesis connected to something practical. Furthermore, by that time I had been studying journalism for several years and had some work experience as a journalist from newspapers, so the concept of public journalism made more sense to me. During the years between the introductory lecture and the MA thesis project I had – at least to some degree – internalized the idea of professional journalism, and therefore ideas of public journalism resonated more clearly. For me, the central point of public journalism at that stage was the idea of producing more dialogical journalism. I also became aware of the wide theoretical foundation that encompassed public journalism.

I could have become a public journalism oriented journalism practitioner, but instead I ended up becoming a practice oriented public journalism researcher. After finalizing my master's thesis I started to explore the possibility of doing further research on the topic and applied to study for a PhD. I started my research in 2004 by doing interviews and collecting material at

Helsingin Sanomat, then at *Aamulehti* and last at *Itä-Häme*. I was interested in the ways these newsrooms had applied the ideas of public journalism in an environment where participation had become an increasingly important tenet in many segments of society.

Citizen participation has been a central theme in various areas of research for the past few decades. Two lines of research are important to identify if we want to understand how citizen participation in public affairs is currently looked at in journalism research. One of the lines is *public journalism* that dates back to the early 1990s and stems from the will to renew or refresh traditional journalism practices with citizen participation. The context of this line of research is professional journalism and the way in which it could positively contribute to the functioning of democracy. In this sense, public journalism is also rooted in the theories of the public sphere. The second line of research considers citizen participation from the perspective of *new technology* and it dates back to the late 1980s and the evolution of the internet. In this line of research, the focus is on the possibilities of technologically-aided citizen engagement and the ways in which these activities may democratize information delivery and prevailing hierarchical communication structures. Both of these lines have specific features and both have tension between the ideal and the practical, but for different reasons – because they draw from different traditions.

Currently, there is a lot of discussion about citizen participation in journalism. For example, the terms *participatory journalism* and *UGC* (user-generated content) surfaced in the early 2000s and they refer to user participation in professional media with the help of online communication. The research field in this area is active but somewhat incoherent. The two lines of research mentioned above – public journalism and technologically-aided participation – have historically been apart but have now converged in the idea of participatory journalism. However, these research traditions are not always in dialogue with each other. I have been surprised how few references there are in participatory journalism literature to public journalism. In other words, even if many of public journalism's ideas would now be more attainable with the help of online technology, audience participation is not often studied in the way that would use the legacy of public journalism as a reference or a point of comparison.

This is linked to the contextual differences. Public journalism was born in a cultural context in which professional understanding was largely ignorant of the massive impact that the development of new communication technology would have on journalism. The true potential of the internet in terms of public discussion and civic communication was never one of the building blocks of public journalism. Therefore, there is a contextual gap between public journalism and participatory journalism that was produced by the enormous changes in the technologic-cultural context.

These changes largely took place during the first decade of 2000s – whilst I have been undertaking my research on newspapers’ public journalism. In one sense, the quick development of the technological and cultural context at first annoyed me. It made me feel that my research would lose relevance. However, during the process of writing this dissertation I have become more convinced of the fact that journalism as social practice changes slowly and that collaboration between professionals and amateurs is always challenging – no matter what the technological platform is. Therefore, I think this research can offer insights into the current status of citizen participation in journalism, which is a lot easier than before but still requires effort. Moreover, I think that truly collaborative journalism – making news *with* citizens – becomes more attainable if research can offer theoretically sound concepts for making sense of what is done and why. With this research I wish to offer analytical tools for studying various participatory news practices and uses of UGC that take place today in print, web or broadcasting, even if my starting point is public journalism in newspapers.

Acknowledgements

The personal process of becoming familiar with public journalism described above has been gradual. There are many people I want to thank for being part of this process. Firstly, I wish to thank Risto Kunelius, the enthusiastic lecturer of 1997 who then became professor of journalism and the supervisor of my dissertation project. Risto never lost his interest in my work throughout the dissertation project. He is a supportive and encouraging supervisor. He has encouraged me by being a partner in theoretical discussions, giving practical advice and helping to find funding. Thank you, Risto!

Heikki Heikkilä has also been of help from the start. It was Heikki who introduced me to the case of *Itä-Häme* and encouraged me to include the local newspaper in my research. Heikki also acted as a "stand-in" supervisor when Risto was visiting the U.S. and was there for discussions all along.

I wish to thank the pre-examiners, Mervi Pantti and Lewis A. Friedland. Their sharp but encouraging comments and suggestions gave me the last spur of energy to finalize this dissertation.

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Naturally, this research would not have been possible without the co-operation of the newsrooms in *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Aamulehti* and *Itä-Häme*. I am grateful of all the journalists who were willing to share their experiences with me in the interviews. Special thanks go to Chiméne "Simppu" Bavard. It has been great to be part of figuring out what a civic reporter can do. I hope you keep up the good work!

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In Tampere, November 2010

Laura Ahva

Table of Contents

Foreword	5
Acknowledgements	7
1. Introduction	13
1.1. Situating this research	14
On the significance of the study	16
1.2. Context of the research: Legacy and challenges of Finnish newspapers	19
Economic challenges	19
Cultural trends	22
Technological transition	25
Evolution of the political culture	27
Summary	29
1.3. Research questions, methods and structure of the book	30
Research questions	30
Notes on methodology	31
Structure of the book	38
2. Public journalism	41
2.1. Public Journalism: Background and concepts	42
The history of public journalism movement	42
Theoretical roots of public journalism	45
The definition of public journalism	48
2.2. The spreading of public journalism	54
Public journalism outside the U.S.	55
Public journalism in Finland	56
2.3. The current state and future of public journalism	58
Public journalism practices still viable	58
Situating public journalism practice with new web-based practices	62
The need for a philosophy of public journalism	68
3. Professionalism	73
3.1. Professionalism and journalism	74
Layers of understanding professionalism	74
Professionalism meets journalism	75
Professionalization process of journalism	77
3.2. Core dimensions of professional journalism	80
Relation to power: Autonomy	80
Relation to public: Public service	82
Relation to knowledge: Objectivity	84
Relation to time: Immediacy	85
Relation to self: Ethicality	86
Relation to democracy: Information delivery and platform for debate	87
Public journalism challenges classical professionalism	89
3.3. Professional culture and newsroom culture	94
Professional culture as a concept for journalism	94
Getting closer to practice: Newsroom culture	97
Challenges to the Finnish professional culture	99

4. Public sphere and public journalism	101
4.1. Introducing the questions around "public"	102
Five counterpoints of the public sphere theory	102
4.2. Habermas and the public sphere	110
Early theory in Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere	110
Later public sphere theory in Between Facts and Norms.....	112
Latest views in Political Communication in Media Society.....	115
Habermas on the public sphere and journalism	116
4.3. The implications of public sphere theory for public journalism theory	117
Structure of the public sphere: Single sphere or multiple publics?	117
Citizens' role in the public sphere: Agents or representatives?.....	121
Goal of deliberation: Problem-solving or issue recognition?	125
Function of the public sphere:	
Finding consensus or highlighting conflict?.....	128
Democratic orientation: Ideal or practical?.....	132
4.4. The "public" in public journalism	136
5. Public journalism practices	143
5.1. Short overview of the newspapers	145
Why these newspapers and projects?.....	148
5.2. Helsingin Sanomat: Election projects in the national daily	150
Public journalism introduced as a project.....	154
Project planning, voters' agenda, team work and events.....	155
Summary.....	160
5.3. Aamulehti: Discussion-based formats in the regional newspaper	160
Public journalism as slow evolution	164
Events, news van, encounters and topic selection.....	165
Summary.....	169
5.4. Itä-Häme: Citizen-oriented reporting in the local paper	170
Public journalism as specialization of an individual journalist	173
Division of work, use of time and civic stories.....	174
An excursion into the work of the civic reporter.....	177
Summary.....	184
5.5. Public journalism practices and newsrooms	185
6. Typology of public journalism stories	191
6.1. Who is who in the public journalism stories?	192
Agents in the stories	194
Agents' activities in the stories	197
6.2. Storytelling elements of public journalism	202
Relevance of everyday life	202
Connections between citizens and politicians.....	207
Citizens' questions.....	210
Possibilities for dialogue.....	213
Citizens as public evaluators	217
Journalists as commentators	219
6.3. A typology of public journalism stories	221

7. Citizens and public journalism	227
7.1. Journalists defining "public journalism"	228
What constitutes public journalism?	228
Problems and risks	230
Drawing the boundaries of public journalism	232
7.2. Discussing the readers: Audience and public frames	233
The audience frame	233
The public frame	235
7.3. Readers as participants in public journalism	237
Sample citizen	237
Providing authentic opinions	238
Ideas for stories	239
Representative	240
Everyday expert	241
Posing questions	242
Civic actor	243
7.4. Differences between the newspapers	244
Helsingin Sanomat	245
Aamulehti	245
Itä-Häme	246
7.5. Citizens and journalism	247
8. Professional context and self-image	253
8.1. "Our paper" as a professional context	254
Central maintainer of the public sphere	254
Object of external evaluation	255
Site for work	256
Joint guideline	257
Branded commodity	258
8.2. Public journalism and professional values	259
Professional values evoked by public journalism	261
How does public journalism relate to professionalism?	263
8.3. Signs of "public professionalism"	264
Extension of classical professionalism	265
Helping and supporting citizens	266
Opening up to the public	267
Journalist as a connector	268
Visibility and publicity	269
8.4. Public journalism and professional reflexivity	271
9. Conclusion: Making news with citizens	277
9.1. Public journalism in the Finnish context	277
9.2. Public journalism practices	279
9.3. Professional reflexivity	282
9.4. Public sphere theory for public journalism	285
References	295
Abstract	313

1.

Introduction

The object of this study is public journalism and its applications in the Finnish press. Public journalism, sometimes referred to as civic journalism, is an American-based journalistic reform movement and an idea which aims at connecting the media more closely with its readers, and readers with public life: administration, democratic governance and politics (Haas 2007). Thus, it is a normative yet experimental set of journalistic ideals and practices, which emphasise the importance of citizen involvement in the journalistic process and public discussion. Public journalism can be best understood as an initiative that has both a theoretical and a practical dimension. It is important to see public journalism as a combination of these two dimensions: normative–experimental and conceptual–practical. This dual setting means that the discussion on public journalism is theoretically inspired, and the normative elements of the theory are clearly apparent. At the same time, public journalism is studied as a form of practical news work, as an attempt to develop citizen-oriented news coverage.

I will examine the ways in which public journalism ideas and practices are manifested in three different Finnish newspapers – *Itä-Häme* (local), *Aamulehti* (regional) and *Helsingin Sanomat* (national) – during the period of 2002–2006. The aim of this research is to provide a description and a typology of their public journalism approaches and an analysis of journalists' interpretations of the practices and their effects on journalists' professional role. I will base my analysis and arguments on data gathered in 2003–2006. The main body of the data consists of interviews with journalists and a collection of public journalism style news stories.

In this introduction, I will first situate my study in the field of communication research and discuss its relevance. Then I will position the object of my study in relation to its context; i.e. I will describe the Finnish newspaper

field and its changes. Thereafter, I will present the research questions and introduce the methods.

1.1. Situating this research

Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch (2009, 3–4) characterize journalism studies as one of the fastest growing areas within the discipline of communication research and media studies: it has matured to become an academic field in its own right. Studying journalism has become recognized as an important area of research because news journalism maintains and constructs our shared realities and our subject positions in the local, national and global contexts. Journalism is also fundamentally tied to democracy. Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch argue that at the moment, however, the significance and role of journalism is challenged and shaped by the introduction of interactive communication technologies and various other trends. Due to the rapid growth of the vast terrain of media studies altogether, and the recognition of the significance of journalism and the challenges that institutional and professional forms of journalism are facing, journalism studies has developed into an interesting yet complex research area.

More specifically, this study can be seen as part of a sociologically and culturally oriented journalism research tradition that aspires to study the professional self-understanding of journalists (Aldridge & Evetts 2003; Soloski 1997; Zelizer 2009). This research focuses on professionalism of journalism: the negotiations that are going on about the role of journalists and journalism in society and the requirements that these roles pose for the whole profession. In the sociologically oriented track of professionalism research, journalists are seen as actors with norms, practices and routines, whereas in a cultural analysis of the journalism profession, more emphasis is placed on examining what is important to journalists themselves and exploring the cultural symbol systems by which reporters make sense of their profession (Zelizer 2009, 35–37).

I situate my research at the meeting point of these two traditions. I will consider professionalism as a sociological phenomenon, but I wish to give room for the journalists themselves to make sense of their profession. The aspects of self-understanding and negotiation – even professional imagination (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008) – are reflected in my work as an attempt to value the experiential knowledge that journalism professionals have about their own work. According to my view, a researcher in the field of journalism should appreciate the knowledge of the profession, but at the same time challenge it. Therefore, this research will concentrate on the reflections of journalists, but will also include an analysis that breaks away from their immediate experiences.

The point of view from which I look at professionalism is public journal-

ism. Naturally, this angle is only one possible among many. However, I consider this perspective as an important one because of the dual nature of public journalism (normative–experiential/conceptual–practical). This setting forms the basis for discussing the practices themselves and the implications of public journalism on the self-understanding of journalists. For me, this twofold characteristic offers a possibility to bring together professional and the academic knowledge in the field of journalism. Thus, this work is a modest attempt in the long tradition of trying to bridge the dissonance between journalism scholars and journalism practitioners (see Zelizer 2009).

One of the current trends in newspaper journalism can be named *reader or audience orientation* (e.g. Hujanen 2008; 2009), i.e. the requirements for newspapers to better recognize, address and serve their readers as customers. The viewpoint of public journalism in this context offers an interesting way to scrutinize this trend because as *practice*, public journalism surely is part of this reader orientation. Thus, it is not fruitful to try to disconnect public journalism from the commercial links that it has and see it only as a normative and democratic reform project. In practice the motivations of the newsrooms to adopt public journalism practices are often commercially driven. Understanding today's newspaper journalism requires the need to recognize the commercial aspect of the industry that frames news work, an aspect that is also internalized by the journalists. The commercial characteristics of journalistic work, however, are manifested differently in different newsrooms. Therefore, studying professionalism in journalism should always be contextual and acknowledge its diversity and the impact of specific newsroom cultures on professional understanding.

So, on the one hand, this research can be situated in the broader tradition of studying journalistic professionalization and professionalism (Carey 1969; Soloski 1997; Deuze 2005; Hanitzsch 2007). While on the other hand, this study can be seen as part of the long research tradition that discusses the public sphere and its relationship to the media and journalism (Habermas 1998; 2006; Dahlgren 1991; 2009). In this sense, my research is also in dialogue with the political science orientation of studying journalism that has for a long time held a normative interest, discussing the ways in which journalism could better serve its public (Zelizer 2009, 37). Public journalism sprang from the *need to reform* political journalism, so there is an intrinsic normative element in the initiative. Public journalism as a normative set of ideas pushes the journalists and journalism researchers to take into consideration what the "public" in public journalism means. Why should journalism become more public and in what sense?

Overall, I see public journalism as an initiative that binds together the tradition of studying professionalism and the tradition of studying the public sphere. This position is illustrated in Figure 1, which aims to clarify the relationship between public journalism, professionalism and public sphere theo-

ries. The domain of journalism is regarded to be divided into journalism practice and journalism theory, and public journalism is placed in this domain. However, the relationship between practice and theory is charged: journalism practitioners do not necessarily see links between their work and theoretically informed research. Despite this dissonance, I regard that theory may provide the profession with competences, such as means for self reflection and evaluation, that would not otherwise stem from the practice of journalism.

The theory of journalism is not, however, a coherent body, rather it draws form various theoretical fields that extent outside of journalism research. In this study, the most important of such theoretical fields are centred on professionalism and the public sphere theories. In this research, I wish to make this connection explicit and redevelop the idea theoretically. With the help of public sphere theories, I suggest that public journalism theory would benefit from re-conceptualizing – or clarifying – its understanding of the public sphere. In the empirical part of my research, I will then analyze what happens when journalism in practice tries to connect more with its public and how professionals interpret this.



Figure 1: Relationships between public journalism, professionalism and the public sphere theories.

On the significance of the study

Why is it worth studying public journalism practices and journalists’ conceptions in the Finnish context and at this time? Firstly, there is a rather extensive and fairly well-defined body of research on public journalism and its criticism that acts as inspiring terrain (Rosen 1993; 1997; Merrit 1995; Char-

ity 1995; Glasser 1999; Lambeth et al 1998). Even if the majority of this discussion took place in the late 1990s, the theoretical debate and analysis on public journalism is still continuing and relevant, especially in a broad international context (Haas 2007; Romano 2010; Nichols et al 2006; Nip 2006). Moreover, just *because* the peak of the broad experiment phase has passed, I find it now relevant to study the everyday practice of public journalism and scrutinize the forms that it has acquired. Naturally, it is important to consider the early stages of the movement, but it is just as important to consider the current practice and significance of public journalism in the 2000s. In this situation, public journalism ideals have become filtered and adjusted to be part of the dominant news practices and cultures as the time of explicit experimentation is over.

My second argument is based on technological development. Even if the peak of the public journalism movement has passed, the ideas and practices remain ever more valid in the current context in which interactivity, citizen participation and public discussion have become more accessible to many due to the rapid growth and development of web-based communication. New approaches such as participatory journalism (e.g. Paulussen et al 2007) and citizen journalism (e.g. Reich 2008) are rapidly developing. In these web-based approaches, the role of professional journalists as the producers of journalism is changing. This transformation bears resemblance to and articulates some of the same discussions that public journalism introduced earlier, for example the interaction between readers and journalists.

Therefore, it is important to study the practices and journalists' interpretations of public journalism experiences that preceded the introduction of web-based participatory journalism, even those "offline" practices that have not utilized new technological possibilities to their full degree. Public journalism practices challenged the role of journalists in a way that now seems to be intensifying online. The rapid progress of online journalism has not yet provided many possibilities for – theoretically oriented – professional reflections. Therefore, I argue that there is a lot to learn from "offline" public journalism experiences, and it is relevant to consider the lessons that my research data could offer to the web era.

A third way to justify this research is to take into consideration the Finnish context. It is important to offer a non-American based account of the public journalism tradition. There is a need to widen the scope of discussion to include international experiences. Haas (2007, 126) argues that the practice of public journalism worldwide has differed from American projects surprisingly little. Therefore, it is important to look at the practices a little deeper, especially the journalists' interpretations, in order to analyze the cultural nuances on the one hand, and the common professional understanding on the other. Interestingly, the tradition and impact of public journalism has been significant in the Nordic context (Denmark, Sweden and Finland) (Haas

2007, 127–135; Bro 2003; Beckman 2003; Heikkilä 2001). The Nordic context allows us to scrutinize public journalism in a media system that is influenced by public service broadcasting and high newspaper readership. The public journalism approach in Finland has evolved during a period in which the old order of democratic–corporatist system (Hallin & Mancini 2004) has commenced a long-term process of evolution towards more individually and commercially oriented structures due to factors such as globalization and increased deregulation. So, even if the focus is on Finnish public journalism, the study provides insight into the Finnish journalistic culture and its context more broadly, as the studied culture surely reveals other important aspects about itself.

From the 1990s onwards the tradition of public journalism has been apparent in Finnish journalism research (e.g. Heikkilä 2001; Kunelius 2001), journalism schools and in actual news work. However, we need to be careful not to overestimate the status of public journalism in the Finnish media. The news media that have been inspired by the ideas of public journalism have not necessarily named their approaches as public journalism, and their participatory practices have been mixed with the broad trend of reader orientation.

This is to say that the actual journalistic projects I have chosen as objects of my study could be viewed from various other angles as well. I have chosen public journalism as my reference point because despite the “adapted” nature of public journalism in these approaches, the impact of the idea is recognizable and in some cases significant. Moreover, I think these newspapers and their approaches depict well the state and status of public journalism in Finnish newspaper journalism in the 2000s where public journalism ideals are a distinct but not the single most important trend that shapes practical newsroom work.

The three Finnish newspapers that I examine in this research – the national *Helsingin Sanomat (HS)*, the regional *Aamulehti (AL)* and the local *Itä-Häme (IH)* – are examples of newsrooms that have absorbed influences from public journalism but have customized those ideas in a way that suits their newsroom cultures and profiles. The public journalism approach of HS concentrates on elections, AL’s on discussion-based stories and IH has created a position for a “civic reporter” who is in charge of the paper’s citizen-based journalism. These approaches thus also represent the different ways in which public journalism has been organized in the newsroom. HS in this study represents a paper that has applied public journalism ideas in the form of distinct projects; AL has assumed the approach to develop repeatable story formats; and IH has approached public journalism via an individual, by assigning the responsibility to a specific journalist.

1.2. Context of the research: Legacy and challenges of Finnish newspapers

The combination of an historical legacy and the effects of recent macro trends amount to the context in which Finnish newspapers and journalists operate. I will now outline the legacy of the Finnish newspaper field and discuss some of the current trends and challenges of Finnish newspaper journalism. Today's contextual setting in Finland constitutes an inspiring situation in which many old professional practices and values are being renegotiated and challenged. I will discuss the legacy and the trends from four perspectives: economic, cultural, technological and political.¹

Economic challenges

From the early years of the 20th century until the Second World War, the Finnish newspaper market was organized around party or family ownership and the local community played a role in the ownership structures: the market was locally dispersed. After the war, the newspaper market went through a transition in which one of the viable regional papers took over as the leading paper in its region and political affiliations started to loosen (Tommila 2001). The provincial newspapers were a commercial success: many of them enjoyed a practical monopoly in the regional markets of advertising and readership. Prosperous papers were locally owned and newspaper publishing was viewed as a particular kind of trade. Newspapers started to market themselves as "omnibus" newspapers with broad appeal (Hallin & Mancini 2004). The growth of a mass-circulation commercial press actually occurred rather late in Finland, but the dominant form of newspaper ownership thereafter came to be private corporate ownership.

In terms of media competition, there was rather little competition for readers due to the system of press subsidies and the regional "niche" system of the newspapers. Steady income was furthered by the tradition of the home delivery system, the subscription-based newspaper market and the overall growth of the Finnish economy. The general trend was a steady increase in circulation figures until 1990 when a collapse in the Finnish economy led to a period of economic depression and mass unemployment that affected the newspapers' subscription levels. (See Tommila 2001, 61; Wiio & Nordenstreng 2000, 17; Heiskala & Hämäläinen 2007, 81.)² Since the economic depression of the 1990s, Finnish newspapers have yet to reach similar prosperity, even if they are doing relatively well. The recent global economic

1 For an earlier and brief version of this section, see Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008, 663–665.

2 Subscription, however, remains the most important form of newspaper purchase to date: 89% of all the sold copies were subscribed and delivered home in 2006. Source: Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority, Statistics Finland, <http://www.stat.fi/til/jvie/tau.html>.

recession has, nevertheless, resulted in redundancies and budget cutbacks in Finnish newspapers.

At present, globally recognized macro trends such as intensified media competition and concentration of ownership affect Finnish newspapers. Perhaps the most influencing trend is the increasing tendency to frame journalism as a business. Journalism has of course always been commercial in nature, but within recent decades, journalistic publishing has increasingly been seen as another branch of a diversified and consumer-driven media industry (Cottle 2003; Olkinuora 2006). Journalists work in large media corporations whose management strategies are informed by blunt economic calculus. According to some evaluations (e.g. Nieminen 2005; Wiiio 2006, 30), in Finland, this is partly a result of the shift from the social responsibility framework to the competitive libertarian media system.

Internationally, there is a measurable trend of declining newspaper circulation. Also in Finland, the circulation of newspapers has been declining since the 1990s: circulation figures have decreased 6.1 percentage units from 1996 to 2006.³ Long-term, loyal subscribers have become rarer as the population is aging, and thus, one of the most oppressive economic challenges for newspapers is to appeal to younger generations. Another clearly measurable trend in the Finnish context is the slow but steady decline in the market share of graphic mass media (e.g. from 36% in 1960 to 25% in 2003). Within the graphic mass media segment, daily and other newspapers are most clearly losing their share when measured according to net sales. Free sheets (*Met-ro* etc.), magazines, books and commercial print products have been able to increase their revenue. The current situation has created pressures for newspapers to seek profit from the digital environment. This has proven problematic, even if a majority of the newspapers have been heavily investing in their internet services.

It is worth noting that newspaper journalism as a business in Finland is still equally dependent on subscription sales and advertisers. Half of the daily newspapers' income originates from the advertisement market (53%) and the other half from subscriptions or sales (47%). In the Nordic countries, a relatively large proportion of total media advertisement is still situated in newspapers (Sauri & Picard 2000, 29), even as other media platforms are competing ever more forcefully for advertisers.

Declining trends and business logic with increasing interest on stock market investments in journalism have resulted in economic effectiveness requirements. Since the editorial content and human resources constitute a major part of spending in a journalistic business, this touches upon a particularly central part of the profession. Moreover, effectiveness combined

3 Statistics Finland, <http://www.stat.fi/til/jvie/tau.html>.

with the growing size of media companies has changed the logic of content distribution. The same content is delivered via several outlets controlled by the same media company. The call for effectiveness is likely to affect the professional culture of journalists; i.e. there is a need for multi-skilled journalists able to produce a story for the web, for print and even for local radio (Jyrkiäinen 2008, 55). Moreover, the ideas of user integration and open innovation (e.g. Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008, Chapter 8) in which users are taken along in product development constitute another broad trend connected to cost reduction and competition. These trends are reflected in journalism as increased publication of user-generated content (UGC) and user-driven innovation (see e.g. Vujnovic 2011, forthcoming).

Another economically driven trend is the fragmentation of the media audience. The economically successful innovations and products in journalism seem to incorporate a clear target group mentality. For the profession, this implies a change also in the journalist–audience relationship, often referred to as audience orientation. The strategies for connecting to the needs, wants, interests and vocabularies of the target audiences challenge the fundamental definitions of the newspapers’ (public service) professionalism, which has been oriented towards to a large, undivided audience. Target group analysis in newspapers is done both in quantitative and qualitative terms, and in Finland, the use of “attitude mapping techniques” such as RISC monitoring have become common (Hujanen 2008; Olkinuora 2006, 20).

One of the trends arising from the unique structure of the Finnish national press market is modest competition among the national quality dailies. *Helsingin Sanomat* is the largest national newspaper, and it has an overwhelming position with a circulation of over 430 000. The second largest newspaper is a tabloid, *Ilta-Sanomat*, but in terms of circulation (196 000), it is well behind the HS. National competition is partially impeded by the small market area defined by the language borders. Furthermore, the largest provincial papers have maintained their regional influence, but concentration of ownership has taken place. In Finland, ownership of newspapers has concentrated into the hands of a few owners (Herkman 2005). Two of the largest media companies (Sanoma Corporation and Alma Media) control more than 40% of the total circulation of newspapers. Corporate ownership and competition in turn have resulted in increasing co-operation between regional papers.

Most concrete forms of co-operation are the systems of page swap, story circulation and the formation of joint Helsinki newsrooms for effective coverage of national politics in the capital city (Jokinen & Koljonen 2007).

A few political trends have also affected newspapers’ economic standing. Although the deregulation trend has been more clearly manifested in the electronic media, it is evident that this trend has increased general media competition, which newspapers are a part of. In Finland, the loosening of state control has also meant a reduction of “positive” regulation, the press subsidies

(Nieminen 2005, 17). The state grants press subsidies for small political and cultural newspapers, but the amount of public support has declined from 80 million (1980s) to the current 14 million euros (Joukkoviestimet 2006, 282).

Cultural trends

Culturally, there has been a strong connection between national or local identities and newspapers in Finland. In the early days of the newspaper industry, many newspapers were foremost created as tools for building a national culture. Many early newspapers were established in order to strengthen the Finnish language press in comparison to the then dominant Swedish language press, and later the press was seen as a means to cultivate Finnish identity against the influences imposed by Russian rule (Tommila 2001, 46). Finland's position between the west and the east has brought a particular angle to the Finnish culture; there is a need to express "Finnishness" that is something other than being Swedish or Russian.

An enduring national legacy in the Finnish newspaper field has been partly sustained by the fact that until fairly recently Finland has been understood as monocultural society in terms of ethnicity. In the 1990s, the Finnish immigration policy placed emphasis mainly on humanitarian immigration (refugees), but by the end of the decade, immigration based on employment became increasingly important.⁴ All in all, immigration policy in Finland has been cautious, and immigrants still account for only 2–3% of the Finnish population (Wallenius 2001). Ethnicity and multiculturalism as issues were considered rather remote in the Finnish journalistic field up until the 1990s.

Changes such as the global movement of the work force and women's role in the labour market have accentuated the transformation of western societies. This means that multiple identities – across cultural background, generations, gender or income – need to be recognized in the production and reception of journalism. Given the importance of journalism as a mediator of public discourse, questions of gender and multiculturalism pose new demands for journalists in Finland. The reminiscent of the "national mission" of the Finnish newspapers has been readjusted in relation to the – admittedly slow – internationalization of the Finnish culture. The newspapers have reacted to this change with varying degree, but there are few examples of more methodical ways of developing multicultural newspaper journalism in Finland (e.g. Horsti 2005).

When we consider broad cultural trends in Finland, we should also discuss the belief in education and welfare state ideology that became increasingly important after the Second World War. These trends contributed to the common understanding of the public service ideal of the media and to the

4 Kunnat.net/Localfinland.fi, http://www.kunnat.net/k_perussivu.asp?pa_th=1;161;279;280;60954;96683

central role of the Finnish public service broadcasting company, *YLE* (established already in 1926). Even though newspapers strictly speaking have not been performing public service because of the commercial interests involved, the cultural ethos of public service tradition has affected the professional self-understanding of the Finnish journalists (Nieminen 2005; Wiio 2006). Another particularly Finnish feature has been the strong tradition of newspaper readership, the idea that reading the newspaper is somehow a part of one's civic duty. This is a trend that is similar to other Nordic countries (Hallin & Mancini 2004).

National and political identities have been contested in late modernity by increasing individualism. Individualism as a value has become more central among Finns too, and the turning point for value change is situated around the 1980–90s (Helkama & Seppälä 2004, 10–11, 29). This value change is reflected in the ways that newspapers addressed their readers before the 1990s: first as politically identified beings (the era of political press), then as residents of certain regions (provincial press) and as undifferentiated mass audience (omnibus papers). Even if these addresses seem different, they all relied on the idea that people identified themselves according to larger structures, usually those of the class society. Political papers made this more explicitly, but also the professional ideal of the objective reporting paradigm, which was dominant in Finland during 1970–90, was based on the idea that the class structure still existed. Pietilä (2008, 158–163) argues that the audience needed to be addressed as widely and neutrally as possible because the aim was to address the mass audience at large and provide the information that would help them formulate their own opinions. Because of this ideal, the papers could not turn to narrowly defined population groups and had to therefore aim at achieving the most objective and realistic coverage as possible. Thus, these addresses were based on collective structures, but the rise of the post-political paradigm (Mouffe 2005) and overall trend of individualization gave way to the dissolution of the politically coloured frames of reference and objectivity as an attainable norm.

In the broad process of the overall "mediatization" of our society, the media have also become an increasingly important frame of reference for people to define themselves and their place in society. The mediated public sphere has become an essential site for identity formation and mirroring of individual problems (Bauman 2002). In the middle of all this, the newspaper as an institution appears merely as a single player among many other media platforms that offer tools for orientation and identity formation. The professional ethos of Finnish journalists has long been captured by considering (newspaper) journalism as the central provider of "full service": information and assistance for the readers to orient themselves in society. At the moment, however, the terrain seems more complicated, as people are increasingly using for example fiction and social media for orientation, identity formation and

reference. Of course, newspapers are adapting to the changing situation in which the mass-audience has been replaced by fragmented subgroups. Many Finnish newspapers have adopted tools for audience analysis from the marketing world (e.g. RISC) in their need to address various subgroups more effectively. The audience segment with the label "adventurous" is currently the most sought after target group by newspapers, whereas groups with labels like "security" and "stability" have usually been their most loyal readers (Olkinuora 2006, 21; Hujanen 2008).

The development of consumer culture has many impacts on newspaper journalism. One of them is the general trend to increase the entertainment function of newspapers. Finnish statistics verify that there has been about a 10% increase in the entertainment content of daily newspapers during the past ten years (Joukkoviestimät 2006, 292). Among cultural theorists, this phenomenon is reflected in the discussion on "tabloidization". Tabloidization includes trends such the increased emphasis on visual representation of the stories, the shortening of story forms, the polarization of content and the personalization of news stories (Sparks 2000; Herkman 2005). However, the trend is not static: in the current context of intensified media competition, the quality dailies are searching for patterns of economic survival from tabloids, but at the same time, tabloids are lifting their profiles as political actors, watchdogs of power and discussion leaders (Olkinuora 2006; Virkkunen 2004). In all, the division between the evening press and the quality press has never been that drastic in the Finnish context.

The strong tradition of newspaper readership in Finland has also altered. Cultural implications include the changing nature of media usage. It can be argued that enthusiasm to read daily (subscribed) newspaper has transformed into enthusiasm for reading in general. For example, by international comparison, Finnish youth still read relatively often, even if the overall trend is downward. Thus, the culture of reading still exists in Finland, but the growth areas are now free sheets, magazines and tabloids. The younger generations are also more likely to seek news from the internet. Therefore, the papers are trying to keep alive the tradition of newspaper reading by campaigns and joint projects with schools, for example. Nevertheless, people are now more likely to give up their newspaper subscription than before. Subscribing to a newspaper is no longer considered a civic duty, and there clearly is erosion occurring in the cultural significance of newspaper readership. Surveys indicate that if a person had to quit one of the following news media, they would first give up the newspaper, then radio, television and last, the internet. (For this discussion, see Hujanen 2007; Nieminen 2005; Wiio 2006; Olkinuora 2006.)

Technological transition

The above cultural trends affect the Finnish newspaper field in a broad manner, but perhaps a more direct effect is evidenced in the terrain of technological development (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008). In terms of technology, there has always been a positive attitude towards progress in the Finnish newspaper industry. In the early days, newspapers were eager to develop their printing technology, and under the protection of the stable economic environment (home delivery tradition and high household penetration), they invested heavily in printing plants and in the quality of the product.

However, development in communication technology has always affected the structure and content of the news media: new technology has always given rise to new forms of media and affected the production and efficiency within the already existing forms (Luostarinen & Uskali 2004). Digitalization and the introduction of the internet started to affect newspapers and journalistic work in the 1990s. However, it was not until the beginning of the new millennium that the actual digital turning point in the Finnish newsrooms took place (Heinonen 1998).

Technical production is still the largest area of expenditure for daily newspapers. Technical costs have nevertheless been decreasing during the past 15 years in contrast to the relative costs of editorial work, administration and marketing, which are on the rise (Joukkoviestimet 2006, 281). This development partially refers to digitalization, which has affected the whole production chain of the newspaper industry: from writing, photography, editing and layout to printing. Effects of digitalization are thus seen at both the levels of distribution and newsroom work. On the one hand, the journalists execute more phases in the journalistic process; on the other hand, their stories are published in more outlets than ever before (Luostarinen & Uskali 2004).

In the newspaper context, the web is often referred to as another publishing platform. The first online versions of print newspapers in Finland appeared in 1995, (Luostarinen & Uskali 2004) and in 2005, all of the daily newspapers had an internet version of their paper (Joukkoviestimet 2006, 272). According to the Finnish Newspaper Association, the number of online newspapers (web versions of printed newspapers) had increased from 33 to 141 during 1997–2006. But as we now know – in the age of web 2.0 – on top of being another publication platform, the internet is also an environment of social and networked interaction, an environment that brings in more varied pressures and possibilities for newspapers than first acknowledged.

Even if the development of information and communication technologies is strongly motivated by economic profits, it is not the only driving force. New technologies have also paved way for new communicative practices for virtual and real-life communities. New media technologies potentially create opportunities for people to form "horizontal" connections: citizens with common interest can communicate with each other. Interests, cultural per-

spectives and identities, which the mass media previously ignored as marginal, can gain new power within these communities. Moreover, the increasingly networked nature of the public sphere enables citizens to see themselves as potential participants in public discussion (Friedland et al 2006, 20–21). A particularly interesting development combining expertise, personal viewpoints, argumentative writing and new interaction patterns is blogging (e.g. Gillmor 2004).

In relation to newspaper journalism, blogging as a phenomenon can be divided into two threads of argumentation: "blogging as journalism" and "blogging as a social method of content management and interaction". Following the first thread leads to the debate on whether blogging in itself *is* journalism (i.e. a form of citizen journalism), thus threatening the position of professional journalism. Sirkkunen (2006, 55) argues that blogging can occasionally develop into journalism, but more often blogs are something else: personal diaries, fiction, photos etc. The other thread of argumentation emphasizes that blogging is a combination of new technology and a social form of media that is built on the premises of networking, linking and interaction. This view emphasises that blogs as social media can go a long way in helping mainstream journalism overcome some of its weaknesses such as detachment, lack of trust and transparency and a low degree of reader involvement, but it also emphasises that social media have developed forms and gained ground independently from journalism (e.g. Lintulahti 2006; Gillmor 2004). Moreover, social media challenges traditional forms of journalism because it is independent of the established production and distribution channels and because it is based on the collective processing of information (Erkkola 2008, 81–83) and may alter the professional roles of journalists from newsmakers and editors into "professional mentors" of participants in media publishing (Lietsala & Sirkkunen 2008, 153–55).

In Finnish newspapers, the reaction to the growth of the blogosphere was rather reactive at first. Blogs authored by leading politicians were first followed by journalists, and thus, blogs acted as a new type of information source; some of the Finnish newspapers started to run sections in their print versions in which quotations from blogs were presented. Then newspapers started their own blogs in which journalists, editors or visiting writers published column-like pieces. According to a recent study (Heinonen 2008, 121–122) the so-called horizontal opportunities that come with blogging have become more widely identified by newspapers. On their web sites, newspapers are providing space for readers' own blogs and independent communication as peers. These sites, however, are quite often separated from the professional journalistic content.

According to Heinonen (2008, 115–126) Finnish newspapers have recognized the emergence of the social media and other web-based communication possibilities, but they seem to have reacted to the change rather traditionally.

Even if they have used the web-based opportunities to include the audience more in the making of journalism, and even if the internet is at the core of the Finnish newspapers' future plans, the actual production of journalistic content is still considered best to remain in the hands of professional journalists. Web-based participatory opportunities are seen to complement the development of face-to-face interaction practices.

Evolution of the political culture

In addition to technological development, there is a slower change in the political culture of Finland that is reflected in newspapers. The political legacy of Finnish newspapers is connected to the party press system, which then transformed into a commercial mass-circulation press. The commercial all-round newspapers evolved in unison with the political idea of welfare state democracy. In welfare systems, the state is the provider of welfare services, and politics of consensus is the central form of decision making (Tiihonen 2004). Consensus, as a practical political idea, includes the idea of power sharing; separation between legislative and executive powers; multiparty system; proportional presentation; and compromise and co-operation between opposing forces (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 51). In Finland, newspapers were thus seen as the sites for consensual opinion formation of national policies, mostly at the level of institutions.

Related to the ideas of consensus and welfare is the idea of corporatism. Hallin & Mancini (2004, 54) describe Finland as a democratic-corporatist country, in which corporatism refers to formal integration of social groups (e.g. trade unions and other key interest groups) into the political process by extensive consultation. Economic and social policy issues, particularly wage agreements, are handled in a corporatist fashion. By now, the most rigid structures associated with corporatism have weakened and given way to more individualized patterns of belonging, but for a long time they played an important role in the development of the political and media systems in many Northern European countries, including Finland.

Within this political tradition, the administrative apparatus holds an important role, serving the society as a semi-autonomous public actor. Administrative orientation is thus another key characteristic of the Finnish political and media systems. Administration as the "official" producer of public information has shaped the role of the press as a transmitter of this information. In this environment, newspaper journalists became neutral professionals with relatively co-operative relations to official sources. Hallin and Mancini (2004, 57) point out that organized professionalism (in the forms of unions and self-regulation) in journalism is more common in media systems where administrative authority is strong.

In the political system, democratic-corporatism was in its purest form before the start of the 1990s, after which the gradual movement towards a more

(neo)liberal system became evident. Thus, by the 1990s, the political climate and public discussion were still strongly influenced by the discourse of planning, expertise and state-centred progress, but there were already signs of the coming discourse that was based on competition and individualism. A growing discourse of market-orientation and "managerialism" evolved. (For this discussion, see Alasuutari 1996, 104–121; Kantola & Kautto 2002, 14–19; Kantola 2002, 252–265.) Moreover, Raunio (2004, 140) argues that from 1990s onwards, the party-politically oriented administration and the preparation system of corporatist committees (featuring politicians and civil servants) has been gradually replaced by non-partisan policy advisors or civil servant working groups appointed by the ministries. This has led to a decline in the connection between parties and policy formulation and strengthened the technocratic and legal nature of the administration. This can be seen as a broader trend of the New Public Management doctrine that promotes a more managerial and cost-effective organization of central bureaucracy.

There is also a wider trend of the blurring of ideological and political differences among the ruling parties in Finland. This has been seen as a result of the long tradition of consensus seeking and coalition formation, but also due to the fact that the society structures in terms of traditional cleavages has been changing: the left–right cleavage has been made more ambiguous by rural–urban and integration–independence cleavages (Tiihonen 2004, 65–66; Raunio 2004, 142). The structures of the class society seem to provide fewer points of political identification for citizens, and perhaps this has contributed to the slow decline in voter turnout in Finland. The average voting turnout during the 1960s was 85.0% while in 1990–2001 it dropped to 70.8% (Grönlund et al 2005, 120).

Three quarters of Finns consider political parties to have drifted further from the problems of ordinary people (EVA 2007). There is thus a trend towards depoliticization (e.g. Mouffe 2005) and general passivity of civil society. However, there are also some signs of emerging new forms of civic activism that take place outside the traditional political organs and associations. According to polls, a majority of Finns think that the new social movements represent citizens' opinions better than traditional parties do (EVA 2005). This activism (NGO's and more unorganized initiatives) is focusing on local or global issues and identities, thus circumventing the traditional representative route of formal politics at the national level. Harju (2007, 93) argues that it is important to consider the informal ways in which people participate in the public sphere as agents whose private selves, emotions and interests stimulate and contribute to their political activities. This informal but politically oriented activism poses a challenge for journalistic coverage because the strong role of bureaucratic power has shaped journalism into an institution that traditionally is at its best in covering institutional sources and po-

litical processes, and because such activism is problematic in terms of representation.

At the moment, global economic trends are increasingly affecting the state and its political system. The ties between the individual and the nation state as the central public agent and provider of services are eroding (Haapala 2008). The crisis of the welfare state system is an example of this trend. In Finland, the idea of the state as the main organizer and provider of social services to citizens has been questioned at least from the perspective of economy (too expensive), legitimacy (not enough public support), ideology (against individual will) and functionality (the welfare structures do not serve their purpose) (Kantola & Kautto 2002, 15). Thus, there are pressures from many angles – global, national and individual – to the Finnish model of the state-oriented political welfare system. These competing viewpoints form a dilemma for political newspaper journalism. News journalism has always been strongly connected to national institutions but there is now an increased need to cover political issues also from either transnational or individual perspectives. Globalization pushes issues further from the reach of national decision making, and in terms of institutions, the European Union has become an ever more important factor in national politics. The EU is an important political actor that affects the newsroom routines and professional identities of journalists, since so much of the decision making now takes place in Brussels (Heikkilä & Kunelius 2006).

Summary

One can see that the trends that shape newspaper journalism in Finland are for the most part globally recognized but locally coloured. Combining together the historical legacy with the economic, cultural, technological and political trends, we can map out the setting in which Finnish newspapers operate today.

Financially, the current context is heavily shaped by a competitive-efficiency framework. Newspapers are facing globally recognized economic challenges, but the combination of the Finnish legacy of public service ethos and the overarching business framework provides an interesting context for these pressures. The technological trends that affect newspapers in Finland are strongly connected to digitalization and to the threats and possibilities of the internet. The Finnish newspapers were for a long time rather reactive in their online approaches, but it seems that the interactive possibilities are being increasingly recognized and adopted. The cultural trends affecting newspapers in Finland can be grouped around the notion of individualized consumer culture: newspapers are trying to adjust themselves to the fragmented environment. In addition, issues like gender equality and multiculturalism should be recognized. The political context, in turn, has undergone quite a few changes during the past 20 years. Depoliticization and electoral passivity

have alarmed the state (see Niemelä 2007) as well as the press and encouraged them to revitalize and develop more interactive and participatory approaches, even if the legacy of the consensus culture and the framework of representative democracy remain strong.

Of course, the trends described here are intertwined with each other, and journalism as a social institution has feedback effects on these terrains and their respective institutions. Bearing in mind this context, we can move on to discuss public journalism in Finland. Public journalism arrived in Finland in the 1990s, a period in time that is widely referred to as a decisive turning point in the national context; i.e. an emergence of a new mental paradigm that was more market and technologically oriented than the mentality of post-war Finland (Heiskala & Hämäläinen 2007, 84–88). Since the 1990s, public journalism has remained in the vocabulary of Finnish journalists, but it has been applied in various ways: there is no explicit or unified model of Finnish public journalism. It has evolved in the middle of the trends and changing context that were discussed above. Indeed, the whole idea of public journalism has not remained intact in the middle of these pressures and trends. Rather these forces have acted as inputs that have pushed the newspapers to become more aware of the changes in their surroundings and the need to experiment with new approaches. It is interesting to study the ways in which journalism in this context tries to remain relevant and act as a legitimate institution of the public sphere.

1.3. Research questions, methods and structure of the book

The public journalism inspired approaches in *Itä-Häme*, *Aamulehti* and *Helsingin Sanomat* are mostly project-like initiatives, in a sense "special cases" in Finnish newsroom practice. This speciality, however, provides an opportunity to catch a moment in which journalists in the newsrooms have gone beyond routine behaviour and reflected upon some of the basic questions of news journalism and the public.

Research questions

Public journalism approaches in the Finnish newspapers have indeed challenged journalists to rethink the role of the public as well as their own roles as professional journalists. In a sense, public journalism can be seen as an ideological or professional *struggle* about the role of journalism in democracy and in the public sphere rather than a set of ideas and practices that bring along solutions. Certainly, the elements of doubt and redefinition are apparent in the journalists' evaluations. Journalists are struggling to adapt to the tightening demands brought on by the changes in the context while at the same time they are willing to preserve something that can be considered the core of journalism, something that makes the profession worth defend-

ing and developing (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008, 676). In empirical terms, the task of this research is to scrutinize the practice of public journalism in Finland and the kinds of professional interpretations that have been initiated by the practice. In theoretical terms, the task is to examine public journalism in a way that opens up the two key concepts of the term: "journalism" and "public".

The overall research task becomes more concrete in the main research question: *What is public journalism, how and why has it been applied and interpreted in three Finnish newspapers, and what kind of professional reflections by journalists have these approaches elicited?*

This main research question frames the discussion in this study, and it can be divided into four sub-questions that I address in separate chapters.

- *How do journalists interpret the arrival of public journalism, and how do they evaluate participatory news practices? (Chapter 5)*
- *What is a typology of the textual presentations in public journalism stories? (Chapter 6)*
- *How do journalists consider the role of citizens in public journalism? (Chapter 7)*
- *How do journalists view their professional self-image with regard to public journalism projects? (Chapter 8)*

With the help of these questions, I will discuss the significance of public journalism for professional journalism in Finland. The sub-questions thus guide the handling of the empirical data, but I will also incorporate the theoretical discussion on public journalism, professionalism and the public sphere into the analytical discussion in the empirical chapters.

Notes on methodology

I will address the above questions by analyzing journalists' interviews and journalistic texts. The interview material (40 interviewed journalists) is my primary research data. Public journalism inspired news stories from the three papers (174 stories) constitute the textual data. I have also conducted sporadic observation and/or participation in the newsrooms, and the materials collected thereby function as a body of supportive data (see Table 1).

Methodological placement. My methodological position stems from the interactive understanding of theory and data: deduction and induction. I do not want to tie myself to either of these aspects *alone*; i.e. neither only to an aspect that considers knowledge production to be grounded in theory, nor to a view that underlines the data as the starting point. I consider that research is best carried out and the best results are reached if there is an understanding of methodology that underlines the *dialogic* nature of theory and empiric data. This dialogue, in turn, can be reached with various analytical methods.

In this research, the communicative relationship between theory and data means that the theoretical framework that comes with public journalism has defined this research from the start. The framework of public journalism is normative; i.e. the conception has an in-built understanding of what journalism should aim at. The theoretical basis of this research – public journalism theory widened with professionalism and public sphere theories – has shaped the selection of the cases, the formulation of the interview questions and the construction of the analytical framework for the textual research. However, the normative framework here is not the only point of reference; the research data – in this case mostly the journalists' interpretations – can point out moments of contestation. The moments of contest and even frustration are important in showing the areas where there might be contradiction between theory and practice. Hence, the empirical material can also talk back to theory. The idea of contestation thus works on the level of data on the one hand, and theory, on the other.

Moreover, I consider methodology as an interpretive cycle in which data, theory and the researcher's interpretations complement and inform one another. This cyclical understanding of research makes the position and interpretations of the researcher apparent (Helle 2009, 100). Because I consider it impossible for research to reflect reality as such, I think it is also suitable for the researcher to take an active part in the research process and production of the research data. This understanding fits well with the public journalism framework, as the initial idea in the movement was to narrow the gap between academic research and journalism practice: to make research more transparent, relevant and "public" for the profession (Rosen 1999, 33; 36). Thus, it is possible to see the public journalism movement as an interventionist and experimental research approach in itself (Ahva 2003, 14–16).

The interventionist approach is part of the tradition of action research that underlines the active and interpretative nature of the researcher. In an interventionist approach, the role of the researcher is made explicit and utilized in data collection and interpretation; the researcher is a participant in the process that aims for change and at the same time, the researcher studies the change process (Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999, 32; Kuula 1999, 198; Helle 2009, 100). In my study, the idea of seeing methodology as interventionist two-way process becomes apparent in the collaborative role that I had with the civic reporter from IH and in my position as a journalist-researcher at HS during the EU project in 2004.

Another grounding methodological paradigm that informs this research is that of qualitative research. Within the qualitative framework, I situate this research in the broad methodological tradition of ethnography. Ethnography, when understood culturally, underlines the importance of studying groups of people and the meaning systems that these groups have and share (van Maanen 1995, 4; Finch 2004). When ethnography is understood theoretically,

the emphasis is placed on either creating a systematic explanation of a particular event or case, or joining a theoretical conversation that goes beyond the case. Regarding the latter, the point is not merely about understanding *what* people do, but also *with what* people do it, i.e. according to what kinds of patterns of behaviour or speech, clusters of values and norms people use to act and make sense of the world (Finch 2004). In my research, I study a particular group, professional news journalists in Finland, with the intention of studying their conceptions and patterns of making sense of public journalism, citizens and themselves as professional journalists. However, I do not intend to create detailed ethnographic descriptions of each of the newsrooms and their cultures, since I consider my observation material to be too limited for that purpose. Rather, I want to find common themes – and interesting deviations – from the three newspapers and their journalists’ ways of making sense of the idea and practice of public journalism.

Thus, this work does not aim to be a comparative research of three case studies. Rather, my research is a *multi-sited* study that utilizes varying data and methods in order to be able to study a given phenomenon that takes shape and transforms across multiple sites (Saukko 2003, 195). The aim of multi-sited research is, firstly, to illustrate that social phenomena are not stable but change when looked at in different contexts, and secondly, to locate the phenomena within wider social and even global contexts (Saukko 2003, 177). This research thus studies public journalism via three different sites, the three newsrooms at HS, AL and IH, and aims to shed light on the different forms and range of interpretations of the approach. But it also aims to point out connections that exist between the newsrooms’ public journalism approaches and make references to the international forms of public journalism. This starting point is also reflected in the analysis and structure of this research: in some chapters I look at the newsrooms separately, but in others I concentrate on commonalities and shared interpretations.

Methods of collecting data. As Table 1 indicates, the methods with which I have collected the data are (1) interviews, (2) gathering of news stories and (3) participation/observation. Thus, ethnography as a broad tradition shapes my research at the level of data collection: semi-structured interviews, observation and document searches are considered as ethnographic methods of exploration and data collection (Cottle 2003, 4–5; Hansen et al 1998, 36).

(1) The interview material acts as a way to study *professional interpretations* of journalists, but I have also benefited from the interviews in a purely *factual manner*, i.e. in getting information on how the projects, which were not familiar to me beforehand, were carried out in practice. I am aware, however, that the factual information provided by journalists about the projects is also interpretive in nature, as it was produced in a particular context of the interview situation.

A semi-structured interview plan guided the interview situations, but

	Helsingin Sanomat	Aamulehti	Itä-Häme
Form of public journalism	Projects	Repeatable formats	Individual assignment of a reporter
Interviews	17 journalists and editors, group and individual interviews	14 journalists and editors, individual interviews	9 journalists and editors, individual interviews
Texts	Parliament election stories and EU election stories (23 stories)	Election tour stories, two "value series" (51)	Civic reporter's stories (90)
Participation and observation in the newsrooms	I worked as a journalist and layout designer in HS during EU project (four months in 2004) Internal memos, two recorded meetings, observations and notes	I followed and observed three discussion events of the election series (over a period of three weeks in 2004) Observations, notes, internal memos	I engaged in active interaction with the civic reporter: discussions, meetings and two-day long observation of her work on site (in the course of two years, 2004–2006) Observations, notes, internal memos, e-mail discussions

Table 1. Summary of the research data.

room was left for flexibility as there was variation between the cases. The interview plan was modified for each newsroom, but general themes that structured the interviews were: journalists' own work experience, newsroom culture, position and context of the newspaper, concept of public journalism and the newspaper's own public journalism approach: its arrival, related practices, journalists' role, stories and the future of the practices.

Interviewing as my main data collection method can be divided into group interviews and individual interviews, both of which were semi-structured. The agreements that I had with the newsrooms along with practical time limitations shaped the nature of the interviews. The interviews with journalists from HS were mainly conducted as group interviews of 2–3 participants. Due to practical reasons, some of the HS interviews were done individually. All of the interviews with AL and IH journalists were conducted one-on-one. Regarding AL, some of the reporters were not located in the main newsroom in Tampere, which resulted in the decision to conduct all of the interviews individually. For IH, the small size of the journalistic staff affected my decision to carry out individual interviews. I also conducted two e-mail interviews with the management in IH.

A group interview allows the researcher to get information about the joint interpretations of the newsroom and it also provides a better opportunity to spot the points of organizational disagreement and conflict than one-on-one interview situations (Moilanen 1995, 29–30). This double aspect makes group interviewing rather demanding for the researcher, as she needs to maintain the flow of the interview while observing the group dynamics simultaneously. However, the group interview is also considered data rich, flexible, cumulative and stimulating to respondents (Fontana & Frey 1994, 365).⁵ My group interviews lasted from 1.5 to over 2 hours. The HS group interviews featured journalists from different departments of the organization. Because the departments or teams usually function quite independently from one another in HS, the group interviews thus allowed me to observe the formation of joint understandings, as well as disagreements, between journalists from different teams. In a large newsroom, the *common* understanding is perhaps less articulated than in smaller ones because of the (physically divided and) differentiated nature of news work. This assumption was supported with an observation that the material from the small newsroom of IH was internally more homogenous than the materials from HS and AL. So, as a self-critical methodological afterthought, I can say that it could have been beneficial to also conduct group interviews (where possible) with AL journalists in order to better discover the joint interpretation of that relatively large newsroom.

However, my experiences from the individual interviews with AL and IH journalists were positive. It was more a rule than an exception that the interviewees were eager to talk about their work and that the interview situations lasted longer than was anticipated. The individual interview sessions were 1–2 hours long. Due to the collaborative connection that I had with IH, my role as an interviewer could perhaps be described as being more informal in IH than in AL, a fact that should be taken into account when reporting the results especially from a comparative viewpoint. However, given that this research does not fully adopt a comparative case study design, I do not consider this – and the fact that I have both group and individual interviews – as a major limitation. In multi-sited newsroom studies that require negotiating access to the site, the conditions may vary and the researcher needs to be open about these differences at the stage of analysis.

On every interview occasion, the researcher should be aware of her steer-

5 As a researcher, I noticed the strengths and weaknesses of the group situation. One of the positive elements was the fact that the group environment stimulated the group and made it possible for participants to compare their interpretations and memories of events that had taken place a little while earlier. The interviewees thus encouraged and completed one another. My negative experiences are related to meandering discussion or situations in which one of the participants was able to dominate the situation. These situations were mostly connected to gender and age. On those occasions, it is the task of the interviewer to balance the situation by encouraging the marginalized to express their views and/or make a note of these occasions in case there is a pattern.

ing effect and the element of power that is inbuilt in interviews situations. I need to point out that after some interviews, I was critical towards my own conduct, as I experienced that I did not make enough follow-up questions or that I was directing the course of the interview too forcefully. However, I think these are typical reflections for every researcher, and in semi-structured interviews, it is difficult to balance between the themes of the interview and the interviewee's experience, especially if they do not always intersect in an evident manner. It is important, however, to understand interviews as a jointly produced discourse, and not to see variation across interviews as errors but as significant data for analysis – presuming that the researcher is clear about the context of the interview in the write-up stage (Mishler 1986, 153; 157).

I have transcribed all of the interviews (including my own questions) in order to acquire a detailed description of the interviews situations, and to better see the interviews as shared communicative situations. In the context of my research, it is evident that the framework that I as an interviewer brought to the situation was that of public journalism. Not all of the respondents had previously framed their initiatives explicitly as public journalism. However, none of them totally denied that the particular frame of public journalism or citizen-oriented journalism (phrases that I used in the interviews) were applicable to their newsrooms. Therefore, the interpretations that journalists expressed in the interviews ought to be seen as results of a jointly produced discourse. I have granted anonymity for the interviewees, but for the sake of clarity I have numbered them and will refer to this numbering when using direct quotations in the text (see the list of interviewees at the end of references).

(2) The journalistic stories that constitute the textual material of this research were collected either in retrospect (HS's parliamentary project 2003 and AL's first value series 2002) or in the course of the publication of the stories (HS's EU election series 2004; AL's election tour and the second value series 2004; and all of the IH's civic stories). Again, the material is not quantitatively comparable as such, as the number of the stories is modest and there is numerical variation between the papers (see Table 1). This variation is due to my decision to choose stories that are anchored in particular projects or initiatives. Nikunen (2005, 30) notes that in multi-sited studies, it is typical that the data from different sites is diverse: it points out to the internal variance of the studied phenomenon. Therefore variation of data can be regarded as a research result in itself.

Moreover, as my main interest in the textual analysis lies in the story elements and story types, the quantitative compatibility of the stories is not a decisive issue. The quantitative content analysis acts as a means to get a condensed depiction of the news stories. My main aim in the textual analysis is to create a typology of the story elements from the complete textual material in order to scrutinize the "grammar" of public journalism stories. On the level

of story elements, there are interesting connections as well as deviations between the three newspapers and their public journalism stories.

(3) Observation and/or participation contain a bundle of data collection methods (Hansen et al 1998, 36). In my case, the practical data retrieval methods included tape recordings of planning and feedback meetings (HS); making notes of newsroom work and other work situations (HS, IH); discussing and interacting with reporters face-to-face (all), over the phone or via e-mail (IH); and asking for internal newsroom documents for background information and analysis (all). As pointed out, the material that I have collected by observing the news work or by personally taking part in the process, acts as a supportive data in this research. This is firstly because my main interest lays in the journalists' perceptions and interpretations, and secondly because I was not able to gain similar access to all of the sites. Additionally, the possibilities for participant observation were limited in terms of time; therefore, there is variance in the duration of the observing periods. Moreover, I wanted to study some projects that had already passed. Due to these reasons, the depth of the observations and participation is not enough to qualify as primary research data.

However, even if this group of data is only supportive material on which I can mirror the journalists' evaluations and discussions, it is nevertheless appropriate to provide briefly an account of my participatory role in the papers, especially because my role as a researcher has been slightly different in each of the cases. The challenge in multi-sited research is to make the position of the researcher apparent by self-reflection (Nikunen 2005, 31). The strongest interventionist role I had was at IH where I acted in co-operation with the civic reporter at the early stages of her work. In the beginning, I had an active participatory role as a feedback provider and after the most intensive research period, I remained in touch with the civic reporter (for a more detailed discussion, see Chapter 5.3.). At HS, I worked as a journalist in the politics department during the EU election project. Hansen et al (1998, 51) refer to this kind of researcher role as "*participant-observer*", with emphasis on participation, and note that this position as an in-situ reporter may constrain the observation work. At that stage at HS, I had already interviewed HS journalists regarding the parliament election project during which I was not part of the staff. The newsroom was thus aware that on top of working as a journalist I was also collecting further data for my research. Regarding AL, I did not have a participatory role. This was because two of the projects that I wanted to study at AL had already passed before starting this research. Consequently, I was not able to participate in the projects other than as an interviewer afterwards. During the election tour, however, I was able to observe a few discussion events in order to gain a more nuanced picture of the approach and its practices, but in these situations, I remained in the role of a silent observer or as "*observer-participant*" (cf. Hansen et al 1998, 51).

Methods of analysis. I will describe my methods of data analysis in more detail at the beginning of each of the empirical chapters (5–8). Here it is enough to point out that the main method in this research is a qualitative content analysis. The interview material was analyzed with the help of Atlas.ti software. I first organized and coded the material according to newspapers and then into four main clusters: (1) definitions and evaluation of public journalism as an idea, (2) talk about the newsroom practices related to public journalism, (3) talk about readers and their participation in public journalism, and (4) talk about the role of the journalist in public journalism. These clusters were then further organized and analyzed in more detail in order to answer the research questions.

In terms of analyzing the stories, I first conducted a quantitative analysis. This analysis was of small size and aimed to create a condensed picture of the stories and to identify any patterns in terms of agent positions in the stories. Thus, the quantitative analysis was also qualitatively oriented; i.e. there was no attempt in the analysis to make statistical generalizations, rather it acted as a guide for the qualitative analysis on story elements. In the qualitative analysis, I closely read a sample of the texts and identified typical story elements in the public journalism stories.

The observation material was not systematically analyzed due to the limitations I described earlier. I have utilized, however, the material mostly in Chapter 5 where I describe the practices and projects in the three newspapers. Notes and documents thus acted as background material that I used as a point of comparison with the interviews. The participatory material from IH – i.e. the notes from meetings and discussions with the civic reporter and our e-mail correspondence – has also been mostly used in Chapter 5 with the attempt to provide a deeper understanding of the work practices and development of the civic reporters' professional profile. In this part of the study, I have tried to reflect openly on my personal responses in the process, as it may provide important insight into the norms and often unspoken rules and values informing the professional practices of those observed (Hansen et al 1998, 36–37).

Structure of the book

The book can be divided into three sections. In the first section (Chapters 2–4), I discuss a *conceptual and theoretical aspect of public journalism*. In Chapter 2, I start from public journalism. By opening with this discussion, I wish to underline that this research is first and foremost about journalism and its change. I will therefore discuss first the nature of public journalism and then broaden the discussion in two more conceptual directions, in the direction of professionalism (Chapter 3) and public sphere theories (Chapter 4). I wish to indicate how considering these two research traditions widens our understanding of public journalism.

The second section of my research consist of Chapters 5 and 6. In this section, I will discuss the Finnish *public journalism practices in a descriptive manner*. By analyzing the public journalism practices (Chapter 5) and stories (Chapter 6), I am able to offer an account of how public journalism appears in the context of Finnish newspaper journalism. My aim in this part of my research is to offer the readers an understanding of the "grammar" of the Finnish public journalism approach.

In the third and last part of the research (Chapters 7–8), I will address the implications of public journalism in relation to *the journalists' professional understanding* of their work as journalists. I will discuss the journalists' conceptions of their readers (Chapter 7), and then I will analyze the ways in which journalists reflect their self-images as professional journalists, especially the relationship of professionalism and public journalism (Chapter 8). In Chapter 9, I will present the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

2. Public journalism

Public journalism is a multifaceted concept. As a scholarly notion, public journalism is connected to the wider academic debates on civil society, democratic participation, the public sphere and the media. These issues have been central in the debates among communication scholars for decades. Public journalism addresses these questions from the angle of journalism in the context of increasingly complex world. As a journalistic notion, public journalism refers to a concrete set of practices in journalism, such as sourcing, agenda setting and community contacts. On a practical level, the idea is also linked to the need to react to the changes in political PR, such as forceful political campaigning during elections. At the managerial level, public journalism is seen as one possible way to deal with declining circulation and increased competition in the newspaper market. Public journalism is also increasingly relevant in relation to developing interactive online practices, such as blogging, UGC and participatory journalism.

Public journalism is thus a combination of both theoretical and practical initiatives. In this chapter, I will open up the concept and discuss the idea of public journalism more closely. First, I will consider where it comes from and on which theoretical premises it is built. I will then offer a definition of public journalism. Second, I will discuss the spreading of public journalism outside the U.S. and its arrival in Finland. Last, I will assess the state of public journalism today, and consider its current significance as a practical as well as a theoretical notion. In this chapter, I thus offer an introduction to and a discussion of public journalism that will be developed further in the following two chapters.

2.1. Public Journalism: Background and concepts

Public journalism started as a journalistic reform movement in the U.S. in the late 1980s. It emerged in a situation where journalistic practices faced much criticism from within the profession itself and where different institutional actors – foundations, universities, trusts and the news organizations themselves – were willing to aid the profession to re-educate itself (Rosen 1999b). These factors formed the soil in which the movement then took root. The movement evolved through three different phases: the first phase of public journalism was early experimentation (1988–1993), the second was the coherent movement era (1993–1997) after which a phase of routinization of some of its practices took place (1998–2003) (Friedland 2003, 129–130). In the following, I will discuss first the evolution of public journalism as a movement, and then examine its theoretical origins in order to formulate a grounded definition.

The history of public journalism movement

The initial take off of public journalism was a result of the critique of the 1988 U.S. presidential election coverage featuring George H. Bush and Michael Dukakis. Observers noted that election reporting concentrated largely on campaigning, political tactics and poll results rather than on politically relevant issues: this "horse race" style of reporting left themes that would have been relevant to the majority of the electorate largely uncovered (Haas 2007, 10). After the election, some journalists started to ask if they had remembered the public often enough in their election coverage, and concluding that the answer was "no", they set out to find the public again by changing journalism (Rosen 2000, 680). Hallin (1992) argues that the identities of the political parties in the U.S. had become muddled, which in turn opened up the way for the domination of campaigning by professional consultants and the "substanceless" politics of 1988. The lack of substance provoked considerable discussion among journalists about how to cover elections (Hallin 1992, 19). In many aspects, the self-realized failure in election reporting was important for the public journalism movement in terms of encouraging journalists to get involved in the change process.

Jay Rosen, a NYU professor, was one of the leading academics in the movement. He has written widely on the subject (e.g. Rosen 1991; 1993; 1997; 1999; 1999b; 2000). In 1990, he started a project called "Project of Public Life and the Press", which aimed at evaluating new kinds of journalistic practices and by 1993, the project had taken on the names "public" or "civic journalism" and gained publicity as various foundations and media houses launched their own initiatives (Lambeth 1998, 2; Rosen 2000, 680).

From the beginning, many of the media houses that started to develop the idea of public journalism were doing it for economic reasons. For them public journalism appeared as a way to engage readers as citizens as well

as consumers; in other words, if readers were connected to public life, they would also be more willing to buy or subscribe to a paper (Sirianni & Friedland 2001, 191). The underlying business motivation and the fact that many newspapers received funding from external foundations, such as Pew Center for Civic Journalism, made public journalism experiments and their motives vulnerable to criticism (Heikkilä 2001, 167–168; Merrit 1995).

Rosen (2000, 680–683), however, has mentioned that the movement had never intended to see itself as being something external to or above the fact that newspapers work in a commercial environment, even if public journalism for him has been a democratic project. Public journalism is a mainstream movement because it operates within the structures of media companies and with the support of publishers and editors. Therefore, it does not sustain a radical challenge to the commercial regime in which the press operates. Rosen argues that there has to be ways to foster a genuine public and a healthy democracy, even in the highly restricted environment in which most journalists find themselves. Moreover, Carey (1999, 51) has written that public journalism has potential as a movement because it has a particular understanding of the existing conditions with which journalism must deal. So, the movement acted in an environment that was business-oriented, but its democratic commitment was decisive for professional journalists to get involved in the reforms.

Public journalism coverage was invented and developed through a series of practical experiments. It has been estimated that from the late 80s until 2002 at least 600 public journalism experiments and projects in 320 newspapers took place in the U.S. (Friedland & Nichols 2002; Friedland 2003, 119). These experiments can be grouped into four main areas: (1) election coverage experimentation, (2) theme specific reporting projects, (3) efforts to develop daily routines and an organizational setting for public journalism and (4) drawing on the potential of the internet in terms of public journalism ideals (cf. Heikkilä & Kunelius 1997; Haas 2007).⁶

The first and most well known public journalism projects revolved around renewing election coverage. These projects took place for example in Columbus' *Ledger-Enquirer* (1988), in the *Wichita Eagle* (1990) and in the *Charlotte Observer* (1992). The basic idea behind the projects was to find out what the "voters' agenda" was and organize reportage as such instead of following the campaign offices' agendas. The issues that were relevant to voters were dis-

6 The description of the projects here is merely an outline. The early initiatives have been documented in detail elsewhere (see e.g. Rosen 1999, Merritt 1995, Charity 1995). For the purposes of this research, it is sufficient to note that public journalism in the U.S. developed particularly in the frame of printed newspapers; therefore, much of the literature deals with the press and its practices. This does not, of course, mean that the approach would be irrelevant for other platforms, such as radio, television or the web (Sirianni & Friedland 2001, 188). In fact, some of the early experiments brought together broadcast and print media, and the later experiments included the use of the web.

covered using various methods: telephone surveys and polling, focus groups and town hall meetings. The newspapers' idea was to pose readers' questions to candidates in order to place the voters' everyday life concerns in interaction with candidates' views on those issues. (See e.g. Haas 2007, Chapter 1.)

After the first wave of election projects, some newspapers started to develop methods of public journalism in terms of specific community issues. Among such pioneers were for instance the *Wisconsin State Journal* (1990), the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* (1993), and *Charlotte Observer* (1994). Some of the most acknowledged projects concentrated on issues like ethnic relations, schooling, city budget and transportation. Journalistic practices differed in each project, but one of the main focuses was to strengthen the role of the newspaper as a site for public discussion and also as a provider of concrete possibilities for public discussion and public problem-solving (Haas 2007 10–17; Sirianni & Friedland 2001, 193–217).

From the mid-90s onwards public journalism was extended through attempts to generate journalistic work methods and develop daily and weekly routines in newsrooms. Newsrooms were for instance reorganized around theme-specific or area-specific reporting teams instead of traditional "beats", or specialized public pages were created (Friedland 2003, 46; 87–94). Papers also developed more permanent ways to keep in touch with citizens, for instance by hosting citizen advisory panels and training journalists on how to "tap civic life" and spot the important networks of the community (Harwood Group 1996, Friedland 2003, 28–29). At the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, the newsroom developed a method of "civic framing", in which a news story on a decided issue was covered from multiple angles in separate stories instead of producing a traditional balanced account in a single story (Haas 2007, 17).

With the advent of the internet, new interactive approaches to civic coverage emerged. For instance, J-lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism⁷ was created as a spin-off from the Pew Center of Civic Journalism, which was one of the main organizations to encourage and fund early public journalism projects. J-lab is still running, and its mission is to develop "innovative news experiments that use new technologies to help people actively engage in critical public issues". However, the internet and its interactive tools also blurred the initial idea of public journalism, and there has been a shift away from the community towards cyberspace (Sirianni & Friedland 2001, 232).

As a movement, public journalism has passed its peak in the USA. The coherence of the movement has dissolved and the central figures as well as large institutional support have withdrawn (Friedland 2003). Even if new practices were innovative, the movement era in its experimental and project-bound form left news organizations fundamentally unchanged, and thus, as

⁷ <http://www.j-lab.org/index.shtml>

the peak of the project is now passed, so are the wider organizational effects (Haas 2007; Firedland 2003).

Even if some institutional support still remains – J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism; the Public Journalism Network⁸; or the Knight-Batten Awards⁹ that are given to technological innovations in journalism that involve citizens in public issues – it is fragmented in nature and limited in scope. Thus, it cannot sustain public journalism as a coherent movement anymore. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of sites for professional reflection and learning, since the courses and seminars related to the early stages of the movement are not held anymore. At the moment, the profession seems more diffused than it was in the late 1980s when the public journalism movement gained momentum. The profession has been shaken by economic troubles, increased competition, credibility crises and the popularity of social media. Therefore, current journalistic innovations in the web 2.0 environment seem quite unlikely to create comparable *coherent professional* reform movement around them. However, the theoretical debate has remained alive for over 20 years, and next I will describe the theoretical sources of public journalism and the academic setting in which it evolved.

Theoretical roots of public journalism

In addition to practical experimentation, the public journalism movement was framed and influenced by accumulated theoretical thinking. Three areas of research and debate in the U.S. during the 1980–90s were the main influences for the scholarly side of public journalism: (1) the research about the state of American political culture; (2) the discussion around the notion of deliberative democracy and the public sphere; and (3) the revisiting of the Lippmann–Dewey debate (e.g. Carey 1989). All of these lines of thought contributed to the theoretical framework behind public journalism, which was in part formulated after the highest peak of practical experimentation (Voakes 2004; Haas 2007; Glasser & Craft 1997, 25).

(1) Around the same time as some of the leading American journalists were expressing their worry about the state of political coverage and as newspapers struggled with decreasing circulation figures, political scientists were describing a decline in civic engagement and studying the relationship between citizens and public life. For example, Robert Putnam (1995) analyzed civic withdrawal from public life and linked it to the loss of social capital. He referred to social capital as features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit. According to Putnam, an individualistically determined cultural and political atmosphere in the U.S. discouraged the development of social

8 <http://pjnet.org/>

9 <http://www.j-lab.org/ba07winners.shtml>

capital (see also Rosen 1999b, 266–269). Richard Harwood and the Harwood Group, in turn, carried out focus group discussions with Americans in ten U.S. cities. Their study published in 1991, *Citizens and Politics*, suggested that the prevailing assumption of citizens not being interested in politics was not a grounded one, instead they expressed being excluded from many areas of public life and viewed politics as a closed network (Haas 2007, 9–10; Sirianni & Friedland 2001, 194). These studies on public life and social capital contributed to the framing of public journalism.

