

University of Gothenburg  
Dept. of Journalism, Media and Communication  
Master essay in Media and Communication  
Spring 2011

# **The democratic ideals among the Palestinian journalists**

**by**

**Mats Tiborn**

Mats Tiborn  
800411-4933  
Tutor: Jenny Wiik

## **Abstract**

**Title:** The democratic ideals among the Palestinian journalists

**Number of pages:** 72+4 (appendix)

**Author:** Mats Tiborn

**Tutor:** Jenny Wiik

**Course:** Master essay, Media and Communication

**Period:** Spring 2011

**University:** Dept. of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Gothenburg

**Purpose/ Aim:** This essay studies the democracy-supportive journalistic ideals among the Palestinian journalists and compare them with earlier studies on journalistic ideals. The essay also studies what shapes these ideals and what holds them back in the journalist's work.

**Material/ Method:** The essay is based upon semi-structured deep-interviews with twelve Palestinian journalists that work for different kinds of media, with different background and in different ages. The interviews are based on theories about journalistic ideals and the relationship between democracy and journalism.

**Main results:** The journalists have great knowledge about the democratic functions within journalism. They are driven by idealism and they work for change in the society. The Palestinian cause weighs the most when the ideal of objectivity is put to the test. A well spread self-censorship is inhibiting the democracy-supportive journalistic ideals from fully work. Though the journalists show an impressive strength to keep up the work in a very dangerous situation.

**Keywords:** Palestine, journalism, journalistic ideals, democracy, the West Bank, Israel, Fatah, Hamas, objectivity, independence, scrutinizing, watchdog-effect, autonomy, self-censorship, Palestinian media landscape, Arab press systems.

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all i'd like to thank all the journalists that participate in the essay. Thank you for giving me your time and knowledge, and thanks for your enthusiasm and welcoming attitude!

Thanks to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the School of Global Studies at the University of Gothenburg for granting me the scholarship that made this essay possible.

I'd also like to thank Johan Romare at Fojo Media Institute for help with formulation the orientation of the essay and Jim Downing and Fojo for great contacts in Palestine. Which leads me to thank Buthayna Semeri at the Media Development Centre at the Birzeit University and for your support.

A big thanks to the Institution for Journalism, Media and Communication at the University of Gothenburg that helped this essay to become what it is. Thank you Annika Bergström and Lena Johannison.

And of course thank you Jenny Wiik, my tutor who sometimes knew more about the nature of my essay than I did myself. Thanks for pushing me just enough to get this done.

Thank you Linn for accepting my absent-mindedness during this spring. This will stop now!

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	6
2. Problem formulation.....	8
3. Question formulation.....	9
4. Main characters of the essay.....	10
5. Structure of the essay.....	10
6. What is journalism supposed to be?.....	11
6.1. Democracy and journalism- theories of the media.....	11
6.2. Journalism and authoritarian/ totalitarian regimes.....	11
6.3. Four theories of the press.....	13
6.4. Democracy-supportive journalism.....	13
6.5. Arab press systems.....	14
7. The Palestinian media.....	15
7.1. The media landscape.....	15
7.2. Working conditions of the Palestinian journalists.....	17
7.3. The respondents experiences from the field.....	17
7.4. The availability of the politicians .....	20
7.5. Repression in figures.....	21
8. The ideals.....	22
8.1 Analysing the journalists ideals.....	22
8.2. Journalism as a profession and the respondents.....	23
8.3. The democratic tool.....	25
8.4. Universal ideals.....	26
8.5. Public service .....	28
8.5.1. Inform the public.....	28
8.5.2. Scrutinization.....	31
8.5.3. The watch dog.....	33
8.6. Objectivity.....	35
8.7. Autonomy.....	39
8.7.1. Criticising the politicians.....	43
8.7.2. Independence.....	45
8.8. Self-censorship.....	46
8.9. Questioning the universal ideals- Hanitzsch's model.....	50
8.9.1. Observe or take part .....	51

8.9.2. Power distance.....	52
8.9.3. Market orientation.....	53
8.9.4. Who is to tell what is true, anyway?.....	53
8.9.5. A fact is a fact.....	54
8.9.6. Culture or world culture.....	56
.....	56
8.9.7. Consequences- schmonsequences.....	57
9. Ethics in action .....	57
10. Summary and Conclusion.....	60
11. Method.....	64
11.1. The problem.....	64
11.2. The theories.....	64
11.3. Collecting the data.....	65
11.4. The respondents.....	65
11.5. The questions.....	66
11.6. The interviews.....	66
11.7. Writing up the essay.....	67
11.8. Trustworthiness.....	68
11.8.1. Transferability.....	68
11.8.2. Dependability.....	68
11.8.3. Confirmability.....	69
12. Reference list.....	70
12.1. Books and articles.....	70
12.2. Internet sources.....	72
13. Appendix.....	73

## 1. Introduction

“I was kidnapped by masked, armed men that took me into an unidentified building. It was not a prison or a detention centre. It was an office, and I was beaten up there by supporters from political fractions. I ended up with three broken ribs in my chest and I ended up with my arm broken in two places. My jaw was broken and my leg was broken in three places. Of course my lens was damaged.”

Ghassan Bannoura is the chief editor of the English edition of the PNN, the Palestinian New Network, a news agency located in Bethlehem, a ten minutes drive from Jerusalem. This incident happened to him while covering Palestinian officers beating up people during a protest in 2007, he says. He also states that he has been shot 28 times by Israeli soldiers with rubber bullets and gas grenades. Stuck between different political forces, with a risk of losing his life while doing his job, he still is happy that the situation in Palestine at least is better than most other Arab societies.

- We are one of the best, after Lebanon, he says and refers to the freedom of speech in the Arab world.

To work as a journalist in Palestine can be very dangerous. According to the Palestinian authority's (PA) law the people have the right to express themselves freely, but in reality it is more complicated. The journalist quoted above is stuck between multiple forces that want to set the agenda in the media and are ready to use violence to do this. The West Bank is partly controlled by the the PA and by the Israel Defence Force (IDF). Gaza is controlled by Hamas. Until 2007 both Fatah (majority in the PA) and Hamas roamed in both the West Bank and Gaza, but in 2007 when Hamas took over Gaza, freedom of expression has been limited both in Gaza and on the West Bank. One of the most sensitive issues in the media is the conflict between these two parties.

Palestine has a media landscape with variety and the Palestinian people have the ability to consume news from many different sources, but there is in fact a widespread self-censorship. Most of the time the journalists know what not to write about to stay on the safe side. Sometimes, though, some journalist steps over the line and write something people with power dislike. This line is not always very clear and in a few cases the journalist crosses the line without realizing it.

One of the journalists interviewed in this essay had just gotten out of detention when the interview was made. He was kept in the arrest for two weeks after broadcasting news about a tension between the PA president Mahmoud Abbas and one of his closest men Mohammed Dahlan. One year earlier his radio station was forced to shut down when the IDF entered the station and confiscated transmission equipment.

It seems that it can be hard to fulfil the journalistic tasks under these circumstances, but what are the journalistic tasks? What does a journalist living in this reality actually feel is the right thing for a journalist to do, when threats come from all sides? What is it that they want to achieve with their journalism, that is important enough to risk many years in prison or even their lives? If journalism should be objective and balanced, is this something to expect from journalists living under occupation or will the journalist take the side of its own people?

This essay deals with issues of journalisms deepest rooted ideals put in the most critical situations. You can't know how well the journalists in a country will stand by its ideals until put under the kind of pressure that the Palestinian journalists are dealing with every day.

## **2. Problem formulation**

In a free society no one can tell you what to say or what to think. There is no state institution that formulate the people's opinion. To be free to formulate one's own ideas is something that is highly valued in open societies. Instead of an elected staff that informs us about what is happening in our society we put our trust in self-proclaimed men and women that want us to believe that they are the ones that can give the proper information for us to make our independent decisions. They call themselves journalists and they often demand money from us to give us this information.

Even if there is not much control from the state, the journalists themselves have created rules which are supposed to be followed in order to call yourself a journalist. These rules are taught in theory in journalist schools and in practice in editorial offices. The most fundamental rules are quite the same all over the world. The journalist should be objective, balanced and inform the public. These are a few of the rules to follow if you want to be recognised as a journalist in most places on earth. What might differ is the way to interpret these rules in different cultural contexts and in different political situations.

In social science lots of studies have been made to theorize around these key concepts of journalism in the western world. Both in what should be the purpose with journalism and what the journalists themselves think of how to conduct their work and what they think the reason for journalism is. More uncommon are the studies about journalism in cultures and countries outside the western world. This is not strange; what we call journalism has been developed in the western society and then spread around the world. The ethics and values that set the standard of this universal journalism are fundamentally based upon ideals sprung out of the western society. There are a few studies made on non-western journalists, like Ramaprasad and Kelly, 2003 about Nepali journalism and Ramaprasad, 2001 about the journalism in Tanzania.

This essay concentrates on the journalists living and working in Palestine. Gaza is unfortunately left out. The situation in the area makes it impossible to even get into Gaza as a student in Media and communication due to restrictions in November and December 2010 when the interviews for this thesis was made.

The journalists in Palestine have a certain research value; the journalistic ideals in this area are not well explored as mentioned before, but it is a particularly interesting area because of the conflict with Israel and the conflict between different fractions (mainly Fatah and Hamas) inside the

Palestinian society.

The Palestine- Israel conflict is one of the longest now ongoing conflicts in the world and the Palestinian journalistic culture has developed during this conflict. This is also an under-developed area within journalism studies. Many studies have, also here, researched how the western journalists behave and what influence them when reporting from a conflict that is not their own. Many of these studies theorise about how conflicts on the other side of the world are reported in the western media. Even the theories about Peace journalism mainly have the western media in focus.

**There is a lot to learn about how journalists inside a conflict conduct their work when they belong to one of the conflicting sides.**

Media development has become one modern way to make way for democracy in countries with limited freedom of speech. Social media, for instance, has had a crucial role in the empowerment of the people in North Africa and the Middle East in the beginning of 2011. Some believe that for the revolt against the dictatorships in the Middle east to spread from Tunis to Egypt Facebook had a crucial role. Groups on the internet community arranged demonstrations and got the people out on the streets. The revolt spread all the way to Syria and Yemen. The Pan-Arabic TV-station Al Jazeera played a big role, broadcasting the revolts live all over the world and more important over the Arab world.

Development of free media will increase the chances of a democratic progress in the Arab world and since the present media development projects mainly are controlled and funded by western organisations, or at least organisations with a western perspective on journalistic issues, the risk is that the cultural context is overlooked. It is therefore important and relevant to make comparisons between the “universal” or western values and the values of the journalist working in a non-western culture. Because of this it is also relevant to study how the journalistic values are affected in times of conflict.

### **3. Question formulation**

1. Which democracy- supportive journalistic ideals exist among the Palestinian journalists?
2. Which are the main aspects that have influence on the Palestinian journalists ideals?
3. What makes the Palestinian journalists compromise with their journalistic ideals?

#### **4. Main characters of the essay**

This essay is built upon semi-structured interviews with twelve Palestinian journalists in November and December 2010. The journalists are working for different kinds of media, with different ownership and in different formate, in television, radio, on the web, in news agencies and in newspapers. They are in different ages, where the youngest is in the early twenties and the oldest around sixty. There are both women and men living and working in different parts of Palestine. None of the journalists are living in Gaza, which makes this essay mainly about journalists living and working on the West Bank. I met all of them face to face either in their offices or in other places where we could sit during the around two hours each interview took. Mainly the interviews were made in English, but in a few cases we used interpreters.

Interviewing 12 journalist working in different media in Palestine about what they think about the universal journalistic ideals, and which contradictions that exist and which make it hard for them to stick to these ideals, gives new scientific knowledge about mainly how the Palestinian journalists journalistic ideals look like in comparison to what we already knew about western journalistic ideals, but also gives us a hint about how to prepare media development projects in the changing states in the Arab world.

#### **5. Structure of the essay**

I will give the reader basic knowledge in theories about journalistic ideals and some theories about what journalism is supposed to be. The relation between journalism and democracy is something that saturates this essay and I will therefore describe theories about this relationship. It is also important that the reader understands the situation in Palestine and I will therefore briefly describe the situation for journalists in Palestine. Here you will find a little about the Palestinian media situation, where I both refer to other studies, but also to the respondents of the essay.

A main focus is the respondents and their ideals. I will describe the respondents thoughts about how they want journalism to be like and how they would like to work in an ideal world. For different reasons I have chosen to use only a few of those journalistic ideals that often are debated by scholars in journalism. One reason is that in a Master essay there is a negotiation between space and importance. I have chosen to study the ideals that I find important for the purpose of the essay.

