

CONCLUSION

Making sense of a crisis

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ABSTRACT

The Conclusion of this book is closely connected to Chapter 1. As expressed in the Introduction, these chapters, serving as bookends, are designed to be read in conjunction with each other. In this Conclusion, I reflect upon the six building blocks of journalism innovation – resources, technology, organisation, management, culture, and business model – while summing up the empirical chapters of the book. In response to our overarching research question asking how Norwegian news media responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of innovation and value creation, we have found that the crisis served as a catalyst for innovation, a critical test of resilience, and an amplifier of value creation. Based on the insights from our empirical studies, we conclude that the crisis stimulated renewal and transformation, which changed – at least in the short term – how news media operated and created value, economically as well as socially.

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Lessons learned from an unprecedented crisis

We began this book highlighting the learning potential in the Covid-19 pandemic for academics as well as the media industry. Revisiting this potential for learning, it becomes evident from the preceding chapters in this volume that, despite the negative consequences it imposed on organisations, individuals, and society, the Covid-19 pandemic also presented an opening for news media to gain new experiences and knowledge, and to act, alter their course, and “rethink the practice and meaning of journalism” (Quandt & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021: 1204).

Assessing in retrospect how Norwegian news media responded during the Covid-19 pandemic’s initial and most tumultuous stages, how they were affected by the crisis in terms of news interest, revenues, working conditions and so forth, and how they think ahead for the future, we can conclude that the crisis stimulated renewal and transformation, which changed how news media operated and created value, economically as well as socially. This volume thus effectively illustrates how crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, have the potential to initiate and expedite innovation. The sense of urgency and need for quick decisions brought about by the pandemic enabled Norwegian news organisations to reprioritise and focus on key challenges, while reallocating and mobilising required resources.

We argued at the outset of this book that innovations mostly create positive change, although there might be some undesirable consequences. This admittedly optimistic view on innovation has largely been confirmed by the research presented in this book. We observe how Norwegian news media interpreted and made sense of the crisis and mobilised people and resources in ways that enabled the media organisations to swiftly implement new working procedures and introduce innovative digital news and information services to the benefit of audiences as well as society at large. Moreover, commercial news organisations were able to keep their businesses afloat and generate substantial economic value from paying subscribers at a time when advertising revenue plummeted. However, we also observe how a major innovation like the transition to telework took its toll on news workers, suggesting that the emergence and implementation of “something new” do not necessarily create positive value for all involved stakeholders. Such insights provide some nuance to the pro-innovation discourse that otherwise dominates much of journalism research (Steensen & Westlund, 2021), and, I may add, our own research agenda in this book.

In alignment with our overarching research goal – to derive valuable lessons from the Covid-19 crisis – in the following sections, I condense the findings of each foregoing empirical chapter and consolidate essential insights regarding the impact of the crisis, coping strategies, and innovations adopted by Norwegian news media in response to the pandemic. To achieve this, I revisit the building blocks of journalism innovation initially introduced in Chapter 1 and elaborate

on how these foundational factors were realised as well as influenced by the crisis. Specifically, I focus on news organisations' ability to cope with the crisis and innovate in ways that created value for key stakeholders. After a brief recapitulation of the building blocks and how they relate to the two other key concepts guiding the empirical investigation of this book – resilience and value creation – I delve into the findings from the empirical chapters individually.

Furthermore, and drawing from the insights presented in the chapters, I delineate and discuss three overarching themes that encapsulate the impact of the crisis on news media's ability to innovate and generate new or enhanced value during times of exceptional uncertainty: the crisis as a catalyst for innovation, an amplifier of value creation, and a critical test of resilience. Following this, I reflect on limitations of the research presented in this book and suggest areas for future research.