Rosen (1999b, 24; 266–270) suggests that the research on American political culture also inspired other civic movements and institutions, for instance the National Civic League, Alliance for Civic Renewal or the Kettering Foundation. There was no single name or single agency for this civic innovation, but the goals were similar: to engage Americans in public life, to have “politics for people” and to find a way for more participatory and deliberative politics. For example, these associations developed the idea of collaborative problem-solving on a practical level. Indeed, the public journalism movement can be seen as part of this wider trend of innovation and renewal, since it also aimed at increasing social and civic capital (Sirianni & Friedland 2001; Meyer 1998, 255–256).

(2) Interlinked with the above described research on American political culture was the discussion about deliberative democracy. For example, Benjamin Barber (1984) examined the possibility of a deliberative democratic model in which decision making is based on the consensus that arises from public deliberation, joint decision making and working through problems (Barber 1984, 224). Daniel Yankelovitch is another much cited source in public journalism literature as one of the early inspirers. He developed the idea of “public judgement”, a deliberative process where citizens would be allowed to form their opinion and arrive at public judgement jointly (Yankelovitch 1991, cited in Charity 1995, 4–9; Haas 2007, 8–9).

One of the reasons why the idea of deliberative democracy was a much debated issue at that time was the fact that Jürgen Habermas’s early work on the public sphere was translated into English in 1989 (Habermas 1989). This publication marked a new wave of discussion on the themes of the public sphere regarding its structures, possibilities and limitations – both historically and applied to modern society. According to Habermas’s idea, the public sphere is a space in between the private sphere and the state where citizens are able to discuss in public and form a public opinion. The public sphere comes into being in conversations of private individuals assembled to form a public body. To some, Habermas’s notion of the public sphere was a myth to begin with, but for others, it was a powerful idea and concept with which to study social life. Anyhow, for most scholars who joined the debate, the “public” was *not* the same as a “mass audience”, and this conception triggered debate about the public sphere and the role of media in it (Rosen 1999b, 62–63; Liv-

ingstone 2005, 19, 23). Later on, Habermas inspired – and agitated – numerous theorists. Therefore, Habermas’s work can be seen as another theoretical building block for public journalism even if the purely Habermasian notion of the public sphere was not the initial spark that ignited the public journalism idea. Habermas’s early public sphere theory has thus influenced public journalism indirectly through the deliberative democratic framework. But as I will argue shortly, Habermas’s later work regarding the public sphere is also fruitful for public journalism (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion about Habermas and his legacy).

(3) In early writings, public journalism is more explicitly built on the Deweyan idea of the public than on the Habermasian concept (Rosen 1999b, 19–20). Dewey’s (1954 [1927]) view was that the public creates itself whenever there is an issue or problem to be solved and discussed. Authors like Rosen used the debate between John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, which originally took place in the 1920s, to clarify the role of the press in public journalism as the provider of “civic climate”, i.e. as a significant player in the process of strengthening the functioning of the whole public sphere (Rosen 1999b, 67; Rosen 1999). In this debate, a prominent journalist of the 1920s, Lippmann, debated the idea of public opinion and the relationship between journalism and democracy with a pragmatist philosopher, Dewey. The essence of this debate was the differences that the authors had about the possibilities of citizens as public agents in democracy. According to Lippmann (1965 [1922], 162, 228–229), forming a grounded public opinion would require time, money, patience and calmness: requirements that one cannot expect every citizen to have. Thus, the most important citizen role in a democratic setting was to act as a voter; not to participate in the formulation of policies in public discussion. Journalism would provide digested expert information to the public. (See also Rosen 1999, 37–38; Rosen 1999b, 64–65; Pietilä 1997, 141–142.) Dewey’s view on the abilities of citizens to process information was much more positive than that of Lippmann’s. Dewey (1954, 203–204, 207–208) argued that public opinion was not simply formed through the information offered by journalists, but also in civic discussions. According to him, expert-driven democracy could not work because experts were alienated from the everyday lives of people. Dewey saw citizens themselves as the best experts on many issues. The role of journalism in democracy for Dewey, then, was to improve the possibilities for public debate and discussion. This argumentation has been used as a basis for public journalism theory (Rosen 1999b). (See more on the Lippmann–Dewey debate in Chapter 4.)

I have offered here three lines of theoretical debate that have shaped the formation of public journalism. These lines are interlinked and they have affected public journalism in a joint manner. Even with this short description, we can see that public journalism is part of the century old debate on the

functioning of the public sphere and democracy, and the roles that citizens and journalists have in that process.

The definition of public journalism

Due to its broad theoretical background and its experimental nature, there are plenty of conceptual definitions of public journalism that are often rather vague and somewhat differing. One of the better ones is that of Glasser and Lee (2002) who begin their chapter on public journalism by defining it as a *loosely organized reform movement aimed at getting the press to rethink its commitment to the ideals of democratic participation*. Rosen, in turn, has defined public journalism as a combination of an argument, an experiment, a movement, a debate and an adventure (Rosen 1999b, 262–263).

When I have talked about public journalism to students or journalists, I have tried to formulate a workable and understandable definition. However, it has been difficult to articulate a satisfactory definition. This vagueness is precisely the reason why the movement and its scholars have been intensely criticized (for this discussion see e.g. Meyer 1998, 251–258; Glasser 2000, 683).

Deriving from various theoretical sources and my own experiences from the field, I have come up with the following definition. This research is informed by an understanding that public journalism is a form of professional journalism that:

- 1) *intentionally aims to foster participation, public deliberation, diversity and connectedness;*
- 2) *considers readers as citizens and takes them as its focal point throughout the journalistic process;*
- 3) *conceives citizens as actors in the public sphere, before and after the story has been published;*
- 4) *and justifies these arguments and defends the practices related to them from the perspective of democracy.*

(1) Public journalism *intentionally* aims at fostering public deliberation, participation and connectedness. This implies that public journalism is an approach that has conscious goals and motives behind it. Therefore, I would not name any kind of journalistic practice that involves reader interactivity or is written from the viewpoint of "regular people", public journalism. This is significant because at times when I have been talking about public journalism with journalists (not only my interviewees), they have responded to the idea by claiming that "isn't that something most papers are already doing and what good journalism ought to be anyway". My answer is yes, I think it is what some papers are already doing and what good journalism would be like, but in most current reader-oriented practices the underlying values and

motives are not thought through or transparent the way that they are in public journalism. The practices might for instance foster reader activity, but often they do not aim to increase civic participation outside the realm of the newspaper. Therefore, not all participatory journalistic practices would be defined as public journalism. Indeed, I argue that public journalism requires both: transparency of justifications and public reflexivity (see Örnebring 2008) of practices from newsrooms and journalists.

Participation is one of the aims of public journalism. Naturally, this is connected to participatory news making methods. Public journalism utilizes many kinds of participatory elements, which can connect journalists and readers: readers can be asked to comment on stories, write e-mail, contact the newsroom by telephone or visit the reporters when they are touring neighbourhoods. People become more aware of the journalistic process and potentially more interested in public discussion through personal involvement. In this regard, public journalism has sometimes been connected to approaches in media literacy and pedagogy, since John Dewey is also considered as one of the founders of experience based learning (Kolb 1984; Rauste-von Wright & von Wright 1994, 137–144). This aspect of public journalism underlines the importance of the participatory news making process as a learning process for citizens as well as journalists (Lehtonen & Ruusunoksa 2006).

However, participation in public journalism also refers to such citizen involvement that does not happen on the citizen–journalism axis but on the citizen–public life axis. Activating this kind of civic participation makes citizens more aware of the political process; makes them realize their own potential to act upon issues and extends their views above personal goals: fostering civic participation is also a way to aid in the building of social and/or civic capital (Sirianni & Friedland 2001, 23). Therefore, newspapers can encourage civic participation by publishing stories that invite citizens to take part in public life rather than present the political process as something that has already taken place or something that is happening behind closed council doors or administrative offices. Public journalism is thus a practice that can help in framing citizens' everyday concerns as politically relevant and lifting them to public discussion or to the agenda of the decision-making apparatus.

By referring to *public* deliberation as an aim of public journalism, I want to emphasize that public journalism is connected to the idea of improving possibilities for discussion that is public in the sense that it is accessible, open and equal. The notion of *deliberation* is used in this definition, because on top of seeing deliberation as a broader democratic goal (see the fourth part of the definition), public journalism also makes use of the deliberative process as a journalistic method. This means bringing people together to discuss issues and find solutions. The deliberative process allows participants to define the concepts that are used in the discussion and redefine their views in a reciprocal manner (Barber 1984). So, in a deliberative process people

together might be able to produce something that they would not be able to work out on their own (Heikkilä & Kunelius 1999). By gathering people together to deliberate, public journalism practitioners are able to find out how people make sense of the world, how they define it and what kind of suggestions they come up with in relation to common concerns. This deliberative knowledge is then used as direct and indirect material for news stories. These stories should then ideally include a *diversity* of voices and be dialogic in nature. In this sense, public journalism also aims at giving a voice to the voiceless, i.e. to bring forward the views of groups, such as women, minorities, youth or immigrants, who do not typically act as sources of information in traditional news agendas.

Connectedness as the third aim of public journalism refers to a textual dimension that should be identifiable in news stories. It is not enough, then, to present many different views without also trying to find a way to connect them, bring them to a dialogic relationship with one another. This means, for example, abandoning the tradition of portraying issues as disputes or polarities with two opposing camps. Drawing from civic deliberation experiments, Rosen (1999, 11) points out that ordinary people often search for middle ground, possible solutions and communication across boundaries. People tend to make connections between ideas and topics that society and journalism tend to fragment (Charity 1995, 84). Moreover, connectedness refers to the journalists' position. One of the early ideas in public journalism was to "get the connections right" (Rosen 1996, also 1993) meaning that journalists cannot remain as outsiders from the community on which they report, but instead they have to reconnect themselves with the everyday life of citizens. Journalists should thus position themselves as co-citizens, to combine their "civic identity with their professional persona" (Rosen 1999, 7).

(2) Public journalism is a kind of journalism that conceives *readers as citizens*. This idea stems from the theoretical basis of public journalism. By using the term citizens instead of readers, viewers or users, public journalism advocates wish to link "ordinary people" with a broader concept of public life. According to public journalism ideals, the "receivers" of journalism should not be seen as spectators or as an undifferentiated mass, but rather as citizens, who compose an active public (Rosen 2000, 680).

However, citizenship as a grounding concept is sometimes considered problematic by journalists. For journalism practitioners the use of the term "citizen" may be alienating (e.g. Greenwald 2002). In my discussions with journalists, many have expressed that the use of the word citizen has a solemn connotation: citizenship is seen as a formal status or as a kind of membership of the nation state. For some, the term even includes an element of arrogance. For journalists, "citizenship" seems to refer to the collective identities (e.g. based on political parties, trade unions etc.) of the public, which are currently being contested by the trends of individualization, commercial-

ization and secularization (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 263). However, against these trends, public journalism challenges journalists to think about their audience as potentially active citizens with experience and knowledge to be shared in public. In a sense then, the citizenship frame of public journalism reminds journalists to take their readers seriously as participants and as members of the public.

Citizenship is a complex term also among academics, since it maintains many connotations in different contexts. In scholarly discussions, citizenship is usually referred to as a notion built on the interlocking rights and responsibilities of individuals as members of social entities, and citizenship status is based on the idea that all members of a society function in two capacities: as private actors and as public actors (Eriksen & Weigård 2000, 32). Furthermore, the term citizenship has at least legal, political, social and cultural layers. It is also noted that the prevailing economic logic and the context of the welfare state often situate citizens as clients or customers of services (Heikkilä 2001, 24–32; Eriksen & Weigård 2000, 14–15; 26–28).

In the context of public journalism, citizenship is referred to as a political, social and cultural position that has an inbuilt potential of activity; citizens as private *and* public actors have the right to form a collective will and act upon it. According to Rosen (1993, 5), the public ceases to exist if people lose their identity as citizens. Therefore, the role of the media is to assist people to see themselves as citizens. It is important to produce the kind of journalism that does not hinder the readers from seeing themselves as citizens with rights to take part in public life in all its forms.

In public journalism, citizens are held in *focus throughout the whole journalistic process*, from the early stages of topic selection to sourcing, defining story angles and choosing textual practices. At some stages of the news-making process, this focus is more of an attitude, whereas at others it may be very practical. For example, during agenda setting, the focus can be applied concretely. There are various ways to find out the citizens' agenda: surveys, (web-based) reader networks, reader panels, group discussions, "public listening" etc. Sourcing is another step in which citizens play a key role. Public journalism appreciates experiential civic knowledge: citizens are often the best experts in many policy issues, since they have the contextual understanding of applied decisions. Public journalism does not, however, dismiss the importance of expert information, but views it as "experts on tap, not on top" (Rosen 1999b, 204).

In current journalistic practice, there is a trend of having many ordinary people on the pages of the newspaper. They are often presented in the sub-stories that provide a "human touch": emotions or examples from everyday life. In public journalism, however, citizens are not positioned as examples or subjects, but as actors, interpreters or problem-solvers. Beckman (2003, 192) exemplifies this by pointing out that traditional journalism often asks citi-

zens the question "How do you feel?" whereas public journalism asks "Why do you feel the way you do?" Emotions are thus part of the civic frame, but usually connected to contexts, positions, definitions and issues. Citizen focus should also be considered in terms of story angles because public journalism includes the idea of covering issues from angles that are relevant for citizens, in contrast to administrative or "politics as a battle field" angles. Framing could also be used as a tool to indicate different viewpoints on a single issue, i.e. to cover the same story from various angles to demonstrate diversity. Citizen focus also means thinking of ways to report complex issues in an understandable yet not over-simplifying manner, providing readers with adequate contextual information.

So, public journalism's principal starting point is the potential partnership of journalists and citizens. Journalists should not, then, give up their own judgement to be replaced by that of the public (Glasser 2000). In other words, public journalism does not mean giving up standard journalistic practices, such as source criticism, even if (and precisely because) it uses citizens as sources. Not everything can be published "in the name of the public", and journalists have the right to demand rational justifications from their citizen sources similarly as from political and expert sources (Heikkilä 2001, 174).

(3) In public journalism citizens are taken as *actors* in the public sphere. With this I imply that in public journalism it is important to offer members of the public the possibility of stepping out from the traditional role of the receiver in order to be an actor in relation to the media as well as the surrounding society. As mentioned, in the context of public journalism, citizenship is not referred to as a legislative or state related term, but can be considered in regard to social agency, practice and communication (e.g. Dahlgren 2006). Public journalism reminds us of the potentially active but in most cases rather dormant subject position that people as citizens have in the public sphere.

Public journalism stresses that it is also important to represent citizens as actors in journalistic texts. This is important, as recent studies (Lewis et al 2005) indicate that the way in which citizens are routinely represented in U.S. and U.K. journalism, for example, is distanced. Journalists have very little direct interaction with the citizens they report on; instead they rely on vague inferences about public opinion, general assumptions or impressions. When there is systematic evidence about the public's opinion, newsrooms most often rely on covering opinion polls. Lewis et al note that *vox pops* are another routine way to represent a variety of citizens' voices, but they have a tendency to position citizens as apolitical and disengaged; expressing approval or disapproval of a decision or making judgements as consumers. Hence, citizens are largely excluded from active participation in public deliberation.

Moreover, it is not enough in public journalism to position citizens as active participants during the process of producing a story or on the level of tex-

tual representation. Public journalism is about providing readers with something Haas (2007) calls "mobilizing information". This means seeing news stories as entry points for civic action, not as the end products of the journalistic process. After reading a public journalism story, citizens should be able to understand what happens next and, and more importantly, see how they could engage themselves in that process (Charity 1995, 82–87). Active civic participation is therefore a key dimension in public journalism: both during the journalistic process and after that, in actual public life.

Public journalism thus aspires to address people so that they can discuss matters relevant to them without automatically positioning their experience (only) as "private". Seeing citizens as actors *in the public sphere* challenges journalists to think of the "publicness" in which they act, and to consider the limitations and possibilities that the media have as an institutional organizer of public discussion. This is a central issue in public journalism, and I will return to it later in the context of public sphere theories (Chapter 4).

(4) The last – but perhaps the most exhaustive – part of the definition deals with democracy. In public journalism all of the above mentioned aims and practices (participation, deliberation, connectedness, citizen focus and activity) are justified from the perspective of democracy and the role that journalism plays or should play in it. Democracy is therefore the most important underlying concept in public journalism: democracy is not conceived merely as a way of governing, but rather as a way of acting: "democracy as something we do, not something that is done to us" (Rosen 1999b, 299). Therefore, even if public journalism does not tightly adhere to any particular theoretical model of democracy, it evidently has links to and is inspired by theories of deliberative and participatory democracy, both in which communication and activity of the citizens play central roles (Elster 1998; Strömbäck 2005).¹⁰

The ideas of participatory democracy are evident in public journalism: citizens' participation in public life is encouraged, civic engagement is fostered and politics is framed as issues that can be discussed and acted upon. Sirianni and Friedland (2001, 23) argue that participatory democracy emphasizes social learning: participating in community and political affairs create citizens who are capable of sustaining democracy. Through active participation citizens become more knowledgeable about the political system, develop a greater sense of their own efficacy and widen their horizons beyond their own self-interest. Journalists should play convening and catalytic roles, bring citizens together and encourage them to participate (Sirianni & Friedland 2001, 187). They should also give people a role in setting the public

10 The relationship of public journalism to the distinct model of deliberative democracy is ambiguous (see e.g. Glasser & Craft 1997, 30–31). Rosen (1999b) and more recent literature connect public journalism with the ideals of deliberative democracy (Haas 2007), but some of the earlier critical-commentary literature links public journalism with a communitarian democratic model (see Black 1997).

agenda, to let them speak for themselves in matters that concern them (Ström-bäck 2005, 340).

From the deliberative democratic model, public journalism has adopted a view that citizens can and should participate in public deliberation and thereby have an active role in defining policies instead of merely casting a vote between already defined options. In the mediated society, the media have a central role in making public deliberation possible (Thompson 1995, 256–258). Thus, public journalism should provide citizens a *site* for public deliberation and also *material* for deliberation in relation to policy changes, elections and everyday life. Deliberative democratic theory suggests that the process of deliberation and its public nature increase the legitimacy of public decisions. In sum, it underlines the importance of dialogue, mutual respect and the civility of public deliberation as a means of reaching a consensus-based closure (Marx Ferree et al 2002, 316). Deliberative democratic theory is thus an ideal way of organizing democratic decision making by discussion among free and equal citizens. It is a form of collective decision making by either those affected by the decision or their representatives. Decisions are achieved by means of argumentation, and participants are committed to the values of rationality and impartiality. (See Elster 1998, 1–12.)

The above four-parted definition of public journalism is partly an idealized image of the movement. In practice, not all of the public journalism experiments have embraced all aspects of this definition. Even so, I find it important to try to provide a theoretically based but practically meaningful definition of public journalism. In the coming chapters, I will broaden this discussion by moving towards professionalism and public sphere theories, and relating this discussion to the interpretations of practicing journalists.

2.2. The spreading of public journalism

Considering public journalism in an international context is challenging, since there is not much literature available for a comparative or global approach. Public journalism never appeared as a coherent movement outside the USA. However, three aspects of the movement acted as links in the global transition: public journalism as a theoretical entity dealt with democratic theory and appealed to academics; as a set of concrete and experimental practices, it addressed acting journalists; and as an attempt to tackle the declining momentum of the newspaper business, it also enticed newspaper managers. Public journalism differed from other alternative movements in journalism because it addressed different agents in the field of journalism within the same framework. For example, in Finland, public journalism gained ground due to its wide appeal: it was introduced first to the academic community and then slowly integrated in to the existing media structures. I will next dis-

cuss the spreading of public journalism internationally, and then discuss the case of Finland more closely.

Public journalism outside the U.S.

Public journalism percolated down from the U.S. in the 1990s. The lack of an international, institutionally supported public journalism movement resulted in an open situation where the public journalism approach was experimented with in different countries somewhat differently. It was experimented with either as the result of the work of individual journalists and editors eager to try new methods, for example, in Sweden (Beckman 2003), or educators in charge of democracy supporting development and journalism education projects, as in Namibia (Shilongo 2005), or experimentally minded scholars wishing to see how the idea might work in their culture, as in Finland (Heikkilä 2001, Heikkilä & Kunelius 2003).

Altogether, public journalism has inspired experimentation in Asia and Oceania (Japan, Australia, New Zealand), Europe (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium), South America (Argentina, Colombia, Mexico) and Africa (Malawi, Senegal, Swaziland, Namibia, South Africa). In these approaches, newsrooms have used various information gathering tools to identify problems that are of concern to citizens. The approaches have included election projects, coverage of minority or social inequality issues, public deliberation initiatives, investigative or ethnographic reporting, community forums and the development of editorial councils with citizens. (For discussion on these international forms, see e.g. Haas 2007, Chapter 7; Romano 2010.)

Haas (2003, 98) notes that international public journalism approaches have been surprisingly similar to their American predecessor, even if there are occasions in which culturally specific versions of public journalism have been developed. He suggests that the biggest substantive difference is that news organizations in some cases have been more *activist* in their approach to foster interaction between government officials and citizens than in most of the American cases. Haas (2007, 126–127) continues to suggest that the plausible explanations as to why the two have been so similar are, firstly, that the non-U.S. experiments were often carried out as co-operations of newsrooms and scholars who had spent time in the U.S. on various research fellowships and/or learned about public journalism through scholarly journals (e.g. Australia, Columbia and Finland). Secondly, several of the non-U.S. projects have been financially supported by American governmental and non-governmental institutions (e.g. Argentina and Swaziland).

It is difficult, however, to classify which international democracy supporting journalistic practices could be regarded as “public journalism”. Those approaches that have been more directly inspired by public journalism literature and U.S. based consultation naturally bear more resemblance to the American models than the more “home-grown” approaches. Indeed, journal-

ists around the globe regularly initiate community supporting activities, on major and modest scales, to vivify civic involvement in the public and political spheres. In some cases, the U.S. concept of public journalism has merely crystallized under a new label of the community-oriented reporting functions that have been evident for decades, for example, in the Third World (see e.g. Romano 2010).

Perhaps then, it is not as important whether international approaches count as public journalism. Instead it is more interesting to study the culturally specific forms of public journalism shaped by varying professional cultures. In addition, combining the traditions of other democracy supporting journalism practices – such as development and peace journalism or public radio initiatives (see Carpentier 2004; Romano 2010b) – with the public journalism frame might also add to our understanding of the significance of public journalism as a globally relevant practice. Thus, in terms of developing public journalism further as a globally relevant theory, more international research would be welcomed.

Public journalism in Finland

My research will for its part answer the need for non-U.S. interpretations of public journalism by discussing the Finnish case. Heikkilä and Kunelius (2003, 181–184) report that when public journalism was first discussed by Finnish media scholars in the mid 1990s, the idea was considered as a decisively American phenomenon with strong links to American culture, and therefore, its significance to Finnish journalism was first regarded as minor. Similarly, some international authors have expressed that public journalism is a product of the American social and political context and therefore ill-adaptable to other cultures (Richards 2000, cited in Haas 2003, 98).

The first question in the Finnish context thus was: how valid is it to "borrow" American ideas and plant them into another societal context? However, Heikkilä and Kunelius (2003, 199) pose a counter-argument that in the social sciences, we need to feed ourselves with others' ideas in order to avoid clinging onto our own immediate contextual restrictions. With the translation of public journalism from the American context to the Nordic one, the question cannot be posed as "does the idea of public journalism work elsewhere?" Rather, we can ask, "what aspects of the Nordic culture do the idea and its application reveal?" For example Haas (2003, 97–98) points out that in Denmark the application of public journalism could be best interpreted as part of the broader trend of populism in the Danish news media.

The idea of public journalism arrived in Finland during an economic depression that aroused concerns about the erosion of the traditionally strong readership and subscriber base of newspapers. People were giving up their long term subscriptions in order cut household costs (Hujanen 2007). So, in Finland, as well as in the U.S., public journalism had its links to the struggle

for economic survival of the news industry even if the situation in Finland was not as critical due to the more rigid financing structure of the industry based on subscriptions and not on single copy sales. Still, the early public journalism approach in Finland was characterized by normative–economic justification (Wahl-Jorgensen 2002) due to its promise to both enhance citizenship and boost readership.

The context of declining voting turnouts and political passiveness created an environment that called out for democracy supporting approaches. Moreover, the paradigmatic and discursive change of the Finnish national culture from strong state-oriented “planned economy” to a more liberal “competitive economy” was taking place at the same time (Alasuutari 1996, 104–121). The role of journalism in such changing conditions of democracy and economy was a motivating question for academics, and the first doubtful remarks about public journalism were set aside. Media researchers set up the first joint projects with newsrooms in the 1990s.

The initial reactions of journalists towards public journalism were more reserved than those of the researchers. Public journalism was first regarded as “do-it-yourself journalism” that undermined the authority of traditional quality journalism. However, at that stage, the professional culture had already become more interested in critically evaluating its own practices, such as detachment from everyday life and dependency on institutional sources (see e.g. Heikkilä 2001), so in the particular professional and economic context, the university led projects started to appear as reasonable for the practitioners.

The first Finnish public journalism initiatives were practical experimentation, in which the whole process itself was seen as a research result. The projects mainly utilized the idea of forming discussions groups and using these citizen groups as a journalistic resource (Kunelius & Heikkilä 2003). The experiences from the early experiments showed that the citizens proved to be both productive and competent participants, thus pointing out that they had been an underused source for journalism. The projects also indicated the need to develop new genres of writing: story formats and generic innovations to grant more participatory roles for ordinary people in journalistic products (Heikkilä & Kunelius 1999; Heikkilä 2001). Thereafter, some of the methods of public journalism gained ground and news organizations started to develop their own citizen-oriented approaches (Kunelius & Heikkilä 2003).

To date, the active participation of the researcher community and the general reader-oriented trend have kept the term “public journalism” in the vocabulary of practicing journalists. The ideas of public journalism continue to reach the journalistic field also via the programs of journalism schools. Newsrooms have kept developing their own reader-based practices that have drifted further from the democratic core of public journalism. Current Finnish public journalism therefore can be described as a mainstream activity that

does not aim to drastically challenge existing structures. Instead, it has been assumed as part of the current journalistic culture.

Due to this situation and the lack of a "radical" movement phase in Finland, this study concentrates on the diffusion of ideas and integration of public journalism practices with existing practices and newsroom cultures. The study of concrete practices and journalists' interpretations of them illustrate how Finnish journalists have made sense of the core ideas of public journalism and domesticated the practice. Thus, even if the approaches in all of the studied newsrooms (HS, AL and IH) are not always labelled as "public journalism", I consider it grounded to adhere to the public journalism framework, which in all of the cases has acted as an initial starting point.

Furthermore, maintaining the connection to the theoretical dimension of public journalism is important because in the Finnish context, the actual concept of "public journalism" (in Finnish *"kansalaisjournalismi"*) has suffered from inflation due to the trend of grouping new forms of web-based, participatory publishing under the same concept (see e.g. Bavard & Ruusunoksa 2007). This research may aid in clarifying the conceptual fuzziness and in theorizing the web 2.0 practises and their relation to public journalism.

2.3. The current state and future of public journalism

At present, public journalism as a movement has dispersed. However, I argue that its practices and its theory remain relevant. In the following, I will first discuss the status and future of public journalism practice, then situate public journalism in relation to its new relatives on the web, and lastly, address the recent theoretical discussion on public journalism.

Public journalism practices still viable

As a journalistic practice, the current state of public journalism is not as stagnant as it is in terms of movement. According to a recent survey of U.S. journalists, Weaver et al (2007) concluded that public journalism has "survived its infancy". The survey results indicate that there has been a significant change in the appeal of what they have labelled as the "populist mobilizer" function of journalism. This function first emerged in a 1992 survey, and in a 2002 survey, the concept seems to have established a foothold with a larger group than before. Weaver et al link the "populist mobilizer" function to public journalism because of the items that, as a cluster, create the function: letting people express their views, developing cultural interests, motivating people to get involved, pointing to possible solutions and setting the political agenda (Weaver et al 2007, 143–145).

However, among scholars there is a slight disagreement about the extent to which public journalism practices are still being applied in American newsrooms. Disagreement is created due to the fact that there have been no studies

or surveys *especially* on public journalism practices during recent years. In a moment of frustration, Leonard Witt, the head of Public Journalism Network, has expressed his view on the reasons for the shortcomings in the diffusion of public journalism practices:

*Civic journalists have been addressing this issue [of excluding certain parts of the public from newspaper coverage] for 15 years – and looking for ways to solve this and other newsroom shortcomings. Did we succeed? Not yet, in large part because the journalists are so damn stubborn, change resistant and arrogant.*¹¹

Even in a state of frustration, Witt seems to think (“not yet”) that the practices can still be developed and ideas delivered further. For Friedland (2003), public journalism practices are still somewhat applied in the press, and the national news media, such as *The New York Times*, have been influenced by public journalism (see also Rosen 2007). However, at the moment, public journalism practices are subordinate to dominant news routines and are thus not a defining organizational principle in newsrooms. Some routines have persisted, but at the same time, they have become mingled with another set of practices which arise from different terrains, for instance audience strategies or more general and technologically oriented interactivity approaches.

The practice of public journalism has faced the inertia of the newspaper industry; the rise of a more competitive corporate culture and the pressures for effectiveness. This is significant for public journalism, which has been dependent on corporate co-operation from the start, since its practices have also required new ways of allocating resources and assessing priorities. The future of public journalism practice is thus dependent on the delicate relation between corporate strategies and leadership that would be favourable to public journalism ideas. Noting that both of these elements are becoming rarer, Friedland (2003) places the future of public journalism on the shoulders of citizens. He sees the potential of public journalism in its connections to independent civic initiatives, which would in turn keep news organizations encouraged to involve citizens in the journalistic process and in public problem-solving. This way public journalism would evolve into citizen-driven journalism. Web as a site for independent civic network building is one possible base for this kind of innovation but it is fragmented in nature (Friedland 2003, 119–135; Sirianni & Friedland 2001). So, all of these conditions led Friedland to predict in 2003 that public journalism practices at their best would “hold steady”: he saw that further development and innovation of new practices faced plenty of challenges.

¹¹ PressThink, http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/05/08/rutt_evo.html

On a slightly more positive note, Haas (2007) argues that the practices of public journalism are still part of newspapers' journalistic repertoire more widely. He too recognizes the "half-step approach" of the current practices meaning that public journalism has transformed to mean "thinner" things to people practicing it: it is now possible to apply some of the elements of public journalism without applying the whole philosophy or the original motivation behind it. Yet he seems to be positive about developing the practices and emphasizes the fact that many journalism schools have taken public journalism into their curricula (referring to a study that found that public journalism is a topic of discussion or taught as a journalistic practice in 84% of the study programs in the USA) (Haas 2007, 139–141). Friedland (2003) agrees with this, but considers that after graduation it is hard for students to find work places where they could learn the routines and practices of public journalism in the everyday working context.

However, Haas notes that the Public Journalism Network is alive and well and continues to report on more "classic" public journalism practices. Haas identifies three sets of practices, which have been developed further since the turn of the millennium: identification of relevant civic topics, reporting on those topics from a civic angle and soliciting citizen feedback through regular activities. He maintains that important steps have been taken in creating a public sphere *about* journalism; i.e. journalistic practices, choices and decisions are discussed more openly and critically than before (Haas 2007, 139–140). Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the ideas of transparency and professional public reflexivity are important for public journalism so that the underlying principles and related practices are assessed in public. Another reason why Haas' view is more positive than Friedland's might be due to the fact that he has taken into account the international dimension of public journalism, as current non-U.S. public journalism practices seem to be more dynamic than those in the USA. For example Hamada (2010, 100) points out that public journalism inspired practices and tools are being used by Japanese journalists despite the fading of strongest enthusiasm.

Beckman (2003, 175–186) suggests that the requirements for the future of public journalism are: commitment and resources from management (see also Friedland 2003, who underlines the importance of organizational structure), commitment of the reporters and the willingness of the public to engage in the process and/or read public journalism style coverage. The practical problems are often, however, related to lack of resources. Beckman offers three scenarios in which public journalism would be achievable in the future: (1) prioritisation of civic coverage in relation to conventional coverage, (2) application for existing external funds or creation of an independent fund to support public journalism or (3) practicing public journalism as part of public service broadcasting. From the offered scenarios, prioritization and public

service seem more plausible, since the movement-ethos and the foundation funding connected to it have lost momentum.

Wahl-Jorgensen (2007, 164) combines public journalism with a traditional category of journalism: letters to the editor. She maintains that the letters tradition could be seen as a public journalism practice insofar as journalists would proactively encourage letter writing and seek out voices of the community. Letters-to-the-editor section could function as a natural ground to further public journalism aims, such as diversity and connectedness. Wahl-Jorgensen is, however, somewhat sceptical of this kind of development due to the financial troubles and the efficiency maximizing premise of the whole industry.

Carpentier (2004) introduces numerous current Belgian participatory and democracy supporting forms of journalism. These practices include co-operational writing processes with open school students; local television station's "participatory editorial team" composed of journalists and unemployed people; in-depth reportage of schools with intensive collaboration with pupils; and a way to incorporate local civic organizations in the production process of local television and a system of co-presentation of a professional anchor and a citizen participant. Carpentier does not identify these practices with any particular normative theory or journalistic movement, but wishes to respect their variation and potential in terms of practice. Thus, he does not frame the Belgian experiments as public journalism, even if there are evident connections. With this approach, he is able to illustrate the variety and broadness of the arsenal available for participatory and collaborative practices that are being developed.

The point of agreement among recent scholars (Haas 2007; Friedland 2003; Nip 2006; Paulussen et al 2007; Beckman 2003) is that new technologies, and especially the internet, hold an interesting but complicated potential for the future of public journalism practice. Rosen – as the most eminent public journalism scholar – has continued to develop and experiment on the web with his blog PressThink and especially with collaborative newsgathering or networked reporting methods.¹² Even if the practices of collaborative newsgathering and public journalism have plenty of connections with each other, Rosen has not explicitly addressed the question as to what is the relationship between web-based collaborative practices and public journalism.

12 For example, "Assignment Zero" was an experiment in 2007 in which professional journalists from *Wired* magazine collaborated with readers in publishing a story about the spread of peer production (Rosen 2007). The starting point for Rosen and the *Wired* staff was that readers knew more about peer production than they and therefore they used reader collaboration for investigating the issue. Press Think: <http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/>.

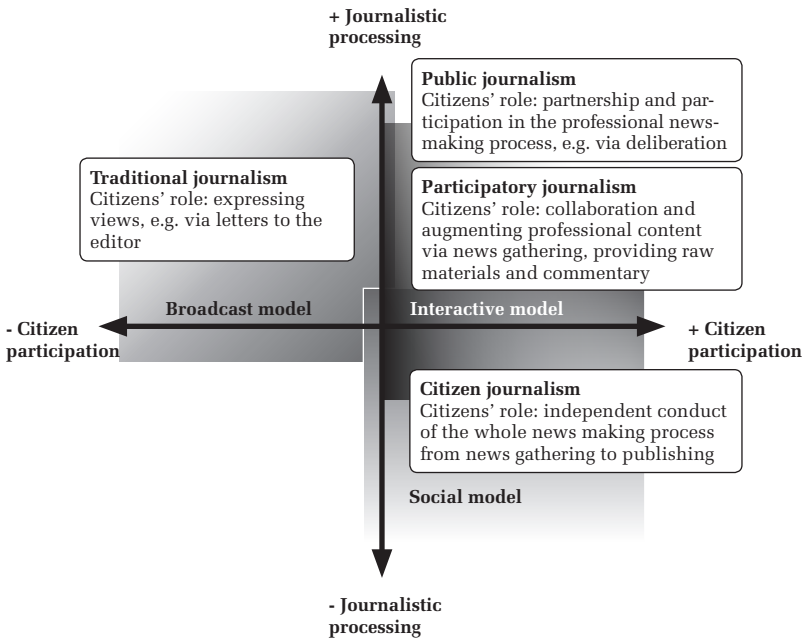


Figure 2: Traditional, public, participatory and citizen journalism.

Situating public journalism practice with new web-based practices

The internet era requires us to situate public journalism practice in relation to its relatives on the web. Web-based journalistic activities have been referred to as participatory, citizen, alternative, amateur, grass roots, personal, folk and networked journalism (Haas 2007, 146; Rosen 2007). The conceptual terrain is messy and the concepts mean something slightly different for different authors. In this context, I wish to clarify the picture from my perspective and refer to two concepts: *participatory* and *citizen journalism*, and briefly situate these in relation to *traditional journalism* and *public journalism* (cf. Nip 2006). In Figure 2, I have situated the four "journalisms" into a field that features dimensions of citizen participation and journalistic processing. Into this field, I have also placed three media models, which represent the dominant paradigms of understanding how the news media connect with people. The models are: broadcast, interactive and social models of media (see Figure 2).¹³

¹³ These models are adapted and refined for this purpose according to Bowman and Willis (2005, 10).

The broadcast model is described as an authoritative realm, in which media content is delivered to a large audience. The so-called traditional news journalism can be thus situated in the broadcast model, in which there is typically little citizen participation, but the degree of journalistic processing and professional control of the raw materials is high. In other words, traditional news journalism addresses the public in a one-directional (one-to-many) manner (Bowman & Willis 2005, Rosen 2006). In traditional newspaper journalism, the role of the citizen is not usually very active, but for example, the letters-to-the-editor sections or call-in shows provide the possibility for citizens to express their views in a controlled manner.

I have placed public journalism in the upper right corner of the field within the framework of the interactive media model. In this model, the citizens play a slightly more active role than in the broadcast model. The keyword of this model is "interaction", which implies that the flow of information is multi-directional (one-to-many *and* many-to-many); citizens' participation and their communication with journalists increase and citizens become recognized as active commentators, even co-creators. However, in this model, there still is a high degree of journalistic processing involved, and in public journalism especially, there remains a clear element of professional control. In public journalism, citizen contributions – ideally – mean partnerships: citizens *together with journalists* formulate the agenda; and citizens' discussions and ideas are used as journalistic resources. This citizen input is, thereafter, handled and refined into journalistic texts by professional journalists.

Participatory journalism can be defined as the involvement of amateurs in the production of news in the framework of professional online media (see e.g. Domingo et al 2008). It is a form of online journalism that aims to turn readers into participants in the production of journalism.¹⁴ Its ideal basis does not stem from deliberative democracy as clearly as in the case of public journalism. Participatory journalism draws from various sources, such as community media theory (Carpentier 2003, 426) and its central ideal is that in the online world, it is possible to democratize the media field and have new "balance of power" (Rosen 2006; Carpentier 2003, 427) between professionals and citizens by active user involvement. Jarvis (2006) – despite suggesting the term "networked journalism" – underlines that participatory journalism should be understood as a "collaborative venture".

Like public journalism, participatory journalism fits with the framework of the interactive media model, but it is situated a bit lower in the figure. In participatory journalism, citizen participation is even more crucial than in public journalism in which citizens' input can sometimes merely act as the starting point of coverage. Even if there is professional processing and control

¹⁴ I depart here from Bowman & Willis (2003), whose definition of participatory journalism includes independent civic activity and no journalistic intervention.

involved in participatory journalism, it is milder than in public journalism because in some cases citizens may be able to publish their online comments without prior filtering. Yet editing and traditional gate keeping are still features in participatory journalism (Hermida & Thurman 2008; Domingo et al 2008, 333).

The activity of citizens in participatory journalism is typically something like sending in audience comments or audience content (e.g. digital photos or videos, small pieces of news and personal stories) (Wardle & Williams 2010, 788). Many mainstream news organizations apply the methods of participatory journalism in particular sections of their news products, for instance "Have your say" sections, readers' photos or citizen correspondent sections. In this context, the term "user-generated content" (UGC) is often applied (Nip 2006, 217–218; Heinonen 2008, 123; for a critical view, see Wardle & Williams 2010). "Crowd sourcing" or "collaborative news gathering" are further manifestations of participatory journalism in a more collective and collaborative manner (Rosen 2007, Ryfe & Mesning 2007); in these approaches, the public as a collective is used as the provider of accumulating information. Typical conditions for advanced participatory journalism are local communities in which citizens contribute to the specific information needs of the community in the framework of a larger media site (Nip 2006; Haas 2007; Bowman & Willis 2005; Schaffer 2007).¹⁵ In sum, citizens' contributions in participatory journalism can best be characterized as collaboration with journalists by providing ideas or raw materials for publication, which typically augment professional journalists' reporting (Heinonen 2008, 122).

Citizen journalism is sometimes used synonymously with participatory journalism, but it is useful to make a distinction between the two (Nip 2006; cf. Bowman & Willis 2003). In this work, I refer to citizen journalism as a form of online activity in which gathering content, visioning and publishing the news product is done by citizens, i.e. individuals, collectives or non-profit organizations usually without paid staff or journalism professionals (Nip 2006, 218). Citizen journalism takes place in the frame of the social media model, which encourages many-to-many thinking; citizens communicate with each other as peers. The model implies that the media are becoming more social; they have various (professional and amateur) participants who serve different roles in the creation, consumption, sharing and transformation of media content (cf. Bowman & Willis 2005, 10). There is no traditional publisher control or professional editing involved in citizen journalism. Citizen journalism sites depend for their vitality on citizens sharing their thoughts, observations and experiences, and they are typical in "hyper local" settings (Schaf-

15 An example of participatory journalism is the *Colombia Missourian's* MyMissourian site, <http://mymissourian.com/>.

fer 2007). Ideals of citizen journalism include independence, creation, open conversation and media democracy.¹⁶

An interesting question related to citizen journalism is whether it should be called "journalism" at all. To qualify as journalism, the produced content needs to include some original interviewing, footage, reporting or analysis of events or issues (Nip 2006, 218). However, sometimes personal blogs or social networking sites, like Facebook and MySpace, are also named as citizen journalism, which makes the terrain more complex. The web enables numerous ways to create social networks and web-based communities but they may have no connection to news production or journalism. Therefore, Schaffer (2007) uses the term "citizen media" rather than "citizen journalism", as citizens rarely contribute reported articles that could be seen as journalism. All in all, citizen media is developing quickly, and its forms are fluid.

Only rarely do the above depicted forms of journalism exist in their "pure" forms.¹⁷ The practices of participatory and citizen journalism are intermingled with traditional and public journalism styles, and the borders of the media models are flexible. So, what is the relationship between the new web-based forms of journalism and public journalism – do they address the same aims? Previously, I defined public journalism as a form of professional journalism that intentionally aims to foster participation, public deliberation, diversity and connectedness; it considers readers as citizens and actors in the public sphere, and justifies itself from the perspective of democracy.

If we compare participatory and citizen journalism to this definition, we can indentify some underlying differences. Firstly, according to my definition, citizen journalism is situated outside professional journalism, an important difference, which sets different standards for evaluation. Participatory journalism in turn, is a form of professional journalism and therefore bears more resemblance to public journalism, for example, in its way to challenge professionals to consider citizen input as a natural part of journalistic practice and redefine the role of the journalist as a collaborator rather than as information provider.

However, the new web-based practices do not possess or require a similar explicit democratic attitude as public journalism. Even if participatory and citizen journalism aim to increase citizen activity and participation in the public sphere, they do not have the normative-theoretical underpinning which public journalism has, for example, underlining the importance of deliberation. Participatory and citizen journalism provide *sites* for on-line dis-

16 See for example Center for Citizen Media, a non-profit initiative established by Dan Gillmor, <http://citmedia.org/blog/about/>.

17 Also note that the lower left quadrant is left empty in this figure only due to clarity and our focus on journalism. In reality this terrain is occupied by non-journalistic one-way communication, like publication of official notices, commercial PR, advertisement etc.

cussion and dialogue, but the main goal of participatory journalism, for example, is to engage the readers in the process of news making and therefore explicit encouragement to deliberation is rare. Citizen journalism allows people the time and space to formulate their views and publish them freely, but deliberation as an explicit ideal does not lie at the heart of citizen journalism, either. Instead, free and accessible publication appears as an important ideal in citizen journalism. All in all, the ethos of citizen activation is absent from citizen journalism.

New technology has made it easier for citizens to publish their views and have their voice heard.¹⁸ Therefore, these new forms have the potential to increase diversity of sources and angles from which issues are discussed. Citizen journalism, especially in the form of citizens' blogs, has created high hopes in relation to widening public access and affecting the agenda of the mainstream media. However, Haas (2007, 146) points out that there is very little evidence that blogs have been the original initiators of the news which they have often been credited for, and there is only little evidence of original and independent news reporting in citizens' blogs. Therefore, even if citizen journalism is not professional journalism, it seems to remain in tight connection with it.

Connectedness as an aim deals with linking the journalist with citizens as well as citizens with public life. Participatory journalism is indeed a way of connecting the news media with the public via the means of new media. Moreover, building up citizen–public life connections and networks may be furthered by various web services. When it comes to citizen journalism, the issue of connectedness on the journalist–citizen axis is irrelevant to begin with because such journalism is done independently of professional journalists. However, citizen journalism has the potential to connect citizens more closely with each other, i.e. to build up horizontal connections, web communities and instant feedback loops (Gillmor 2004, 237).

Participatory and citizen journalism do not link themselves as tightly with democratic ideals or public sphere theories as public journalism. Therefore, the term "citizen" is also often replaced by the term "user" or "producer" in the context of participatory and citizen journalism. These terms naturally imply activity beyond the mere receiving of information, but they seem to refer to activity in the field of the media, not necessarily in the broader social context. The way in which for example Gillmor (2004, 38) refers to democracy, is more about *democratizing* the media system than about the functioning of the democratic system. It is also typical to refer to *media democracy* (e.g. Wardle

18 This is true of course only to the extent that is allowed by the "digital divide": even if blog publishing, taking digital photos and using the email has become increasingly affordable, accessible and user-friendly, not everyone has equal access to or skills with the same technology (Williams & Wahl-Jorgensen 2009). Thus, questions of capability, resources and motivations remain.

& Williams 2010, 790) in the context of participatory journalism. Neither of the new forms thus has as rigid underlying normative philosophy to connect citizens to public life and democracy as public journalism has – they deal more with citizen *involvement in the publishing process* than civic *involvement in the democratic process*.

However, participatory and citizen journalism have created high hopes for democratizing news journalism (cf. Bowman & Willis 2005; Gillmor 2004), and I certainly think they will provide fruitful opportunities for developing journalistic coverage by widening the scope of public discussion, making reader participation more accessible and providing more feedback for journalists. But new technology has also shifted the focus away from the democratic basis of citizen participation. Newspapers' willingness to use UGC is also linked with pragmatic and cost-conscious news gathering decisions, or a part of the larger convergence-driven trend of seeing members of the audience as co-creators of media content, be it in the context of advertisement, computer games or journalism (St. John III 2007; Deuze 2007, 76).

Altogether, the new "journalisms" seem to contribute to the same participatory aims as public journalism – especially the aims of reader activity and citizen-journalist connections – with the help of online techniques. However, they do still have some of the same problems as public journalism. For example: how to maintain the diversity of voices and sources if it is usually just the most active ones that take part (Williams & Wahl-Jorgensen 2009)? Moreover, the aim of finding connections rather than divisions between people, ideas and values remains a challenge in all of the three journalisms. This is especially the case in citizen journalism, in which sites tend to be built around lifestyles or like-mindedness. But could connectedness be built *between* citizen journalism sites, sub-groups and alternative publics?

Due to the similarities as well as the differences between the three "journalisms", I argue that there is still room for a public journalism approach. In addition, acknowledging the fact that journalistic methods are in essence forms of *social practice*, public journalism with its roots in the "old media" and participatory and citizen journalism practices in the "new media" can and should be studied in a parallel manner. Certain studies on participatory journalism emphasize that participatory relationships with the audience that are now highlighted by the new technology have always existed (Wardle & Williams 2010, 792) and that the new online practices can be seen as continuation of the earlier participatory practices (e.g. Carpentier 2003). In the current situation, it is important to take into account newspaper and broadcast practices in order to avoid *over-emphasizing* the democratic potential of the new media and in order to show that many journalistic practices are applicable regardless of technological standards (Carpentier 2004).

The future of public journalism practice should not be considered as something separate from recent developments. On the contrary, the web with

its interactive, networked and community-building potential is indeed an interesting partner and platform for the continuing development of public journalism. There is also an emerging wave of research on participatory journalism and UGC and the forms it takes in the mainstream media. This line of research would benefit from taking into consideration the experience that has accumulated in the process of practicing and discussing public journalism for the past 20 years, as well as having a closer look at public journalism as a theoretical construction.

Because of the obvious links, the theorization of participatory and citizen journalism could benefit from public journalism theory: there could be fruitful ways to combine the ideals of democratization and deliberation. So, on top of discussing the current state of public journalism practice, we need to also approach the state of public journalism as a media theory. This is done next by discussing the latest theoretical perspectives on public journalism.

The need for a philosophy of public journalism

As a philosophy or a theoretical framework, public journalism is currently facing a very interesting phase. As discussed, this is connected to recent practical developments in ICT and academic studies on citizen and participatory journalism (e.g. Gillmor 2004, Paulussen et al 2007, Hermida & Thurman 2007). The rise of experimental as well as theoretical work on web-based journalistic forms has also re-ignited and contributed to the discussion on public journalism.

In addition, the inadequate philosophical construction of public journalism still has continued to concern researchers (e.g. Glasser & Lee 2002). The incoherence of public journalism theory and the lack of research-based and valid evaluations of its effects (Meyer 1995; Glasser 2000; Massey & Haas 2002) have been a central element in the criticism of public journalism.¹⁹ The critics claim that public journalism scholars were never able to build a real theory or philosophy for the movement; therefore, without a guiding philosophy, public journalism advocates cannot soundly criticize the existing practices or develop new ones (Haas & Steiner 2003, 34; Haas & Steiner 2006, 239–24). The claims of public journalism are criticized for not being part of a “logically developed, historically formed, and internally coherent theory or philosophy of journalism”, and thus, its propositions are merely organized around general themes (Glasser & Lee 2002, 206). The advocates of the idea have been further criticized for formulating the ideas of public journalism in a narrative and story-like fashion or building the foundation on examples rather than on solid concepts and principles (Woodstock 2002, 45; Glasser 2000, 683).

19 Public journalism has faced a lot of criticism, and the philosophic-theoretical theme is only one among many (e.g. Ahva 2003). I will address the criticism in Chapter 3.2., where I discuss the relationship of public journalism and classical professionalism.

The latest attempt to construct a guiding "public philosophy" for public journalism is by Tanni Haas (2007, Chapter 2). Haas starts with the notion that public journalism still lacks a distinctive set of foundational and theoretically based principles that clearly explicate what the "publicness" of public journalism is (Haas 2007, 25). Without a public philosophy it is difficult to defend and improve the idea and avoid the co-option of public journalism with purely commercial interests. The latter notion implies that with clear and publicly formulated guiding principles it becomes easier to clarify the goals of public journalism as opposed to market research based goals or populism. I would add that "public philosophy" is also needed in order to further clarify the relationship between public journalism and the newer forms of journalism discussed earlier, as well as to guide the assessment and planning of possible future projects. Haas' guiding principles include the formulated understanding of (1) the public, (2) public discourse and (3) the public sphere.²⁰

(1) Haas argues that the concept of *the public* in public journalism should be embedded in a deliberative democratic framework instead of either a liberal or communitarian one as was argued by early critiques (see e.g. Black 1997). With this formulation Haas wishes to avoid the narrow understanding of the communitarian view, as in seeing the community and its common good as the starting point for public journalism. On the other hand, he wants to avoid the emphasis on individualism that the liberal framework brings to the forefront. Haas' understanding of the public relies on Habermas's notion of the "*deliberating public*", which does not assume that citizens share an overarching vision of the common good, nor do they merely share common membership as individuals, but rather that citizens share a commitment to engage in common deliberation. In my view, this notion comes close to what Dewey (1954) meant by the public.²¹ For him, publics are formed when people realize that there is an issue which affects them and requires attention. All of the people affected by the issue thus form the public because they are included in the sphere of its influence. This does not mean that the public would necessarily agree upon the common good, even if reaching a solution is the aim. It is thus the realization of the common issue and its (varying) effects that create the public. Therefore, the public is (and should be) committed to common deliberation in order to evaluate the situation and reach solutions. The solution does not necessarily have to be "the common good"; it can be a compromise, a decision that does less harm to the members of the public.

20 Haas has two additional dimensions in the public philosophy: agenda setting power and the goals of deliberation, but I see the three principles named here as the core philosophical points he makes about publicness. Moreover, I will come back to the question of goals of deliberation in Chapter 4, where I will discuss public sphere theories in more detail.

21 Haas does not, however, make references to Dewey in the context of his first philosophical principle of public journalism.

I see Haas' formulation of the "deliberating public" as an attempt to keep public journalism outside the disputes of communitarian and liberal democratic theories and as an indication to connect the philosophical basis more closely to deliberative democratic theory. I appreciate the fact that Haas links public journalism's idea of the public to a broader philosophical basis and Habermas's theory on the public sphere. Haas' interpretation is welcome in its clear cut way of avoiding the (sometimes narrowly used) idea of *community* as a basis of public journalism, because it may restrict our understanding of public journalism and reduce the "publicness" of the idea.

(2) Secondly, Haas formulates the philosophical dimension of *public discourse*. He discusses the forms of public discourse that journalists should endorse in public journalism. Haas (2007, 34) argues that by relying on existing public journalism literature, it is unclear whether journalists should conceive public discourse in dialogical or in deliberative terms, and what the proper relationship between the two is (see also Glasser & Craft 1997, 30–31; Glasser & Lee 2002). Haas states that public journalism ought to commit to the idea of public discourse as being a combination of dialogue and deliberation; i.e. the desired public discourse in public journalism would entail a dialectic relationship between the two forms (Haas 2007, 35). However, he points out that deliberation should not rule out the possibility of conflicting interests and standpoints. On the contrary, conflicting standpoints and social inequalities should be made explicit in the reasoning process (Haas 2007, 37).

What is problematic with Haas' interpretation, though, is that he seems to refer to dialogue as a form of face-to-face discourse and deliberation mainly as something that is presented in and fostered by news stories, i.e. as mass mediated deliberation (Haas 2007, 35; 47; see also Thompson 1995 256–258). I would rather see that both forms are possible in real-life as well as in mediated contexts. Furthermore, I would place dialogue and deliberation on a continuum, which has summary of different views on the one end and dialogue and deliberation on the other, the more demanding end of the continuum.

On these premises, I agree with the view that public journalism theory ideally considers public discourse both as dialogic *and* deliberative and that real life interaction as well as news texts may feature dialogic as well as deliberative elements. However, public journalism emphasizes the deliberative end of the continuum, in order to recognize the importance of accumulation of information and assimilation of differing views, not merely the exchange of viewpoints. But as public journalism is also a practical and not merely a theoretical idea, it should take into account that commitment to deliberation is demanding. For example, representing deliberation in a news article requires representing a complex reasoning process that often includes value judgements. Moreover, it requires more than a summary or a list of different opin-

ions; it entails representing opposing views and acknowledging responses to these (Rosen 1997, cited in Nip 2006, 215).

(3) Haas' third philosophical principle deals with the understanding of the *public sphere*. This issue is closely related to the first principle, the conception of the public. Haas turns to Nancy Fraser's critique on Habermas. Fraser (1992) views the public sphere as composed of multiple and alternative discursive spaces (counter-publics) instead of an overarching and unified public sphere. Such a public sphere would make it possible for alternative publics to emerge and give them opportunities to invent and circulate counter-discourse and formulate oppositional interpretations to be expressed and brought in a dialectic relationship with the dominant public discourse. This requires journalism to bridge together the various discursive spaces with each other by promoting public problem-solving that would effectively include different civic groups, experts, and the institutions of civil society (Haas 2007, 41–46; see also Haas & Steiner 2001). Haas argues that by understanding the public sphere as a combination of multiple publics, it would better bring forth the role of journalism as a connecting agent (Haas 2007, 40). More importantly, I think Haas shows here that public journalism theory would benefit from joining up with the broader theoretical discussion on public sphere theory.

The work on public journalism's philosophical core is a welcomed approach to clarify the underlying principles. To oversimplify somewhat, there seems to be two camps in relation to public journalism as a philosophy. One, represented here by Haas (2007) but accompanied by various other scholars, ties public journalism more closely to its normative tradition and aims to clarify its underlying and guiding principles with the help of the public sphere theories. This view wishes to deepen the ties to deliberative democracy and see what could be learnt from going back to the underlying principles already apparent in the early literature.

The other, thereafter, (e.g. Carpentier 2004; 2007; Romano 2010b) seems to take a broader theoretical standing point and position public journalism and its philosophy in a large framework of democracy-supporting participation that would not adhere too rigidly to the original U.S.-based ideal of public journalism. Romano (2010c) wishes to continue to underline the broad idea of deliberation as an overarching and connecting aim behind various democracy supporting journalism ventures, whereas Carpentier (2004; 2007) takes a step away from the notion of deliberative democracy and the legacy of Habermas's public sphere theory. The aim for both authors, however, is to find out the connective points between public journalism and other reform movements, for example peace, development, human interest, participatory and citizen journalism. However, this aspect of framing public journalism theory is not as developed as the discussion that arises from the American public journalism tradition.

So, as a philosophy, public journalism is currently being considered at

least from two slightly different angles. I appreciate the attempts to clarify the core of public journalism philosophy from the public sphere perspective. That kind of conceptual work is needed in order to develop public journalism as a theoretical entity; and for providing a conceptual means with which public journalism practice is assessed (Haas 2007, 26). Then again, a more flexible theoretical approach could also fruitfully bring together the fields of public, participatory and citizen journalism that often seem to evade each other in theoretical terms. Moreover, I regard attempts to move public journalism beyond the concepts of community and locality as especially fruitful.

The central question seems to be, then: how can we combine these standpoints in order to avoid forgetting the philosophical roots of public journalism on the one hand, and isolating it in its own realm, on the other? If we are to tackle the developing journalistic culture and its various participatory practices in an inclusive manner, we need a theoretical approach that combines conceptual clarity and flexibility. By being conceptually sound, but open for new inputs, public journalism theory could also offer resources to studies outside the immediacy of public journalism itself.

3.

Professionalism

The idea of this chapter is to move from the theoretical notions of public journalism to the more general principles of journalism. I aim to open up what "journalism" in the context of public journalism means. Because public journalism is activity that takes place in the context of professional journalism, the point of departure in this chapter is professionalism. I will discuss what professionalism means in journalism, and what kind of relationship there is between public journalism and traditional professionalism. This overview is needed in order to underline the idea that public journalism is something that poses a challenge to the traditional professional self-understanding of journalists. Public journalism can be seen as a way to re-understand some of the assumptions or convictions that journalism refers to in its search for news; assumptions about politics, power, people, public opinion and democracy (Rosen 1999b, 27). For example, traditional ethical codes of the profession are almost exclusively about *separation*, and not about *connection*, a key dimension in public journalism (Rosen 1997, 80–81). Therefore, in order to understand the double challenge – for journalism theory and practice – of public journalism, we need to take a closer look at the literature on professionalism and the professionalization of journalism.

I will first discuss the notion of professionalism on its own and then link it to journalism and discuss the way in which journalism as an occupation became professionalized. Then, in the second section, I will examine the core dimensions of professional journalism, which constitute the "ideological" core of the profession and discuss the relationship between professionalism and public journalism in this light. I will then widen the scope and address the questions of professionalism in terms of professional culture and newsroom culture. Finally, I will offer a short description of the current tendencies in the professional culture of Finnish journalists.

3.1. Professionalism and journalism

In an everyday context, professionalism as a notion raises connotations to ideas such as skills, norms, belonging and formality. But in an academic context, professionalism is understood more widely. In the following, I will map the way in which professionalism is understood. This discussion will then lead us to consider how professionalism has been historically formed in journalism.

Layers of understanding professionalism

There are at least four layers of understanding professionalism. The first layer relates to the terms "profession" and "professional" as a reference to someone who is earning a living from practicing certain skills. This practice is connected to the idea of belonging to a professional group, and in this sense, professional is understood as an expert, the opposite of amateur or amateurish. It is seen as a *skill-based social status*, and individuals are regarded as representatives of their profession (cf. Splichal & Sparks 1994, 34–36; see also Taylor & Willis 1999, 123). Evetts (2003, 398–399) accounts for the growing trend in several occupational fields to frame their occupation as professional: the armed forces, accountants, teachers, social workers and so on. In this trend, professionalism is foremost being defined in relation to correct conduct and practice; i.e. work is considered professional, if the work is carried out technically correct.

The second layer of conceiving professionalism can be referred to as a *set of ideological values and norms* related to a particular occupation. The early use of the term profession was applied especially to the professions of law, the church and medicine, which all entailed specific value systems to endorse their practices. In this meaning, professionalism is thus often discussed in relation to practices and values within the profession; i.e. professionalism is seen as a common reference to an occupational group held together by a common value system (cf. Splichal & Sparks 1994, 35; Taylor & Willis 1999, 123–124). Therefore, this layer of understanding sees professionalism as an ideology which holds the profession coherent (Deuze 2005; cf. Evetts 2003).

The third view can be named as a *classical sociological understanding of professionalism*, which is based on sociological research about the differentiation of occupations. During the 1950s–60s, there was a debate on the relationship between occupations and professions: what is it that makes some occupations professions and others not (Evetts 2006, 134). At that point a "professional orientation index" was developed in order to specify a pattern according to which professionalism was defined. The index included criteria, such as service, intellect, autonomy, responsibility, altruism and a sense of ethics (Splichal & Sparks 1994, 38). Classical sociological understanding, then, saw professionalism as a set of standards that translated into fixed boundaries.

The fourth angle from which professionalism can be considered is discursive. It refers to the way in which *professionalism is constructed in the shared discourse of the members of the occupation*. For example, Soloski (1997, 139) maintains that it is unproductive to debate over the distinctions between professions and non-professions, but considers it more fruitful to examine what it means for certain groups to define themselves as professions. Aldridge & Evetts (2003, 548–9) note that discursive understanding of professionalism is a mechanism, which helps the members of a profession to relate to and understand the changes that are taking place in the professions. In other words, discursive understanding of professionalism entails more reflexivity than the other three layers.

Professionalism meets journalism

If we consider *professionalism in terms of journalism*, we do not merely ask what kind of competences journalists are hired for, or what kind of social cohesion and status do they have in relation to the rest of society, or whether they master their tasks according to the norms of the occupation (Splichal & Sparks 1994, 34–36). We need to consider all of the layers in a flexible manner and remember to think about why it is significant for journalists to see themselves as professionals and refer to professional ideology, and through what kind of discourse this boundary work is done.

In the scholarly literature on journalism and professionalism, one usually finds a discussion on the last three layers: ideological, sociological and discursive. Firstly, for example, Deuze (2005) uses the notion of a "shared occupational ideology of news workers" when he refers to professionalism in journalism. Deuze wishes to use the term ideology instead of professionalism because he sees that it is an appropriate denominator for a collection of values, strategies and formal guidelines that affect journalistic work. On the one hand, ideology – in its meaning as a system of ideas – is recognized by and shared with the majority of journalists, and thus acts as the "cultural cement" of professional journalism. On the other hand, ideology – in its critical meaning as a struggle over dominance – is also an appropriate term to denote the value basis of journalistic professionalism because it underlines the issues of power in professionalism (Soloski 1997; Hanitzsch 2007). Professionalism acts as a means of control: it is easier to guide and control a journalist who acts according to the common professional norms than a journalist who does not. Thus, professionalism also acts as a personalized self-regulation system (Soloski 1997). Critics claim that it is the very existence of such an ideologically seen value basis that may allow the profession to think on behalf of the journalists (Rosen 1999b, 173).

Secondly, journalism is quite often considered in sociological terms. It is often noted that journalism cannot be considered a profession in the "classical" sense, like doctors of medicine or practitioners of law, because there is

no objective set of criteria against which journalists' professionalism could be measured against, neither is there a "monopoly" of certain competences (Evetts 2003, 402). True professions are said to require a certain level of specific skill, autonomy, service orientation, licensing, testing, professional organization, rules for practice or a distinct curriculum. Journalists do not meet these requirements: there is no permit or license required for practicing journalism, nor is there a set of universal regulatory codes. Thus, according to this strict classification, journalism is not a profession (Zelizer 2004, 33). However, the boundary work raised by this discussion can be considered important for journalism studies. For example, Örnebring (2008) calls for updated sociological research on professionalism that would bring recent findings from the sociology of work and occupations back into the study of journalism. He considers this to be essential in understanding the changes that are taking place within journalism at the start of the 21st century.

Lastly, there is a discursive professional ethos in the self-understanding and practice of journalists. There is a tendency for journalists (likewise many other knowledge based occupations, see Evetts 2003) to see themselves as professional actors, to make sense of their work in terms of their shared values. According to this view, journalistic professionalism is constructed in discursive practices, and this discourse is embedded in the ideological basis. As a result, a body of journalists have a common understanding of how a professional journalist ought to act (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 93). Örnebring (2008, applying the ideas of Evetts 2003) suggests that two professional discourses are of special relevance in studying journalism in its current context: occupational professionalism and organizational professionalism. Occupational professionalism refers to the discourse that arises from within the group itself, for example, to retain autonomy and the right to define professional standards; and organizational professionalism refers to the ways in which the news organizations define professionalism as compliance with employers' goals and methods. He argues that is important to study the *negotiation* of these two competing discourses in the context of news work.

In my research, all four layers of understanding professionalism become relevant in an interesting way. Firstly, public journalism and other participatory methods are essentially about the relationship between professionals and amateurs, and it touches upon the questions of the status of the journalism profession and its relation to the rest of society. Secondly, public journalism deals with the values and norms related to the journalistic profession. What are the central values that should define journalism practice: is it objective reporting or active participation – and do journalists share a common view on these? And thirdly, even if the institutional limits of professions and non-professions are not the core questions in public journalism, my approach deals with some of the core dimensions that were already considered meaningful for the early sociological studies on professionalism at large (e.g. pub-

lic service and autonomy). Lastly, the introduction of public journalism can be seen as a discursive struggle over the definition of professional journalism.

Even if all of the layers are interesting and relevant in the context of public journalism, I will mainly focus on the ideological and discursive because I consider journalistic professionalism from the viewpoint of *self-understanding*. I will look at the ways in which Finnish newspaper reporters and editors view professionalism and its values from the angle of public journalism; how do they narrate public journalism as part (or not as part) of their professionalism? But before moving to the professional norms and journalists' interpretations of them, we need to understand how professionalism has become an important frame of reference to journalists, to see how journalism has professionalized.

Professionalization process of journalism

In the modernization process, work life developed into a system in which particular crafts and occupations were controlled by distinct experts. Professionalization of communication took place as the societal division of labour increased and the structures of society became complex, resulting in a situation where face-to-face communication between differentiated groups of people was difficult. (See Carey 1969; 23–29; Kunelius 1998, 210; Hallin & Mancini 2004.) In journalism, the process of professionalization took different patterns and occurred at different time frames in western societies, but a general line of development can be distinguished. It has been suggested that journalism professionalized through revolutionary, public, partial, commercial, autonomous and corporate phases (Carey 2007; see also Nerone & Barnhurst 2003).²²

The *revolutionary stage* refers to the radical nature that early journalism held in its ability to publicize and circulate material that became connected to de-legitimation of the ruling authority (Carey 2007). Nerone & Barnhurst (2003, 437) point out that in the revolutionary context the newspaper's content was expected to advocate. The *public stage*, thereafter, refers to the phase in which journalism was to act as an arena of public opinion: journalism reflected and animated public discussion and kept a public record (Carey 2007). During these initial stages, it was largely the printer-publisher of the paper who was responsible for gathering the information and editing the textual materials to be published, and therefore there were no specialized editors or reporters yet (Nerone & Barnhurst 2003, 436).

22 Carey (2007) also suggests that universal congruity is represented by the consecutive appearance of these phases in varying cultures, but his order of the stages (revolutionary, public, commercial, partial and autonomous) is a bit different than what I have presented above. Due to the lack of further development of thought from Carey, I have developed his ideas in the light of Nerone & Barnhurst (2003) even if they deal particularly with the press in the USA. Nerone's and Barnhurst's stages include revolutionary, public, partial, commercial/industrial, professional and corporate.

In Finland, the era from the 1770s until the 1860s can be characterized as the revolutionary-public phase: the early newspapers kept a public record and aimed at educating the citizenry. The ideals of the first publishers were characterized by the enlightenment, promoting freedom of expression and nationalism in the form of advancing the role of the Finnish language in public debate (during an era of domination by the Swedish language on the one hand, and Russian rule, on the other). The societal context did not yet favour deeper professionalization due to the existence of censorship and a small reading public (Pietilä 2008, 120–131).

According to Nerone and Barnhurst (2003, 437–438) the *partial stage* in professionalization of journalism can be interpreted against the growth of mass politics and the tendency to see journalism as a political organ with abilities to affect public opinion. Party enthusiasts, often without training in printing, took over as editors of party papers, composing editorials and selecting material from other newspapers to promote a party line.

In Finland, the newspaper field started to truly develop after the 1860s. At that stage, political orientation was more important than occupational orientation, and this period can be characterized as the Finnish partial phase. The newspapers were almost exclusively party newspapers, and in the smaller political newspapers at least, the roles of editors and reporters remained less differentiated. However, also during this period, the formalized training of journalists was established in 1925. The training was based on the social sciences, and the education was slowly developed to include more academically oriented studies. (See Pietilä 2008, 139–145.)

The *commercial stage*, in turn, refers to the formation of the early commercial press that served the needs of the growing economy. Newspapers started to figure themselves as general merchandisers of news. At this stage, the work of the reporters started to become differentiated from that of the editors and business managers (Nerone & Barnhurst 2003). The newspapers had to rely on professionals trained in the gathering and assembly of the raw materials, as this raw material was now fact instead of opinion (Örnebring 2007).

In Finland the partial phase gradually transformed into the commercial phase after the Second World War. The transition period was characterized by the growing prosperity and importance of local and regional newspapers (Salonkangas 1999, 85–87; Tommila 2001). The idea of journalism as a mediator or transmitter of information started to emerge as a central professional element (Pietilä 2008, 148–153). Moreover, Pietilä (2008, 160) connects the emergence of objectivity to the fall of the party press system. When newspapers gave up their political affiliations they ceased to address any specific segments of society. Instead they adhered to the notion of objective reporting in their attempt to address the audience in a broad and inclusive manner. The commercial phase in Finland was also characterized and/or balanced by the ethos of public service. It was exemplified by the strong role of the public

broadcasting company *YLE* that aimed at offering accurate, balanced and factual information to citizens. Journalism was thus seen as the main organ for transmitting the information produced by the administrative and legislative authorities (see also Hallin & Mancini 2004).

The *autonomous stage* refers to the development in which journalism came to be seen as a central actor in democracy and a distinct profession in its own right (Carey 2007). Professional norms and codes, especially the ideal of objective reporting were consolidated during the autonomous phase. The formal organization of the profession, together with the will to differentiate the occupation from publicists and PR personnel, assisted in the spreading of codes of conduct that underlined objectivity (Schudson 2001, 162–164). University based training and the emergence of professional associations characterize the autonomous stage: journalists' attempts to monopolize the knowledge related to journalism practice and to gain control over their work were strong (Nygren 2008, 154).

In Finland, the idea of the press as the "fourth estate" started to gain ground in the 1980s marking the start of the autonomous phase. The adoption of routines of journalism, which emphasized a more analytical–critical stance towards the state, politics and administrative expertise, became stronger in the Finnish media. This was exemplified by the increasing sense of distance from the state and politicians among Finnish journalists (e.g. Aula 1991, 90–111) even if the welfare state ideology and its connection to the idea of consensus in decision making remained to affect and to "neutralize" the nature of political public discussion.

The *corporate phase* of professionalism has followed the autonomous. With this notion, the increased importance of media corporations as frames of journalistic conduct is emphasized. Nerone and Barnhurst (2003, 439) suggest that the ideals of the modern newspaper and the ideologies of the professional reporter required a consensus and a level of monopoly that no longer exist today, and that, on the political economic level, the autonomy of newspapers from other forms of media and businesses has eroded. Nygren (2008, 157–160) even proposes that the journalism profession has started to de-professionalize: there is less clarity about what is journalistic work and who is entitled to practice it; the formal organizations and journalists' unions have become weaker and the altruistic public service ethos is constantly contested by the market logic. The corporate phase is thus characterized by the weakening of the professional logic altogether.

In Finland, the corporate stage is marked, for example, by the emergence of a strengthened professional discourse at the end of the 1990s that openly recognized the nature of the newspaper as a commodity (Heikkilä 2001, 132). Currently, the features of corporate professionalism – such as increased discussion about commercial goals, entertainment and target group mentality (Jyrkiäinen 2008, 56–58) – are strengthening, even if the older, public service

professional ethos is still part of the conceptual repertoire with which journalists and editors make sense of their profession in Finland (Ylönen 2008).

All in all, professionalization of journalism can be understood via this broadly sketched process. By regarding the evolution of the profession, we can better understand that the central values and norms of today's journalism are based on this historical legacy.

3.2. Core dimensions of professional journalism

When the essence of professionalism in journalism is being defined in the research literature, a set of values and norms emerge. On the one hand, professional values are handled normatively, as in values and norms that professional journalists *ought to* embrace. On the other hand, professional values are handled as conceptions and attitudes that journalists themselves have about their profession, i.e. *as a self-understanding* of the professionals (see McQuail 2006, 47). I will try to separate these two views – the normative and the practical – as I will next go through the central dimensions of professionalism in journalism. It is important to make this explicit, since the function of professionalism, in one sense, is to create a workable balance between the normative and the practical sides of journalism and because normative values become meaningful in the practical contexts. In the following, I will conceptualize six key dimensions of professionalism, which I will present as relations between journalism and (1) power, (2) public, (3) knowledge, (4) time, (5) journalism itself and (6) democracy. Finally, I will consider how these dimensions are related to public journalism.