These ideals are mainly the ones that concern the relation between journalism and democracy.

I will also explore the relation between the ideals and the reality. The essay studies the limits for the Palestinian journalists. Which ideals are problematic within the situations they work in and how do they compromise?

## **6. What is journalism supposed to be?**

### **6.1. Democracy and journalism- theories of the media**

There are many different view points from where you can look at journalism and its functions. During different times and in different parts of the world the purpose of publishing journalism differs a lot and much depending on the political leaders, the functions get adjusted.

One thing is certain, journalism and politics have a long and close relationship. In many cases journalism supports democracy, in others, journalism helps to maintain authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

Media and journalism has emerged as one of the leading institutions of opinion making during the last century until to day. Ever since the beginning of the research field of media and communication, research on the link between politics and the media has been in focus. See for instance Lazarsfelds classical “The people's choice: how the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign.” where a city in America is studied before the presidential election in 1940 between Roosevelt and Willkie. This study handles the issue of how big influence the media actually has when voters made up their minds in America at that point in time.

So how much does media influence peoples thoughts? There probably is no universal answer for this, but there is a consensus among leaders anywhere, and that is that media has a political power in the society.

### **6.2. Journalism and authoritarian/ totalitarian regimes**

The power of the media is used in different ways in different societies. Most obvious difference appears when comparing democratic and non-democratic political systems. In the first media is used for maintaining multiple opinions in the society and for holding the ones who govern accountable in what they achieve. We will return to this later.

In the non-democratic states media is controlled and used by the ones in power for controlling the opinions in the country and for maintaining the power. The media here is mostly governmental or tightly bonded to the government. Non-democratic regimes can be categorized into authoritarian and totalitarian.

Authoritarian regimes are the opposite to regimes that have individual freedom of thought and speech. These regimes are run by either one person or a small group of elites that don't let the people vote in free elections and there is no or poor possibilities to create opposition parties that can compete for the power. The other form of non-democratic regime is the totalitarian. One main difference between these two is the lack of ideology in the authoritarian regime, while the totalitarian is based on an ideology which not only permeate the government, but the whole society.

Where the authoritarian regimes are satisfied with remaining in office, the totalitarian regimes also claim the peoples private sphere and force them to embrace the ruling ideology (Gunther and Mughan, 2000, Linz, 2000).

Mughan and Gunther discuss what distinguishes different authoritarian, totalitarian and democratic media systems from one another in their "Democracy and the media" (Gunther and Mughan, 2000). They state that the characteristics of the authoritarian/ totalitarian media models are that the media is being used, by these unaccountable and self-selected regimes as puppets. The political elites are not only setting the agenda, but also structuring the information to the people in order to shape peoples opinions, attitudes and behaviour. There is a slight difference between these two types of political systems.

The authoritarian regimes, according to Linz (2000), use the media to stop people from organizing an opposition, from mobilizing against the ones in power and to maintain stability and social order while keeping the power over the people.

The totalitarian regime not only does that, but also particularly have social-revolutionary objectives. The goal is to get their ideology into the heads of the people and give no alternative way of thinking and even to create a "new person" in this revolutionary, utopian society.

In the relationship to the media and the journalists the authoritarian and the totalitarian regimes are quite similar, according to Linz. In both cases journalists are censored and repressed and the elites are trying to control the flow of information to the people. Though, Gunther and Mughan continues, there is no black and white in label democratic and non-democratic media. No totalitarian regime has gone as far as it does in Orwell's 1984, where even the vocabulary is being reduced by the government and the enemy is the same although it changes, and even in democracies such as Great Britain and Sweden, there are limits for what you may write without facing punishment for instance concerning national security.

### **6.3. Four theories of the press**

One of the most significant and quoted theories of the media is Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's Four theories of the press from 1956. Their categories are the Authoritarian with the chief purpose to support and advance the policies of the government in power and to service the state, the Libertarian with the purpose to inform, entertain and sell, but most important to discover truth and to check on the government. The Social responsibility theory is in many ways similar to the libertarian with the purpose to inform, entertain and sell but it also raises conflict to the plane of discussion. The Soviet- Totalitarian theory is about contributing to the success and continuance of the Soviet socialist system, and to the dictatorship of the party (Siebert et. al. 1956).

Democracy and journalism do not depend on each other, though there is a clear link between them. There can be democracy without journalism, like in ancient Greece and of course there can be journalism where there is no democracy. Even in the worst dictatorships there can be journalism and even independent journalism. The risk for the journalists might be high, but still it does exist in forms of online newspapers made by exiled diaspora and journalists reporting secretly from inside the country. This happens for instance in Vietnam, Burma and even Eritrea, which according to Reporters without borders was the country with the lowest press freedom in the world in 2010. See references for a selection of independent media in these countries.

### **6.4. Democracy-supportive journalism**

The link between democracy and journalism however is of the supportive kind. Democracy supports journalism with freedom of expression and journalism supports democracy in a large extent in many different ways. According to Michael Schudson journalism supports democracy in seven ways:

1. To inform the public about what is happening in the society is one of journalism's democratic roles. Journalists should provide the citizens with information so that the citizens can be able to create an opinion and thus enable them to vote on a ground of sufficient knowledge.
2. Investigating the ones in power is another way for journalists to create a more democratic society. When journalists investigate the ones with power they will make the citizens know if the powerful people, like politicians, are using the people's mandate in a proper way. They will also create a fear of getting caught among the people with power so that they will not misuse their trust.

3. The journalist should also have an analytical role. They shall explain and analyse social processes that might be difficult to understand in a way so that the citizens can understand it more easily.
4. Within the democratic role of the journalist lies also, according to Schudson, to show social empathy. The journalists should take the side of the ones without power. They should be a voice for the once that normally are not heard in the society.
5. The media should be a public forum for debate. Newspapers should not only report news, but also raise debates where the public can participate.
6. Schudson also claims that the ability to mobilize people through partisan media is a democratic function. This kind of media motivates the citizens to participate in politics.
7. The seventh role, Schudson writes, is that the media should bring forward also the ideas of minorities, and not only take the side of the majority in the society. Many of these democratic ideals of journalism are the same as what many media scholars refer to as universal journalistic ideals, at least in the Libertarian and the Social-responsibility theories. Thus the idea of having a responsibility to maintain and make the democracy stronger lies deeply rooted within the idea of what journalism is.

### **6.5. Arab press systems**

Within the framework of the four theories of the press Rugh (2004) has studied the Arab countries but could not place them in just one of the theories. They are pending between the authoritarian, social responsibility and the libertarian theories.

Most of the theories I will explain and build this essay on are taken from social responsibility theory and the libertarian theory, both common in the western world journalism and used in most democracies of today.

From a democratic point of view it is interesting to see how much the Palestinian journalists recognize functions of the democratic norms of journalism, the functions and values we find in the theory of social responsibility and the libertarian theory. More specific these theories are normative for journalists all over the world.

Rugh (2004) splits the Arab press system into four categories. The first he calls The Mobilized press, including Libya, Syria and Sudan (where Rugh uses the word “press” I prefer the word

“media” and will hence use it instead). The mobilized media is used by the government as a political mobilisation tool. Secondly there is the loyalist media existing in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar. Here we also find Palestine, according to Rugh (2004). With loyalist media he means that a great deal of the media is privately owned and there is some freedom granted to the media, but the government still has great influence on what is published. The media owners shows great loyalty to the regime and its ideology.

The third category is the Diverse media. Here we find countries like Lebanon, Iraq and Morocco. It is characterised by less authoritarianism and diversity of opinion.

The fourth category is called Transitional media systems. Algeria, Egypt and Jordan are countries that fit in here, according to Rugh. What is typical for this category is that it can't really be categorised. The system is changing but it is uncertain in what direction.

It is important to notice that these categorizations were made before the Arab uprising that started in the beginning of 2011.

## **7. The Palestinian media**

### **7.1. The media landscape**

The West Bank, where most of the interviewees in this essay work, is partly controlled by the PA and partly by the IDF. Depending on where on the West Bank you are, different authorities control the area. Before the Oslo accords in 1993 Israel had control over the area and thus the whole media landscape in Palestine.

Printed press was the only media that was allowed in the occupied territories (Hillel Nossek and Khalil Rinnawi). The Oslo accords changed that and now Palestine have a wide range of media desks, most of them are situated on the West Bank. The PA also ratified a media law that would guarantee the freedom of expression and the press freedom on the West Bank.

According to article 27 in the current Palestinian Basic Law, amended in 2003, everybody have the right to establish any kind of media. It shall also be allowed for all to work within any kind of media and censorship of any media is prohibited.

“No warning, suspension, confiscation, cancellation or restriction shall be imposed upon the media except by law, and pursuant of a judicial ruling.” Though formulations other parts of the law about national values and unity are interpreted by the authority to restrict the media anyway

(freedomhouse.org).

The situation for the journalists in on the West Bank is difficult. Interventions made by both the PA and Israel and harsh restrictions on free movement is making the journalistic work extremely hard. The checkpoints on the West Bank can make a journey that would normally take one hour instead take several hours, thus making it hard for journalists to be immediate in their reporting.

The conflict between Fatah and Hamas is also deteriorating the journalistic situation. Since 2000 and the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> intifada the media organizations economy has become weaker.

The media in the Palestinian territories have today a variety of shapes. There are TV-stations, radio, press and online-news with both local and regional news available in Arabic for the Palestinian people. Also the political orientation varies a great deal from governmental to independent. The largest Palestinian TV channel is the PBC, the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, owned by the government.

- But we are working hard to make it public service. We have a presidential decree to make it independent. I think, after one year from now it will be independent, if everything goes okey, says Emad Al-Asfar, producer on the PBC, who earlier worked as a reporter on the Voice of Palestine.

But right now they are a part of the Palestinian Authority.

The PA also owns the radio station the Voice of Palestine and the new agency WAFA.

There is also a great deal of local TV stations all over the West Bank. The most popular TV stations, though, are the Qatar based Al- Jazeera and the Dubai based Al- Arabiya, according to JMCC (Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre).

They have a high credibility among the Palestinians, and all across the Arab societies because of their independence from the governments they report about (Pintak, 2011). The biggest newspaper in Palestine is Al-Quds (the Arabic name of Jerusalem). It's independent from the PA and is Palestine's oldest newspaper. Other papers are Al- Ayyam, privately owned and Al- Hayat a-Jadidah which belongs to the PA.

There are also several news agencies; the independent news agency Ma'an, the governmental news agency WAFA, with news in Arabic, Hebrew, English and French and PNN, also an independent news agency with news in Arabic, French, German and English.

There are about 30 local radio stations on the West Bank, according to the European

Neighbourhood Journalism Network. The ones worth mentioned for understanding this essay are the governmental Voice of Palestine, the independent Radio Bethlehem 2000 and Radio Ajyal.

Hamas has a TV- station in Gaza, called Al- Aqsa. Unfortunately no media located in Gaza takes part of this study, because it is hard or even impossible for me to get into the area as a researcher. The current situation on the West Bank is that there are no Hamas supporting journalists to find. Reporters affiliated with Hamas controlled media are being persecuted and imprisoned by the PA's intelligence services (UNHCR).

## **7.2. Working conditions of the Palestinian journalists**

Historically media on the West Bank has been controlled by authorities, either Israeli or Palestinian. The situation right now is that much still is controlled by the PA. The Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), the radio station Voice of Palestine and the news agency Wafa are all governmental, but there are also lots of journalism made by media independent from the government, at least juridical.

After a long tradition of regulation of the press Palestinian journalists still feel that they might risk their safety when reporting about the situation in Palestine and Israel.

## **7.3. The respondents experiences from the field**

I would agree with Rugh categorizing Palestine as loyalist. There are lots of private media that don't freely support the government, but there are also media that are loyal to the PA.

George Canavati is the editor in chief of the non-governmental Radio Bethlehem 2000. Their station is located in Beit Sahour, neighbouring Bethlehem on the West Bank. The day before I meet him he just got out of a few days in PA detention. He is frustrated and when I ask him about about the relation between journalism and democracy on the West Bank his answer comes quickly.

- If you would speak freely you would go to jail. There isn't any democracy, so you can't use journalism in a democratic way. There are lines that you can't cross. You can't say anything about the president freely. You can't express your own feelings and your own mind.

Canavati had been arrested a few days earlier for reporting about a power struggle between president Mahmoud Abbas and one of his closest men, Mohammed Dahlan. Just two hours after this was broadcast the Palestinian intelligence came and took Canavati away for five days of

interrogation. He says he gave them all they asked for, like how he got his hands on this information and why he broadcast it, but they still kept him a few days more. According to him they wanted to teach other journalists that they can't discuss these things. There is no written rout of what you can or can't publish. Canavati expected some questioning when publishing this, but not detention. Pintak (2011, p 33) explains this as a deliberate way of the authorities in the Arab world, not to let the journalists know the red lines, leaving them in great confusion.