News media's ability to innovate and cope with the Covid-19 crisis

In Chapter 1, we outlined our concept of innovation by stressing the value creation aspect of innovation, in addition to innovation as improvements and novelty. Building on different strands of innovation literature (Dogruel, 2015; Furseth & Cuthbertson, 2016; García-Avilés et al., 2018, 2019; Hendrickx & Picone, 2020; Krumsvik et al., 2019; Paulussen, 2016; Posetti, 2018; Steensen, 2009), we identified six internal factors, aligning with a multi-level perspective of an organisation, that are relevant for investigating the ability of news media to innovate during crises. These innovation building blocks have come into play in different ways and in different constellations throughout the various chapters in this book. The crisis impacted or activated 1) resources (tangible assets such as production facilities, intangible assets such as brand value and reputation, as well as financial assets like revenue), 2) technology (platforms and tools for news production, news presentation and distribution, customer management, and more), 3) organisation (a news media organisation's employees as well as organisational structures, routines, competency, and communication), 4) management (the practice of planning, organising, leading, and controlling a news organisation), 5) culture (norms, values, and traditions that could either stimulate or hinder innovation), and 6) business model (the “architecture” by which a news operation generates economic value through the delivery of products and services). The next sections demonstrate how these building blocks of innovation played a role in building resilience and creating value amid the Covid-19 crisis, or alternatively how the crisis impacted innovation building blocks in ways that affected resilience and value creation. As editors of this book, we firmly believe that this interplay is crucial for comprehending how Norwegian news media managed the crisis and extracting valuable insights from their coping strategies.

News media's ability to bounce back, forward, and beyond amid the crisis

In Chapter 2, “Innovations in resilience strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic”, Mona Solvoll explored innovation initiatives in Norwegian new media in the first period of the crisis and identified high innovation activity across three resilience strategies: bouncing back, bouncing forward, and bouncing beyond. Solvoll demonstrated how the bounce-back strategy focused on maintaining existing activities in existing markets to achieve stability and involved rapid adaption and restructuring of operations to cope with the crisis and quickly return to pre-crisis activities. Innovations related to the bounce-back strategy were characterised by the organisations’ focus on “doing business as usual” and involved incremental improvements in operations and service provisions. The bounce-forward strategy, on the other hand, involved developing new digital products and services, such as live trackers, streaming events, and live news studios. Through this strategy, the crisis was regarded more as an opportunity to make long-term changes and overcoming cultural resistance to innovation in the news organisations, reflecting a shift towards service-centric and customer-focused approaches among the news media under study. The bounce-beyond strategy focused even more explicitly on co-creation of value between the news organisation and external stakeholders, as well as community engagement, interdepartmental collaboration, and organisational restructuring. Innovations included user-generated content initiatives, virtual events, and partnerships with external players. This strategy involved adapting resources and skills to renew the entire service system of the news organisation, encompassing both radical and disruptive innovations and resulting in changes in organisational culture, audience orientation, as well as business models. The analysis illustrated how newsrooms relied on technological resources to create novel digital services, such as advanced data visualisation and live streaming services. Through these innovations, the news organisations played a pivotal role in assisting the public to comprehend the uncertainty and chaos of the early stages of the crisis and engage in a variety of cultural activities that would have otherwise been unattainable. The technology was not ground-breaking; in some cases, it could even be considered old-fashioned, such as e-mailed newsletters with updates on the pandemic. Nevertheless, technology played a crucial role in enabling the creation of new services that provided substantial value to the public. The analysis also highlighted the role of newsroom culture in innovation processes, as the crisis was seen to stimulate a more service- and audience-oriented mindset among those news media pursuing a bounce-forward or bounce-beyond strategy.

The observed changes in organisational structure, external partnerships, and audience co-creation also exemplify the impact of organisation and management on innovation – two key innovation building blocks – which led news media into uncharted territory and fostered new forms of collaboration, both within

and beyond the news organisation. Conversely, the analysis also demonstrated that in times of crisis, the organisational factor can serve to foster stability, as evidenced by the bounce-back strategy. This emphasis on stability may have generated considerable value for news workers operating under unprecedented pressure and uncertainty, with the crisis intensifying the demand for news and at the same time posing significant obstacles to regular news reporting.

Overall, this chapter demonstrated how the news media under study emerged stronger and different from the initial stages of the pandemic, with positive organisational learning outcomes even though the long-term sustainability of the changes identified, particularly among those following the bounce-forward strategy and the bounce-beyond strategy, remains uncertain.