Relation to power: Autonomy

The first dimension of journalistic professionalism deals with power relations. In the literature, this dimension is often conceptualized as journalistic autonomy. Autonomy refers to freedom of action or to the latitude that is available for professionals in their decision-making. Autonomy thus embraces the idea of self-direction (McDevitt 2003, 156). In journalism, autonomy refers to the status that journalism has in its relation to other institutions and actors in society, and these relationships are always about defining the balance of power.

From a normative perspective, the idea of autonomy is based on the premise that journalism should remain as an independent public actor so that it can deliver balanced and uncorrupted information to citizens (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001). In this sense, autonomy is relevant in two ways: as the structural autonomy of the newsroom and as the individual autonomy of the journalist. In journalism research, the terrain has thus been divided into studies about the power relations of journalism and other institutional actors and

studies about power relations within the newsroom (Löfgren-Nilsson 1999, 12).

Structural autonomy refers to the latitude that journalism has in relation to the state, the market or certain elite sources; i.e. the actors who are involved in and have an interest in journalistic content. News organizations want to maintain their self-determination as extensively as possible, and this is grounded in the democratic-informative role of journalism and the underlying idea of press freedom. The terrain of autonomy is thus large and quite vaguely defined (e.g. McDevitt 2003). The assumption of autonomy is strong, but exactly *how* autonomous journalism should be and *from what* exactly should autonomy be achieved are more seldom discussed as normative questions (Schudson 2005, 214–215). This leads to the situation where autonomy can also be seen in terms of economic motives: news organizations are not willing to define journalism or journalistic autonomy very specifically because it might prevent the actual practice of journalism, for instance, in the fear of facing law appeals and hence economic losses (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001, 18–19). Thus, the vague definition of autonomy in itself can be seen as a means of achieving autonomy.

Individual autonomy deals with issues within the newsroom. These include the degree of independence and the power that individual reporters have in their jobs. Individual autonomy can be related to intra-organizational power relations or to relationships between an individual journalist and her sources (Löfgren-Nilsson 1999; McDevitt 2003, 158–159).

Autonomy on the practical-experiential level is a complicated matter. It is difficult to grasp the relationship between structural and individual autonomy. In other words, does autonomy at the institutional level translate into autonomy at the individual level, and vice versa? Weaver et al (2007) report that American reporters' perceived that individual autonomy in the newsroom has been in decline from the 1980s onwards. They suggest that the lessening of individual autonomy can have implications for the freedom and diversity of news coverage: "If reporters are not able to cover stories they think are important, this can negatively impact the ability of journalists to provide a full and fair account of the day's events – something that is necessary for an informed citizenry in a democracy" (Weaver et al 2007, 243). However, McQuail (2006, 52) summarizes the relationship between structural and individual autonomy by stating that professional journalism traditionally enjoys autonomy (i.e. press freedom) on a larger scale, but journalists do (and can) not necessarily practice personal freedom of expression in their work. Following this, structural autonomy is not the sum of individual autonomy within the newsroom, given the routinized and ever more centralized nature of news work.

The strong position of autonomy as a journalistic value can result from the conflict that is created by the normative and the practical. That is, in prac-

tice, journalistic work is restricted by various limitations, such as resources and compulsory and routine-like work practices. Therefore, the need to promote autonomy as a core value becomes very central as a normative journalistic value (McDevitt 2003). Bourdieu (2005, 45) notes that even if autonomy within a field can lead to an "egoistic" closing-in of specific interests of the people engaged in the field, this closure can also be the condition of freedom with respect to immediate demands. So, by appealing to the value of autonomy, the journalistic profession tries to maintain its legitimacy and relevance in the mediatized and commercialized social environment.

Another practical implication of autonomy is what Hanitzsch (2007) calls power distance. According to him, different newsrooms and even individual journalists can be placed on a continuum, in which one end represents newsrooms that relate to power systems in a watchdog-like and adversarial manner, and the other end represents cultures that relate to power structures conformingly or even loyally. Thus, the classical role of the watchdog is a central notion within the autonomy frame: journalism cannot practice its watchdog role if it cannot retain its independence in relation to other institutional actors. The mainstream of western professional culture can be placed on the adversarial end of the continuum, but in practice, there are also newsrooms and cultures which do not hold the adversarial power relation in such a fundamental way. Hanitzsch (2007, 374) notes that the "loyal" end of the power distance continuum may work explicitly or implicitly. In the latter case, journalism does not challenge the legitimacy of the existing power structures and hence tends to lend support to established authority and norms, although not in a straightforward manner.

Relation to public: Public service

The second dimension of journalistic professionalism is the one of journalism and its public. If there is no public, there is no journalism, and that is why this dimension is central as a professional element. As Carey (2007, 12) puts it:

The value of journalism was [historically] predicated on the existence of the public and not the reverse. For that reason, the 'public' is the god term of journalism, the final term, the term without which nothing counts, and journalists justify their actions, defend the craft, plead their case in terms of public's right to know, their role as the representative of the public, and their capacity to speak both to and for the public.

For Rosen (1999b, 1) journalism expects the individual practitioner and the practice as a whole to serve the general welfare of the public through acts that amount to public service. In journalism – as a contrast to other professions –

the ethos of public service receives even more significance because journalism is not based on expert skills or abilities that would be possible for trained journalists exclusively (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 36–37).

The public service ideal of journalism also refers to themes of responsibility and rights: journalism is seen to be responsible for its doings for the public (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001; Kunelius 1998, 214). The journalism–public relationship is also sometimes discussed in reference to the idea of “people’s right to know” or the necessity of journalism to build a relationship of trust with its public. Therefore, trustworthiness and credibility of journalism are professional values embedded in the larger dimension of public service. In other words, trust has to be established between journalism and its public for the public service to function.

In the more practical setting, references to public service orientation can be seen in the ways that journalists talk about their audience, or the ways in which they think their work affects the public (Deuze 2005, 447). Even if the public service orientation is often hidden under the discourse of press freedom (i.e. autonomy), the dimensions are intrinsically two sides of the same coin (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001, 19–20; 36–37). However, public service is currently facing challenges as the public is increasingly being regarded as consumers. For instance, the emergence of “service journalism”, which provides help and guidance or focuses on everyday life issues and needs, tends to position the public as individual consumers rather than citizens (Hanitzsch 2007, 374–375). So, the overarching trend of consumerism poses a challenge to the public service orientation and thus requires ever more reflection by professionals.

At the moment, public service orientation and especially its subcategories of trust and credibility are being contested also by the emergence of citizen journalism and other web-based alternative media, which in the eyes of the public seem to be appearing as more trustworthy and credible than mainstream professional journalism. According to a survey of British adults, only 29 percent agreed with a statement that professional journalism is more trustworthy than material sent in by the public, while the rest did not have an opinion or they disagreed (Williams & Wahl-Jorgensen 2009).

All in all, journalists’ self-understanding is closely tied to their relationship with the public: the public is their reason for being, their audience, their sources and their allies (Heinonen 2008, 20). However, the public can also be seen as the adversary. This is indicated for example by the way in which editors talk about their public in relation to the letters-to-the-editors sections (Wahl-Jorgensen 2007). Even if journalists believe in the normative ideals of public discussion carried out in the pages, there are discourses of “insanity” or “craziness” in relation to people who write letters. So, contacts from regular people are often considered a waste of time, since their views appear as crazy or irrelevant. In this sense, the public also becomes an adversary for

journalists, who try to maintain or protect the professionally defined idea of offering a space for rational public discussion (Wahl-Jorgensen 2007, 2–4).

Relation to knowledge: Objectivity

The next value of professional journalism deals with knowledge and truth, and therefore, it opens up an epistemological dimension. Even with the complex nature of epistemology, it is common to say that journalism's "obligation is to the truth" (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001, 37; Hanitzsch 2007, 375). Therefore, the ideas of knowledge and the ways of knowing in professional journalism centre on the value of objectivity. As noted, the notion of objectivity as a central professional value has its roots in the historical development of professions. Separation of fact and value in professions was initiated by the rise of modern science and realism in the late 19th century: the realist idea implied that there is a world of facts that journalists can select from without drawing on their own values and biases and that these facts are then presented neutrally in order to present a reality "out there" (Friedland 2003, 14).

Professional behaviour in many occupational fields was derived from this ideal, and in journalism, this resulted in the situation which was formulated by Walter Lippmann in the 1920s: in the world of clashing values, ideas and facts, there cannot be genuine objectivity, so the way in which journalists work should be objective in nature. Ironically, then, the modern ideal of objectivity rests on the notion that we can never truly know the facts and reality as such (Friedland 2003, 14–15; Schudson 2001). Objectivity, especially in North American journalism, became technically defined as a method designed for a world in which even facts could not be trusted (Schudson 1978, 122). Thus, objectivity did not rely on the idea that journalists themselves could be objective, or make objective observations, but they should strive for objectivity in the *process* of news making, in checking the facts and in their style of writing (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001, 13; 72). In other words, the professional reporter would record facts with care and fidelity and arrange them so that they would comment themselves (Nerone & Barnhurst 2003, 439).

As a normative value, objectivity affects the professional culture even if the problematic nature of the possibility of objective reporting has been acknowledged. Again, this value acts as a means to legitimize the work of journalists and underline the credibility or meaningfulness of the whole profession (Deuze 2005, 448; Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001). The notion of objectivity is linked to the idea of journalism as being an autonomous and adversarial watchdog of power in the name of the public, who has the right to know, to receive unbiased and truthful information.

In practice, the value of objectivity translates into goals labelled as unbiased reporting, neutrality, fairness and balance. Through these labels the underlying – and problematic – idea of objectivity frames journalistic practice and self-understanding (McQuail 2006, 52). This is the case in most west-

ern cultures, especially in the USA. According to Tuchman's (1972) classical study, journalists make use of various strategic procedures in order to be able to claim objectivity. These routines include balancing a story with two or more views, or the use of direct quotes to indicate that the reporter is not the one making truth claims. For Tuchman, objectivity appears as a collection of work routines that journalists have become used to and are willing to apply, for example, in order to avoid criticism that would be targeted directly at them. In this sense, objective reporting amounts to a practice where personal values are bracketed from the reporting. If journalists would refrain from acting according to the routines of objective reporting, they would be more vulnerable to criticism, which in turn would limit the latitude of journalists (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 112).

Objectivity is not, however, the only manifestation of the epistemological dimension in practice. Some newsrooms, such as politically committed ones, reject the idea of objective reporting and take a more assertive and active role (Hanitzsch 2007). For example, Schudson (2001) points out that objectivity as a norm never has been as central in Europe than in the USA. There is also variation between different media systems: in some systems news media tend to be more bound to political or ideological groups, for example, the media systems that Hallin & Mancini (2004) label polarized-pluralist systems (e.g. Italy or Spain).

Relation to time: Immediacy

In scholarly research, time as a professional dimension is not often articulated. Deuze (2005), however, treats immediacy as a normative professional dimension. As journalism is essentially about producing the news in a timely fashion – i.e. news values are intimately related to newness and freshness – immediacy has become a normative dimension of professionalism (Deuze 2005).

Immediacy as a value thus arises from the practical realm of professionalism rather than from the normative. For researches, journalists' remarks on "lack of time" or "hurry" might appear as weak explanations or even excuses, but journalists seem to look at hurry and the quick pace of the work from the angle of professionalism. Timeliness and immediacy are closely connected to the temporality of news work and its deadlines (Schultz 2007, 197). Therefore, if we wish to appreciate the experiences of journalists and their shared discourse, we need to take time into account as a professional dimension.

According to a recent survey of American journalists, two dominant roles have remained central in the minds of journalists over the years: investigating government claims and getting information to the public quickly (Weaver et al 2007, 244). The idea of "hard news" demands speed, especially in the stage of gathering facts. Tuchman (1973, 118) notes that if a journalist does not work quickly, the news story will be obsolete before it can be distributed in

the day's newscast or in the newspaper tomorrow. In that sense, old news is "mere information" and therefore professionals are worried about timeliness.

Therefore, hurry is a professionally sound argument for practicing journalists (Juntunen 2009). For example, losing a scoop to competing news media or having to cite other media as sources appear as failures in the journalistic practice, and thus, getting the story first becomes a journalistic virtue. Moreover, the current environment of media competition on the web has increased the "need for speed" and constant updates, but as Juntunen notes, Finnish journalists seem willing to accept this pressure because it is not in contradiction with the already existing value basis.

Relation to self: Ethicality

The fifth dimension of professionalism is journalism's relation to itself. By this notion, I refer to the ways in which the journalistic profession takes a look inside and defines its own ethical values and boundaries. Even if professional ethics are based on more general moral values, they have ceased to be about values understood as common ideas about the good – instead, professional ethics are codes of behaviour or moral rules developed by the profession for itself for proper conduct of work (Friedland 2003, 10).

Normatively, the very existence of professional codes of ethics is seen as a sign of professionalism. Journalists and their professional organizations have formulated codes of ethics in many countries worldwide. The most common features of the codes are fairness, truthfulness, precision/accuracy, protection of sources and honouring privacy as well as the profession itself and its autonomy (Nordenstreng 1998). The dimension of ethics includes many of the other dimensions described here, and therefore, it acts as an umbrella concept in the normative and institutional sense. Nordenstreng (1998, 131) underlines the value of professional ethics as a means for self-reflection and sensitization. Indeed, the existence of ethical codes points out that reflexivity is an important element in professionalism altogether. In other words, it is not enough to have ethical codes that bind together the core dimensions of the profession, but it is also important that the profession has a reflexive relation to the dimensions.

On the practical level, the ethical codes often act as a means of striving for structural autonomy; to show the rest of society that the journalistic profession is capable of dealing with its own ethical problems. It is a way to avoid external regulation like laws, which might undermine the degree of autonomy. The development of professional self-regulatory systems is a structural way to legitimize the profession: a professional code of ethics acts as a tool for the journalists themselves but also as a sign of professionalism for the outside world (Heinonen 1995, 6–7). The ethical dimension is therefore also perhaps the most institutionalized of the dimensions.

Professional organizations of journalists are the main actors in the formu-

lation of ethical codes. Shared ethical norms are a crucial part of professional organization because they are defined and reflected horizontally, against the self-understanding of professional peers (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 35–36). In general terms, journalists seem to relate to ethical codes either as fixed principles or as a set of guidelines. In the latter case, the guidelines may be followed, but the contingency of journalistic dilemmas should always be considered in situational terms (Hanitzsch 2007; Juntunen 2009).

In newsrooms, journalism's ethical relation to itself is manifested as norms, which are operationalizations of the ethical values and fixed codes. Norms take the form of unwritten rules and habits, and they become apparent in practice and routine, and eventually they become tacit knowledge, which is mostly learnt through the process of professional socialization (Löfgren-Nilsson 1999, 20).

Relation to democracy: Information delivery and platform for debate

The last and the most fundamental dimension of professional journalism is the one of democracy and journalism. That is to say, that all of the above mentioned dimensions – autonomy, public service, objectivity, immediacy and ethicality – are justified in terms of democracy. Democracy is thus the most important dimension that legitimizes the role of journalism, and therefore, it is clearly a normative dimension to begin with. Carey (2007, 13) states that without the institutions or spirit of democracy, journalists are reduced to propagandists or entertainers. He sees that the historical origins of journalism are the same as the origins of democratic forms of governance.

As a normative professional notion, the relationship between journalism and democracy implies that the role of journalism is something special due to the public nature of the profession: the task of the journalist is to inform the public and maintain public discussion in order for democracy to work. Therefore, the democratic dimension often comes up when there is a need to do boundary work with other forms of communication (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001). However, as a normative notion – as central as it is – journalism's relationship to democracy is controversial since it seems to commit journalists to the defence of something, to compromise the valued non-partisanship. According to a strict definition then, journalists can be objective about everything but democracy (Carey 2007, 13).

The democratic dimension of professional journalism leads to two normative orientations; on the one hand, the democratic role of journalism is linked to information delivery, and on the other hand, journalism is seen as a participant in the democratic process by fostering public discussion and through that ultimately democracy (e.g. Kunelius 1998). The first orientation implies that journalists provide the public with information they need in order to be members of the democratic society they live in. The second, in turn, implies

that the press has also an obligation to provide a platform for diverse public debate and encourage citizen participation in politics (McNair 1999, 99).

On a practical level, the informative orientation has been dominant over the participatory since journalistic practice is closely linked to the practice of representative democracy and administration. The practical implications of this normative professional value thus become mainly apparent in political and societal journalism. Political reporting and coverage of national politics are highly regarded tasks among journalists themselves. Journalists need to inform citizens, explain the decisions made by the representative political system in an understandable manner, interpret the potential impacts of the decisions and inform the voters before elections (Strömbäck 2005). However, the broad societal de-politicization trend and the blurring of boundaries between news journalism and other media forms are affecting the practical implications of the informative democratic dimension. It has become increasingly difficult to define and ground the democratic dimension of journalism among these trends.

In turn, the public discussion orientation is manifested for example in the newspapers' letter pages or other media forums that elicit audience input and commentary. However, Wahl-Jorgensen (2007, 85) points out that newspaper editors refer to the letters sections in various, even conflicting, ways. The U.S. editors see the democratic potential of the letters section as inseparable from economic justifications: providing conditions for public discourse is intrinsically also customer service.

On the practical level, the democratic dimension can also be considered as a continuum of interventionism, which recognizes the varying interpretations that journalists and newsrooms have about democratic involvement of journalism. Some newsrooms support the idea of detached information delivery and reporting (i.e. gate keeping), and others may be located at the other end of the continuum, which includes journalists who wish to advance or advocate certain values. Interventionism thus refers to the way in which journalists relate themselves to the issues they are reporting; how far are they willing to participate or intervene with their actions in the issues. The foundation of active interventionism is the idea that journalists cannot remain as outsiders, but they should take part in and advocate change. In practice, active interventionism is usually apparent in the politically committed news organizations, where the relationship between journalism and democracy is more instrumental. (See Hanitzsch 2007; Hallin & Mancini 2004; Donsbach 2008.)

But as discussed earlier, in practice, the mainstream understanding of the journalism professionalism is situated in the non-interventionist framework. For example, American journalists see themselves as interpreters, information providers or watchdogs of the ones in power (Shoemaker & Reese 1996,

94). All of these roles fit well with the non-interventionist and informative understanding of the relationship between journalism and democracy.

The above summarized discussion indicates that journalism as a profession is based on a collection of shared values that arise from the central dimensions. It is important to note that these values gain meaning in the context of practical news work and that in different cultural contexts and points in time the significance of certain values may increase and others' decrease. The values are also closely interlinked with each other. Thus, the interpretations of the values are not fixed. The discussion also shows that public journalism, on the one hand, fits well with the professional framework, for example, with its ideal of public service and its general commitment to democracy. But on the other hand, public journalism challenges many of the core dimensions, or at least interprets the values in a broadened manner. In the following, I will move on to discuss the relationship between professionalism and public journalism in more detail.

Public journalism challenges classical professionalism

The link between professionalism and public journalism is twofold. Firstly, according to Zelizer (1999, 55), public journalism is linked to the old debate of whether journalism is a "proper" profession. Journalists lack an institutionalized route of professionalization with its required degrees and permissions. So, some view this lack of institutional professionalism as a partial reason for welcoming public journalism, which provides the idea of social responsibility as a central part of journalism's legitimacy to exist as a profession. Secondly – and this is a larger issue than the first – public journalism is situated in the position of a challenger in relation to traditional journalistic professionalism in its attempt to re-imagine the boundaries of objectivity and autonomy, for example.

The charged relationship between public journalism and traditional professionalism is best exemplified by the wave of criticism that public journalism has created among journalists and scholars. Indeed, criticism by journalists themselves deals with the challenge that public journalism poses for the traditional dimensions of professionalism. Academically oriented criticism deals with the same issues but adds a layer of theory to the debate. In fact, the lack of a coherent public journalism theory has been a central theme of academic criticism (Glasser 1999).

Most of the criticism towards public journalism is targeted at the role of the journalist and more specifically at questions of journalistic *autonomy* (e.g. McDevitt 2003). Carey (1999, 56–57) points out that the long tradition of journalism as the watchdog of power has assured journalism certain liberties and an independent position, and this freedom is now seen to be threatened by public journalism. For instance, Merrill et al (2001; also Merrill 1997) see the rise of public journalism as a threat to press freedom. They connect pub-

lic journalism to a broad paradigm shift starting in the mid 20th century, in which ideas such as community, balance and security are central. The authors maintain that this communitarian paradigm is competing with the liberal and individualistic paradigm, which forms the basis of press freedom. Merrill et al thus call public journalism "people's authoritarianism, where the people can determine good journalism better than journalists" (Merrill et al 2001, xii–xiv, 120).

Critics resent the idea of the reporter becoming too involved in community life thus not being able to retain her individual autonomy (e.g. Barney 1997). They view public journalism as giving up journalistic autonomy in the name of the public; to let the public, which might have inadequate knowledge on the matters, have a say on how the news agenda is formed and the news handled (Buckner & Gartner 1998, 229). The individual autonomy of journalists has also been considered to be under threat, as some journalists have felt they were forced by the organization to transform their routines. This point of criticism has arisen from practicing reporters and editors (Rosen 1999b).

Questions of structural autonomy have surfaced, too. Some critics view public journalism merely as a result of attempts to gain a profit by pandering to audiences or teaming up with external financiers, such as foundations. Therefore, the role of journalism as the advocate of the public good is questionable, and the autonomy of the profession is under threat. (See Buckner & Gartner 1998; Hardt 2000; Greenwald 2002.) Indeed, a broad question has been raised: where in the private–public continuum does public journalism actually fall? Is it a *public* endeavour for a *private* press (Glasser & Craft 1997, 32–34)? In other words, it has been questioned as to whether it is a healthy trend to attract customers by appealing to foster public life (Chaffee & McDewitt 1999, 179; Davis 2000, 686).

St. John (2007) argues that critics from the craft have viewed public journalism as propagandist. This has been due to the deeply rooted view on the harmfulness of persuasion and the inability to differentiate between "social action communication" and "propaganda". Public journalism in its quest to get citizens to act upon issues has thus appeared as a parallel phenomenon for other public communication campaigns, which have aimed at making people act upon certain guidelines. Therefore, public journalism has appeared as an anathema to many professional journalists who wanted to protect their work from any external influences (St. John 2007; see also Massey & Haas 2002).

Another distinctive area of criticism deals with *democracy*. The framework of representative and election-based democracy endures as a framework for practicing journalists, and therefore, the participatory and deliberative ideals of public journalism have caused criticism among journalists. On a theoretical level, criticism here is centred on the incoherence of democratic theory of public journalism. For instance, Glasser & Lee (2002, 217) criticize public journalism for not offering a particular theory of democracy. Follow-

ing this incoherency, some consider communitarian democracy as the main framework of public journalism (e.g. Barney 1997; Merrill 1997) and consider notions such as community, common good and consensus as a overly idealized basis for a journalistic movement (Merrill et al 2001). Critics claim that these ideal values tend to create inequality in practice, for instance, in terms of who gets to be included in and excluded from the community (see Haas 2007, 38).

Critics who place public journalism in the frameworks of deliberative democracy, believe that public journalism turns public discussion into professionally organized committee work or is too centred on actual face-to-face discussion, and thus leaves the benefits of deliberative experiments at the level of the small discussion groups or local communities, even if some of the most pressing current issues are global (Peters 1999; Pauly 1999; Schudson 1999). Some see that information transmission and dissemination have proven to be a more effective means of public communication than dialogue-based methods, especially when it comes to nation-wide political communication (Peters 1999, 113). Therefore, public journalists' willingness to take deliberation as a starting point and committing to the idea of participation that follows has been taken as a fundamentally questionable value from the viewpoint of professionalism.

It has also been questioned whether the ideal of deliberation has materialized at all in the discussions or on the pages. Haas (2007, Chapter 5) indicates that deliberation between citizens, officials and experts has been lacking even in some of the most prominent public journalism initiatives. According to him, there might have been dialogue within each group separately, but the views of citizens and experts have not been in a deliberative relation with each other. Critics have also pointed out that the way in which public journalism elevates citizens' voices and different views may give the impression of participation, but in reality, it merely offers dispersed information, which does not further activity (Merrill et al 2001, 118). Another central and very important area of criticism dealing with deliberation is the fact that even the deliberative measures cannot eliminate the inequalities that are deeply rooted in our society (Haas & Steiner 2001). In fact, sometimes they might even foster them. In other words, participating in deliberative meetings always requires a certain degree of cultural and social competence that is not evenly dispersed among citizens. Therefore, public journalism has been criticized for becoming a mouthpiece of the middle class, the educated or the affluent, because their competences might overshadow the marginal voices. (See Heikkilä & Kunelius 1997, 17.)

In addition to autonomy and democracy related criticism, critics believe that the notion of *objectivity* as a professional core value has been stretched by public journalism. Even if critics understand the problematic nature of objectivity as a journalistic value, the ethos of objective reporting remains

strong – and the practices and routines created by that ethos are considered to be undermined by public journalism. So, objectivity as a term is not so much discussed, but its relatives, truth or impartiality in particular, have been central elements in public journalism criticisms. According to critics, a journalist cannot be impartial and active at the same time (Merrill et al 2001, 122), and the communitarian or collective values underlying public journalism are in contradiction with the basic commitment to truth (Barney 1997, 79–80). Therefore, public journalism places journalists in a difficult position; on the one hand, journalists are asked to be active in producing public discussion, but on the other hand, they are asked to refrain from taking any sides in the discussion. Thus, staying impartial and applying the citizen's agenda is a problematic combination to begin with (Glasser 1999b, 9).

Public service, immediacy and *ethics* as professional dimensions have been mentioned less by critics of public journalism. For instance, of the six professional values introduced, public journalism seems to be less in contradiction with the idea of public service. However, public journalism definitely widens the understanding of *how* the public ought to be served. Therefore, criticism around this dimension is mostly about the problems related to widening the scope of public service to include participatory and activating measures. Immediacy as a professional value has also been handled in public journalism critiques. Critical remarks have been made about the idealized nature of public journalism, which does not take into account the time pressures or the immediate nature of news as topical pieces of information (Ahva 2003, 67). According to some, public journalism and the idea of the citizens' agenda cannot produce the kind of immediate, topical and newsworthy material that is the essence of journalism (Woodstock 2002). The professional value of ethicality is materialized as collections of norms of proper journalistic conduct. Public journalism has not been directly deemed as unethical journalistic conduct. Indeed, Steele (1997, 174) argues that public journalism operates at the same ethical and responsible standards as traditional journalism "if it is practiced with great skill and deep commitment, and if it is guided by leaders with high ethical standards". However, a few, and more focussed, ethically oriented questions have been raised. For instance, Glasser poses a question of what public journalists should do in a situation where citizens would start to demand public book burnings on the basis of deliberations that the news media itself organized (Glasser 1999b, 9).

Lastly – and departing from the set of core values – a very practically oriented and wide theme of criticism arising from the professional community deals with the *practices* of public journalism and the *content of the stories* produced according to public journalism ideals. At the initial stage, there was plenty of criticism among journalists towards the process in which public journalism was introduced to the newsroom. Some of the early projects were criticized for being too focused around a single leading figure (usually

the editor) in the newsroom, or the shift from traditional reporting to public journalism was considered too quick, leaving journalists puzzled (Zelizer 1999; Davis 2000; also Rosen 1999). Critics also claim that the stories have not offered anything new to readers, that they are too rational or conventional for the taste of today's readers, or that the journalistic innovation in terms of tools, story formats and styles of reporting has been weak (Davis 2000; Woodstock 2002).

Indeed, a very common theme in the early public journalism criticism by the profession was the rather incoherent claim that there was nothing new to the approach, and that public journalism was just good journalism and therefore something journalists had been doing all along (Woodstock 2002, 46–47; Ahva 2003, 66). In a sense then, this criticism accepted the premises of public journalism, but it regarded the movement as incompetent to differentiate itself from earlier journalistic reform practices by not offering new and concrete tools for truly democratizing the press, e.g. media accountability systems, publicly elected publishers or editors or the establishment of national news councils (Schudson 1999, 122). According to critics, public journalism was not able to offer anything "democratizing" at the level of political economy or the press system (Glasser & Lee 2002, 220).

The above summarized debate indicates two things. Firstly, it is a sign of the considerable impact that the public journalism movement and its ideals has had on the professional as well as academic discussion. Rosen (1999b) maintains that the movement peaked during a time of crisis of the American newspaper industry, and therefore, the soil was fertile for the professional debate. The academics, in turn, had been discussing the problem of the public and the relationship between journalism and democracy for a long time before public journalism was around, but the critical debate that the movement created among scholars is an indication of the experimental nature of public journalism. According to Rosen, there was plenty to debate and discuss, since some of the things that had been discussed on a conceptual level, were now applied in practice. Secondly, the wave of criticism points to the need for future research. Particularly interesting is the rich material that public journalism initiatives can provide for studying professional values in journalism and the professionals' understanding of the public sphere.

It is also appropriate to note that, naturally, not all the responses to public journalism from the profession were critical in nature. The first experiments, writings and lectures on public journalism addressed the journalists' from within the framework of professionalism. Had it not been the case, the movement – as it became to be – would not have been possible. Thus, public journalism touched upon the core dimensions of professionalism in a way that made it impossible to dismiss all of its claims as either too mundane or too extravagant.

Accordingly, public journalism invited professional reflexivity (see Ettema

& Glasser 1998 for the use of the term in the context of investigative journalism). Professional reflexivity in this research refers to journalists' capacity for self-awareness; their ability to recognize influences and changes in their environment, alter the course of their actions and re-negotiate their professional self-images as a result.

3.3. Professional culture and newsroom culture

The core dimensions of professionalism in journalism were introduced above as autonomy, public service, objectivity, immediacy, ethicality and information delivery/public debate. However, these values are not rigid, and they are being interpreted and applied differently in different contexts and newsroom cultures. In order to fully understand this contextual nature of professionalism, we need to consider two more notions: professional culture and newsroom culture.

Professional culture as a concept for journalism

Even if the notion of "culture" has been defined in various ways, Hollifield et al (2001, 94) note that the definitions share common elements: cultures are historically and socially formed, they have common practices, values and knowledge, which can also be shared with newcomers. Hanitzsch (2007) condenses the notion further: a culture always has shared ideas, practices and artefacts. Bearing this in mind, I will now consider the notion of professional culture of journalism.

The professional culture of journalism is situated within a larger cultural terrain, which I refer to as journalistic culture (see Figure 3). Journalistic culture is built around the notion, practices and products of journalism. The common denominator in this vast arena is the struggle over the definition of journalism; what is it and who can practice it. Currently there are more and more actors within the journalistic culture who are claiming to do journalistic work and produce journalistic stories: employed journalists, photographers, free-lancers and other media workers, as well as bloggers and amateur web users. Thus, the current status of journalistic culture is contested and blurred, and at the moment, journalistic culture does not have a shared understanding of what can be counted as proper journalistic practice. All the agents within the journalistic culture (amateurs as well as professionals) are trying to accumulate experience and authority – to build up their cultural capital – in order to strengthen their position inside the journalistic culture altogether or to cross the fluid barrier between journalistic culture and professional culture (cf. Bourdieu 2005).

This journalistic culture is thus the large context of which a distinct professional culture of journalism is a part of (see Figure 3). Professional culture is an inner level of journalistic culture with its shared beliefs and daily hab-

its based on the professional values (Rosen 1999b, 274). Professionalism as a system of core values can be seen as the basis (as well as a product) of the shared way of knowing and doing that is common to journalists working in democratic surroundings. In this field, the borders are more distinct and the shared ideas, practices, and artefacts are clearer. Professional culture is thus a set of ideas, practices and artefacts by which journalists – consciously and unconsciously – legitimize their role in society and render their work meaningful for themselves and others (cf. Hanitzsch 2007, 369). Professional culture provides journalists with support in their professional decisions if they need or wish to lean on something larger than their own or their organization's principals (Zelizer 2004).

There is a debate among scholars about the universal nature of professionalism. Surveys about global professional unity point to differing directions. Early cross-national surveys supported the view that, despite different national cultures and patterns of professional education and organizational forms, the stated professional values of journalists did not differ greatly from nation to nation (Schudson 1991, 150). Also a survey conducted in 1994 among first year journalism students pointed out that their attitudes were not connected to their national background, social status or economic structure (socialist, non-socialist) of their home country (Splichal & Sparks 1994, 179–181). The more recent surveys point out, however, that even if some general patterns and trends among journalists around the globe can be found there are still many differences. In fact, in a survey of 21 countries, there was more disagreement than agreement over the relative importance of journalistic roles – such as quick and accurate reporting, providing access for the public to express views and acting as a watchdog of the government – and hardly any evidence to support the idea of *universal* occupational standards (Weaver 1998, 456, 468, 480).²³

Some approaches thus adopt a stance according to which it is relevant and fruitful to study professional culture as a universal phenomenon; i.e. it is at least conceptually possible to construct a notion of universal professional culture based on the shared ideology. The variations of this culture can then be studied and analyzed at the levels of nationality, organizations or individuals; or at the levels of cognition, evaluation and performance (Hanitzsch 2007, Deuze 2005). Other approaches, however, underline the importance of seeing the fluidity and contextualized nature of professional culture to begin with. In this view, professional culture is seen as a form of an interpretative community (Zelizer 1997), and it does not necessarily emphasize the formali-

23 Hanitzsch (2007, 368) notes that these differing results are partly due to conceptual confusion. The neighbouring concepts like "journalism culture", "journalistic culture", "news culture" or "culture of news production" are used to serve multiple purposes: sometimes they are used to suggest an all-encompassing consensus among journalists, and sometimes they are used to capture the cultural diversity of journalistic values and practices.

ties and ideology of professionalism but underlines the importance of shared discourse. An interpretative community is a loosely formed community of people who share a similar view on interpretations of reality. Zelizer notes that journalists' common discourse is manifested in informal conversations, professional meetings and other occasions where journalists deal with the central questions on their work. Through this discourse journalistic work becomes understandable and relevant to all the members of the interpretative community. For instance, past events and journalistic practices are used as resources in practical decision in everyday work. This view on professional culture thus emphasizes the more experiential way in which journalists see themselves as journalists (Zelizer 1997, 27–28).

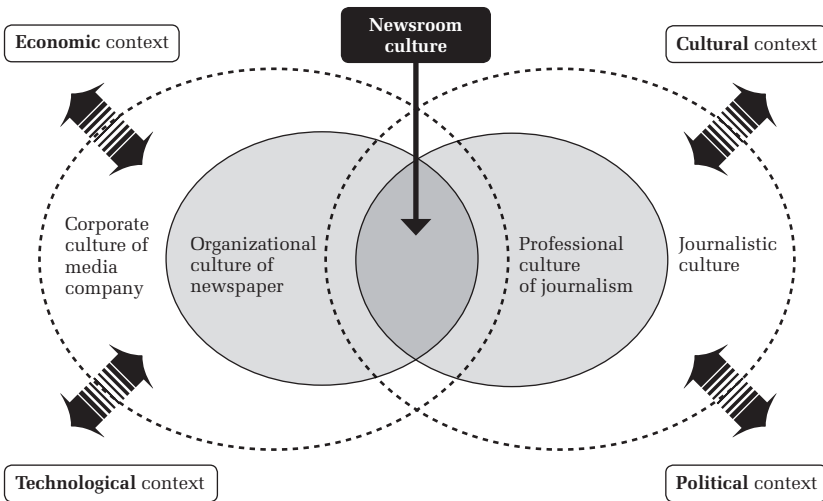


Figure 3: Relationship between journalistic, professional, corporate, organizational and newsroom cultures.

Even if the notion of an interpretative community as the basis of professional culture might be too loose a definition for some, there are numerous views that underline the role of context and experience in the formation of professional culture. For example, Ettema et al (1997, 33) argue that studying professional values cannot be separated from the routines that are produced by the organizational setting. Also Glasser (1992) criticizes the idea that professional journalism, especially its work practices, would be universal or congruent in nature. He evinces a view that professionalism and professional education particularly carry with them a trend towards unifying knowledge through bypassing differences in experience. Glasser thus criticises the idea

that professional techniques of journalists are considered as transnational or homogenous (Glasser 1992, 134–135).

In other words, professionalism may be produced in an ever more globalized setting, but the meanings of professionalism are produced in daily practice and at the local level. Moreover, the rapid change, fluidity and the widening of journalistic culture adds up to a situation where professional culture and its sites of interpretation become increasingly virtual or “liquid” as more journalistic work is done outside the newsrooms: in the virtual environment, private settings or through free-lance based work (Wahl-Jorgensen 2009, Deuze 2007). Wahl-Jorgensen (2009) points out that ethnographic journalism research with its method of field observation – and especially newsrooms as the quintessential site of observation – has added to the homogeneous understanding of professional culture. This is the case since a majority of ethnographic news production studies have centred on elite, national or metropolitan news organizations. The results drawn from this terrain have had a major influence on the way in which the professional culture of journalism has been understood.

In this research, I wish to adopt a combination of the above described approaches: the universalistic and the interpretative. I see the importance of recognizing common, underlying ideological underpinnings of professional journalism – if only on a conceptual level. This professional foundation could then be studied in ways that recognize the importance of shared (although contested) discourse, which does not merely build on ideology but also on lived experiences and practices. So, journalists as professionals are not merely or simply an interpretative community: as a group they are held together with shared rhetoric and discourse, but their work is also built on historically evolved and contextually operationalized professional norms.

Getting closer to practice: Newsroom culture

To be able to grasp the differing interpretations of professional culture in different work contexts, it is fruitful to consider a concept of newsroom culture. Professional values are being negotiated everyday in the editorial process of news production and in the decision-making it requires. In a sense then, professionalism is being renegotiated everyday from the viewpoint offered by the particular culture of the newsroom itself.

For example, Bantz (1997, 124–126) views newsrooms as cultures. For him, cultures are symbolic constructions, which are produced by their members. Cultures function reflexively: the members produce and rework the culture from within and at the same time the culture in itself affects the way in which its members view the culture. Newsroom cultures are distinct forms of organizational cultures (see Figure 3), which in turn are patterns of meaning produced and shared by past and present members of the organization. Organizational cultures define the limits of appropriate behaviour and activ-

ity that are related to the particular organization (Bantz 1997). The organizational culture of a newsroom is furthermore surrounded by a larger context of the whole media corporation, which is usually more decisively economic in nature (e.g. Ettema et al 1997, 33; Nerone & Barnhurst 2003). I refer to this terrain as the corporate culture. Newspapers today often make up merely a segment of larger corporations, which may be involved in many other areas of media industry (and sometimes also outside the media) besides newspaper publishing. This corporate culture affects newsrooms, for instance, in the form of a brand consciousness.

Hollifield et al (2001) suggest that in many occupational fields, there is a tension between the organizational culture and the professional culture, and therefore, they make a clear distinction between the two. The authors have noticed a trend, especially in highly competitive market environments, in which the tension becomes manifested as a struggle to keep up with the competitors on the one hand, and maintain the professional standards, on the other. Competition requires product development and efficiency, whereas professionalism requires maintaining professional practices and standards at the level to which the public has become used to and can trust. There is thus a constant struggle between these requirements, and either one can dominate the newsroom culture at different points of time (cf. Hollifield et al 2001, 92–93; also Örnebring 2008).

So, newsrooms are sites of conflict and constant negotiation. According to Bantz (1997), it is noteworthy that in newsrooms, the conflict between business and professional norms has become *accepted*. The juxtaposition has become normalized, and it might even become necessary for the functioning of news organizations. This implies that by combining professional norms with business norms there emerges a set of inconsistencies, which are not often properly processed, and therefore, this conflict of norms in itself becomes the new norm (Bantz 1997, 127). This conflict arises from the basic nature of journalism, i.e. being a form of business and a form of public service at the same time.

If we are to understand any newsroom culture we need to try to identify the vast cultural terrain of journalism (journalistic culture), the shared norms and values of the practicing journalists (professional culture) as well as the patterns of meaning in the media corporation in question (corporation culture) and the features that are typical for the news organization (organizational culture). It is in here, in the relationship between these four domains, that we can find the newsroom culture (see Figure 3). Due to the public nature of journalism, professional and organizational cultures are not the only influences that affect the formation of newsroom cultures. In addition, the historical legacy and the broad societal context have to be considered. This means that the economic, technological, socio-cultural and political setting in which the newsrooms exists shapes and affects the newsroom cultures.

Challenges to the Finnish professional culture

My study is situated in the framework of the Finnish professional culture of journalists. The professional culture is shaped by the historical process of professionalization that I described earlier. Currently, the professional culture in Finland is also being shaped by various commercial, technological, cultural and socio-political trends in society. Discussing the impact of these trends may help us to understand the context in which public journalism is interpreted by Finnish journalists. The challenges that the Finnish professional culture faces is here exemplified by a case study based on interviews with Finnish mid-level newspaper editors (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008; Ylönen 2008) as well as a recent survey of over 600 Finnish journalists (Jyrkiäinen 2008).

According to the editor interviews, the *economic* and the *technological* trends are the dominant driving forces of change at the moment: they set the agenda for re-negotiating journalism, its ideals and practices. In terms of economy, the tightening nature of media competition is recognized by editors, and they also see the need to adapt to the profit logic of the market. However, some of the demands created by increased economic competition are seen to be addressed with the help of technology: the mid-level editors have a positive attitude towards technological development, but the new web-based technology is also a source of worry in terms of news work becoming increasingly difficult in an over abundance of web-based information (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008, 668–669). Moreover, the survey indicates that journalists consider the efficiency requirements brought forward by the increased profit orientation of news organizations as the biggest change in their work. The adoption of new technologies, in turn, seems to be well internalized by journalists as part of the profession: surveyed journalists do not consider technical demands as particularly stressful, even if they clearly recognize an increase in the need to manage new technical applications (Jyrkiäinen 2008, 54–55).

The wide *cultural* changes affecting newsrooms according to mid-level editors are tabloidization, consumerism, entertainment and the need to provide the audience with experiences. Cultural terrain is thus discussed widely and with variance, but the lessons drawn from the terrain often coincide with the competition-adaptation logic provided by the techno-economic discourse. In other words, wide cultural changes are often viewed from the perspective of *consumer* culture (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008, 8). In addition, the survey indicates that journalists consider the increased trend towards entertainment and "shallow" forms of journalism as the most evident challenges affecting the professional culture in the future (Jyrkiäinen 2008, 50, 57).

Interestingly, current changes in the *socio-political landscape* of journalism's environment are not often mentioned in the dominant interpretation schemes of mid-level newspaper editors. Editors seem to ignore many inter-

esting issues, but they do focus on two broad political themes: a belief in the trend of depoliticization – both regarding journalists and the audience – and a need to detach journalism from bureaucratic power. News editors take great pride in their attempt to tackle the news from an everyday life perspective instead of seeing the world through the eyes of system experts (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008, 9).

All in all, these studies indicate that the dominant discourse in the Finnish professional culture is aware of the "extra-journalistic" challenges. The interviewed managers react to the challenges by turning them into professional demands, such as effectiveness of the work process and the ability to regard business logic as a professional virtue or a source of competence. However, surveyed journalists express a worry according to which they estimate that the economic pressures in particular will affect the profession so that the autonomy and independence as well as analytical-critical dimension of journalism will decrease in the future (Jyrkiäinen 2008, 50). The journalists thus express a higher degree of powerlessness in front of the challenges than editors and managers.

These are the ways in which the Finnish professional culture of journalists is reacting to the influences and trends of the current societal context. I need to emphasize, though, that the trends arising from the current context should not be merely considered as pressures or external forces to which the professional culture is reacting to. The values of professionalism in the heart of the professional culture also act as a proactive force, and indeed, the arrows in Figure 3 between the context and the newsroom culture are pointing in both directions. The newspapers and their cultural values also affect the surrounding context, and the relationship is reflexive. For instance, the conceptions of *the public and public service* seem to remain near to the very core of newspaper professionalism and act as a proactive force. Because journalism is a public profession which produces something that always reaches out of the professional culture and into the public sphere, a dimension of "publicness" has to be taken into account when professionalism is discussed (Zelizer 2004, 32). This is, then, also an interesting starting point for researching professionals' interpretations of the public in terms of public journalism in Finland. Therefore, we need to widen the theoretical frame of professionalism research to include public sphere theories and their relevance for studying public journalism.

4.

Public sphere and public journalism

In this chapter, I will tie the discussion on public journalism and professionalism to a broader debate on the role of journalism in the public sphere. The public sphere is seen as the ultimate context in which journalism operates; i.e. the public sphere is a phenomenon that is considerably broader than "the media sphere". Journalism, then, is one of the many agents and institutions that function in the public sphere: it creates, maintains and shapes it, but it is not the public sphere in itself.

As we have seen, public journalism has posed a range of challenges to professional journalism: it has created a wave of criticism from the professionals dealing with the practices and values of public journalism. The academic critics, in turn, have centred on the more theoretical aspects of the movement pointing out that public journalism literature has left various theoretical issues open. Much of this criticism can be grouped under a combining theme: *the way of conceiving the public sphere* (see Glasser 2000; Glasser & Lee 2002; Peters 1999; Haas 2003; 2007). This criticism suggests that we need to address the theoretical understanding of the public sphere in public journalism more closely. What does the public sphere stand for or could stand for in public journalism? What is the "public" in public journalism?

I will thus continue Haas's (2007) work by addressing the theoretical question of what the public in public journalism means. As discussed in Chapter 2, Haas has taken Habermas's notion of "the deliberating public" as a starting point of his theoretical discussion. Habermas is one of the central public sphere theorists and much of the current debate is centred around his work. Therefore, Habermas's conception of the deliberating public will act as the point of departure in discussing public journalism's relationship to the pub-

lic sphere. However, in this research, I wish to try to broaden Haas's theoretical scope and discuss the ways in which the public sphere has been theorized by Habermas, particularly in his later writings in which he explicitly addresses the role of media and journalism in the public sphere. Additionally, I will discuss the work of other relevant public sphere scholars in order to be able to address the open questions of public journalism theory more broadly. This discussion opens up new horizons in terms of challenging or widening the professional-based conception of journalism (Chapter 2) and deepens the way in which public journalism (Chapter 1) is understood. Public sphere theory is thus the philosophical context in which public journalism makes sense and is connected to the theories of democracy.

I will start by introducing five open theoretical questions of public journalism in relation to the notion of the public sphere. I will then move on to consider Habermas's contribution to public sphere theory, after which, I will enlarge upon the five introduced counter points with reference to Habermas as well as some other public sphere theorists. I will discuss: (1) the structure of the public sphere; (2) the role of citizens in the public sphere; (3) the idea and aim of deliberation; (4) the function of the public sphere as a site for public opinion formation; and (5) the relationship between the public sphere and democratic frameworks.

4.1. Introducing the questions around "public"

The central theoretical questions that have emerged from the public journalism discussion deal with the idea of "publicness". In the following, I will introduce these questions in the form of counterpoints to which public journalism needs to relate itself more clearly. I will also briefly consider how professional ideology described in the previous chapter relates to these notions. This will clarify why these counterpoints are problematic to both public journalism and professionalism, and why I consider it meaningful to turn to public sphere theories in order to discuss the "public" in public journalism.

Five counterpoints of the public sphere theory

(1) Single public sphere vs. multiple public spheres. The first open question deals with the notion of the public sphere vs. multiple public spheres. Should the practice of public journalism be understood as being situated within the notion of a single public sphere; or would the framework of multiple smaller publics or public spheres function as a better point of departure?

In my definition of public journalism (Chapter 2), I refer to the public sphere in the singular, but previous public journalism literature is rather ambivalent on this. In fact, no public journalism theorist has explicitly argued for the existence of a single public sphere as the key frame for understanding public journalism. Rather, the notion has remained unresolved, or the exis-

tence of the single public sphere has been taken for granted. However, some authors (e.g. Haas & Steiner 2001; Haas 2007) explicitly argue for understanding the public sphere in terms of multiple spheres or counter-publics. According to them, it is the task of public journalism to nurture the diversity of public discussion and enable the activities of marginalized publics.

This first counterpoint reveals a fundamental dilemma in the way public journalism understands the public: how to combine the idea of the public sphere as a site of *diversity* and as a site of *connectedness*. On the one hand, the public sphere is seen as a sphere of agency that implies diversity and plurality (multiple publics). On the other hand, the public sphere is seen as wide-open arena in which activities take place and are recognized by others (the singularity of the public sphere). This is a constitutive question and leads us to varying and demanding interpretations of the role of (public) journalism operating in the public sphere.

This dilemma also points to the question of whether we should talk about "publicness" or "publics" rather than "the public sphere" because the last term seems to lead us to the problem of single sphere/multiple publics and other restrictions implied by the spatial metaphor (e.g. Livingstone 2005, 20; Splichal 2006, 705). Heikkilä and Kunelius (2006) note that the tendency to over-emphasize *either* the spatial and structural aspect *or* the pragmatic and activity-oriented aspect of the public sphere is damaging our understanding of the role that journalists play in the public sphere. These dilemmas, I argue, have not been fully discussed in public journalism literature.

Does professionalism help us formulate this question further? Due to the abstract nature of publicness and to the concrete nature of journalism, professionalism-based understanding of the public sphere is rather difficult to infer from professional values. From the six identified values, journalism–public and journalism–democracy relationships make up the core of the professionally-based understanding of the public sphere. The function of journalism in the public sphere is to *serve the public by delivering information and feeding public discussion*. For this function, journalism needs a certain degree of autonomy, ethicality and immediacy in order to be able to inform the public effectively.

Even if the question is not directly addressed, professionalism seems to build on the public sphere as a singular notion: it is *the public* that needs to be kept informed. The centrality and historical importance of the norm of objectivity seems to support this view. Adhering to the notion of objectivity refers to the idea that journalism should provide unbiased raw material for opinion formation in the public sphere. Even if professional journalism has not historically been able to bypass the divisions of society (e.g. class structure and the corresponding sub-publics), it has been willing to address its public within the framework of *the* public sphere by adhering to the idea of objective reporting. However, it is not always clear whether professionalism

situates journalism in the public sphere, or whether it sees the public sphere as being created by journalism.

Moreover, the idea of the singular public sphere is challenged by current trends: there seems to be an increasing – economically, technologically and culturally driven – trend to regard the public as differentiated sub-publics or consumer segments that need to be addressed differently. In other words, journalism is facing the erosion of the traditional model of *mass communication* and its corresponding imaginary of the public sphere. Due to this situation, the concepts of classical professionalism do not offer adequate help for public journalism theory in its need to clarify its relationship to the question of a single public sphere or multiple publics.

(2) *Citizens as active agents vs. citizens as representatives of the citizenry.* The second and third parts of my definition of public journalism deal with understanding citizens as the focus of journalism and as actors in the public sphere. If we consider citizens as active agents, we will need to recognize their capacity to open up new horizons with their actions, to reshape the very public sphere in which they act through engagement in organizations and in public debate (Strömbäck 2005, 337). In this regard, it is public participation that transforms individuals into public citizens (Marx Ferree et al 2002, 296). In turn, if we consider citizens predominantly as representatives of larger entities (most commonly the citizenry of the nation state), we need to recognize the possibility that citizens may become tied to the already existing structures and horizons that do not require activity. However, the existing structures, like the representative political system, provide citizens with legitimacy as the electorate. Therefore this position justifies citizens' role in the public discussion but it emphasizes their ability to express a *representative public opinion* rather than acting out their citizenship in other ways.

For the early public journalism thinkers such as Jay Rosen (1991) the possibility for citizens to open up new horizons with their public action was a source of inspiration and a key argument. Rosen (1991, 274–245) draws from Hannah Arendt's thinking and argues that public journalism can be "more public" by involving the community in public debate and action: the public sphere is a place for citizens to act, create something new. Citizens become empowered by the fact that their activities and opinions become publicly recognized.

In the subsequent public journalism literature the aspects of citizens' empowerment and agency have not been emphasized as much. Haas (2007, 50–56) summarizes that the evaluative studies have focussed on the *attitudes* of journalists; the public journalism *coverage*; and the *impact* on public journalism coverage on citizens. Haas (2007, 61–62) suggests that future research ought to address questions that relate the empirical evaluations to the theory of public journalism. Many studies dealing with public journalism tend to emphasize *journalism* at the expense of the *public*: citizens' experiences

are rarely studied compared to those of journalists'.²⁴ Moreover, the fact that many public journalism initiatives have been connected to election coverage can be seen as one of the reason why representation and voting have become more explicit in the literature than citizenship as agency. Therefore, I argue that this double role of citizens in the public sphere should be more deeply discussed in public journalism theory.

As noted above, traditional professionalism positions citizens in the framework of the public sphere as representatives of the citizenry rather than as active participants. The idea of "informed citizenship" (Schudson 1998) has dominated the professional understanding for a long time. According to this idea, it is the task of journalists to keep the citizens informed but not to worry about what they do with the information they receive (Merrit & McCombs 2004, 30–31). This becomes evident from the professional values that are linked to ideas of information delivery and public service: these activities are traditionally conceived in a unidirectional manner. Moreover, the practice of professional journalism has strong links to national cultures and to nation states. Thus, one of the key references in journalism is the national political system in which citizens become positioned as members of the national electorate (Heikkilä & Kunelius 2008). The representative frame of citizenship also remains strong in the professional practices. This is exemplified by the study on the role of citizens on TV news in the U.K. and U.S. (Lewis et al 2004; 2005). The study shows that citizens do get to represent public opinion, but the form that it takes favours apolitical and vague second-hand accounts rather than more explicit expression (Lewis et al 2004, 162).

However, there exists an element of active citizenship in the way that professionalism considers journalism as an open arena for public discussion. This idea is exemplified for instance by letters-to-the-editor sections in newspapers. The professional culture of journalism thus maintains a moderately active ideal of citizenship. Recently, it has perhaps even widened its willingness to invite active participation due to new technological possibilities of the internet and financially based pressures to include the public more actively in coverage: readers' comments are asked for and ordinary citizens have a strong visual presence in the media. However, these activities do not seem to link civic agency to the functioning of the public sphere, but rather to the functioning of the media product and production. To put it crudely, citizen participation is encouraged in order to get traffic to the web sites (to

24 In terms of empirical data, this research can be seen to be part of this journalism-oriented research tradition since the core of my material consists of journalistic texts and journalist interviews. However, theoretically, I would like to join the discussion about the public sphere and – and related to the second counterpoint in particular – to analyze the conceptions of citizenship that are constructed in the journalistic practices and fostered by the professional culture.

attract advertisers) rather than by the ideal of fostering civic agency in the public sphere.

Therefore, there is room for a public journalism theory that discusses the role of civic activity in relation to the functioning of the public sphere, and not merely to the functioning of the media sphere. However, it is also difficult for public journalism to bypass the overarching frameworks of commerciality as well as the nation state and its electorate – even if it underlines civic agency as a notion that reaches beyond the acts of consuming and voting. I argue that current public journalism theory should address the role of citizens in the public sphere more clearly in order to recognize which frame of citizenship can help us understand and develop public journalism further, and if and how public journalism actually challenges professionalism in this question.

(3) *Solution orientation vs. issue recognition.* The third counterpoint deals with the aim of public discussion: should public deliberation be solution-oriented and strive for concrete answers, or should it be seen as a process during which certain issues are recognized as relevant. Conceiving the aim of deliberation with regard to either of these two respects affects the way in which the role of journalism in the public sphere is seen. So, the question is: should public discussion (fostered by journalism) strive for closure in terms of solutions, or should the formation of public opinion be understood as a process which does not necessarily provide us with solutions but ends up in the formation of a public and perhaps expansion of the political public (e.g. Marx Ferree et al 2002). In the latter sense, the process of forming public is more important than finding solutions because the process itself brings forth issues and reveals viewpoints of the public.

Public journalism theory is clearly inspired by the Deweyan idea that the public needs to realize itself through discussion and sharing of experiences and consequently finding out the important issues that require public attention (see e.g. Rosen 1991, 269–270). However, the aspect of problem-solving has also been underlined in public journalism literature (e.g. Haas 2007). These two ideas seem to be overlapping. On the one hand, deliberation is needed in order to draw together people so that publics are formed and attention drawn to certain issues, and on the other hand, deliberation is needed so that the public may reach a solution to the experienced problems. This overlap deserves a closer look in public journalism theory.

In classical professionalism, the value of objectivity clearly points out that even if the public sphere could be seen as a site for finding solutions, journalism should not be an active part of that process: it should not promote certain values or solutions. Therefore, professionalism is likely to consider the public sphere as a realm where information from the political system, administration and experts can meet the ideas of citizens, but due to the information delivery ideal, the flow of this information is mostly top down. This value ba-

sis explains why the whole idea of public deliberation as an activity is problematic in the context of classical professionalism. The public sphere is seen as a site in which problem formulation is possible, but the agenda usually arises from the political and elite fields and is not formulated deliberatively. Therefore, the role of citizens is to get informed about problems and react to them, not necessarily to deliberate or find solutions for them.

In sum, journalistic professionalism considers the public sphere as a site of public problem formulation, but perhaps even more as a site of public reactions. In this regard, public journalism theory needs to make it clear whether it follows the path that is paved by the classical professional understanding of the public sphere, which does not emphasize deliberation and is sceptical of promoting solutions. Or alternatively, should it underline active citizen deliberation and the solution-finding aspect of the concept, to what extent and in what kind of issues?

(4) *Creating consensus vs. highlighting conflicts.* In discussing the definition of public journalism and its theoretical links to deliberative democratic theory, I touched upon the question of consensus. The question is, whether public journalism should seek consensus through public deliberation, or should deliberation be practised without placing the focus on achieving agreement – temporary or final. If consensus is seen as a central aim in public journalism, it poses a strong demand for the functioning of the public sphere. Theoretical perspectives – for example those that Marx Ferree et al (2002, 306–315) label as constructionist theories of the public sphere – criticize consensus-seeking and underline the importance of the public sphere as a site where actors and identities can appear and problems are recognized but not necessarily solved in a consensual manner. These perspectives thus accept the conflicting nature of the public sphere as a site for varied opinions and identities.

This theme is clearly related to the above mentioned solutions vs. issues counterpoint. The difference is, however, that in this question, consensus (or agreement) is seen as the most important basis for a potential solution, whereas in the former question, the solution does not have to be a result of a consensus, it is enough if it is being produced in the *process* of deliberation. So, this juxtaposition of consensus vs. conflict poses a question: should public journalism strive for a process of public opinion formation which ought to end in some kind of agreement or consensus, or should it rather take care of the fact that all the possible solutions and viewpoints are deliberated in the public sphere, even if (or because) they are conflicting in nature. Emphasizing either of these aspects can lead to different practical consequences in journalism. Public journalism literature is explicit about the need to find common ground between opposing parties and values in news stories (e.g. Charity 1995; Merrit 1995; Beckman 2003), but it is more vague about the re-

lationship between the methods of finding common denominators and especially about the theory of consensus.

Like the previous counterpoint, this one is also strongly framed by the ideal of deliberation, which has not traditionally held a strong role in professional journalism. Moreover, professionalism is framed by the ideas of detachment and distance, which arise from objectivity and autonomy. All these values together shape the way in which professionalism views the public sphere: it is an arena in which different actors of society can present their views and carry out public discussion if they wish, but the ultimate objective of public discussion is not to achieve consensus; at least it is not the task of journalists to promote any outcomes. The public sphere is rather seen as an arena that is plural and consequently conflicting in nature.

Indeed, conflict remains a central news value in professional news journalism (e.g. Schultz 2007). By highlighting conflicts, journalists wish to create attention among the public. Additionally, in an inverted manner, the professional notion of balance (a sub-category of objectivity) links to this issue. If reporters follow the ideal of balanced reporting, in which both viewpoints are covered, the news issues become easily framed as conflicts. Hence, the professional view on the public sphere is understood rather in terms of appearance of sources and their conflicting views than dialogical or deliberative discussion of these views.

In this question, public journalism departs clearly from professionalism as it adheres to the notion of deliberation. Therefore, in this case, it needs to draw from the theories of public deliberation rather than from professional journalism. However, public journalism theory should state more clearly, whether deliberation is seen as a method to achieve consensus or would deliberation in itself be considered as an adequate aim. Moreover, could conflicting elements sometimes enhance and motivate deliberation, not merely distort it.

(5) *Ideal vs. practical model of democracy.* The final question deals with the concept of democracy. In my definition of public journalism, I lastly state that the claims of the idea are always justified from the perspective of democracy. So, should the public sphere as a site for public discussion and opinion formation be seen in reference to deliberative and participatory models of democracy? The theory of public journalism certainly fits in to these normative models, but should this link be made more explicit? Or would public journalism benefit from remaining outside of any ideal democratic model and just accept the fact that journalism functions in a democratic system that is institutional, representational and based on competitive elections? Because democracy is such a fundamental aspect in public journalism and because democratic theories and public sphere theories are so closely linked with each other (Marx Ferree et al 2002), I argue that public journalism's conception of the public sphere would become clearer if it stated its relationship to

the counterpoint of the ideal vs. the practical model of democracy and explicitly acknowledged this gap.

Classical professionalism is embedded in the notion of representative democracy, which is supported by trained experts in the administration. Professionalism has a twofold relationship to expert democracy. On the one hand, the watchdog role of journalism is based on the idea of surveillance of authorities and institutions. On the other hand, professional journalism is highly dependent on these institutions as providers of reliable facts and accounts. In this double sense, professional journalism needs the institutional structures and experts in order to justify its existence. The idea of "journalism of information" is based on these premises (Carey 1978; Wahl-Jorgensen 2007).

So, even if public journalism theory is embedded in the ideal of the participatory-deliberative framework, in practice, it needs to function in the same representative and election-oriented system that frames professionalism. Therefore, some of the earlier accounts of public journalism theory (shaped by practical experiences) have been ambiguous in their notions of democracy, and this aspect of public sphere theory has been problematic to public journalism (e.g. Glasser & Craft 1997).

All in all, the media and journalism are nowadays among the principal institutions of the public sphere, and professionalism understandably underlines this role. Indeed, it is through media rather than face-to-face settings that individuals as a public come to discuss matters of common concern; therefore the conception of the public sphere in terms of professional values is *journalism centred*. In other words, journalism has a key role in connecting and mediating between different areas of society – civil society, political life, the state and the economy – but this role is not innate; the central role of journalism in the public sphere is therefore furthered and legitimized by professionalism (Wahl-Jorgensen 2007, 18).

However, I argue that a professional understanding of the public sphere would benefit from an increased level of abstraction and by taking a step away from journalism-centrism. Public journalism's understanding of the public sphere, in turn, would benefit from similar abstraction and more unambiguous arguments in relation to the counterpoints I introduced. Therefore, I consider that in the current context and as a *theory*, public journalism can gain more from the concept of "public" than from the concept of "journalism" and thus search for answers from theories of the public sphere and combine them meaningfully with the discussion on professionalism. Moreover, many aspects of professional journalism have already been widely discussed during the movement phase of public journalism. For public journalism to be relevant in the evolving context of multiple "journalisms", it can benefit from enhancing its theoretical understanding of its public nature.

4.2. Habermas and the public sphere

Jürgen Habermas's theory on the public sphere is one of the most influential conceptualisations of "publicness". His first book on the topic, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, was originally published in 1962, and it created considerable discussion especially among German speaking academics and the interest towards studying the public sphere gained momentum in Europe (Koivisto & Välvirronen 1987, 4–7). Another wave of interest emerged after the book was translated into English in 1989 as *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. With this work, Habermas provided a language for a phenomenon that had been implicit in much political and social theory, but had not up until then been thoroughly theorized (Wahl-Jorgensen 2007, 12). Therefore, he became a central theorist in many fields of social research. Outwaite (1994, 6) suggests that one of the most important themes throughout Habermas's work has been his analysis on the conditions of rational political discussion in the modern technocratic democracy. Habermas's ideas have been widely applied in media and journalism studies, especially because his early theory on the fall of the public sphere gives a central role to the media in relation to the democratic process (Dahlgren 1991, 7–8) and because later the mass media act as a key example of an institution that can either enable public discussion or thwart it (Hove 2007, 4).

There is a massive amount of literature handling Habermas and the media criticism that was initiated by his early work. However, there is less literature that combines his later writings on communicative action and social systems with the original concept of the public sphere (Friedland et al 2006; Hove 2007). Consequently, in the following, I will outline a picture of Habermas's contribution to understanding the concept of the public sphere based on *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas 1989 [1962]), *Between Facts and Norms* (Habermas 1998 [1992]) and his recent article *Political Communication in Media Society* (Habermas 2006). My aim is not to provide a new interpretation of his conception of the public sphere but to condense the development of his understanding of the public sphere and journalism's role in it. I have chosen the above mentioned texts as my point of departure because they explicitly deal with the function of journalism in the public sphere.

Early theory in *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

In *Structural Transformation*, Habermas analyzes the way in which a construct called the public sphere first evolved in Europe. His preliminary work has thus a strong historical background. He outlines how the term "public" has its roots in the Greek language in which the term was related to the publicness of ideas and had a strong connection to the idea of democracy (Habermas 1989, 3–5). He then analyzes how the idea of publicness in the Greek sense, *for the public*, was transformed in the Middle Ages to a more ceremo-

nial idea of representing the power *in front* of the public. Then slowly, in the 18th century, a more functional idea of the public sphere emerged with economic and social developments in society. This is what he calls "the bourgeois public sphere" and within it he distinguishes between the literary/cultural and the political public spheres. The literary public sphere was formed when individuals gathered together to discuss reflect their personal experiences novels and other forms of literature. The political public sphere, in turn, focused on issues related to power and law. (See Habermas 1989, Chapter 7; also e.g. McGuigan 2005.)

The preconditions of the formation of the bourgeois public sphere were the realization of the idea that social power can be controlled, the overall economic liberalization in the form of early capitalism, the birth of individualism and a development of the press (Habermas 1989, Chapter 9). Thus, during the rise of the bourgeois class, the public sphere started to become understood as an abstract forum in which individual people would gather as a public in order to force the ruling power to justify itself in public. The bourgeois public sphere thus evolved during the pre-modern era of the press (public and partial stages, see Chapter 3.1.; Barnhurst & Nerone 2001; Nerone & Barnhurst 2003) in which publishing and politics were not differentiated from one another. Thus, the public agents in the press were also political agents, a feature that made the public sphere dynamic.

The latter part of *Structural Transformation* analyzes the way in which the public sphere has been transformed or "refeudalized" in the modern era. After modernization and industrialization more areas of society became public and accessible, but at the same time, the idea of the public sphere as a site for public opinion formation and scrutiny lost its significance. In this process, the rational-critical nature of the public sphere was lost. The public was, on the one hand, divided into minorities of specialists who continued to put their reason to use publicly, and on the other hand, into a mass of consumers, whose receptiveness was public but uncritical (Habermas 1989, 175). During the modern era, the tasks of publishing, reporting and political activism became largely differentiated in the press, making the professional aspect of journalism more active but the rational-critical nature of the public sphere more static.

On top of the historical analysis, *Structural Transformation* can be – and it certainly has been – taken as a conceptualization of how an ideal public sphere would be structured and would work: as a normative theory that can be applied (see Koivisto & Väliverronen 1996 for critical perspective). According to the normative view, the public sphere acts as a buffer zone between private forms of life and the state. This sphere should be open and accessible to citizens to take part in rational-critical public discussion in which their views should be measured against the value of the argument and not according to their social status (Habermas 1989; Wahl-Jorgensen 2007, 12).

So, what does this historically rooted, but normative model mean in terms of journalism? In *Structural Transformation*, Habermas sees journalism as an institution of the political public sphere. Journalism should provide an arena in which different opinions could be expressed. These issues can then be deliberated, perhaps handled again in journalistic texts and after that delivered to the political decision making structures as an expression of public opinion. However, the role provided for journalism in *Structural Transformation* is rather static: journalism merely acts as a platform through which citizens can deliberate in order to form public opinion. Even if there is emphasis on civic deliberation, there is very little discussion on *how* journalism should act in order to aid the deliberative process and formation of public opinion, as journalism was embedded in the political deliberation process altogether. Habermas merely notes that professionalization has made journalism more patterned; therefore, journalism has lost a sense of discussion (Habermas 1989, 169). The refeudalization argument of the book states that the mass media has "hollowed out" true discussion into mere publicity where it is difficult to evaluate the authenticity and motivations of the discussion (Habermas 1989, 162; Linvingstone 2005, 27). This argument is very similar to the one that C. Wright Mills proposed in his 1958 essay *The Structure of Power in American Society*. Mills argues that publics should influence the political life and the mass media ought to enlarge and animate the public discussion as well as link publics together, but instead the publics have become weaker in the mass society, they have become markets for the mass media (Mills 1963 [1958], 35).

For Habermas, the "world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only" (Habermas 1989, 171). Thus, journalism's critical role has become muted in the wake of advertising, entertainment and public relations (Dahlgren 1991, 4). Therefore journalism should separate itself more clearly from public PR and entertainment. It should not, however, place itself *above* the public sphere and separate itself from the public whose instrument it is. Journalism should see itself as extension of the public's debate (Habermas 1989, 176; 183). In other words, journalism alone does not constitute the public sphere with its actions and texts: it transfers and amplifies the rational-critical debate of private people (Habermas 1989, 188).

Later public sphere theory in *Between Facts and Norms*

Between Facts and Norms is Habermas's latest major work in which he develops further some of the central themes of *Structural Transformation* (Malmberg 2004, 63). The basic argument in terms of the public sphere remains rather similar: the public sphere still plays a key role in signalling important issues from citizens to the political sphere. The political system should then solve the issues with its parliamentary institutions (Habermas 1998, 359).

This type of deliberation is referred to as "strong" as it is closely tied to the existing decision making structures.

There are a few modifications and additions, though. First, Habermas's theory is shaped by his enlarged conceptual work on structures of society and the function of discourse in these structures. Thus, his later public sphere theory can be described as being more sociologically informed and the system theoretical approach in his work is more visible (Friedland et al 2006, 8).²⁵ On a macro-level, he now divides society into the "lifeworld" and "the system". The lifeworld includes civil society and the private sphere; and the system includes the state, political system and economy. He underlines the fact that the political and the economic systems have become complex and more autonomous in relation to the lifeworld (Friedland et al 2006, 6). However, the public sphere as a "network of communicating information and points of views" (Habermas 1998, 360) remains the social realm between these two sides of society. He stresses that the public sphere is formed and reproduced through communication; it is a communication structure and not an institution (Habermas 1998, 360; Malmberg 2004, 67). The public sphere is thus formed by actors who communicate.

The second new layer in *Between Facts and Norms* deals with the tasks of the public sphere. Habermas is now more precise about these tasks. This is due to the fact that in this work, Habermas addresses the questions of the *political* public sphere in particular and is thus able to define the tasks more specifically. The tasks include thematization, problematization and even dramatization of social issues (Habermas 1998, 359). In other words, in modern and complex societies, the public sphere cannot merely transfer or amplify the issues that rise from civil society. It also needs to problematize the issues even if the actual problem-solving remains the task for parliamentary organs.

In *Structural Transformation* Habermas underlined the critical nature of the public sphere as a power balance to authoritative power, but in *Between Facts and Norms*, he focuses more on the pragmatic functions of the public sphere as a site of opinion formation and social alarming system (Hove 2007, 120–121). These modifications are partly explained by the fact that *Structural Transformation* had a historical focus that dealt with the role of the public sphere in pre-modern and non-democratic societies. *Between Facts and Norms*, in turn, discusses the public sphere in a largely democratized context. Moreover, whereas *Structural Transformation* was embedded in the crit-

25 One needs to note that Habermas's work is extensive: in between the 30 years of publishing *Structural Transformation* and *Between Facts and Norms* he has written regularly and concentrated for example on the systemic nature of society as well as universal-pragmatist claims about communication in his two volumes of *Theory of Communicative Action* (originally published in 1981). One must note that this work opened up a broad and complex perspective on the social, cultural, and institutional conditions that both constrain and enable communicative ideals like rationality, agreement, trust and consensus (Hove 2007, 3).

ical tradition of the Frankfurt School, in *Between Facts and Norms* this ethos has been largely replaced by the functionalist and system theoretical frames.

Therefore, thirdly, in *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas deals more with the limitations of the *modern* public sphere than in the historically oriented *Structural Transformation*. He thus acknowledges much of the critique that his early conceptions faced; for example, the idea of counter-publics is taken into consideration (Habermas 1998, 370). In a nutshell, Habermas is now more explicit with the idea that there are ultimately more than one public. The public sphere is not unified, it is manifold, and it alters in terms of space (e.g. international and national public spheres) or themes (scientific and religious public spheres) (Malmberg 2004, 69).

This refined idea of the public sphere positions the media somewhat differently than the early theory (Hove 2007, Chapter 6). It is obvious that the role of the media is increasingly important as the link between differentiated publics (Habermas 1998, 361). However, he still maintains that it is not the media or journalism – or even the political actors – that thematize issues in the public sphere, but rather, it should be the public itself. The issues that are brought to the agenda should have the public's consent (Habermas 1998, 379). Journalism should thus understand itself as an important agent to the public whose willingness to learn and capacity for criticism it should "pre-suppose, demand and reinforce" (Habermas 1998, 378). Journalism should also preserve its independence from political and social pressures, and it should be receptive to public's proposals and confront the political process.

Hove (Hove 2007, 128) argues that in *Between Facts and Norms* Habermas is more willing than before to consider the positive effects that the media can have on the functioning of the public sphere and democracy. In other words, the mass media's *abstracting and condensing ability* should not be left out of the normative theory of democracy. The complexity of society requires other platforms for deliberation than the face-to-face setting, and as this platform, journalism plays a key role. The mass media can express certain issues in a condensed and generalized manner. Moreover, they can expand the scope of the public sphere and link together the private and the public (Hove 2007, 132). Already in *Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas noted that the mass media can act as a "relief mechanism" and promote efficient communication: media's ability to generalize and disseminate information can be leaned on in cases where truly deliberative communication is not possible (Hove 2007, 63–66). This modification is connected to the problem of scale that is inherent in most participatory and deliberative democratic theories when discussed in the context of mass society. In this context, journalism thus acts as a relief mechanism: it acts as a communication form that *relieves* rather than distorts and dominates efforts of reaching understanding (Hove 2007, 53). However, the public needs to stay aware of journalism's ability to affect public discussion also in a negative manner.