This was not the first time Radio Bethlehem 2000 had trouble with authorities. One and a half years earlier, in August 2009, the station was forced to shut down after the Israeli defence force had confiscated the transmitting equipment. Israel said the reason for this was that their transmission could damage navigation systems at the Ben Gurion air port in Israel.

Even though the media law in Palestine is liberal and allow freedom of expression and freedom of press to a large extent, the reality looks different. Journalists are facing threats and punishment for reporting news that disturbs the ones in power. Israel, of course, as an occupier of Palestinian territories has a great influence of the lives of the Palestinians and the Palestinian journalists.

Ghassan Banoura, quoted in the beginning of the essay, holds a video of how he gets shot by Israeli forces with a sound grenade. He says he keeps it for evidence if anyone would take the case to court in Israel, he says. He can not do it him self.

- Well, the Israeli army made it as a law. We are not allowed to prosecute the Israeli army. They are the occupiers. They control us.

Ashira Ramadan, freelance journalist, working mostly with video and radio says she was arrested by the IDF when she worked in a radio station in Israel called Ram Fm, run and funded by South Africans. It was a station where both Israeli and Palestinian journalists were working together.

- It was a wonderful experience working together, but eventually we all got arrested. We were changing the Israeli way of life, they said. That was the accusation, Ramadan says and laughs like she thinks it was a silly accusation.
- Is it illegal to change the Israeli way of life, I ask.
- People are hearing stories from both sides, both Palestinians and Israelis. We had competitions for money so people don't give a shit if they are Palestinians or Israelis, so they

were competing on the airwaves for money and talking together on the radio and competing so it was like... it was a system of diversity and people listening to each other.

- But you actually did what you were supposed to do?
- Yes. We were very objective because we had both Palestinian and Israeli journalists working together to cover the stories. Both sides [societies] were very angry, everyone was angry. The Palestinians were complaining and the Israelis complaining about our reporting so we thought we were very good since everybody was complaining.

This was not the first time for Ramadan in Israeli custody. Earlier, when working Ram Fm, she managed to meet and interview Palestinians on the Israeli “most wanted” list. She found the persons on it and interview them. Then the Israeli intelligence arrested her and interrogated her for three nights, she says.

- They couldn't arrest me for just knowing where they were. At that point I had a Israeli government press card and I was working with the South Africans. I had a little bit of protection but then they arrested me on the emergency law of Danger to the state. Basically they said that I had information that was dangerous to the state of Israel. I never went to court because there was nothing and they had no right to hold me. I never stood trial, I was just there for three days of full interrogation. They asked about the locations of these people and the reason why I have connection with them. They tried to say that I was a part of these political parties but I told them that I visited five political parties. Which one would you like to blame me for being part of? Which one do I belong to? They cannot say that I belong to five different military groups. They are very different. I told them that you could pick one, Hamas, Al-Aqsa brigade, Islamic Jihad, who do you want? You collaborate with them, they said. But they don't collaborate with each other.

Ramadan says that she has been arrested totally three times. Every time by Israeli forces, and since she has been arrested by the Israelis she believes that the Palestinians wont arrest her. Probably because an arrest by the Israelis give Palestinians credibility in the Palestinian society.

Mohammed Rifae works at an agricultural newspaper with their office in Ramallah. He tells me that he has spent four years in Israeli prison for expressing his thoughts in workshops organized by students or political parties about resistance against the Israeli occupation. His colleague helps us translate:

- First of all he's against violence, but he is with the resistance. He has some thoughts about not exactly how to defend our land, but he talks about this topic and he talks about it a lot. He wants people to be aware about the importance of how to resist the Israeli occupation and all these things.

Rifaae says the court gave him seven and a half years in prison, but he got out after four. He says he did not participate in any violence. He was in prison for four years for saying things, he tells me.

#### **7.4. The availability of the politicians**

When journalists in the western world first could start using the freedom of speech in their work, this freedom was not what it is today in the western world (Schudson). The journalists had the right to express their thoughts pretty much freely, but they didn't have access to the politicians to the extent they have today.

Schudson describes a time when journalists had to wait outside the parliaments and try to catch the politicians when they were leaving. They did not know what had been said inside, which obviously made their work much more difficult. This is the situation for the journalists in Palestine today. The access to politicians is very limited (this varies from different political groups) and they must be careful to not offend the politicians. Politicians can and do cancel the contact with journalists that ask “the wrong questions”, critical questions.

One respondent complains that it is too hard to get in touch with the politicians to get statements. You want your answers right away because you want to deliver the news fast, but the politicians slow it down. The PA are very bad in media relations, the respondent says. If there is an incident that affects the relationship between Israel and the PA, the Israelis send out a statement right away. The PA does not send out any message. So it is hard to get their view of what has happened.

Another respondent tells a story about when she interviewed the foreign minister. She gave him a couple of really tough questions and the minister asked her “what are you doing?” and he told her to stop these hard questions. She then told him that he can't tell her how to do her job. Next time she was sent to a press conference with the foreign minister his spokesman told her that she was not welcome. She called her boss who decided not to report about the press conference. The spokesman then called the boss and told him that they had to report about the press conference. The boss demanded a written apology from the spokesman to the respondent. She got the written apology and a verbal in front of her colleagues on the next press conference.

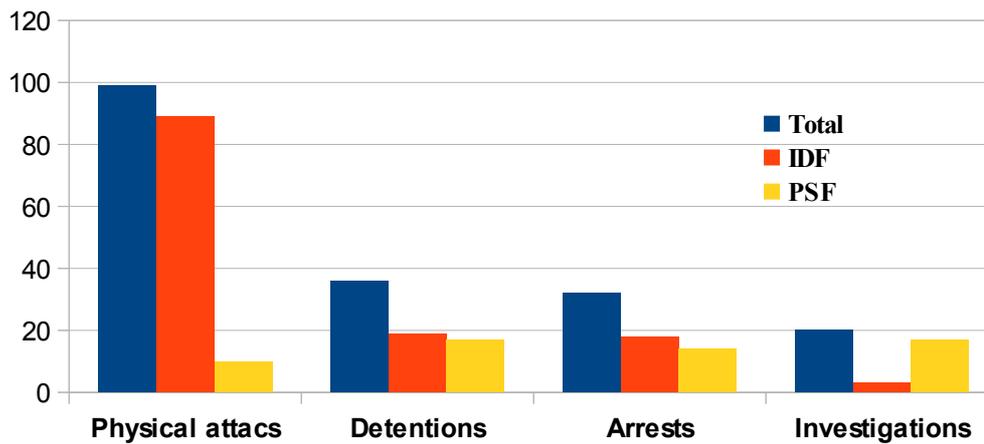
This shows that even the governmental media is not totally in control by the government. It also shows that there is a strong symbiosis between them. In this case the honour of the respondent was more important than the actual news. The media station wanted an apology, they got it and then reported what the government wanted.

It seems that the reason for at all reporting about the press conference was because the government wanted them to. Another remarkable thing is the difference between the west media's relation to the politicians compared with the West Bank. If a reporter would be treated this way in Sweden, the big news would not be the press conference. The big issue would instead be the behaviour of the politician. In Palestine this doesn't seem to make it to the headlines. Even when reporters get arrested for doing their job, it does not seem to have enough news value.

One of the respondents was detained by the PA for about five days and had just gotten out of detention when I met him. This was something other respondents I talked to knew about, but they did not report about it. Another respondent said that the journalist syndicate on the West Bank had met politicians to protest against the detention, but he didn't want to report about it in the news. The reasons for this were not clear to me but it seems he thought the complaint was enough. Another reason might be that the subject is too sensitive to report about. The risk is that those who report about it also get detentions.

## **7.5. Repression in figures**

The violations against Palestinian journalists have increased in 2010 compared to the year before, according to the Palestinian Center for development and Media Freedom's (MADA) annual report. 218 violations were reported throughout the year with an average of 18 violations every month. This is an increase of 26% compared to 2009. Greatest is the increase of reported violations committed by the IDF or Jewish settlers on the West Bank. This kind of violation was reported 139 times, an increase with 54% compared to the year before.



*Repression against Palestinian journalists*

Types of violation by category in total and divided into IDF and Palestinian Security Forces:

Most violations were reported from Hebron and second most came from Ramallah and the checkpoints Qalandia and Al-Atara.

These figures come from MADA.

These are the terms and conditions that the Palestinian journalists face in their work. The remaining part of this essay will deal with how this shapes the journalists; which their journalistic values and ideals are and how they make these values and ideals operate with the reality they live in.

## 8. The ideals

### 8.1 Analysing the journalists ideals

First I want to know how the Palestinian journalists look at them selves. I want to know if they really feel that they are journalists, and not only a providers of news and gossip. I will use theories about professionalism and journalism to be able to see if journalism actually can be called a profession in Palestine.

Then comes a part about the relation between journalism and democracy. There is also an analyse of how the respondents look at the relationship between journalism and democracy.

I will then try to understand the respondents core journalistic values. My goal is make it clear how these journalists ideals comply with relevant theories about what journalism is supposed to be.

There are many studies done on different parts of classical journalistic ideals like objectivity, fairness and balance, all of which I will present, but there is also another theoretical approach I will use.

The German Professor in Communication Thomas Hanitzsch has created a schedule for analysing journalistic values which I intend to use as a contrast to the classic image of the journalistic ideals.

## **8.2. Journalism as a profession and the respondents.**

In theories about professionalism there are a few criteria for what should be called a profession. What is significant for professions are that they have common ideals, norms and exclusive occupational knowledge which keep the professionals together and give them legitimacy (Ekström and Nohrstedt).

Occupations that are usually mentioned as classical professions are lawyers and doctors. These occupations require a certificate to become a part of and fits also well in to the rest of the requirements of what makes an occupation a profession. Journalism, though, doesn't require a certificate. Anyone can call him/herself a journalist. Can it still be called a profession?

According to Jenny Wiik (Wiik, 2010) there is a struggle for journalism to legitimize calling it a profession. It has to work hard with self-regulation and autonomy to be able to call itself a profession. Especially in times of commercialization of the media it is important to keep the professionalism in order to keep the legitimacy of the journalists. In theories about professionalism there are criteria or at least characteristics of how to detect a profession and journalism fits into them (Wiik, 2010).

- *A systematic body of knowledge.* The knowledge of how to conduct journalism is not something only journalists have knowledge about, but they are the only ones that have access to media. They, more or less have the monopoly of publishing news. This is changing more and more with internet and social media affecting the world in ways only journalistic institutions could do earlier. On this point journalism of today is weaker than only a few years back.
- *Autonomy.* This is something fundamental in journalism. The journalistic occupation should not be influenced by outsiders. It doesn't, in this interpretation, mean that every journalist must be free to decide how to conduct the job, but it should be decided inside the profession.

A profession should be free from pressure from outside the profession and in the case of journalism in a democracy is to stay autonomous from the ones in power, to be able to scrutinize them and to have the role as the watch dog, who barks when ever the ones who govern are abusing their power.

This is something that every respondent agreed upon. No one outside the news desk should have influence on what gets reported and how, all of them said. Unfortunately this is something that is not reality in Palestine today.

- *Altruism.* A profession should have a higher goal than to make money. There should be a purpose to serve the people. This is also a very important feature in the legitimization of journalism. To legitimize the autonomy of the journalistic profession there must be a gain also for the people. This is often said to be the democratic effects of journalism and this ideal must be seen as more important than economic gain for the media.

The altruism is definitely the case in Palestine. The money they make from working as a journalist is very low. One respondent says that he has to work extra to make the ends meet. As shown earlier in the essay, the struggle for the Palestinian cause is what gets most of the respondents going. Also the will to make a change in some way is what motivates some of the respondents.

- *A common culture.* These are the norms, values and symbols of the occupation, which signifies the profession. Within journalism these are the ideas of how the work should be done, the history of how the profession has emerged and different ceremonies that maintain the importance of the profession.

The respondents mostly agree also here. There are of course differences of opinion but the fundamental values come from the same origin. There is a slight difference in some definitions. What some of the respondents would say is objectivity is not at all what other respondents would agree on. There is, for instance, a difference in the way the respondents look at government media and other media. The ones not working for government owned media all say that the government's media is very biased and that it lacks the credibility. The respondents working for government media, on the other hand says that all media has influences from somewhere and that there is no independent media in Palestine.

### 8.3. The democratic tool

The justification for journalism has a close relation to democracy. According to theories about media, journalism has a responsibility to maintain and support democracy (Schudson, Gunther and Mughan). I wanted to investigate how the respondents felt about this responsibility.