News workers ability to reorganise to cope with the crisis

In Chapter 3, “Positive renewal in newsrooms through crisis in crisis”, Gudrun Rudningen demonstrated how the Covid-19 crisis was experienced as meaningful by journalists and editors – as an opportunity for positive renewal and innovative ways of organising. However, the crisis also created frustration and exhaustion in the long run. By exploring sense-making through lived experiences among news workers, Rudningen highlighted how newsrooms navigated the challenges and opportunities presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, including the initial excitement and digital adaptation, followed by fatigue, loss of routines, decreased efficiency, and endurance. The chapter thus illustrated how a crisis like the pandemic tests an organisation’s resilience by exposing its ability to adapt and respond effectively to unforeseen challenges. In response to the challenges posed by the crisis, the news organisations under study reorganised and followed three practices of resilience: flexible working conditions; creativity and collaboration; and increased trust, autonomy, and solidarity.

In identifying these resilience practices, the study engaged with several of the innovation building blocks. For example, working remotely encouraged the newsrooms to explore new modes of organising news work and collaboration. This demonstrates the importance of culture, organisation, and technology for innovation. The study found that newsrooms were well-prepared for remote work, thanks to prior technological upgrades and digital communication tools. Furthermore, a strong sense of duty and motivation to provide the public with essential information amid the crisis helped the relative friction-free transition to new working modes. When access to the physical newsroom was severely restricted, the news workers implemented smaller, more intimate group discussions and outdoor meetings for idea generation and collaboration. This facilitated more informal and productive discussions, resulting in a reorganisation of meeting structures for better professional discussions. The insights regarding increased trust and autonomy among journalists also emphasise the combined importance of culture and

management in innovation. The news workers demonstrated their ability to work efficiently and independently from home, and their managers – the editors – recognised the responsibility and self-management skills of their teams. The crisis was found to foster a sense of solidarity among employees, bringing them together across disciplines and ranks and creating a stronger sense of community.

However, while innovative working practices like telework offered benefits like time-saving and increased efficiency, it also came with challenges, such as blurred boundaries between work and personal life. The news workers expressed how they missed in-person interactions to foster creativity and spontaneous collaboration. As such, the innovation of work practices and organisation, albeit more flexible, did not only create value for news workers, but also problems, particularly as time passed.

News media's ability to create economic value amid the crisis

In Chapter 4, “The digital shift in news media’s revenue streams during the Covid-19 pandemic”, Jens Barland and I examined the pandemic’s impact on news media revenues, with an emphasis on the economic resilience of newspapers. We also made comparisons between the economic performance of these news outlets and other commercial news media. By focusing on revenues, we illuminated how the crisis impacted one of the innovation building blocks, namely resources, in the news media industry. While numerous commercial news organisations worldwide witnessed a substantial drop in revenues, this chapter, drawing from revenue statistics, industry reports, and interviews with industry experts, showcased how Norwegian newspapers were relatively well-prepared and positioned to navigate the crisis.

Although the news media sector bore a significant brunt from the decline in advertising revenues at the outset of the pandemic, Norwegian newspapers’ total advertising and user revenues grew from 11.1 billion Norwegian kroner in 2019 to 11.6 billion in 2021. The investigation of revenue streams found that the crisis had significant impact on the newspapers’ two-sided market model, increasing digital reader and advertising revenue and reducing revenues from print subscriptions and advertising. The pandemic thus accelerated the digital transformation of the Norwegian newspaper business and changed how news media create economic value. The upsurge in online shopping and digital news consumption during the pandemic proved advantageous for newspapers that were ready to adjust to these evolving market dynamics. In this context, many Norwegian newspapers held a favourable position, as they had initiated the transition of their print subscription base to digital formats well before the pandemic, boasting a well-established system for managing digital subscriptions. Moreover, the larger newspaper groups had developed sophisticated systems for online sales and customer management. Due to their robust connections with the digital infrastructure of advertising and audience

markets, these media organisations, particularly large and resourceful ones, came out of the pandemic as winners.