Even if it is clear that Habermas has become less pessimistic about the relationship between journalism and the public sphere, he remains critical towards the domination of the modern public sphere by institutional actors. Journalists' professional ethics and self-understanding are not "in agreement with deliberative politics", and therefore, norms such as the idea of balance do not always promote the idea that civic actors outside the political system could have opportunities to influence the content of the media (Habermas 1998, 377). Moreover, even if he is more moderate than in his early media criticisms, he still sees a kernel of truth in critical theory of the culture industry. In other words, information processing strategies of the media are still embedded in market strategies, which work to depoliticize or over-intellectualize, and thus, distance public communication from civil society and the experiences that are rooted in the lifeworld (Hove 2007, 130–133).

Latest views in Political Communication in Media Society

In 2006, Habermas gave a speech at the annual International Communication Association conference in Dresden titled *Political Communication in Media Society*. The speech was later published as an article in *Communication Theory* (Habermas 2006). It summarizes Habermas's latest views on the public sphere and media. He continues to define the public sphere as a system of communication between the state and civil society. The main functions of the public sphere are to mobilize relevant issues, process these issues and generate rationally motivated attitudes: in sum, to produce considered public opinions and prepare agendas for political institutions (Habermas 2006, 411–412; 415–416).

In terms of the structure of the public sphere, there are no clear indications in the essay to any significant refinements. There are, however, a few factors that Habermas emphasizes more clearly than previously. First is the *reflexive nature* of the public sphere, which means that issues can be played back and forth in the public sphere: "all participants can revisit perceived public opinions and respond to them after consideration" (Habermas 2006, 418). This reflexivity acts as a test to see how well the public sphere really represents considered public opinions. The second new emphasis is on the *filtering function of the public sphere*. This metaphor is already apparent in *Between Facts and Norms*, and Habermas now continues to stress that the public sphere filters public opinions to the political system. The political system thus receives a "range of what the public of citizens would accept as legitimate decisions in a given case" (Habermas 2006, 418). Thus, his later works seem to underline even more the process-like nature of deliberation that takes place in the public sphere, whereas his early texts underscored the critical counter-force that was manifested in the idea of the rational-critical public sphere.

Political Communication in Media Society deals with the role of the media

in the public sphere quite specifically. Perhaps due to his focus on the political public sphere, Habermas gives the media even more of a central role than before. For instance, he states that without journalists (and naturally also politicians) no political public sphere could be put to work: political journalism is a centrepiece of deliberative politics (Habermas 2006, 416; 423). He still maintains that the public constitutes and shapes the public sphere with their actions, but in order for political deliberation to take root in journalism, media is needed as the supplier of *published* and *polled* opinions. Thus, the public sphere is still the primary site of deliberation because not all mediated political communication (e.g. journalism) can be deliberative in nature (Habermas 2006, 414). In order for this process to work, Habermas introduces two conditions: the media should be self-regulating and autonomous and there should be a proper feedback loop between the media and citizens (Habermas 2006, 420–423). Thus, Habermas values journalistic professionalism in its ability to provide journalism with the professional code to which self-regulation and autonomy are based on, but he also points to the same direction as public journalists by indicating that there is a need to have more interaction or feedback between the media and civil society.

Habermas on the public sphere and journalism

How do we summarize Habermas's conception on the public sphere and the role that journalism plays in it? Mamlberg (2004, 39) notes that even if Habermas has written abundantly about communication and its role in society, he has been less precise concerning specific questions of mass communication. One needs to acknowledge that Habermas has developed his theory for over 30 years and has not always been consistent. It is demanding to recognize Habermas's dual approach that combines normative and historical-empirical aspects (see e.g. Hove 2007, 2; Benson 2007; Koivisto & Väliverronen 1987).

As a normative theorist, Habermas holds on to the idea of deliberation. Throughout his work, Habermas uses vocabulary such *deliberating public* (1989), the proceduralist concept of *deliberative politics* (1994; 1998) and the *deliberative model of democracy* (2006). Habermas's basic normative argument remains the same: the public sphere should stay independent from the state, the economy and other functional systems because it has developed its own normative code of deliberative, rational-critical debate that results in the formation of considered public opinions and communicative power (Friedland et al 2006, 12; Habermas 1994). However, there is a shift in the functions of the public sphere as his work evolves: the public sphere starts as being a rational-critical political counter-force but later its filtering function is emphasized.

The historical-empirical foundation in Habermas's work brings along the liberal-representative framework in addition to the deliberative. He acknowledges that the practical "institutional design of modern democracies [...] em-

bodies ideas from different political philosophies”: the liberal, republican and deliberative (Habermas 2006, 412; see also Habermas 1994). But it is also obvious that the liberal framework is the one that dominates the actual democratic *practices* in Western societies, and as such brings forth values of individuality of private citizens, freedom and restricted state control (Wahl-Jorgensen 2007, 15; Habermas 2006, 412–413). Habermas is thus aware of the limitations that his normative model faces in practice (Habermas 1994, 10).

This contradiction between the ideal and the practical is indeed the main source of Habermas’s media criticism, which remains relatively similar throughout his work. He criticises the media-dominated nature of the public sphere, i.e. the excessive power that media holds as an institution of the public sphere. He is also critical towards market-orientation that affects publication strategies, media contents and forms as well as the autonomy of the press. Moreover, he continues to criticize the unequal possibilities for agenda setting that social actors have according to their status and power. Thus, his ideas consistently challenge journalism to be more *accessible*, *transparent* and *connective* in relation to the public. These are arguments that fit together with the ideals of public journalism.

4.3. The implications of public sphere theory for public journalism theory

Next, I will return to the five counterpoints of public sphere theory that I introduced as important but thinly discussed dimensions in theoretical conceptions of public journalism. I will begin by considering what Habermas’s conceptualizations can offer us in terms of these questions, and then make comparisons to other theorists and views where appropriate.

Structure of the public sphere: Single sphere or multiple publics?

The first question deals with how to consider the structure of the public sphere. Should it be conceived as a single sphere or as multiple public spheres? Public journalism does not usually clearly advocate for either of the conceptions even if there are some authors (e.g. Haas & Steiner 2001, Haas 2007) who explicitly argue for understanding the public sphere in terms of counter-publics.

In *Structural Transformation* Habermas seems to suggest that the public sphere as a concept can be regarded in singular, since smaller publics are always aware of being part of the larger public sphere (Habermas 1989, 37). In addition, he points to the idea that the public sphere is not unitary by identifying the literary public sphere as well as the political public sphere (Habermas 1989, Chapter 7). He also briefly acknowledges the limitations of his concept in terms of exclusion: as an institution of the 18th century, the bourgeois

public sphere was in practice exclusive, and it typically did not have women or non-property-owning citizens as its members (Habermas 1989, 86–87).

Despite these notions, the question of the public sphere vs. multiple public spheres remains in the background in Habermas's early theory. Hence he has been largely interpreted as theorist who argues for a single and unitary public sphere – and a significant debate has resulted. Habermas has been criticized for seeing the public sphere as something unified, singular and therefore exclusive (e.g. Fraser 1992, also Mouffe in Carpentier & Cammaerts 2006). Even if this debate would partly be based on a misreading of early Habermas, this discussion is important to take into account, since it may help us to understand the various aspects from which the public sphere is viewed at.

The debate is further affected by translation: the original German concept of *Öffentlichkeit* does not suggest as strong a spatial and singular connotation as the English translation of the "public sphere". Splichal (2006, 507) notes that translating *Öffentlichkeit* as "the public sphere" surpassed the traditional conceptualizations of "the public" (or the French "le public") and thus also the work of theorists such as Jeremy Bentham, Gabriel Tarde, Walter Lippmann and John Dewey who had conceptualized "the public" before Habermas. To make things more complicated, Habermas (and his critics) are not consistent in their use of the terms "the public sphere" and "the public". Sometimes the public sphere and the public are interchangeable, and sometimes not.

However, in his later work, Habermas is more explicit. In *Between Facts and Norms*, he writes that the public sphere has become differentiated into several publics, either according to issues or themes, or according to the way in which the publics are organized. Here he refers to the fact that publics can come into being as episodic publics (e.g. coffee houses or pubs), as occasional or arranged publics (e.g. presentations or other public events) or as abstract publics (e.g. mass mediated) (Habermas 1998, 373–374). In his 2006 article, he again explicitly points out that the public sphere is composed of different layers and issue-based publics (Habermas 2006, 25). Thus, in his later public sphere theory Habermas continues to consider that the idea of *the* public sphere is conceptually fruitful but he express more explicitly that in practice the public sphere is differentiated into several publics. The communication in the sub-publics is framed by the idea of the public sphere at large.

C. Wright Mills (1963, 35–38) is one of the early theorists who has conceptualized that public opinion emerges from multiplicity of publics that ought to be linked with each other. He argues that according to a classical theoretical understanding, the publics discuss problems, formulate and organize viewpoints. Various viewpoints – or reasoned opinions, as he calls them – then compete and usually one of them "wins out". Thereafter people or their representatives act upon this view. But the emergence of the mass society and mass media has weakened the discussions in the publics that do not posses

instruments for decisions. So, Mills' earlier conceptualization is very close to that of Habermas. Both theorists see that publics act in between the state and civil society and that publics are the genuine bases for opinion formation.

Fraser (1992), one of the most prominent of Habermas's critics, has further underlined the need to recognize the existence of several publics. Fraser acknowledges that Habermas's early work depicts a certain historical public, but she argues that Habermas's whole narrative is informed by an underlying assumption that confinement to a single public sphere is a positive and desirable state of affairs (Fraser 1992, 116; 122). For Fraser this is a constricted narrative. If the public sphere is framed as a desirable state of affairs, subordinate groups may become absorbed into a false "we" that merely reflects the more powerful and excludes the plurality provided by minorities (Fraser 1992, 123). Marx Ferree et al (2002, 309) point out that according to constructivist critics such as Fraser, the dialogue in the unitary public sphere is not as desirable as the dialogue in autonomous and separate cultural domains or "free spaces" in which individuals may speak together supportively and develop their identities free from the conformity pressures of the mainstream. However, the authors also note that even those sympathetic to this approach have expressed concerns about the extent to which the public may become fragmented into mutually uncomprehending factions.

Dahlgren (2006) is another theorist in favour of seeing the public sphere as being comprised of several smaller publics. He believes that "while it can be useful to think in terms of a 'standing' or always potentially ready general public, a more dynamic understanding emerges by conceptualizing complementary specific issue-publics that emerge, exist for varying durations and then eventually dissolve" (Dahlgren 2006, 274). On the one hand, this view resembles Habermas's arguments, but on the other hand, it expresses a more dynamic understanding of the way in which publics emerge.

Friedland et al (2006, 6; 23–24) discuss the structure of the public sphere from a slightly different perspective. They introduce an idea that the public sphere is assuming an increasingly networked structure. They build their idea of the networked public sphere from Habermas's later theory, and rework it towards an understanding that acknowledges more clearly the networked nature of civil society and the ways in which individuals communicate within these structures. Thus, the authors underline the coexistence of (at least) two public spheres. There is the strong, political public sphere and the weaker, informal public sphere. The former has more effect on the political system, and the latter, with its informal discourses, has less power. The informal public sphere is nevertheless an important sphere for communicative action because it draws from the everyday life and can be related to the larger structures of public discourse through the network structures.

The question of a single vs. multiple public spheres is made even more complicated due to globalization. According to McNair, the limitations of

the global public sphere include unequal access, quality of information and the capacity of the public to absorb ever-increasing amounts of information. Thus, the 21st century public sphere is much more complex, interconnected and competitive than before. Despite these limitations, McNair is one of the theorists who believe that a globalized public sphere is emerging (McNair 2006, 143; 153). He notes that the media may help bring about a globalized public sphere for example through its forms of transnational satellite news and the internet (McNair 2006, 154). Clearly, his view is more media-centred than those theorists who claim that the public sphere ought to be seen in terms of multiple spheres. Another theorist who argues for a singular public sphere (or in his words the public space, "mediapolis") is Silverstone. His view on the public sphere is also media-centred, and he argues that the media increasingly constitute the world's publicness (Silverstone 2007, 29). Silverstone considers it fruitful to visualize the *wholeness* of media culture and to interrogate its weaknesses and possibilities. However, globalization has encouraged theorists also to consider the concept of public "sphericules" instead of the public sphere. For example Cunningham (2001, 132–143), who develops Gitlin's (1998) original idea of public sphericules, suggest that they are vibrant and globalized spaces of community-making and identity formation that are typical for contemporary, culturally plural societies. Cunningham suggests that the emergence and popularity of diasporic popular media is an example of the fact that in the globalized context, there are overlapping and ethno-specific sphericules which allow articulations of "multi-national" citizenship identities (Cunningham 2001, 134–135).

Indeed, the whole dilemma points to the question of whether we should talk about "publicness" instead of "the public sphere", since the latter term seems to lead us to disputes that might even hinder further theorizing. For example, Splichal (2006, 696; 710) maintains that we need to see the idea of "public/ness" as the basis and the principle on which the concept of the public sphere is founded. This principle of publicness is built on the Kantian understanding that people have a natural right to communicate. Therefore, we need to conceptualize a "site" for this communication that takes places according to the principle of publicness. This conceptualisation then usually is referred to as the public sphere. In addition, Heikkilä and Kunelius (2006, 65) point out that the "language of space" that the term public sphere connotes often directs our imagination by suggesting that questions regarding the public sphere are connected to the question of *where*. They suggest that one way out of this dilemma is to see the public sphere as action, much like pragmatist philosophers such as Dewey. Dewey sees that the public (sphere) is always a social formation defined by interaction between people (Kunelius 2004, 99). It is also useful to remember Habermas's notion that the public sphere is formed and reproduced through communication; it is a communication structure and not an institution (Habermas 1998, 360). Understand-

ing the public sphere as communication allows us to see that the diversity of communication in society may lead to diversity of publics.

The underlying idea in this discussion seems to be the usability of the notion of the public sphere itself: can it help us understand modern society and (public) journalism's role in it? Taylor (2004, 83) argues that the public sphere should be seen as one of the "social imaginaries" of modern society. With this, he means that the public sphere is a collective construct, an imagination that has become so evident for us that it is hard to conceive a society without it (Taylor 2004, 99). So, despite the spatial metaphor of the public sphere, it remains a fruitful concept if we consider it as a representation of our joint social imaginary; a mode of collective understanding about our social existence; an imaginary that is carried in images, stories and everyday practices, not merely in social theory (Taylor 2004, 23–24; Heikkilä & Kunelius 2006, 66–67). If we conceptualize the public sphere as a social imaginary, it also enables us to realize that we cannot escape the concept of *the* public sphere, in singular. The concept allows us firstly to conceive publicness and secondly to consider it as being constituted of smaller "actualized" publics.

Therefore, I suggest that for public journalism the best way to understand the structure of the public sphere is to consider publicness as the defining principle and consider the public sphere as being comprised of multiple publics that may emerge, dissolve or linger. Thus, in public journalism theory, we need a conception of an overarching and joint public sphere in order to have a relevant discussion about the possibilities and limitations of public journalism to bring forth diversity of citizen opinions in the public sphere, and ultimately have an impact on the policy making processes. However, we also need to recognise the plurality of publics within the public sphere in order to be able to evaluate how well public journalism succeeds in connecting the sub-publics with each other. In line with Dewey's view (see Kunelius 2004, 104), we may conclude that public journalism should aim at connecting various publics in order to recognize issues that require joint processing: democracy always presupposes that citizens can discuss with people who do not necessarily share the same experiences. Public journalism can monitor and articulate the discussions of the sub-publics; but it should also have the responsibility to maintain the connection (Haas 2007, 40) between those articulations and the political public sphere in which the articulations may evolve into considered opinions that can have an impact on decision making.

Citizens' role in the public sphere: Agents or representatives?

Seeing citizens either as active agents or seeing them as representatives of the citizenry lead to differing ways of viewing the public sphere of which citizens are a part of. The agency framework suggests that citizens are the most important actors in the public sphere, which is by definition an inclusive sphere of communication and interaction. The representative framework implies that

the ultimate authority in society rests with the citizenry, but that their public activity is not central for the function of the public sphere (Marx Ferree et al 2002, 290–291) and therefore they are seen in a more abstract frame.

Habermas considers citizens as active deliberators in the public sphere. Habermas's view on citizens as active agents is linked to his idea that it is the citizens who produce the public sphere with their communication. The role of citizens as active agents is thus fundamental for Habermas (1998, 364) because without citizens there would be no public sphere to begin with, he values communicative freedom that allows citizens to take part in deliberation. Hove (2007, 23) notes that for Habermas communicative freedom is a positive liberty, but paradoxically it entails *obeying* the socially interactive obligations of discourse. Thus, Habermas follows the liberal-individualist tradition in arguing that democracies should allow citizens a degree of individual autonomy, but the obeying aspect of discourse ethics follows the civic-republican tradition of democratic theory. Following the liberal heritage in his thinking, Habermas consistently views that civic activity takes place in the public sphere but the decision making ultimately takes place in the parliamentary organs (see Habermas 1994, for further comparison between liberal, republican and deliberative models).

One can say that Habermas's view of civic agency has a dual orientation due to the fact that his deliberative model takes elements from liberal as well as republican views (Habermas 1994, 6–7). On the one hand, civic activity is required in order to construct the public sphere to begin with, and on the other hand, civic activity in the form of deliberation is needed in order to produce public opinion and thus affect the political system with that opinion. In his 2006 article, he briefly touches a third point, namely that of civic agency as a process of learning or empowerment: civic agency can also strengthen citizens' identities and their capabilities to act (Habermas 2006, 414). Thus, he moves closer to Fraser (199, 125) who points out that public spheres are not just arenas for the formation of public opinion; they are also arenas for the formation and enactment of social identities.

However, for Habermas, civic activity without democratic representation is not effective. For him the public is recruited from the entire citizenry. It is the idea of belonging to a larger representative group, which acts as a guarantee of the public sphere's ability to work properly: to signal the state about current problems of civil society at large. As Habermas (2006, 24) puts it: "the political public sphere needs input from citizens who give voice to society's problems and respond to the issues articulated in elite discourse." Here Habermas's view on citizens is framed by "responding", but even so, Habermas cannot be situated among advocates of representative liberal democratic theory who consider that the public sphere should rather include citizens through their representatives than through participation (Marx Ferree et al 2002, 291–292).

For instance, Walter Lippmann's (1965 [1922]; 1925) theory on public opinion formation is more clearly based on a liberal-representative framework, which emphasizes the reactive role of the public. According to Lippmann, citizens merely represent themselves as individuals in the public sphere; they are outsiders in relation to the actual decision making in society. Consequently, the task of the public is to observe and oversee, and it should not act upon issues or waste its energy in deliberation. The public can affect the issues by lending or withdrawing its support to the administrative organs that are in executive positions. Even if Lippmann's role as an "anti-democrat" has been recently questioned (Schudson 2008) and the often cited Lippmann–Dewey debate has been re-interpreted in a manner that points out that the debaters in many cases were not that far from each other (Malmberg 2009), Lippmann can still be seen as a public sphere theorist who adheres to the ideas of expertise and representation rather than citizen agency. Namely, he argued that the government should take distance from public opinion expressed in the press: he considered public opinion as short-sighted and issue-oriented, and journalism as too profit-driven and unprofessional (Malmberg 2009, 61–62).

Blumer (1948, 545) has acknowledged that the element of representation is apparent when the public expresses its opinions: "the individuals almost always speak either explicitly or implicitly as representatives of groups". Even if Blumer considers that a public is formed through interaction, he sees representation as lending "backing" or prestige to the expressed opinions. Blumer argues that public opinion needs this representative backing because it is always affected by social inequalities between groups and individuals. Opinions gain prestige through representation. However, for Blumer, the idea of representation is connected to specific issues rather than to the overall representation of the citizenry. His ideas therefore suggest that in journalism, we need to identify the groups that are somehow involved and interested in the issues that are discussed, and to consider whether their views are truly represented in expressed public opinion or not.

The agency aspect of public sphere theory is prominently explicated for example by John Dewey and Hannah Arendt: they consider the relationship of civic agency and the public sphere to be central. For them, communication and interaction ultimately define the possibility for social and political life. For example, according to Dewey, it is only through interaction with others that the individual becomes a conscious agent (Dewey 1920, cited in Kuneilius 2004, 103). Arendt's theory of publicness relies on the fact that people "can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves" (Arendt 1958, 4). Communication can only emerge meaningfully if people acknowledge both what they share and what distinguishes them from one another: publicness is meaningful only if there is thinking, speaking, listening *and* acting (Silverstone 2007, 35, 38).

Arendt therefore suggests that citizens' capacity to act is also a capacity to initiate, "set something in motion", i.e. to reshape the surroundings in which people live (Arendt 1958, 177). For Arendt, being truly public means to be able to act and start something new, to be able to use one's public freedom. For her, civic action thus has a rather precise and demanding meaning; action always causes exceptions to the routine behaviour people so easily conform to (Rosen 1991, 274–275).

The idea of active citizen engagement in the public sphere is sometimes criticized by empirical findings that indicate citizens' disinterest and increasing passiveness in political and public life. This trend is good to bear in mind in order to avoid over-enthusiasm about active citizenship. However, according to Hermes (2006), for example, the cultural studies perspective suggests that we should widen the concept of the public sphere in order to recognize the importance of popular culture as a platform of the lifeworld – as it is the lifeworld to which the public sphere is rooted in. Therefore, we do not have to consider citizens' passiveness in the "serious" platforms of the public sphere so alarming; citizenship is also nurtured in the broader domain of media culture, especially now that the media landscape is changing so rapidly (Hermes 2006; Livingstone 2005). Thus, the everyday talk (and other forms of "weak" deliberation) that takes place for instance in the context of popular culture could indeed be seen as a basis of public discourse that has relevance for the political public sphere. To interpret this with the concepts of Habermas, the cultural studies approach suggests that the informal cultural public sphere and the formal political public sphere ought not to be considered too separate from one another. Indeed, in the current societal context, where publics have become increasingly mediated and audience participation is a key word in the media industry, research should address whether, when and how the activities of particular media audiences – be it journalism or popular culture – constitute a form of engagement and activity that matters to and is oriented towards the public sphere (see Livingstone 2005, 17; 36; also Couldry et al 2007).

An in-between position between the two viewpoints represented here can be exemplified by Michael Schudson's (1998) term "monitorial citizenship". He suggests that the best way to understand citizenship in the late modern era is to see that citizens engage in environmental surveillance rather than active information gathering and enactment. The current state of citizenship is seemingly inactive (people tend to be less active politically and in associations), but since citizens constantly monitor and scan their informational environment they have the potential to become alerted to action when faced with issues that are meaningful for them. Citizens may form floating or temporary coalitions to deal with the issues, and then after a while the coalitions may dissolve. (See Schudson 1998, 294–314; Merrit & McCombs 2004, 30–32.)

The above discussion about citizens as agents in the public sphere points

out that the role of civic activity in the public sphere has been looked at from various perspectives and levels. Citizen activity may mean the fundamental *interaction* that creates the public; *action that initiates something new* and without which the public sphere is not truly free; *political activity* such as activity in civic organizations; a *potential* to become active when necessary, or more informal *activity in the context of the everyday life* and popular culture. In addition, especially in the context of public journalism, there is also another level of citizen activity: *activity in relation to the news media*.

How should public journalism theory relate to this variance? Public journalism cannot bypass the role of citizens as representatives of a larger population and the framework of the representative democratic system in which it operates. Moreover, representation lends citizens' views legitimacy and authority in the public sphere, as Blumer notes. However, public journalism theory is deeply rooted in the framework of citizen activity here represented by theorists such as Dewey and Arendt. Citizens' interaction and capability for creating something new with their action form the basis of public journalism's underlying experimental-normative assumptions: public journalism ought to take part in maintaining the public sphere by recognizing the potential activity that citizens have, by addressing the public in a way that initiates and encourages citizen activity and thus also further assists the process of creating publics. In terms of political and everyday citizen activity, public journalism should take into consideration its aim to connect: to link the formal with the informal, so that the political public sphere would be connected with the experiences rooted in the lifeworld. In addition, public journalism should encourage citizen activity in relation to the news organization, but the motivation of this encouragement should not merely focus on the aim of getting citizens to contact the newsroom, but in getting citizens involved in public life.

Goal of deliberation: Problem-solving or issue recognition?

Public journalism theory takes deliberation as a key element of public life. However, it is somewhat unclear as to what the *aim* of deliberation is that public journalists advocate. It has not been clearly articulated whether public journalism builds itself on an idea of the public sphere where deliberation strives for solutions; or is deliberation rather a process during which certain issues are recognized (for similar argument see Haas 2007). The latter view means that sometimes the *process* of public opinion formation through deliberation is seen more important than solutions because the deliberative process brings forth issues and reveals viewpoints of the public and therefore also creates a public that is concerned about this common issue (Dewey 1954; Kunelius 2004, 98).

As noted, Habermas places his theory into the frame of deliberative democracy. In this framework, however, the public in itself does not have to

come up with solutions. Public deliberation is seen as a process that produces public opinion, but this opinion is not a solution, it merely acts as a method of control and guidance. The element of guidance becomes even stronger in his later work. Public deliberation does not have to – and in fact, the public sphere as a rather weak formation cannot – end up with solutions. Instead, it produces considered public opinions (Habermas 2006, 414). Moreover, it is significant that these opinions, concerns or questions are detected, thematized and problematized in public deliberation and in the media, and that – ideally – everyone who is affected by the issues is included in this process (Habermas 1998, 365). In other words, Habermas's later work places more emphasis on the public sphere's role in broader social problem-solving, which includes many components: 1) the public sphere enables people to form opinions, 2) it warns the state about situations that require attention and 3) it influences the state to respond to demands that arise from civil society (Hove 2007, 100). Hence, the public sphere is part of the process of social problem-solving, but it cannot be the primary site of finding solutions.

Moreover, Habermas (2006, 423–424) has not promoted an idea that it is merely beneficial for the functioning of the public sphere if publics are formed around issues. Especially in the context of the web, issue-publics can become isolated. However, he notes that a current trend of "issue voting" reveals the growing impact of public discourse on voting patterns and thus also on the formation of publics. He therefore softens his views and sees that publics formed around issues could even form an answer to fragmentation and the class-structured nature of the political public sphere.

Even if Habermas has become more prone to view that publics are formed around issues, he does not promote the idea that the *essence* of public deliberation and interaction lies in the process that creates the public. For him, the essence of deliberation is its "truth-tracking potential" and ability to "generate legitimacy through a procedure of opinion and will formation" (Habermas 2006, 413). For pragmatist theorists like John Dewey, the essence of deliberation is its result in the formation of the public itself. Dewey (1954) sees that a public consists of all those who are directly and indirectly affected by the consequences of a given action. The realisation that these consequences need to be jointly controlled ends up in the formation of a public. According to this understanding, the idea that people recognise certain "symptoms" and detect problems is the key factor that binds people together into a public. In a Deweyan sense, issue recognition refers to the process in which publics become aware of themselves. The goal of public deliberation is to phrase or thematize the issues from the perspective and in the language of civil society and everyday life so that the public can recognise itself in public discourse (Kunelius 2004, 100–101).

Also Blumer (1999 [1946], 22) suggests that publics are formed when problems emerge and require public discussion. By underlining the situation-

based nature of publics, Blumer points out that publics do not have a common culture. In other words, a public is not the same as a community. Blumer (1948, 546) heavily criticizes the study of public opinion through opinion polling; this reduces the idea of public opinion to a "quantitative distribution of individual opinions". Therefore, studying public opinion should rather focus on the *social interaction* through which public opinion is actually formed (Blumer 1948, 545).

Similarly, Dahlgren (2006) argues that the "traditional concepts of the public sphere do not help us to understand how publics 'come alive'". He thus emphasizes the idea that it is more important to understand the public sphere as being comprised of issue-publics that are formed through civic action and discourse. He calls for a more "concrete, empirical and even ethnographic" understanding of the public sphere, which would take into account that the public sphere is also something experiential and active (Dahlgren 2006, 274–275). This view underlines the importance of deliberation as a process that in itself creates and forms the public sphere and therefore does not place emphasis on finding solutions to problems. Dahlgren underscores the idea that civic activity and public discourse bring forth civic competence, and to be able to understand the sources of this competence, we need to look at the interplay between the private and the public.

Recent public sphere theorists, more tightly connected to deliberative democratic theory, have highlighted problem-solving as the key result of the deliberative process. For example, Seyla Benhabib (in an interview with Karin Wahl-Jorgensen) notes that we should not forget that deliberation is a decision-making process; it is not just a conversation. Hence there is always the urgency of coming to some kind of *conclusion* (Wahl-Jorgensen 2008, 966).

In terms of public journalism theory, the dilemma between problem-solving and issue recognition remains interesting. It is obvious that public journalism theory owes greatly to the Deweyan tradition by considering that the task of public journalism is to aid citizens in recognizing issues and coming together as publics. Based on this background, some public journalism scholars have taken a step forward and suggested that public problem-solving should be taken as the key aim of the idea (Rosen 1999b, Sirianni & Friedland 2001, Haas 2007). Haas (2007, 41–46) argues that the problem-solving model suggests that the public sphere should be considered in more expansive and inclusive terms than before. The journalists should move beyond the distrust of expertise or the belief that expert participation would taint the authentic expression of public opinion. Instead, it is important to consider the public sphere as an inclusive terrain in which some problems may be resolvable by citizens but other problems may require collaboration between citizens, experts and government officials. Therefore, he evinces that public journalism ought to facilitate the creation of such a "macro public" that would bring together all the relevant participants required for the problem-solving.

However, I consider problem-solving a demanding task and therefore it should not be over-emphasized as the core outcome of deliberation with regard to public journalism. The solution-oriented idea of public deliberation suggested by scholars is supportable, but could be toned down by the fact that issue recognition is a valuable outcome in itself. For example, feminist scholars point out that the process of public discussion is significant in its empowering ability, and its public nature may bring forth new understandings and recognition of distinctive standpoints of participants (Marx Ferree et al 2002, 307–308). In this question I would thus incline to Habermas's view that journalism should foster social problem-solving in a broad sense. It is enough for public journalism to encourage deliberation and use deliberative methods without the burden of having to come up with solutions. Solutions and suggestions may result from public journalism practices, but a too intense solution orientation may paralyse the process.

Function of the public sphere: Finding consensus or highlighting conflict?

The next juxtaposition deals with consensus-oriented deliberation and open-ended, even conflicting communication as a function of the public sphere. Consensus is seen as a collective and unanimous opinion of a number of people, whereas open-ended discussion does not underline single-mindedness. This counterpoint is closely related to the above mentioned solutions vs. issues question. In this dimension, however, the focus is on the question of whether the basis for a potential solution ought to be consensus or not.

Public journalism literature has not explicitly addressed the question of whether journalism should strive for a process of public opinion formation, which ends in a consensus, or rather, should it act as an open arena and take care of the fact that all the relevant viewpoints appear in the public sphere. According to the first view, consensus is seen as a frame that defines the nature of interaction in the public sphere. According to the latter option, the significance of the public sphere is seen in the plurality of views that it brings to the public. The latter view appreciates the fact that varying, even conflicting and passionate views get to be presented in the public sphere. Therefore, it is critical towards the rational nature of Habermasian deliberation.

Habermas's early view on consensus is summarized in the following quotation: "Public debate was supposed to transform *voluntas* into a *ratio* that in the public competition of private arguments came into being as the consensus about what was practically necessary in the interest of all" (Habermas 1989, 83). Thus, his early views that were based on the historically defined idea of the bourgeois public sphere highlighted the importance of reaching a consensus in rational-critical debate. The task of the public sphere was to settle "conflicts of interest" (Habermas 1989, 198). However, in his later writ-

ings, he shifts his focus to modern forms and the political public sphere and ceases to emphasize the idea of consensus. Instead, he refers to "approval" or "agreement" as necessary elements in the process of deliberation, if the process is to produce a truly public opinion (Habermas 1998, 362). Habermas argues that preferences and attitudes – which are always sources of conflict – cannot be separated from opinion formation, but participants can be separated from putting these dispositions into action (Habermas 1998, 361–362). By this, he refers to the fact that the deliberative process ought to be embedded in a shared understanding of the rules and practices of public communication, which emphasize rationality.²⁶ In other words, Habermas seems to loosen his emphasis on consensus as a product of deliberation, but he does not loosen his position on rationality as a shared understanding of the nature of public communication. A certain degree of rationality is always apparent in language-based human communication that aims at achieving understanding (Habermas 1984 [1981], 75), and understanding is always needed for reciprocal communication in society. However, understanding does not equal consensus. Hence, the function of the public sphere is to produce "plurality of considered public opinions" (Habermas 2006, 13), but these opinions are indeed plural, and therefore, they need not to be consensual.

However, Habermas does not go so far as to see the public sphere simply as an arena that brings forward all the necessary views. Opinion formation is still more important for him than the mere appearance of ideas. This is naturally linked to the central element of deliberation in his thinking. Deliberation is always a reasoning process, and therefore, it always produces more than a set of ideas. Even though Habermas admits that consensus is rarely reached, he continues to insist that we must go on assuming that consensus is in principle possible, or otherwise, political disputes would degenerate into purely strategic struggles for power (Baumeister 2007, 488; Karppinen et al 2008, 7). Moreover, while consensus was a significant component of early de-

26 The critics of Habermas's conception of rationality often interpret this concept rather narrowly. Even if Habermas's theoretical work presented in *Theory of Communicative Action* is not the focus of this study, one should note that in that context Habermas develops the concepts of rationality and rationalization extensively. He argues that in studying modern society it is central to focus on human communication, and such communication is defined by rationality, the need to understand the other and make sense of the societal context. (See Habermas 1984, 1–7.) For Habermas, rationality does not, then, equal something that is merely "free from values". Rationality is a necessary condition of modern human communication. Habermas develops rationality as a multi-layered concept. Rationality in communication is produced by various ways that take the form of validity claims. In other words, rationality is produced in communication by testing the validity of utterances by considering their truthfulness, normative rightness or sincerity (Habermas 1984, 99). This does not mean that Habermas would rule out emotions or experiences from rational communication; they are included, but also expressive self-representations need to be justified when criticized so that other participants may recognize in these representations their own reactions to similar situations (Habermas 1984, 15–17). Thus, expressive views and experiences are also tested with validity claims.

liberative theory, later contributions have modified its role and deliberative democratic theory has moved beyond a purely reason-centred and consensus-oriented emphasis (Karppinen et al 2008, 10).

A substantial theory of publicness that emphasizes appearance rather than consensus is brought forward by Hannah Arendt (1958). For her, the public realm is composed of the "space of appearance" and the "common world". The space of appearance is needed so that a reality becomes comprehensible: for humans something that is being seen or heard (i.e. appears) constitutes reality. The public realm provides this possibility for appearance, which is necessary also for the establishment of our public identities and for the assessment of the actions of others. This space of appearance comes into existence in interaction, in speech and persuasion. The common world is the other aspect of the public realm. This is the world of human artefacts and institutions that we have common experience and knowledge of; and this commonality also holds people and publicness together. (See Arendt 1958, 50–58; d'Entreves 1994, 140–143.) The role of the common world is important since mere appearance without context guarantees no understanding and thus no meaningful public life (Silverstone 2007, 26). The concepts stress the importance of appearance over reaching a consensus. However, Arendt argues that spaces of appearance are needed in order for citizens to disclose their identities and establish relations of reciprocity and solidarity (d'Entreves 1994, 152). So, even if Arendt does not underscore consensus, she suggests that political life cannot be solely based on differences and separations. This is due to the fact that difference without acknowledging a shareable identity leads to isolation, which then might lead to political impotence (Silverstone 2007, 36).

Some theorists do not follow the route provided by Ardent or Habermas, but they maintain that the aim of achieving consensus in the public sphere is problematic to begin with because human society is unequal and conflicting. For them, the deliberative process masks underlying power relations. Subordinate groups may not be able to take part in public discourse due to the lack of cultural competence. For example, Fraser (1992, 119–120; 125) notes that if we consider the public sphere to be composed of multiple publics, we are bound to see that the interlinking relationships between these sub-publics are as likely to become conflicting, as they are likely to be deliberative. In addition, Blumer argues that a "collective opinion" does not have to be unanimous. In fact, even if he values deliberation and rational argumentation, he sees that functioning public interaction is always characterised by oppositions, not by single-mindedness (Blumer 1999, 22–23; Blumer 1948, 545). He is accompanied by Gutman and Thompson (1996, 26) who argue that moral disagreement is a condition with which we must learn to live, not merely an obstacle to be overcome on the way to a just society.

Discordant communication may be seen as a goal in itself. This argument is

brought forward by a recent prominent critic of deliberation, Chantal Mouffe (1999, 2005). She argues that the idea of deliberation and especially the aim of consensus wipe out the dimensions of power and antagonism that are always present in the social and thus in the public sphere (Mouffe 2005, 24). Mouffe thinks that the deliberative framework fails to recognize that power and antagonism play key roles in the public sphere. She does not see the elements of conflict and disagreement as barriers to public discussion, but as elements that indeed make public discussion and exchange of opinions possible. In other words, unequal power relations and conflicts are inherent in all human societies. This antagonism emerges in all forms of social life, especially in politics and the public sphere. Therefore, Mouffe thinks that it is simply impossible to find a rationally based consensus in the public sphere without walling out anyone, i.e. without starting to reduce the very degree of publicness (Mouffe 1999; 2005). Therefore, the public sphere should be considered a site for the expression of dissensus and passions (Mouffe 2005, 24; Carpentier & Cammaerts 2006, 973) and an arena in which the political nature of society is made explicit. This process for her is contradictory by nature.

Is there any way of finding common ground between consensus-oriented and conflict-oriented theorists? In a way Mouffe addresses similar issues as Habermas, who points out that the validity claims in public discourse ought to be tested, questioned and contested. Karppinen et al (2008) suggest that it would be fruitful to overcome the polarized readings of both, Habermas and Mouffe, and to combine their insights in order to see that settlement and unsettlement are co-existing impulses of political life. The authors point out that contrary to some readings, neither Habermas nor Mouffe would embrace full consensus or unlimited pluralism. Therefore, both theorists could be used – even simultaneously – as perspectives that reveal problems and shortcomings in political and social reality. These insights may help us to study deliberation between people as a form of communication in which people accept each other's colliding positions as legitimate. (See Karppinen et al, 2008, 6–11.)

Furthermore, the theorists who do not fully embrace either view have suggested the importance of the everyday context; personal forms of knowing and experiences need to be included when studying the public sphere. Indeed, several other critics have pointed out that Habermas's emphasis on rationality – as a precondition for possible consensus – is problematic to begin with. Therefore, critical remarks on consensus are often coupled with those on rationality and the exclusion of the private. For instance Dahlgren (2006, 275) points out that the idea of the "public" as a basis for the public sphere has become associated with reason, rationality, objectivity, argument, work, text, information and knowledge – and also historically with masculinity. In contrast, the "private" resonates with the personal, emotion, intimacy, subjectivity, identity, consumption, aesthetics, style, entertainment, popular cul-

ture, pleasure and femininity. The problem is that if this whole terrain of the "private" and "non-rational" is analytically separated from our understanding of politics, democracy and the public sphere, it will be hard to understand the motivations, identities and passions that ignite people to become active (see also Fraser 1992). In addition, scholars such as James Aune and Gerard Hauser have recently suggested that rationally based deliberative democracy might benefit from paying greater attention to vernacular, personal and culturally informed forms of knowledge and emotion (Huspek 2007, 329–330).

Some critics seem to discard the idea of consensus-oriented deliberation altogether, but some consider that even with its limitations, it is a useful framework. For example, James Bohman supports the idea that even if finding a consensus might be too difficult of a task, deliberation is needed in order not to reduce the public sphere into a mere arena of rootless opinions. Bohman has stressed that when Habermas talks about deliberation, he is not referring to merely the diversity of opinions, but rather to diversity of perspectives as an experiential source of opinion. Thus, the deliberative process can make apparent the fact that the produced opinions are always attached to a group's social position and to the collective memory of its historical experiences. (See Huspek 2007, 330–331.)

For public journalism, then, the question is: with its adherence to the idea of deliberation, should it also adhere to the idea of consensus; or is it enough that the process of public deliberation is seen as an open and inclusive arena that promotes the expression of differing views? As I stated earlier, public journalism aims to foster public deliberation, and therefore, it is closely connected to the Habermasian framework. Additionally, following Arendt, it agrees that the possibility for public appearance in itself can be significant for marginalized groups. Therefore, public journalism theory should aim at what Habermas calls the "plurality of considered public opinions", thus not adhering to the notion of consensus as a collective and unanimous closure, but allowing citizens to express their considered opinions. Moreover, as in the case of problem-solving, a too tight theoretical adherence to consensus might work against the practice of public journalism. What public journalism theory may learn from critics of Habermas, then, is that that moral disagreements, conflicts and unequal power relations are inherent in human life and should not be treated as obstacles, but as points of departure for public discussion – however, not as the essential focus of journalistic coverage.

Democratic orientation: Ideal or practical?

Public sphere theories always have some kind of a link to democracy. As Marx Ferree et al (2002, 289) state: "Democratic theory focuses on accountability and responsiveness in the decision-making process; [and] theories of the public sphere focus on the role of public communication in facilitating or hindering this process." In the context of defining public journalism, I stated

that all the claims made in its name are always justified from the perspective of democracy, and that public journalism adheres to the ideas of deliberative and participatory theories of democracy. Therefore, public journalism sees democracy in terms of agency. However, this begs the question: should public journalism adhere to this participatory-deliberative framework as an *ideal* basis for its theory, or should it also in its theoretical considerations take into account the practical democratic setting in which it operates?

Habermas's public sphere theory offers us a mixed view on this matter. As mentioned earlier, it is possible to find both civic-republican and liberal-individualist elements in his theory (Habermas 1994; Hove 2007). Thus, the driving force behind democracy is also twofold: on the one hand, Habermas emphasizes civic participation and deliberation, and on the other hand, he trusts the experts in the parliamentary systems to take care of the "burden" of decision making. In my view, Habermas's theory gradually drifts closer to an *ideal deliberative model* of democracy, but he holds on to the idea that in practice this deliberative model is situated *in a representative* system of democracy, in which public opinion may "point the use of administrative power in specific directions" (Habermas 1994, 9). This twist thus generates the normative aspect in his work, in which he is worried about the technocratic nature of modern democracy (Outhwaite 1994, 6). In his ideally functioning democracy, civil society (i.e. participating citizens) should influence political institutions through public opinion. If it had no influence, political institutions would operate only according to logics of power struggles and bureaucratic routine (Hove 2007, 102). In other words, the interplay between the public sphere and parliamentary bodies is an important starting point for practices of deliberative politics (see Habermas 1998, 371).

Consequently, as a *normative* ideal, Habermas's public sphere theory is participatory and deliberative. However, as he tries to fit his normative view into the practical-empirical setting of the modern political public sphere, he also acknowledges the role of the elite actors more extensively in his later writings. He summarizes that in the political public sphere experts give advice, lobbyists and advocates represent interest groups and marginalized voices, moral entrepreneurs generate attention to neglected issues, and intellectuals promote general interests (Habermas 2006, 416). Their role, however, should not overpower that of citizens. His later theory is thus directed towards agents who are already well situated within the political public sphere, but it is less clear how his ideas might serve such agents in the public sphere that are excluded from the centres of power but desire a participatory entry (Huspek 2007, 332).

The question of ideal vs. practical democratic framework can be further discussed by referring to the already mentioned Lippmann vs. Dewey debate (cf. Schudson 2008; Malmberg 2009) on the nature of democracy. Lippmann advocates administrative democracy by stating that citizens are "outsiders"

of modern governance, and thus "it is on the men inside, under conditions that are sound, that the daily administrations of society must rest" (Lippmann 1965, 251). This means that there is a clear distinction between the public who observes, and experts and politicians who act. Lippmann does not view public opinion as a force that could truly control or guide public life (Lippmann 1925).

Schudson (2008) suggests that it is fruitful to consider Lippmann in the framework of representative democracy. From that perspective, Lippmann appears as a theorist who wishes to seek a way to harness experts to a legitimately democratic function as the advisers of politically elected decision-makers, not to place them in the role of the public. Malmberg (2009, 57–58) too refers to Lippmann as a "realist" in his view of democracy. Therefore, Lippmann can be regarded to evince a view that is embedded in representative democratic practice, and not in ideal theories.

Dewey, however, regarded that public opinion that is formulated in discussion and embedded in lived experience should have an impact on democratic decision making. Dewey argued that people's experiential knowledge should be utilized in a democratic way, via public discussion and participation. His dialogical and experience-centred view was thus fundamentally different from Lippmann's individualistic and knowledge-centred view of democracy. For Dewey, local communities and their forms of face-to-face interaction appeared as the ideal basis on which to build the democratic system altogether. (See Dewey 1954, 217–219; Malmberg 2009; Carey 1989, 79.)

According to Mouffe (2005), the driving force behind democracy is conflict that is inherent in every part of human societies. She makes a distinction between "the political" as the inherent conflict-driven nature of society and "politics" as the institutional handling of current issues by experts and politicians. By bearing in mind this distinction – and especially the fact that we need to have some kind of interplay between the two terrains (Mouffe 2005, 970) – we can see more clearly why it may be problematic to consider technocracy or experts as the driving forces of a democratically functioning public sphere.

If we consider that our society is embedded in "the political", as Mouffe suggests, we cannot ignore the active role that people inherently have as citizens in their right to "politicize" issues. This means that citizens can make explicit the power relations in seemingly non-political issues and make connections to larger societal problems, and thus bring them up as topics of discussion in the public sphere. Revealing the political nature of various issues often means that the handling of issues as "politics" becomes more complicated. However, Mouffe seems to believe in an institutional and party-led democracy. The role of this system is to transform antagonism into "agonism", i.e. to transform the innate conflicts into politically manageable differences, so that the citizens can have clear possibility to choose from different ways

(left vs. right) to organize society (Mouffe 2005, 120). For Mouffe, democracy is "agonistic struggle where you are being bombarded by different views" (Carpentier & Cammaerts 2006, 968).

The more culturally oriented media scholars have also discussed these issues. One of their central arguments deals with the emphasized way in which "traditional" public sphere theories still ultimately underline the elite structures and understands democracy in line with "politics" and not "the political". Cultural studies scholars argue that parts of society that are not traditionally seen as political or public also possess democratic potential (Dahlgren 2006). For instance, Hermes (2006, 40) argues that varying forms of popular culture and the "hidden debates" that take place in everyday settings should be taken seriously by public sphere theorists: "It is to make clear that politics is not something belonging to (informed) elite that you need to qualify for – but is about who we are and what we, all of us, want to make the world we live in." Additionally, Livingstone (2005, 19) suggests that it is important to see beyond the formal political system because citizen participation is increasingly a matter of identity, belonging and lifestyle, not merely a matter of formal and politically defined citizen status. Indeed, Marx Ferree et al (2002, 310) define "the political" as the societal dimension and power relations that are woven into lifestyles, cultural activities and family life, and thus the task of the media would be to actively seek out the political in everyday life.

These perspectives suggest that we should not adhere to the existing practices and ways of seeing democracy merely in line with the representative framework and formal politics. However, they do not embrace the idea of deliberative democracy, either. More importantly, these perspectives seem to transgress the lines between the public and private, so that everyday life issues could be handled in public, in order to reveal the political dimension of these issues.

A recent contribution to understanding the current state of democracy – between the participatory and representative frames – is introduced by John Keane (2009) who suggests that democracy ought to be understood in terms of *monitory democracy*. Keane argues that the basic institutions and legitimating spirit of representative democracy have undergone major permutations after the Second World War. Democracy today has assumed various forms and it needs to be viewed pragmatically. A common denominator in these forms is monitoring: i.e. *public scrutiny and control* of state and non-state institutions. Assembly-based/direct forms and election-based/representative forms of democracy that used to be dominant have now been mixed and combined with new extra-parliamentary ways of public monitoring: citizens' juries, advisory boards, public integrity commissions, consumer councils, social forums, participatory budgeting, blogs etc. In monitory democracy, the centrality of elections, political parties and parliaments is weakening, though not lost altogether. But the rules of democratic accountability, repre-

sentation and public participation are applied to a much wider range of settings and in much more complex manner than before. Monitory democracy stretches across borders; public monitoring takes place on local, national and supranational levels and its forms are networked, rapidly changing and supported by the new communication technologies, the internet especially. In sum, the new monitory institutions are defined by a commitment to strengthen the diversity and influence of citizens' voices and choices in decisions that affect their lives and to supplement the outcome of elections. (See Keane 2009, xxii–xxix; 686–747; Schudson 1998.)

What does the debate about ideal vs. realist democracy mean for public journalism? I consider that public journalism should adhere to the notion of deliberation, and thus to the theories of deliberative and participatory democracies as normative and ideal visions. These visions act as frames within which public journalism is able to justify its aim to assist publics to realize themselves. However, for public journalism as a movement that is practical as well as normative, it should be fruitful to state more concretely how public journalism can make a difference in the current societal context that is still largely election based, representative and expert-oriented. Here, the notion of monitory democracy can be useful: public journalism can itself be seen as a form of public monitoring. It could also be incorporated as part of the already existing or emerging monitory institutions. Keane (2009, 740) sees journalists as unelected representatives of publics and argues that in the era of communicative abundance, no topic is protected from media coverage and from possible politicization. Public journalism could act as a force that politicizes topics in a citizen-oriented manner. Public journalism should thus position itself more clearly as a connective agent that aims to build a link between citizens' participation and the formal political system in a way that does not neglect the experiences of the subaltern publics that are often ruled out of the formal political system. Public journalism should thus strive to take an active part in the democratic system that aims to combine "the political" with "politics" in a deliberative and participatory manner.

4.4. The "public" in public journalism

The five questions considered here can help us produce a theoretical basis for public journalism that is more deeply rooted in public sphere theories. Habermas's theory acts as an appropriate point of departure, particularly if his later work regarding the public sphere and journalism is considered. This allows us to take a step away from his early refeudalization argument and media pessimism. However, his conceptions can be in many respects widened by other theorists' views.

Firstly, despite its limitations, the notion of the public sphere as a singular concept is theoretically powerful. It has become part of our shared social

imaginary. In this regard, it is fruitful to maintain the idea of a singular public sphere, but to stress that it is a varying, non-spatial and actively formed terrain that features various sub-publics. Thus, the notions about the multiplicity of publics need to be taken into account, too. Publics may emerge and dissolve over time; some publics are more permanent than others. In addition, the sub-publics have different kinds of interests to become recognized in the public sphere, but nevertheless all of them exist in relation to it. This formulation allows us to see that it is possible – at least potentially – to consider, compare and connect issues that arise from the numerous counter-publics and issue-publics in the general framework of the public sphere.

Moreover, Friedland et al suggest (2006, 9; 24) that in a networked society, also the public sphere is networked; therefore, the direction of communication becomes varied and unpredictable allowing multiple contributions. The networked structure of the public sphere points to the way in which differentiated and issue-oriented publics can interact and communicate with each other and become recognized as part of the political public sphere. Indeed, people can be members of numerous publics, and thus interpersonal linkages and communication between publics should be recognized. The formation of these links is furthered by the internet and other new interactive and networked communication technologies. However, I do not consider the impact of these technologies as merely unifying. We need to be also aware of the “centrifugal” effects of new technology in its ability to reinforce scattered identities (Gitlin 1998, 173; Silverstone 2007, 52).

So, what does a public sphere consisting of multiple publics mean for public journalism? It means that it is journalism’s task to identify the multiple emerging “seeds” of publics in civil society. Journalism should take care of the fact that plurality provided by the smaller issue-based publics is recognized; i.e. they need to be encouraged in order to make the public sphere more multifaceted. Moreover, it means that journalism could facilitate the formation of these publics and take them into journalistic focus when relevant. Through this kind of activity, the recognized publics could become more aware of themselves and indeed more active, and the less recognized counter-publics could become seen as legitimate parts of the public sphere. Sometimes the counter-publics should, however, be allowed the time to evolve and not to take them too rapidly into the journalistic focus. The increasingly networked nature of the public sphere means, in turn, that public journalism in every platform should recognize the networked (and technologically aided) way in which individuals become publics and how these publics – even if they may be virtual – could be taken seriously in the realm of the political public sphere.

Secondly, it needs to be stressed that citizens indeed are the agents who construct the public sphere. This is a view that Habermas shares with Dewey and Arendt, even if the connection is not always explicit. Indeed, it is the ac-

tivities of citizens that form the public sphere in the first place. The public sphere (as a cluster of publics) is always an active notion, which requires interaction to be realized. For me, this is also the essence of the term "public" in public journalism: truly "public" journalism cannot exist without understanding the importance of civic agency. Therefore, in public journalism, citizens cannot be considered as passive receivers.

A central challenge for public journalism is to consider *how* journalism can be part of producing content and news stories that would launch the potential in individuals to become citizens, to become active firstly by recognizing itself as a public and secondly, engaging itself in public life. This is not a new dimension in public journalism, and these themes have been broadly discussed by Rosen, Merritt and numerous others. However, what is important in the above suggested understanding of civic agency is to consider it in broad terms, which do not undermine any forms of thinking, speaking, listening and acting. This requires sensitivity from journalists in seeing the social and political (or the lifeworld, if you wish), and not just politics (and the system) as legitimate areas of coverage. Understanding the role of citizens in these terms means considering civic activity firstly in relation to public life at large and only secondly in relation to the news organizations.

Thirdly, it is most fruitful to consider the public sphere as a social entity in which issue recognition is as important as solution-orientation. By issue recognition, I refer first to the way in which citizens as active agents form the public sphere. Recognizing common concerns and acute issues is the starting point for a public to realize itself. Second, it refers to the task of the public sphere to act as a site where these issues can be combined, tested and debated in order to find possible solutions. I do not, however, emphasize that public deliberation should always result in a solution. Indeed, problem-solving is a demanding goal for deliberation, and public journalism should sense the conflicting nature and plurality of society.

As such, it is also important to notice the potential nature of citizens as problem-solvers. Citizen-based problem-solving can indeed be maintained as a valid journalistic practice where appropriate. It may empower the public to see the possibility of proposing solutions, not just reacting to the solutions that are offered to them by the elite. But it needs to be considered where and how far does the ability of the public extend in terms of executing the solutions that it comes up with. These considerations have to be taken into account in order to avoid the disillusionment of citizens who take part in public journalism projects (Haas 2007). Therefore, in public journalism, problem-solving does not have to be the ultimate goal; it is more important to engage people in public life and aid publics in the realization of themselves.

The fourth question dealt with consensus and conflict. Consensus as a closure of deliberation is also a demanding idea. It is thus problematic to consider the public sphere in terms of consensual opinion formation. In fact, very

few theorists seem to emphasize consensus and even Habermas has moved towards an idea where there is no single or agreed public opinion, but rather the plurality of considered opinions. In other words, theorists do not believe that considered public opinions need to be consensual in nature in order to serve as fuel for public life.

Of course, some degree of agreement is always needed in collective opinion formation. A certain degree of mutual understanding is needed in order to be able to even make public discussion possible. Common interests can be discovered, but they remain contested as much as shared. Indeed, d'Edtrevés (1994, 151–152) has beautifully summarized Hannah Arendt's view on the matter: "When individuals come together to discuss and decide matters of public concern, they bring with them their own distinct views and opinions which are shaped and transformed, tested and enlarged in the encounter, but which are never eliminated nor transfigured into a unanimous agreement."

Instead of consensus, theorists seem to underline the importance of access to and the openness of the deliberative process. Openness and plurality act as sources of legitimacy for public opinion (e.g. Huspek 2007). In line with Arendt, I believe that we need to notice the importance of appearance in itself as a source of public power; for marginalized groups the mere possibility to become apparent in the eyes of the larger public can be a step towards public agency. However, I also consider that we should not undermine the conflicting, personal and experiential inputs in the public sphere. These interest-based views may well act as resources for public deliberation. Emotions and passions are factors that make people active and therefore public agency is connected for example to feelings of enjoyment or apprehension (Pietilä & Ridell 2008).

For public journalism, this means that it does not have to identify itself with an understanding of deliberation that emphasizes consensus. However, it does not have to take conflict as the new buzzword either. Public journalism could aim at politicizing seemingly apolitical issues, and thus make an intervention to and provide input for the routinely functioning system of politics. But concentrating only on conflict and ignoring connectedness might lead to a kind of journalism that promotes civic activity only in isolated and populist terms, or even take a step back towards classical news values that endorse conflict. Moreover, if public journalism wishes to empower citizens, it needs to take the question of appearance seriously. It needs to actively produce the kind of mediated public sphere in which appearance, identity formation and interaction become possible for the public.

The last counterpoint dealt with the ideal and realist democracy frames. Habermas's ideal model of democracy is deliberative, but his views are strongly affected by the practical way of organizing current democracies in a representative-liberal manner. So, how can public opinion that is formed

in the pluralist process of deliberation effectively influence decision making in democratic organs? Is communicative power, as Habermas suggests, an effective enough force to make representative and administrative organs take public opinion seriously?

In the context of public journalism, it is fruitful to consider democracy in terms of participation and deliberation as Dewey and Habermas have suggested. This view builds on Rosen's original idea that democracy is something that we *do*. Civic participation should thus be promoted also in its "weakest" sense, to encourage people to see "the political" nature of the everyday. However, it is useful to take into account that public journalism often functions in representative and administrative framework, and therefore, it needs to find ways in which public deliberation can be connected with the existing democratic structures, e.g. via the emerging institutions of public monitoring. I do not suggest that public journalism would give up its basis as seeing democracy in a participatory manner, but public journalism should openly recognize the contradiction between the ideal and the practical, so that it could more clearly identify itself as a form of public monitoring and promote civic participation in an effective manner. Indeed, this is the way in which journalism can remain democratic and "political" (in the broad sense) without fearing to lose its credibility by getting too involved in the "politics". Public journalism does not have to aim at transforming the formal and institutional structures of democracy but it needs to be aware of the differing logics behind the ideal and the realistic.

Based on the public sphere theories reviewed above, I conclude that public journalism would benefit from developing its practices on a wide theoretical basis. This basis draws broadly from Dewey and Habermas, but also from their critics. I suggest that if public journalism considers itself truly *public* it needs to recognize that the public sphere constitutes multiple publics, which are actively formed by citizens, but in which finding solutions is not always easy, since the nature of the public sphere is political and conflicting. In addition, the public sphere is kept alive by providing possibilities for appearance, participation and deliberation. In Table 2, I have summarized the suggested "deepened" conception of the public sphere in public journalism.

From this summary, we can see that this type of understanding of public sphere theory challenges professionalism's journalism-centred view. In order to consider *how* this challenge takes place and how it is interpreted in practice, we need to turn to my research data: public journalism news stories and interviews of journalists who have been working in newspapers that practice public journalism. Moreover, I wish to identify points of intersection between professionalism, public journalism and the idea of the public sphere. At these meeting points exists a basis for a firm theoretical ground on which it would be possible to develop the kind of public journalism that is professionally sound and "publicly" inspiring.

	Theoretically elaborated public sphere conception for public journalism
1. Structure of the public sphere	Multiple evolving publics that make up the public sphere. Public journalism's task is to promote the diversity of publics and connect them with one another and to the joint public sphere.
2. Role of citizens in the public sphere	Formal and representative citizenship with its voter status provide legitimacy for civic agents in the public sphere, but more important for public journalism it is to encourage citizen activity and the formation of publics. In public journalism, activity is important in relation to news organizations but more importantly to public life.
3. Goal of deliberation	The public sphere is a site for deliberation that enables solution finding, but problem-solving does not have to be the ultimate goal of public journalism. Fostering deliberation is more important in the sense that it reveals issues that require joint processing.
4. Function of the public sphere	The public sphere is an inclusive site for presenting conflicting views, and the opportunity for public appearance is also significant in its ability to empower. Consensus-formation is unlikely, but common understanding and considered opinions should be sought after.
5. Model of democracy	An attachment to the ideal of deliberative-participatory democracy that is centred on "the political." Links to the formal political system should be established: e.g. by considering public journalism as a form of public monitoring.

Table 2: Summary of the concept of the public sphere for public journalism theory.

The above discussed understanding of the public sphere is a normative-theoretical construct. Malmberg (2004, 58) summarizes Habermas by pointing out that he sees that mass communication can be both; a means to repress and a means to emancipate, and therefore, it is an empirical question to study when and where the media is repressive or emancipatory. I am fully aware that journalists do not and cannot consider these theoretical issues in the context of their everyday work. The constrained nature of news work was previously illustrated by the notion of newsroom culture. Therefore, this normative-theoretical basis acts as a mirror against which we can study newsroom practices and the interpretations that journalists have about them in the context of their newsroom cultures. We will be able to consider whether public journalism practices in the three Finnish newspapers have made journalists reflect on (or question) the way in which professionalism traditionally conceives the public, or whether public journalism is interpreted from the classical professional angle. It is interesting to see how the two broad aspects that are combined in public journalism – professionalism and the public sphere – appear as sense-making frames among journalists' reflections and in the organizational and textual news practices.

Thus, the task of the coming empirical chapters is *to scrutinize the practice of public journalism in Finland and the professional interpretations that have been initiated by such practice*. The theoretical debates addressed in the past chapters are examined empirically. Analyzing the news practices (Chapter 5) in the three newsrooms allows us to consider the way in which newsroom cultures have domesticated the idea of public journalism and how the journalists make sense of the arrival of public journalism into their newsrooms. The textual analysis (Chapter 6), in turn, enables us to see how the ideas and news making practices are turned into textual representations. Citizen positions in news stories are studied and attention is given for example to the way in which citizen activity is handled in those stories and whether the textual representations are able to produce connections between informal everyday life and the formal political public sphere. This discussion is followed by two chapters dedicated to the journalists' own interpretations. Journalists evaluate the role of citizens (Chapter 7) in participatory news approaches of their papers. It is discussed, for example, how participation is regarded in relation to the newspaper as well as the public sphere. Finally, the impact of public journalism on journalists' own professional self-images (Chapter 8) is discussed from the perspective of the elements of professional values and the "public" values. The discussion in this chapter thus shapes the handling of the empirical material, but more explicitly I will come back to these issues in the concluding remarks (Chapter 9).

5.

Public journalism practices

I will now move from the theoretical level of public journalism to the practical. In this chapter, I will discuss public journalism as journalistic work and practice in three Finnish newspapers: nationwide *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS), regional *Aamulehti* (AL) and local *Itä-Häme* (IH). These newspapers have somewhat differing histories with public journalism, and their newsroom cultures are different. Hence, public journalism has taken different forms in each newspaper. In order to understand the nature and the implications of public journalism in news texts (Chapter 6), for journalists' conceptions of "citizens" (Chapter 7) and for their own professional self-image (Chapter 8), we need to first form a view of newsroom practices related to public journalism. The underlying research question in this chapter is: *How do journalists interpret the arrival of public journalism and how do they evaluate the participatory news practices?*

In terms of methods, this chapter is based on interviews with reporters and editors as well as observations I have conducted in each newsroom. In addition, I have used documents such as planning memos, which I have gathered as research material from each paper. This chapter thus represents a study that Cottle (2003) calls the "middle-ground" of newsroom production studies: the study of organizational structures and workplace practices. He emphasizes the importance of studying journalism practices because he finds it inadequate to rely solely on the reading of media texts. He argues that it is important to study practices and texts together and approach them as mutually interpenetrating and not as analytically separable moments (Cottle 2003, 4–5; 16–17). Therefore, I wish to consider here public journalism practices and the journalists' interpretations of them, and then, in the following chapter, to look at the texts that have been produced, which will already have been discussed by journalists in this chapter. I wish to offer a way of seeing public

journalism as interplay between work practices and textual representations. I underline the agency of journalists: journalism practice is not merely dictated by routines or bureaucratic needs. I see it important to study the interpretations that journalists have about the practices, as recent media-ethnographies find support for professional reflexivity; i.e. for the argument that journalists are knowingly, purposefully and consciously involved in the process of producing news texts (see Cottle 2003, 17). In addition, the professional culture brings in understanding of the shared journalistic values and their evolution.

The introductory parts of every sub-chapter and case are based on the analysis of the whole spectrum of data: internal documents and memos as well as interviews and observations. The observation material (my notes, recorded meetings) was not fully coded, but it was used as supportive data in order to form a nuanced picture of the practices at the organizational level. When I discuss the interpretations of the arrival of public journalism as well as the evaluation of practices, I rely on interviews. The interview analysis for this chapter was carried out by first coding the data according to newspapers and then according to moments where journalists discussed the newsroom practices in a reflexive manner. Afterwards, this mass of "practice-talk" was coded into evaluative categories: into positive and negative reflections. Then each newsroom was analyzed separately by grouping and re-grouping the most prominent discursive clusters of evaluative talk. As a result of this analysis, the most discussed practices were identified.

I will start this chapter by first providing a short description of the newspapers and their newsroom cultures. I will then discuss each newspaper separately. In each sub-section, I will start by describing the way in which public journalism ideas have reached the newsroom and then discuss how journalists interpret this: do they consider public journalism as *a change* to the news practices and the prevailing newsroom cultures? After that I will discuss the central practices and routines that have been created in each paper in their public journalism projects. I will do this by analyzing the journalists' accounts on the successes and challenges they see in the practices. I wish to appreciate the journalists' own reflexive descriptions and evaluations, and therefore, the practices I analyze are the ones that are most discussed by journalists in the interviews. My analytical approach is thus grounded in the research material. Finally – and as part of discussing the practices in the local paper, IH – I will make a more detailed excursion into the work of the civic reporter. I will give more room for the civic reporters' own thoughts on her work routines and practices as well as for my own reflections as a participant and partner in the process.

	National newspaper	Regional newspaper	Local newspaper
Name	Helsingin Sanomat (HS)	Aamulehti (AL)	Itä-Häme (IH)
Location and circulation area	City of Helsinki (pop. 560 000) and the metropolitan area; leading national daily in Finland	City of Tampere (pop. 200 000) and the surrounding province of Pirkanmaa	Small town of Heinola (pop. 21 000) and four neighbouring towns
Circulation (2005)	420 000 (largest daily in Finland)	139 000 (third largest daily in Finland)	12 000
Publication pace	7 days a week	7 days a week	6 days a week (5 days a week until 2005)
Form of public journalism	Election coverage project based on citizens' agenda and joint election project with TV company	Wide citizen-oriented trend, e.g. election series, discussion events, news van	Permanent and specialized civic reporter, "civic stories"
Examined time frame	2003–2004	2002–2004	2004–2006

Table 3: The studied newspapers.

5.1. Short overview of the newspapers

I look at three different newspapers and their public journalism inspired approaches that have taken place in 2002–2006. In Table 3, some basic information about the studied papers is provided.

Helsingin Sanomat (HS) is a nation-wide newspaper, with a regional emphasis on the metropolitan area. The paper has a dominant position in the Finnish media field. It is estimated that every fifth Finn reads HS (970 000 readers), so it can be said to be the most influential quality daily in Finland. The structure of the Finnish national press market is unique, since there is virtually no competition among the subscription-based national dailies. The electronic media and the evening tabloids are seen as the closest competitors for HS. Therefore, Wiio (2006, 22) emphasizes the role of HS as a significant national agenda-setter. HS is part of the biggest media corporation in Finland, The Sanoma Group, which operates internationally in the publishing business.

Due to the secure position of HS as the leading national daily, its newsroom culture can be characterized as rather stable. It is affected by the trend of lowered subscriptions and advertisement income, but it is perhaps less

pressured by the economic situation than other newspapers in this study. But the socio-cultural trends, such as increasing multiculturalism, are reflected more clearly in its newsroom culture: the Helsinki area inhabits the most immigrants compared to other areas of the country. HS is the most important arena for domestic political debate, and the newsroom has a separate team of political journalists (10 journalists) to cover parliamentary politics, a resource in its own league compared to the rest of Finnish print media newsrooms. HS is party-politically independent. Historically, the paper was linked to the progressive and pro-Finnish politicians and later the Liberal Party, but the ties to the party started to loosen already in the 1930s. The newsroom is divided into several teams or departments, so that there are in fact several small newsrooms within HS. The HS building is located in the centre of Helsinki. Technologically the newsroom culture is defined by increasing importance of online journalism. However, at the time of gathering the empirical material for this research (in 2003–2004) the impact of social media on mainstream journalism was not yet explicit.

In this research, I will examine two HS's public journalism inspired election projects in 2003 and 2004. The projects were carried out by the politics team. During the Finnish parliamentary elections of 2003, HS based its pre-election reporting on a "citizens' agenda" rather than on the agenda of the political elite. Coverage was based on the 10 most important issues inferred from a reader survey. In 2004, the politics department carried out another public journalism inspired but differently organized election project connected to the European Parliament election. The EU election project included cooperation with a national commercial television network from the Sanoma Group. Pre-election coverage of the election included four large discussion events organized in the indoor agora of the newspaper's building.

Aamulehti (AL) is the regional leader in the area of Pirkanmaa, the province around the city of Tampere. It is part of the Alma-Media Group, which is the other big Finnish media corporation along with the Sanoma Group. Based on estimated circulation figures, AL is the third biggest newspaper in Finland. So, even if its profile is regional, it can be said to have aspirations at the national level. As mentioned, the regional newspapers have a historically strong role in the Finnish media field and they are still considered influential in their own regions. The biggest regional papers can also act as a nationally recognized force in their own right, since their actions define which national issues become widely relevant (Wiio 2006, 23).

Politically, AL was linked to the main right-wing conservative party in Finland, the National Coalition Party, until 1992. Currently, however, the paper is independent, and the newsroom culture is now defined by AL's regional role as the leading political arena of the area around the city of Tampere. The newspaper also has a separate team located in Helsinki and several small teams around the province. Economically, AL has been able to maintain its

circulation levels due to active marketing and a growth of population in the Tampere region. Socio-political elements that define its newsroom culture are similar to other newspapers in the Finnish media field. For example, AL has taken a proactive approach in the form of various pro-voting campaigns and election projects for reinvigorating the electoral activity in the region – and the prestige and significance of the newspaper itself.

In this research, I will examine more closely three different projects carried out in AL: the municipal election project of 2004 and the "value series" of 2002 and 2004. In the election project, AL organized public discussions events – a tour – in the region's municipalities and towns. The discussions gathered together candidates, representatives, other decision-makers and voters. The two value series were titled "Challenging Power" (2004) and "Turning Point of the Welfare" (2002). These series were based on the idea of facilitating discussions between citizens and acting ministers about broad and topical value questions in order to bring together the ideas and viewpoints of citizens and top-level decision-makers.

Itä-Häme (IH) is a local newspaper in the small town of Heinola in central Finland. The paper is part of ESA-konserni, a company that owns altogether eight local and regional newspapers and free sheets in the area. The newspaper has its roots in four local municipalities' interests to create a medium for information delivery for local municipal decision making. Historically, IH was identified with moderate right wing liberalism, but local coverage was considered more important than political orientation, and the paper has adopted a non-aligned position (Turpeinen 2000, 232–236). Locally, the paper continues to have a strong role, especially in the towns of Heinola and Hartola. Nationally, the paper has received recognition by winning the Finnish Newspapers Association's contests for local newspapers.

The newsroom culture of IH is influenced by the local surrounding where it operates. The Heinola region has a declining and aging population base, and due to this setting, the paper has been facing declining subscriber levels. However, culturally, IH represents a significant local public arena, and according to a reader survey, the most important reasons to subscribe or read IH are to receive local news and local event information. The paper also has a long-standing reader base. (See Pajula 2004.) Compared with the other two newspapers in this research, the political influences are perhaps least apparent in the local newsroom culture, due to the fact that the local papers in Finland have been less willing to align themselves with any political orientations in order to serve the local community on the whole. Technologically, the pressure to keep up with the speed of online news delivery is not that pressing either in the local setting than in the national and regional. However, IH's journalistic staff (about 15 people) has been affected by the digitalization development for example by being increasingly involved in the layout design process that used to be considered a purely technical skill.

Instead of particular projects or series of stories (as with HS and AL), I will study the work of IH's civic reporter, Chiméne "Simppu" Bavard, from the early stages in 2004 until 2006, that is, from the start of the publication of her "civic stories" to a period in which her work had developed into more stable routines. The creation of the civic reporter's post is connected to the aims of IH to stay relevant to its readers and underline the local and "intimate" nature of the paper. The civic reporter usually writes two stories a week, which are referred to as civic stories. They differ from the rest of the news stories in a way that the topics originate from citizens, or citizens are active participants in the process of making the stories, or the story is considered to serve the local citizens. None of the earlier Finnish public journalism projects have resulted in creating permanent posts, and in this sense, the approach of IH is significant.

Why these newspapers and projects?

In a multi-sited research, one needs to be transparent about the selection of the sites that are studied (Saukko 2003, 187). In my research, the first defining factor in choosing the sites was public journalism. I wanted to concentrate on newsrooms that have *experience in public journalism* or whose journalistic practices have been influenced by the movement's ideals. Even if journalists and editors generally have a varying understanding of what public journalism is, I still consider that these three cases represent the more conscious and methodical attempts to practice public journalism among Finnish newspapers.²⁷ Even if there has not been a banner of "public journalism" attached to the projects, the influences of the "original" public journalism movement are evident in each case. At HS, American public journalism election coverage inspired the newsroom. In the case of AL, the influence of public journalism was rooted in early co-operation projects with university researchers. In IH, "original" public journalism influenced the newsroom via the personal qualifications of the civic reporter, who had done her MA thesis on a public journalism experiment that she was personally involved in. The IH approach has also been affected by my own interventionist approach as a researcher and co-developer.