First I asked them if they thought that there is a democratic reason for journalism. They answered that they thought there is or at least there should be. I interpret this as all the interviewees thought positively about the word democracy. During the following interviews I tried to understand what they meant with their thought about the relationship between democracy and journalism.

I discovered that all the interviewed journalists more or less had the same idea of what the connection between their profession and democracy is. There are two things they mentioned when I asked them about the relationship between democracy and journalism. One mentioned that democracy and journalism are interdependent. The one makes the other possible. Emad Al-Asfar, working on PBC said:

- There is no journalism if there is no democracy. There is no democracy if there is no journalism. It would be such a kind of public relation. So when we say journalism the basic reason for existence is having the democracy. Journalism must increase its democracy. [...] For the journalist himself to kill his self-censorship. When he can make that he can raise the ceiling for freedom. So I think the main objects for journalism is to high this ceiling of freedom every day in each news he writes, in each article, in each feature he makes, he can raise this ceiling of freedom.

Emad Al-Asfar says there is a lot of self-censorship among the Palestinian journalists and this is something that keeps democracy back. If journalists would stop censoring themselves, this would help democracy in Palestine.

This statement is close to what Schudson (2008) says about the relation between journalism and democracy. Journalism has an important role to play, even though he does not go as far as to say that there is no democracy without journalism, since democracy existed long before journalism existed, but journalism can support democracy in many ways. Many other journalists in the study agree with Schudson. They don't say there is an interdependency, but an interrelation. Osama Nasdam, on the Voice of Palestine said:

- It is a two way street I think, Mats. Democracy is very important for journalists because it gives you space and you can move. It enables you to express your opinion and to express your thoughts. Journalism is very important for the promotion of democracy. For spreading and disseminating democratic ideals and democratic thoughts so they are interrelated I think. Each helps the other. But if there is no democracy as a journalist you will not have that space to express yourself and to cover the story the way it is acquired.

There is journalism that supports non-democratic governments in the world, but this kind of journalism is not what he is talking about. When Osama Nasdam talks about journalism in this way, he is referring to what he thinks journalism should be.

#### **8.4. Universal ideals**

Journalism researchers often try to formulate a set of norms that defines journalism anywhere you look in different societies and cultures. Most of these studies are made in Western countries or at least by western researchers. Pintak (2011) criticize the western model for not taking subcultures into account, the realities that journalists around the world live in and get influenced by. He refers to Weavers conclusion from a survey with journalists from 21 different countries participate. It shows that the norms and values in the nation have much stronger influence on the journalists than the so called universal journalistic ideals. The largest consensus that was found was that journalists should deliver news fast, immediacy, while investigative journalism didn't have such a large consensus. Also in questions about ethics, the analytical role of journalists and objectivity there was a variety in the answers (Weaver, 2004).

Whit this in mind it is interesting to look at principles and policies from different influential journalist organisations.

International Federation of Journalists Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists:

Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist.

In pursuance of this duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right to fair comment and criticism.

The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.

The journalist shall only use fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.

The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.

The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.

The journalist shall be alert to the danger of discrimination being furthered by media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discriminations based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national and social origins.

The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following: plagiarism; malicious misinterpretation; calumny; libel; slander; unfounded accusations; acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression.

Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognise in matters of professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of any kind of interference by governments or others.

Adopted by 1954 World Congress of the IFJ. Amended by the 1986 World Congress.

These values can also be found in many declarations of codes of conduct from media houses and journalist organisations over the world in many different shapes, but basically very similar to each other. (See for instance the English National Union of Journalists code of conduct, Al-Jazeera's Code of Ethics and BBC's Editorial Guidelines)

According to Deuze there are universal codes of conducts.

These are, according to Deuze (2005):

- **Public service**, the journalists are the watchdogs and must scrutinize the ones in power.
- **Objectivity**, journalists are objective and neutral.
- **Autonomy**, journalists must be independent and free.
- **Immediacy**, journalists should be quick in their reporting.
- **Ethics**, journalists must have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy.

Deuze's list of values can be seen as a formal way of deciding how journalism should work. Large agenda setting institutions like the ones mentioned above follow them. They are, in a way theoretically universal values of journalism, but as shown in Weavers study (2004), the actual voices from the journalists in different parts of the world don't always agree. The Palestinian journalists have their unique context which shapes their way of thinking of their journalistic values and their mission. All of the ideals that Deuze claim are universal are not relevant for the purpose

of this essay. Saying that, I don't in any way claim that they are not valid, but for this thesis I have chosen to put more focus on the values of Public service, objectivity and autonomy. Immediacy is very important part of journalism, but not very important when studying the relation between journalism and democracy. Ethics is more relevant, when studying democracy, but still not as relevant as the ideals that I choose to analyse.

I will now analyse the ideals of Public service (with its subgroups Informing the public, Scrutinization and “The Watchdog”), Objectivity and Autonomy. Starting with Public service.

## **8.5. Public service**

According to Kent Asp (2007) democracy is based on two fundamental values. The sovereignty of the people and free exchange of ideas. Media has an important roll in the free exchange of ideas, and thus has an important roll in a democracy. In the exchange of ideas Asp divides the roll in two. Media should scrutinize those who govern, and inform those who are governed.

According to IFJ respect for the truth and the public's right to the truth is the first duty of the journalist. Very similar to this the respondents said in different ways that to uncover and deliver the truth is the most important thing for journalists to do. George Canavati said the most important thing with journalism is:

- To know the truth, to do [make] everything hidden transparent. Journalism should be transparent to take the truth and give it to the people.

### **8.5.1. Inform the public**

Schudson (2008) claims that informing the public is the main democratic purpose with journalism. Since the public is the ultimate authority of democracy, they must know what the ones who govern are up to. They should also know what their fellow citizens are doing. This function is educational for the people. One journalist on the non-governmental Ma'an said:

- In Palestine we are trying our best to help the public to learn about democracy and governance and to learn the rights about the public and what are their rights and other things that they should expect from the government. What are the things that they should do in order to build a good democracy and a good future of the Palestinian state. Because as I said before in a country which for a long time has not been introduced for democracy it is important to let the people you know what democracy means and what they should expect from it and what they should do. People are not experts, you know. Sometimes they think

that their government is doing something wrong and it's not wrong sometimes. We think that a policeman is violating the rights sometimes, but that's incorrect sometimes. If he is violating the rights. Because people are not used to see a policeman from the Palestinians themselves on the streets. They have to know everything. And even they like to know. In Palestine people listen to news maybe more than anywhere else in the world.

This, I believe, shows that there is a will among journalists in Palestine to not only inform, but also to educate the people in democracy and to make democracy stronger. Here is also one thing that divides the interviewees. I recognise that some of the journalists first of all work for the Palestinian cause. They want to inform the Palestinians, but also the rest of the world about the situation in the conflict between Palestine and Israel.

When I ask questions about what kind of information that they think is important to spread these journalists answer something about the Palestinian cause or the suffering of the Palestinian people. This is something that I recognise more among the journalists working on news desks close to the government. One journalist working on a local radio station said:

- Mainly about negotiations with Israel and negotiations between Fatah and Hamas. This is mainly.

She also finds it important to report about other social issues, but of all topics she finds the conflicts within the society most important.

A reporter on the Radio station Voice of Palestine said:

- It is very important to make all the people understand, especially here in Palestine. And the way the Western world understand the Palestinian cause. There is some change in what I see on the ground. I see that there is some change in the way that the Western world understand us. But before they were classifying the Palestinian fighters and the Palestinians as terrorists and terrorist fighting against that democracy called Israel, the only civilized state that is found in a wild world, the Middle East. I think that as a journalist you are aware of all the stereotypes and that is an effect of the Israeli propaganda.

For some of the interviewees the conflict with Israel was the reason for becoming a journalist. They wanted to inform the world about what is going on and inform the people about the occupation. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank is something no one who has visited the West Bank can neglect. This is something that effect all Palestinians in some way. Just travelling from one city to another will put you in waiting lines and make a normally 20 minutes drive take several hours. This is devastating for Palestinian companies and social relations. You can never be sure to reach an appointment in time if you reach it at all. The Israeli military check-points are random and can forbid Palestinians to pass them.

The settlements on the country side are constantly increasing, making the land harder for the Palestinians to cultivate and even dangerous to live in. The settlers are allowed by the IDF to carry weapons and the Palestinians are not. These are a few of the issues that the interviewees have to deal with and feel they must report about. But some, a minority of the interviewees, mention also another side of the situation that they feel is important to write about. One journalists said:

- We focus on human interest stories that you don't normally read about in the Palestinian society. About the Palestinian food, culture, everything, and this is what we are trying to provide. We don't want to be one of the providers of the kind of news that goes by the rule "where it bleeds it leads". Any story that has blood in it is the top story, no. People here are not living to die. There is a society where there is culture, there is art, there is a functioning society. In Palestine agencies are trying to reflect that. We don't only report about Palestine when there is death and destruction.

For this journalist and at least a few others of the journalists it is very important to contribute to the image of Palestine as something more than a place where terrorists dwell while planning new attacks on Israel. This is something they have not managed to do very well yet, in my eyes, at least in spreading this image to the Israeli people. Israelis are not allowed to enter the West Bank by the Israeli authorities. They can not go and see for themselves. The way to know what is going on in there is mostly through the media. Without having studied the image of the West Bank in the Israeli media I can only conclude that the average Israeli person is terrified of going into the West Bank without military protection and many strongly advice anyone talking about going there not to go because of the danger. The image of the Palestinian culture is not something that has a good connotation in the Israeli mind.

The informative roll of the media demands that the information is relevant, according to Asp (2007). By relevant he means that it brings a wide spectra of view points on the topic or information breadth, a density of information and a depth in the information that is given. The topic should be analysed through as many aspects as possible so that the public gets enough information to make up their mind in their own way.

### **8.5.2. Scrutinization**

Within the term “Public service” we also find the value of scrutinization. This is one of the fundamental functions of media. Kent Asp puts it like this:

*“News media should scrutinize those who govern so that abuses of power and other impropriety become known to the public; they should provide citizens with such information as enables them to make independent assessments of the issue at hand”.*

Through investigating and confronting wrongdoers with power the media full fill the function of scrutiny. The media must stand independent from those who they scrutinize. Independence and objectivity are necessary values for the scrutinizing media to have credibility.

The scrutinized are the ones with power. It must not only be the elected politicians, but also companies that have the ability to affect peoples lives and even journalists them selves, since also journalists have some power of the public opinion. The behaviour that should be scrutinized could be abuses of power, crimes and other improprieties that are immoral or unethical . The media should work as an alarm bell whenever misdoings are done and bring this to the public's attention (Asp, 2007, De Burgh, 2000, Glasser and Ettema, 1989, Graber 2003). The discovery of misdoings can either be made by the media itself or by the public or others monitoring the society.

Historically scrutiny is a relatively young ideal in journalism. It came with the thoughts in liberal media theory in the first decades of the twentieth century (Schudson 1978).

There is definitely a wish among the journalists to do investigative journalism, but their definitions of what should be investigated differs a bit. When I wanted examples of good investigative reporting non gave examples about investigations about politicians and the corruption that the PA has an image of. The investigative reporting they mentioned were cases of businessmen and religious leaders abusing their powers or scamming the people.

Cases mentioned in the interviews by different respondents were the story about the too old flour with forged expiration date that was sold by Palestinian merchants before the scam was discovered, and the religious leader who granted his friends and co-leaders passports for a Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, that was supposed to be given to poor Palestinians. Some of the respondents say that they should investigate the politicians, but not the president. One of the respondents says that is not needed since he does not hide anything anyway:

- In our case here minister Abbas tells everything to the world. So it is comfortable to see what he does because it's already out there. Even though he speaks English or Arabic it is translated. You feel comfortable with him.
- Should you investigate in what he does also?
- The journalists feel comfortable with it because they already know what is happening.
- How do you know if you don't investigate?
- It is a part of the governmental institute. We already know everything about him. He doesn't have the character or a different life.

This journalist also mentions that it is very important to investigate the politicians, though, she thinks she has too little experience of this to do it well. My impression is that when it comes to the president many of the journalists hesitate. They seem to think that the president is untouchable, but the rest of his staff is not. This is an impression I got from some of the journalists. Others say they want to scrutinize everything and that to dig out the truth is the most important thing for a journalist. My overall impression is that the will to produce investigative journalism is widespread on the West Bank. The journalists recognize scrutinization as an important journalistic ideal, but as described above, the definition of scrutinization varies.