Contrasting this, small local news providers, including independent local newspapers and local radio stations, lacked the necessary infrastructure to connect them with digital markets. These smaller players faced significant challenges during the pandemic and were identified as Covid-19 crisis losers in this study. Notably, the chapter also underscored that the media industry did not fully utilise all the extra funds allocated by the state, offering further evidence of the sector's relatively robust economic resilience amid the crisis.

News media's ability to innovate in response to audiences' information needs

In Chapter 5, "Crisis-driven newsroom innovation", Junai Mtchedlidze delved into the dynamic interplay of exogenous and internal factors that fuelled innovation during the pandemic. She highlighted the increased information demand among the populace as a critical exogenous force. Together with internal factors, such as bottom-up innovation initiatives within the news teams, collaborative efforts between editorial developers and journalists, and technological expertise within newsrooms, the population's critical information needs were pivotal to journalism innovation during the pandemic. Based on interviews in four news organisations, this study revealed how the high demand for information encouraged news workers to adapt their practices and develop new services that provided vital updates on the pandemic.

Newsroom workers were challenged to be creative and rapidly come up with new ideas. By demonstrating the importance of technological expertise in the newsroom, combined with an entrepreneurial mindset among news workers and organisational structures that facilitated collaboration across professional boundaries, Mtchedlidze engaged with the culture, technology, and organisation building blocks of innovation, which played a crucial role for news organisations' ability to create new and improved value for audiences.

The chapter highlighted the innovation potential of younger journalists with technological expertise, underlining the significance of technology and coding skills not only within developer teams but also among journalists. Collaborating on data collection, analysis, and visualisation, journalist-developer teams created entirely new services, exemplified by VG's Covid-19 live tracker. Creativity was depicted as a shared responsibility, with instances where journalists generated innovative concepts, while at other times, developers contributed their ideas. Through mutual engagement and collaboration, professional boundaries between journalists and developers became less distinct. Journalists with a computational mindset were better equipped to communicate with developers, while developers took on journalistic responsibilities, such as contacting sources during the information

gathering phase of the journalistic process. The chapter also stressed the importance of speed in the development phase and how having developers in the newsroom accelerated innovation. In contrast to other settings where innovation and IT product development may take weeks or months, the newsroom demands the emergence of innovation, new products, or services within days, and sometimes within hours. Recognising the importance of adapting to the rapid pace of innovation, especially during a crisis, was considered a crucial developer skill, while collaborations with developer teams unaccustomed to newsroom settings had proven unsuccessful.

News media's ability to create value for employees amid the crisis

In Chapter 6, “Exploring telework innovation’s value for news workers”, Cecilie Asker, Maria Konow-Lund, and I explored whether and how the introduction of telework was perceived to create value for news workers. Introducing a structured framework to analyse the perceived benefits and challenges of this significant innovation of newsroom practices, the study revealed that working remotely through digital tools generated complex and ambiguous value experiences among news workers. This emphasis on how news workers perceived the value of a major innovation in the news organisation’s service system offers a nuanced understanding of innovation and value creation that is often overlooked in service innovation literature. A key premise for research in this tradition is that value creation, be it economic, social, or any other value, is the main objective of innovation during crises and otherwise. However, this study demonstrated that the rapid and comprehensive shift to telework, a critical innovation for news organisations to provide value to audiences during the crisis, was not universally perceived to create value for employees. The emotional, functional, and strategic challenges reported by the study’s participants illustrated the difficulty of achieving the idea that innovations should create value for all stakeholders involved. The research also revealed how negative challenges were intertwined with positive benefits in the participants’ experiences: new opportunities to connect with colleagues in digital spaces versus feelings of isolation and stress; increased efficiency and flexibility versus communication difficulties; and opportunities for saving and increasing productivity versus decreasing creativity. Such contradicting accounts of how the telework affected the news workers and newsroom operations demonstrate how the value of innovation could be highly individual and ambiguous.

This study highlighted the role of the physical newsroom as a hub for innovation and shed light on the interplay between the resource building block of innovation and other building blocks like technology, culture, and management. Restricting access to the physical newsroom necessitated the use of technology for news production, influencing the culture in various ways. For example, it enhanced cooperation and relationships for some news

workers while reducing hierarchical barriers. However, it also led to feelings of detachment and weakened the sense of community for others. The lack of physical interaction limited spontaneous creativity and strategic innovation processes. As an essential innovation during the crisis, the shift to telework had the potential to hinder future innovations, highlighting an innovation paradox in this study.