Another set of reasons for studying these particular newspapers is the variation that they provide in their *history and tradition of public journalism*. HS

27 It is appropriate here to make the point that even if public journalism might have gained foot in Finland more than in some other European countries (cf. Haas 2007), it does not mean that all of the Finnish newsrooms would be practicing public journalism or even having been influenced by its ideals. There has been an ongoing professional discussion about public journalism in Finland, but there is no agreement on a conceptual or practical level of what public journalism is. I have thus consciously chosen to study the more methodical public journalism routines and the journalists' reflections upon them. Therefore, I cannot provide a general picture of what the position of public journalism is in Finland, but I aim at offering an analysis of these particular cases.

represents a newsroom that was introduced to public journalism relatively late, in 2002–2003. It is also noteworthy that the HS election initiative did not spring from the academic world; it was an internal editorial decision to begin with. AL in turn represents a paper with a long tradition of public journalism, dating back to mid 1990s. Public journalism entered the AL newsroom initially through researcher-led initiatives (e.g. Kunelius 2001). However, the particular projects studied in this research were not done in university–newsroom co-operation as in earlier projects. In the local paper, IH, the spark for public journalism was an original mixture of academic research results and clearly articulated business motives. The start dates back to 2003–2004. The initial study that sparked the public journalism approach was conducted by a researcher Heikki Heikkilä from University of Tampere, but the idea for the civic reporter came from the newsroom. Thereafter, however, development of the civic reporters' work description and practices were formulated in co-operation with researchers from the University of Tampere (that is, mainly with me). Thus, IH represents a newsroom that started to develop a public journalism approach from a human resources perspective (allocating a specific position for public journalism practice), but with the motives being partially economic and the practice being developed jointly with a researcher.

The third set of arguments that grounds my cases is the differing *size and prestige of the news organizations*. HS is the largest newspaper in Finland with over 250 employees in journalistic work. The newsroom has separate departments covering domestic issues, politics, foreign news, Helsinki area, opinion, culture, sports and different theme sections. There are also regional teams covering different parts of the country. AL is a regional paper, but it has a fairly large news organization. There are about 140 people among the journalistic staff. The newsroom of AL is also divided into teams, and there is a separate team located in Helsinki for covering the national political scene. On top of this, there are also small regional newsrooms (sometimes operated by a single reporter only) in distant parts of the region. IH is a local newspaper with less than 20 employees: general news reporters, specialized local municipal reporters, a sports team and a photojournalist. Size matters because the public journalism approach is at the same time more challenging and more applicable in a large newsroom. In terms of challenges, there are potentially more difficulties in engaging a large work community in public journalism. However, the advantage of a large news organization is the possibility to allocate resources to the approach and the opposite, of course, applies to smaller newsrooms. When studying journalism and professionalism it is important to take into consideration different kinds of contexts. The tendency to focus on metropolitan and elite news media has been recognized by the research community, but the challenge still remains to take into consid-

eration for example local or alternative newspapers (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch 2009, 12; Glasser 1992, 136).

The fourth reason for choosing these particular newspapers is the material they provide for studying *the public sphere*. Due to their different locations and profiles, the coverage in the three newspapers is also addressed to different kinds of publics: a national, a regional and a local public. HS has a substantial impact on the national media agenda, since it can create wide public discussion with issues it reports. Public journalism at HS has been explicitly dedicated to the task of the politics team, which also indicates potential changes in the *political* public sphere. American public journalism has been criticized for being too local in nature (e.g. Zelizer 1999, Peters 1999); thus, it is interesting to examine the approach applied in the biggest newspaper in Finland. AL aims at addressing the people of the region by covering regional events and issues or searching for a distinct regional angle to national issues. The public that is addressed in IH, in turn, is local (or sub-regional) and the profile of the paper is connected to locality and closeness. With these cases, then, I can examine the ways in which the scope of the aimed public is present in the journalistic practices and self-evaluations.

The final set of reasons that grounds these cases is their *varying practices*. In fact, a central aim of my research is to identify and typify these practices. At this point, it is enough to say that there are grounding differences in the practices: HS has taken the path of election projects and cross-media co-operation; whereas discussion and dialogue-orientation would be the words to depict the practices of AL; and IH has developed its practices by allocating public journalism practices to a given reporter and then developing routines from there. I will now discuss each newspaper and its practices in turn.

In this research, I wish to indicate that due to the different newsroom cultures there are differences between the public journalism approaches and interpretations, but due to the shared professional culture, there are also significant similarities in which journalists in a small, middle-sized and a large news organization consider and practice public journalism.

5.2. Helsingin Sanomat: Election projects in the national daily

Public journalism ideas entered the HS newsroom when the politics department started to plan the coverage of the 2003 parliamentary election in the end of 2002. When Atte Jääskeläinen, the chief of the politics department, had started his position a few years earlier, he was advised by his superiors to develop the practices of the politics team; i.e. to think of the possibilities of "doing things differently" in political reporting (Jääskeläinen 2003). Hence, there was a clear wish by management to refresh the practices of political reporting, but the guidelines were left open.

Jääskeläinen considered that newspapers in general needed to be bolder in their election coverage: they should avoid the "measuring tape syndrome" according to which the requirements of politically balanced reporting over-run the requirements of journalistic relevance. Jääskeläinen framed the 2003 election project as a way to take the public agenda into the hands of the newspaper and take a step away from the agenda defined by the influential political players. The paper wanted to spark voters' interest in the election. The view of the newsroom was that the voters would be best served by "going to the basics", i.e. by covering *issues* instead of the *game*. Thus, the classical public journalism arguments figured clearly at HS. Another underlying idea at the planning stage of the project was the aspect of loyalty. Kovach and Rosenstiel's *Elements of Journalism* (2001) was one of the inspiring books for Jääskeläinen at the time. The authors' main argument is that journalists should not forget the core principles of professional journalism. In particular, given that journalism exists in a relationship with the public, it is always responsible and loyal to citizens. Moreover, journalism should gain back the public's trust. (See Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001.)

As the planning of the project developed, the newsroom searched for inspiration from the way in which election coverage was dealt with in other countries. Public journalism projects from the U.S. proved to be the most inspiring and promising. Tips for election reportage were sought from Poynter Institute's²⁸ website and publications as well as various American journalism schools' sites. Therefore, there was no definite idea to "start practising" public journalism at HS. Instead, there was a general will to reform election reporting, and this reform was inspired by public journalism ideals, among other things.

The plan was thus to redefine the election agenda in a way that would emphasise HS's loyalty to citizens – not to the political parties or the elite in general. Jääskeläinen pointed out that the HS newsroom in general is well aware of the "steering power" and the responsibility that originates from being the biggest daily in Finland. Consequently, the newsroom wanted to be as transparent as possible in its aims. When the first story was published (3.2.2003), it started with a commentary column that explained the premises of the project: to encourage voting, demand clarity from the parties, invite readers' inputs and appreciate the voters' agenda. The column underlined the new ways of doing election journalism.

The pre-election coverage was built around a survey of 1400 voters who were asked to consider the most important issues in the coming election. The voters thus acted as a backing on which the newsroom was able to lean on in its attempt to redirect election coverage. The idea was to bring forth the issues that were considered important by voters and relate these topics to the

28 www.poynter.org

views of political parties and candidates. The practical design of the project included ten theme stories (on unemployment, health care, criminality etc.) and seven party leader interviews that featured questions that were sent in by readers. Both story types were full-page articles written in pairs of two journalists: one reporter was usually a political journalist and the other from another team (domestic issues, economy etc.).

The starting point for the public journalism approach at HS was thus closely connected to the logic of the election process and national politics. It seems as if election coverage is an appealing, justified and relatively clearly defined starting point for projects that aim at journalistic development. This is indicated by the fact that many of the early public journalism projects in the U.S. were election projects. The case of HS is thus an example of the broader trend in which election coverage has been the entry point for public journalism into newsrooms. Election, as the high point of political reporting, brings the relationship between the press and the public more visible than the everyday context – even if it also brings forth more clearly the representative citizen position than the broader participatory position.

The trend of renewal and "doing something different" continued at HS in the context of the European Parliament election in May 2004. Again, there was a clear wish to try to increase voters' interest, now towards the EU election that had previously suffered from a low turnout percentage (about 40 %). In addition, there was willingness to strengthen the element of discussion at HS and experiment with open discussion events that would feature candidates and voters. At this stage, the cross-media possibility came up: the idea was to organize discussion events together with a TV broadcaster. *TV Nelonen* as part of the same corporation was a natural partner. According to a planning memo, co-operation with *Nelonen* was justified by the idea that two big organizations, *Nelonen* and HS together, could more easily get the political parties as well as voters interested and active. HS and *Nelonen* wanted also to lift their profiles as actors that would organize election discussions a little differently than the ones featured on the "traditional" TV channels. Another goal was to gain visibility for the newspaper through the medium of television. (See Nieminen 2006.)

The planning of the EU election project was started by Jääskeläinen, but soon he changed position and moved to another media company. Martta Nieminen – the news editor of the HS politics department – reports in her study (Nieminen 2006) that it would have been possible to withdraw from the project at that stage, but there was willingness to continue despite the fact that one of the project's main architects had left the organization. The election project was the first proper cross-media project between HS and *Nelonen*, and it therefore acted as a kind of pilot case. Hence, Nieminen took the lead in the process. Nieminen (2006, 63) emphasizes that one of the factors that

led to the project with *Nelonen* was the enthusiasm by the HS management to develop and strengthen cross-media co-operation practices.

The EU project resulted in four discussion events in Sanomatalo, the big newspaper building in the centre of Helsinki. The indoor square of the building was turned into "Euro-Agora" in which information about the EU and new EU countries was provided and the parties were able to promote themselves. During the events, there was also a large podium in which the broadcasted interviews took place. Each event had a different theme (new EU countries, security etc.) and they featured candidates and current MEPs as guests. The journalists from *Nelonen* and HS acted as the hosts and interviewers in the events. HS published a full-page story package from each event: a news-like main story that would feature the most interesting parts of the discussion, a short reportage featuring the reactions of the public, and a list of interesting quotes. The story package also always included a story that introduced fresh results from an opinion poll featuring the public's opinion on various EU-related issues as well as support for the different parties.

Planning memos indicate that "public journalism" – in citation marks – was part of the 2004 election project from the start. However, in the memo, the phrase "public journalism" was used rather narrowly to refer to a part of the event where it would be possible for the public to prepare questions and pose them to candidates. Moreover, in the actual events this element remained minimal: there was no time for proper questioning, and there were not many "authentic" citizen questions because many of the active members of the public were actually from the campaign offices. In retrospect, it seems clear that the cross-media nature of the project with all of its practical challenges and novelties took up so much energy that the public journalism aspect of the project shifted into the background.

However, the parliamentary election project of 2003 and the EU election project of 2004 form an interesting pair of projects that have openly aimed at renewing the practices of election journalism. The first project was more explicitly inspired by public journalism than the following. However, the positive experiences from the 2003 project acted as the starting point for the second one. Therefore, the two projects together provide interesting research material for considering the impact and interpretation of public journalism in Finnish newspaper journalism.

At the moment, HS is still applying some of the public journalism methods. Even if the approach started in the politics department, the methods have later been applied in the other sections, mainly in the "City" section that concentrates on the Helsinki area. The newsroom has for instance organized discussions on the themes of ethnic minorities, published a series of participatory articles about recovering a park in the city centre and invited readers' suggestions for how to best allocate the state's supplement funding for public investments at the eve of the economic recession. The paper has also invested

much in the development of its web pages and encouraged the integration of UGC with journalistic content. The HS web pages feature the possibilities to send in photos and videos, send online comments about news stories and read or comment on the journalists' and guest writers' blogs.

Public journalism introduced as a project

How did journalists interpret the arrival of public journalism at HS? In the interviews, the predominant explanation was connected to the earlier mentioned idea of "doing something different". In this interpretation, public journalism was framed as a moderate reform resource, a supplement to already existing practices. According to journalists, public journalism is not a label that was connected to the projects very actively but the projects were considered as conscious changes of direction in political journalism. The election projects were regarded with mixed feelings at first, but in retrospect, almost all journalists thought both projects deserved to be done. Public journalism was generally accepted as a good ideal but difficult to carry out in practice. (For an early account of the 2003 project, see Ahva 2004.)

On the one hand, HS's public journalism constituted projects that had a clear start and finish. Journalists admitted that they were willing to take part in clearly defined projects, especially when they were connected to parliamentary election coverage, the core task of political journalism. In this project frame, public journalism was also seen as something extra that exists on top of the traditional way of reporting that is still needed. Thus, citizen-based election coverage was seen as a deviation from normal political reporting. One of the journalists summarized that "this is not a typical practice at HS".

On the other hand – and quite opposite to the project frame – the introduction of public journalism at HS was seen as part of a longer and broader trend in political reporting. Suggestions about a wider shift – a broad "civic turn" (Ruusunoksa 2006) – in professional values were indicated by journalists. According to the interviews, there had been more talk at HS about the role of the citizens and "ordinary people" after the turn of the millennium.

I think in general journalists as professionals have started to think more about the process of doing a story. For instance, questions about the public: Who are you writing for? This discussion is nowadays more active. (HS4)

This quotation suggests that public journalism was seen as part of the trend that underlines the understandable, readable and reader friendly nature of the stories. In this trend, the journalists are required to think of the readers more closely than previously. The ideas of public journalism have thus become mixed with other visions as well as the already accepted traditions of

HS's newsroom culture. These trends include reader friendliness and interactivity with the audience.

In the case of HS, public journalism was also very closely connected to Jääskeläinen's leadership; the approach was personified. Journalists made frequent references to the fact that the approach was introduced and orchestrated by Jääskeläinen, and public journalism was considered part of his "philosophy". These references mostly had a positive undertone, but the journalists who were not enthusiastic about the projects made more negative remarks. For example, Jääskeläinen's decision to leave HS before the EU project aroused mixed feelings. Friedland (2003, 123) notes that the centrality of leadership actually underscores the relative fragility of public journalism within a news organization; sustaining public journalism requires an embedded leader who remains in the newsroom for a long time and is committed to the newsroom, the community and change.

These interpretations suggest that at HS the arrival of public journalism was not considered a very radical shift. The predominant frame was to see it as a *personified project mostly in line with the already existing newsroom traditions*. Public journalism in the project frame seemed more acceptable and appealing to journalists than a larger change in the philosophy of political journalism. Even if the two election projects were big investments – distinct moments of experimentation – the element of public journalism in them was not regarded as very deep. Hence, at HS, the arrival of public journalism ideas could be framed as a re-checking of the course.

Project planning, voters' agenda, team work and events

In the following, I will discuss the HS journalists' evaluations of the public journalism inspired practices. When I asked the journalists in the interviews to discuss their experiences, there always appeared both positive and negative features. The elements that were discussed most were (1) planning, (2) voters' agenda, (3) teamwork and (4) organizing and reporting the discussion events.

Planning. The planning and structuring of the projects were among the most discussed features. First of all, the journalists regarded careful and detailed planning as a positive element in the 2003 election project. The project was considered well organized and methodical, and therefore, it provided clarity for the pre-election coverage, which can at its worst "shoot around at different directions". According to journalists, the planning of the publication timetable, coherent visual layout and page templates helped their work (see Coleman 2007, for the role of design as content in public journalism). Journalists used phrases such as "building blocks" or "formats" when they referred to the structure of the project.

Here we had a grounding idea and this was a bit more structured approach. Everyone knew that we are going to have a terribly busy March ahead of us, but at least for me this plan brought calmness. It was like: ok, when we are through with this, at least we know we have done something proper. (HS1)

On the other hand, journalists thought that planning provided clarity for only the "technical" aspect of writing the stories, i.e. the lengths of the stories or the nature of the required story elements, such as fact boxes. The planning did not extend to the contents of the stories further than the assigned themes. This was partly regarded as a good thing because it provided a possibility for independent work, but partly, it was considered difficult to start writing a story about for example the problems of the health care system. Journalists were struggling to figure out what they were expected to write regarding the actual content of the stories. The only over-arching piece of advice that was given was to cover the themes from the perspective of ordinary people.

Another more negative point about the planning of the 2003 project was that the emphasis on pre-planning actually decreased the newspaper's ability to take up unexpected issues or follow the flow of news.

HS8: When we were doing the first stories and absorbed in our project, I was thinking that perhaps we forgot the fact that something unusual might come up. But I don't know, I am inclined to think that in spite of this the project was relevant.

HS9: Yeah, maybe the kind of reportage approach and sensing feelings on the field [of campaigning] suffered a bit.

Moreover, in the EU election project, the planning stage was considered stressful because during the process there was confusion about the role of the HS journalists (vs. *Nelonen's* TV reporters) in the events. Nieminen's (2006) findings also reveal that many journalists thought that the EU project was planned in secrecy; that there was not enough information available for those who were not directly involved in the project. Two possible explanations here could have been the rapid change in project leadership during the middle of the process or the kind of suspicion that is often expressed in terms of co-operation plans. The EU project also lacked a similarly transparent and representatively legitimate starting point that the survey provided in the 2003 project. All in all, journalists seemed to appreciate planning and consider the orderly nature of the 2003 project as successful. Consequently, they might have also inflated the shortcomings in planning and openness as the negative experiences in the 2004 project.

Voters' agenda. The 2003 election project was formed around the voters' agenda that was created by a telephone survey. Surveying public opinion is a

rather typical part of the American public journalism approach (Firedland & Nichols 2002, 46–47) especially in the context of an election. In the HS survey, voters were first asked an open question about the most important issue in the coming election. After that, they were asked to evaluate the importance of a number of given issues. Typically, opinion polls at HS centre on more specific issues, and their results are covered in one or two news stories. This time, the survey was used as a structure for the whole coverage. Journalists considered this as a positive starting point because it provided a firm basis and the possibility for issue-oriented coverage rather than person- or event-oriented coverage.

HS4: [In the previous parliament election coverage] we handled the situation very differently.

Q: How?

HS4: Went to the events organized by the parties and followed their comments. It was basically that. We repeated the themes they gave.

Q: And this time it was quite a bit different?

HS4: Yes, very much. And I think this is definitely a better method. I don't say that it all was bad then, from the viewpoint of the reader, but it felt better to do it like this, so that we actually tried to do it for the voters or like citizen-oriented.

The voters' agenda thus provided "posture" for the whole approach and made HS's coverage distinguishable from other media. The positive point was that the survey results were well utilized and made transparent.

However, even if the survey provided a set of representative results, some journalists pointed out that there are always challenges in interpreting the results. Depending on the interpretation, the results can be used as a means to either strengthen or undermine the existing power structures. The survey was also regarded as a rather limited way of finding out opinions because with the help of a survey, it is impossible to discover the experiences that people have about different issues. The HS journalists thus pointed in the same direction as Glasser and Craft (1997) who have criticized public journalism's dependence on opinion polls. They argue that polling may turn public opinion into an aggregation of individual opinions and produce impressions of opinions without the possibility to evaluate the roots of those opinions (Glasser & Craft 1997, 29). However, combined with discussions or some other techniques that can provide depth to the meaning of the results, a survey may act as a relevant starting point for coverage.

The binding nature of the survey was also challenged. Discussion among the journalists was aroused by the theme of migration, for example. The theme did not reach the top ten most important issues according to the voters, but the newsroom made a decision to include the topic in the series anyway. The

results of the election revealed that the decision was right in a sense that the right wing party with an immigration critical profile received a surprisingly large amount of votes. This result provoked journalists to question the ability of a survey to truly reveal important societal trends. Another downside of using the voters' agenda was connected to the previously discussed problem of inflexibility or inability to react to the quickly changing election agenda or the "flow of news". Moreover, a few journalists even questioned the whole idea of the survey because they thought that journalists could have come up with a similar list on their own, and therefore, they regarded the survey only as an addition that made the project *look* like it was citizen-based. Thus, the agenda was seen as a relevant and useful starting point for the pre-election coverage, but the journalists also saw its restrictions.

Teamwork. Both projects involved teamwork at the planning and writing stages and brought together journalists from different departments. The EU election project also featured teamwork that crossed the borders of two different newsrooms, HS and *Nelonen*. The teams at HS usually operate very independently and are thus regarded as "states within states", as one of the journalists put it. The journalists explained that both of the projects were labour-intensive, they tied many people, because the story packages were large, full-page stories. However, many journalists considered that in terms of teamwork the resources of the news organization were utilized well, especially in the first project.

We had a lot more joint discussions and we did things together. We talked more about the issues in politics and what to do with them. If we use organizational language, I think we used the resources of the newsroom a lot more efficient than we did last time, because now we had co-operation. (HS1)

Journalists considered it as a positive element that the theme stories were written in pairs of two: the political reporter usually covered parts of the story that dealt with the views of the parties, and the other reporter wrote about the subject matter. The idea was to utilize the expertise and experience that already existed in the organization: a crime reporter covered the theme of criminality and insecurity; a foreign reporter wrote about migration and so forth. One of the journalists mentioned that she liked this kind of pair work because it was flexible and there was the possibility for fruitful interaction with colleagues without formal and tiring meetings.

However, teamwork with the TV station *Nelonen* in the EU election project was considered more problematic. Most intensive co-operation took place at the planning stage and was mainly the task of the project leaders. Among journalists, there were prejudices about the co-operation and its nature. *Nelonen* is a newcomer to the Finnish national television market, and hence, it is

not necessarily regarded as a traditional or credible news media. The professional skills of the *Nelonen* crew were not directly questioned, but from the start, there was a sense of uneasiness. However, during the project, most of the critical attitudes faded away. This observation indicates that the journalists at HS did not sense a shared corporate culture within Sanoma Corporation that would have acted as the basis for teamwork. However, during the project, common points of reference were found from the shared professional culture of journalists. Eventually the cross media project was regarded as an exciting experience and a way to acquire new competences with the guidance of "TV professionals", as a journalist put it.

Public discussion events. In connection to the EU project, the evaluative discourse of the journalists was centred on the discussion events. The journalists were mainly content with the events: they were considered lively and having a nice, relaxed atmosphere. Journalists were pleased that the events brought together political actors and voters; they were also pleasantly surprised by the amount of people that attended the events. Another positive factor was that the events brought people to the newspaper building. This theme was not deeply reflected upon, but journalists seemed to consider that it is beneficial for HS to act as an approachable and active organization.

The events were considered to serve their purpose in getting people interested in the EU election. According to HS journalists, the events served those people best who really came to the venue. The edited broadcasts, in turn, were criticized for being too short and slightly amateur-like. From newspaper readers' point of view, the events were considered somewhat problematic. This was caused by the fact that the events compelled the reporters to write news about what had taken place even if nothing especially newsworthy happened. One journalist regarded that the news stories cannot be considered "a journalistic triumph" for HS.

I didn't actually get any good pieces of news from there, because the issues were already dealt there that evening. So it felt more like delayed reporting, not real news work. - - For me it was somehow difficult to make the stories, I was never pleased with my own stories. (HS13)

Some journalists were not happy that the election coverage in the EU project was event-based, especially in comparison with the issue-based approach of the 2003 project. Most of the criticism was targeted at the fact that due to the broadcasts, the events were designed on TV's terms: getting the newspaper stories was regarded as a secondary purpose. Some journalists even felt that they were forced to report positively about the events (if not about the attending politicians), and they felt that perhaps their reporting was lacking a critical stance.

Summary

At HS, public journalism took the form of election projects. Even if the wider "civic turn" in newspaper journalism was spotted and discussed by HS journalists, the main frame of the organization's public journalism was that of a project. Both of the election projects were thus considered as special cases, deviations from traditional political reporting, but the deviation was not considered to be a very dramatic one. The public journalism projects were considered as attempts to handle election coverage a little differently. Most emphasis was placed on the practices of planning, forming the voters' agenda with the survey, teamwork and the organizing of the public events. For HS journalists, these practices represented the "difference" that the projects brought to the newsroom.

Journalists appeared as conservative regarding the cross-media nature of the EU election project. Moreover, in comparison to *Nelonen*, HS journalists had a certain typical pride in their work and their organization: they underlined the nature and tradition of HS as a *quality daily* (Nieminen 2006). Considering this kind of newsroom culture, it is unlikely that reform movement rhetoric and the framing of the public journalism approach as a dramatic change would have thrived at HS. On the contrary, HS's newsroom culture seemed to have enhanced the journalists' way of regarding public journalism as an additional element to the already existing styles of reporting.

All in all, participatory practices were discussed in a rather reasonable manner. There was no hype; journalists noticed the positive as well as negative features in all of the practices. As separate projects, the issue-based parliament election project seemed to have suited the HS journalists' professional values and the existing newsroom culture better than the EU election project that required cross-media elements and event-orientation. However, the use of the voters' agenda as a single practice created the most interesting – and contradictory – professional reflections. This indicates that using participatory methods in the agenda setting of a national daily remains a contradictory element.

5.3. Aamulehti:

Discussion-based formats in the regional newspaper

The history of public journalism at AL is longer than at HS and IH. First project-like initiatives were organized and led jointly by the paper and Tampere University researchers in the 1990s. The first project began in 1996 and focused on suburb reporting. Suburbs can easily become neglected areas of newspaper coverage due to the lack of official representative organs and routine-like institutional sources or the reporters' prejudices about the suburb (see also Beckman 2003). The project aimed at revitalizing the relationship between the newspaper and a large local suburb in Tampere, called Hervanta.

In the 1996 project, a reporter was temporarily located in the suburb to enable access to and interaction with the residents. Efforts to change routine coverage were also made by experimenting with new story types and organizing meetings with local residents. The project was widened in 1997 by experimenting with deliberative focus groups that were gathered together to discuss the city budget. An unofficial "budget jury" was created and the group met six times. Due to the lack of existing participatory routines, the experiments were regarded as demanding by the reporters and the results were temporary. However, the first projects confirmed that citizens are willing to participate in the news making process and express their views when an opportunity opens. (See Heikkilä & Kunelius 1999; Kunelius 1999.)

The paper later discontinued the suburb focus as well as the use of deliberative focus groups, but other types of participatory practices were assumed. AL moved its main newsroom from a distant industrial area to the city centre in 2001 and started to organize open discussion events in the new newspaper building's auditorium on a more regular basis. The paper also named a special "reader reporter" to answer readers' questions about the paper and its practices in order to improve the transparency of the news making process. The use of the "news van" also started and became systematic. The paper introduced practices such as the election tours and school tours. In the latter concept, the paper organizes discussions together with different schools in the area. In these events, students get to choose the topics, and a story based on the event is published. The topics have varied from alcohol use to nuclear energy.

Despite the early projects in the 1990s, it is difficult to clarify the roots of the public journalism approach at AL, as the paper has actively developed its routines and sought inspiration from abroad.²⁹ In the course of time, the ideals of public journalism have become mixed with the broad idea of reader orientation or user-driven journalism (Fallows 1996, 266). For example, AL has been among the first Finnish newspapers to utilize the RISC Media Monitoring concept in its journalistic planning and evaluation. The criteria for good journalism are renegotiated according to the perceived wants and needs of the RISC-surveyed target groups (Hujanen 2008).

In the RISC framework, readers are mostly seen as consumers, but the ideas and practices that emerge from the use of RISC as a journalistic tool – and not merely an advertising tool – can also aim to serve people as active citizens. Hujanen (2008, 195–196) notes that customer oriented RISC-practices do not necessarily conflict with the views of public journalism and political participation. According to her study on the use of RISC in Finnish newspapers, AL stands out as an example of a newspaper in which the RISC method is used

29 For example, Ed Miller from USA has visited the paper as part of a leadership program. Miller was involved in the 1992 *Charlotte Observer* election coverage reform project with the Poynter Institute.

to address the readers in multiple roles: as consumers, consumer-citizens and politically active citizens. Hujanen argues that public journalism and RISC-based methods as development tools are not mutually exclusive or even necessarily conflicting. The RISC method can also fuel fresh political journalism given that it is being developed and utilized for this purpose. The newsroom culture therefore plays a decisive role in the way that such methods are used.

The newsroom leaders at AL directly pointed out that public journalism and the use of RISC go "hand in hand". The approaches are linked in a way that they both aim at getting to know the paper's public better. The impact of RISC on public journalism at AL is evident in the way that public journalism inspired practises were wished to be developed into formats or "concepts" with fixed target groups and clear profiles.

These concepts do work, but our own thinking has evolved, too, so that we might not carry out this type of series [the first value series] any more. I would like to better address readers who are in this RISC quadrant - - who emphasize pleasure and trends. The heavy-users, tradition and opinion oriented people, they would read the stories anyway. (AL8)

Turning public journalism practices into *concepts* – as pointed out by the above quotation – is about routinizing practices and helping them take root in the newsroom culture. Public journalism requires a lot of work, and commitment by journalists is important. Familiar and repeatable formats might make it easier to engage the journalists in the practices due to the shared vocabulary that is created. Furthermore, with known labels it may be easier to recognize and address the kind of people that are regarded as the target groups.

The public journalism formats that have been examined in this research in more detail are the so-called value series – "Turning Point of Welfare" (2002), "Challenging Power" (2004) – and the local election project of 2004. These series featured a group of public journalism practises: the use of small group interviews, face-to-face encounters, news van visits and public discussion events. The ideals of discussion and dialogue were common to all of the practices.

However, dialogue and public journalism were not the only starting points when the value series concept was created in 2002. With the series, the newspaper wanted to develop practices that would bring together the Helsinki office and the main newsroom in Tampere.³⁰ There was thus a wish to shape the

30 At the time of the projects, the Helsinki newsroom included journalists from AL as well as from another regional newspaper *Turun Sanomat* that has its main newsroom in the city of Turku in western Finland. Thus, the logic of the value series was also to combine the forces of the two newspapers. The projects involved four journalists from the home newsrooms in Tampere and Turku and two journalists from the joint Helsinki office. By now the co-operation between AL and *Turun Sanomat* has been dissolved.

organizational culture of the newspaper towards more effective co-operation. The public journalism aspect of the project, in turn, was less defined.

It was not so much about public journalism. I quickly realized that what was wanted was a project - - that would bring the Helsinki, Turku and Tampere newsrooms together. - - The thought about doing public journalism, it came along a little later. I don't think we even used such a word. We were concerned about how to get the voice of the provinces heard by the decision-makers in Helsinki. (AL9)

In the second value series public journalism as a notion was more explicit. In a 2004 planning memo, it states, "it is again time for direct public journalism". The project was justified by the idea that the paper needs to scrutinize the policy programs of the government in a way that would open up their meaning from the citizens' point of view. The aim of the series was thus combined with the need to challenge the "new form of political liturgy", the policy programs. The key idea in the value series was to write story pairs: the first story was based on an interview with a citizen and the second story on a meeting between the citizen and a minister in Helsinki.

The first election tour was carried out in 2000. According to an editor, the first tour was a pilot case and a learning experience that gave the newsroom a possibility to test the concept. The idea of the tour was developed further and carried out again in the local election of 2004 (as well as in 2008). The refined format underlined the importance of proper background work and the creation of enthusiasm, even "hype" about the discussions and the election itself.

According to the planning documents, the main goals of the election project in 2004 were based on the fact that AL as the biggest newspaper in the Pirkanmaa region needs to promote the mental and economic prosperity of the area. The starting point was thus closely connected to the paper's status and legacy as the "voice" of the province. The aim was to widen the traditional agenda of the newspaper and make the paper an active agent in order to raise themes and issues that were relevant for local residents. The election project stories were also published in pairs of two: the first story introduced the central issues that were discovered by the news van visits, and the second story reported the discussions featuring politicians and voters.

At the moment, AL is still utilizing some of the public journalism concepts discussed here. Different kinds of tours and discussion events on various topics, such as the quality of school lunches or the state of elderly care, have remained part of the newspaper's repertoire. The newsroom has also developed its website to include more interactive possibilities and devoted one of its Sunday supplements to small-scale events and local people.

Public journalism as slow evolution

According to journalists, the reader-oriented approach as an accepted way of doing journalism has been broadly adopted by the AL newsroom. Since AL, in contrast to the two other newspapers in this study, has the longest history of public journalism, there has been more time for the journalists to socialize to the particular newsroom culture and its values, routines and rituals (see Shcudson 1991). The paper's own idea of reader orientation has become such an integral part of news work that journalists have difficulties in identifying the early stages and arrival of the trend in their paper.

The seeds [of public journalism] have been around for a long time, whatever name you give to them. In another context, I was going through old papers and I went through Aamulehti and Helsingin Sanomat. I got the picture from there that we in Aamulehti have quite early chosen the path of going close to people, asking them different questions. Now, in these [value] series for example, the idea just crystallized. (AL3)

Journalists' repeatedly indicated that the roots of participatory practices run deep in the organization. However, the journalists' interpretations also varied with each other significantly. Thus, within the newsroom, there was no dominant narrative according to which public journalism was seen to have arrived at the paper. Journalists referred to various different starting points or sources: some saw public journalism as an idea of Hannu Olkinuora (the editor-in-chief 1995–2000); some connected it to Matti Apunen (the editor-in-chief at that time); some remembered the university led projects of the 1990s as the starting point; and some connected the arrival of public journalism to the start of the school tours or the unemployed section developed during the 1990s recession.

The introduction of public journalism was further explained by an economic imperative. At the same time as the practices have evolved, public journalism ideals have blended in with more business-like ideas of reader orientation and service journalism. So, the RISC discourse was recognized but not profoundly discussed by reporters. The editors were the ones who brought forth most clearly the importance of RISC and the idea that RISC and public journalism were not contradictory with each other. These measures were seen as ways to revive the audiences of political journalism. Audience strategies are in fact closely connected to whether public journalism is likely to be tried: the traditional wide readership strategy is to appeal to the public broadly, and thus, it holds the widest possible democratic effect of public journalism, but the narrower demographic or segmented strategies do not preclude the public journalism approach either, but they reach out to those

(usually more affluent readers) who are more likely to be active in the first place (Friedland 2003, 122).

In the business-oriented interpretation, one of the driving forces behind public journalism of the 2000s was media competition that pushes AL to compete with other media outlets over readers and advertisers. Therefore, the paper was seen to be in need of addressing its readers in a more appealing manner and design its content and profile according to the (assumed) needs of its readers in order to be able to survive increasing media competition.

I think that the whole field of communication will evolve so that television will strongly grow as an entertainment medium utilizing international formats, the web will evolve into the meeting place of small tribes, and the newspaper, a little surprisingly perhaps, will struggle but will become the central medium to foster the sense of community. In this province, there is no other medium that would keep people together and promote the sense of community than the regional paper. (AL6)

In the above quotation, the market-oriented competition interpretation goes interestingly hand in hand with the more historical and normative one. The Finnish regional press has a strong tradition of carrying forward the "voice of the province" into the national public sphere. This traditional task has presumably made it easier for journalists in the regional paper to frame public journalism as a suitable effort to maintain the joint regional forum and connect it to the national public sphere. Public journalism has been seen as part of this long historical continuum.

In sum, the entry of public journalism into AL was interpreted by journalists in three ways: it was connected to the slow development of reader orientation, to the logic of media competition, and to the status of the paper as a regional forum. So, at AL, public journalism was not seen as a single project of a single chief. This is an indication of the fact that the *ideas and practices of public journalism have arrived to the organization slowly and from various sources*. This reminds us that public journalism never appeared in Finnish newsrooms as a movement-like phenomenon. The kind of "applied" public journalism that is currently practiced in the papers is indeed a result of many factors and a blend of practices.

Events, news van, encounters and topic selection

When public journalism formats at AL are considered in more detail, the most discussed practices turn out to be (1) the events, (2) the news van, (3) encounters and (4) topic selection. These practices thus formed the essence of how public journalism was seen as news work.

Events. AL journalists generally regarded the election project events as

successful. Deliberative events have become a typical feature in the public journalism approach in the U.S. where, for example, about half of the studied 600 cases included community conversations or supported some form of public deliberation (Friedland & Nichols 2002, 48–49). At AL, discussion events were recognized as an integral part of the paper's public journalism approach. The AL journalists were content with the overall rate of participation and at their best, the events were regarded as lively, even fun. The idea that the discussion events provided the public an opportunity to question the candidates was valued; thus, the events appeared as a kind of service to the voters. They were also thought to invigorate the political culture of the region's towns. Many journalists explained that without the paper's effort some of the smallest communities would have lacked such a forum.

However, when the events were discussed in detail critical experiences surfaced. Firstly, reporters who were involved in practical work as organizers, reporters or hosts of the events indicated that the events required a lot of work. The election project involved scheduling and planning, co-ordination and other non-journalistic organizing, such as taking care of the venue or "props", as one of the journalists put it. Some even thought that the events primarily served the marketing needs of the paper and a lot of energy was therefore put into the appearance of the events. Because some journalists considered the events as circulation promotion manoeuvres, they also considered the stories as merely by-products and thus not always very high in quality. Here we can see commonalities between HS and AL; perhaps an indication of the shared professional culture that acts as a reference point for journalists to distance themselves from promotional aspects of the practices.

I think they [stories] were a bit scattered. I mean when you write in a hurry, it won't be Pulitzer journalism. There are many other factors affecting, too - - all of the invited panellists need to be noted in the story - - . So if you think about journalistic quality, I don't think these are the best examples of that. (AL2)

The journalists considered – quite similarly to the journalists at HS – that the writing had to be done on the events' terms. Stories were referred to as "quick reviews", and due to having only a maximum of two hours' time to finish the story, reporters had to rely on their internalized routines. Journalists thus addressed the dilemma arising from combining the public service of organizing a possibility to meet the candidates; reporting the event quickly for the next morning's paper; and the journalistic quality of the stories.

The biggest problem, however, was considered to be the lack of "ordinary citizens" (see Chapter 7). Journalists' accounts of the discussion events often underlined the fact that the majority of the participants in the events were current representatives, candidates for the city council or local "activists"

from political parties or other groups. The passiveness of the "regular" voters positioned the whole event concept into a dubious light, as the following example shows:

It turned out that there [in the events] were mainly candidates. And therefore, there was a contradiction because the aim was to listen to ordinary citizens. But how do you do that when you cannot find them? You had to find the citizens with a magnifying glass: it was good if you could find one or two regular citizens among the fifty participants. How do you build your story then? (AL14)

News van. On the positive side, the news van visits were framed as opportunities to tap into authentic experiences of citizens and non-institutional sources. The news van practice was seen as an opportunity to build up connections with local residents and have more time to discuss with them the issues than a normal *vox pop* interview situation on the street. The practice was also considered as a means of getting direct feedback from the audience. Some considered the news van practice as an integral part of the election tour concept because it provided journalists with necessary information to prepare the discussion events.

Another positive side was the element of surprise: in news van meetings, journalists may discover issues that do not arise in institutional contexts. The citizens' views and experiences may even challenge a reporter's preconceptions. One of the journalists gave an example of this and described a news van visit that was organized prior to an election discussion. Based on her own preconception and the coverage of the competing (local) newspapers, she was sure that people would emphasize the issue of building a new swimming hall as the central election theme. However, people who visited the news van did not discuss the swimming hall. Instead, they brought up a wider and more abstract question of the dispirited atmosphere of the town; people were worried about empty business premises and the fact that people were moving out of the town. This experience suggests that the news van practice may help journalists better map the mental climate of the communities they visit.

The news van, however, was perhaps the single most criticized practice at AL. Journalists considered it to be problematic in many accounts. Firstly, practical question such as time of the day or the venue of the van visit were considered to affect the outcome. The van usually visited the sites during daytime when a majority of people were working; therefore, this method did not reach the working age voters. The most critical voices maintained that the news van only attracted pensioners, housewives or "the regular local activists" who are already in contact with the newspaper. Some journalists were frustrated with having to persuade or even pressure people to discuss their opinions and experiences with them.

I've done a few of these news van gigs, and in practice, I have had to drag people there and persuade them to say something. - - If there is one active participant that is usually the half-witted personality of the town that everyone knows already. (AL1)

The main reason for such reactions is unpredictability. The news van situation is not controllable by journalists themselves: there might be many visitors, or none at all; it is hard to predict. In order to avoid a situation in which the journalist would have had to return to the newsroom with empty hands, journalists started to invite people they already know to visit the van or even interview them beforehand and only ask them over to the van for the photo. These kinds of measures helped the journalists to tackle the unpredictable nature of the practice, but they also worked against the principles of the whole concept.

Encounters. The practice of bringing together citizens with decision-makers in face-to-face dialogue is referred to as an encounter. Both or the value series were based on this idea: the journalist first interviewed an individual or a group of people in order to write a story that depicts their everyday experiences and views. After that, one of the interviewed citizens travelled to meet a minister in Helsinki.³¹ This practice was evaluated as being a labour intensive but most often rewarding way of doing public journalism. The positive experiences were connected to the fact that the encounters enabled the opportunity to get concrete answers from ministers and to engage them in dialogue with citizens.

Another positive element was the fact that at their best the encounter stories represented the citizens as able partners in discussion, as questioners who have knowledge based on their own experiences – as farmers, students or nurses. Journalists also had mostly positive experiences from working with citizen groups. Moreover, some of the journalists considered this way of making a story as a learning experience for themselves because this method offered a way for citizens to share their knowledge with the reporter.

In terms of difficulties, the biggest problems were connected to scheduling: being able to organize a meeting that fits the timetables of a minister, two to four journalists, a photographer and two citizens is a hard task. The amount of practical work was "terrible", as one journalist put it. Another problematic issue was the question of news value in the encounter stories. According to an evaluation by a journalist, the series did not prove to be as news-like or as intense as was hoped. Sometimes, the meetings were dictated

³¹ In fact, there were always two citizens at a time discussing with the minister. This was because both series were carried out as joint projects with the Helsinki newsroom that produces stories for AL and another regional paper, *Turun Sanomat*. There was, however, only one person featured in the actual story. Only a few of the stories mentioned the presence of another participant.

by the ministers and a possibility for true dialogue was lost. The face-to-face situations also "civilized" the nature of the discussion, and therefore, the stories may have lost an element of tension valued by journalists. A news editor commented that if the concept of the value series is applied in the future, it needs sharpening: "It is more than difficult to produce an extravagant story with this concept."

Topic selection. Topic selection was considered a central journalistic task connected to all of AL's public journalism concepts. The journalists recognized that one of the premises in public journalism is to provide the possibility for the public to affect the news agenda; offer them an opportunity to suggest topics and issues for coverage. However, in practice, it was very seldom possible to start with a totally "clean slate", as one of the journalists put it. Consequently, there was a contradiction between the idea of truly citizen defined topics and getting a newsworthy story.

Current journalistic trends underline the importance of pre-planning (e.g. Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008): the contents of the next day's paper are already roughly decided in the morning meeting. This kind of planning runs counter to the ideal that journalists would go to the field to find out topics without any pre-decided frames. This creates a dilemma: should journalists appreciate the public journalism ideal and give room for citizens in the news van visit or group interviews to determine the actual topic of the coming story, or should they play it safe and think of possible themes beforehand in order to get an interesting story?

Due to this contradiction, some journalists were even hesitant to name AL's practises as public journalism. Is it public journalism if the events or visits are pre-planned, even "forced" in nature? If journalists decide which topics are covered, and if they filter and select the themes that the public suggest, is it public journalism, or is it just journalism? These kinds of thoughts were usually connected to an overall critical stance towards public journalism, and therefore, they did not imply that the journalists would have necessarily wanted the practices to become *more* citizen-driven. Indeed, not all journalists were willing to hand over the task of agenda setting to citizens. This discussion suggests, however, that participatory news practices at AL have made the power of agenda setting visible.

Summary

The dominant interpretation suggests that public journalism arrived at AL slowly; it was only in the 2000s that the ideas took a more clear form and became regular practices. The practices, thereafter, were developed into repeatable formats and fixed concepts. The way in which public journalism practices were discussed at AL reveals an important aspect: by regularly facilitating practices such as the discussion events, news van visits and encounters the journalists framed public journalism practices mainly as *concrete events*.

Moreover, the implementation of these events requires activity and concept development by the newsroom.

Given the long tradition of public journalism practices at AL, journalists have plenty of experience and material in order to evaluate its positive and negative sides. The paper's approach was evidently considered to have its problems. Serious reflections about topic selection and agenda setting suggest that due to the long tradition, journalists have been able to reflect upon conceptual questions of public journalism, such as the line between public journalism and "just" journalism.

One of the biggest questions concerning the practices at AL was centred on the idea that thorough organizing and planning do not automatically guarantee a successful outcome. The journalists were troubled by the idea of having to organize the events and yet being unable to control them, since with public journalism practices the newsrooms need to partly rely on the input of citizens. This might be another reason why format development has become so central at AL: to provide a sense of control. All in all, even if the practices were (self-)critically evaluated by journalists, it seems that public journalism in its "applied" form has reached a rather firm position in the newsroom culture of AL.

5.4. Itä-Häme: Citizen-oriented reporting in the local paper

In 2001 *Itä-Häme*, the local newspaper in the town of Heinola, started a short project that aimed at improving the content and practices of the newspaper and enabling journalists to evaluate their work better. Researcher Heikki Heikkilä from the Journalism Research and Development Centre at University of Tampere was asked to co-ordinate the project. During the project, a content analysis that indicated heavy reliance on official sources, acted as an initiator for further development. It was a concrete result that provoked the newsroom to recheck its sourcing practices. According to the editor-in-chief at the time, Ari Helminen, the broad ideas of citizen-orientation and its everyday aspect had already been part of the paper's aims at that stage. After the development project of 2001, however, some of the shortcomings and problems in the practices became verbalized. The idea of public journalism was discussed in the newsroom for the first time when the idea was introduced by the researcher.

The project was continued independently by the newspaper's own editors in 2002–2003. During this second project, the problems of everyday work were mapped. These included being stuck in old routines, shortage of time and resources, lack of motivation and team spirit, lack of reader feedback and problems with the internal communication and feedback. Some of the problems were addressed in internal discussion sessions and a few training days were organized (e.g. creativity in news work). After these discussions, the

new aims and means were collected into a folder and delivered to all. In addition, the strategy of the newspaper was renewed during the process. "Regular people and their everyday lives" were considered to be an important focus of the paper in a way that they should be featured in the paper as "users or customers of services and also as active actors and experts", as was documented in a project paper. A focus group study in which readers evaluated the paper was also organized. The readers suggested that the paper should rethink the ways in which it utilizes the expertise of regular people or local organizations and clubs.

These development projects were shaped and affected by the need to improve the economic success of the paper. For instance, the internal project report starts by referring to the "circulation problem". Thus, the idea of citizen orientation at IH has been clearly connected to the idea that the profitability of the paper can be affected by measures such as public journalism.

After the projects, the editor-in-chief and the area manager developed further the idea of citizen orientation and decided to recruit a specialized "civic reporter" that would be "close to the readers, so that the readers would find it easier to approach the paper", as was formulated by the newsroom leaders. The idea in the beginning was that the civic reporter would "write about the everyday life of people in the region, about their joys and sorrows". The area manager explained the roots of the idea as follows:

I accidentally opened the TV and started to follow a story that featured an Austrian editor-in-chief telling about his newspaper. The program highlighted the role of an individual journalist as a trustee, helper, problem-solver, listener and active participant. During the program, it appeared to me that a newspaper can lift up problems of the so-called regular citizens and try to find answers from the authorities, for example. In the program, a local politician regarded the papers' approach positively because often a problem that an individual is facing actually affects a larger group, too. This seemed like a good idea, and based on this, I made a proposition that was developed further in the newsroom.

The position was thereafter created and announced internally. News reporter Chiméne Bavard was recruited for the position, which at first was a temporary one. The idea was to test the concept first. The job description of the civic reporter was rather open to start with, and Bavard was given room to develop her work methods individually.

In May 2004, the newspaper contacted the Journalism Research and Development Centre again with a proposal. The paper asked if the Centre or any of its researchers would be willing to take part in the process of developing the work of the civic reporter. At this stage, I got involved in the process due

to my research interests in public journalism. From then on, I agreed to be of assistance to the civic reporter by giving her feedback about the stories and discussing and developing the practices together with her. In return, I was allowed to use the experiences from this co-operation as my research data.

As we can see, the story of the arrival of public journalism at IH is somewhat different from the other two papers. Even if there are some similarities to AL – the research community as the initial introducer of public journalism – the practices at IH did not start to evolve after a specified public journalism project. The news organization decided to take an approach that would redefine the profile of a single, specialized reporter, to match the ideas of public journalism as well as the paper's own economically informed needs. Thus, the paper created a model of its own. To my knowledge, IH has been the first newspaper in Finland to introduce a civic reporter. A slightly modified approach was introduced in 2006 at *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*, another newspaper from the same chain, *Esa-konserni*.

The arrival of public journalism at IH can be seen as a chain of development projects that evolved into an organizational, long-term approach: into a decision to change the structure of the journalistic staff in a way that would more clearly channel public journalism practices as the task of a single journalist. The aim was to make the citizen-oriented coverage more premeditated and appealing to subscribers. The economic justification of the approach also underlined the fact that the civic reporter was considered as a kind of commodity. "I see this [post of the civic reporter] almost as a product; and public journalism is the line that we follow", mentioned the area manager. Interestingly, at IH, it is the journalist that has become commodified, whereas at AL, the RISC-analyzed audience is seen as an article of trade.

The position of the civic reporter was made permanent in 2005, and the reporter is still (while writing this) working at IH. In 2005, the paper went through a transition by moving from a broadsheet to a tabloid format and changing the publication pace from five to six issues per week. As a broadsheet, the civic reporter was required to produce at least one civic story per week, but as a tabloid, this requirement increased to two stories.

The civic reporter's stories are commonly referred to as "civic stories" (*kansalaisjutut*). They differ from the rest of the paper's news in a way that the topics usually originate from citizens. Citizens are also active participants in the process of making the stories. The stories feature a logo that includes the following text:

The topic of this article came from the readers. Do you have in mind a theme that would concern the readers of Itä-Häme? The theme can be critical or positive and somehow connected to your everyday life. We can for instance go and meet the decision-maker

or a politician who is in charge of these issues. The ideas and tips can also be delivered without a name.

The civic reporters' stories do not follow a strict pattern, but they can be categorized into six different story types: (1) everyday life stories, (2) current topics stories, (3) presentation of local areas and people, (4) encounter stories, (5) "mobilizing stories" and (6) readers' questions. In 2005, the civic reporter also started her own blog on the papers' website.

By now, the civic reporter has established her position among the staff as well as the local public. She has been able to build up a civic network and has become such a visible actor in the local public sphere that she receives more story ideas than she can deal with. Consequently, some of the ideas are passed on to the rest of the newsroom, thus making the contents of the paper even more broadly citizen-based: some methods used by the civic reporter have spread to the rest of the newsroom. IH has also been moderately developing its website during the past years. Readers are encouraged to contact the civic reporter online or comment on her blog. At the moment, however, the new newsroom leadership seems to have adopted a looser definition of public journalism resulting also in a looser definition of the civic reporter's profile and tasks.

Public journalism as specialization of an individual journalist

Among IH journalists, there was a twofold way to make sense of the arrival of public journalism. On the one hand, it was seen as an organizational reform initiated by the management of the paper. Hence, public journalism was interpreted to be a part of the series of organizational development projects of the early 2000s. It was therefore seen as a strategic choice that touched everyone on the staff. The idea of citizen orientation has been presented "countless times" in the morning meetings, and therefore, it was considered as an ideal that applies to the whole newsroom, not just to the civic reporter.

We have tried to bring the citizen angle into the paper in various ways. We have had so many development projects that it's starting to get tiresome, really. But now finally there are some signs of change as well. You can see the difference if you compare what it was six years ago and what we have now. (IH1)

According to this organizational interpretation, the development project of 2001 first increased the awareness of all of the reporters to take the civic angle into account in their stories. However, the awareness was turned into effective practice only after the creation of the civic reporter's position.

On the other hand, the arrival of public journalism was connected to the start of the civic reporter's work. In this frame, public journalism was primar-

ily seen an approach that belonged to the civic reporter – not necessarily to the whole news organization.³² The journalists had a positive attitude towards public journalism, but their willingness to apply it in practice varied. Thus, even if the reform projects at IH have prepared the ground for reflexive professional discussion, the practices do not penetrate the whole organization.

The journalists pointed out that in the beginning there was a state of confusion about what the whole concept meant and why there had to be a new title for a single reporter. For many, the title "civic reporter" sounded foreign. However, because the idea was seen as an individual's project, it did not create much resistance in the newsroom. Gradually the concept became accepted and the term "public journalism" gained concrete meaning through the work of the reporter.

Because the civic reporter was entrusted with the development of the practices of public journalism, the approach was considered to be "on her shoulders", as someone put it. However, not all saw this differentiation as a positive phenomenon and they thought, for example, that it would be more beneficial for the whole organization to have joint brainstorming sessions in which the concept and the themes of the civic stories would become processed further.

An additional articulated frame for the introduction of public journalism was economic pressure; declining circulation was a well-known fact. A small newsroom with a small staff is affected by tightening budgets. This profitability framework has spread throughout the staff. All in all, the *general newsroom development work and specialization of the civic reporter were seen as means by which the paper tries to stay economically profitable.*

Division of work, use of time and civic stories

I have grouped together three central issues that were evaluated by journalists at IH regarding their public journalism practices. These themes include (1) the formation of the civic reporter's job description and division of work within the newsroom, (2) the use of time in public journalism and (3) the civic stories. I have excluded the civic reporter's own remarks from the first part of the analysis. In this section, I will thus give space to Chiméne Bavard's colleagues to evaluate the paper's approach altogether. However, since public journalism practices at IH are so clearly personified, I will then discuss separately Bavard's personal experiences and make an excursion into the work practices of the civic reporter.

32 Heikkilä (2001) reports about an early public journalism project in a regional newspaper called *Savon Sanomat*, in which a university-led public journalism project resulted in a creation of "civic pages" that were in practice assigned to a single journalist. There were interesting similarities with IH: on the one hand, the periodical publication of the pages made public journalism an approved approach among the staff, but on the other hand, public journalism was also seen as an individual project of the individual journalist (Heikkilä 2001, 275–280).

Job description and division of work. In the beginning, the job description of the civic reporter was vague; the civic reporter started "from point zero", as someone put it. However, journalists considered that the job description and the issues related to the distribution of work became clearer over time. The early confusion turned into a professional pride of creating a new method of doing local citizen-based journalism.

According to newsroom management, the civic reporter was able to "validate" her position in the eyes of her colleagues through her work. Colleagues viewed the civic reporter's work as useful for the whole organization. Indeed, even if the divide between "regular reporters" and the "civic reporter" created some confusion at the start, many journalists came to the conclusion that it is beneficial to have a separate civic reporter who can concentrate on public journalism. Her example provoked others in the newsroom to think of their own work practices, even in the sport section. On top of that, the overall amount of reader contacts has increased, and consequently, the civic reporter has acted as a resource for the whole paper.

I have understood that now she gets more ideas and tips than she can use on her own. So, Simppu has also passed on the ideas to others - - so that she actually is a very good source of information for us. We have the problem that not many of us reporters come from this region originally, and therefore, we don't have our own networks yet. But Simppu has been able to create a network with her work, and therefore, she can forward information to others, too. (IH2)

"Validation" of the civic reporter's position and the solidifying of the job description can further be seen as a result of the fact that participatory work practices had become a visible part of the everyday routines of the paper. New ideas slowly turned into practices thereby becoming routinized and accepted. Another reason for this recognition is that the civic reporter was awarded for her work in 2006 by the Union of Journalists in Finland, i.e. by her professional peers outside the newsroom. The reporter was given the "Sword for Freedom of Speech", an award that is presented to a distinguished journalist every four years.³³ The award acted as an approval of the whole newsroom for being on the right track.

33 Quotation from the award nomination: "*Chiméne Bavard is a civic reporter at Itä-Häme. She has made close connections with the public. She finds answers to questions that readers consider problematic and let readers comment on the officials' and other experts' answers. As a journalist, Bavard has shed light on the experiences of people who do not usually appear in public: immigrants, residents of the outback as well as people dependent on public food support. She has made it easier for people to come and visit the newsroom. In addition, Chiméne Bavard has openly talked about the approach of public journalism to her audience as well as colleagues.*"

In terms of the distribution of work, everyone was considered to be "allowed to do public journalism" at IH. However, it depended on journalists' personal interests and eagerness whether participatory practices were adopted. Some saw the adoption of participatory practices as a question of generation: the younger generation was thought to have adopted the practices more willingly than older generations. The basic idea of citizen-based journalism was thus widely accepted as an attitude in the organization, but the degree to which the attitude was turned into practice varied.

Use of time. Time-related experiences played a central role in the interpretation of public journalism at IH. Phrases such as "hurry", "use of time" or "lack of time" were mentioned often as the most important obstacles to practicing public journalism more widely at the newspaper. Hurry was thus regarded as one of the fundamentals of being a journalist in a small newsroom and immediacy emerged as a central professional value. In the beginning, the use of time was seen as more problematic: not everyone in the newsroom was ready to accept that one of the journalists could spend a whole week on a single story, whereas the rest were supposed to write one, two or more stories per day.

However, the interviews indicated that journalists understand the time-consuming nature of public journalism practices. The reason why these practices did not penetrate the whole newsroom was connected to the feeling that the pace of normal news work did not leave room for doing public journalism. Even if journalists considered that citizen-based reporting lies at the heart of local journalism, there was not necessarily enough time for actually practicing it.

It's the same old reason: hurry. It is the number one obstacle and the only real obstacle, the lack of time. If we are in a situation where you have to get a story for tomorrow's paper - - there's nothing more to add. In that stage, it is the ordinary people's viewpoint that falls off the easiest. Especially if you have received the assignment on a short notice. (IH1)

After the publication pace of IH increased from five issues per week to six in 2005, the civic reporter's stories started to be published twice a week. Some journalists mentioned that the quality of the civic stories decreased after the change because the new pace sometimes resulted in "compromise" situations where there were no possibilities to write ambitious stories. The time limit led to situations where a suggested theme did not necessarily "fit into" the civic story framework, but because two stories every week were required, there was a need to use the gathered material anyway.

Civic stories. In the IH interviews, there was a joint way to discuss the civic reporter's stories as an entity: the stories were referred to as "civic stories"

and they were discussed slightly differently than regular news stories. This indicates that the public journalism approach of the paper was able to create a new notion and a way to evaluate stories, which in itself is a significant development.

The general sentiment was that the civic stories proved to be good. The stories were regarded to be successful if there was a news-like element in them. The journalists felt that there were enough "soft" stories with citizen perspectives and the actual need for a clearer citizen angle was in the "hard" news. Therefore, civic stories that were labelled as hard news seemed to be esteemed somewhat higher than other civic stories.

The "hardness" of the news, was not, however, the only way to assess the civic stories. The IH journalists highlighted the encounter stories as especially successful, because the encounter as a story type was recognizable and citizen participation in it was explicit. In other civic stories, the citizen input was more subtle. Encounter stories with their dialogic aim seemed to represent the core of public journalism for some, as exemplified in the following quotation.

I have liked the civic stories that feature regular citizens vs. decision-makers. I mean, like the series about immigrants: it is definitely a right direction, and as a series, it's really good one but for me it is hard to consider that series as public journalism. I don't really know why, but I seem to want the kinds of stories that position the officials into a tough spot, like one of the early [encounter] stories about the playgrounds. (IH6)

The notion of the "civic story" provoked journalists at IH to think about the meaning and boundaries of public journalism. For many, the essence seemed to be the active participation of citizens in the news process *and* their appearance in the actual news story. As a story type, the encounter story fulfilled these premises and was thus considered as a successful public journalism practice.

An excursion into the work of the civic reporter

All the themes that were phrased by the journalists at IH were also discussed by the civic reporter herself. Nevertheless, from her perspective, the slow formation of her profile, the time-consuming nature of public journalism and the process of making the civic stories – among other themes – appeared to be more nuanced than from the perspective of the rest of the newsroom. In order to appreciate this nuance and the personal experience, I will now discuss Chiméne Bavard's reflections on her work.

I will do this by analyzing the interviews with her as well as the material that I have gathered during the years that I acted in co-operation with her.

Thus, in this section, I will also discuss my own reflections. During the early stage in autumn 2004 and spring 2005, I followed the civic reporter's work very closely, and via email contact, I provided weekly or monthly feedback. Together we discussed her work and tried to develop routines and brainstorm new ideas. My role was to act as a co-worker or a kind of advisor who provided insight for the work of the civic reporter from outside the newsroom. After the adjustment period, I visited the newsroom and followed her work as the civic reporter for two days in 2005. We have also met several times face-to-face. Due to my active role and co-operation, I wish to stress that the following analysis is affected by the reciprocal relationship between me and the civic reporter. Some of the issues discussed in this section are therefore initiated by me and some have arisen from Bavard's experiences. I will discuss four themes: (1) the formation of the profile, (2) participatory news practices, (3) civic stories and (4) the position within the newsroom.

The launching stage and formation of the profile. Bavard started as a temporary news reporter at IH in the start of 2004. At the initial recruitment stage, there was no explicit discussion about a special post, but the idea obviously already existed, since the job interview questions focused on her masters' thesis that she had written on public journalism at the University of Jyväskylä (Bavard 2003).³⁴ After working for a while as a news reporter, Bavard was appointed as civic reporter through an internal application process.

In our first face-to-face meetings and in the first interview, the civic reporter brought forward her concerns of getting the work started and having to start without a definite job description. Themes such as the paper's circulation problems and the idea of appealing to the readers were also explicit; the civic reporter had internalized the idea that her position was connected to the need to appeal to the audience as subscribing customers. Another worry in the beginning was the question of time: the reporter was concerned whether there would be enough time for planning and writing the civic stories, as she already had some experience of the demanding nature of public journalism practices in her dissertation project.

The first concrete task in the launching stage was to let the public know about the civic reporter. First, Bavard was introduced to the readers in an interview and in a few of the paper's own advertisements. The civic stories also started to feature her photo and a logo that advised people to contact her. In addition, the newspaper management wanted to have visibility for the civic reporter by organizing visits to the local market square. However, the market square tactic did not turn out to be very useful in building up a contact network and was therefore renounced.

³⁴ The thesis was based on a public journalism experiment in which Bavard gathered a group of immigrants to discuss questions that were important to them. She wrote stories based on the ideas triggered in the group and published a story series in the regional newspaper, *Keskisuomalainen*.

The profile of the civic reporter was not clear to the public at first: local activists and organizations contacted the reporter when they wanted to promote themselves. However, the idea became more familiar to the public with time and through the stories that were published. The first stories featured local residents in an active role and addressed their problems, such as the importance of the local police, traffic questions, leisure time possibilities etc. The fact that the stories featured Bavard's photo and contact information encouraged people to approach the paper.

In our first e-mails and discussions, the civic reporter mentioned that one of her most important tasks was to lower the threshold for regular people to contact the newspaper. The following quotation indicates that the slow start later developed into a successful practice. By now, the readers have become so used to contacting the civic reporter that she receives so many tips that she cannot handle them on her own.

Today for example, I have received two text messages and three calls. I have had this mobile phone for a half a year now and it has increased the number of messages I get. - - Sometimes I feel irritated if I have to pass on the ideas to the others [in the newsroom] (laughs). I mean, it's frustrating sometimes not to have anything and then sometimes you have so many stories that they are getting old if you don't handle them right away, like now. (2006)

In 2005 when the publication pace was increased to six days a week, the requirement to write two stories per week was introduced. This created pressures for the reporter because she was also assigned to do a layout shift once a week. In practice, this resulted in a situation where the civic reporter had to sometimes knowingly make the other story a little lighter or to resort to "quick fixes", as she put it. Another development after the transition into tabloid form was the introduction of the civic reporter's own blog. At that stage, the civic reporter went through similar thoughts as in the beginning of her job; she would have wanted to plan the idea a little better before starting it.

And now they [the newsroom leaders] are really enthusiastic about the blog. I said to them that I won't start it unless I am given time to even internalize what a blog is. But they just told me to start writing. - - I would like at least a day to go through this blog thing a bit. (2005)

The civic reporter concluded that the enthusiasm of starting the blog was a reaction to the changes in the media environment and the general growth of the blogosphere. Thus, the blog was a result of the need to adapt to the changing reading habits of the public.

On the whole, the newsroom culture of IH seemed to emphasize the kind of model of operation in which new practices were formulated during the process and through action. This experiential nature allowed for the practices to take their form and gave time for the journalists as well as the public to adjust to them. In terms of the civic reporter concept, this approach can be regarded to have been successful because enough time was given for the practices to take shape. However, the problematic side of this kind of newsroom culture is the fact that some practices – like starting the blog or the increase from one to two stories a week – were perhaps launched with insufficient preparation. This creates stress for the reporters who are assigned for certain tasks without clear knowledge of the requirements.

Participatory news making process. As mentioned, Bavard had some prior experience in public journalism from her MA thesis project. Even if – and perhaps also because – she had some experience with the use of discussion groups as a journalistic tool, she wanted to develop other practices. She was hesitant in utilizing groups, which she considered rather laborious in relation to the time frame and work pace of the newsroom. This became clear from my e-mail feedback where I suggest the idea of forming discussion groups, reader panels or group interviews as alternative reporting methods. The civic reporter was sympathetic towards my suggestions but in practice these methods were used only occasionally.

Nevertheless, the civic reporter utilized various other methods of making the journalistic process more participatory. She maintained reader contacts with e-mail, telephone, text messages and her blog. She either used the initial contact persons as sources for the stories or searched for other relevant interviewees and information sources. Even if most of the story ideas typically originated from readers' contacts, she also looked for tips for stories from the paper's text message column or the letters section. She also utilized online discussion groups organized by the local web-based community college³⁵. From these discussions, she was able to find story ideas, relevant interviewees and participants.

The civic reporter's experiences with citizen collaboration varied. One positive example was a story suggested by a local resident who was worried about a dangerous crossing in her neighbourhood (see also Chapter 6.2., Example 2).³⁶ The reason why the civic reporter considered this co-operation successful was the fact that the resident was well prepared and had contacted the reporter, the city administration and the police at the same time. Her e-mail included digital photos of the crossing and an explanation of an appeal that had been sent to the city administration already two years ago.

35 www.sytty.net

36 I was able to follow the development of this story because it took place during my visit at the newspaper.

From this background information, the reporter was able to see that the citizen was being earnest and the suggested issue was worth a story. Even in this case, the reporter was hesitant to write about the issue at first because the problem seemed minor. However, as the resident was active, Bavard decided to cover the issue. She invited the resident – who invited other people from the neighbourhood, altogether 10 people – a local politician, a city official and a policeman to the particular crossing to discuss the situation and possible measures for improving the security of the crossing. The meeting ended up in a specific suggestion to move the location of the zebra crossing, which was later done.

Sometimes the experiences from working with citizens were not as rewarding. Most often problems were connected to the fact that even if people were eager to suggest a story and state their case very critically, they were not ready to participate in the news process themselves. Another set of problems with citizen involvement was connected to the citizens' assumption that the civic reporter would automatically take their side.

Then I have had these setbacks when people get annoyed if the story doesn't come out like they had imagined, even if I think I've been really gentle (laughs). I think that they get angrier at me than they would get at any other regular reporter, you know. (2005)

In these situations, the civic reporter was required to have professional as well as social skills in order to balance between the roles of the reporter and helper or supporter (see Chapter 8.3.). She thought that people sometimes identify themselves with her, even consider her as a kind of therapist: "I feel as if people don't always realize that I am a journalist who is making stories about them."

In my responses, I emphasized the need to be open and clear about being a journalist in sensitive interview situations. However, it seems important to understand that the position of the civic reporter had created certain expectations from citizens – whether they were justified or not. The civic reporter clearly needed to balance between the wishes of the citizens who contacted her and the requirements of the newsroom.

Evaluation of the civic stories. During our collaboration period, I evaluated about 60–70 stories and wrote short comments and development suggestions about them. Bavard usually reacted to my feedback and thus reflected upon her own work that way. As mentioned, there was no pattern or story types that the reporter was suppose to follow; thus, she was able to develop her own style in the process. Moreover, we did not start our co-operation by choosing to concentrate on certain kinds of stories or themes; we discussed all the "civic stories" that the reporter produced.

The first time I heard Bavard talking about her work at a public lecture in

October 2004, she had divided her stories into three categories: encounters, everyday life stories and mobilizing stories. This was her first attempt at evaluating or summarizing the *story types*. I encouraged her to develop the stories towards encounters and mobilizing stories, i.e. forms that would either feature citizens in an active and participatory role or encourage them to take part in local activities.

The encounter stories were part of the repertoire from the start. One of Bavard's first civic stories dealt with the state of public dental care in Heinola: in the story a local resident met the chief dentist and a local politician and they discussed the situation. Another early story brought together a concerned mother, the city gardener and a local politician to clarify the situation of the town's neglected and dangerous play grounds. From our e-mail correspondence, it becomes clear that I as a feedback giver was enthusiastic about the encounter stories, and the civic reporter herself considered the stories quite successful, as well.

Co-ordinating timetables took up a lot of time, but I was happy when I eventually got all of the participants on the spot at the same time. I didn't get any reader feedback from the story, maybe a few comments in the text message column about playgrounds in general. I don't think that the bosses said anything. (2004)

As mentioned in the quotation above, the reactions of the newsroom and the readers were quite tamed. It seemed that the practices of giving and receiving feedback within the newsroom were not very effective, a point that was referred to often by the civic reporter and her colleagues. Perhaps a more methodical way of evaluating the civic stories would have enabled the civic reporter to further refine the story types.

In light of our e-mail correspondence, the most typical feedback that I as a researcher gave to the civic reporter dealt with the question of "what then?" In many of my e-mails, I suggested that the stories would benefit from a follow-up story, a concrete timeline, an account of how the issue will be handled in the future or how citizens could get involved in the process. Another idea that was apparent in our e-mail discussions was the newsworthiness of the civic stories. My point was not to push her work towards "hard news" as such, but to remind her that it was important to regard citizens as active agents also in "serious" issues that are traditionally considered to be in the field of the city administration or party politics. I was sensing that the profile of the civic reporter was becoming softer; i.e. she was concentrating on lifestyle issues and feature stories. However, whereas I – and to a degree the colleagues in the newsroom – expressed the wish for news-like stories, the civic reporter herself seemed to be more concerned with the *effects* of the stories on public discussion.

It is a good idea to try to combine news-like elements to the stories. However, personally, I would like to see that the stories would create more public discussion. (2005)

The idea of writing stories that would have an effect on local public discussion was a consistent personal aim of the civic reporter. However, the idea of newsworthiness also started to become more central after the first year. This indicates that after the story types had been established, the requirements of the stories started to get more demanding and the personal goals were set higher. However, this process of developing the civic stories was not smooth. Some of the e-mails point out that the process was stressful.

The most anxious I get is when I have to come up with a story idea in a hurry. Sometimes I go and suggest my [reader-based] issues to the editors and they question whether it is a suitable civic story at all, and then I get panicked. - - I have to say that recently I have received very few potential ideas from the readers. (2005)

I replied to the e-mail above by stating that I did not see why there should be separate civic story issues and regular issues, since every topic can be handled from a citizen perspective. The problem, however, in the everyday newsroom practice was that there existed a separation between the two. For example, lifestyle issues, local disputes or citizens' complaints were often regarded as appropriate issues for civic stories. It seemed challenging to try to break away from the tendency to evaluate "civic story potential" according to issues only.

All told, the invention of totally new story types and forms remained a challenge, both from my and the civic reporter's perspective. Bavard mentioned for example that she would have been interested in developing story types that would utilize a more literary or narrative approach and the personal experiences of citizens. She thought that new story types would act as "tools" that would make her work easier. It is easy to agree with this thought because the case of the encounter story points in the same direction: if a certain story type becomes recognized as a civic story type, the coverage of a broader spectrum of issues becomes easier. So, sometimes the story type – and not the content – can validate the story as a civic story. Therefore, innovations in story types are important for the future development of public journalism.

Position in the newsroom. One of the central themes in our discussions was the position and role of the civic reporter in the newsroom, as I wanted to know about the organizational context. Bavard had sensed the confusion of the early stage: she regarded that some of the journalists who were already

doing their work in a citizen-oriented manner thought that their work was undermined by the introduction of a specialized public journalism reporter.

Moreover, she considered her position as a "special case" in a dual manner. On the one hand, she enjoyed the independence that came with it; she was able to decide independently which topics she was going to cover, plan her weekly schedule and dig deeper into the stories. But on the other hand, she sometimes thought that her autonomy has turned into isolation or separation from the rest of the newsroom. According to Bavard, some journalists at the start thought that her work came close to "clowning" because she became a public figure and was featured in advertisements. The civic journalist believed that some of her colleagues thought that she was pulling the rug from under their feet by agreeing to the suggestions of the marketing department.

A theme that became denser in the final interviews and discussions was the question of personal (and professional) "territories" within the newsroom. The civic reporter tried to guard her own territory by avoiding any extra assignments in order to be able to carry out the task of producing two proper civic stories per week. In a small newsroom, this kind of securing of one's own working time can be easily interpreted as disloyalty.

No-one has said it [the critique of not doing more than a few stories a week] directly to me, but sometimes I sense it when everyone is terribly busy. In the beginning, it was amusing; I couldn't just sit at the meeting when they all were looking at me when the assignments were delivered (laughs). But now I can do it already. (2005)

The theme of territories became apparent in the civic reporter's comments often in a self-ironical manner. She had an ambivalent feeling about her colleagues' use of public journalism methods. On the one hand, she was eager to guard her own territory and expertise as the only civic reporter of the newsroom, but on the other hand, she was happy about the spread of participatory practices among other journalists.

Summary

IH first developed participatory practices through reform projects but then decided to continue its public journalism approach more systematically by establishing the position of the civic reporter. This move was interpreted by the journalists as a continuation of the preceding projects, and as such, it was considered to affect the whole newsroom. Quite naturally however, public journalism practice was also clearly considered to be the specified territory of the civic reporter. Therefore, the most discussed practices dealt with the civic reporter and her stories. The wider understanding of public journalism as an approach that concerns everyone in the newsroom was mainly discussed from the perspective of time-related questions and the difficulty in actually

practicing public journalism. The evaluations of the journalists as well as the civic reporter herself also pointed out that a defining factor in IH's newsroom culture was experimentation with practices. When new ideas were introduced, practices were refined by doing rather than intensive planning.

The formation of the civic reporter's profile and work practices form an interesting case of public journalism. A specialized reporter as the responsible public journalism journalist is a two-edged question. In comparison to the projects of HS or the formats of AL, the civic reporter approach appears as a practice that is flexible and can be developed in the process. However, for the single journalist it appears as a demanding job. In this approach, a lot of responsibility is given to the civic reporter to cultivate public journalism practices in her everyday work. The everyday demands of the news work do not, however, bypass the civic reporter. In the case of IH, the tensions that build around high expectations and everyday routines and needs of a small newsroom are apparent.