The material must, according to Asp, also have good quality. First of all it must be true. Secondly it must be of relevance. What is relevant and not is a question of judgement. Scrutinizing journalism should not slander people. A judgement must be made whether the information is of public interest or not and if it is important that people get the information. Thirdly the scrutiny must be independent. Journalists often receive information from people with own interests people that might gain from someone else's negative exposure in the media. The journalists must take this into account before publishing. Only the journalists themselves must be the ones deciding if it is worth publishing or not, measuring relevance against the source of the information's goals. A fourth part of

the scrutiny is to be fair. The ones scrutinized must have a chance to meet the criticism and to defend themselves.

One interesting case where Palestinian journalists were put to the test for these four requirements was when a video of a high PA official slandering the president and trying to use his position to have sex with a woman was shown on Israeli television. I asked a few of the respondents what they thought about the material and if it was ethical to show it or report about it.

One reporter working for a governmental media said that this news in itself was not important. The news value, he said, was why this video came to the Israeli television. The tape was given to the channel by a PA security official, and the respondent says this happened because of a power struggle inside the PA. That was the most interesting thing about this, said the respondent. Reporting about the official using his power for sex was also important to report about, he said, but not as important, but a famous person having sex outside the marriage is not relevant news, the respondent says.

Another respondent, a freelancer, had the same opinion. The security official was the most interesting person in the drama, but the respondent thought that the original story about the politician using his power for sex was brought forward on the wrong grounds. The official lost his job because he tried to have sex outside his marriage. Not for misusing his power. The respondent thought that having sex outside the marriage is not relevant news.

To report about peoples private life is not common in Palestine. The private life is more sacred in Palestine than in the Western media.

### **8.5.3. The watch dog**

Another function of the scrutinizing media is the risk for the investigated of getting caught. The people in power don't use their power for their own benefit in fear of the media exposing the wrongdoings (Asp 2007, Wiik 2007, Djerf Pierre and Weibull 2001, Patterson 1998, Schudson 1978). In that way media also works preventive. Here Asp also points out that by bearing these functions it is of utmost importance that what is exposed really is wrong and that the media works effective and the abuses really are made public. It is the good judgement made by the media together with the effectiveness that marks out whether the journalism works as a good watch dog or not.

One of the respondents says he thinks the Watch dog effect is important and has an example of

when it works in Palestine. The respondent's newspaper published a story about how criminals are making money from the secret tunnels from Gaza to Egypt. The reporter who wrote the article lives in Gaza and I asked if it was safe for him after writing such an article. The respondent answered that no one would dare to hurt him because of the power of the media. The potential perpetrators were afraid of the power of the media.

The belief that media has a watchdog-effect over the politicians in Palestine is not to be found in any of the respondents answers. Some believe that there might be a little effect, but not like it is supposed to be according to their image of good journalism. Some say there is no watchdog-effect in Palestine at all. One of the journalists that works at a governmental news agency believes that there is no watchdog-effect, but really wants it to exist, and says that: “then journalism would be taken seriously”.

One respondent says that the watchdog-effect is something that exists in Europe, but not in Palestine. Though he thinks that the Palestinian media is moving towards more political influence:

- If journalists follow them [the politicians] and write about what they are doing and cover what they are doing, what they are doing must be positive for the people because at least they have salaries and they take lots of money just to represent the people. (...) I think it is very important for politicians to understand that there are somebody who follow their activities. And I hope that one day we will be like Europe for example and that all politicians will understand that their duty is to do the job and serve the people and not to make the people serve their interests.
- Is this possible in Palestine?
- I think we are moving ahead and we are making small steps and it is good for us. (...) many politicians calculate their steps before doing anything. One day we would reach these targets, we must reach it. It is important, but it is not easy. (...) In Europe for example, and Sweden who has the Swedish government and the Swedish law, you understand what you are doing, but here on the West Bank we have the Palestinian authority and the Israeli occupation and the Hamas regime for example. We have three different kinds of systems and we have the community also and the traditional things which means we are working under three or four hammers.
- But they are actually working for you too so you can scrutinize all of these.

- We are trying. We're not succeeding all the time, but we try.
- But don't you think that it has an effect when you show?
- There is an effect and many times in briefings even I can feel that the Prime Minister is taking journalists more serious than before and they understand very well that one day maybe they will write about if he is doing a mistake. I can say even the whole complicated situation for the Palestinians I can say something is moving ahead, even though we have all these challenges and risks that we have here. We cannot compare the Palestinian situation with Europe. We have millions of miles to jump. But if we are comparing the situation here which was before 10 years or if we compare the situation here with other Arab countries, many of the Arab countries, we make more progress toward more freedom than what they have in many other Arab countries.

I would say that this is a positive way of looking at the future which is to be found among many of the respondents. They are aware of how the media works in many countries that have western democracy, they know the difference between this system and their own and they both hope and believe that the Palestinian society is taking steps towards having the same effect and power in the society that media in the western democratic countries have.

## **8.6. Objectivity**

According to Schudson (2001) objectivity is what guides the journalists to distinguish between facts and values and makes the journalist go for the facts. Objective reporting has a moderate tone instead of emotional and reports news without contributing with own thoughts in the matter and without in any way taking sides. It is also of importance that the news is reported without putting any values into the formulation of the story (Schudson 2001).

It is commonly accepted that objectivity's opposite is bias, when a reporters own opinion is reflected in the news and not only the actual fact is reported. But it is also possible to distinguish more than just one kind of bias. One kind is the matter of balance. Unbalanced reporting is one-sided and the kind that does not give different actors the acknowledgement they deserve. This could for instance be if one of the candidates for a political mission gets much more air time than the other, assuming that both of the candidates have the same relevance and work as hard with the election. Another way a journalist can lack in objectivity is if the image presented is distorted or stereotyped in any way. This kind of journalism shows the fact through a filter of the journalists own preconceptions (Hackett, 1984).

Whether objectivity is possible or not is the topic of many debates. The metaphor of media as a

mirror of the real world is rejected by researchers. Altheide (1976) says that media constantly de-contextualize events and re-contextualize them into a news format. Some researchers even say that bias is a part of the language and within the words used lies values, which makes it impossible to be totally free from bias (Morley 1976).

In research about journalism objectivity is seen as one of the most fundamental parts of the free journalism (Schudson 2001, Hanitzsch 2007), though the concept is not totally clear. There is a partition between the objectivists and the subjectivists (Hanitzsch 2007). Objectivity is, according to the first, something real and possible for the journalist to achieve. The journalists can in fact describe reality as it actually is. The latter claims that every journalistic product is made out of the journalists preconceptions and the news are based on their own judgements. These standpoints, I would say, are the extremes and most journalists will fit in somewhere in between.

One issue that makes Palestine very interesting as a case of objective journalism is that it is hard to define the moderate line of objectivity. Which are the mayor different opinions that together form this moderate line?

In cases where there is just one major stand point, as in cases of foreign-policy, the bias is obvious. Herman and Chomsky concluded (1988) that the American media took sides in American foreign-policy, and that they did it because of subordination to U.S. political and economic elite.

Imagine any country getting occupied by another country and then imagine the journalists of the occupied country, because of the ideal of objectivity lifting up the occupiers agenda as much as their own country's agenda. This is the way many journalists in Palestine sees it and some are afraid of getting normalized and used to the occupation. Despite this many of the respondents to some extent also try to take into account what the Israelis say and do. Most of the journalists, though, refuse to do this objectively. Some say that they have no problem being objective. Just reporting the truth, they say, is enough to show what a disgrace the occupation is and that the Palestinians are the victims and the Israelis the perpetrators.

I got an interesting answer from Ashira Ramadan, the freelance journalist who used to work for a radio station that was broadcast to both Palestinians and Israelis. I asked her what her opinion about objectivity is and if she thinks that objectivity is something that actually exists:

- I don't think in reality there is such thing as objectivity, as in extreme objectivity. I think we should strive towards objectivity with the knowledge that when you are born and you live in

a certain society then you are already not objective. That fact that I'm born in Palestine means that I come with an ideology. If you are born black you would have that kind of life and expectations in your good hands and your reality and your surroundings. It's the same as being Palestinian, you cannot erase it. But you can be open to other opinions and that's how I see it. I put other opinions and report both sides and reporting both sides equally and fairly impartially.

- Have you ever felt in some special occasion that you could not be objective?
- It's not that I cannot be objective. Saying that I cannot be objective about it is to take the position to be biased. I never took the decision to be biased. But it can happen.

What this journalist expresses is in line of what Morley says above about everyone being biased. It is not something one chooses to be, but growing up in certain surroundings will probably have influence on a person's perceptions. I asked another respondent, Emad Al-Asfar who used to work at a governmental media station, if he used to report objectively when it came to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He said:

- I think you have to be objective. But sometimes you cannot. Of course if you have to be objective you will lose your viewers or audience. You will lose your popularity sometimes and sometimes they will say something making you so angry that you will interrupt him and say the truth. You cannot let him just speak because he will tell lies.
- Is this really important? Don't you think that your readers can tell this by themselves? That they know that this is a lie? If you make a report and interview an Israeli politician and would they say something that for you is obviously not true, according to the way you see this topic, is it important that you actually write that it's not true?
- But it's our duty also to put these facts instead of his story. If he says that they have killed this terrorist you have to say that he is 14 years old. You have to say that.

The respondent mentions here that sometimes being objective would possibly make you lose your credibility and your readers. Within the concept of objectivity lies not only reporting the conflicting sides and report what they say. There is also a tension between the balance and the distortion. Should the reporter only report what the different sides claim to be the truth or should there be an analysis from the reporter?

In the journalistic work there is always a point where selection must be made. It is impossible to

publish everything that has been said. Therefore it is important that the journalist have the ability to interpret, make selections and analyse the situation. I asked one respondent who works for an independent news agency if it is hard to stay objective working for Palestinian media. He said:

- Definitely this is very hard especially on a personal level. I have lost members of the family by Israeli fire. It is difficult for me when I'm reporting about somebody killed by the Israeli army. That's why I always give my story to a different person to read before I print it or send it out so it stays fair and objective.

The above quoted respondent also says this about objectivity:

- It is your job as journalists stay objective. Again I say we are not animals, we are not robots, we are humans, we feel and get angry and frustrated. We have our own political points of view as journalists. I am very critical of my society and the Israeli army. For example on a personal level, I am against violent resistance. I am morally against it because I think it is not effective in this time of history. Maybe it used to be in the past but now it's not. That's my own idea and my own perspective as an individual and I don't reflect that in my reports.

Like the quoted person above many of the respondents have experience of themselves or their relatives in physical confrontations with the IDF. This probably makes it even more difficult to keep track of what is objective journalism for them. Another opinion about how to approach the conflict between Palestine and Israel being a Palestinian journalist is that you should not even try to be objective in this case. In other cases objectivity is a good ideal, but when it comes to the conflict there should not be objective reporting says the respondent George Canavati:

- When you say that Israeli forces came into Bethlehem and killed four people you cannot take it from the Israeli point of view. You cannot be objective in that news. So when the Israelis killed a person because he is a thief or because he stole a car, you cannot say that the Israeli forces killed him because he's a thief. You have to say that they killed him only. You have to take the Palestinian side.
- You don't say the reason for the killing?
- No because most of the Israelis kill without reason. If a Palestinian kills another Palestinian we say why. We take our side so we cannot be that much objective.

- And you don't want to be objective here?
- You can't be. First of all the Israeli occupation. They took our land, they killed our parents, they killed millions of people so you cannot be objective. You cannot say that a Palestinian person cause anything beside the occupation. If your cousin killed your brother would you be friends with your cousin? You have to take your cousin as an enemy.

Canavati would feel like a traitor against Palestine if he even would try to be objective in these cases. He also says that he is very critical towards the politicians of Palestine, especially since he was detained and questioned by them for reporting about sensitive issues within the PA. Using the same metaphor as above he says that it does not matter how badly your brother treats you. You will always stand up for him when he needs you. When there is a conflict between the PA and Israel he will always take the PA's side.

- You cannot talk to Israel and occupied Palestinian as an equal matter. We are being occupied. There isn't a fight, there isn't a war between two people and they are fighting over country. No. They came and they fight us and they kill us. They killed our parents they took our land.
- So you don't want information from the Israelis?
- Yes, we want it. For sure.
- To get this information do you talk the same way [to the Israelis] as you do to the Palestinian politicians?
- For sure no because the relation between us and the Palestinians is friendship. It's not like the relation with the Jews.

There are thus different opinions amongst the Palestinian journalists about the ideal of objectivity. All hold the ideal high and see it as a fundamental part of journalism, but in some cases the approach to the occupation is more important.