New managers' ability for "do-better" and "do-different" innovations

Lastly, in Chapter 7, "The effects of an external crisis on the prioritisation of innovations", Arne H. Krumsvik and David L. Francis explored strategic decision-making in news media organisations from an organisational resilience perspective and examined the managerial challenges that arise after a period of crisis. By focusing specifically on innovation priorities among news media executives, Krumsvik and Francis shed light on the management building block of innovation.

The chapter offered a novel research typology – the 8×2 model – to provide fine-grained insights into the dynamics of decision-making related to media innovations. Based on empirical insights from a survey among newspaper executives, this chapter presented a tentative hypothesis that, when confronted with the uncertainties of a crisis, leaders and managers are more likely to explore how they can reconfigure and leverage existing resources more effectively (e.g., to become more agile) rather than immediately commit to radical innovation initiatives. They might consider the latter only if their current business model is dysfunctional or if they strategically choose to use the crisis as an opportunity for reinvention. The pace and uncertainty of a crisis tend to favour "do-better" innovations over "do-different" ones. Improving market positions as well as products and services and already existing revenue streams were top managerial priorities. Thus, the immediate post-crisis period was not perceived as a time for redefining the very concept of a newspaper nor the genres of journalism. There were, however, some indications of willingness to experiment in more radical ways.

The study identified three distinct clusters of media executives. Cluster 1, "Keep calm and carry on", was identified as experienced, modest, and conservative in terms of innovation ambitions. Cluster 2, "Polish the product", had less experience as top executives and a strong focus on product improvement. Cluster 3, "Go get new revenue", prioritised developing new sources of revenue and showed higher willingness to change, but even in this group there was more focus on incremental innovation than radical shifts in operations. These managers were characterised by willingness to change, however neither thinking outside the newspaper-box, nor challenging established norms of journalism.

The crisis as a catalyst for innovation

The empirical studies of this book synthesised above have demonstrated how an organisation's response to a crisis can be rooted in a sense of urgency as well as ambition. According to Buck and colleagues (2022: 29), "a sense of urgency is caused by the perception of the crisis as an immediate threat to the survival of the organisation, which leads to a focus on minimising the negative impacts of a crisis by using and adapting digital technologies". A sense of urgency compels an organisation to respond to a threat or emergency by realigning its weakened system. The organisation does not plan or necessarily want to change but is forced to do so due to the issues arising from the crisis. Conversely, a sense of ambition emerges when perceiving a crisis as an environment abundant in opportunities. Ambition-driven innovation is implemented when an organisation seeks to leverage its potential in times of crisis. In other words, it is characterised by more planning, deliberation, and strategy compared with urgency-driven innovation. To turn a crisis into an opportunity, an organisation must identify and exploit changes in technology, shifts in customer behaviour, emerging market trends, or alterations in government policy. The empirical studies in this book suggest that crisis-induced innovations among Norwegian news media were urgency- as well as ambition-driven. The crisis thus acted as a dual force – a catalyst that necessitated substantial changes in how news organisations operated and, concurrently, an encouraging factor to capitalise on emerging opportunities.

The rapid transformation of newsroom operations, whereby the entire news production was moved online and interaction between people in the physical newsroom was replaced by telework, is the most salient example of urgency-driven innovation. This shift, aimed at securing the stability of news production, was an unprecedented move for news organisations and was not part of their digital strategies. However, they were prepared and capable of making the change when the crisis compelled them, not least due to the availability and familiarity of digital tools. Somewhat surprisingly for the news organisations, this forced transition to telework yielded successful results and benefits. It encouraged autonomous, trusted, and cross-disciplinary teams, which created innovative service solutions, digital workplaces, and new roles for practitioners. The urgency-driven innovation thus served as an eye-opener by demonstrating the news organisations' innovation capabilities. It bolstered the confidence of news organisations, enhancing their ability to navigate unprecedented production challenges and arguably better preparing newsrooms to respond to future crises requiring similar adaptability. Furthermore, the sense of urgency propelled changes with significant implications for how news work can, and perhaps increasingly will, be organised in the years to come. Thus, the urgency to address an immediate problem may have had a profound influence on the operations of future news organisations.