In the IH approach, public journalism practices were not isolated as special methods or concepts that are used merely during a certain period of time; the practices were allowed to evolve and take shape over time. However, the challenge remains to avoid isolating the civic reporter from the work that the rest of the newsroom does; to find a balance between the civic stories and the over-arching idea of the organization's citizen-based approach. On the organizational level, this approach would require attempts to bridge the gaps between the public journalist and everyone else, for example in the form of continued teaching and learning (Friedland 2003, 127).

5.5. Public journalism practices and newsrooms

In this chapter, I have given room for journalists to evaluate the advent of public journalism in their newsrooms as well as the practices that followed. In comparison with practices of public journalism worldwide, the Finnish approach comes out as *newsroom-centred*: the newspapers have not joined forces with any community organizations, and thus, retaining control over the projects is in the newsrooms (cf. Romano 2010; Friedland & Nichols 2002, 30–31). In addition, Finnish participatory practices seem to *emphasize the activity of the citizens*: citizens are invited to contact the newsroom, visit the news van and attend the events. Public journalism practices in other cultural contexts have underlined more the activity of journalists themselves in finding the relevant stories by methods such as community or civic mapping (e.g. Davidson 2010; Haas 2008); ethnographic or investigative research by following the life of certain communities over a longer period of time; or practicing the art of listening (Romano 2010d; Miralles 2010, 243–144).

There are, of course, striking similarities, too, between public journalism practices in countries as far from each other as Finland and New Zealand, for

example. Both countries' journalistic cultures have assumed the ideas of public journalism and developed similar election coverage practices with telephone opinion polls, public meetings and top ten issue coverage (see Comrie & Venables 2010). These similarities are explained by the fact that news organizations have *modelled after U.S. projects*. However, the Finnish approach also bears an interesting resemblance to practices in Japan, in which the American examples have not been as directly applied. For example, the typical Finnish method of encounter is similar to a practise in a large Japanese newspaper in which students were invited to meet with high-ranking officials and experts (Hamada 2010, 92; 96).

The discussion in this chapter points out that public journalism inspired practices in the three Finnish newsrooms can be grouped into four general themes. Public journalism practices were evaluated in terms of *organizational questions* such as planning and division of work; the *nature of the work* as teamwork or time-consuming practices; the practices as *concrete events* such as discussion events, news van visits and encounters; and *the participatory role of citizens*, as in the case of voters' agenda, topic selection or the active role of citizens in the civic stories (see Table 4). The practices have thus invited journalists to evaluate their work from many aspects. These aspects form the most discussed themes among the 40 journalists who have evaluated public journalism as practice in their newsrooms.

Newsroom management	Style of journalistic work	Concrete events	Participation of citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Division of work • Civic reporter's job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Time consuming nature of practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion events • News van • Encounters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voters' agenda • Topic selection • Civic stories

Table 4: The aspects of public journalism practice as evaluated by journalists.

But what can these evaluations tell us about the newsroom cultures at HS, AL and IH? Was the adoption of public journalism practices considered as a change for the existing newsroom cultures? In the case of HS, public journalism was seen as a project-oriented approach that required planning and reorientation, but the changes were temporary since the approach was connected to specified short-term projects. The first election project was more tightly modelled after American public journalism experiments, and the second project was influenced by the cross-media trend. The evaluative talk of journalists revealed the existence of inherent struggle between the corporate culture that emphasizes cross-media co-operation and the professional culture that underlines news victories and originality of coverage. It seems that the newsroom culture at HS was more willing to accept influences from the

broad and international professional culture of journalism than from what was seen as the corporate realm.

At AL, public journalism was adopted gradually. The evaluations indicate that public journalism was considered as a bundle of practices that requires joint effort and commitment from the staff to clearly modelled formats. It is interesting to note that the long tradition of public journalism in the organization was manifested in the form of critical reflections about practices. The experiences from the participatory news making process had provided material for the journalists to critically evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the approach. Despite the atmosphere of criticism, the interviews draw a picture of a newsroom culture that has clear boundaries: there was a joint commitment to the principal of citizen orientation, and therefore, it was also easy to evaluate the work that was done. Thus, within the boundaries of the newsroom culture, there was room for internal variation of attitudes and preferences.

At IH, the introduction of public journalism was seen as a change that was brought about by the series of organizational reform projects and the specialization of the civic reporter. The change was thus considered to affect the whole newsroom and its traditions *via* the practice of an individual. Thus, at IH, it was typical to discuss the practices in relation to organizational questions and the nature of the work rather than concrete events. The adoption of the practices also revealed another aspect of the IH newsroom culture: an orientation that can be labelled "practice first". The small size of the newsroom and the tradition of reform projects seemed to make it possible for a flexible introduction and adoption of news practices. The refinement to the practises was made during the process.

It is also possible to condense newsroom specific narratives for legitimating public journalism. In other words, there were different ways in which the arrival and adoption of public journalism were justified in each newsroom and how it was interpreted in the context of the changing professional culture in Finland. At HS, public journalism became justified as a *practical moment of experimentation connected to democratic elections*. The election functioned as an acceptable entry point for public journalism as it manifested the crisis of electoral democracy. In this context, citizen participation and activation became to be seen as acceptable both in terms of supporting the well-being of competitive democracy and the legitimacy of political journalism. At AL, the legitimating narrative was connected to regional well-being: public journalism was seen as a means to *contribute to the prosperity of the Pirkanmaa region* and thereafter the prosperity of the newspaper itself. This narrative drew from the historical legacy of regional papers but it was also informed by the realization that the professional culture of journalism needs to change and to take into account the viewpoint of the inhabitants of the region, not just the institutions. The narrative for public journalism at IH was

connected to the *economic survival of the paper via strengthening the "closeness" of the paper to its readers*. The local paper was regarded to need something extra, locality alone was not enough. The closeness was thus brought about by the work of the civic reporter, but the rest of the organization needed to change, too, in order to make the idea of closeness more visible.

What can be said about the elements of newsroom cultures that either strengthen or weaken the adoption and use of public journalism practices? A clear common element in the material was the realization that public journalism as *practical news work is demanding* and time-consuming; a point that has been made by various international studies (Romano 2010d, Comrie & Venables 2010). In every newsroom, there were voices that questioned the relationship between the demanding nature and the quality of the stories; the input–output ratio. This issue might surface, especially if there is no joint understanding of how to assess the output, i.e. shared and clearly articulated understanding of the aims. Therefore, it seems that newsroom cultures that are willing to invest in the extra work and getting the whole staff committed to the practices are more likely to utilize participatory news practices.

In all of the newsrooms, the adoption of the participatory practices produced critical reflection: the journalists *discussed the practices openly and (self-)critically*. It seems important, therefore, that space is given for this kind of critical evaluation. Romano (2010d, 76; 73) points to the same idea with her concept of the "learning organization": she underlines the importance of an environment that allows mentorship and the building of capacities and competencies, as public journalism requires substantive change of mindset and practices. Therefore, newsroom cultures that allow reporters to openly bring forward their questions and doubts are in a good position to develop such practices that are inspiring and relevant for practicing journalists and function better in actual work situations.

In addition, the discussed public journalism inspired practices were not necessarily labelled as "public journalism". There was a *trend to underline that the chosen approaches were original to the newspapers* in question and arose from authentic needs – not from ready formulated movements or traditions. In general, it seems that any kind of movement ethos has fitted poorly with the professional culture of Finnish journalists (see also Rosen 1999, 163). However, all of the newsrooms discussed here were open to new ideas and influences from various directions: American election projects, research results, guide books, international examples and co-operation with researchers. The adoption of participatory practices thus requires open-minded ground work.

The role of newsroom leadership is another issue connected to the adoption of new practices into newsrooms (Friedland 2003, 121–124). In terms of public journalism in particular, it seems important that *someone in the news organization has thorough knowledge of the idea*. Comrie and Venables

(2010, 88) point out that personal commitment is significant in public journalism, but its flipside is the fact that the zest may wane and practices die if the key figures move on to other newsrooms or positions. However, if there is wider personal commitment in the newsrooms, the adopted practices are bound to be more rooted in the conceptual basis of public journalism and the newsrooms may draw from the accumulated knowledge of past experiments. If the connection to the underlying idea of public journalism is weak or lost over time, the practices may evolve into routine behaviour that is repeated without insight.

All in all, as Haas (Haas 2007, 139) has noted, many newsrooms have adopted a "half-step" version of public journalism; they have applied the idea and developed the practices without the commitment to the original democratic and public motivation of public journalism. The practices discussed in this study may be thin in some respects, but as such, they provide interesting insight into the dynamics of the ideal and the practical in participatory journalistic practices.

6.

Typology of public journalism stories

In this chapter, I will analyze the news stories from the Finnish public journalism projects of *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS), *Aamulehti* (AL) and *Itä-Häme* (IH). The participatory newsroom practices discussed in the previous chapter are now linked to textual representations. We will be able to see what kinds of stories these practices have produced.

Public journalism has inspired a good deal of evaluative research in the U.S. and to a lesser degree abroad. The content analysis discussed here falls in line with empirical studies that examine news coverage from public journalism projects (Haas 2007, 49; 53–54). Departing from this line of inquiry, though, I do not focus on providing evidence of *differences or similarities* between public journalism and traditional coverage (cf. Forster 2010; Comrie & Venables 2010). I will make comparisons to conventional news coverage when relevant but will focus on public journalism stories in particular, in order to find out the elements that characterize Finnish public journalism coverage. My aim is thus to deconstruct the public journalism stories into smaller storytelling elements (see Friedland & Nichols 2002, 41–46). The idea is to find the meta-elements of public journalism that are manifested in the texts, and the research question of this chapter is: *What is a typology of the textual presentations in public journalism stories?* With this analysis, I wish to provide a clearer picture of the three newspapers' public journalism approaches, their textual grammar, and provide a more detailed context for the journalists' interpretations.

Methodologically, this chapter is based on a combination of an inventory quantitative content analysis and a qualitative reading and classification of the stories. The quantitative content analysis acted as a tool that helped guide

the qualitative analysis. The sample consisted of 165 stories. Regarding the coding scheme, I coded all of the *agents* and their *activities* in the stories. The aim was to find out which actors' voices were heard and what kind of positions in terms of activity were they portrayed in. From this angle, we can consider which groups get to define and determine the guidelines of public discussion in the stories and with what weight they are given to do this (Juppi 2004, 167–168). The emphasis on citizen agents enables us to consider whether the public journalism approach actually contributes to producing active, citizen-based discourse.

With this straightforward quantitative analysis, I first attained an overview of the kinds of positions that the participatory practices in the news work were opening up for citizens in the stories. In the qualitative analysis, thereafter, I identified any common features in the stories and then compared and contrasted these in order to evaluate whether they were typical enough to form (or be a manifestation of) a so-called meta-element. After finding these broad structures, I returned back to the stories. In this closer analysis, I concentrated on a sample of 20 stories, which represented each story type from the different projects of each paper. I then analyzed in more detail the way in which the meta-elements of public journalism were manifested textually in the sample stories.

In the following, I will provide first a short overview of the data and make observations about the groups whose voices were heard in the stories. I will then move on to discuss the common elements in the public journalism stories, and end by presenting a typology of the meta-elements of public journalism that were characteristic of the stories in question.

6.1. Who is who in the public journalism stories?

From HS, I analyzed two election series published in 2003 and 2004 (see Table 5). The textual material from HS consisted of 23 full-page story packages that were combinations of four or more stories. A larger body of material came from the parliamentary election series in 2003, which covered the voters' agenda and invited reader input. A smaller number of stories were linked

Parliamentary election series (3.2.–13.3.2003)	19 stories - opening story introducing the voters' agenda - 10 theme stories (e.g. unemployment, health care, crime) - 7 party leader interviews with biggest political parties - ending story evaluating the readers' letters
European Parliamentary election series (2.6.–9.6.2004)	4 stories - based on discussion events that featured candidates, supporters and voters

Table 5: Stories from HS.

"Turning Point of Welfare" (24.10.–17.11.2002)	9 stories - 4 citizen interviews (e.g. a farmer) - 4 citizen–minister encounters (the farmer meets the minister of forestry and agriculture) - ending story (concluding interview with the Minister of Finance)
"Challenging Power" (31.1.–29.2.2004)	10 stories - 5 group interviews with citizens (e.g. young "activist" adults) - 5 citizen–minister encounters (a "spokesman" of the group meets the Minister of Justice)
Local election tour (20.9.–23.10.2004)	32 stories - 16 "news van" stories (reports from different areas of the region, citizens' views on election themes) - 16 discussion event stories (candidate panels, general discussion, citizens evaluating the discussion)

Table 6: Stories from AL.

Civic stories (24.7.2004–30.12.2005)	
Everyday life stories	23 stories (e.g. life with allergic children)
Current topics	23 stories (e.g. debate on the impact of a water treatment station on air quality)
Introducing local areas and people	17 stories (e.g. local villages)
Encounters	12 stories (e.g. police meets with local residents to discuss traffic problems)
Mobilizing stories	9 stories (e.g. encouragement to use internet discussion sites)
Readers' questions	8 stories (e.g. questions about city gardening)

Table 7: Stories from IH.

to the European Parliamentary election series based on discussion events in 2004.

From AL, I collected 51 stories published in 2002–2004 (Table 6). This material came from three different projects: two "value series" (2002; 2004) featuring encounters of citizens with top-level decision-makers, and the local election series (2004) that combined "news van" stories and discussion event stories. In fact, all of AL's stories functioned as story pairs. There was always a background story with citizen interviews and then a follow-up story that featured a minister meeting or a discussion event.

The material from IH consisted of all of the civic stories written by the civ-

ic reporter from the start of her work in July 2004 until the end of the following year, altogether 90 stories. IH differs from AL and HS given that the stories are not part of any projects and thus do not have unified story designs. However, in Table 7, I have categorised the stories into six different story types.

Agents in the stories

With the term *agent*, I refer to a certain societal position or reference group that people are affiliated with in news stories (Juppi 2004, 139). The agent categories in my analysis were: politicians, officials, companies, representatives of NGOs/associations, experts, citizens and journalists. People naturally have multiple roles in their real lives, but in the context of news stories, they are usually placed in only one agent position; their presence in the news text is motivated by that particular position. I coded all of the agents that presented views in the articles either directly or indirectly. Thus, the agents that I am referring to are so-called "active agents"; they have been given an active position in the text. In other words, only being mentioned in the text does not qualify as being an active agent; an agent needs to be quoted directly or indirectly.

The total amount of agents in all of the stories was 1210. Table 8 indicates the amount of agents that the three newspapers featured in their stories. Note that there were fewer stories from HS than from the other two papers but the story packages at HS were so big (full-page entities consisting of small stories) that the total number of agents was nearly equal to IH's total, where the stories were shorter.

The average number of agents in the public journalism stories (story packages) was seven. I consider this as an indication of the commitment to the idea of *diversity*.³⁷ However, if we consider the average number of agents in each paper, we can identify differences. The average number of active agents

Paper	Stories	Agents
HS	23	326
AL	51	489
IH	90	395
Total	165	1210

Table 8: The number of stories and agents in the data.

³⁷ According to a similar content analysis of regular news coverage that I conducted for three regional papers (*Lapin Kansa*, *Pohjolan Sanomat* and *Kainuun Sanomat*) in 2003, the average number of agents per story was two. All the stories produced by the papers' news staff from a one-week period were analyzed. The sample consisted of 375 stories, and the total number of agents was 650. However, note that this analysis also included small single-column stories, which affects the average.

per story was 14 in HS, 10 in AL and 4 in IH. HS and AL preferred large entities or story packages and event stories that brought together many agents, whereas IH's public journalism approach was characterized by smaller stories that were typically based on individual or group interviews.

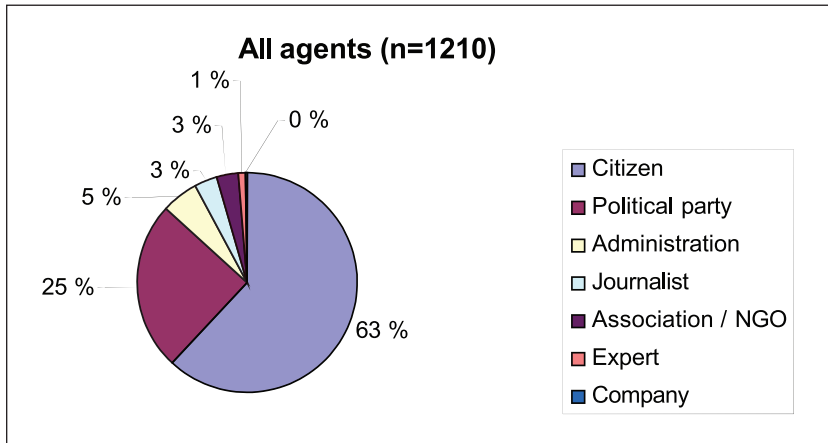


Chart 1: All agents in the public journalism stories (n=1210).

It becomes very clear that public journalism gives space to citizens: of all the agents in the stories, over 60% (748) were citizens (see Chart 1). The second largest group presented in the articles was comprised of political parties and their representatives, 25% (302). Far behind citizens and politicians were officials (5%, 65), journalists (3%, 41), associations or NGOs (3%, 36) and expert sources (1%, 15). Finally, there were hardly any companies present in the material (only three). These results provide clear evidence that the public journalism approach was strongly *citizen oriented*.³⁸ I did not conduct further classification on the types of citizen agents that were present in the material, but based on the qualitative reading, it can be stated that typical citizen sources included "regular" voters, residents of certain areas, parents, professionals from different fields, hobbyists, immigrants, youth and so on.³⁹ A notable feature in the material was that some of the citizen agents were any-

38 For a rough reference, note that according to a recent media content analysis of Finnish morning newspapers, individual citizens made up 11% of the sample when the main active agents in the stories were analyzed. The study also indicated a trend according to which companies and other agents of economic life had increased as active agents in two years at the expense of agents related to state administration (Suikkanen et al 2008, 25–38; 128).

39 In future research, it would be interesting to conduct a further analysis on the citizen agents that were featured in the stories. I am aware that this study does not shed light on the gendered nature of public journalism, for example. This kind of further analysis, however, would be a suitable focus for another study.

mous, for example, if direct quotes from surveys or internet discussions were published.

Political parties were well represented in the public journalism stories. This is explained by the fact that the material included three election projects. The total number of agents after combining citizens and politicians is noteworthy: together they make up 88% of all agents. Thus, public journalism stories clearly *concentrated on the viewpoints of citizens and politicians*. This result, however, does not tell us whether these agent groups were *connected* in the stories.

There were surprisingly few administrative agents represented in the material, as well as NGOs. In terms of using official sources, these results go hand in hand with the public journalism ideal of aiming to look at topical issues from alternative angles, and not only those proposed by the administrative apparatus. However, even if the administrative agents were not active in the stories, it does not necessarily mean that the administration as a more general news source was as scarce. The influence of official sources can be more subtle. The small proportion of NGOs is also noteworthy. Even if associations typically act as the semi-official voice of civil society in journalism – they act as routes for journalists that try to find relevant sources for their stories – their numerical appearance as active agents in newspaper journalism is rather modest (Suikkanen et al 2008, 25–30). The findings indicate that the public journalism stories tended to represent civic life via individual citizen voices rather than via organized civic associations. In other words, *the political nature of civil society was handled via individuals*.

The amount of expert and business agents was remarkably small in the public journalism stories. Again, the election stories play a role here, but these results also point to the idea that public journalism can be seen as an *antidote to expert-driven or business-driven journalism in terms of sourcing*. However, one might also raise a question about the absence of the business world in these stories: is it an improvement or not? What does it tell us about public journalism as a journalistic practice if the business world is missing from the stories given that society has become more and more affected and influenced by financial power? In light of this analysis, it seems that there is a risk that in public journalism business and administration powers become separated from civic life. This can hardly be considered a favourable outcome; public journalism should not mean *substituting* elite sources with citizen sources. Rather, the gap between the two ought to be bridged.

If we consider the results paper by paper, we can see some interesting differences (see Chart 2). Citizens were clearly the most prominent agents in all three papers. Citizens made up 70% of the agents in HS stories, 55% in AL and 77% in IH. The clearest difference is that in the IH stories political parties were rarely agents (22; 6%) and officials (44; 11%) were quoted more often. In HS and AL stories, political parties were clearly the second largest

agent group. These figures are of course explained by the fact that AL and HS approaches were more clearly connected to election coverage than that of IH. It is interesting, however, that there were such differences between administrative agents in the papers. Officials as an active agent group were practically non-existent in HS stories, there were only two administrative agents among 326 agents, whereas in IH and AL stories the number of administrative agents was 44 (out of 395) and 19 (out of 489) respectively. These figures suggest that the approaches chosen by the national and regional papers underlined more clearly the idea of distancing reporting practices from official sources than in the local paper. The bigger newspapers emphasized the role of political power more explicitly.

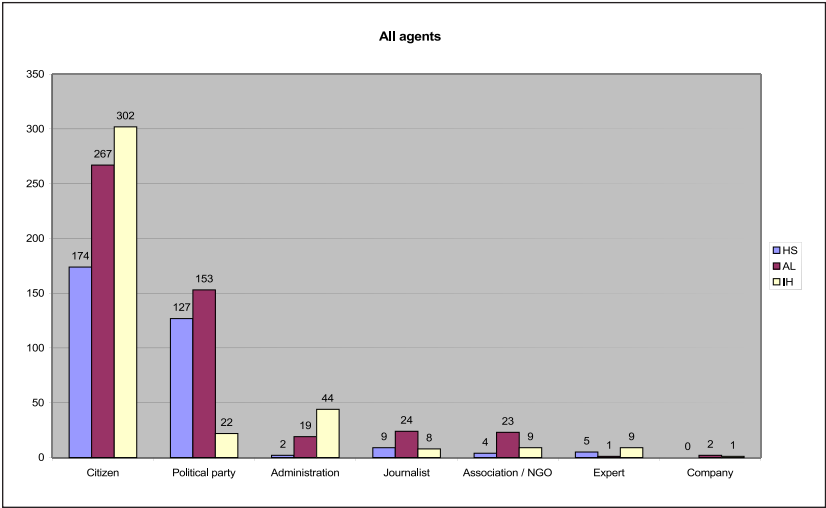


Chart 2: All agents in the stories according to newspapers (HS: n=326; AL: n=489; IH: n=395).

I coded journalists as active agents in stories if their personal views were clearly presented. Journalists were active agents – typically in commentaries attached to the news stories – most clearly in the AL stories, where five percent of all agents were journalists. This is not by any means a high percentage, but it nevertheless is more significant than in HS and IH stories, where journalists represented a smaller portion (two percent) of all active agents.

Agents’ activities in the stories

When I analyzed the frequency of different agent groups, I also considered the nature of their activities. In other words, I wanted to see what all these actors were doing in the stories and how they were positioned as a result. In my coding scheme, I considered whether the agents in the stories (1) expressed

feelings, (2) brought forth experience, (3) expressed viewpoints or opinions, (4) posed questions, (5) gave advice or guidance, (6) criticized or called something into question or (7) proposed or argued for something.⁴⁰ I coded only one type of activity per agent in the story. This decision was made in order to be able to conduct a reasonable content analysis on all of the 1210 agents.

In my analysis, I considered the classes as a gradual scale or a hierarchy, in which each of the following activity was "stronger" than the previous activity. This means that if I coded an agent as giving advice (class 5), it did not mean that the agent would not have necessarily also express an opinion elsewhere in the story (class 3), but I only coded the strongest activity that an agent expressed. This gradual classification was chosen for this analysis in order to find out the degree or "strength" of activity that was portrayed in the stories. With this approach, I wanted to move beyond considering whether the agents were active or not – or "mute" as Juppi (2004) puts it. I positioned expressing an emotion as the lowest type of activity, while making a reasoned proposal was considered the highest. This scale is based on the viewpoint of public discussion: the ability to affect the direction or the content of public discussion. With a proposal, I argue, an agent has more power over public discussion than with expressing an emotion. Therefore, posing a question, for example, is placed higher on the scale than stating a viewpoint: making a question can be considered as an intervention, a way of (re)directing public discussion.

I was especially interested in the *activities and positions of citizens*. Previous studies have indicated that while citizens – in television news for example – are allowed to express emotions there seldom is room for expressing a political opinion or offering a solution to a problem (Lewis et al 2004, 154). With this coding scheme, I was able to study whether public journalism stories open up positions for citizens beyond expressing sentiments.

The results suggest that citizens were given many different positions in the stories and they got to act in varying ways; there was no single most obvious type of activity provided for citizens in the public journalism stories altogether. The most common type of activity was expressing a viewpoint or an opinion (22%). In other words, in the public journalism stories, citizens got to express their views on various issues, but almost equally frequent were situations in which citizens posed questions (18%), criticized (17%) or made reasoned proposals (16%) (see Chart 3). In sum, citizens were granted active and fairly versatile positions in the public journalism stories.

If we consider the coding scheme and its classes as a scale, we can see that the "top three" activities (argumentation, criticism, advising) together made up 47%, and the "bottom three" activities (expressing feelings, experiences

40 My classification was inspired and partly based on previous coding schemes that analyzed Finnish newspaper stories and the roles of agents or agent groups in them (see e.g. Reunanen 2003, 242; Raittila 2001, 143; Juppi 2004).

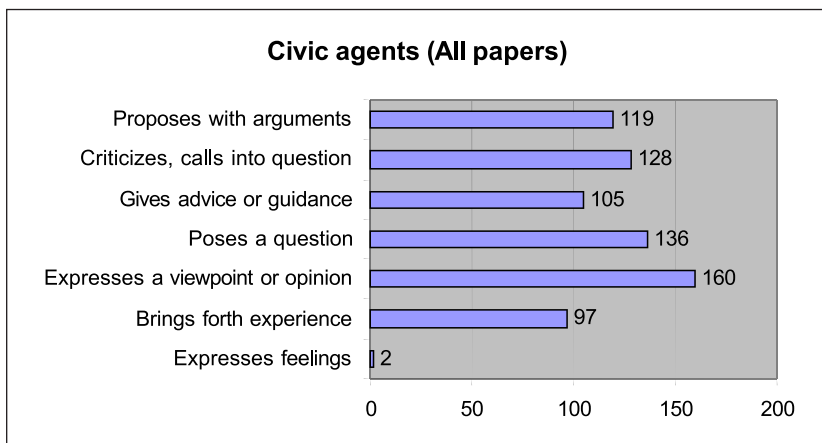


Chart 3: Activities of civic agents in all the stories, n=748.

or opinions) made up 35% of all activities. This result modestly indicates that citizens were given an influential position in the stories, as they were allowed to affect the discussion as experts of everyday life: they proposed, criticized or advised. Interestingly, expressing a feeling or a sentiment was almost totally excluded as a citizens' role.⁴¹ The typical "man on the street" position of more populist genres of citizen-based journalism or disaster journalism (Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen 2009) was thus rare in these stories. These genres usually employ more of a confrontational positioning between regular people and the power elite. However, excluding emotions from public discussion can also be regarded as a defect. As noted in Chapter 4, some theorists (e.g. Mouffe 2005; Dahlgren 2006; also Pantti & van Zoonen 2006) argue that emotions need to be included as part of public discussion, especially since emotions often act as the driving force behind public participation. The question then is: why should such emotional motivations be hidden? For example, Pantti and Husslage's (2009, 88) research on the role of emotions in television news point out that in typical *vox pops* interviews emotional responses and political opinions or rational discussions are not mutually exclusive.

Another critical observation can be made about the most frequent activity, expressing a viewpoint. Admittedly, this does not reveal a very radical image of the public journalism stories and their architecture in terms of the positions they open up for citizens. This result therefore indicates that even if the Finnish public journalism projects may have widened the range of po-

⁴¹ However, it needs to be noted that the actual number of emotive expressions may be higher than these results indicate, since I employed a gradual scale in the coding; i.e. "stronger" activity types may hide the "weaker" ones, since I only took into account the strongest activity type for each agent.

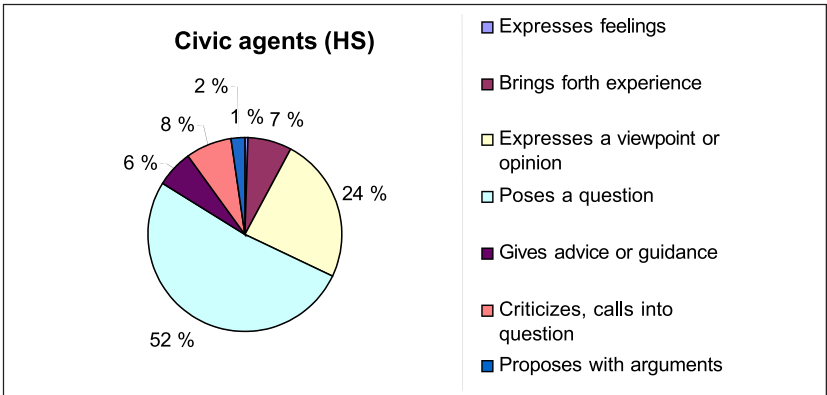


Chart 4: Civic agents in HS (n=179).

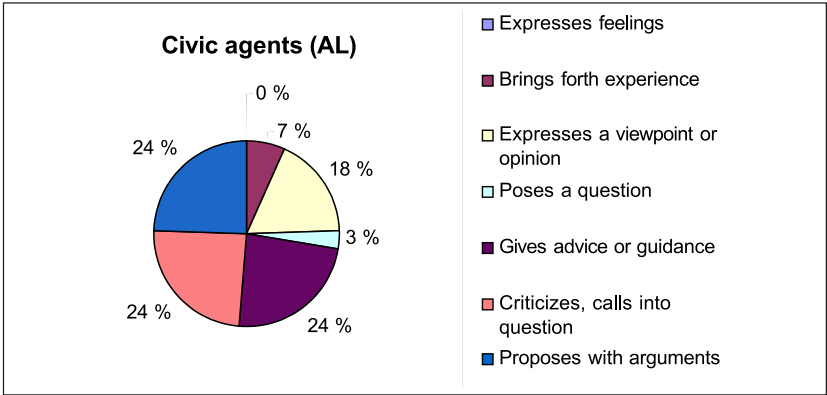


Chart 5: Civic agents in AL (n=267).

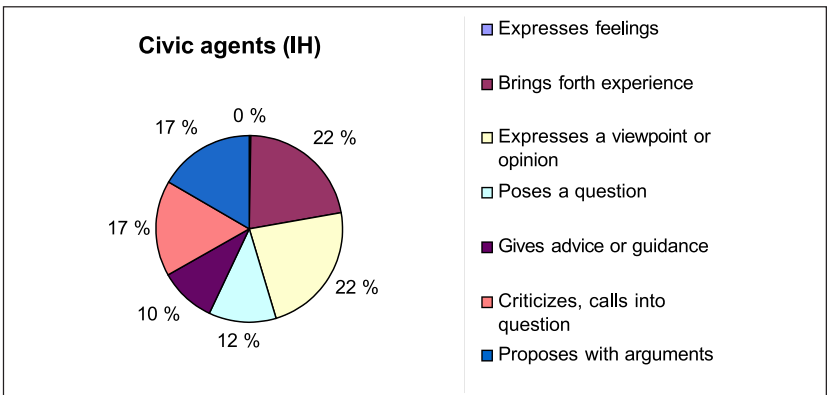


Chart 6: Civic agents in IH (n= 302).

sitions offered to citizens, they still frequently relied on traditional positioning, which – at least partly – is a result of using traditional reporting methods and textual representations, such as “on the street” *vox pops*. However, the relevance for expressing opinion is also linked to the issues and the contexts in which citizens are asked for their views. In these public journalism stories, citizens were typically asked for their views on topical election themes or local problems.

Together, the citizen agents’ positions appear as an evenly divided pie (with the exception of emotional expressions). However, there are differences when the results are considered paper by paper. These differences should not be taken as a comparison between the papers, but as a manifestation of the different decisions that the newsrooms have made in their textual approaches to public journalism. Interestingly, in HS stories (Chart 4), the clearest role for citizens was to pose questions. The percentage was so significant that the questioning role of citizens can be considered as the main feature of the whole HS approach.

The HS approach thus clearly built on the active questioning role of the citizen, whereas the role of the citizen in AL’s approach (Chart 5) was more clearly to advise, criticize or make propositions, and in IH, it was (Chart 6) to express experiences or opinions on certain issues. From these proportional figures, we can conclude that at a textual level the approach of AL seemed to offer the most demanding roles for citizens, whereas the other two papers were less willing to position citizens as active shapers of public discussion. However, the division between the different activity types was most even in IH. This indicates that a public journalism approach that is not tied to any specific projects seems to be flexible in opening up versatile roles for citizens.

Due to the limited number of administrative, association and journalistic agents in the material, I have thus far only concentrated on citizens’ positions. However, some comparisons can be done. If we compare the roles of citizens and political actors, we see that politicians and parties got to act as advisers more often than citizens when we consider proportional differences. Political agents hardly ever brought forth experience or posed questions; their role in the stories was to act as advice or opinion givers. The fact that so many of the politicians’ activities were coded as giving advice or guidance is linked to the tone in which political actors were often quoted; they got to formulate their views in a manner that stressed the “ought to” aspect instead of more subtle phrases or tones.

The role of officials in the stories was even more clearly steering. The actual number of administrative agents in the stories was rather small, but in over 50% of the times when they did appear as agents, their role was to give advice (e.g. suggest guidelines). Even if the number of agents in the different agent groups were not fully comparable, we can see a trend: the proportion of the “top three” activities gets larger as we move from citizen agents to politi-

cal and administrative agents. This conforms to the "traditional" idea that political and official sources hold more power in terms of their ability to shape and steer public discussion. Thus, despite the substantial role given to citizens in terms of numbers, the analysis of the agents' activities points out that certain trends of political journalism and political public discussion remain.

Altogether, the results of the quantitative analysis indicate that the public journalism stories were committed to the ideal of citizen orientation; the stories featured a relatively high number of active agents. The typical agents were citizens, politicians and officials. The scarcity of associations and the absence of businesses as active agents was another typical feature: the stories seemed to emphasize the individual citizen aspect rather than collective civic participation in associations, and the significance of political rather than economic power. Citizens were clearly the focus: they were positioned as proactive agents who influenced the public discussion with their inputs: by asking, proposing and criticizing. However, to avoid oversimplification and to improve our understanding, we need to consider the contexts and story structures in which these positions became possible.

6.2. Storytelling elements of public journalism

In the following section, I will elaborate on the common storytelling elements that the three newspapers have employed. This analysis stems from the idea that considering news as information is not enough; news can be seen as storytelling that utilizes various frames, narrative structures and storytelling elements (see Bird & Dardenne 2009). The discussed meta-elements of public journalism were identified through a close reading of the material; they emerged from textual representation, agent positions and story designs. By identifying and analyzing these structures, we can formulate a typology of the public journalism stories. The common meta-elements that shaped the Finnish public journalism stories were textual structures that (1) made everyday life relevant and political, (2) connected citizens and politicians, (3) positioned citizens as questioners, (4) generated dialogue, (5) provided space for citizens' criticisms and proposals and (6) enabled journalists to comment on different issues. The typology offers a way of understanding how Finnish public journalism stories as texts promoted civic engagement, and what kind of textual strategies journalists utilized.

Relevance of everyday life

The clearest common component of the public journalism stories was *making citizens' everyday experiences relevant* in terms of public discussion. In other words, all the newspapers employed storytelling elements that framed citizens' experiences as politically significant. This was done by a simple act

of giving space for citizens' experiences and bringing forth their voices in various ways.

This meta-element was evident, for example, in the typical "marching order" of the story packages: a main story presented the citizen's point of view and a sidebar provided a more general angle to the issue. Therefore, the structures of the story packages supported the idea of highlighting the citizens' experiences. This approach represents a reversed version of a typical storytelling structure in Finnish newspapers in which a main story addresses a more general issue, say a law reform, and a sidebar features the citizen aspect, i.e. exemplifies what the reform means to regular people. In this sense, the everyday orientation of the public journalism stories as such was not the key issue; it was the direction of the stories. The stories started with (individual) citizen perspectives and were developed towards a more general resonance and relevance.

The everyday life orientation in the stories was supported further by visual elements: despite few exceptions, the stories generally featured citizens in their "own" surroundings. The photographs provided authenticity and an entry point to the stories that drew attention to the citizens' reality (see Coleman 2007, who problematizes the visual aspect of public journalism). The story packages also featured small visual elements that for instance summarized a typical timetable of a farmer, revealing in a concise form what it is in practice to run a dairy farm.

Bringing citizens' voices and experiences to the forefront was a typical ingredient especially in the local paper IH, in which "everyday life stories" were common. This was due to the nature of the civic reporter's work, as she built her stories on ideas and tips from readers. Thus, the story ideas usually stemmed from the everyday experiences of readers as mothers, students, pensioners and so forth. There was, of course, a risk that these stories would remain on the individual level and turn into isolated curiosities or survival stories. In fact, not all of IH's "everyday life stories" succeeded in connecting the citizens' experiences to broader societal frames or generally interesting angles. However, there were often occasions when this was done. For instance, stories about the lives of the unemployed, young housewives or the elderly living in old-age homes, connected the persons' experiences and thoughts to a wider public discussion quite successfully.

One of these examples was an article on ordinary people who worked as caretakers of their relatives at home ("family carers"). In this story package ("You need to rest even if you care for the other" / "Pakko levätä, vaikka toisesta tykkää", IH 2.10.2004), the main story was dedicated to four women who worked as family carers for their husbands or relatives. The women talked about their lives, stated views regarding the expenses of home care, critiqued the local social sector for not giving proper information, and proposed concrete improvements by suggesting the creation of a reserve of stand-in

carers. The sidebar featured an official from the city's social services and a project leader, who provided background information about the local situation concerning family carers and their home care allowance. In the sidebar, the issue was also linked to current law reform and to the general increase of home care in the area: the theme became politicized. Thus, a story that began with descriptions of daily routines of the home carers developed into an article that provided new information for the public and addressed the issue as a broad social question. Altogether, this information was rooted in the everyday experiences of ordinary people, which made these experiences a relevant part of the current public discussion on home care, its expenses and the law reform. The described experiences may even have promoted and increased the approachability of the home care case.

In HS, everyday life experiences were made relevant in the parliamentary election stories. A series of ten theme stories handled issues that voters regarded as most important in the upcoming election. In the theme stories, socio-political issues, such as health care, unemployment, criminality or aging of the population were handled from the viewpoint of regular people.⁴² For example, a story about the dilemma of combining family life with working life ("Lack of time is wearing out adults and children" / "Ajan puute väsyttää vanhemmat ja lapset", HS 10.2.3003, see Example 1) was written from the viewpoint of a father who was also a special education teacher. In the story, the course of his ordinary day was reported and he got to state his views as an expert on special education. From this position, he proposed that politicians should seriously consider a possibility for parents of schoolchildren to work shortened hours. In the HS story, the teacher's experience was made relevant by linking it to the survey results that stated that schools and the well-being of families were among the most important election themes. This connection entailed added significance to the views of the interviewee. In fact, the whole concept of the HS series represented the lives and experiences of regular people as politically significant due to the fact that the story themes were derived from the survey. However, the connection between the everyday story and the survey was not always made explicit.

In AL, everyday life orientation was evident in the so-called value series, and especially in the linkage that was made between a background story and an encounter story. In the background story, a group of ordinary people or a single person spoke about their life experiences related to the issue in question. For example, in the story about farming, a dairy farmer and his wife talked about their everyday timetables, past hardships and future plans

42 In this context, it is relevant to note that even if HS had the highest percentage of citizen agents in its stories, they were mostly anonymous and their views were expressed in separate sidebars. This practice may be reader friendly, but it does not facilitate the idea of connectedness if no references to the comments are made in the main story.

(“Computer is keeping track on the milk quota in the cowshed” / “Tietokone vahtii navetassa, ettei maitokiintiö ylity”, AL, 7.11.2002). They also stated their views on the effects of new EU farming regulation in Finland. From this angle, the story unpacked the complicated system of milk production quotas, national regulation and international rules provided by the EU. Thus, the experiences of the farmers were framed as part of the broad political discussion on agriculture. In the follow-up story (“Finland’s position in the negotiations made better due to new EU policy on agriculture” / ”EU:n maatalouslinjaus paransi Suomen neuvottelutilannetta”, AL, 8.11.2002), the farmer travelled to Helsinki to meet the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. In this story, the everyday life that was covered the day before became even more politically oriented, as the participants discussed the current EU negotiations about farming subsidies and Finland’s position in these negotiations.

Critics of public journalism might ask: is there something new to this? Is it not just good journalism? The answer is: yes, at the textual level of news journalism, the stories represented examples of good traditional journalistic writing: they gave space for citizens and let them speak about their experiences. This everyday element alone cannot be considered very radical, and without the combined use of the other meta-elements, its effects would remain rather minor. Nevertheless, the element is significant as it reflects the fundamental orientation of the newspapers’ public journalism approach: to mark citizens’ experiences as relevant input for general public discussion.

In sum, the meta-element of representing everyday life as politically relevant seemed to be especially apparent in the story structures and designs – more so than in the styles of writing. The story designs provided room for citizens to take a lead in defining the discussed issues from their perspectives. In HS, relevance was produced by the size and style of the story packages: a full broadsheet page was dedicated to a single issue and the whole concept of the election series provided relevance for everyday experiences by referring to the survey results. In AL’s story pairs the follow-up story always widened the context of the everyday story, and in IH relevance for everyday experiences was made explicit through a combination of a main story that featured citizens and a side-bar that provided broader background information. However, making the connection between citizens’ experiences and the broader societal frames was somewhat problematic: one might question whether the logic actually worked if the stories were not read as pairs or interpreted as parts of the same entity by the readers. Therefore, the logic behind these structures could have been made more transparent by openly expressing them in the stories.

Connections between citizens and politicians

Another common element in the public journalism stories was the *linking of civic life to political decision making*. This was a significant aspect because

politicians were the second largest agent group in this material. This element is closely connected with what was discussed above about relevance, but it is more closely related to the representative system of political decision making, i.e. to "politics" and to the way in which politicians were positioned in the stories as counter pairs for citizens. Quite often, this element was characterized by actual face-to-face meetings between citizens and politicians in the context of discussion events or a one-on-one setting.

In the two bigger papers, the election context affected the way in which civic life was connected to political decision making. There was a clearly expressed will in the election projects to encourage citizens to use their right to vote. The stories also aimed at presenting the political system as accessible and understandable to citizens. The connection between citizens and political decision making was produced in HS's parliamentary election series by posing readers' questions to party leaders. However, the fact that these questions were posed by the reporter – and not directly by the voters themselves – left the citizens' questions un-contextualized and the citizen–politician connection rather thin. In the EU election project, the newsroom employed another approach and aimed at more concrete connectedness by covering the discussion events that featured citizens and politicians. However, even if the events brought citizens and politicians to the same room, their perspectives did not often meet in the stories. Citizens who participated in the events were featured most often in the sidebar stories: they evaluated the discussion and the event. The citizen agents were positioned as the audience: as followers of the debate, they seldom interacted with politicians. This is partly explained by the TV-dominated production situation and the scarcity of the audience questions discussed in the previous chapter.

However, the events' basic idea could have opened up possibilities for connecting citizens with politicians, but at the textual level, this connection remained weak. The main stories in the story packages concentrated on poll results and politicians' comments and debate. They framed the election as a game in which the main questions dealt with winning and losing. In this frame, the citizen was easily positioned as a percentage among others, despite the initial participatory aim. Moreover, the tendency of HS to concentrate on high-level political actors affected the stories by turning the texts into consecutive expressions of opinions from different prestigious politicians. The journalistic tradition of balance affected the presentation: all the political parties were given some space in the discussion event stories, and therefore, the texts became dominated by the politicians' opinions. From the perspective of voters, this kind of listing offers possibilities for comparison, but from the perspective of citizens as agents in the stories, the practice is marginalizing. Thus, there seemed to be an inner contradiction in the logic of the HS stories in terms of whether they should serve citizens as the reading public or include them in the stories as active counter-parts for politicians.

There were similar contradictions in the regional paper's election stories, the key being whether the stories should serve the readers – to inform the voters as broadly as possible about the candidates' differences – or whether they should report and even aid connectedness between politicians and citizens in the discussion events. AL's election series was a long process: the tour visited 16 cities and involved about 20 journalists as writers or hosts of the events. Consequently, the texts varied and reporters approached the events with different kinds of ideas and personal writing styles. So, even if the series as a story format was tightly regulated in terms of its structures (the main story featured panellists' views and the general discussion, the sidebars featured citizens' evaluations of the event⁴³, and a short list of interesting quotations from the event was always included and results from mock votes were presented), the texts varied in terms of how much room was given to the linkage between candidates and citizens. Some stories succeeded in promoting connectedness better than others, for instance by structuring the discussion stories with audience questions or the themes that were presented in the news van stories by local residents and associations. However, the AL stories, too, were affected by the ideal of balanced reporting and the need to quote all of the panellists fairly, which sometimes resulted in stories that listed political statements and were dominated by political jargon. This indicates that the ideal of connectedness was difficult to translate into the textual presentation.

In AL's value series the act of combining citizens and politicians worked better. By covering the one-on-one meetings, the stories were able to produce connections between the participants. The first value series "Turning Point of Welfare" introduced four broad "welfare" themes: health care, working life, farming and entrepreneurship. The second series "Challenging Power" was connected to policy programs that dealt with employment, entrepreneurship, health care, civic activity and the information society. Both series were based on encounters that enabled combining "the political" aspect of everyday life with "politics". In one of the encounters, for example, a waiter talked about the difficulties that he had faced with temporary work contracts, and the Minister of Labour explained the ways in which the government aimed at monitoring the operations of employment agents ("Filatov wants to broaden the right to intervene" / "Filatov haluaa laventaa puuttumisoikeutta", AL 1.11.2002). The story pointed out that political decisions are connected to aspects of the everyday working life, but in the case of labour market questions in particular, the political decision-makers, too, are somewhat constrained. This story was thus an example of an article that would have benefitted from including the aspects of the employers and businesses.

Even if the encounter stories connected the citizens and politicians more

43 At times, the sidebar was not used for presenting citizens' comments; sometimes a newsworthy issue or a particularly interesting part of the discussion was published in the sidebar.

fluently than the discussion event stories, there were some problems with this approach, as well. For example, the stories ran the risk of accentuating the role of the minister at the expense of the citizen. The coding results indicated that the most common activity of the political agents in the stories was to give advice or guidance, and this applies to the encounter stories, too. The expert position of the citizen that was created in the first story may have been overshadowed by the minister's political prestige. In other words, the power balance easily shifted to the side of the minister who took the lead in the discussion situation and was thus able to have more effect on the way the eventual story was framed. In spite of these problems, in one-on-one encounter stories, there was more space for interaction and possibilities for connectedness than in the often rather sporadic discussion event stories.

The proportion of political agents in the local paper was considerably smaller than in the other two papers. In the IH stories, only six percent of the agents represented political parties. The IH approach positioned the city administration as a more decisive public actor than politicians, as the administrative sector as an agent group was proportionally larger (11%) than the political agents. Indeed, IH's encounter stories more often connected citizens with city officials than with local politicians. As mentioned, this was of course a natural result of the fact that in the IH sample, there were no election projects, but that is hardly the only explanation. The local context in which the newspaper operates may play a role here. Local papers in Finland have traditionally been positioned as the "official papers" of their area and municipalities; they have acted as the information transmitters of official notices and local decisions. Reliance on local administration as a news source has therefore been a characteristic of local papers. This tradition is still reflected in the work of the civic reporter at IH in the sample stories. Moreover, any openly political implications of the civic reporters' stories were rare.

When connections with citizens and politicians emerged in the IH stories, the relationship was the kind that aimed at encouraging people to follow the local decision making process or take part in local public discussion. The two story types in the repertoire of the civic reporter, which mostly dealt with politics, were "mobilizing stories" and "current topics" stories. The mobilizing stories were more explicitly about connections to politics, but they remained on the general level and did not rely on one-on-one meetings. There was usually a dual aim to the stories: citizens were encouraged at the same time to take part in both the journalistic process and general public discussion. Two examples illustrate this approach. In the first example story, three different people were invited to Heinola Town Hall to follow a regular meeting of the local city council ("More discussion than anticipated in the city council meeting" / "Valtuustossa puhuttiin odotettua enemmän", IH 26.2.2005). The story featured three local citizens: a chief from a planning department, a student and a home aid worker. They followed and evaluated

the meeting and talked about their relationship to local decision making. The meeting was represented as understandable and interesting as a means of encouraging local people to take part in these meetings. Political life was familiarized through the experiences of the citizens who expressed their views about the meeting and proposed improvements.

In the second example, two local citizens were asked to take electronic candidate comparison quizzes ("Local candidates have been lazy with the candidate comparison quiz" / "Heinolan ehdokkaat käyneet laiskasti vaalikoneella", IH 16.10.2004). An educator and an environmental secretary answered the electronic quiz and talked about their experiences, they also expressed criticism towards the candidates that did not fill out their answers so that the quiz and its results would fully serve the voters. In a sidebar, local party leaders explained why so many candidates neglected to fill in their answers. There was an interesting tension between the citizens who thought the electoral quizzes were a "fun and relaxed way to get interested in politics" and the politicians who considered the applications rather sceptically as "merely a game, though an interesting one". The story thus used participatory and activating methods and encouraged people to demand answers from candidates. These examples shed light on the way in which IH linked citizens and politicians by activation and familiarization.

To sum up, due to the nature of their projects, HS and AL aimed to connect citizens and politicians from the perspective of the electoral system, even competition. At the textual level, the encounters provided a more fruitful way to build up the connections than the discussion event stories. IH's approach, which was not directly linked to elections (and not a distinct project with recurring story structures), appeared softer in its ways of challenging politics: it connected citizens with the administration rather than with political decision-makers and concentrated on activating citizens and familiarizing them with politics. The analysis indicates that the practices and story designs aimed at overcoming the gap between citizens and politics, but at the level of storytelling, the aim of connectedness proved more problematic.

Citizens' questions

Citizens' questions were another common element in the public journalism stories. The simple act of asking was used as a tool for involving and activating citizens as well as making their views part of the public discussion. Readers' suggestions and questions were asked for in different ways. HS asked its readers to contact the paper via e-mail or mail; every IH story featured a logo with the civic reporter's photo, phone number and e-mail address and AL invited readers to the news van or discussion events by advertising them beforehand. The requested citizen input often took the form of questions when the stories were published. Asking a question was the second most common act (18%) for citizens in the stories after expressing an opinion or a viewpoint

(22%).⁴⁴ Questions and questioning thus form an important cross sectional element in the stories even if there were differences as to how the questions were used or presented in the stories.

The element of questioning was particularly strong in the HS stories, in which over half of the citizens' acts were coded as questions. This can be explained by the fact that the party leader interviews were based on a format in which readers' questions played a key role. A full-page story package included a traditional interview, a comment by a journalist and a Q&A sidebar with ten reader questions. These questions varied from broad value questions to very concrete ones, or they contained a personal touch. For instance, the chairwoman of the Left Alliance Party was asked about whether she had ever dealt with great financial strains in her personal life ("Siimes: I turned the direction of the tax policy discussion" / "Siimes: Käänsin verokeskustelun suunnan", HS 10.3.2003), and the leader of the Green Party was asked: "I am single 25-year old without children living in a big city. I have a master's degree with good grades, I speak five languages, I know my way with computers. But I can't find a job. What is wrong?" ("Soininvaara: Pelkkä kannatus ei riitä" / "Soininvaara: "It is not enough to have support", HS 7.2.2003). The readers were given a possibility to influence the direction and the content of the interview, but it was done in an anonymous manner, and in fact, it was impossible to evaluate whether the questions truly originated from (different) readers.⁴⁵ However, the questions brought nuances and practicality to the stories that would not have been present without the readers' activity.

Questions were a part of AL's concept as well, even if the percentage of questioning citizens was small at only three percent. The small percentage can be explained by the fact that the questions did not form an integral part of the textual story design. Nevertheless, questioning had an important role in the value series' encounter stories. The questions that worked best in the stories were the ones that were based on the participant's own experience or expertise: they provided concreteness to the discussion and hence to the whole story. In fact, this approach gave more authority to the citizens than HS's approach because the citizens acted as questioners themselves. In these stories, citizens prepared questions individually or with a peer group (or with the help of the journalist, a fact that was not explicit in the texts) before the meeting. Questions were considered as a means with which the citizens prepared themselves for the minister meetings, an empowering element. There-

44 Due to the gradual scale that I used in the coding, the actual number of question asking citizens (or other agents) may have been higher in reality. For example, if an agent was coded as criticizing (an act that was higher on the scale than asking), she/he may also have posed a question in another part of the story.

45 I coded all the questions as different citizen agents even if the questions were anonymous. This is somewhat problematic, but as my aim was to identify which agent groups get their voices heard in the texts, I took into account the anonymous questions as well, since they are labelled as "readers' questions".

fore, questions were not always reported as such in the stories: they were often hidden in the narrative. But in encounter stories where the questions were apparent, the role of the citizen as an active participant became clearer. In a story that covered a meeting between an "active youth" and the Minister of Justice ("There are no prospects for decreasing the voting right age limit" / "Nuorten on turha odottaa äänioikeuskärajan laskua", AL 22.2.2004), the beginning of the story was framed from the point of view of the minister, which was also indicated by the headline. However, in the second half of the story – in which the questions were published – the voice and aspects of the youth group were more clearly articulated. The questions dealt with the reluctance of the government to utilize referenda in Finland, or with the justifications for why established political organizations received more public funding than other civic associations. The Q&A format represented the youth as challengers of the existing political culture and the minister as the defender of traditional representative structures. When the questions were not reported, the story became dominated by the minister's voice and view.

In the IH stories, readers' questions were also used as a journalistic tool and they acted as a means of inviting citizens' participation to the journalistic process. The logo that was always attached to the civic reporters' stories asked for citizens' questions. One fifth of the IH stories were either "reader's questions" or "encounter stories", and 12% of citizens' acts in the stories were coded as questions. Questions were thus used as a way of formulating readers' problems or suggestions into concise stories that served the reading audience or developed into encounters in which citizens were able to pose their questions in person. "Reader's questions" stories utilized a traditional question and answer format. In some cases, the questioners were also given the possibility to comment on the answer they received. This kind of practice combined the questioning and evaluative roles of the citizens. An important aspect in these stories was transparency: they offered the possibility to explain where the questions originated, who posed them and why.

On top of Q&A stories, there were IH encounter stories that resembled those of AL, but they were not published in pairs. An example of a story that utilized questions in an interesting manner was a meeting between members of a local discussion club and two new city councillors representing different political parties ("There is lot of what I don't understand" / "Paljon on, mitä en ymmärrä", IH 2.11.2005). In this meeting, the club members were able to ask questions that they formulated together. An important fact here was that the club members also explained their views and gave reasons for their questions. This, in turn, invited the representatives to explain their answers in more detail. Moreover, a sidebar was dedicated to a list of questions that were asked and a short evaluation of the whole meeting by a few of the club members. This kind of listing of questions without reporting all of the answers might seem pointless, but I interpret this as a way of increasing transparency

and activation. With the list of questions, the story drew an outline of the club members' agenda and provided an example of the kind of input that is wished for from citizens in the future.

As we can see, all of the three newspapers employed citizens' questions journalistically but in a varying manner and degree. HS used citizens' questions in the most apparent and straightforward manner. HS's approach resembled that of IH by way of turning questions into Q&A stories, but due to the anonymity of the HS questions, the element of transparency was left out. HS's method thus left out interesting information that was connected to questioners' background and motivations. In IH's and AL's encounter stories, citizens' questions played a decisive role. However, there were difficulties in making questions a part of the journalistic narrative that would have been both journalistically stylish and valued the citizen input. As a work method, the discussion events were promising, but as a textual story type, discussions would have required more development in turning the questioning nature of the events into a smooth and newsworthy journalistic narrative. All things considered, in the public journalism stories, some of the journalistic authority and control that comes with questioning or interviewing – traditionally regarded as central tools for journalists – was given to citizens.

Possibilities for dialogue

Dialogue was another distinctive feature in the public journalism stories and it was closely linked with questioning. On top of questions, though, dialogue requires reciprocity. From the coding scheme, we can identify three activities that potentially invite reciprocal exchange: questioning, criticizing and proposing. Approximately 45% of all the activities in the stories were coded as one of these activities. This result is promising in terms of dialogue. However, advising – an act that is not very interactive to begin with – was the single most common category of action among all the agents (23%). This, in turn, explains why the aim of dialogue was a difficult one. It seems that public journalism's storytelling structures did not radically challenge the position of politicians and officials as advising experts and did not invite them into a more dialogic relationship with citizens. All of the newspapers, however, have elements in their public journalism stories that provided *possibilities for dialogue*, and therefore, it can be considered as one of the meta-elements of public journalism stories.

In the IH stories, dialogue was generated in group interviews or encounters. These formats enabled the exchange of views and provided a possibility to react to other participants' ideas. For example, in a story about a dangerous crossing ("Stop speeding on Kaakontie Road" / "Kaahaus kuriin Kaakon-tiellä", IH, 18.5.2005, see Example 2), a group of local residents, two city officials from city planning, and a policeman met and discussed the dangerous crossing at the location in question. This kind of meeting connected together

the experiences and worries of residents with the ideas of the planning officials, enabling the emergence of dialogue. The idea of problem-solving that some theorists consider as a central element in public journalism (e.g. Haas 2007) was most apparent in the local encounter stories. It seemed that the local context and the fact that participants met in the actual surroundings (be it a dangerous crossing or a neglected playground) added to the possibility of finding a solution. It was not the newspaper or the reporter that advocated a specific solution; the situation generated dialogue and deliberation, and therefore also problem-solving.

A group interview was another method of generating dialogue in the IH stories. It lacked the element of juxtaposition that was often apparent in encounters, and therefore, it worked in cases where the experiences from a wide range of people were reported: others' experiences encouraged people to talk about their lives and compare their experiences with each other. Dialogue was sometimes also produced without real-life meetings. For example, a story about a local waste water treatment station that produced a strong odour in the area ("Residents in Tommola are demanding repayments for bad odour" / "Tommolalaiset vaatimassa korvauksia pahasta hajusta", IH 27.4.2005) positioned residents, a water service engineer and a local politician into a dialogic relationship by letting them address the same question from their own perspectives and then comparing and contrasting their views. This way reciprocity was produced textually without real-life meetings.

AL also employed encounters and group interviews in its approach. A good example of an encounter story in which dialogue was produced was a story about a meeting between a young computer enthusiast and the Minister of Communication. The example shows that reciprocity was possible even between a minister and a 17-year old high school student ("Digital-TV and broadband are possible at the same time" / "Digi-tv ja laajakaista voidaan toteuttaa yhtä aikaa", AL 29.2.2004, see Example 3). The student's questions were published in bold text type and the ministers' answers were reported accordingly. However, half-way through the interview the roles were turned and the minister started asking questions to the student. She asked about open source software platforms, about how the student acquired her computer skills and about how computer teaching took place in schools. As a result of this reciprocal exchange, the student was able to act as an expert in her own area and was positioned in the story as an equal participant. It seemed that dialogue emerged as a result of the individual's qualities and expertise as well as the minister's willingness to get involved in the conversation.

In addition to encounters, discussion events and news van stories provided possibilities for dialogic interaction. However, dialogue proved more difficult in these story types than in the encounters. News van stories were effective in presenting and condensing the pressing issues as experienced by local people, but participants seemed to be more willing to get their is-

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Monet Sarkolantien asukkaat eivät päästä lapsiaan Kaakontien yli omiin puihin. Maanantai-ilta Reijo Federley oli paikalla varmistamassa turvallisuuden ylläpidon. (Kuvat: Jari Kautila)

Kaahaus kuriin Kaakontiellä

Sarkolantien asukkaat saivat lupauksen lapsille turvallisemmasta risteyksestä

Pöytäkirja
Chimene Boverd

Sarkolantien ja Kaakontien risteys on puhuttanut alueen asukkaita jo pitkään. Kaakontiellä ajetaan viidenkymmen nopeusrajoituksesta huolimatta huomattavan kovaa ja näkyvyys risteysalueella on mutkan ja suuren sähkökaapin takia Sarkolantien suunnasta lahes olematon.

– Oikealta tulevia autoja ei näe eikä paljon kuulukaan. Alueella asuu paljon lapsia ja Sarkolantiella on kolme perhepäivähoitajaa. Tällain mennessä tässä ei ole sattunut yhtään onnettomuutta, koska lapset on muistutettu väärästä pienestä pitäen joka päivä, perhepäivähoitaja **Sinikka Jukko** kiittää.

Erittäisen huolissaan asukkaat ovat Sarkolantien lasten koulumatkasta. Suojatietä pitkin kulkee päivittäin lapsia, joiden takia autot eivät tunnu uskeakaan hiljentävän.

Meillä saatetaan eka luokkalaisten aina tien yli, koska yksin häntä ei riitä eikä uskalla päästää auton vaarhien takia. Eihän edes aikukaan näe, onko tuot-



Maria Venäläinen ja muut asukkaat kuuntelevat Antti Kallion ja Ari Mattesin ehdotusta risteysalueen parantamisesta. Yhokomisario Federley tiipittaisi Kaakontien nopeusrajoitusta.

kin Kaakontiellä ajettiin ylinopeutta, mutta Federley virka-asu sai monen järjuttämän.

– Kävin täällä käännyttiä ison joukon mutta asukkaita, jotka kertoivat kommenttinsa paikan päälle kutsutulle kaupungin katu-
 tumestari Ari Mattelle, rakentamispäällikö Antti Kalliolle ja yhokomisario Reijo Federleylle.

Vaarallinen risteys oli etukäteen tuntu niin kaupungin virkamiehille kuin poliisille. Haastatteluhetkellä

avulla voisi nähdä paremmat toiset suunasta tulevat autot. Ilmassa on katkeruutta, koska asian puolesta on aikaisemminkin kerätty addressia, mutta turhaan.

– Olemme kuulleet, että tällä ei pidetä vielä vaarallisena risteykseen. Pitäisikö tässä sattuua kolari ennen kuin tähän reagoidaan, **Maria Venäläinen** kysyy.

Tällä kertaa kaupungin esittäjä oli kuitenkin ehdottanut, Toivossien ja pelien sijain Mattesin ja Kallio esittelivät asukkaalle suunnitella Jari Kautilan viime viikolla tekemän kehittämissä.

– Helppo ja toimiva ratkaisu olisi jatkaa kevytvaivaisi sähkökaapin takseja ja siirtää sen taakse Kaakontien ylittävälle suojalle. Tämä kaivettaisi ajoväylä, mikä yleensä tiputtaa ajoneuvon. Samoin tekisi kaikin reunaan perustettava korkeampi reusakivi. Kallio selitti.

Esitelty muutokset pienien mutkan koululaisen matkan, mutta samalla ylittävän ajotien pituus lyhenisi. Asukkaat saivat tulla kaupungin suunnitel-

Lappu ja sähköposti tehosivat

Kaakontien ja Sarkolantien risteyksestä huolestuneet asukkaat eivät osuneet paikalle sattumalla. Kokouksen aikana on risteysalueen asua **Maria Venäläinen**, joka muutamaa viikkoa aikaisemmin lähetti alueesta sähköpostia kaikille, jolle hän ajatteli asian kuuluvan. Ylittävän kukaan viestin saaneista valtuutetuista ei vastannut, kuten ei tehnyt kaupunginjohtajakaan.

– Enemmän minulle vastasi Ilkonne- ja viestintämääräyksen ylläpidon Juhana Valtonen. Hänen risteysalueen risteysalueen kovan ja tietojen perusteella vaaralliseksi. Venäläinen kertoi.

Mys Reijo Federley vastasi Venäläiselle pian. Kaupungin

min postiviestillä.

– Ollisihan se hyvä parannus erityisesti lasten kannalta. Tästä tulevien autoilijoiden tilanteeseen se ei paljon vaikuttanut, mutta se ei ole pääasia.

Kallion mukaan esittelijä ratkaisi ka-

glin virkamiheet saatiin paikalle toimittajan kutsuttuna.

– Naapurit ja muut asukkaat tulivat paikalle päiväkseen lähittämällä lappu perusteella. Olin yllätetty, miten paljon tähän kerääntyi ihmisiä. Tämä on selvästi tärkeä asia.

Keskustelun jälkeen Venäläinen valutti sytytyksellä kaupungin lupapöytäkirjaan. Eriävän postiviestinä hän koki sen, että työt luvattiin aloittaa jo ensi viikolla.

– Koko prosessin menin miinusta alkua yhteensä alle tunnin. Sähköpostit on aika tehokas väline, mutta silti ihmisillä tuntuu olevan iso kynnys ottaa lähimmäisiä vastaan vahtia. Sitteen pehvi, etteivät valtuutetut vastanneet minulle, Venäläinen summaa.

Example 2: IH 18.5.2005.

sues through to the reporter than discussing their views with other people. However, sometimes the participants were placed in a dialogic relationship with each other in the text. The same applied to discussion event stories. An example from such an occasion was from the discussion event in the city of Lempäälä. In the sidebar, two young voters from the audience were positioned in dialogue with the panellists because this interaction – as the journalist noted – was lacking in the actual discussion (“Health care centre predictably seen as the most important investment target” / ”Terveyskeskus nousi odotetusti tärkeimmäksi investointikohteeksi”, AL 22.10.2004). This was done by letting the two voters compare their own views with the panellists’ and to talk about their hopes as young residents of the town.

In HS’s stories, dialogue was rarer than in the other two papers. As mentioned, the design or the script of the EU election events did not support voter–candidate connectedness. Thus, citizens were not brought into a dialogic interaction with the candidates or other participants either. So, even if HS’s EU stories were based on discussions, the opportunity for dialogue was missed. However, in some of the HS’s parliamentary election stories, dialogue was produced textually. An example of this was a story about regional politics and the inequality between different parts of the country (“Helsinki is saving, but also supporting poor cities” / ”Helsinki säästää, mutta tukee köyhiä kuntia”, HS 17.2.2003.). In the story, a family from Helsinki was positioned in dialogue with a Regional Secretary from Kainuu, a region in North-East Finland. Dialogue was generated by storytelling techniques with phrases like “a resident from Helsinki insists...” or “a regular wage-earner from Helsinki is terrified by...” In other words, the journalist took a step further from merely presenting the citizens’ opinions and invited dialogue through textual means.

Dialogue is a demanding aim in public journalism, but by participatory journalistic work methods and styles of writing it is possible to produce a dialogic dimension in the texts. Therefore, dialogue is not merely a product of face-to-face meetings. IH’s approach, which was not linked to pre-decided story designs or events, produced most variance and hence flexible opportunities for dialogue. In addition, the local setting seemed to enhance dialogue – and problem-solving – but locality alone did not automatically result in dialogic texts.

Citizens as public evaluators

In the material, the most common activity for citizens was to express a viewpoint or an opinion (21%), but the public journalism stories opened up other positions for citizens, too: the division between activities was rather evenly spread. If we consider the “depth” of the activities of citizens, AL seemed to offer the strongest public position for citizens; i.e. 72% of citizens’ actions were coded as the three “strongest” classes of activity: proposing, criticising

and advising. This is compared to 44% in IH and 16% in the HS stories. This indicates that AL's approach was successful in representing citizens as agents who were proactive and capable of public discussion in terms of argumentation, critiquing or giving guidance or advice. This element thus placed *citizens as public evaluators*.

AL's news van stories placed citizens in a proactive role by letting the citizens propose themes for the upcoming discussion event. In the main story, citizens and representatives of local civic organizations – or anyone who wished to visit the van – were able to state their views or criticize the current situation. Criticism was usually targeted at past decisions or local politics. The sidebar featured a traditional *vox pop* interview with mug shots and short answers, but the questions were often posed in a way that invited a proactive answer. Citizens answered questions such as "What kind of advice would you give to future decision-makers?" or "What areas need improvement in the coming years?" ("Rapid growth of Ylöjärvi puts pressure on enlargement of schools" / "Ylöjärven raju kasvu tuo painetta koululaajennuksiin", AL 15.10.2004). Another feature in the AL stories that placed citizens in a proactive position was the sidebar of the discussion event stories: it positioned citizens as peer evaluators to whom the reading audience could relate. In these stories, citizens often evaluated the course of the evening: panellists' performance and the relevance of the discussed themes. Therefore, also the event in itself was placed under public scrutiny: a measure that increased transparency of the practice.

In the IH stories, citizens were often asked for their evaluation on different issues or events, like in the story about the citizens following the local city council meeting. Indeed, the whole civic reporter concept invited citizens to take a critical stand: a proactive public position was often produced by the simple fact that citizens contacted the civic reporter with an issue. This starting point often placed citizens as critics of local administration. This dimension was exemplified by various encounter stories that featured citizens with public officials, such as the police or employment authorities. In these encounters, citizens discussed their critical observations and possible improvement proposals. The encounter as a social face-to-face situation, however, lessened the sharpest of disagreements. Only one of IH's encounter stories in this sample reported a truly confrontational meeting: a discussion about skiing from which the other party angrily dashed away ("Skiers and walkers end up in arguments on a daily basis in Tähtihoivi trail" / "Hiihtäjät ja kävelijät kärhämöivät päivittäin Tähtihoivin reitillä", IH 29.1.2005). However, it needs to be noted that the rest of IH's story types did not promote critical public evaluation as successfully. Especially stories that presented local people or local areas – e.g. immigrants or small villages of the area – were quite the opposite in their sympathetic tone.

In the HS stories, the idea of citizens as critical evaluators was not as ap-

parent as in the other two papers. The EU project with its story design offered an element in which this kind of position emerged. Much like in AL, the sidebars of the discussion event stories featured voters who evaluated the event, the performance of the candidates or the usefulness of the discussion from their own perspective. However, this element easily turned into a text that described the atmosphere of the event rather than allowing the public to assess the discussed issues. In the parliamentary election stories, the public's responses or questions were wished for ("propose a theme or tell us your opinion"), but citizens were rarely allowed to evaluate the election themes. Only in the final story of the election series were the citizens' letters and e-mails discussed in a broader manner ("Readers' letters highlighted a wide spectrum of voters' problems" / "Lukijakirjeet nostivat esiin laajan kirjon äänestäjien pulmia", HS 15.3.2003), but an opportunity for interesting evaluation was missed, since the letters were more or less discussed as a bulk and their contents were not handled in more detail. Consequently, the actual use of citizens as public evaluators remained rather modest in the HS stories, especially since the ending story spoke about the enormous response that HS's approach created: the newsroom received altogether 600 letters or e-mails.

To sum up, the position of a critical public evaluator was a common constituent in the public journalism stories even if the weighting of the evaluative role of citizens varied between the newspapers. The HS stories invited participation, but did not use citizens' input as a means of bringing forth the evaluative aspect of citizen participation. The IH stories in turn, placed citizens in an evaluative role with the civic reporter approach, in which critical citizen observations were a typical starting point for the stories. AL's stories were designed to allow a proactive and critical citizen position to emerge, for instance citizens were often placed as advisers.

Journalists as commentators

The final common meta-element in the public journalism texts was the *journalists' role as commentators*. Short commentaries have recently become a typical part of the storytelling structures in Finnish newspaper journalism in general. This trend is indicated by story packages that typically include a main story introducing the facts or the state of affairs, a sidebar that features an interview (e.g. with regular people), a fact box, some graphs or statistics, and a short commentary piece by the journalist. The short comments continue the tradition of neutrality: the main story becomes presented as value free, because the comments and evaluation are situated in a separate story element altogether. The public journalism stories were no exception to this trend: all of the papers featured this kind of story structure, even if commentary was not the single most significant of the meta-elements. The style of the journalist as an active commentator in the stories varied. The content analysis indicated that AL's stories provided the most opportunities for journalists' com-

ments: five percent of all the agents in the AL stories were journalists. The corresponding figure in HS and IH stories was two percent.

In AL's second value series, "Challenging Power", commentaries concentrated mostly on politics or the discussion that took place between the citizen and the minister, whereas in the news van stories' commentaries, journalists often provided background information about local issues. In other words, the commentaries in the election series made it possible for journalists to act as specialists on local matters that they had followed. AL's commentaries were characterized by a critical or advising tone, as the manner in which journalists in AL tended to express themselves was either to pose (rhetorical) questions or to give advice or guidance in the columns, as indicated by the results of the content analysis.

There is an interesting difference in the way commentaries were used for journalistic expression in the other papers. In the HS stories, journalists did not give advice or pose questions, they used the opportunity to state their opinions about certain issues or politicians, and this was most often done in a critical manner. There was thus a traditional confrontational setting between journalists and the political elite in HS's commentaries, which was understandable given the context of the elections and the position of the newspaper as the national discussion leader in political journalism.

In IH, commentaries were not routine-like elements, even if they were part of the civic reporter's repertoire. When commentaries were published, the civic reporter most often spoke about the process of making the story or used her own experiences as examples or points of comparison for the viewpoints expressed in the main story. These commentaries thus produced transparency or increased the credibility of the stories. This approach can be exemplified by a commentary that was published in the water treatment station story. In the text, the civic reporter told about her own scepticism concerning the seriousness of the odour problem. But she also wrote about her visit to the water station and how her own senses made her aware of the problem. These observations supported the local residents' complaints. However, there were virtually no politically oriented opinions in the commentaries of IH, which was an interesting difference with the other two papers.

Even if the proportion of journalists as active agents in the stories was not very high, short commentary columns made up a recognizable storytelling element. The public journalism approaches were appropriated to the current trend of producing story packages that typically include commentaries. They provided the stories with credibility and depth, but each paper had its own way of doing this. In AL, the publishing of commentaries was most continual: AL's commentaries enabled journalist to act as specialists on local matters. HS's commentaries, in turn, represented journalists as evaluators of political figures; journalists in the nation-wide paper were more openly opinionated

than the journalists from the other papers. IH's civic reporter mostly wrote about her own experiences and avoided stating political comments.