## **8.7. Autonomy**

The free press is one of the main values of journalism. A wide spread opinion is that the freedom of the press plays a great roll in the democratic society. In Palestine there are existing laws that says that media should be free, but as mentioned earlier, the Palestinian journalists might face punishment after writing a critical text and therefore self-censorship has increased.

In studies about Western media autonomy is often debated from a commercial point of view. The greatest risk is that media owners and economic power will affect what will end up in the newspapers. McQuail (2010) says that most owners are not interested in the editorial part. They run the company and make structural decisions and leave the questions of publication to the journalists. Though, he continues, commercial media has to do profits to stay alive. Bad results and less money will result in less employees and lacking quality.

According to McQuail commercial media also has interests in the capitalist system and they therefore more often support conservative political parties, at least in USA and some European countries. The public owned media does not have the problems as the commercial ones have. They instead have to follow a certain editorial line (albeit a neutral line). For the media to get the largest opportunity to be independent, according to liberal ideals would be if the media institutions would be many, small and competing with each other.

Tony Harcup (2007) says that “if the downside of press freedom is that people are free to produce material that treats their audience as stupid- and encourages them to be so- the upside is that the freedom of the press can facilitate the participation by citizens rational discussion on public affairs of the day”.

Media who cherish independence has much in common with the partisan press (Schudson). The two types of press can both strive for relevance, fairness and truthful reporting, but the partisan press is not objective since it is one parts point of view. The respondents don't appreciate partisan media. Almost all of them answer that they don't consider partisan media as journalism. This answer from one of the respondents pretty much speaks for most of the respondents:

- Any party who wants to have his own media it's his right, but this media is monopolized to serve points of views for this party. I cannot say that this kind of media is forbidden, but at the same time I don't think that this is media, this is propaganda. This is not journalism. You have to separate between media journalism press and propaganda. This kind of media is propaganda. They have political agenda that they want to serve. They are serving and delivering news from one point of view. Of course it's a big question of credibility. Their credibility will be very low because who would trust this kind of media? Only the people that believe in this political line of the party.

Even those working for media owned by the government don't consider partisan media as journalism, but then again they don't consider their media to be partisan. If they would work for a certain party like Fatah or even for PLO, they believe that would be partisan. The government, though, is not one party, but many and therefore is not governmental media the same as partisan media. I interpret this as they see this way of ownership a kind of Public broadcasting without the regulated independence that western societies are used to, like the BBC or the Swedish Radio. One of the respondents from a governmentally owned media said:

- You are working as a journalist and are not affiliated to a certain party so you should cover the stories objectively, and the way it is issued by a the parties or the politicians otherwise you would not be objective, you would be working for a certain parties.
- What do you think about partisan media?
- It is destructive. It works for a certain party and a certain ideology so it is completely biased. He tries to enforce the ideas of that or that party on the public and even if it is it wrong and if it is not in the interest of the public, it is in the interest of a certain groups for example that the leaders of this party, this must be on the expense of the Palestinian public so you sacrifice the majority of the society for a certain group that you benefit. That is not journalism, this is politics.
- Couldn't they [the partisan media] also investigate in the opposition?
- When you have a website working for Fatah it has to convince the people that Fatah is right. Same with Hamas media. Without showing the flaws of Fatah or the flaws of Hamas. Here is the absence of objectivity and the absence of logic over journalism so that is why I don't think that they investigate and it is like bigotry. They just try to enforce the ideology they have on other people. That's why they don't succeed.

Since the governmental media works closer to Fatah than to Hamas I ask the respondent if he reports about the two parties in the same way.

- I think this is a very difficult question, Mats. You know, it is very difficult and very complicated environments and you have to be creative in order to have balance while covering the story, not to be a partisan journalists. To be credible journalists. We face difficulties.

- What is the difficulty?
- The difficulty, what Hamas government comments in the Gaza strip, when you cover it some people, especially here on the West Bank, when they are far away from Gaza, and the way the people of Gaza view us and the way we cover the story is different from the way people here on the West Bank see it. When we cover the actions and the things that Gaza government, makes the people here feel that we are biased to the PLO and they think that we are trying to exaggerates what is happening to Gaza. But that is because they are far away from Gaza of course and this is one of the problems we face as journalists. But we try of course to support our stories with pieces of evidence, to show and prove what we are doing is not partisan, that this is the reality on the ground.

He says that they ask critical questions to both sides and the important thing is that there should not be two governments, but one that controls both the West Bank and the Gaza strip. If there is bias favouring the Fatah government in the governmental media is not up to this essay to decide, but the conflict situation between Palestine's two biggest parties is creating a more difficult situation for the governmental media than for the independent media in Palestine to keep the journalistic ideal of objectivity and also to some extent to autonomy.

Much journalism in Palestine as in the rest of the world depends much on politicians and their statements. Access to the politicians is important for the journalists, but the respondents say it is important not to be too good friends with the politicians. One respondent says that many journalists on the West Bank act like politicians. They are members of a party and you can tell by the way they write that they support this party. I ask his opinion in this matter:

- I think the audience, the readers, the viewers, the public, are more clever than the journalists. They know everything. They know that the journalists want to put the facts that way or that way and that they want to hide something or that they want to make something beautiful when it is ugly. They know this. Because here in Palestine I think that the Palestinians are experts in media. Because they do not watch one or two or three TV stations or news agencies. They can get news from more than 45 sources and they can see. “Why he did do that? Why talk with that person? Why hide that fact?” So there are experts here.

According to one of the respondents, working for an independent news agency, the relationship between journalists and politicians should be like hunter and prey:

- We shouldn't be friends with them like having a laugh with them or having a drink with them somewhere. We shouldn't have any ties to them. When they see us they should say "oh shit". That's how it should be. Because we are the voices of the people. We are the news providers for the people and we should be hunting them down and calling them up and mess with their lives, with the lives of their communities. We should be investigating them and putting them under the microscope every single day. We shouldn't be friends with them. That is why political media doesn't work. Like a TV-station that belongs to a political fraction like al Manaar- tv for Hezbollah. That doesn't work. They only tell us what the political group want to state. It is basically the PR of that political fraction, like Fox news in the US. It's the representative of the right wing Christian Zionists.

There are also opinions that there should be a kind of semi-friendship with the politicians. The reason for this is to gain access to information easier.

None of the respondents thought that anyone outside the journalistic part of the media should have the right to decide or influence what should be reported in the news.

### **8.7.1. Criticising the politicians**

The respondents all agree that a journalist should criticise the politicians. However in reality there are obstacles that limit the ideals in reality.

There are different thoughts among the respondents about who they can or can't criticise and in what way. One of the respondents, working for a governmental media station, said that the news editor wouldn't allow critics against the president.

When I ask her about balance in the news she says it is one of the most important things for a democratic journalist to think about, but also that you have to be smart so you don't lose your job. The journalists have their space, but they also have their limits.

- Sometimes as a journalist you need to stick to the law of your institute because you would not work against your institute. You have this space and you don't go further.
- Are there limits where you work?
- My limit is not to talk about the president. That's the red line.
- If he makes an important announcement, you can't tell this?

- You can tell, but you are a governmental agency so you don't criticise. You never criticise your president because he is the head of the institute, so basically you don't criticise him.
- You have a prime minister too.
- For the prime minister we can say what we want. [...] The institute where I work, the majority is from Fatah. They don't criticise their idol. You just can't because you are here to defend him and sometimes you need to give him excuses.

The respondent thinks that this is not an ideal situation and does not like to conduct the job this way, but if she didn't she would lose her job, she says. She also says that in the conflict between Fatah and Hamas she is supposed to support Fatah. She has a clear image of objectivity and this is not objectivity to her, but she also says that in reality, as a journalist in Palestine you also have to be a politician. When she writes stories, she says, sometimes her editor tells her that she has to put more emotions into the stories. She has to show that she agrees with the government in their decisions. She says she does not do this anyway so the editor often change her stories and re-write them so it shows that the media institute agrees with and supports the governments decisions. If they would suddenly write critical stories against the government, the politicians would call them and wonder what is happening and tell them to stop.

One respondent says there was more accountability during the Arafat-era than today. Back then the PA were more corrupt than it is today, she says, but the media was also more free to criticise them and write about the corruption.

- Where was the media's role during the Hamas and the fighting, the internal fighting and reporting about why it happened, or where was the media's role when Yassir Arafat was killed? Where was the accountability to the Palestinian authority and what they have done and how did this happen? There were no questions asked and there was no one being accountable.
- Why do you think this happened?
- Because there was a move to limit the freedom of journalism. I felt it personally with the coup and what happened in Gaza. Then I really felt that we have Palestinian censorship, that we have a strong Palestinian media censorship. A lot of it has become because we have Israeli censorship on one side and Palestinian censorship on one side. The journalist feels it all and it becomes self-censorship which is the worst kind of censorship. "I'm not under the

story because I might get in trouble with these people” and you have people to always worry about when you're publishing and writing.

- So this is what's happening right now, self-censorship?
- Yes.

Although some things have changed for the better in Palestine, this respondent has decided to stop writing political journalism about interior affairs, and instead focuses on international reporting to get away from the censorship.

Another respondent tells about a freelancer who wrote an investigating story about the prisoners in Fatah-jails and Hamas-jails. She tried to sell the story, but no newspaper wanted it. There was nothing wrong with the quality. The piece won an award in Lebanon for best investigative report, but the topic was too sensitive.

### **8.7.2. Independence**

One respondent working at a local radio station in Ramallah says that she, or her colleagues are the ones who decide what to report about and no politician can just call the station and demand to talk on the radio:

- You cannot just call me and tell me that you have this issue that you want to talk about. I decide that. That is what is good with this radio station. The reporters themselves decide what to talk about and what not to talk about. In this radio station and I believe in most local radio stations we are not biased. I don't say anything about Fatah, something bad about Fatah or something bad about Hamas. We're in between and we don't interfere.
- But sometimes you might report something and that fact is actually bad for Fatah, or for Hamas.
- I would talk to someone in Fatah or in Hamas and make him response to that issue. I will report it after I talked to him and have a sound bite.
- But still if he says that you should not report about this, that this is not good for Palestine?
- I decide that.

Most of the Palestinian news media seem to have that much independence that they don't have to report about issues that the politicians tell them to report about. The politicians don't have a roll of

editors in that way that they can decide what topic that should be reported about. Though they do have a power of setting the limits of what should not be reported about.

## **8.8. Self-censorship**

There is a difference between the ideals and journalism in practice, Nossek and Rinnawi (2003) argue. They claim that the censorship in developing countries are applied in three different ways. Either through laws and regulations, by silent agreement between the state and the media owners and through self-censoring. To describe where Palestine should end up on the lists of categories Jamal (2001) describes the situation on the West Bank as a self-censoring community. The media laws of Palestine are open for interpretation and the journalists critical of the Palestinian authorities risk facing punishment and media offices have been forced to shut down after critical reports. This has led to a self-censoring media environment (Jamal 2001).

The respondent Ashira Ramadan tells a story about how she got to learn the limits of freedom of expression on the West Bank. It was a few months after the Hamas takeover in Gaza in 2007 and she and her colleagues wanted to ask Fatah politicians questions about the coup and the aftermath when they suddenly were stopped by the PA.

- They sent a very strong message actually. I don't want to go into the details but it was that big. They made a meeting for a lot of journalists and they gave us a very strong message on don't touch. Basically the message they sent us ” we are with democracy and very supportive of our journalists, but at the end of the day it is the gun. We are doing what is good for you and we are doing what is good for the Palestinians and for Fatah and for the society. Their [Hamas] existence here is not good for us. For all of you so we are protecting you.” I went home and I was like, cancelling a few stories tomorrow. Not too smart to write about that. Because it was a very strong message.
- So before this you thought that you could write whatever?
- Yes, I was already writing and I went and interviewed and I questioned lots and I was trying to get an interview with Dahlan [Muhammed Dahlan, Palestinian politician] to drill him about a few things, but after that I was, I might end up, you know, I have already been detained by the Israelis. That I find acceptable, because they are the occupiers, but it is really difficult for me to see it on the other side. It was shocking for me because I always thought that we had a democratic system and freedom of speech until I really touched on something that I shouldn't. So we really don't have that.

The PA told the journalists that they should not write about the ban on Hamas on the West Bank. They told the journalists that this was for their own good.

I ask Ramadan if she would go to prison on the West Bank if she would report about what she was told not to report. She answered that it is either that or she could be hit by a car on the street.

Many journalists follow these recommendations or threats from the authority. Either because they are afraid for their own safety or because they believe the people can not handle some information.

One respondent, working for a governmental news media first told me that he had never avoided publishing any news because of the damage it might make. I then asked about the recent arrest of the other respondent in the essay. He did not report about this he said, but he went with the journalists syndicate to complain to the politicians. He did not write about this because this had to do with a sensitive question about cracks in the top sphere of the ruling party.