The new and enhanced journalistic services developed during the Covid-19 pandemic in response to high information demand among the public can be considered the best example of ambition-driven innovation, indicating a purposeful exploitation of emerging opportunities. Despite not planning for new services, such as Covid-19 live trackers or the streaming of cultural events, news organisations implemented these initiatives by leveraging their technological resources, routines, and reputation as trustworthy providers of news and information. In many cases, these new initiatives served as extensions of existing services tailored for an increasingly digital audience. The pandemic significantly heightened the demand for such services, driven by the need for trustworthy information and the escalating risk of isolation and community loss among the population. This increased demand provided news organisations with a strengthened sense of purpose, which they capitalised on by introducing new services. A growing emphasis on meeting audience needs and expectations had already been recognised as a distinct shift in journalism practices well before the pandemic, as outlined by Costera Meijer (2020), aligning with the broader trend of news media operations becoming more service oriented. The pandemic, we find, accelerated this tendency, particularly among the news organisations which followed a bounce-forward strategy.

While these insights regarding urgency- and ambition-driven innovation highlight the accelerated digital transformation of Norwegian news media during the crisis, one should not overlook the often small and incremental nature of many changes made in their service provision. Such small-scale changes also dominate media managers' ambitions for the future, providing some much-needed nuance to the seemingly radical shifts happening in the industry because of the crisis. Moreover, a significant portion of the news provided adhered to the traditional track of conventional news reporting. For news reporters and editors working from home, facing limited access to sources, and taking extra precautions to ensure their safety, maintaining stability and security posed a major challenge. This challenge may have dampened enthusiasm for digital innovation. Furthermore, we observed signs of creativity drying up, with people unable to meet and generate new ideas in the physical newsroom, posing another obstacle to innovation. While the pandemic served as a catalyst for urgency- and ambition-driven innovation among Norwegian news organisations, paradoxically, it also potentially hindered innovation by constraining creative processes.

The crisis as an amplifier for value creation

As observed in the synopsis of the empirical chapters, the Covid-19 pandemic provided opportunities for news media to enhance their value creation by innovating their service system, allowing them to sustain news production and introduce new services to audiences. This, in turn, resulted in economic

value for the news organisations, evident in increased reader revenue during the crisis. However, the challenges faced by news workers when teleworking also illustrate how innovation, while crucial for value creation for some stakeholders, could have negative implications for others. This demonstrates how value creation is embedded in a complex web of often contrasting value perceptions and interests among news operations' stakeholders (Picard, 2010).

Frequently, the profit-oriented logic of commercial news publishers is perceived to conflict with social responsibility ideals in news media's value creation. For instance, news media may be seen to prioritise content that is popular and cheap to produce but holds little information value for the public. In the context of the pandemic, reserving Covid-19 news for paying subscribers highlighted another side to this economic versus social value creation conflict, as news publishers were accused of capitalising on the public's information need by paywalling Covid-19-related content (Olsen, in press). This edited volume, while not delving into this conflict specifically, shows how news media experienced a significant increase in news interest, resulting in growth in subscriptions due to a well-established digital paywall system.

As demonstrated in other research, news media provided the most important pandemic news free of charge while paywalling exclusive and elaborate Covid-19 news reporting – a strategy which helped them navigate the conflict between business considerations and broader social interests with relative ease (Olsen & Furseth, 2023). Supplementing this, our research underscores how the pandemic heightened news media's economic value creation in their audience market, albeit diminishing its value creation in the advertising market. Furthermore, it illustrates how the pandemic amplified news media's value creation for individuals and society by delivering news with substantial information value, aiding individuals in staying informed about the virus and learning how to protect themselves and stay connected with their community. Nevertheless, the potential adverse effects of paywalls for non-subscribers in a crisis context should not be underestimated. In a situation where access to reliable information is pivotal for public health and security, adopting a thoughtful approach to paywalling – balancing economic interests against public service considerations – is arguably essential for news media to sustain their business, uphold popular support, and maintain legitimacy as knowledge-producing institutions in society.