6.3. A typology of public journalism stories

In Table 9, I have summarized the use of meta-elements in the three newspapers' public journalism stories. Even if there were differences in the papers' approaches, the typology represents the elements that were common in all the papers and hence shaped the textual forms of public journalism.

In sum, all of the newsrooms in the material made journalistic decisions that were apparent as storytelling elements that produced relevance for citizens' experiences, connected citizens with political decision making, utilized citizens' questions, generated dialogue, positioned citizens as public evaluators and presented journalists as commentators. My analysis has made explicit the logic with which the newspapers approached public journalism in their texts, but the existence of these elements alone does not equate with successful public journalism stories. Indeed, the effective and imaginative use of the elements varied between the newspapers and some of the elements themselves could have benefitted from refinement. The typology thus also opens up the possibility for evaluation and development.

Relevance of citizens' everyday experiences was brought about by the large number of citizen agents in the stories. The viewpoints and experiences of citizens were given space in the newspapers: citizens were allowed to start the discussion on certain topics and frame the issue first from their own angle. Room was given for the experiences of the unemployed, immigrants, ordinary families, various occupational groups and so on. By letting these people appear on the pages, the newspapers opened up the possibility for public discussion that was citizen-oriented. Friedland & Nichols (2002) discuss this element by referring to a human-interest frame that aims to present the human face of civic and social problems. This frame was used in the U.S. stories to increase issue relevance by telling the story through the perspectives of those individuals with personal experiences and potential solutions (Friedland & Nichols 2002, 42–43). In light of my analysis, this meta-element, however, would benefit from more clearly exposing and expressing the political dimension in citizens' experiences. Space was given for citizens and marginalized groups, but the political nature of their experiences were not always underlined in the texts. This indicates that the meta-element did not offer enough latitude and/or means for journalists to combine the narrative of personal troubles or experiences with the narrative of political significance (see Bird & Dardenne 2009, 213–214).

Table 9: Typology of public journalism stories in HS, AL and IH.

Meta-element	Manifestation in the texts
Relevance of the everyday	Space for citizens' voices and experiences. Layout structures and story designs (e.g. story pairs, survey) let citizens frame the issues before others: bottom-up direction of the stories. Approaching people in their own environment.
Links between citizens and politics	Story types that bring together citizens and politicians: events and encounters. Political decision making framed as accessible and understandable: activation and familiarization. Elections and voting emphasized as the high points of representative democracy.
Citizens' questions	Various ways of utilizing and presenting citizens' questions: anonymous questions posed by the reporter, one-on-one meetings and discussion events. Transparency created by revealing the origins of the questions.
Possibility for dialogue	Story structures that provide possibilities for dialogue: events, news van stories, encounters and group interviews. Textual representation of dialogue remains challenging, but dialogic relationships between agents sometimes produced by textual means.
Citizens as evaluators	Proactive position of citizens emphasized by providing possibilities for criticism, proposing and advising. Evaluation of issues, events and candidates.
Journalists as commentators	In the commentaries, journalists express their specialization on certain issues or political figures. Commentaries as sites for producing transparency by unpacking the news making process.

Another common feature in the stories was the *will to bring together citizens and decision-makers*. This was most clearly manifested in the election series that connected these agents together either by means of textual positioning or by reporting occasions in which citizens and politicians met face-to-face. This meta-element was characterized by the ethos of democracy and voting, which became evident in the stories through activation of the voters and familiarizing the structures and practices of representative democracy to citizens. Accordingly, a key aspect of this element seemed to be the idea that representative democracy can be enhanced by better connecting citizens with politicians. The use of this element in the stories was somewhat problematic; i.e. even though the connections that were created in the real meetings and face-to-face situations may have functioned as true points of connection, the stories easily turned into the representations of politicians' talk that bypassed the idea of connectedness. Another interesting aspect was brought forward by the local paper's propensity to bring together citizens and local officials rather than politicians. Haas (2007, 117) notes that the promoting of direct interaction between citizens and officials is a key feature in which non-U.S. projects have differed from their American counterparts. My findings suggest

that this feature is also linked to the decided organizational approach and the local setting.

Citizens' questions made up a meta-element that was more concrete and easily detectable than the two previous ones. All of the newspapers had story types in their repertoire that relied on the activity of citizens as questioners. Interestingly, a similar use of citizens' questions can be found for example in the Japanese public journalism approach in which questions are solicited from readers, and reporters invite the persons with the most intriguing questions to help them interview public officials. This "reader-tag-along" model has been the basis of public journalism coverage in the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* (Hamada 2010, 93–94). In the Finnish case, questions seemed to appear as a distinctive feature because of the first two elements: questions acted as a concrete means with which the everyday experiences were linked to the general public discussion and citizens' views related to those of politicians. Moreover, publishing readers' questions made explicit the fact that the stories were citizen-based.

The public journalism practices and story structures provided *possibilities for dialogue*, but the texts did not always succeed in mediating the dialogue that took place. Therefore, it can be concluded that the dialogic element remains challenging: it requires reciprocity from the participants, a factor that cannot necessarily be affected by journalists. However, dialogue can be furthered in the texts by placing different agents into reciprocal connection by the means of journalistic storytelling, i.e. by posing different agents' questions to one another or inviting mutual assessment. A method that seemed to reinforce dialogue was the encounter. The face-to-face meeting between a citizen and a decision-maker created a certain amount of tension to the story without concentrating on the conflict between the participants but rather on the points of contact, even solutions. Dialogue was thus an element that led to problem-solving; an aspect of public journalism that played a rather small role in these Finnish public journalism stories compared to U.S. coverage. Friedland and Nichols (2002, 45–46) point out that 78% of the 600 public journalism cases they studied offered some form of possible solutions to the introduced problems.

Citizens' role as critical evaluators was another element in the typology. Its use in public journalism was significant because it helped the newspapers avoid the personalization of problems and individual experiences; a difficulty that is often connected with stories that report on everyday experiences. Haas (2007, 87–88) has noted that the personalization of citizen testimony (vs. generalization of the testimony of elite actors) is a feature of even some of the most widely celebrated initiatives, such as the *Wichita Eagle's* "People Project". However, public journalism's central tenet is to allow citizens opportunities to address and open up broader problems. My analysis points out that citizens' evaluations were presented in the texts. For example, the news

van stories appeared to open up a proactive public role for citizens by letting them criticize, propose and advise. However, the evaluative role did not emerge from the participatory practices effortlessly. This was indicated, for example, by the difficulties that journalists' had with the news van practice (see Chapter 5.3.). However, when citizens evaluated the events and discussions that they personally took part in, their evaluative position functioned more naturally. By taking part in the discussion events, citizens assumed a position of an involved participant from which they could more naturally assess the events, other participants and the addressed issues.

Journalists were not very apparent in the public journalist texts: their presence in the encounter situations, for example, was not underlined, nor were the stories written in first person. The stories thus followed neutral and news-like styles of expression, in which the journalist played the role of an observer and interpreter. These findings mirror the results of the U.S. approach in which the use of opinion pieces was noted but overall rather modest; in 20% of the 600 cases, there was some evidence of the editorial staff supplementing the newsroom staff (Friedland & Nichols 2002, 44). A joint element in all of the studied Finnish newspapers' textual approaches was, however, the use of short *commentaries by journalists*. This story type was an element that created a space in the story packages in which the reporters were able to use their expertise and make personal evaluations of political figures and issues. Moreover, commentaries also may have produced transparency by unwinding the story making process.

The six identified meta-elements represent the most prominent storytelling structures in the Finnish public journalism stories. These elements are not unique to the Finnish approach: similar characteristics can be found in international public journalism projects, but the emphasis that is given to the elements varies. Therefore, international research that would take a step away from the organizational aspects of the projects and analyze the use of typical storytelling elements in different cultural context would be welcomed. Moreover, I would find it more interesting to study the evolution of public journalism's storytelling elements rather than concentrating on the differences between conventional and public journalism coverage.

The discussed elements tell us something about the relationship between classical professionalism and public journalism. It is clear that the logic of classical professionalism has shaped the typology to some degree: the ideals of public service, democracy, even objectivity or neutrality were evident in the texts. For example, the meta-element of citizen-politician connectedness underlined the classical democratic role of journalism as an information delivery conduit *and* a public debate forum. In fact, the dual approach of the election discussion stories manifested this dimension rather well: on the one hand, the stories were designed to deliver relevant information to voters, but on the other hand, the stories functioned as debate platforms. In a

sense then, there was a tension between serving the voters through balanced reporting and serving the situation in which the debates took place through encouragement and activation. Furthermore, the classical watchdog role that was apparent in the commentaries of the two bigger newspapers can be seen as a manifestation of traditional professional values. The watchdog attitude came apparent in the commentaries more clearly than in the other story components. However, the role of commentaries pointed to another dimension of professionalism, too. The idea of objectivity shaped the textual practices so that the main stories contained accounts of what took place, and the commentary was the site for the journalist's own evaluation. The tradition of balanced reporting was clearly evident in the pre-election coverage, and in some cases, the tradition affected the stories by making their structures rather stiff and list-like. The journalist's own position as an active participant in the story making process was not underlined: the storytelling structures adapted to the tradition of distant observing. In a way, then, the applied participatory methods that require activity from journalists were not often manifested in the texts. So, even if public journalism and its citizen-based starting point offered a possibility to break away from the familiar storytelling structures, for example seeing elections as a game, the standard narratives that have become dominant in classical professional conduct were not radically challenged (cf. Bird & Dardenne 2009, 213).

The typology can also be related to the definition of public journalism I introduced in Chapter 2. The typology indicates that the aim of *diversity* can be identified in the meta-element of everyday relevance. This element gave space for diverse voices and highlighted the fact that many seemingly minor issues may be covered from an angle that renders the everyday issues relevant, even political (Mouffe 2005). Citizens' active role as *participants* in the journalistic process was indicated by meta-elements such as questioning, evaluation and dialogue: these elements always require citizen participation and are connected to the general idea of the more proactive role of citizens in journalism and in the public sphere. Public journalism's value of *connectedness* was also clearly apparent in the typology: the Finnish approach underlined connections between citizens and politicians as well as officials. However, a critical remark could be made about the scarcity of NGO's and businesses as sources. From a critical standpoint, it could be argued that by lifting up citizens, the stories run the risk of isolating citizens, creating their own sphere, and connecting the individual citizens' perspectives mainly with those of politicians and the administration but not with economic life or the various collective forms of civic activity.

The definition of public journalism also includes the aim of *deliberation*. The typology indicates, however, that even if dialogue was encouraged, the texts did not necessarily succeed in representing a complex reasoning process in a deliberative manner. The analysis also showed that participation

that was wished for in these stories mostly meant participation in the formal political system by voting, not necessarily participation by engaging in civic associations, for example. The ethos of *democracy* was thus apparent in the public journalism stories but was predominantly framed as a representative and competitive system.

In sum, the meta-elements of the public journalism stories reflected the professional as well as the public journalism ethos. The storytelling elements can be seen as a result of negotiation between the two traditions and this typology underlines one point in particular: public journalism entails the idea of transferring *part of* journalistic authority from journalists to citizens. Public journalism as a textual practice works in favor of making citizens more active in the journalistic process and creates a more dialogical relationship between them and public authorities. Even if the current public journalism practices were diversified and the dialogical successes were often modest, the existence of such elements as questioning, evaluation and dialogue act as evidence that public journalism has offered Finnish newspaper journalists a means to regard readers as *capable public actors*.

7.

Citizens and public journalism

As indicated by the textual analysis in the previous chapter, citizens formed the most common group of agents in the public journalism stories. Therefore, it is important to take a closer look at the role of citizens in public journalism from the perspective of journalists. The Finnish translation of public journalism is *"kansalaisjournalismi"*, which literally translates into civic or citizen journalism. Thus, the title of public journalism already invited journalists to consider the role of citizens in journalism, but the citizen position was not the only point of reference. The typical way journalists referred to their public was as "readers". This finding deserves a closer look: *How did journalists consider the role of citizens in public journalism?*

Methodologically, this chapter is based on a qualitative content analysis of interviews with journalists. The interviews were analyzed with the help of Atlas.ti software. The data was first organized according to four themes: public journalism definitions and evaluations, talk about readers, news work talk and notes about the role of the journalist. The findings in this chapter are based on the first two themes. First, journalists' definitions of public journalism were analyzed in order to identify common schemes of interpretation and newspaper specific particularities regarding public journalism and its limits. Second, readership talk was scrutinized. At the coding stage, it became evident that a typical way for journalists to refer to their public was to talk about "readers" but that in relation to public journalism the idea of readership included various other aspects, too. Readership talk was regrouped in to four clusters: (1) readers as subscribers, (2) readers as receivers, (3) readers as participants in journalism and (4) readers as citizens. The analysis of these clusters forms the basis of this chapter.

I will approach the relationship between journalism and citizens by first examining the way in which journalists described and discussed public jour-

nalism as an idea; what kinds of interpretations and definitions did journalists offer for public journalism and what kind of problems did they identify? This discussion is placed here – after the chapters on practices and texts – in order to emphasize the context from which the definitions emerged, in other words, to better understand how the practical work shaped journalists' way of making sense of the idea of public journalism. Second, I will analyze how journalists discussed their readers in relation to newspaper journalism in general. I have identified two main frames: the audience and the public frame. These frames help us to understand that public journalism draws upon both domains. Lastly, I will focus specifically on the participatory role of readers in public journalism and finally point out some interesting differences between the three newspapers.

7.1. Journalists defining "public journalism"

In the interviews, I asked journalists to talk about how they became familiar with the term public journalism, its aims and how they understood it. Journalists had become familiar with the term in different contexts: newsroom discussions, seminars, articles in the trade magazine or in their own studies. This variance of sources indicates that the concept of "public journalism" belongs to the vocabulary of the Finnish professional culture, but it also points out why the understanding of the term is incoherent. The term in itself was familiar to all of the journalists but uncertainty was expressed about the "correct" definition or understanding of the idea. Moreover, each newspaper had underlined different aspects of public journalism in their coverage or named their approach differently. For example, the prevalent term at AL was "reader orientation", and at HS, the projects were said to include "elements of public journalism", but they were not explicitly named as public journalism projects. The journalists in the local paper, IH, were most at ease using the term "public journalism" but definitions of the concept varied within the local organization, as well.

Despite the diversity, four concurring dimensions were identified regarding journalists' conceptions on public journalism. In the following, I will discuss these dimensions and organize them in a way that points out the variance in the depth in which public journalism was conceived.

What constitutes public journalism?

The first dimension in defining public journalism dealt with the information that newspapers provide readers. Journalists maintained that in public journalism *information should be relevant to people as citizens*; it needs to be useful, understandable and easy to digest. This dimension was linked to the idea that traditional journalism often covers issues from the perspective of the decision-makers and provides information that is relevant for them –

not necessarily to the general public. This aspect of understanding public journalism underlined the importance of covering topics in a way that translates political jargon into everyday language and explains how decisions affect the lives of ordinary citizens. This dimension was also linked to the idea that the public needs to be well served as consumers in order to keep them as subscribers. The journalists who understood public journalism as such often noted that public journalism, as a separate term is not necessary. According to this view, journalism has been and should always be about issues that are relevant and understandable for citizens, and therefore, the epithet "public" could be omitted from the title (for similar findings, see e.g. Rosen 1999b, 163–164).

The second dimension of understanding public journalism dealt with the representation of citizens in the stories. Journalists here suggested that public journalism is essentially about *giving space to the voice of citizens*, taking care that "genuine" civic voices, opinions and experiences are covered. This logic involves the use of regular people as sources, which in turn requires shifting the "radar of journalism" from traditional elite sources to sources with experience from everyday life. There was a slight variance within this dimension. For some journalists, it was enough to simply have citizens' voices in the paper, but some emphasized that the reason to concentrate on citizens was done because citizens and politicians need to be reconnected; i.e. everyday experiences of citizens should inform decision-makers.

The third dimension of public journalism was more challenging in terms of citizen participation than the previous two. According to journalists here, journalism was regarded to become public journalism if the *topics that are covered in the paper originate from readers*. In public journalism, the public has more power over what the newspaper covers than in conventional journalism. For many journalists, providing space for citizens' views was enough, but some indicated that public journalism is not genuinely "public" if journalists decide the topics themselves and then only incorporate "the citizen angle" in the story.

The fourth dimension of public journalism discussed by journalists was the most profound in terms of citizen participation. According to this idea, public journalism should always include an element of interaction with the public. In public journalism, the journalists cannot isolate themselves; they need to *enable citizen participation and activity*. In itself, the idea of journalist–reader interaction is not very radical as it can take many indirect forms (e.g. reader feedback via e-mail), but if this interaction takes the form of direct citizen participation, the dimension becomes more demanding for journalists. According to this view, the citizen acts as a co-worker of the journalist and hence public journalism is something that journalists do *together* with citizens. It is the task of the newspaper to activate and encourage people to take part in the journalistic process and afterwards in public discussion.

Some journalists also pointed out that public journalism should be the kind of journalism that makes a difference: leads to solutions or improvements suggested by citizen participants.

As mentioned, there was variation among the interviewees in relation to these four dimensions; i.e. there was a lighter and a deeper understanding of public journalism among journalists. The light version of public journalism typically included the first two dimensions: providing relevant information for the public and making sure that the voices of "regular people" were presented. This understanding was linked to the traditional role of journalism as a site where governments can appear to the people and equally where the people appear to governments (Couldry 2009, 445). The following excerpt summarizes the light version of public journalism.

Well, it [public journalism] is journalism that serves the needs of citizens. It does not concentrate on the issues of any particular group, organization or business, but it addresses the public at large, the regular people. And their voices get to be heard. (AL5)

Some journalists emphasised the latter two dimensions of public journalism; i.e. newspaper coverage should be based on topics that originate from citizens and the news making process should feature interaction with readers. The following quotation by a journalist at IH indicates that defining public journalism and drawing its boundaries was not an easy task. The quotation, however, also points to the deeper meaning of public journalism.

Well, I am thinking of its [public journalism's] limits. I mean, is it public journalism if we make stories about regular people. Or does it start only when we are activating the citizens? Or when the stories originate from them? - I am inclined to think that there has to be some kind of activism from the citizens' part, be it spontaneous or encouraged by the newsroom, in order for journalism to be public journalism. (IH3)

Problems and risks

Journalists were also asked about the problems or risks that are related to public journalism. All of the journalists mentioned some risks, which indicates that even if public journalism was accepted, journalists did not consider it as an unambiguously positive trend. When journalists discussed the problems of public journalism, they referred to their practical experiences and stepped away from defining the approach and its problems on a conceptual level.

According to the interviewees, public journalism was sometimes considered to *undermine the independence of journalists as professionals* by giving

in to the public's opinion. This was clearly expressed when journalists discussed citizens' possibilities to affect the content of newspapers. If journalism reports merely the issues that *interest* the public and not the issues that are *important* for them (Hujanen 2009), there is a risk of covering the "wrong" issues. There was also the fear of being used by certain groups of people if only "the ones who shout the loudest, get their voices heard", as an AL journalist put it.

The problem in this case was that the stories might end up representing the voice of the citizens in a biased manner. The interviewees pointed out that this, in turn, could lead to populism and superficiality. If journalists – in the name of public journalism – start to position themselves on the side of regular people without any source criticism, the whole idea could lead to the kind of journalism that merely panders to readers in a populist manner. Some also criticized public journalism for emphasizing individual experiences and focusing on emotional stories at the cost of more serious issues that would be meaningful to the public at large. The risk of losing journalistic autonomy was thus also related to the business pressures and the need to "sell" the public journalism stories (for similar findings regarding participatory journalism online, see Singer & Ashman 2009, 15).

Another set of problems dealt with news values. The journalists felt that sometimes *the values of public journalism ran counter to news values*. Some journalists suggested that the public journalism approach hardly ever produces a piece of hard news, which is seen as the ideal goal of newspaper journalism. This indicates that the internalized division between "hard" and "soft" news affected journalists' interpretation of public journalism. The notion of hard news was connected to the "official viewpoint" and soft news with "the everyday" aspect. Thus, some journalists considered that news can be spiced with citizens' comments but they are not necessary. There was a contradiction therefore between the requirements that arise from the notion of news as ideally being "hard" and citizen-based news practices connected to the importance of everyday experiences (see Paulussen & Ugille 2008, 35 for similar findings regarding online user participation).

This contradiction became explicit if the newspaper, for example, invited people to participate but their participation did not produce material that was considered newsworthy or "sexy" enough. Journalists indicated that there was a risk of participation being asked for but not being really put to use. Therefore, public journalism was considered to run the risk of becoming a gimmick that would only make the paper *look* interactive.

The third problematic issue dealt with the *uncontrollable nature of citizen participation in public journalism*. Journalists indicated that public journalism was problematic from the viewpoint of the journalistic production process. Public journalism by definition is dependent on the public and its willingness to contribute to journalism. As journalists revealed, this aspect

brought with it the problem of control. When a paper organizes a news van visit, for example, there is always uncertainty about the amount of people that will show up and the kind of topics they will discuss. Therefore, there is also an element of uncertainty about the end product, the story.

In order to create some sense of control, newspapers planned their public journalism projects beforehand in terms of themes and page templates (see Chapter 5.2.). However, this, in turn, was regarded to bring with it the element of inflexibility, and it threatened to turn public journalism into an approach that was stilted. On top of this, there was a problem of scale. In public journalism, issues might get out of proportion if a small, but interesting issue gets a lot of publicity in the paper, if for example only a few people participate in the events.

Drawing the boundaries of public journalism

As indicated by the discussion above, journalists' ideas and definitions of public journalism were not definite. At a conceptual level, public journalism had many layers. Some journalists had a deeper understanding of the idea than others did, and there were voices in each paper that pointed to the risks of public journalism. Even if there were some differences between public journalism definitions in each newspaper (see Chapter 7.4.), the depth in which public journalism was conceived was not directly determined by the news organizations in which journalists worked. The conceptions of public journalism were also linked to the journalists' own professional self-images (see Chapter 8) and personal histories with public journalism. For example, journalists who had assisted in planning the projects – not merely executing them – tended to embrace a deeper understanding of public journalism.

Journalists did not offer concise definitions of the idea; instead, the interviews suggested that there had been little joint discussion in the newsrooms about the term itself, almost as if the theoretical side of public journalism was avoided. This finding points to the frail role that theory has in relation to journalism practice more generally; journalists tend to emphasize the importance of tacit knowledge or intuition ("news sense") over formalized knowledge systems (Zelizer 2004, 29–30). For the interviewed journalists, it seemed easier to discuss public journalism as a set of work methods rather than as a set of ideas, and therefore, the task of defining public journalism was difficult: it requires distancing oneself from the practice. Thus, public journalism evoked a professional discourse that tried simultaneously to make sense of the idea at the practical as well as conceptual level.

It is clear, however, that the notion of citizenship played a significant role in interpreting the dimensions of public journalism. Citizens were apparent in all of the four dimensions of understanding public journalism, and the risks journalists discussed were related to the fact that taking citizens along

in the making of journalism is problematic: it may render journalism too dependent, non-newsworthy or uncontrollable.

In sum, the boundaries of conceiving public journalism seemed to focus on the participatory role of citizens. Nonetheless, the interpretation was not as straightforward as might be inferred by the discussion above. If we take a closer look at the journalists' talk about readers, we can see that citizenship was not the only reference point for readers in public journalism.

7.2. Discussing the readers: Audience and public frames

Two main registers of discussing readership can be identified: the audience frame and the public frame. In the audience frame, readers were seen as receivers of stories or as media consumers that needed to be served, while in the public frame, readers were seen as members of society or a local community. It is within the public frame that the notion of citizenship was located. Thus, despite the fact that citizenship was a central reference point when public journalism was discussed as an ideal, it was not the only way in which readers were viewed by journalists. Moreover, the two frames overlapped and co-existed.

The audience frame

In terms of public journalism, readers were seen in relation to the news media itself; this is what I refer to as *the audience frame*. This frame became apparent, for example, when readers were discussed by journalists as the imagined counterparts to the texts. According to this view, readers were considered as receivers to whom the stories were directed. The stories needed to be understandable; and therefore ideas such as intelligibility or simplicity were central in this frame. Journalists noted that writing clearly and understandably was an aim that had always been part of journalists' professional requirements and public journalism was part of this long tradition. Phrases that came up in this context for example were "reader friendliness" or "the language of the people".

Moreover, when the ideas of intelligibility and media competition met, the key term became "interesting" or "engaging" ("*kiinnostava*"). In the current competitive media environment, it is not enough to write stories that are clear and understandable; the stories also need to create interest and engage people. Therefore, the aim to produce engaging stories has become a professionally accepted way to develop the idea of intelligibility (Heikkilä et al 2010; Hujanen 2009). Journalists considered writing an engaging story mostly in terms of technique.

There needs to be something in the text that makes the reader actually read the story: a captivating headline, a good illustration or

some other element that encourages the reader to read the whole story. Many readers start reading but they stop because they don't think the story affects them or is interesting to them. So, there needs to be an element that will keep the reader interested; there can be a little reward for the reader at the end of the story. (HS16)

In this regard, the visual elements of the stories also became important: readers' attention is engaged by turning stories into entities or packages that are composed of various elements: headlines, text, photos, graphics, fact boxes and so on. Packaging thus appeared as a journalist's solution – although a contested one, especially if the package includes too many pieces (Coleman 2007, 35) – to the need of combining intelligible and engaging journalism. Another solution was to tell stories "through ordinary people", which was a concurring metaphor in the interviews. According to journalists, readers' attention can be captured by addressing the audience in an individually oriented manner, through personification. These reader-related trends – intelligibility, engagement and personification – are important in terms of considering how public journalism has become understood by Finnish journalists. Public journalism has been interpreted in the same audience frame in which these trends have become accepted as professional norms.

Within the audience frame, readers were also referred to as consumers. The consumer discourse was not very dominating, but nevertheless an apparent one. Journalists considered public journalism (and its practices) as part of the idea that the paper needs to build tighter links to its readers as a means of keeping their subscriptions. In this discourse, the reader was often referred to either as a loyal subscriber who needed to be kept content, or as a potential customer who needed to be invited to pick up the paper and read the story. The latter way of understanding newspaper readership is relatively new in the Finnish context, where newspaper business models have been traditionally based on lifelong subscriptions. Given that this steady business is now under threat, journalists are required to understand that newspapers need to compete with other media products for readers' time and money. All in all, journalists have assumed an understanding that journalism is part of a larger media business, a field that is highly competitive. Therefore this economically informed discourse was apparent in the journalists' accounts: marketing language was part of journalists' manner of speaking. There were concurring references to "circulation figures", "target audiences" or the need to "sell the paper". In this frame, public journalism was portrayed as another way to attract customers. All in all, there was an understanding that today's newspaper reader is demanding; the reader was portrayed as a demanding consumer to whom the news needed to be tailored.

For some professionals, public journalism appeared as a continuation of audience-oriented trends, whereas others regarded public journalism as a

challenger in relation to the customer orientation. Altogether, it is important to understand that the audience frame – readers as receivers and consumers – has been an integral part of the way in which public journalism has been understood and practiced in the Finnish newsrooms.

The public frame

In the context of public journalism, readers were also discussed in relation to the public sphere, i.e. *the public frame*. This entailed a way of conceiving readers not through their relationship to the newspaper as members of the reading audience, but as public agents who exist in interaction with surrounding society. Journalists employed the public frame when they pointed out the various roles that people have in their lives due to the different networks that they belong. In the journalists' answers, readers were seen as members of different organizations, as local residents, employees, parents of schoolchildren, dog owners and so forth. By recognizing the different social roles that people occupy in their lives, the journalists took a step away from seeing readers as individual receivers and towards understanding the social dimension in which readers live and act.

However, the single most typical way in which the public frame became apparent was when journalists referred to their readers as voters. In the research data, this reference was very frequent due to the fact that many of the projects were connected to elections. Framing readers as voters is not a very radical or active conception, but it nevertheless is a way to understand that readers have a certain societal position from which they read the newspaper. In their role as voters, readers were seen as members of organized society and the representative democratic system. The voter position was thus institutionalized but rather individualistic: journalists referred to the voters' needs to get information in order to make their personal voting decisions, but references to more collective political activities were rarer.

Another typical way to discuss the public was to refer to the need to write news about the *effects* of political decisions rather than the political process or the game that leads to the decisions; an idea that is familiar to early public journalism experiments (e.g. Charity 1995, 1–2). This was a frequently discussed theme, especially at HS. This type of discourse was close to the audience frame in which the aim to write clearly and understandably was emphasized. This discourse, however, was not quite the same as the receiver discourse. Central to this "effects" discourse was the idea that the decisions of parliament or the local city council need to be dealt with in a way that their consequences become clear to the public as citizens (see also Hujanen 2009, 121). So, even if readers were positioned in a passive role – as objects of decisions – they were not merely conceived as receivers of texts. They were conceived as citizens who are part of organized society and therefore the decisions that are handled in the texts have effects on their lives.

Journalists frequently used the phrase "the ordinary citizen" (*"tavallinen kansalainen"*). In this context, the citizen was positioned in relation to the representative democracy framework in which elected representatives are accountable to all citizens. From this position, the citizen was seen as the counter-part to the decision maker. Consequently, journalists indicated that it was important to bring forth the perspective of ordinary citizens in order to balance out elite-oriented coverage. However, sometimes the emphasis was on the word "ordinary" rather than on "citizen". In this case, ordinary citizens meant such citizens that would lack political affiliations, strong interests or causes; they would be "normal". To be able to address ordinary citizens as their readers, the papers were regarded to need ordinary citizens through whom the stories would be told. As we can see, if there is more emphasis on ordinariness than citizenship, this position starts to resemble the personification trend of the audience frame.

The voter position and the ordinary citizen position cannot be considered very dynamic ways of conceiving the public. There were, however, indications that journalists saw – much due to the influence of public journalism – their readers also as active members of the public, and thus took a step away from the perspective that was provided by the frame of representative and expert-driven democracy. This aspect was linked to the deeper understanding of public journalism.

The way in which journalists discussed citizens' activity was thus twofold. On the one hand, they expressed the need to activate the public and revitalize the public sphere: newspapers were seen to have a central role in feeding the public discussion and keeping it transparent and open for as many participants as possible. The newspaper needs to serve the public by taking measures that activate people to take part in public life. On the other hand, the idea of activation was seen unnecessary. Journalists noticed that in relation to certain issues or areas of life, citizens really are active: they want to express their opinions or influence certain issues. Journalists recognized that publics that are formed around issues are more active than the more abstractly conceived publics. As pointed out in the following quotation by the civic reporter, public journalism wishes to activate citizens and is dependent on their activity.

I think that it [public journalism] activates people in some sense. There was one person who contacted me with her case and she had already contacted other people too. I think this kind of activity can awaken others too to become active in their own cases. So that people wouldn't just swallow it all, but would do something. (IH)

The two frames discussed above indicate that readers were not only regarded in relation to the newspaper but also in relation to the public sphere. The

concept of citizenship that was central in defining public journalism was only one of the reader positions situated in the public frame and the concept of citizenship remained rather thinly elaborated by journalists. However, the public frame portrayed a picture of citizenship that was a combination of interests and responsibilities. Therefore, citizens may be active at times, but they also need to be activated.

7.3. Readers as participants in public journalism

When journalists discussed their readers as participants in public journalism, they acknowledged that participation could be sought after for various reasons and that these different reasons provide different roles for participants. Therefore, readers' participatory roles featured elements from both the audience and public frames. Public journalism was not built on either of the reader frames alone. In this section, I will analyze the way in which journalists' discussed the participatory roles of readers in the public journalism projects and I will move from audience frame towards the public frame.

Sample citizen

The first role attached to reader participation by journalists was the "sample citizen". This refers to the need to have individual citizens on the pages of newspapers as examples of regular people so that readers may find an entry point to the story. In this manner, reader participation was justified from the viewpoint of the text and the reading audience. Citizens were seen as example-like devices that were needed for writing stories; they were used in a "dramaturgical way", as one of the interviewees put it.

A concurring metaphor in the interviews was that stories needed to be told "through people". As noted in the following quotation, this way of positioning the citizen was not considered a new approach, thus it was not tied to public journalism alone but to the more general trends of audience conceptions in newspaper journalism.

For a couple of years already, our team [on domestic issues] has focused on the regular people, always the regular people. Therefore, this [public journalism project] didn't seem that new. You always need to find a person from somewhere to say something. And then slip the issue into the story through that person's life. (HS4)

Considering readers as sample citizens here did not position them in an active role. In fact, the actual participation in this role was limited to quite traditional forms of interaction, like interviewing or polling. The role of the sample citizen was to personify or depict the story, provide a quick comment or pose for a photograph. In this way, journalists viewed the citizens rather

instrumentally, even symbolically. This might result in the situation where civic action is lifted out of its larger context rather than being integrated into the journalistic practices. For example, in situations where people are asked to act as informants in a survey, the relationship between journalists and citizens is not very interactive. In this way, the ideas of appearance and visibility become more important than activity and participation.

This role – despite referring to citizenship – drew on the audience frame. According to the joint understanding of the profession, the audience needs to be addressed in a manner that is “personified”. The stories need to be told through frames that readers recognize, through themselves or people like themselves. A similar argument has been made by journalists on the use of *vox pops* in broadcast news: the need to make news from which ordinary viewers can recognize themselves (Pantti & Husslage 2009, 86).

Providing authentic opinions

Another common way to justify reader participation was to point to the need of getting “citizens’ voices” in the stories. Whereas citizens were seen as symbolic elements and raw material for the stories in the sample citizen role, this role placed emphasis on opinions as the central raw material. This role was particularly typical among AL’s journalists in which the need to “bring out the citizen’s voice” was a slogan-like phrase. The central idea behind this slogan seemed to be that reader participation was needed because it provides authenticity and diversity.

So that voices of the readers or the people of the region could be heard better and in a diverse manner and also, like, genuinely.
(AL3)

This idea reflects a trend in newspaper journalism that underlines the importance of presenting different kinds of opinions. For example, Olkinuora (2006, 57–58) has noticed an increase in Finnish newspapers’ use of commentaries and column-like pieces. This trend is also exemplified by the increased number of pages dedicated to audience letters (e.g. HS went from one page to a full spread), by the introduction of text message columns, as well as blogs authored by journalists in the web versions of the newspapers. Opinions in general have become increasingly important raw material for journalism. This trend has evolved hand in hand with the growing importance of social media and indicates a shift from the importance of information delivery to that of opinions.

So, in order to portray “authentic voices” and opinions, the newspapers have mobilized themselves, organized news van tours and discussion events and encouraged people to contact the reporters. This mobilization was considered to help journalists get interesting and briskly expressed opinions

from citizens. Public journalism was thus connected to the idea that it is beneficial for the newspaper to have citizens' opinions widely apparent, not only on the letters pages.

This role was situated in between the audience frame and the citizen frame. Naturally, readers have opinions only if they have some kind of relationship to the issues that are discussed; i.e. they have interests and motivations due to their social positions and networks. In this sense, opinions were linked to the public frame. But the motivation of publishing citizens' opinions was also linked to the needs of the newspaper as a product: it was considered appealing and readable to publish opinion material. Journalists were aware that newspapers are increasingly competing with the web, and therefore, the pressure to increase opinion material was articulated with references to the web.

Ideas for stories

The third role dealt with agenda setting. According to journalists, an important role for readers in public journalism was to provide ideas for stories. This was the most widely recognized role, as indicated by the public journalism definitions as well as the risk talk. According to journalists, a central idea in public journalism was to open up the newspaper to questions and issues that readers have. In its narrow form, this meant that readers could phone or send in their story tips. In a broader sense, the role of the reader as an idea provider was connected to all of the participatory methods that may enhance a tighter connection between the paper and its audience, so that the coverage could be based on the citizens' agenda, not merely that of the institutions.

Even if journalists agreed that this role was important, they were not unanimous about how direct this type of participation should affect newspaper content. Some journalists (a minority) believed that public journalism should start with a clean slate: journalists should approach citizens with open minds in order to find the issues that need to be covered. In other words, there should not be too much filtering or pre-planning from the journalists' side. However, others thought that the paper could very well decide the topic first and then invite people to discuss or comment later – and if other relevant issues would come up in the process, then journalists should pick them up.

The role of the citizen as a source for story topics was thus agreed upon, but conceptions differed about the extent to which the topics should be purely citizen-based and also how noticeable this should be in the stories. For instance, at IH, the visible role of the reader as the initiator of the stories was emphasized in the logo that was attached to every civic story. At HS, however, "ordinary citizens" were seen as starting points of the stories, but citizen participation did not have to be visible in the texts.

If we think about the story making process, an ordinary person can be a source of a story idea. Then we check the tip and confirm it, we process it into a story, search for additional information from statistics and wherever. So that the ordinary citizen may affect the process in a way that a certain issue is raised and becomes a story even if that [participation] is not visible in the story, it is hidden. (HS11)

The role of the reader as an idea provider transfers more power to the audience than the two previous roles. This role means – even if it does not directly imply – that readers do not merely react to the newsroom’s impulse, but that the newsroom may also react to the public’s impulse. Therefore, this role entails more weight for readers as the shapers of public discussion than the previous roles. Even if the link was not always explicit, this role drew on the public frame: readers were considered as appropriate agenda setters due their position as citizens and voters, for example. However, the audience frame shaped this role too, especially regarding the need to come up with “interesting” stories. Therefore, the role of the reader as an initiator was also justified from the premise that readers’ ideas are needed in order to capture the attention of the audience, as a means of better addressing them.

Representative

A further role identified by journalists was based on the idea of readers as representatives of larger groups, for example, their occupational group or their neighbourhood. There was a slight contradiction between the roles that dealt with opinions and representation, since the former usually emphasized individual experiences and the latter collective. However, both roles were apparent in journalists’ responses. In fact, journalists seemed to struggle with finding relevant links between opinions and their representativeness, i.e. between readers’ individual input and issues that could be generalized.

One [problem] is that usually issues that touch citizens have to be handled on such a general level, so that not all the details match to everyone. About every story I’ve done on pensions, for example, has received the kind of feedback that says that “this is not how it goes in my case”. Another problem is that a citizens’ viewpoint is usually so damn narrow, I mean subjective. They can’t see the big picture. (HS12)

This contradiction was typically solved by emphasizing the representative role of citizens, a position that makes it possible to generalize the experiences to apply to a larger group of people (see also Hujanen 2009, 123). As representatives of larger groups, people are positioned in a more powerful role than

as individuals; they gain authority from the collective. The kind of representation that I am referring to does not always require a formal membership in an organization. A mother, for example, can here be regarded as a representative of a group of parents who are concerned about the closing down of their children's school. It is easier for journalists to justify citizen participation in journalism if they can position individual citizens in a collective role.

This position fits the public frame. Reader participation becomes relevant through the representative role that people assume from belonging to informal social networks or to organized civic groups. They have something relevant to offer for public discussion if they are positioned as members of a collective. The role of a representative is affected by the tradition of democratic-corporatism in Finland, since that tradition favoured the use of formally organized sources to provide representative political pluralism. In the current situation, however, representation is no longer connected with institutions only.

Everyday expert

Another role attached to citizens by journalists was a combination of the two previous roles (representative and opinion provider). That is, an individual with particular concerns and a member of a larger collective can be described as being an expert on everyday life, be it working life, living in a neighbourhood or being an immigrant. According to journalists, newspapers need to be active in finding everyday experts – people who have experiences and something to say – since this information does not automatically reach the newsrooms. The difference between this expert role and the role of the representative lies in the fact that the expert position gives room for individual experiences and knowledge; it is not justified only from the viewpoint of collective representation. The everyday expertise does not necessarily have to be generalizable. This role also differs from the sample citizen: if the citizen participants are considered to be experts of their situations, they are positioned in a more demanding and active position than mere examples. The sample citizen role can, in fact, at its best turn into an expert role if the experiential knowledge of the citizens is recognized and utilized.

Public journalism was considered by the journalists as useful in creating routine-like ways of reaching these everyday experts. Journalists repeatedly pointed out that finding relevant and appropriate citizen sources for interviewing was a difficult task. When the point is to find expertise – special knowledge that arises from the everyday experiences – journalists cannot rely on randomly interviewing people on the street. At IH, the idea of readers as experts was explained in a way that, with its public journalism approach, the paper wished to "appreciate" ordinary people's knowledge and experience. The following quotation exemplifies how citizens were considered as experts in regard to municipal services.

Such stories have been really good when Simppu has been able to find a person who has something important to say about a certain problem, for example, a defect in the service provided by the municipality, and then they have gone to discuss the problem with the person who is in charge of this service. (IH5)

This role links to the public rather than to the audience frame. In the expert role, readers are not merely used as elements in the stories, but rather, they are used as social beings that have experience-based information and the willingness to bring this information to the public. As everyday experts, readers are considered as agents who have connections to the discussed issues.

Posing questions

Another role indicated by journalists, which was clearly situated in the public frame, was readers as questioners. As discussed in Chapter 6.2., readers' questions formed a central textual element in the Finnish public journalism stories. Journalists articulated this role quite clearly and for them it appeared as a distinct change that was reflected in their professional conduct. In this role, they viewed readers as active citizens – as agents or subjects, and not as objects or receivers. Thus, the role of the questioner represents a position that brings authority to the citizen participants in terms of allowing them to word the issues that are considered problematic or worthy of public handling.

Nevertheless, positioning citizens as questioners does not automatically imply a high degree of public participation. Citizens can for instance send their questions to journalists via e-mail and remain anonymous. But in a situation where questioning takes place in face-to-face setting, the presence of the citizen as a questioner becomes journalistically interesting. According to journalists, the participants – due to their positions as citizens and voters – had a special role to play in situations where they met elected representatives or ministers. Their citizen position brought along with it tension or a "twist" that made the questions journalistically interesting.

Now we are doing it the way that the questioner in this case is not... The professional journalist doesn't have the leading role, but there is the citizen, who usually is positioned as an object of decision-making. Now we take the citizen along into that role so that we get a new twist to this practice. (AL3)

As questioners citizens are positioned as a kind of a counter-force to the ones in power, given that the decision-makers cannot overlook the questions that are posed to them by their potential voters. In this sense, the citizen participant assists the journalist in the classical watchdog role. Thus, the role of the questioner can be a very powerful one, a role in which the citizen participant

is actually seen as an ally or as a useful co-worker for the professional journalist. In this position, participants were seen by journalists as valuable information sources that were sometimes able to ask more concrete questions than journalists.

Civic actor

The final role attached to readers by journalists was connected to public agency and hence to active citizenship. The civic actor role was considered controversial but it was nevertheless recognized and discussed by journalists in all of the three papers. Journalists noted that people who take part in the journalistic process often (but not always) have a willingness to influence the direction of public discussion, get publicity for their cause or contribute to certain local issues. In this role, the citizens' capacities as active public actors were fully recognized and their motivations and interest were *accepted*.

[The aim is] to take them as active and speaking human beings, not only as decorations on the pages - - as equal subjects in this system, not only subservient to the governance. (IH1)

As indicated above, the key is to understand that people are not just decorations on the pages of the paper, but they have a right to participate in journalism and in public sphere due to their position as citizens and members of the community. However, we need to remember that journalists continuously discussed citizens and their activity in a dual manner: on the one hand, the public was seen as an *active formation*, but on the other had as an *object* of activation. The logic, however, works in a way that if the paper wants to take citizens as participants in making journalism, it cannot only rely on those who are already active. Instead, the paper needs to encourage and activate the public at large, because this brings benefits for all: to the paper, the citizens and their communities.

But the problem is that civic activism did not always fit into the journalists' understanding of the role of the reader in relation to the newspaper, i.e. to the audience frame. Journalists were not willing to act as the mouthpieces for active citizens even if they realized that citizens almost always have their own interests when they act publicly. In general, there was thus a slight contradiction in seeing readers as participants in relation to the needs of the newspaper and in relation to public life more broadly (see also Heinonen 2008, 122–123). In the cases when there is a possibility to find a way to combine these two "directions" of participation, the results may be fruitful.

An example of this kind of possibility is when citizens' are taken as discussion participants. In discussion, citizens get to share their experience and knowledge and find potential solutions to recognized problems. The newspaper, in turn, gets rich material and ideas for stories. The idea of citizens as dis-

discussion participants was recognized in each paper, but not very profoundly articulated. This is an interesting finding, since deliberation is such a central part of the public journalism philosophy. The importance of citizens as participants in discussion was considered most thoroughly at AL, and this was related to the central role that the discussion events played in its approach. In this context, readers were considered as public actors who possessed a willingness and interest to take part in discussions that were organized by the paper. Journalists understood that participants did not come to the events merely to act as "material" for the paper; they came to the events as citizens with their own interests and opinions to discuss publicly. At the same time, however, the participants' interests posed a challenge for journalists because the ideal of finding "regular citizens'" opinions functioned in the background, and because regularity was often equated with impartiality.

In sum, the seven participatory roles point out to a more general finding: the emphasis on the demanding nature of participation. Journalists acknowledged that participating in the journalistic process requires much from readers. The public journalism approach made journalists to bypass the typical references to readers as irrational or insane (Wahl-Jorgensen 2007, 135–151) because the practices so heavily relied on the public's input. The journalists had high expectations of readers who took part in public journalism. In particular, journalists thought that participants of public journalism projects should be committed, well prepared and understand the context in which they are acting. In other words, readers who take part in public journalism should be able to understand the nature of the public sphere in which they act – be it local, national or regional – and the questions and issues that are relevant in that sphere. Moreover, if the participants have some understanding of journalism and its norms, disappointments or excesses can be avoided. This general finding indicates that when journalists considered readers as participants in public journalism, they considered them perhaps more seriously than usual.

7.4. Differences between the newspapers

In all three newspapers, the seven participatory roles discussed above were identified by journalists. However, there were some differences in emphasis between the three newsroom cultures. The strongest differences emerged in the way that journalists viewed readers as civic actors and their attempts to have an effect on public issues via the paper, i.e. the last role discussed above. In this section, I will discuss the differences between the newspapers in order to provide examples of the flexible and contextual interpretations of public journalism and reader participation.

Helsingin Sanomat

Among journalists at HS, there was the most hesitation about the definition of public journalism. Interestingly, public journalism as an *idea* was most clearly connected to the marketing needs of the paper. Even if the marketing dimension was apparent in all of the newsrooms, in the other two newspapers, it was more common to bring in the economic justifications or marketing needs when the *practical experiences* from the projects were discussed. But when journalists at HS were asked to describe their way of understanding public journalism, on top of the four dimensions discussed, there was an emphasis on the aim to make the paper more interesting to its readers, to make an appealing product. Public journalism was also referred to as a fashionable expression, a new "product branch" of journalism that was being imported to newsrooms by media managers. At HS, public journalism seemed to be situated in between the idea of serving the public as well as appealing to it, and thus clearly both frames – the audience and the public – played a role in the way that public journalism was understood.

In the reader conceptions, however, the audience frame was emphasized. A typical way at HS to discuss readers was to underline the importance of writing news "through regular citizens" or in a way that the meanings and consequences of political decisions would become clear for readers. This way of seeing the reader does not open up a genuinely participatory role; the offered position is rather passive. The HS journalists were also hesitant about connecting civic activism and newspaper journalism. Hence, they were somewhat troubled by the idea that citizens as active agents could act upon public issues through the medium of the newspaper. This idea seemed to be in contradiction with the conception that journalists had about themselves as professionals (more about this in Chapter 8), as indicated by the following quotation.

Mostly, our job is to tell the citizens about the decisions of the elite. And as long as public journalism means that we try to clarify what those decisions mean, then it fits into this picture. But if we think that there would be political journalism that is citizen-based, then it would mean that we would start telling the decision-makers what they should do. That is the next stage. And I am not sure if that is our role, even if citizens might want us to do that. I am little doubtful of this. (HS3)

Aamulehti

At AL, a typical way to conceive public journalism was to frame it as an activity that positions the newspaper as a link between citizens and decision makers. The point in public journalism thus was to bring forth the everyday experiences to the decision makers; public journalism was seen as a connec-

tive bottom-up approach. At AL, there was more positive discussion about civic activism than at HS: the idea of citizens as active participants in public life was appreciated. The following quotation is nearly the complete opposite from the previous one. Here, the respondent summarizes the bottom-up direction of public journalism and the idea that citizens' influence on public discussion and decision making should be stronger.

I don't see that the media's task is just to pour down the wisdom to the public, to let them see how things have been decided for them, like telling about the tax rates, but also to mediate the message from the bottom-up: this is how it is wanted, this is what citizens want and this is how they want you to decide. (AL8)

However, in practice citizens' activism was considered problematic also at AL. The paper did not want to align itself with any politically oriented actors or single cause activists. Consequently, political identification was avoided by positioning the paper as a platform for public debate. The paper can be a part of the *processes* that may lead to solutions suggested by civic actors, but the journalists did not want to promote or speak for any particular solutions. The journalists seemed to think that the role of the newspaper was to serve as a channel through which active citizens can get their ideas noticed.

Itä-Häme

At IH, public journalism was most clearly connected to the idea of finding solutions. Journalists in the local paper underlined the idea that public journalism should have an effect on public life. At the very least, the stories should increase public discussion and draw attention to citizens' issues. In addition, the ideals of dialogue and discussion were most often connected to the definition of public journalism at IH.

The way in which citizens as active agents were discussed at IH points out that the journalists were more willing to conceive the paper as a part of civic activism. At its mildest form, this became apparent at IH similar to AL: citizens may approach the paper with their problems and questions and the paper channels the messages to the decision-makers. But there was also a more concrete way to discuss the idea of citizen-based problem-solving at IH. The journalists seemed to be proud if the paper played a part in getting improvements or solutions to local questions. The civic reporter, especially, was willing to accept that citizens are active agents who wish to make a difference or influence certain issues with the help of the paper.

When I had to give a lot of interviews due to this award [given by the Union of Journalists], everyone was always asking if there is a lot of it, or do you sense that you are being... or that people wish

to... I mean again about the fact that citizens are advocating their own causes. - - I said that maybe at first I was feeling a little like that, too, but that I haven't really come across anything like that at all. Or then I just haven't realized it. (laughing) But I also said that I am not sure if there is anything wrong about it. I mean all the officials are similarly advocating their causes, too, so why not [citizens]. (IH)

These examples from different newsroom cultures position readers as participants in journalism slightly differently. Readers' participation was considered meaningful in all of the newsrooms, but it was justified from varying angles. These differences also indicate that even if the audience and public frames coexist in all of the newsrooms, the newsroom culture may emphasize them differently. At HS, the audience frame seemed to be a more typical structure of interpretation while at IH it was the public frame. At AL, the frames were most clearly in contradiction: at the level of ideas, the public frame dominated, but experiences from the practical news work brought in the audience frame. The context in which the newspapers act, play a role here, as well; the local setting, for example, seemed to allow the most latitude for reader participants. It also made it possible to concentrate on problem-solving.

7.5. Citizens and journalism

As discussed, journalists identified four dimensions of public journalism: offering readers relevant information; publishing the voice of the citizens; writing about topics that come from readers; and organizing possibilities for citizens' participation in the process of making news and in public life. On top of these common dimensions, the newsroom cultures and differences in practices affected the way in which public journalism was understood as a term. The term "public journalism" did not have an agreed upon definition in the professional culture. This underlines further the fact discussed in Chapter 5, i.e. the lack of movement ethos. For the three studied newsrooms, the starting point for the projects and approaches was not "rhetorical" in a sense that the label or the strictly defined idea of "public journalism" would have been underlined. This is an indication of the fact that public journalism as an ideal is under negotiation, and this negotiation process takes place through practices that reshape public journalism rather than discussions that set a fixed meaning to the idea.

The four dimensions of public journalism and the identified risks point to the same direction: public journalism is considered a practically oriented approach and it is essentially about the relationship between the public and the journalists. The risks of public journalism almost exclusively deal with

the need to come to terms with this relationship: to be able to enhance citizen participation in a manner that fits to the norms of professional journalism (see Singer & Ashman 2009, for similar argument regarding UGC). Journalists' reflections pointed out that within the current professional culture in Finland there is a tension that arises from the previously dominant way of seeing the public collectively, as the Finnish citizenry. In this position, the public was considered to have "the right to be informed" (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008, 675). This older professional ethos of public service journalism is currently being contested by the more individually oriented discourse in which the public can be considered to have "the right to identify themselves" in journalism. Public journalism is thus situated in this professional culture, which features a symbolic struggle between different registers of legitimating journalism and its relation to the public. In addition, public journalism brings into this struggle the idea that the public has "the right to participate".

If the journalists' interpretations of public journalism are compared to the ones offered at the beginning of this dissertation, one can see that the dimensions of deliberation and democracy were not extensively discussed by journalists. The lack of discussion about deliberation is interesting in light of the public journalism literature, which particularly emphasizes this element (e.g. Romano 2010). This finding is, however, in line with the story element typology (Chapter 6): they both indicate that deliberation is an element that does not easily fit into the practices of newspaper journalism and therefore also in the mindsets of professional journalists. It seems difficult to incorporate deliberation as a practice and an ideal into the professional culture. The lack of references to democracy can be explained by the fact that journalists may consider the democratic role of journalism so given that it is not especially underlined. This explanation seems plausible because the ethos of democracy was nevertheless apparent in the definitions: in the idea of public journalism as the provider of relevant information to citizens, and in the idea of enabling citizen activity. Moreover, references to civic agency pointed out that the idea of participatory democracy was not foreign to journalists, even if the frame of representative democracy remained dominant.

In this chapter, I have shown that journalists use the audience frame and the public frame simultaneously when referring to the role of readers in public journalism. The repertoire of participatory roles that journalists identified for readers in public journalism can be placed on a continuum: at one end, the audience frame is more dominant while at the other it is the public frame (see Figure 4). The roles are therefore justified from these two perspectives; some roles emphasize the needs of the newspaper and its audience; and some the idea of helping citizens to cope with the public dimension of their lives (Rosen 1999, 160). The roles that readers were given within the audience frame – acting as the sample citizen, providing opinions and story ideas – indicate that journalists connected public journalism's reader participation to

the discussions about what journalism could do in order to serve the audience better on the level of texts and in the context of media competition. In turn, the roles that drew from the public frame – representative, everyday expert, questioner and civic actor – point out that in public journalism readers were also granted positions that take into account the different roles that they have in society, for example as voters, citizens and public actors in various networks. This continuum thus represents the space that journalists regard appropriate for reader participation in the context of public journalism.

The two frames together affect the way in which journalists conceived public journalism. Public journalism is not a separate movement, but a trend that is attached to the pressures that arise from the need to conceive readers simultaneously from both the audience and public perspective. Quite often in public journalism literature, only the public frame and the normative justifications of public journalism are discussed. My material, however, points out that the audience frame cannot be ruled out of the way in which public journalism is understood; it is a valid scheme of interpretation and cannot be merely seen as an obstacle. It is not fruitful to think that there are two separate lines of development in journalism: one that is business oriented and another that is normatively oriented. The key is to understand that these two trends are intertwined and in interaction with each other in the ways that journalists make sense of their profession (Hujanen 2009).

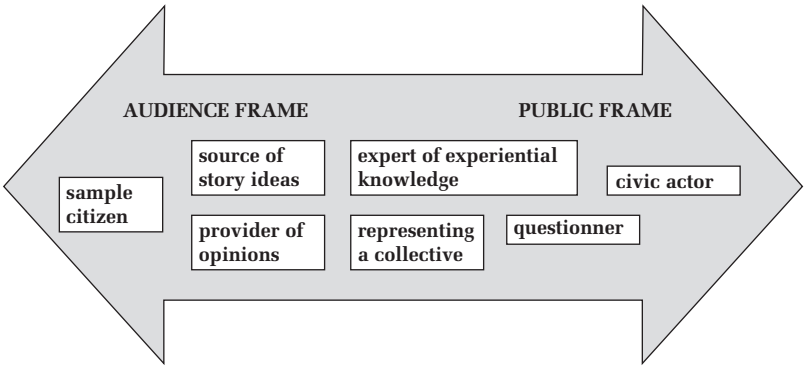


Figure 4: Reader roles in public journalism according to journalists’ interpretations.

Thus, public journalism is embedded in the normative-economic discourse that defines professional journalism and its relation to the audience. From this perspective, public journalism provides conditions for civic activity *and* a means to secure customer service (Wahl-Jorgensen 2002). These tasks are thus not always in contradiction with each other – or this contradiction it-

self has become accepted and taken as the prevailing norm of public journalism (cf. Bantz 1997). Thus, the broader trends in the professional culture and the general evolution of journalists' audience conceptions have paved the way for public journalism. It is natural that these trends affect professionals' views of public journalism and the role of readers. In order to understand the state of public journalism in Finland, one needs to be careful not to overemphasize the public frame and the normative-democratic implications of public journalism.

Massey & Haas (2002) have concluded that public journalism in the U.S. context has had only a modest influence on journalists' routines and attitudes. According to the authors, the most important contribution of public journalism does not lie in the enhancement of citizen participation, but in the fact that it ignited the discussion on the role of journalism in democracy and its commitment to the public. Indeed, it is not the case in this study either to evaluate whether there have been significant changes in the attitudes of journalists, but to indicate the repertoire with which reader participation in public journalism has been considered meaningful or problematic by professional journalists.

The continuum also points to the question of control and power: the stronger the public frame – and the weaker the audience frame – the more demanding the roles become for journalists to manage. The public frame lends more authority to amateur participants in journalism. Readers who are organized into a collective, pose questions and are motivated by their own causes are more difficult to manage than readers who are considered as individual story elements. In public journalism, there is thus a contradiction in terms of degree of activity: journalists hope for active reader participation, but that participation should not be *too* active, interest-oriented or politically coloured. This is further exemplified by the fact that the clearest differences between the newsrooms were centred on the ways in which journalists considered readers as civic actors; not all newsroom cultures were comfortable with the activist role of the citizen. Therefore, they either emphasized the importance of the less active roles or provided different degrees of latitude for reader participants within the active roles; for example, the citizens' questioning role was used either symbolically or concretely.

But what were the circumstances in which journalists accepted the more demanding and active roles for readers? This was connected to the relevance of the topics and expertise of the participants: if the topic was considered interesting by the journalist and the citizen participant had knowledge and experiences not already known to the public, the journalists were willing to accept active participation. If reader participation was regarded to provide a "newsworthy" contribution to public discussion and provide the newspaper with credibility, then the more "public" roles were also likely to become ac-

cepted. In those circumstances, citizen participants were able to act as collaborators with journalists.

The idea of journalist–amateur collaboration in journalism has been recently discussed actively in the context of online participation. Participatory journalism has provided challenges for news organizations in terms of engagement with the audience: to the extent in which users are taken along in the processes of gathering, selecting, editing, producing and communicating news materials online (Deuze et al 2007, 323). However, empirical research on online audience participation shows that the participatory features in online news have not radically challenged journalists' conceptions of their audience (Heinonen 2011, forthcoming). Journalist interviews (Heinonen 2008, 97–98; Heinonen 2011, forthcoming) indicate that online participation has opened up participatory roles for users at the initial and final stages of the news process: users are regarded by journalists as sensors at the observation stage or as reflectors at the interpretation stage. But interactive online features have not actively encouraged journalists to consider users as co-workers in journalism, as partners in the core journalistic tasks of producing editorial content. There are thus clear similarities between journalists' audience conceptions invoked by public journalism and by participatory journalism. It is evident that they both can be situated within the same domain of the interactive media model (see Chapter 2.3.).

However, as the premise of participatory journalism is indeed *participation*, it seems to bridge over the mere symbolic use of citizens. Therefore, the sample citizen role, which is typical in public journalism, is absent in participatory journalism. This suggests that the potential of the online environment for reader participation is the fact that it becomes possible to let go of the strictest audience frame. In the networked environment, in which horizontal peer communication is natural, newspapers may lose their central role. Therefore, in the net environment, the audience and public frames may become more naturally merged. In the network environment, there are various "directions" of participation: activities take place also in peer and civic communities (Heinonen 2011, forthcoming), i.e. also in the public frame.

Journalism is a form of social practice, and therefore, participatory and public journalism both appear as practices that touch upon the relationship between professionals and amateurs. As a result, they both struggle with same central questions: the appropriate role of citizen participation in professional journalism. This indicates that journalism and journalists draw from the joint professional culture for interpreting new trends, whether they involve online techniques or not. Therefore, despite the fact that the use of online features was limited in the studied public journalism projects, the discussion in this chapter points out that public journalism has invoked journalists to reflect upon the role of readers in ways that can be useful also in many ways for the

online environment, as the role of the reader/user as participant in journalism is without doubt increasing.

The continuum and categorization of different participatory roles may aid professionals in planning and evaluating future projects and approaches by focusing on certain roles or developing new ones; analyzing which roles are considered valuable in their newsrooms, and developing new participatory practices from that perspective. In addition, the findings from the story element analysis and journalists' interpretation of public journalism indicated that deliberation was not a central value, despite the fact that discussion events and group discussions were included in the repertoire of participatory news practices. This result thus points out that public journalism – as it has been *practiced* and interpreted by Finnish journalists – is closer to the idea of participatory journalism than suggested by its *theoretical* basis.

Moreover, research on Finnish newspapers suggests that the dominant way in which reader participation is handled in newspapers is a combination of offline and online interaction: reader contacts continue to take place in face-to-face meetings or via telephone as well as via various online forms (Heinonen 2008). Therefore, public journalism projects may help in building links between offline and online participatory practices so that the development of online participatory journalism could better utilize the experiences that have been gathered from public journalism; and perhaps then, avoid overemphasizing the mere technical aspects of participatory journalism (Herida 2011, forthcoming).

The public journalism projects have also clearly invited journalists to reflect upon articulations about their own profession and its relationship to the public. These articulations emerged from concrete and practical experiences, but they did not remain at the practical level. This finding supports the idea of seeing the profession from the viewpoint of discourse. The changing context of journalism requires reflexivity from professionals. The boundaries of the profession are continuously reworked with reference to practice, and this sense making process is discursive. The interviewed journalists in this study clearly expressed themselves as capable of professional reflexivity. Heinonen (2011, forthcoming) suggests that journalists' audience conceptions are affected by a complex process of forming their self-perceptions. In other words, how journalists see their audience is shaped by how they see themselves. In the following chapter, I will turn more closely to the question of how public journalism has invoked journalists to reflect upon the professional role of the journalist.

8.

Professional context and self-image

The professional core of journalism can be understood as a collection of shared but continuously contested values that define how proper journalists should act and what they should aim at. Journalistic professionalism is not a permanently fixed set of values. Journalism's professional core is shaped by various external influences in society: economic, socio-cultural, technological and political trends (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008). Moreover, there are also internal influences within the professional culture that challenge the classical value dimensions. Public journalism can be understood as this kind of internal trend that has been nevertheless shaped by external influences. Hence, public journalism has resonated widely with journalists. In this chapter, I will analyze the way in which journalists' talked about their professionalism. The underlying research question is thus: *How do journalists view their own professional self-image in relation to public journalism projects?* I wish to shed light on the professional reflexivity produced by the public journalism experiments.

In terms of methods and data, this chapter is based on qualitative content analysis of journalists' interviews. The discussion is based on the analysis of one of the four main clusters that were identified at the early coding stage: references to being a journalist. This "profession-talk" was further coded in Atlas.ti into four smaller themes: (1) references to one's newspaper; (2) notes about professionalism in general; (3) the effects of public journalism on professionalism; and (4) notes about personal self-development. The findings in this chapter are based on the qualitative analysis of these sub-themes.

I will begin by discussing professionalism from the contextual aspects and then move towards personal reflexivity. In order to understand the surround-

ings in which professionalism and public journalism are discussed, I will first map the ways in which journalists' talked about their own newspapers. In the second section, I will discuss the most prevalent professional value dimensions evoked – critically as well as constructively – by public journalism in each paper. Together the newspaper discourses and the dominant values provide a description of the context in which journalists made sense of the public journalism projects. The third section, thereafter, discusses some of the signs in journalists' way of thinking that pointed towards the idea of how the profession could become more "public" in public journalism. Finally, I will discuss the significance of the professional reflexivity created by public journalism.

8.1. "Our paper" as a professional context

When journalists referred to "us" or their own newspaper in the interviews, they did not merely talk about the newspaper as a name or a title, but there were many aspects to the way in which it was discussed. It is important to study these different ways to talk about the newspapers because they indicate the space in which journalists saw themselves as professionals.

Central maintainer of the public sphere

The clearest way in which journalists' ideas of their "own" paper defined professionalism was connected to the position that the newspaper was regarded to have in the public sphere. At the same time, journalists also spoke about the ways in which they understand the public sphere. In most of the interviews, the newspapers were regarded as significant actors that foster and maintain the public sphere. Thus, a common element in the interviews was the strong position of the newspaper in relation to its "own" sphere of influence, be it the metropolitan area, the province of Pirkanmaa or the town of Heinola and its surroundings. There was a wide belief in the "impact" the paper had in its own circulation area, and consequently, the public sphere was often constructed as being journalism-centred. Of course, such discourse can partly be considered as part of routine PR-talk about the paper's public role. Nevertheless, this discourse was widely accepted and assumed by journalists; so even if the talk about the strength of the paper was just PR, it still was part of journalists' repertoire of speaking about their paper.

This discourse was especially strong at HS, where the paper's size and influence were often referred to. In the journalists' answers, the position of HS was rather unquestioned; the only other recognized national players in the field were regarded to be tabloids and television. At HS, this influential position brought along with it the element of responsibility. There was interesting "HS-talk", which took the leading position of HS for granted: journalists were used to their position as employees of such an influential paper. This HS-talk,

however, also underlined the "terribly big" responsibility and the need to be extra cautious to avoid mistakes or imbalance. The paper's size and national significance created external pressures that seemed to foster a "community spirit" in the newsroom.

At AL, the position of the paper was also considered strong. The responsibility of the paper and its employees was to support and activate public life in the Pirkanmaa region. In fact, this was the most usual way of referring to their newspaper. Journalists even mentioned that there were no other actors in the region that could carry such a responsibility.

I guess the most central task for us is to be the chief organ for this province. And this dictates the baseline for our actions. (AL7)

At IH, the discourse about the paper as the maintainer of the local public sphere was also explicit. The paper was considered to have a strong position in "our region" in terms of influencing public discussion. However, this discourse was affected by a hint of uncertainty that had emerged due to the economic uncertainty and loss of subscriptions. Anyhow, one can say that even if such uncertainty was apparent, mentally the paper was considered by journalists to have a firm hold on the region.

Object of external evaluation

Another common element in the journalists' talk was that they saw their newspapers as objects of external evaluation, pressure and criticism. This discourse became surprisingly apparent at the second coding phase, when I singled out the phrases in which the proper title of the paper was used. The proper name of the newspaper was often used when journalists were talking about their paper from the viewpoint of someone else. This points out that sometimes it seemed rhetorically easier for journalists to let the audience and different public actors do the evaluative work, be it criticism or appraisal. In a sense, the journalists *outsourced* the assessment of the paper and its practices to non-journalists. This is noteworthy because profession as a collective is usually the most important reference group when journalistic work is discussed by journalists (Heinonen 2011, forthcoming), but public journalism projects prompted journalists to recognize additional actors as public evaluators of journalism. Nevertheless, in the interviews, when these additional and critical perspectives were articulated, the criticism was presented as being directed not at "us" as journalists but at the "paper" as an organization. This indicates that journalists do boundary work between the profession and the organization.

When journalists discussed their newspaper from the perspective of public officials, for example, they recognized the officials' role and influence on professional journalism. This discourse was most obvious at IH where it was,

in fact, the most typical way to refer to the newspaper. The way in which local journalists at IH viewed their own paper and their own professionalism was therefore shaped by the evaluations of non-journalist agents. An evaluative role was given to the local people, readers, city governance and local politicians. This indicates that the newsroom culture at IH is not that exclusive as in the other papers. It seems that the local setting has accustomed journalists to take into account the viewpoints of other local actors.

Politicians are very eager to give feedback, and it is actually quite interesting how they see IH; they see us like this nasty watchdog that reveals everything, even if we really are not a scandal seeking paper. There is always a big cry if we have some kind of feedback discussion with politicians. They usually blame us for writing too negative things about them, not finding anything good in them. And it is quite contradictory because the public seems to think that we should be better in uncovering all the mess that is going on. (IH7)

In AL's newsroom culture, self-critical professional attitude was common. Therefore, especially positive evaluations were outsourced. The journalists explained, for example, that AL is considered by local communities to do a good job when it tours the region and organises election discussion events. The positive comments dealt with the public journalism approach and its effect on the reputation of the paper.

At HS, the idea of seeing the paper as an object of external evaluation was the weakest; there was no consistent way of outsourcing evaluation (compared to AL and IH), even if journalists occasionally explained how politicians viewed the paper or tried to use it for their own purposes. These findings imply that at HS professionalism was considered more autonomous than at AL and IH. The newsroom cultures in each newspaper provided room for external evaluation to a different degree. At HS, the journalists placed themselves closer to the imagined centre of professionalism's classical ideal; therefore, the two smaller newsrooms appear as more reflexive in terms of the boundaries and context of their profession.

Site for work

Journalists also referred to their papers as a site for work: as organizations or employers. These findings support the argument that has been made concerning the importance of the organization in the construction of journalists' professional self-image and values (Ettema et al 1997; Örnebring 2008). This reference was most common at HS: the paper was mentioned by its title when journalists discussed newsroom work, their own section or team, or referred to HS as an employer. The paper was seen as an organization that brings to-

gether various journalists that have a kind of membership status in the organization, which was referred to with the nickname "hesarilaiset". There was also a distinct way to refer to "the house" or "our house". This implies that the employees as members have their say in the conduct of the paper.⁴⁶

HS is quite a journalist-driven system, and not manager-driven. This means that if us journalists would not do anything and just wait for orders, there would not, I think, be this much (laughs) discussion. (HS10)

At AL and IH, it was not common to frame the newspaper as a work place from a membership point of view, but references took place at a concrete level: journalists discussed the working conditions or their relationships with colleagues. The work place discourse was strongly connected to experience. The idea of being an "old hand" and having many years of experience and a sense of belonging to the current organization was a way of triggering this discourse. Thus, journalists recognized the value that a professional acquires from having extensive experience in the field. This, in turn, means that the profession was defined by practical experience – and not so much by theories and knowledge. Therefore, it is not surprising that journalists drew from experiences rather than the domain of theories also in the context of public journalism.

Younger journalists often referred to themselves as "beginners" or "temps", but a sense of adaptation was strong: the kind of working life that offers only temporary contracts has (in its part) forced younger generations to be adaptive and flexible employees. The work place discourse can be interpreted as a sign of stability seeking in a situation where freelance-based work and temporary contracts have become increasingly typical in the media field (see Deuze 2007).

Joint guideline

An interesting feature at AL was the way in which interviewees used the phrase "our paper" or referred to "us". These phrases were mostly used by journalists who were highly positioned in the organization, and therefore, there was also a strong feature of "ought to" connected to the use of "we". Thus, being an employed journalist at AL brought with it the need to act in a certain way. In this discourse, the paper was seen as a common frame for jour-

⁴⁶ My material points out to a journalist-driven newsroom culture at HS, but it can be noted that the manager-driven leadership style has intensified during the recent years in the Finnish newsrooms, and this has most probably also happened at HS after these interviews (2003–2004) were conducted. (For changes in journalists' experiences, see e.g. Kehälinna & Melin 1988 and Jyrkiäinen 2008.)

nalistic work, as a guideline or a joint way of doing things. In the following quotation, this is referred to as commonly recognized style, "handwriting."

We are now beginning to have a coherent understanding of what our handwriting is. It should not be unclear. I think pretty much the entire newsroom knows what we want. (AL7)

At AL, the guidelines were discussed in an accepting manner: they were considered part of the paper's own culture. They were considered to make everyday work easier because an organization needs a common understanding of what it is doing: expressions like "goals", "strategy" and "norms" were being used. In this respect, the guideline discourse resonates with seeing the paper as a brand with a reputation to be taken care of. However, in the guideline discourse, the focus was primarily on the journalists' own work methods and journalistic style. Thus, it was a look inside the organization and not a question of external reputation.

At IH, the paper was also referred to as a guideline, but not always as acceptingly as at AL. At IH, the guidelines and internal strategic documents were referred to by journalists in an ironical tone. For instance, journalists noted that they probably should have read the paper's new strategy document a bit better, in order to be able to answer my interview questions in a "right way". The guidelines that the paper provided were thus partly seen as something that was brought from above. At HS, in turn, the guidelines were internalized via the membership that came from being an employee of the news organization, and therefore, the guideline discourse was not as strong. Overall, the guideline and the work place discourses suggest that professional reflexivity more naturally surfaces at the level of the "house styles" rather than at abstract professional values.

Branded commodity

The final common way to discuss their newspaper by journalists was to frame it as a commodity. In this discourse, terms such as "brand", "subscribers", "competition" and "marketing" were prevalent. The product nature of the newspaper framed professionalism by setting requirements for journalists to think of the visibility and reputation of the paper. There was a clear need to be visible in order to secure a position in a competitive market. Visibility was often discussed in relation to specific public journalism practices: the tours (AL), the position of the civic reporter (IH) or the broadcasted events (HS).

In these [planning] meetings when the bosses started to discuss the marketing and visibility of HS and how we can gain a good reputation, I tried to ignore that discussion, not to listen to it or pay atten-

tion to it. Because I don't really want to think about what this [election project] can, like, give to HS's brand. It is not my task. (HS14)

As the quotation above indicates, journalists frequently noted that it was not their task to think of the commercial aspect of the newspaper industry, but the business language still affected journalists' way of expressing themselves as professionals. Even if journalists referred to their newspapers as "brands" often in a distanced manner, for example emphasizing the quotation marks when using the words, they realized that as professionals they are part of their newspapers' brand. At AL and HS, the commodity discourse was more centred on the idea of branding than at IH, but in the local paper, the economic standing of the paper was elaborated most concretely and openly. The journalists were sincerely concerned with the economic wellbeing of the paper.

To sum up, the common ways in which journalists in all three papers referred to their own newspapers was as a public actor, object of evaluation, work place, guideline and commodity. At HS, professionalism was primarily defined in the way that journalists saw themselves as part of the "house" and professionalism represented itself as a kind of membership, which pointed to a journalist-oriented newsroom culture. At AL, "our paper" was considered as a guideline that affected everyone's work and united the journalistic staff. Professionalism at AL was therefore defined by the particular AL-style of doing journalism, the "common handwriting". At IH, the clearest way to see the newspaper was to consider it as an object that was open for external evaluation. Professionalism in this case was partly shaped by the way in which non-journalists talk about the paper.