- It is not in the interest of any Palestinian to show or to see that there is a split among the Palestinian officials or the Palestinian leaders, because the Palestinian situation now is very precarious and it's very volatile. I don't think that's we should start any more problems at this special points of history.
- Do you feel that you have this responsibility to look after the politicians? I mean it was the politicians decision to actually arrest this journalists. They should know the consequences. If they arrest a journalists, other journalists will write about it. And that might look very bad for the politicians. In your case you take this responsibility for the politicians, in saying that's what it's not good for them.
- I think that the responsibility for the public and for the Palestinians in general and at the same time for the journalist himself who was arrested, because as his colleagues, as Palestinian journalists, we go to the Ministry of Interior and to all the parts concerned and exert as much pressure as possible until they free him. So they understand the story. That the arrest of any journalist making a big fuss for them. [...] But I agree with you. If we were in Sweden or any European country the situation would be different. I'm not arguing that this duration is ideal. Now we are here in the Middle East and under occupation so you have a lot of conflicting factors, so if you don't act cautiously and carefully much trouble would emerge. [...] From the beginning, as a journalist I assess what is in the favour and what is not in the favour of the Palestinian society. Here today people are facing the problems of the settlements and the settlers attacks and the split between Gaza and the West Bank and all that's talk on the internal division. To also show them that there is a split between the Palestinian leaders I think it is too much.

This opinion is the most means-oriented (the idea of taking the consequences into consideration before publishing) that I came across during the interviews. I believe it shows that there sometimes is a difference between what is said to be the ideals and what actually are the ideals. In this case there might also be an influence from the structures of the organisation where the respondent works, but I believe there is a belief among the respondents that certain values sound more professional to recognize than others.

In this case the outcome-oriented (the idea of not taking the consequences into consideration before publishing) values sound better in theory than they are to follow in reality. I believe that the respondent wants to be outcome-oriented but in some cases it does not feel right. In the end the Palestinian peoples cause is the most important thing and the respondent follows his thoughts about how to support the cause.

Most of the respondents, though, say that when they avoid publishing a story it is because of the dangers they might face if they do.

Walid Omari, editor in Chief at Al-Jazeera Arabic in Palestine gives witness of having people from Fatah coming to his station and burn the media stations cars and threaten and attack his colleagues and even open fire against the media's building. Omari and his colleagues also has been death threatened by Hamas and during the Lebanon war in 2006 he and many of his colleagues were detained by the IDF blamed for supporting Hezbollah. According to him he and his station faces threats from all directions because of their objective work. He says that what ever they report about at least one of the sides will think that his media is biased, since the news does not favour them. This creates a situation of self-censorship. Omari is in charge of the Al-Jazeera Arabic's offices on the West Bank, Jerusalem and in Gaza. He has a responsibility not only for himself but also for his colleagues and staff.

- When I start thinking about publishing news that's the first step towards self-censorship. Everyone is involved in it. Don't believe anyone who tells you that he doesn't have self-censorship. But at least my life and the life of my family and the life and safety of my colleagues is important for me. I am responsible for that. [...] Every office is acting under different kinds of authorities and laws. Here we are acting under the Palestinian authority and Fatah and the Israeli occupation at the same time. In Jerusalem we are acting under the Israeli authorities and laws and in Gaza we are acting under the authority there which is controlled by Hamas. It is an amazing thing that you have to try to coordinate your steps

between these three different kinds of systems. It's not only a question of what you're trying to publish. It is a system of taxes, a system of laws, systems of security, system of stereotypes, system of everything. Everything is something else.

Another respondent is very critical to the way the journalists have covered the Fatah-Hamas-conflict. She says that suddenly after the coup in Gaza all the Hamas members suddenly disappeared from the West Bank.

- Has Fatah taken responsibility for what it is doing to Hamas and its members on the West Bank? Torture, the prison system and these issues, have they ever taken accountability? Where have all the Hamas people disappeared? Poof! They disappeared. Where have they gone? It is like democracy on one side with Fatah being democratic to its people by taking out another party completely. That is not democracy, but they are saying it is a democracy.”

The respondent says that there are only publications to find about this in blogs on the internet. No newspaper dares to write about it. The ones who did had their journalists detained and beaten up by Fatah. This of course send signals to other journalists telling them that they should stay away from the subject. This respondent has decided to get away from these problems by focusing her work on issues concerning Palestine- Israel relations. She does not report about internal affairs inside the West Bank. In that way she feels that she can keep her dignity as a journalists and freely report about anything she wants and still don't risk punishment from Fatah. She says she was about to write a story about how the PA lost Gaza, but she does not dare to. She is afraid that she will get murdered. Her family tells her not to write about it too.

I asked George Canavati, the respondent that had just gotten out of jail when I met him, if there is self-censorship on the West Bank:

- Yes, they are afraid.
- Afraid of what happened to you?
- Yes, exactly.
- Does everyone know what not to write about?
- There isn't any rule, but you will get in trouble. Most journalists told me that I'm crazy when I brought that issue, but this is normal news. It's not a big deal.
- Did you know what was about to happen when you broadcast this?

- No, I did not expect that we were this much retarded.
- Did you expect something?
- I expected a few questions, but not this much.
- So next time you are going to do the same thing?
- I seek the truth.
- Do you think there is a difference between you and other journalists?
- Yes. They are afraid.
- Are there any options for this? Can it be changed in any way?
- Maybe by changing the people that are in charge.

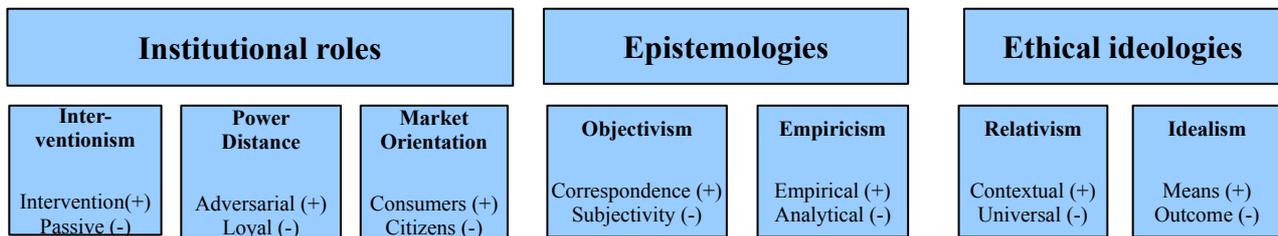
As mentioned in the intro of this essay one of the respondents has been shoot 28 times while working as a journalist, he says. Another respondent was imprisoned by Israel for four years for expressing his opinion in work shops with other students. Most of the respondents have had relatives killed in the conflict. This inspires many of them, but it demands mental strength to keep on following their journalistic ideals.

### **8.9. Questioning the universal ideals- Hanitzsch's model**

The concept of universal ideals is problematized in Hanitzsch's Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Towards a Universal Theory (2007). He recognize the values that Deuze writes about (Public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics), but at the same time claim that these values are actually used very differently around the globe.

He argues that even though concepts of objectivity, impartiality and accuracy in most studies are taken for granted as universal ideals, there are other forms of journalism that challenge these ideas. Concepts like Peace journalism, development journalism and public or civic journalism are not always compatible with these ideas, he argues and raises the question: "Is there any class of "cosmopolite" journalists who share a common occupational ideology and understanding of journalism?" He argues that to be able to assess universal journalism culture one have to have counterparts within or outside the culture.

He therefore develops ideal types. His paper suggests three constituents: institutional roles, epistemologies and ethical ideologies. There he divides into sub- constituents that all have inherent opposite ideal types.



### 8.9.1. Observe or take part

The institutional roles have to do with the journalism's role in the society. Here it is decided whether the journalism plays a neutral or participatory role. Within the scale of *interventionism* it should be measured how involved the journalist is in what is reported about. The scale goes from *Intervention*, where the journalist is highly motivated by a cause and could be called a missionary or a participant. The journalist act for change in the society. This is often seen as the counterpart of the journalism of western societies where the ideals of the *passive* journalist is held high, according to Hanitzsch. This means that the journalist is acting like an observer, a passive disseminator of news. This view of the profession is common in media science and among western journalists, but Hanitzsch doesn't want to call it universal. In China and in Russia, he claims, partisan media is still common.

Every individual of the respondents are unique, though they have similarities and differences. Most of them are more on the interventionist side than being of the passive kind. How the respondent defines his or her journalistic work depends much on the topic they are dealing with. The more the issue is about the conflict between Palestine and Israel the more the respondents become interventionists. Some even became journalists to support the Palestinian cause in the conflict with Israel.

One of the respondents, a freelancer, said that she started to think of becoming a journalist when she was sixteen years old and got beaten up by Israeli soldiers, while journalists were standing around taking photos of the beating. She wondered why they didn't try to pull her away and thought that she wanted to become a journalist that doesn't just observe but also makes a difference. She wants to change the situation rather than observe the situation, she says. Also for a respondent who used to work for a governmental media thinks that journalism should work for change in the society. He

says that if you have a good and efficient newspaper or radio you can create roots in the society and you can reform the society. The role of the journalist is to say what is good and bad in the society.

A third respondent says the reason for him to become a journalist was because he got fed up with allowing the Israelis to tell their side of the stories alone. He wanted to use his language skills to reach out to other countries to tell about the Palestinian society. On the other hand he prefers the non-activist kind of media, and does not see himself as an activist. His ideals are more towards the passive kind, that Hanitzsch writes about. He sees his job as to report about what is happening rather than to make things happen.

A respondent working at a local radio station in Ramallah says the occupation is the reason that she became a journalist. She wants to deliver the message that they are under occupation, she says. Another respondent says he wants to cultivate the culture of peace by working as a journalist, but as he tries people come up to him on the street and tell him that they don't understand what he means. They don't see any peace.

### **8.9.2. Power distance**

Hanitzsch also talks about power distance. The two opposite approaches are the adversarial and the loyal journalist. The adversarial is the kind of journalist that place him/herself in opposition to the ones in power. This is the case of the watchdogs and the journalists that see their profession as one that must criticise the power. On the other end of the scale is the loyal media. The loyal journalist defends the authorities and freely engage in self-censorship. A more common and less extreme kind of loyal journalism is the kind that doesn't question the agenda setting of the authorities. This kind of journalists report what is told by the ones in power without question if it is trustworthy or credible.

The respondents all answered pretty much the same way when I asked about their affiliations to political parties. They don't want to serve the politicians. They want their work as journalists to serve the people is what they answer when I ask about the relationship to the authorities, no matter if they work for governmental news media or independent media.

The kind of relationship the respondents want to have to the politicians differs a little bit as discussed above under the title “Autonomy”.

The ideals of the journalists are not always the same as the reality and even though self-censorship is widespread in Palestine it is not always because the journalists are loyal. Many are afraid of what might happen if they don't follow the line of self-censorship. Therefore it is hard to put the respondents into a scale from adversarial to loyal. With a few exceptions most respondents think that they should support the PA more than Israel when it comes to the conflict between Palestine and Israel, but none says they should always support the PA or the ones in power no matter what.

### **8.9.3. Market orientation**

The third sub-constituents in the institutional roles is the *market orientation*. On one side we have journalism that sees the reader as consumers and on the opposite side they are seen as citizens. Journalism that sees the reader mainly as a consumer has a focus on people's everyday life, their fears, aspirations and emotional experiences. This type of journalism takes place mostly in commercial media and has a focus on the individual more than the large mass. The journalism with the citizen in focus, on the other hand cares more about their function as informers of the citizenry and to encourage political participation.

On the West Bank the commercial media doesn't have the agenda setting power as in the western world. Most media are either governmental or funded by donors in some form. There are commercial newspapers, but not to the same extent as in the western countries. It is obvious to me that the respondents first of all are driven by a responsibility towards the citizens. They want to contribute in some way to give information to the Palestinian people or the world around about the situation on the West Bank. As I mentioned above this information can come from an urge for change and to make opinion or it could come from what Hanitzsch calls a passive approach. Either way, the respondents approach towards the market orientation of journalism is clearly more citizens orientation than consumer orientation.

### **8.9.4. Who is to tell what is true, anyway?**

Next constituent is the *epistemologies*. This is divided into two sub-constituents. *Objectivism* is measured from one extreme called *Correspondents*, which means that journalism can be totally objective and give the "truth" without any influence from the journalist. Journalism can, according to correspondence theory mirror the reality, totally unbiased. The opposite to correspondence is *subjectivity* which says that there is no "pure" reality. All that gets reported is filtered through a person and lots of information gets left out and what is reported can be nothing but biased. The question of objectivity divides the respondents.