The journalistic profession has a long-standing tradition of viewing “journalism as a service in the public interest, one that is shaped with an eye toward the needs of healthy citizenship” (Zelizer, 2005: 72). This book highlights how the pandemic prompted individual news workers to reassess their approach to work, fostering a newfound appreciation for their roles. We observe how presenting essential information to the public in innovative ways elevated the sense of purpose among news workers. The crisis unfolded as a pivotal moment for journalists and editors, prompting them to acknowledge

the intrinsic value of delivering vital news and information to the public. In this regard, the crisis also amplified news media's value creation for news workers by providing opportunities to do something meaningful and important during the crisis. For some, the rapid integration of new technology facilitating remote working practices also enhanced their competence, confidence, and flexibility. Nevertheless, the disruptive impact of the crisis on working routines and collegial cooperation, coupled with heightened stress, isolation, and frustration over encountered shortcomings in teleworking, adds important nuance to this overall picture. While working with news amid the crisis was initially exciting and meaningful, it became exhausting over time. In this sense, the crisis was not only an amplifier of value but also posed severe challenges to the well-being of news workers, varying from person to person and context to context.

The crisis as a test of resilience

Throughout the chapters in this volume, a significant degree of preparedness for change among the Norwegian news media is observed. The empirical studies demonstrate how the Covid-19 pandemic represented a critical test of resilience, and, for the most part, Norwegian news media passed that test. This conclusion arises from insights into how the Norwegian news media handled challenges during the pandemic and prompts a discussion of the reasons behind this resilience in the Norwegian context.

Firstly, we observe that no news organisation in our material were forced out of business. Instead, we find that despite differences in economic performance, the overall revenue development of Norwegian newspapers, which constitutes the backbone of the Norwegian media system, was far more favourable than one would expect based on the bleak outlook reported during the early days of the crisis (e.g., Olsen et al., 2020). Most of the news organisations under study had the necessary organisational structures, financial resources, technology, culture, and management in place to cope with the negative consequences of the pandemic, at least in the short term. The pandemic, in a Norwegian context, was not an overwhelmingly disruptive event that pushed the news media beyond their limits. Instead, most of the organisations we studied demonstrated persistence as well as flexibility. While some bounced back and quickly returned to their pre-crisis activities, others bounced forward and beyond, emphasising learning and adaptability in response to the crisis. Resilience often encompassed a combination of incremental and radical innovations that paved a new pathway for the organisation while retaining its core function, structure, and identity. Paradoxically, these organisations were able to change, yet stay the same. Norwegian news media organisations also demonstrated their ability to sustain regular activities and societal roles despite a comprehensive transformation of working practices. The mature level of technological adoption within Norwegian news media might have helped in implementing remote working practices and virtual newsrooms.

One could also argue that the Norwegian news media's resilience to external shocks is a product of their enduring exposure to "business challenges such as the loss of audiences, the diminishing effectiveness of the mass media business model, the lingering effects of the economic crisis, and the impact of digital competitors" (Appelgren, 2022: 722). This extensive experience, coupled with a high resistance to other crisis factors, positions organisations for a faster recovery (Faggian et al., 2018).

For some news organisations, previous experience with crisis journalism could also have had a positive effect on readiness to change. For example, experiences with working under crisis conditions, such as the terror attacks in Norway on 22 July (e.g., Konow Lund & Olsson, 2016), may have somewhat prepared certain news organisations for the extraordinary and uncertain circumstances that characterised the pandemic. As Olsson (2009: 459) has noted, "constant preparedness" is a key aspect of journalism, and experience plays a pivotal role in newsrooms' abilities to act when ordinary structures and routines fall short.