8.2. Public journalism and professional values

In the analysis, I singled out direct references to phrases such as "professional" and "journalistic". This was done in order to see how journalists used these terms in their own professional reflections. The terms were not common, but journalists occasionally mentioned something being "professional" or having made a "journalistic" judgement, for example. A general feature in the interviews was that professionalism as a term was used as a *flexible and rather undefined backing mechanism*. Sometimes professionalism equated with ethical values, sometimes with work routines. It did not seem natural for journalists to explicate what they mean when someone acts "professionally". This can also be seen as a defence mechanism: by not defining too strictly the borders of professional conduct, the journalists retain more latitude (e.g. Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001, 18–19).

When looking closer, it was possible to identify four aspects of journalistic professionalism that were being discussed by journalists: (1) work practices and routines, (2) specified skills, (3) norms or rules and (4) values (see Figure

5). The two outer layers represent the experienced aspect of what being a professional journalist means, and the two inner layers represent the normative aspect of professionalism (see Chapter 3.2.). References to professionalism tended to be vague because with professionalism, journalists may refer to any of these layers. Despite this vagueness, however, it can be summarized that professionalism is an entity that separates skill from non-skill, brings order in the form of routines, is structured by rules and shared as an understanding of certain values.

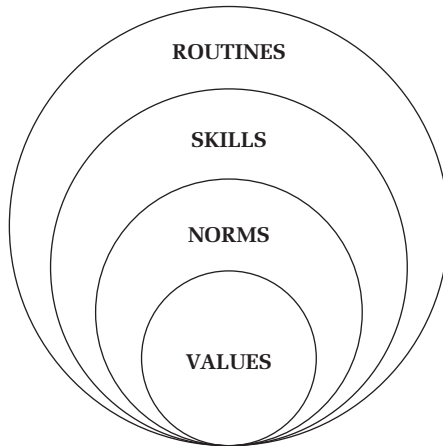


Figure 5: Layers of professionalism in the interviews.

On top of this vagueness, the interviews indicated that professionalism was very *contextual* in nature. Each newsroom culture with its particular context determined slightly differently which dimensions of professionalism were taken under discussion and which aspects of professionalism were being triggered by the public journalism projects. So, even if professionalism can be seen as an ideology or as a joint way of understanding the duties and meaningfulness of journalism, it becomes clear that active understanding of professionalism is formed in the area where the underlying professional culture of journalism meets the organization's culture (see Evetts 2003). This is indicated, for example, by the fact that talking about professionalism as a set of values or abstract ideology was not equally easy for all journalists. Whereas journalists from the national paper discussed and mentioned abstract dimensions such as objectivity or trustworthiness with ease, it was not that typical for the journalists in the local newspaper to articulate professionalism as an abstract construct. The discussion at IH took place primarily at the level of work routines and skills.

This points out that there are differences in the degrees to which newsroom cultures cultivate professional vocabularies and registers of speaking about journalism. For example, HS's newsroom culture, which is embedded in the national context, more clearly held certain abstract professional values than the other two newsroom cultures. This suggests that professionalism as an abstract value collection seems to fit best with the "highest" and most abstract level of the public sphere, the national domain.

Professional values evoked by public journalism

Even if professional values were not explicitly specified by journalists, public journalism invited such reflexivity that points to the existence of certain core values. The contextual nature of professionalism is underlined by the fact that in each newspaper the most important aspect of professionalism evoked by public journalism was different for each paper. Thus, there was no uniformity in journalists' understanding of the relationship between professional values and public journalism.

The most clearly articulated professional dimension at HS was *autonomy*. This became evident in the way that journalists discussed their values and roles as journalists. Frequently used phrases were "independent", being "free from" and "separate from" political actors or other sources. In other words, the aspect of autonomy that was emphasized at HS was autonomy from non-journalistic actors (see Schudson 2005), external autonomy. The most important contextual reason for this element is due to the fact that most of the interviewees from HS were journalists from the politics team. Their position as political reporters from the biggest and most influential newspaper in Finland surely affected their way of seeing their own role and the essence of journalism. Journalists at HS considered professionalism as presuming a certain degree of separation from the surrounding society, but it should – and cannot – presume total isolation. Separation was justified by the fact that distance helps journalists see clearer, and therefore, it helps them find the most important issues for coverage. At HS, autonomy was highly regarded as a value, but its limitations in practice were also recognized. Autonomy was thus considered both as a normative ideal and as a practical question. The dilemma between separation and isolation in political reporting is summarized by a journalist in the following quotation.

You need to be close enough [to the sources] to get confidential information, but still you need to keep yourself separate enough in order to be able to publish that information in the paper. (HS14)

On top of external autonomy, the idea of internal autonomy also emerged. In other words, journalists recognized the need to maintain a degree of independence also *within* the organization, especially in relation to the marketing

department, but also in relation to the rest of the newsroom. Some journalists were doubtful of newsroom trends that emphasized pre-planning, ready-made page templates or teamwork, and therefore, they wished to underline the idea that a journalist is always the best expert on her own story.

Even if the organizational contexts at HS and IH were different, there were some similarities in the most valued elements of professionalism. The most central professional value inspired by the public journalism approach at IH was the *critical watchdog position*. This discourse included the ideas of "courage" or "challenging and questioning" the decisions and decision-makers. The critical watchdog stance can be considered as a sub-category of autonomy in a sense that it entails a certain degree of independence. However, at IH, being a watchdog was more about the courage to provoke critical public discussion than about independent journalist–source relations.

But honestly, I hope that the paper, and us journalists, would be feistier. We need more courage to test the boundaries a bit. We are a little too nice. (IH5)

Moreover, the watchdog position was seen as an important professional virtue at IH due to the history of the local paper. Local journalists and papers function in a difficult situation in terms of having to secure their advertisement revenue, acting in co-operation with local authorities and addressing and serving their audience in a credible manner (e.g. Puranen et al 1999, 55–56). At IH, this in-between position was highlighted by a common understanding that the paper used to be too close to local authorities, too "soft" or "nice". One of the journalists even claimed: "It was not journalism at all". IH has its roots as the local information delivery platform of four municipalities in the region (Turpeinen 2000, 232–236). Therefore, now, the role of an adversarial watchdog has been raised to an important professional value at IH, because a more independent position has been assumed. The newsroom's collective interpretation of the past thus clearly affected which professional values were regarded as important.

This is an interesting finding, since in Britain for example, the anti-political and consensus-oriented nature of local journalism has been recognized; local papers' watchdog role is mostly limited to issues on which there is consensus among readers (Wahl-Jorgensen 2005, 10). Interestingly, being a watchdog at IH did not seem to require the need to be afraid of being an active player in local public life. The local context and the public journalism approach made it natural and even desirable for the paper (if not necessarily journalists) to be considered as an active agent. However, this activity was also justified from the viewpoint of boosting the community and not merely from the viewpoint of social change – a common feature with the local press in Britain (Wahl-Jorgensen 2005, 12).

Journalists at AL framed their work from the perspective of the readers more strongly than their colleagues at HS and IH. Readers and readership were the keywords that defined professionalism in the regional paper, and *public service* emerged as the most important professional value dimension. As discussed, there was the tendency to see the paper as a provider of common guidelines, and public service in the form of "reader orientation" was one of these common frames. At AL, the idea of public service was interestingly connected to responsibility. A central task for the journalist then was to report about important issues and act as a gatekeeper, and the values of trustworthiness and credibility came up often at AL. The journalist was regarded to be responsible for choosing the issues that are published and also for clarifying complicated issues for the general public.

I am an old-fashioned journalist. (laughing) I think the newspaper has a kind of educational... well that is a bit difficult word, but... But I think that a newspaper needs to tell about things, even those that are not necessarily very easy for the media. (AL3)

As indicated by the quotation, elements of education and enlightenment were also apparent at AL. According to this thinking, a professional journalist is someone who can serve the public with relevant material, and help her to navigate in society. This discourse included the belief that it is essentially journalism and journalists who can act as "educators". Moreover, the idea of public service was broadened to include "encouragement" of the public.

Autonomy, public service and the watchdog position were thus the strongest dimensions of professionalism that were evoked – and partially redefined – by public journalism in the three newspapers. Consequently, these values emerged as the core of professionalism among journalists who had practised public journalism. But following the contextual differences, the way in which public journalism was considered to be affecting professionalism, was also framed slightly differently in each paper.

How does public journalism relate to professionalism?

At HS, public journalism was framed as a *reminder of what good journalism can be*.⁴⁷ Via the public journalism projects, the journalists were reminded of worthy goals, interactive work methods or their own strengths and weaknesses as journalists, especially about the importance of maintaining autonomy in journalistic decisions. HS journalists were therefore rather ambivalent about

⁴⁷ Even if in these interviews (2003–2004) indicate that public journalism appears as a reminder at HS, it is fair to say that the idea has slowly affected the organization and its work practices more broadly. For example, in the course of seven years, elements of public journalism have been apparent in projects dealing with local elections, city planning, ethnicity and the economic decline.

the positive impact that public journalism as a participatory method could bring to professional journalism.

At AL, the relationship between public journalism and professionalism was more than a reminder: public journalism was seen as a *slow mental change that required stepping out of the comfort zone*. In comparison to HS, journalists at AL were more positive towards public journalism's impact on professionalism. After all, public service – and not autonomy – was the most prevalent professional dimension referred to in the context of public journalism at AL. The effect of public journalism could be summarized as the need to open up or dissolve the borders that have been drawn between journalists and their public. The doubtful effects of public journalism were connected to the incorporation of marketing goals with journalistic work.

At IH, public journalism influenced professionalism through *practice and experimentation* rather than abstract value discussion. In the local newsroom, the practical changes in work routines seemed to precede changes in values. The impact of public journalism on professionalism was considered to be fairly positive. It seems that changes implied by public journalism were easier to accept and interpret when there was a colleague in the newsroom that routinely did her work according to the public journalism ideas than if public journalism took the form of a project. The fact that the classical watchdog position was the most prevalent professional dimension at the local paper is interesting; this role was broadened by the public journalism approach. Local journalists thought that the role could be strengthened by citizen participation: citizens can sometimes pose better questions than journalists and act as a starting point for critical public discussion. Citizens were thus seen as allies or co-workers for journalists in their attempts to scrutinize the conduct of local officials.

It is important to understand that all of the three papers offered a particular kind of setting for public journalism approaches. They therefore created a particular kind of professional reflexivity that should be understood in relation to the newsroom cultures. The above outlined discourses about newspapers and professional values constitute the background against which we can now consider signs of more "public" professionalism. In the following, I will step away from the frame that is offered by the three different newsroom cultures and discuss journalists' professional self-image at a more general level.

8.3. Signs of "public professionalism"

The public journalism approach required journalists to rearticulate some of the professional dimensions as well as their own identity as professional journalists (cf. Carpentier 2005, 214). Even if there were signs of change at the identity level, these changes provoked journalists also to reflect upon their professional stability; how they are and have been and not how they have

developed or changed as journalists. In some cases then, public journalism initiatives invited journalists to underline the virtue of staying unchanged by new trends. This indicates that there is a core in professional journalism that is considered to be constant and stable – and worthy of defending (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008). Indeed, narratives of permanence and stability might be necessary to all occupational ideologies.

However, the ideas of change and stability are not mutually exclusive (Helle 2009, 100) and in the interviews, the discourse of adaptation was generally stronger than that of stability. This discourse did not hold on to stability as an important aspect of professionalism. On the contrary, journalists seemed to regard that they need to constantly adapt to external and internal trends and pressures and rearticulate their meaning to professionalism. Due to the project nature of some of the public journalism approaches, this process of rearticulating was temporary for some. It can nevertheless be regarded important as it arose from practical news work. I will now discuss five themes that emerged from the interviews and dealt with the effect of public journalism on professional self-image. These can be taken as signs of "public professionalism".

Extension of classical professionalism

Even if there were journalists in every newspaper who did not consider public journalism as a significant professional challenge, there was a majority that saw public journalism as a natural part or an extension of traditional professionalism. Previous studies (Gade et al 1998) show that in the context of public journalism journalists have accepted the idea that there is more than one legitimate approach to professional journalism. When journalists frame public journalism as part of traditional professionalism, they usually frame it as something that "good journalism should be anyway" – a common argument among U.S. journalists (see e.g. Woodstock 2002, 46–47). However, this stance does not require much re-articulation. Instead, there is *inclusion* that is easier and more common.

In the interviews, this kind of argument was stated in order to criticize or support public journalism. In a critical sense, public journalism was seen as academic hype or as another buzzword. According to critics, there was no need to rename good quality journalism as public journalism, and therefore, public journalism and its effects on professionalism should be critically evaluated, even resisted. But when public journalism was seen to be part of the familiar professional ideology in a supporting sense, the argument contained an idea that public journalism is a natural part of journalism, and there is no contradiction between classical values of journalism and public journalism values. In the following quotation, the critical and positive stances are interestingly combined in a sceptical attitude towards the civic reporter on the one hand, and an embracing attitude towards the ideal on the other.

Q: How did the idea of a civic reporter sound like when you first heard it?

IH5: Well, I sniffed at it a little.

Q: Why?

IH5: Well, because I think it is a kind of work that should be done by all of us really. Or we should have a similar approach to our work.

Public journalism was seen as a natural part of professional journalism most commonly at the local paper IH. This attitude was affected by the presence of the civic reporter in everyday work. As mentioned, at IH, journalists viewed public journalism in very practical terms, and therefore, perhaps, the inclusion of public journalism into professionalism seemed easier at IH than in the other papers.

Throughout the interviews, public journalism was easier to accept and see as being part of traditional journalism if it was considered as a kind of a *tool-kit*, and not as a *set of values*. Therefore, this inclusive discourse – despite being a common one – did not necessarily require much reflexivity or professional rethinking in terms of journalists' self-image. However, this discourse presents journalistic professionalism as a permeable construct that includes adaptation. Moreover, seeing public journalism as an extension to professionalism is important, since an adaptive attitude is a precondition for any new ideas to become accepted in the first place.

Helping and supporting citizens

A clearer case of re-articulation was apparent when professionals discussed their role in relation to the audience: the journalist was positioned as a *collaborator or helper*. Public journalism influenced the journalists' professional self-image so that they positioned themselves on the same side as the public. Journalists did not consider themselves only as reporters that should perform their public service to a receiving public as a mass. Even if the idea of serving the public in the traditional manner remained, and the idea of the public as a reading audience existed, according to the re-articulation, journalists also "helped" and "supported" the public as citizens, even "defended" them and were "loyal" to them.

The idea of helping took different specific forms. For example, in interview situations where ordinary people met decision-makers, the role of the journalist was to help people formulate their questions and encourage them.

We can't just throw a random citizen into the minister's office and hope that she performs nicely. Because she won't. Because it is not

her professional skill to be involved in a political debate like that.
(AL3)

Here the citizen was portrayed as an amateur in political debate. Political debate was seen as a professional skill of journalists, and therefore, they needed to be of assistance and lend some of their skills to the citizen. It is interesting that (political) journalism traditionally values juxtaposition and conflict, and therefore, citizens and decision makers are positioned as opponents. The ideals of public journalism, then, bring along the idea of helping. It is the journalist that first positions citizens in the tough spot and then comes to their aid by assisting and supporting them.

The idea of helping also took another – and much more usual – form according to journalists. Helping may happen “textually” in a sense that journalists write their stories from the viewpoint of regular people. In the text, the journalist can take the position of the citizen or frame issues from angles that are relevant for the public. This was considered as helping because stories with “the citizen angle” were thought to be more relevant for the reading public than stories that cover the political process from the viewpoint of the ones in power.

The metaphor of helping refers to the fact that journalists as professionals are still needed: the amateur-citizens cannot make it on their own in public discussion. Thus, the idea of helping can be seen – a bit paradoxically perhaps – as a way to retain some of the authority and competence that used to originate from remaining distant or autonomous. Thus, the professional journalist is still needed to perform public service, but serving the public now requires assistance rather than distance.

In the traditional professional discourse, the idea of public service was perhaps so self evident that there was no need to underline the “added value” that journalism could offer to citizens. This newer discourse points out that the traditional journalistic value of delivering credible and trustworthy information to citizens is not enough anymore (Heikkilä et al 2010). The public needs to be offered something additional, in this case, assistance. Hence, it has become acceptable to make stories in which this collaboration and helping is noticeable. Whether this practice produces “valuable” stories for citizens remains unresolved in this context.

Opening up to the public

The second cluster of re-articulations was the *need to interact with the public*. According to this discourse, journalism as a professional conduct needs to open up in order to make journalism more relevant, interesting and inclusive for the public. This was justified by the previously experienced isolation of journalists. Usual terms linked to this discourse were “meeting people”, “taking readers along” or “being accessible”.

The need to reconnect was first justified by the newspaper content: journalists ought to be more receptive in sensing the issues that are important for readers. By being more open to citizens' comments and participation, journalists were regarded to get a "reality check". For instance, there was a distinct need to interact with voters before making a story about candidates in an election in order to know the questions that needed to be asked. An AL journalist thought: "We cannot pretend that we know everything."

Secondly, individual journalists need to be more accessible. From the interviews, there emerged a shared understanding that there was something wrong with journalistic professionals. In the past, they positioned themselves too distant from everyday life and were too bound to the desk and telephone.

It's weird that people would rather send a message to the paper's text message column than contact us directly. There's something... There has to be something wrong with us, but I really don't know why. I have come across people saying or thinking that we know everything already, and therefore, there is no need to contact us.
(IH5)

Public journalism projects have thus clearly encouraged the kind of re-articulation of professionalism that deals with removing the "professional shell" and avoiding "barricading oneself to the newsroom". Thus, there was a physical dimension to this discourse, too. Especially at IH and AL, journalists discussed the importance of an easily accessible newsroom location.

Whereas the previous re-articulation was motivated by the idea of offering added value to the readers as citizens as well as consumers, this re-articulation of "opening up" was supported by the ideals of openness, access and collaboration. These ideals figure widely in various terrains of late modern societies; but they are especially strong in the new media field (e.g. Deuze 2007, 39–40).

Journalist as a connector

Seeing the newspaper as a site for public discussion is a classical professional dimension, which is extended in public journalism towards deliberation. In public journalism, the virtue of discussion is not merely seen in the forms that it may take after the publication of the news stories; in public journalism, *moderating and reporting* discussions are also seen as part of the journalist's professional capabilities. Provoking and fostering public deliberation prior to reporting is valued, and discussion becomes an important method of information gathering and a way of making a story. Consequently, a recurring metaphor that appeared in the interview material was the idea of getting different participants "around the same table".

Now these people, our readers, regular people and decision-makers are around the same table. The journalist used to – if she acted according to the classical tradition – phone these people separately and then formed a synthesis of their views. Now all these people are present at the same time. (AL11)

Possibility for open discussion is thus created, but the journalist as a discussion moderator still holds the strings and an element of control remains. It was pointed out, however, that discussion-based methods are more stressful for journalists than traditional reporting because the situation may change rapidly and unexpectedly. Journalists noted that it was a demanding task to try to find the connections and create true dialogue between participants. In this regard, the journalist is seen as a connector between different parties that would not otherwise connect.

However, even if this connectedness was underlined, deliberation – as a dialogical process for finding solutions – was almost absent from the journalists' accounts. Perhaps due to the difficulties in practice, the idea of finding solutions in a deliberative process was not emphasized, especially in the context of journalists' own professional roles, even if connecting different groups together was a favourable goal. The larger cultural trend behind this re-articulation could be the tendency to consider the – technologically as well as socially – networked nature of our society and the assets that can be achieved by interconnecting the various agents in the networks.

Visibility and publicity

According to its title, public journalism affects professionalism in a way that the journalistic *profession is considered as more public*. According to journalists, there were two sides to the issue. On the one hand, profession was seen as public in terms of being there *for* the public. This way of interpreting what "public professionalism" means was indeed a broad way of rearticulating the journalistic profession and it embodied all of the elements or signs that have already been discussed: helping, interacting and connecting. On the other hand, however, profession was considered as public in a narrow sense of the word: being public was equated with publicity and promotion. This narrow sense of viewing the profession as public was common in all the papers, and it was a feature that cannot be bypassed. There was a common discourse in journalists' interviews that touched upon themes such as "visibility", "performing" or "productization".

Carpentier (2005) points out that in journalism there has always been a link between being professional and being employed in a media organization. According to my findings, the public journalism projects created increased pressures for journalists to identify themselves as representatives of their organizations as businesses. The centrality of public events seemed to

bring along the ideas of identification and visibility. Because the paper was portrayed as a public agent, the journalists that represented the paper at the event also became more public. The journalists in the events – as hosts, interviewers or reporters – were positioned as representatives of the news organization. Therefore, the journalist needed to align herself with the values that the paper represents.

The interviewed journalists did not consider this change in a positive light. It was not regarded nice to be a "walking *Aamulehti*" or "sit beneath the huge newspaper logos", to become equated with the newspaper's brand. Some journalists thought that journalistic work had become mixed with marketing and promotion or that it had become "performing" due to the public and broadcasted nature of the events. Journalists understood the logic of branding but felt annoyed that they were forced to think about it.

I find myself to be thinking all of this through the brand. - - From the marketing point of view, it was probably beneficial, although it is not my job to think of that. (HS13)

The publicity discourse at IH focused on the role of the civic reporter as "the face of the paper" and the advertisements about her work. The journalists discussed with slight irony that the civic reporter had been "productized" or "commodified". But even if this aspect was discussed in an ironical tone, publicity was considered as means to "get the idea through to the public". The civic reporter herself was also ambivalent about this aspect:

In the beginning, I was maybe even a bit too agreeable to appear in the advertisements. But on the other hand, I do understand it up to a point because of the readers. It really has an effect on how easy it is for them to contact me. (IH)

Publicity was sometimes seen as a means of achieving "deeper" goals, but when publicity in itself was manifested as the end product, it created the critical remarks about the meaningfulness of public journalism and its effects on professionalism. Journalists clearly drew a line between being a journalist and being a publicist. It is evident, therefore, that public journalism projects created critical reflexivity, especially with regard to commerciality as an all-encompassing trend.

All in all, the re-articulations discussed in this section point out that on top of drawing from the shared professional values, journalists' conceptions were also shaped by more general societal trends connected to the idea of public journalism. It can be summarized that public journalism has invited the journalists to rearticulate certain shifts in journalistic culture: shifts from autonomy to assistance; from enclosed occupation to a collaborative environ-

ment; from information delivery to network building; and from secured economic standing to competitive branding. These shifts have been part of public journalism from the beginning in one way or another. In this sense, public journalism has anticipated some of the trends and shifts that have now become more explicit in the current technological environment and discussion about participatory journalism.

8.4. Public journalism and professional reflexivity

In this chapter, I have discussed journalists' reflections on professionalism from the viewpoint of public journalism. There was evidently a joint pool of discursive resources from which the Finnish journalists drew from, but each newsroom culture also created particular ways of referring to the newspaper as a context of professional journalism. The newspapers were seen as membership organizations, as providers of guidelines and as items of external evaluation. These differences in the newsroom cultures, in turn, created particular settings for journalists to see public journalism's professional challenges. Therefore, public journalism invited journalists to reflect upon autonomy, public service or the watchdog position as the most prevalent professional values, and the approach was seen either as a reminder, as a mental change or as a practical change (see Table 10). Overall, public journalism brought to surface the underlying and esteemed professional values that the newsroom cultures found worthy of defending.

	A typical way to frame "our paper"	Prevalent professional value	The effects of public journalism on professionalism
HS	Membership, employer	Autonomy, independence	Ambiguous: public journalism as a reminder of what could be done better
AL	Practical guideline	Public service, educational ethos	Moderately positive: public journalism as mental change, requires stepping out of the comfort zone
IH	Externally defined item	Watchdog position, need to be more adversarial	Fairly positive: public journalism influences professionalism through practice

Table 10: "Our paper", prevalent professional values and effects of public journalism on professionalism at HS, AL and IH.

Despite the incoherence in understanding public journalism (Chapter 7) and the contextual nature of professionalism, there was unity that binds together the three papers and their journalists' experiences of public journalism. For example, some collective signs on the impact of public journalism to journalists' self-image were found: in the context of public journalism, the reporter

needs to act as the helper, discussion moderator and in interaction with the citizens and to be more public, in terms of both the public sphere and the market. This points out that even if there was not much room in the middle of everyday newsroom work for theoretical talk about public journalism and its boundaries, the practical experiments as concrete efforts invoked professional reflexivity that required discussing the boundaries and possibilities of "public professionalism". Again, these signs point to the direction that – despite its permanence and stability – journalists' professional self-image is a construct that can be and is rearticulated.

It can be concluded that public journalism has invoked journalists to reflect on their professional identities in relation to the organizational culture (their work place, the newspaper business) and to the professional culture (the professional values, their newspapers' relation to the public sphere). This is an indication that professionalism in journalism ought to be understood as being embedded in both domains: the organizational and professional cultures (e.g. Örnebring 2008). Journalists' most immediate frame of reference, after all, is the newsroom culture that they inhabit, and that culture is always affected by organizational as well as professional impulses (see Chapter 3.3.).

In the case of public journalism, *organizational culture* and especially its surrounding domain, the corporate culture caused the most uneasiness. Even if journalists understood the economic realities and the requirements that arise from media competition – they did see the newspaper as a product – they were hesitant about the needs to identify themselves with the media corporation and its brand. Being an employed professional journalist thus requires a certain degree of company identification, but the uneasiness that was apparent in the material points out that the idea of internal autonomy positions journalists in a contradictory situation. There was a legitimate discussion among the journalists about how far they as professionals should adapt to the pressures arising from the business side of newspaper industry, and this discussion has undoubtedly intensified due to the industry's increased economic hardships. Hardt (1999) has made a point about public journalism's failure to question the practices of those in charge of human and capital resources in news organizations by addressing the rank-and-file journalists and appealing to their conscience and imagination. His criticism seems valid also in light of my findings: journalists expressed helplessness and irony when they faced blunt commercial interests suggested by the management level. This made them equate the idea of "public" in public journalism with publicity (as attention and PR) rather than publicness (as the principle of people's right to communicate).

However, the journalists' relationship to their work communities, the *newsroom culture*, did not entail similar uneasiness. On the contrary, identification with the newsroom appeared to be strong among all of the inter-

viewed journalists, i.e. the closer one got to ones newsroom culture and further from the corporation culture, the more positive the identification was. This was indicated by the way in which the interviewees talked about the common guidelines of work, or the membership qualities that come along with being a part of the newsroom. There were some elements that pointed to an occasional willingness to separate oneself from the newsroom as a collective: sometimes journalists underlined their personal strengths and skills as individual journalists. These personal strengths and desires did not always appear as welcomed in the context of the projects that underlined planning, teamwork, citizen-orientation (as opposed to system orientation) or writing according to certain length requirements (see also Chapter 5). However, in relation to the newsroom culture, elements of frustration were rarer than elements of belonging.

As noted, journalists did identity work also in relation the *professional culture*. By being able to draw on the joint professional culture of journalism that goes beyond the organizational and newsroom specific cultures, journalists were able to see themselves as members of a broader professional collective. McDevitt (2003, 159) notes that individuals typically identify themselves as members of the profession long before they join a specific organization. In this way, professionalism acts as a stable resource for journalists' self-image. This study indicates that professionalism as a collective reference frame works more consistently when journalists draw from it with the intention of *defending* the professional core values than with the intention of *rearticulating* them due to the already existing and shared vocabulary. However, McDevitt (2003, 156–158) argues that proponents of public journalism have interpreted professional values, most notably autonomy, too narrowly: as hindrances to the movement's ideals. He argues that reflective introspection is an attribute of autonomy – and that autonomy is a developmental and multidimensional process. Indeed, the traditional professional values cannot be regarded as obstacles in the process of adopting public journalism; the adoption process requires reflexivity, and professionalism acts as a resource in this reflection. So, professionalism may invite journalists more easily to adopt a protective than proactive position, but the professional values also act as the basis for the whole discussion to take place.

On top of relating oneself to the media organization, the newsroom and the profession, journalists reflected upon their *relationship with the public sphere* and with members of the public. This became apparent in the ways that journalist discussed the role of their paper as a significant maintainer of the public sphere. This indicates that journalists tend to frame the public sphere as journalism-centred. However, in another discourse, the paper was also positioned under public evaluation. Even if the newspaper was still clearly in the centre of attention, in this discourse the journalists stepped away from journalism centrism; they identified other agents in the public sphere that

could affect the forms and content of public discussion. Journalists recognized that the newspapers and their professionals are part of a public sphere that goes beyond the pages of the newspaper.

In fact, these two elements – public significance and public evaluation – were important elements in the professional self-image of journalists in relation to public journalism. There was a common understanding that the work that journalists do is publicly significant, but a degree of defensiveness in the professional discourse emerged from the public nature of the work. In the context of public journalism then, professionalism acts as resource that invites defensiveness but it also makes the explication of public significance possible. Thus, positive discourses around public journalism and professionalism – support and help for citizens; a more open and interactive stance; and the aim to act as a connector – can be seen as *signs towards* "public professionalism", not as unambiguous indications of such professionalism's existence.

It has been indicated that the public journalism approach has not revolutionized journalistic practice or norms, but it has offered practical–theoretical input into the professional culture that has fuelled active discussion among practitioners and academics (e.g. Friedland 2003; Haas 2007, 139; Gade et al 1998). My research shows that journalists are willing to experiment with new ideas and practices and reflect upon them in a way that provides input for the profession by making explicit how professionals regard their work context and their professional role in it.

The Finnish professional culture that is embedded in the democratic-corporatist media model has offered an interesting setting for public journalism. In many respects, it may be argued that public journalism fits more easily with the Nordic professional culture than with the professional culture in the USA. For example, the historically strong and broadly accepted value of public service among Finnish journalists has made it possible to consider public journalism as an extension of this value, even if public service now seems to require more than information delivery. Moreover, the tradition of corporatism and the culture of consensus in top-level decision making (see Chapter 1.2.) may have also prepared the way for public journalism ideals in Finland: professionals in the democratic-corporatist system have not been as critical towards the ideas of deliberation and solution orientation as in the liberal media systems (see also Haas 2003). In this light, however, it is interesting that deliberation and a solution orientation did not form an integral part of public journalism in the three studied Finnish newspapers. Thus, these ideals were not actively applied nor explicitly contested.

This can be further explained by the fact that during the past 20 years or so, in democratic-corporatist countries, there has been a shift towards "critical professionalism" with focus on critical investigation, analysis and dissemination, i.e. practices and ideals that have traditionally been stronger in

the sphere of the North Atlantic liberal media system (Hallin & Mancini 2004, 170–178; Haas 2003, 96). Public journalism has been rooted in this framework to begin with – despite being also a challenger of distanced critical professionalism – and has therefore caught the attention of the media professionals. Moreover, global techno-economic trends have also shaped journalism in Finland towards practices that bracket out the structures of collective representation (such as corporatism) and underline individual experiences and targeted journalism. Public journalism in Finland can thus be regarded as an approach that has been able to address the historically strong normative-democratic tradition and its current shift towards the liberal model, as well as the current practical-economic trends that define Finnish professional culture.

The signs of “public professionalism” I discussed in this chapter can be regarded as valuable for the future evolution of journalism and its participatory features. Results from studies of online participatory journalism (Domingo et al 2008; Hermida & Thurman 2008; Heinonen 2011, forthcoming) suggest that professional culture has remained surprisingly unchanged by participatory practices, as professionals have kept the decision-making power in their own hands. Journalists are retaining the traditional gatekeeping role in adopting UGC on their websites. This is a further indication of the fact that normative interventions, such as public journalism, are valuable in a sense that they encourage journalists and researchers to reconsider some of the basic assumptions in journalism, since there is very little room for this kind of reflexivity in fast pace of editorial work and technological development.

Moreover, I concur with Haas (2007) in his evaluation that the emergence of independent citizen journalism does not relieve mainstream news organizations of their responsibility for improving their relationships with citizens and for trying to generate more politically involved publics. While it is certainly possible that citizens themselves become publicly active, there is only sparse evidence suggesting that more demanding deliberative discussion would take place in practice and that the concerns of the marginalized groups would be articulated (Haas 2007, 159–160). The discussion in this research indeed points out that these goals are also challenging for professional journalism. Hence, the idea of “public professionalism” would best benefit from taking into account the independently produced citizen journalism activities and combining this input with professional practices.

9.

Conclusion:

Making news with citizens

This research has discussed the forms that public journalism has acquired in three Finnish newspapers and the interpretations that the participatory practices have elicited among journalists. In the past chapters I have addressed four research questions dealing with the reception and practices of public journalism (Chapter 5), the textual typology of the stories (Chapter 6), citizens' role in public journalism (Chapter 7) and journalists' reflections on their professional self-image (Chapter 8). This study has been an attempt to understand participatory newsroom practices and shed light on the phenomenon of public journalism via three different research sites, the newsroom cultures of *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Aamulehti* and *Itä-Häme*.

This research has opened up an opportunity to concentrate on (1) the meaning of *socio-cultural context* for public journalism. It has also provided an opportunity to discuss the intersection of (2) *public journalism practices* and theories of journalism, especially those of (3) *professionalism* and the (4) *public sphere*. In the following, I will summarize my findings and discuss the input of this research in relation to the four fields. I will devote special attention to the implications regarding the public sphere theories. Altogether, these conclusions reflect on the role of journalism in democracy and how public journalism contributes to that.

9.1. Public journalism in the Finnish context

The broad context of this study is the professional culture of journalism in Finland. This context has provided an opportunity to see how public journalism has been adapted to an environment that combines the political legacy

of democratic-corporatism with the rise of managerialism and requirements of efficiency in an increasingly technological environment and emerging cultural diversification.

The U.S. based public journalism movement has had an important impact on the forms that public journalism has taken in Finland, but the movement, however, has not been the only source of inspiration. Citizen participation as a central notion in Finnish public journalism is part of a broader *participatory paradigm* that influences many sectors in society. This research has indicated how participation has lately emerged as a central element of journalism practice overall. Public journalism is an initiative through which the emergence of participatory paradigm can be studied in journalism. Moreover, public journalism also reflects a broader legitimacy crisis that many modern institutions and professions are now facing as they are required to search for justification from widening the meaning of their expertise and professionalism as well as the customer/consumer roles that are embedded in their practices.

Thus, the adoption of public journalism has been justified from viewpoints that are not immediately connected with journalistic practices. In the Finnish newsrooms the arrival of public journalism has provoked legitimating narratives that are connected with democratic elections (HS), regional prosperity (AL) or the profitability of the paper (IH). This points out that there has been a common feature to justify the practices especially from economic and political aspects.

The economic pressures of the surrounding societal context have been most clearly detected and articulated by journalists. Even if the financial status of newspaper industry in Finland at the start of the 2000 was not critical, the sense of alarm about economic viability of newspapers clearly framed public journalism. Consequently, the approach has been mingled with target audience strategies and branding. The economic hardship of the newspaper industry has lately been intensified due to the global economic recession. Therefore, the economic motivations of participation in journalism presumably play an increasingly important role in the future.

The political context, in turn, has been apparent in the studied forms of public journalism as a clearly expressed will to take partial responsibility of the well-being of the democratic system and electoral activity. The public journalism practices have adapted to the transformations of corporatism and welfare state ideology. Public journalism has marked the need to bypass the old collective forms of decision-making and make democracy more participatory, and it has in its part offered more individually oriented means to address citizens (cf. Heikkilä 2001, 290–291).

Technological and cultural trends have played minor roles in legitimating public journalism. The most intense technological development in online journalism in regard to web 2.0 technologies has mainly taken place after the

data for this research was collected. However, the studied public journalism experiments have prepared journalists to face the changing nature of citizen participation in online environment. This research therefore indicates how the idea of user participation was assumed in the field of news journalism before the technologically-driven participatory business models were intensified (for a critical review of "peer production", see van Dijck & Nieborg 2009). The research therefore also suggests that technology should not be seen as the one and only or most defining factor in journalism development in the future.

The cultural context, especially the sense of overall "mediatization" of the society, has been reflected in public journalism as attempts to find such ways and styles of journalistic coverage that would be distinguishable from other media content. But in regard to the emerging cultural diversification, the studied public journalism projects have not fully utilized the potential of the approach to give voice to marginalized groups or cultural minorities as publics. Culturally, the approach has therefore largely addressed "mainstream citizenship" rather than diverse cultural citizenship.

Journalism's way of legitimating itself is thus always connected with broader social paradigms and the context that nurtures these paradigms. Now it is the individually-oriented context with its participatory paradigm that is affecting journalism's legitimacy discourses, innovation and renewal. However, journalism is not merely being *affected* by its context: especially in the case of public journalism, one should ask how journalism could act as a catalyst for meaningful participation. In other words, it remains a challenge for future projects to think of ways how public journalism could contribute to democratically-informed citizen participation so that it would become a genuine part of various institutions' practices, not just those of journalism. Further discussion within the profession is needed in order to consider to what extent it is journalism's role in particular to create public pressure for wider democratic participation.

In this overall socio-cultural context, public journalism has been applied in practice. The findings of this research point out that for practitioners, public journalism is essentially about *making news with citizens*. It is news making that requires professionals to act together with citizens, not just to write news for them or about them.

9.2. Public journalism practices

In terms of journalism practice, this research has offered a view into public journalism models that have been applied in three Finnish newspapers of different size. This study therefore demonstrates well how public journalism is practiced in national, regional and local settings. Public journalism in Finland has evolved from researcher-lead projects into independent newspaper practices that have been carried out in mainstream newsrooms. The

idea has been adjusted in each newsroom to their specific needs and existing practices.

Public journalism practices have been regarded as either distinct projects (HS), repeatable formats (AL) or as individual professional specialization (IH). Public journalism has invoked journalists in all the three newspapers to reflect on a variety of practices that range from newsroom management to concrete modes of journalistic work, and from organization and execution of public events to participation of citizens in the journalistic process. These reflections indicate that public journalism requires commitment from the management's as well as practitioners' part like any other attempt to develop journalism, but on top of that, public journalism requires engagement from the public.

There has not been a coherent movement ethos or clearly defined borders for public journalism practice in Finland. Public journalism has been seen as a toolkit rather than as an ideal construct with theoretical roots. Therefore the practitioners' definitions of public journalism have been shaped by their practical experiences and the pragmatic core of journalism. In these definitions citizens have a central role: journalists see that the essence of public journalism is to provide citizens with information, to give space for the diversity of voices, accept story tips from citizens and enable their participation to the making of news as well as to public life.

The content analysis pointed out a clear citizen orientation of the coverage. Citizens were positioned as active agents in the stories. However, in the future it would be fruitful to analyze citizens as agents more closely in order to identify possible competences and qualifications that are attached to active citizenship and to deconstruct the idea of "mainstream citizenship". In other words, for future research it would be important to consider what kind of citizenship is constructed in the public journalism coverage, for example, to be able to consider the gendered nature of citizenship (Ruoho & Torkkola 2010, 47–49).

In this research I have concentrated on textual storytelling elements, because none of the earlier Finnish studies on public journalism have focussed on this aspect. I therefore identified and analyzed storytelling structures that were typical in the newspapers' public journalism coverage. There were six common structures: emphasizing the relevance of citizens' experiences; connecting citizens with political decision making; utilizing citizens' questions; generating dialogue; positioning citizens as public evaluators and presenting journalists as commentators. These meta-elements can be regarded as a negotiation result between traditional professionalism and public journalism. The emerging textual grammar suggests that public journalism has transferred part of the journalistic power from journalists to citizens but that public journalism has not dramatically transformed journalistic storytelling. In fact, it still seems problematic for journalism to find concrete and feasible ways of

representing certain public journalism ideals textually: the ideals of dialogue and deliberation are especially demanding. However, the typology presented here may act as a tool or a starting point for developing and evaluating storytelling techniques and ways to deal with public journalism in the future, also in the web environment.

In addition, the identification of readers' roles in public journalism acts as a means to develop collaborative news making practices. The roles that readers have been given by journalists within the audience frame are: acting as a sample citizen, providing opinions and suggesting story ideas. The audience frame draws from the combination of professionalism's information delivery ideal and the logic of media competition. This frame is strongly apparent and cannot therefore be ignored when professionals' interpretations of public journalism are studied. The roles within the public frame are: acting as a representative, providing everyday expertise, questioning the decision-makers and being a civic actor. Within the public frame readers are granted positions that take into account the different public (and potentially political) roles that they have in society, for example as voters, citizens and members in various associations and social networks. These roles arise more clearly from the ideals of public journalism. The two frames – commerce and democracy – are intertwined with each other and together they form the foundation from which journalists draw their ideas when they interpret their relationship to the public.

Recognizing the ways in which citizens are positioned in the context of public journalism may aid in thinking means to better utilize new information technology in order to strengthen the public aspects of online participation and counter the many reservations with which newsrooms are facing online participation (Singer et al 2011, forthcoming). The lessons learned from the public journalism experiences should not be bypassed when online participation is developed. The ways in which citizens contribute their time and effort by voluntarily engaging in journalistic production is a significant question in newspaper-based public journalism as well as in web-based participatory journalism. An aspect that would require further attention is the process how citizens analyze their own motives, consider experiences from collaboration with journalists and evaluate the resulting stories. It would be important to assess the collaborative reporting process from both viewpoints; the professionals' as well as the amateurs'.

Another clear finding arising from this study in terms of public journalism practice is that deliberation is a demanding ideal and only thinly apparent in the texts and journalists' interpretations. Public journalism theory emphasizes the notion of deliberation, and for the sake of conceptual clarity and depth of thought I consider it useful for the theory to adhere to the concept. By holding on to the notion of deliberation, public journalism may be developed to a direction that does not only produce discussion for the sake of

getting "colour" to the coverage or a mere feeling of participation to citizens. However, furthering the emergence of deliberative knowledge remains problematic in practice. Seeing readers as experts and questioners, and journalists as helpers and moderators, could make deliberative practices possible, but journalists have not been eager to get deeply involved in deliberation processes. This finding suggests that public journalism lacks an intermediate articulation that would link the theoretical ideal of deliberation into the practice of journalism.

In this research, newspaper journalism has been studied from the particular normative viewpoint of public journalism. Therefore the analysis has brought forth such aspects of participatory practices that are connected with democracy. This normative view is significant in order to link the Finnish experiences with the discussion about the international forms of democracy supporting journalistic practices (e.g. Romano 2010) and to develop the theory of public journalism in its own right. But I want to emphasize that the normative aspect provided by public journalism is not the only framework in which this type of journalistic practice and professional journalists can be studied. As pointed out, this research illustrates clearly that the normative and economic aspects are intertwined in public journalism even if scrutinizing commercially-driven customer orientation has not been the most fundamental aspect of this research. Journalists recognize and partly accept the interplay between the normative ideals and economic pressures related to public journalism.

9.3. Professional reflexivity

Public journalism has provoked journalists to reflect on their professionalism. In the interviews, professionalism appeared as an entity that refers to skills, routines, rules and shared values. The newsroom culture forms the setting for professional reflection and development. It acts as a context that brings coherence to the interpretations and defines the borders of shared meanings within the organization. The newspapers in this research were seen by journalists as membership organizations (HS), as providers of guidelines (AL) and as items of external evaluation (IH). Consequently, public journalism has been mirrored against varying collectively recognized strengths and weaknesses: HS journalists wanted to write more citizen-oriented and intelligible stories, AL journalists emphasized the need to help and encourage citizens and IH journalists were willing to maintain distance from the local authorities with the help of citizens.

The differences in the newsroom cultures have led to particular ways of seeing public journalism as a professional challenge. Public journalism has invited journalists to reflect upon autonomy (HS), public service (AL) and the watchdog position (IH) as the most prevalent professional values in the news-

rooms. The introduction of public journalism has made these professional values more visible by reaffirming their classical meaning on the one hand, and widening that meaning on the other. The widening means that ideas of citizen participation have been absorbed as part of the existing values. This has been especially clear in the case of public service: journalists see that serving the public does not only mean quick and reliable information delivery but that the public can also be served by taking them along to the news making process and encouraging them to take part in public life.

In the newsrooms, public journalism has been seen as a reminder (HS), as a mental change (AL) or as a practical change (IH) for professionalism. The impact of public journalism has been construed as broad shifts in professionalism: from autonomy to assistance; from enclosed occupation to collaborative environment; from information delivery to network building; and from secured economic standing to competitive branding. The findings point out that the practical experiments have invoked professional reflexivity in relation to the organizational culture and to the professional culture. Moreover, they indicate that the broad societal trends function as the basis for professional reflection.

Four emerging signs of more "public professionalism" were traced. In public journalism the reporter helps citizens; moderates discussions; works in interaction with citizens and generally is more public – both in terms of the public sphere (publicness) and the market (publicity), even if the bluntest economic imperatives regarding journalists' own work were clearly resisted. These findings suggest that participatory news practices have had an impact on journalists: despite certain stability brought by classical professional values, journalists' self-image is a construct that can be rearticulated. Thus, as a result of professional reflexivity, professionalism can evolve and change. Moreover, discussing journalists' "public" roles is significant, since it can help in building a bridge between public journalism and online participatory journalism: both initiatives need to develop meaningful ways to incorporate professional journalism with citizen participation.

"The public" appears to be a central category outside the newsroom that continues to represent professionally significant meanings: journalism's legitimacy is still based on relevance to and communication with the public (see also Kunelius & Ruusunoksa 2008, 675). Professionals recognize that their newspapers are part of the public sphere that goes beyond the pages of the newspaper and that citizens can be considered as active participants in that sphere. Journalists thus consider their newspapers as influential agents in the public sphere but at the same time journalists understand that their papers are exposed to public's evaluation and criticism. Journalism is thus framed from the perspectives of public significance as well as public assessment. In the current environment of media competition, journalism needs to emphasize its significance for the functioning of democracy and the public sphere

more intensively than before. Moreover, increased accessibility and interactivity have pushed journalism to justify its practices to the public in a more transparent manner.

This research has indicated journalists' willingness to open and self-critical reflection that mostly stems from concrete work situations but does not merely remain on the practical level. This kind of professional reflexivity can be considered as a professional virtue as such: in order for professions to evolve and stay vibrant the practitioners need to be able to reflect upon the basic assumptions of their work and alter the course of their actions when needed. Self-criticism is a typical feature when journalists compare the current situation with past practices or formerly dominant professional conceptions, but it is more difficult when reflexivity should take place between the current situation and ideal or theoretical conceptions. Thus, for journalists it is easier to be reflexive in relation to "what used to be" than to "what should be", especially if no space is provided for such reflections in everyday work. This is why professionalism acts as a domain that allows re-articulation but also fosters stability.

Because past practices and conceptions form an important reference point for professional reflexivity, the critical reflections on public journalism are slightly different in different cultural settings. Thus, criticism against public journalism has differed in Finland from that in the USA. For example, professionals in the Finnish democratic-corporatist context have not been as critical of the ideas of deliberation and solution orientation as their colleagues in the liberal media system (see also Haas 2003). This can be due to the already mentioned fact that deliberation in all is rather thinly apparent and discussed in Finland. But it may also stem from the fact that consensus has been broadly accepted as a political ideal in Finland and as such it has framed the conduct of professional journalism: journalism as an institution has been seen as part of the process of consensual opinion formation and solution finding. In fact, one can argue that classical adversarial watchdog journalism has never been as strong in Finland as it has been in professional cultures that are embedded in the liberal media model. Finnish journalists' are part of a media system that has traditionally emphasized an abstract ideal of public interest. In this context the professional ideal of being a watchdog of power has emerged as a critical stance towards the functioning of the democratic system in all, and not so strongly towards (individual) political conduct. Therefore public journalism and election projects aiming to recover democratic participation have fitted well with Finnish professional culture.

In general, the democratic-corporatist orientation of the Finnish professional culture has made public journalism seem applicable. But the orientation has not resulted in an unproblematic adoption of public journalism. Firstly, the orientation has been mingled with other trends and media models. For example, professionalism in Finnish journalism used to be more

clearly defined through its relationship to the administrative apparatus; i.e. seeing public service as information delivery from the state's authorities to the public. This framework has now given way to the relationship between journalism and the market. People's lives are considered to be defined increasingly by the market, not merely by the state and its governance. Secondly, the idea of consensus that has framed the political system and hence also journalism has not meant a consensus that would be achieved by citizens' deliberation, rather it has referred to a broad societal consensus among institutional elite actors such as formal political parties. Thirdly, Finnish journalists' professional orientation still includes such elements that do not easily fit together with public journalism, namely those of autonomy and objectivity. Hence there are also similarities between international and Finnish criticism of public journalism. There is thus a shared professional domain of journalism that is used as a source of self-reflection, but this domain is being shaped in the course of time and emphasized differently in various cultural settings.

9.4. Public sphere theory for public journalism

In regard to public journalism theory, this research first offered a definition of public journalism. According to this formulation, public journalism is a form of professional journalism that aims to foster participation, public deliberation, diversity and connectedness; it considers readers as citizens and takes them into journalistic focus; it conceives citizens as actors in the public sphere; and it justifies these arguments from the perspective of democracy. This definition is needed in order to be able to discuss the tradition, forms and future significance of professionally conducted citizen-oriented journalism. I argue that in spite of technological development and the rise of independent citizen journalism this kind of journalism will not disappear. The legacy of public journalism can assist us to keep such aspects of journalism in view that may escape our attention when we concentrate on technological development. For example, the tension between democratic norms and commerciality remains as an aspect that technology has not settled.

I have argued that the conceptualization of "public" in public journalism in scholarly literature has not been consistent. Drawing from Habermas and other public sphere theorists I have concluded that public journalism should recognize that the public sphere consists of multiple publics, which are actively formed by citizens, but in which finding closures and solutions is not always possible since the nature of the public sphere is political and conflicting. An element of conflict is always present in public deliberation: certain amount of disagreement sparks the deliberative process. In addition, the public sphere is best kept alive by providing possibilities for appearance, participation and deliberation. I have suggested that this conception of the public sphere could be taken as the deepened understanding of the "public" in pub-

lic journalism. This conception thus challenges professionalism's classical and journalism-centred notions about the public sphere. However, the conception also challenges public journalism itself. To conclude, I wish to look at how the empirical findings in this research relate to the suggested deepened understanding of the public sphere. I will discuss five central themes of the public sphere theory: (1) the structure of the public sphere, (2) the role of citizens, (3) the goal of deliberation, (4) the function of the public sphere and (5) democratic orientation.

Structure of the public sphere. The studied public journalism stories do not directly yield up a particular conception of the public sphere. Some of the textual practices, such as the story pairs that combine a group interview with an encounter with a decision-maker, suggest that there is willingness to shed light on the discussions and worries of certain groups, such as certain occupations or unemployed persons. However, the textual practices do not point out that the interviewed groups would necessarily be considered as sub-publics in a sense that their public nature would be improved beyond covering their issues in the stories. The stories aim at bringing the worries of various groups to general public discussion but they do not particularly aim at stimulating the groups' internal publicness or assisting the identity work within them beyond public recognition. In the light of the stories, the issues that the groups bring forth appear as more important than the viability of the groups as potential publics. This is indicated, for example, by the scarcity of such story telling structures that would support continuity of the coverage.

In addition, journalists' conceptions of both public journalism and readers point towards an understanding of the overarching public sphere that needs to be fed with issues that arise from smaller publics. The emphasis is on the importance of keeping general public discussion diverse and active. This aim appears to be more important than to support sub-publics or to encourage issue-publics to emerge. Journalists are prone to think that issue-based publics should emerge by themselves. It is the task of journalism then to find the publics and cover their issues – not necessarily to facilitate their emergence.

The idea of seeing journalists as connectors also suggests that the public sphere is seen as a domain of several smaller issue-publics which could be connected with each other. Journalists' reflections on their professional contexts add a journalism-centred view to their public sphere conception. In all of the newsrooms, journalists considered their newspapers to be important agents in shaping and maintaining the public sphere. It was less clear, however, how issues from the multiplicity of publics would best move "upwards" and eventually reach the national political public sphere in order to make a difference to the policy making processes. Journalists referred to the idea of "having an impact" with public journalism stories, but they were not clear as to how this impact would be achieved.

The dominant conception of the structure of the public sphere in the con-

text of Finnish public journalism can thus be described as journalism-centred public sphere in which several issue-publics appear. This conception is mostly in line with the discussed public sphere theory. The most challenging aspect is to conceive that publics are not merely sources of interesting issues. The vibrancy of publics could be encouraged in order to add up to the well-being of the public sphere and to the possibility of local publics, for example, to gain such momentum that would make it possible for their issues to reach the national public sphere and the national decision-making structures. The increasingly networked nature of the public sphere and the emergence of social media that utilize the network logic can enhance such movement "upwards", but this movement is not automatic and could be assisted – even if not controlled – by journalism.

Citizens' role in the public sphere. The interviews reveal that citizens are seen in two ways by journalists: sometimes as abstract representatives of citizenry and sometimes as active agents. In relation to texts, the journalists refer to readers as symbolic citizens, almost as story elements that act as material for the stories: photos, opinions or ideas. But if readers are viewed in relation to their role in public discussion, the roles become more demanding: citizens' opinions and story ideas are connected with their roles as active social beings in various networks. Therefore citizens are also considered to possess such resources that make it worthwhile to share their experiential knowledge in public. The duality in the citizens' roles indicates that the elements of "public" and "journalism" in public journalism bring in influences that do not match seamlessly but that they can be negotiated. To put it crudely, the logic of journalism emphasizes the usability of citizens as elements in the stories, whereas the logic of publicness emphasizes citizens' input on the public discussion and the usability of journalism to citizens. However, both of these logics seem to require citizen activation, mobilization and encouragement: citizens are not considered active as such even if their activity is a desired condition. This is an interesting contradiction to the point I made earlier: journalists think that individual citizens need activation, but at the same time they wish that issue-publics would emerge by themselves.

Journalists' perceptions of their role in public journalism confirm the dual view on citizens. On the one hand, journalists realize the need to be more accessible and open in order to channel the already existing citizen activity into the newsrooms. But on the other hand, journalists see themselves as helpers who aid citizens to become more active and to take part in the public debates. This kind of mobilizing is important for journalism because civic agency creates the public to being with. Journalists can see themselves as "mobilizers" of general civic activity but not as "mobilizers" of specific issues. The aspect of civic agency is also emphasized by journalists since such activity is considered to attach the public better to the newspaper as a product: active citizens are also active subscribers.

According to the textual analysis, citizens are granted an active role in the stories: they ask questions and evaluate public affairs from their own perspectives. This can be seen as an indication of the fact that the public journalism approach considers citizens as active agents in the public sphere altogether – not merely in the media sphere. The texts do indicate that citizens are provided with possibilities to affect the direction of the public discussion with their inputs. However, also the inactive and symbolic citizenship positions become evident, especially in the stories that focus on elections. Despite good intentions such stories become dominated by political players. Hence citizens become easily positioned as abstract representatives of the electorate.

On the whole, even if the representative and symbolic aspects of citizenship are apparent especially in the texts, the current forms of public journalism in Finland emphasize the virtue of citizen activity. The kind of citizen activity that is emphasized is informal but publicly oriented and takes place in everyday life context; overtly political activity is considered more problematic. This implies that the ideal citizen is not passive and dispassionate; citizens are allowed to have interest in various issues. Journalism tries to monitor civil society and identify moments when interests accumulate and issue-publics come alive. However, if issue-publics start to symbolize something more permanent – to evolve into true counter-publics – journalism becomes more sceptical towards such publics' intentions to use journalism to promote their own purposes. Furthermore, public journalism has not encouraged journalists to consider citizens in the role of deliberators in Habermasian sense, since the element of deliberation is generally rare in the material.

Goal of deliberation. The idea of deliberation is scarcely manifested in the studied news practices and hence also thinly elaborated by the journalists. However, I have suggested that public journalism ought to adhere to the notion of deliberation and consider the public sphere as a site for deliberation that would result in recognition and formulation of issues that require public handling – not necessarily in solutions. The findings in this research indicate that deliberation in the form of solution-oriented discussion that aims at closures is indeed problematic for news journalism.

However, issue recognition is characteristic of Finnish public journalism practice when textual representation is considered: the most common meta-element in the stories deals with representation of everyday life as publicly and politically relevant. In other words, the stories aim at recognizing the issues that arise from grassroots. The bottom-up direction of the stories and giving space to citizens' voices are indications of the fact that there is willingness to try to find and discuss the concerns of citizens, but there is no emphasis on the fact that this process ought to be deliberative in nature. Neither is the aspect of problem-solving a significant element in the texts. The element of connecting citizens with politicians – best exemplified by the practice of encounters – implies that such connectedness can lead to solutions, but none

of the prominent story-telling elements explicitly deal with problem-solving. Therefore the emphasis is on connectedness rather than on problem-solving.

These findings are supported by the journalists' interpretations of reader roles in public journalism. Citizen participation is justified by the need to recognize and cover issues that are relevant to the public. The reader roles such as the opinion or story idea provider fit in with this picture. Even if citizens' questions have a central role in the coverage and being a questioner is a recognized citizen role, there is no emphasis on solutions. The Q&A stories are valued as end points: problem-solving is not seen as a deliberative process that would *start* from questions and answers and move forward from that on. Problem-solving is not explicitly apparent in the journalists' role conceptions either. The idea that journalists can act as connectors between various groups hints to the idea of problem-solving, but here, too, the element of connectedness is more explicitly expressed.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the studied public journalism projects have not encouraged journalists to conceptualize their practice and profession in such a way that would emphasize the importance of seeing the public sphere as a site of deliberative problem-solving. This finding is connected with the minor emphasis that is given on deliberation in the studied approaches altogether. Connectedness, in turn, appears as a more attainable ideal. From the viewpoint of deliberative theory this can be regarded as weakness, but from the viewpoints of participation and accessibility this can be seen as an asset: journalism aims to present diversity of views and also connect them with each other.

Function of the public sphere. I have suggested that public journalism would benefit from considering the public sphere as a broad domain that facilitates public appearance and representation of considered and conflicting opinions rather than full consensus. Because deliberation is not a distinctive element in the studied approaches, the question of consensus as an end product of deliberative process is not central either. But in terms of style and tone, the stories come out as consensual: they very seldom portray issues as open conflicts. Citizens' questions and proposals as well as encounter situations provide such elements to the stories that could lead to confrontations. This type of tension would even be welcomed by the interviewed journalists. However, discussion events and one-to-one meetings tend to minimize confrontations and emphasize the aspect of mutual understanding, if not full consensus. The story structures studied here do not employ a populist approach of siding with citizens' points of view in order to build up tension. The journalists' own commentaries, in addition, are rather controlled. For these reasons the idea of appearance becomes more central than that of either consensus or conflict.

Journalists' interviews further illuminate why conflict is not a central element in public journalism. The role of citizens as questioners is appreciated

because citizens' questions bring a "twist" to the stories; citizens give support to and legitimate journalists in their watchdog role. On this basis it would be possible to emphasize the conflicting nature of the public sphere, but journalists want to avoid combining public journalism with any extreme views, openly political content or strong advocacy. The stories may reveal the political and conflicting nature of the covered issues but they seldom process this conflict further. Moreover, the role of citizens as participants in conflicts is considered with caution. If citizens were given more prominent roles as participants in conflicts, it might also mean more unpredictability and handing over journalistic power to the public. This question is related to the sense of autonomy and is therefore considered problematic by the journalists.

I have suggested that public journalism should allow and assist citizens' public appearance and expression of considered opinions. The analysis of journalists' role perceptions supports this view: connectivity, accessibility and assistance have become to be seen as virtues for journalists in public journalism. This research points out that in the context of Finnish public journalism the public sphere is seen as a site of appearance of various views and opinions, but neither consensus nor conflict comes up as the most essential definer of the nature of public communication. Appearance is an important and necessary element, but one can ask whether it is strong enough to bring about considered opinions?

Democratic orientation. Can the ideals of participatory and deliberative democracy be found in the approach, or is public journalism more clearly rooted in the prevailing representative-administrative system? Deliberative democracy does not occur in the interpretations of the journalists but a participatory framework is more apparent. Citizen participation is considered a virtue, it is encouraged and presented in the public journalism stories. Possibilities for dialogue are organized and reported. However, even if encounters are organized and discussion is encouraged, the textual representation of the dialogue remains a challenge in this material. Dialogue is more clearly apparent in the methods of public journalism than as an element in the stories themselves: a lively and dialogical face-to-face discussion does not easily convert to dialogical journalistic narrative, not to mention that it would effectively challenge the existing democratic structures. The existing system of representative and competitive democracy thus remains the dominant frame in the stories, a feature that is strengthened by the election projects that form central part of the data.

Even if democracy was not explicitly discussed by journalists when they defined public journalism, the ethos of democracy was strongly apparent in their conceptions. The traditional democratic duties of journalism – informing citizens and acting as a platform for debate – have affected the journalists' understanding of public journalism. Thus, public journalism is rooted in these traditional premises but has an additional tone of participatory ideals

in it. Reader participation is discussed by journalists predominantly in relation to the newspaper and to a lesser degree in relation to the public sphere or the functioning of democracy. Public journalism should therefore find ways in which citizen participation in journalism could actually be connected with the functioning of the existing democratic structures, for example by considering the practice of public journalism as a distinctive form of public monitoring (Keane 2009). In this regard, public journalism faces similar challenges as participatory and citizen journalism: how to direct the momentum of citizen participation outwards from the media field to the public sphere. From the democratic perspective, it is not enough to invite citizen participation for the sake of media participation but genuinely consider the impacts that this participation can have on public discussion, civic engagement and decision-making. The function of the public sphere is to produce public legitimacy for decisions and, in addition, to see that public participation has an influence on the decisions that are made.

In this research autonomy, public service and watchdog position became manifested as the core professional values evoked by public journalism approach. Even though these values were extended to include citizen participation, the main democratic frame was the existing system that relies on competitive elections and representation. So, even if there were signs of more "public professionalism" based on the participatory–deliberative foundation, the new approach was still mostly evaluated from the viewpoint of classical professionalism that offers the framework of representative democracy as a dominant point of reference. Moreover, the increasingly market-driven context has shaped the journalists' understanding of the public sphere. Therefore elements of commercial publicity such as branding and visibility were a part of journalists' conceptions: democracy and the public sphere were seen as competitive domains. In sum, the studied public journalism approach has not radically challenged the logic of representative and expert-driven democracy, especially as the ideal of deliberation has not been clearly manifested in the practices or interpretations of this approach.

All in all, the suggested normative framework – the deepened public sphere theory for public journalism – has revealed that journalists consider the public sphere as a domain that needs to be kept vivid by feeding issues from smaller publics into general public discussion, in which various issue-publics can be connected with each other. Civic agency is considered a virtue, but public journalism has strengthened a conception of the public sphere that emphasizes issue recognition over problem-solving. Connectedness emerges as an important intermediate concept, since deliberation remains thinly addressed. The possibility for public appearance comes out as a significant function of the public sphere. The dominant democratic orientation associated with public journalism is the representative and competitive system with a participatory flavour.

Thus, this research has also revealed a discrepancy between the more demanding public sphere conception and journalism practice. The role of normative theory is, however, to aid us to understand of what is done and prepare the way for assessment and criticism of existing forms. Empirical work, in turn, is needed to show the conceptual limitations and possibilities of the suggested theoretical framework and to provide alternatives. If the suggested public journalism theory is taken seriously, public journalism practice needs to recognize that sub-publics require encouragement and space for identity work in order to act as a true resources for public discussion. In addition, civic participation should be more imaginatively turned into dialogic and deliberative textual narratives. Also, it would be worthwhile to consider how to enhance rigorous public discussion – the kind of discussion that accepts people’s passions and colliding positions as legitimate – without turning the approach into populism. From the point of view of democracy, it would be beneficial to innovate ways in which public journalism can combine media participation with the functioning of the existing democratic system and to have an impact on the political public sphere and thereafter the national decision-making.

All of these challenges become increasingly acute in the current environment where professional journalism coexists and competes with the overall media abundance and social media. By turning to its theoretical roots, public journalism may acquire a clearer standing in itself and therefore also provide incentive to other participatory forms in journalism. The significance of this “public philosophy” lies in the fact that it may help in evaluating the variety of participatory practices – in print, broadcast or web – from the perspective of democracy. Therefore, it is not perhaps necessary to underline the need to name the practices as public journalism or as participatory journalism, but rather to underline the need to identify a theoretical basis on which to assess these practices. In the current context, then, the concepts that the public sphere theory can offer may act as a more important source for development than the distinct concept of public journalism.

However, the role of theory for (public) journalism practice is not straightforward. There is no clear place for theory in the everyday practice of journalism. This became evident for me when I was writing Chapter 5 on the practices and arrival of public journalism. It was easier to find narratives than analytical theorizations about the practices. Therefore I argue that public journalism theory (embedded in the public sphere theories) can shape the practice in the field if it can produce such “intermediate” analytical tools that help in breaking down narratives into concepts. My co-operation with the civic reporter was a process in which we had to find intermediate concepts in order to make our interaction possible. Somehow we succeeded, because according to the civic reporter, receiving feedback was one of the assets in our co-operation. Journalists in general are hungry for feedback. This suggests

that if theory can be used as a structure for feedback, it may reach newsrooms and then also shape practices.

Moreover, even if empirical findings show that the suggested public sphere theory is partly too demanding for journalism practice, I still see that professional practices and self-conceptions can be evaluated with a challenging normative framework. It is apparent that in public journalism the relationship between theoretical notions, journalists' interpretations, work practices and news texts is not seamless. For example, when we look at practices from the viewpoint of theory, public journalism appears as "adapted". Or when the stories are evaluated, it becomes apparent that participatory news practices do not necessarily produce dialogic texts. Nevertheless, it is the task of research to help in specifying these disparities and encouraging such professional reflexivity that may allow journalists to assess theoretical as well as practical aspects of public journalism or challenge their existing viewpoints. In addition, it is important to continue study how theories of classical professionalism and public sphere meet each other in the context of public journalism, since feasible forms of public journalism draw inspiration from both theoretical domains.

As far as the future of public journalism is concerned, this research suggests that demanding and truly deliberative forms of journalism are quite unlikely to be assumed in the middle of everyday news work and the pressures of competitive media environment. However, various participatory methods will quite probably be utilized and developed in the newsrooms. Public journalism has been appropriated to the mainstream newspapers in a way that addresses both the normative and the economic foundations of journalism. It does not radically challenge the professional self-understanding of journalists, but provides such an input to the newsroom cultures that makes it possible for journalists to consider their profession as an interactive and collaborative territory and see citizens as capable public actors. Journalists thus possess such professional reflexivity that allows them to consider and evaluate the significance of normatively oriented and democracy-supporting journalism for the profession as well as the public sphere. The role of journalism research is to produce and maintain the kind of vocabulary with which professional reflexivity becomes possible on a conceptual level and does not remain bound to the immediate work environment and existing practices.

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LIST OF RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

HS1: 4.11.2003 (group 1)
HS2: 4.11.2003 (group 1)
HS3: 4.11.2003 (group 1)
HS4: 4.11.2003 (group 2)
HS5: 4.11.2003 (group 2)
HS6: 4.11.2003 (group 2)
HS7: 4.11.2003 (individual)
HS8: 5.11.2003 (group 3) and 19.8.2004 (individual)
HS9: 5.11.2003 (group 3)
HS10: 5.11.2003 (group 4)
HS11: 5.11.2003 (group 4)
HS12: 26.7.2004 (individual)
HS13: 19.8.2004 (group 5)
HS 14: 19.8.2004 (group 5)
HS 15: 23.8.2004 (group 6)
HS 16: 23.8.2004 (group 6)
HS 17: 23.8.2004 (group 6)

AL1: 18.3.2005
AL2: 11.4.2005
AL3: 24.3.2005
AL4: 30.3.2005
AL5: 22.3.2005
AL6: 12.4.2005
AL7: 30.3.2005
AL8: 1.3.2005
AL9: 24.3.2005
AL10: 18.4.2005
AL11: 5.4.2005
AL12: 31.3.2005
AL13: 24.3.2005
AL14: 31.3.2005

IH1: 17.5.2005
IH2: 7.6.2006
IH3: 7.6.2006
IH4: 17.5.2005 and 7.6.2006
IH5: 17.5.2005
IH6: 17.5.2005
IH7: 7.6.2006
IH8: 17.5.2005
IH9: 7.6.2006
E-mail interviews with the IH management 26.3.2004 and 1.6.2006

Abstract

The object of this study is public journalism and its applications in the Finnish press. Public journalism is an American-based journalistic reform movement and an idea which aims at connecting the media more closely with its readers, and readers with public life. This research examines the ways in which public journalism ideas and practices are manifested in three Finnish newspapers – *Itä-Häme* (IH, local), *Aamulehti* (AL, regional) and *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS, national) – during the period of 2002–2006. The overall research task is: What is public journalism, how and why has it been applied and interpreted in three Finnish newspapers, and what kind of professional reflections by journalists have these approaches elicited? This question is addressed by analyzing journalists' interviews (40) and news stories (174). The interview material acts as the primary research data. Qualitative content analysis of texts and interviews has been utilized as a method of analysis.

This research first offers a definition of public journalism. According to this formulation, public journalism is a form of professional journalism that aims to foster participation, public deliberation, diversity and connectedness. It considers readers as citizens and takes them into journalistic focus. Public journalism conceives citizens as actors in the public sphere, and it justifies its arguments from the perspective of democracy.

Public journalism is embedded in professional journalism. In this research professionalism is understood as a shared ideological value basis that is constructed and shaped discursively and that is manifested in practices and routines. The shared values of professional journalism are: autonomy, public service, objectivity, immediacy, ethicality and democratic ethos. Public journalism has challenged journalists to consider the borders of these core values, because public journalism emphasizes the idea "publicness" as a key dimension.

However, the conceptualization of what is "public" in public journalism has not been consistent. Drawing from Habermas and other public sphere theorists it is concluded that public journalism should recognize that the public sphere is comprised of multiple publics, which are actively formed by citizens, but in

which finding solutions is not always possible to attain, since the nature of the public sphere is political and conflicting. In addition, the public sphere is kept alive by providing possibilities for appearance, participation and deliberation. This conception of the public sphere is offered as a deepened understanding of the "public" in public journalism.

In the empirical parts of the research, the forms and interpretations of public journalism are analyzed. The results indicate that public journalism has invoked journalists in all the three newspapers to reflect on a variety of practices that range from newsroom management to concrete modes of journalistic work and from organization and execution of public events to participation of citizens in the journalistic process. In the newsrooms, public journalism has created various legitimating narratives that are connected with political and economic aspects.

The content analysis points out to a very clear citizen orientation of the stories. In addition, there were six common storytelling structures: emphasizing the relevance of citizens' experiences; connecting citizens with political decision making; utilizing citizens' questions; generating dialogue; positioning citizens as public evaluators and presenting journalists as commentators. These storytelling structures have transferred part of the journalistic power from journalists to citizens but public journalism has not dramatically transformed journalistic storytelling. Dialogue and deliberation remain as especially demanding ideals.

The journalists' interviews indicated that in the context of public journalism there is a twofold way to consider the newspapers' readers, the ordinary people. On the one hand, the readers are seen from the audience frame that emphasizes the product nature of the newspaper, and on the other hand, from the public frame that considers readers in relation to the public life, and not merely in relation to the media product. The readers' roles within the audience frame are: acting as a sample citizen, providing opinions and suggesting story ideas. The roles within the public frame are: acting as a representative, providing everyday expertise, questioning the decision-makers and being a civic actor. These roles draw the borders within which the Finnish professional culture is willing to place reader participation in journalism.

The newsrooms were seen by journalists as membership organizations (HS), as providers of guidelines (AL) and as items of external evaluation (IH). These differences in the newsroom cultures, in turn, have created particular settings for journalists to see public journalism's professional challenge. Public journalism has invited journalists to reflect upon autonomy (HS), public service (AL) and the watchdog position (HS) as the most prevalent professional values and the approach has been seen either as a reminder of what is good journalism (HS), as a mental change (AL) and as a practical change (IH). Moreover, collective signs of the impact of public journalism to journalists' self-image can be traced: in public journalism the reporter needs to act as the helper, discussion

moderator and in interaction with the citizens and to be more public; both in terms of the public sphere and the market. These findings indicate that despite certain stability, journalists' professional self-image is a construct that has been re-articulated in the context of public journalism.

All in all, the suggested normative framework – the deepened public sphere theory for public journalism – has revealed that journalists consider the public sphere as a domain that needs to be kept vivid by feeding issues from smaller publics into general public discussion, in which various issue-publics can be connected with each other. Civic agency is considered a virtue, but public journalism has strengthened a conception of the public sphere that emphasizes issue recognition over problem-solving. Connectedness emerges as an important intermediate concept, since deliberation remains thinly addressed. The possibility for public appearance comes out as a significant function of the public sphere. The dominant democratic orientation associated with public journalism is the representative and competitive framework with a participatory flavour.

Thus, this research has also revealed a discrepancy between the more demanding public sphere conception and public journalism practice. Public journalism practice needs to recognize that sub-publics require encouragement and space for identity work in order to act as true resources for public discussion. In addition, civic participation should be more imaginatively turned into dialogic and deliberative textual narratives. Also, it would be worthwhile to consider how to enhance rigorous public discussion that accepts people's colliding positions as legitimate and to innovate ways to combine media participation with the functioning of the existing democratic system. Moreover, all of these challenges become increasingly acute in the current environment of overall media abundance and the web 2.0.

The studied public journalism experiments have prepared the journalist to face the changing nature of participation in journalism. But this research also suggests that demanding and truly deliberative forms of journalism are quite unlikely to be assumed in everyday news work embedded in competitive media environment. However, various participatory methods are and will be utilized and developed independently in the newsrooms. Public journalism has been appropriated to the mainstream newspapers in a way that addresses both the normative and the economic foundations of journalism. It does not radically challenge the professional self-understanding of journalists, but provides such an input to the newsroom cultures that makes it possible for journalists to consider their profession as an interactive and collaborative territory and see citizens as capable public actors and participants in making news.