Additional explanatory factors for the high level of resistance and resilience in Norwegian news media could be contextual, rooted in Norway's robust socioeconomic system. Norway is a small, stable welfare democracy among the world's wealthiest countries, primarily due to the country's oil and gas resources and its progressive national petroleum policy (Ihlebak et al., in press). The country's diversified economy, solid welfare state, and stable public sector contribute to its ability to handle economic challenges and crises. The oil and gas industry has fostered economic growth and stability, resulting in low unemployment and a high standard of living. The Norwegian media welfare state (Syvertsen et al., 2014), characterised by a mix of public service broadcasting, commercial television and radio, and a thriving newspaper sector, has a strong tradition of quality, independent journalism with high newspaper readership. The country's expansive media policies seeking to stimulate media diversity and digitalisation (Ihlebak et al., in press) have contributed to the sustainability of newspapers and their ability to navigate digital transitions and changing media consumption habits. The country's news media characterised by stable high trust play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information.

Despite challenges posed by digitalisation, the Norwegian newspaper market has demonstrated adaptability by embracing digital platforms, offering online editions, multimedia content, and digital subscription models to maintain relevance and reach audiences in new ways (Ihlebak et al., in press). These structural factors, encompassing a commitment to quality and trustworthy journalism among legacy news media; a longstanding tradition of readership with a relatively high willingness to pay for news; government support through various forms of subsidies, regulations, and grants; well-developed digital infrastructure; and a readiness to adapt to changing consumer prefer-

ences, arguably create exceptionally favourable conditions for navigating the challenges posed by the Covid-19 crisis. Thus, the ability of Norwegian news media to withstand the resilience test posed by the Covid-19 pandemic not only underscores the inherent adaptability of news organisations but also reflects a convergence of factors that collectively establish conducive conditions for overcoming crisis – to build back better, recover, and thrive.

Concluding remarks and directions for further research

In response to our main research question about how Norwegian news media responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of innovation and value creation, the contributions to this edited volume have delved into the intricate interplay between innovation and crisis within the news media. The authors have explored a spectrum of interconnected innovation factors and uncovered innovation processes that evolved at varying paces and intensities, driven by both a sense of urgency and ambition. These processes involve diverse stakeholders and encompass multifaceted value creation pathways, which concern news media's role as businesses as well as social institutions.

In this last section, I would like to highlight some areas of future research that we consider important to develop and expand our research on innovation and crisis further. In doing so, the limitations of our own research, conducted in one national context, within a limited time frame, and with a specific pro-innovation lens, is acknowledged. Norway, as discussed in this section, represents a media system with characteristics that arguably provided extraordinary favourable conditions for the news media to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. Extending our focus on innovation in times of crisis to other national contexts with different media systems could add important insights on how media respond to extraordinary uncertainty and threat. The world is witnessing an increasing number of crises, where significant global events have substantial local repercussions. As this book comes to press, heightened concerns persist regarding wars and conflicts in various regions, threatening the safety of journalists and the sustainability of news media, while simultaneously underscoring the crucial role of reliable news and information. We particularly encourage research that delves into journalism innovation within contexts of warfare and terror, where civic life faces threats and misinformation thrives.

Furthermore, the long-term implications of the specific crisis addressed in this book – the Covid-19 pandemic – continue to unfold. This crisis severely impacted local media in many countries, resulting in the closure of news outlets in numerous communities. We invite research that explores journalism innovation in the post-pandemic era, particularly the emergence of new digital initiatives in areas left devoid of local newspapers after the pandemic. It is

also important to underscore that even in a stable and peaceful country like Norway, news media face ongoing economic challenges. With the fading of the heightened news interest generated by the crisis and the rising cost of living, there might be a significant decline in the number of individuals willing or able to pay for news. This raises important questions about the sustainability of news media's business model, which is increasingly reliant on reader revenue. As demonstrated in this book, the acceleration toward a subscription-based revenue model was evident during the pandemic. Nevertheless, it is post-crisis when the true viability of this shift will become apparent.

Lastly, it is essential to underscore that innovation during crisis might have its downsides. As evidenced in this book, adopting new ideas, adapting to novel work methods, and seizing digital opportunities during a period of uncertainty can take a toll on news workers. Often, the "dark side" of journalism innovation concerning those involved in news production gets overlooked due to the prevailing pro-innovation bias in journalism research. Therefore, we strongly encourage further research that critically examines the value of innovation for news workers, both during crisis and in other contexts.

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