Some believe that true objectivity exists and some question the word objectivity. The way the respondents argue about objectivity you can read more thoroughly about under this essays title “Objectivity”. There I show that there are different ways of looking at objectivity. Many think that objectivity is a good value to strive for, but few believe that it is possible to be 100% objective and most of them think that it is sometimes difficult to be objective when it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I would also say that this part of the model has lots in common with the next sub-constituent:

#### **8.9.5. A fact is a fact**

The second sub-constituents to epistemologies is *empiricism* with the two ideal types *empirical* and *analytical*. It deals with how the journalist look at knowledge. The extreme empirical journalist sees scientific facts, observations, measurement and experiences as the only way to reach the truth. There should be no opinions or putting different facts together to make an analyse. They want the fact to speak for it self.

The other extreme is the analytical ideal type. This journalist doesn't see any real truth in observations, but only in the analyse of the observation and the experiences. The analytical journalists thoughts about deciding on what is true is their ability to persuade the readers, according to Hanitzsch. These two ideal types are very uncommon in real life. Most common is to find journalists somewhere in between. Also to judge what is an objective analyse and what is not is of course impossible.

I realized during the interviews that many of the respondents had the same way of looking at putting their own opinion or bias into the news they write. For them it is obvious that it is good to put their own opinion into analytical articles. When they write news, though, there should only be observations that lead to the truth. Here appears a dilemma concerning objectivity and the nature of knowledge. One of the respondents puts it this way:

- How you can isolate it from yourself? It's not easy, but it's possible and is also due to the issue that you are dealing with. If you are dealing with something concerning the Israeli occupation it's not easy. Because the whole story if you take small pieces maybe you will find the occupation is doing well, but the hole story is this occupation. If there is an Israeli patrol coming from here and I see a Palestinian kids taking a stone and throw at them you can write in your news that an Israeli army shoots a person who threw a stone and their [the

soldiers] lives were ill treated, but it is not the only fact that you should say. The background for the whole story is what the Israeli patrols are doing inside a Palestinian city. That's the story. That's the background that he needed for such a story. That's the story of the occupation.

By just doing observations of separate situations would be, according to the respondent, to be unjust to what is happening. Everything happens for a reason and to not put the background into account would not be good journalism. In the case of the Palestinian journalists that I interviewed the background is Palestinian, in the same way that Israeli journalists background is Israeli. This is where difference appears.

Comparing two stories reporting about the same situation will often look very different in Palestinian and Israeli media, though both contain totally true information. So whether or not the journalists only think that analyse is for analytical articles only, just by choosing the background information for any event will force the journalists to be analytical in everything they write. One of the respondents does not agree. He says it is possible to put all facts in one news story by using interactive links on the internet. I ask if there is no limit for the information in the news:

- Exactly, this is just lots of bollocks. When you tell the 400 words article. That's a lot of shit. The articles they wrote in the 1930s and 1940s and 1950s were five or six pages long. There were more than 3000 words per article. They were in-depth and they told people what is happening. They didn't select what is happening. Now it's more modern and you can utilize media. To save time if you are lazy journalist and don't want to write. Go to the UN and they have all the peace deals and laws on their website. Put a link to it and let people read it. And people will greet you provide the information, they will read, they are not stupid. Again, we have to be respectful as journalists to our own audience and tell them the whole story. [...]For God's sake if you go to CNN and read a story you can get the whole story from the first two lines and then know what to think about it in the second two lines. That is not good journalism, I'm sorry . That's called lots of bollocks.

I believe the respondents intentions to be fully unbiased in their news reporting are honest. Some have a feeling that their background might make it impossible for them to be unbiased and some believe that the background they deliver is totally enough for the media consumers to make up their minds.

### 8.9.6. Culture or world culture

The last constituent is the *ethical ideologies* with its sub-constituents *relativism* and *idealism*. Relativism has the two ideal types *contextual* and *universal*. The contextual based ideal type is a way of describing all different moral aspects that one can find in different cultures that may influence a journalist. The journalist with contextual based ethics doesn't accept the so called universal journalistic ethics. S/he only trusts in the ethics of the culture where s/he is situated. The opposite ideal type believes that the universal ethics are the right ones to follow in the journalistic occupation.

The Palestinian journalists that I have talked to give an image of knowing what is happening in the world around them. They are aware of what distinguishes their culture from other cultures. I find the respondents in general more universal than contextual in their ideals. There are more thoughts and opinions among them that are in the universal direction.

Though, there are a few issues that show the contextual ideals, that they belong to a Arabic, conservative culture. I asked a few of the respondents about how they report about gay people. Being gay in the Palestinian culture is not accepted by people in general. People try to pretend that gay people do not exist in the Palestinian society. The respondents answered very differently on how they deal with the issue of gay rights. One said that it is not important to write about. The Palestinian cause is much more important. Another said that the problem with the way the Western world's journalists report about gay issues is that they don't report about the negative consequences and the dangers of being gay.

One of the respondents says she actually published a story about gay rights in Palestine. The reaction was anger from many directions. Religious leaders said she should not publish this kind of stories. In the end this reporter managed to get the religious leaders to a debate on the show about the issue. The respondent says it is not impossible to write about gay rights, but it is very sensitive. The respondents mainly had three things that they said they prefer not to publish stories about, namely sex, religion and critics towards their own culture. Some see no reason for writing about it, they say. Others want Palestine to be more liberal about these issues but until then they will not write about the issues because they don't want to lose their audience.

### 8.9.7. Consequences- schmonsequences

Idealism deals with the impact of the journalistic products. One ideal type believes that the journalist should take the outcome of what is written into consideration before publishing. This journalist is focused on the *means* to achieve certain goals, and that goal is to not make any damage. If a story might hurt someone the means-oriented journalist would not publish it. The opposite ideal type is the *outcome*-oriented. This journalist believes that sometimes it is necessary for people to get hurt to get something good out of it in the end. The respondents are divided also here. About half of them think that journalists should not take the consequences into consideration when delivering the news, half think they should. Here are some different opinions about this:

- The truth is the truth. You cannot put sugar on it and you cannot put honey on it to make it easier. A fact is a fact. If you don't like it, tough, I'm sorry, it's a fact. Effecting peace talks or not, it shouldn't be. Information shouldn't be damaging. The information should be constructive, should allow people to think, re-strategize and understand what is really happening. It shouldn't be treated as a threat.

Another respondent says:

- It's better to avoid sometimes because it might lead to more tension. So it's better to avoid sometimes. This is my own opinion. First of all if you know that your article would lead to even more tension in the society to create maybe riots or maybe someone could be killed. As a journalist you might also be in danger so it's better to avoid. Although I know that many journalists believe that the journalists is a fighter. My own feeling is that we need to sometimes avoid writes about something stories which can lead to more tension in the society. [...] It's not that you have to stop writing about everything. Especially in here because it's a comfort zone it is really difficult sometimes to write about certain topics. When I say avoid I don't mean avoiding everything. Just in rare cases you have to avoid.

## 9. Ethics in action

In the ideal world the ideals and the practice would be the same thing. This is not the case, for many different reasons. Time and money are two things that tend to threat the ideals from flourish, but there are other things too. Ekström and Nohrstedt (1996) claims that the debate about the difference between ideals and the practice very often goes missing in journalistic debates.

They call the gap between the ideals and practice the ethics in action with which they mean that there are ideals that are counter parts to each other. How can you possibly cover all sides of a story within the time frame that you have? Must you always report a story even though it might hurt innocent people's integrity? There is therefore a discussion about which are the prime principles within the journalistic ethics. Ekström and Nohrstedt holds scrutinization as one of the highest ideals among the Swedish journalists. How the ethics in action are conducted by different depends on which journalistic theory or culture they work within, whether it is the libertarian, the social responsibility, the totalitarian or the authoritarian theory.

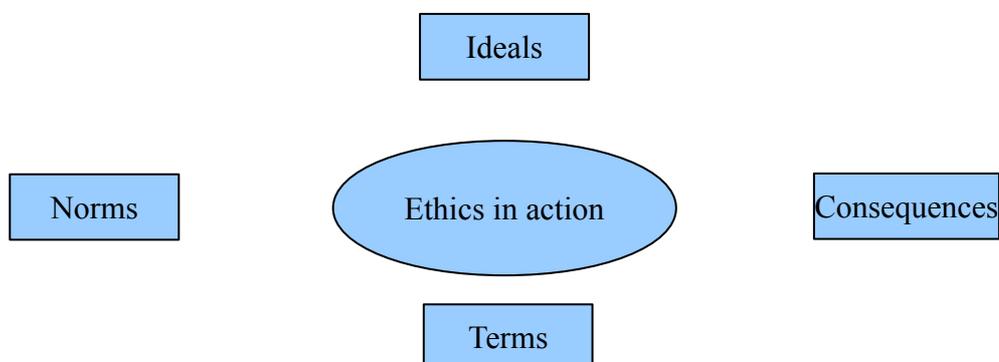
In this essay the totalitarian theory is not very relevant since the media since the West Bank is not governed by a totalitarian regime and thus has no totalitarian media to speak about. When to choose between publishing something that might harm someone's integrity or not to, the libertarian journalist would choose to publish while the social responsibility journalist maybe would not. The libertarian ideology is all about the journalists integrity before all. The truth must come out and the journalist is the one to reveal it. Anything threatening to stop the publication of truth is a threat to democracy, according to this ideology.

The social responsibility journalism is not unlimited. One demand on the journalist is to not first of all go for the most profitable news. There is also a demand that the news should be enlightening for the people, be balanced and have multiple sides of the story. The ideology is one of the things that the journalists use to interpret the ethical rules that are written down in school books, legal regulations and codes of conduct. The ethics in action is how the journalist use these regulations in real life. Ekström and Nohrstedt claims that it is important for the journalist to keep as short a distance between the ethics and the practice as possible. Not only to keep their own dignity as journalists, but also to keep the legitimacy for the profession in the society.

To learn about the journalistic ideals, you can just read legal regulations or codes of conduct, but to know how to use the ethics in action you have work as a journalists. Of course the ethics in action is something that differs between different news desks and different societies. The way to interpret the ethics in a tabloid newspaper is seldom the same as within a public service broad caster and there is also a difference between different societies and countries.

What seems to be the objectively right persons to have debating the conflict between Israel and Palestine in an Israeli TV-show is not the objectively right person in a Palestinian TV-show. Who is

objective and who is not is hard to judge. The persons debating might have different view points, but within the frame of the society they live in. The media is not above the society it is working in. The ethics in action gets influenced by this. Ekström and Nohrstedt created an illustration to show what influences the ethics in action:



The ethics in action should be seen as the *ideals* in practice. The *norms* that influence the ethics in action are, according to Ekström and Nohrstedt, the social norms that exist within the profession and sometimes only within the editorial office. I would here claim that above this is the society's influence on both the profession and the editorial office.

The norms in the society sets the agenda and will be the base of these norms, which in term sets the agenda for the society (I will get back to this a few paragraphs further down in my discussion about structuration). They are also interrelated to the ideals. In the editorial offices there are norms about what should become a news and what not, but there are also norms about what to do to accomplish objectivity and balance, how to present the news and how long time it may take to create the news. For instance there is a conflict between objectivity and immediacy. There are normally norms in the editorial office about how to work around this problem, which thus affect the ethics in action.

The *terms* are set rules which determine the news in many ways. In general the terms are the set dead lines the journalists have to follow, the formate the news must be published in (TV, radio, newspaper etc.), the amount of sources that the media has, the way the media gets its information (news agencies, correspondents etc.). Part of the terms are also the demands on productivity on the media set by the owner. By *consequences* Ekström and Nohrstedt mean the influence the news has on the society. They suppose that media has a great influence on the society where they work and that the journalists have to make decisions whether news should or should not be published for the sake of the society. Depending on which journalistic ideology the journalist embrace s/he will or will not take the social consequences into account before publishing news.

To take the consequences into account would, according to the libertarian ideology, be a threat to free media. Though what is done in reality and what is said in the ideology are not always the same. According to Giddens structuration theory (The constitution of society, 1986) the social structures in the society are not separate from the individuals like institutions that force people into a certain way of thinking. Instead the structures are withheld by the people of the society by memory traces. Individuals maintain the structures through different media, not only mass media, through reproducing the ideals, myths and norms. This is not only an obstacle for the individual, it also helps him/her to know how to act and interpret information in the society. By doing this the structures reproduce. This does not mean that people can not reflect over their actions. The journalist can realize that structures are being maintained and can do things to change this, though changing structures is a very slow process.

What the journalist can not know, according to Ekström and Nohrstedt, is all the consequences the news will have in the society, and they therefore wonder if it is fair to demand from the journalists to take responsibility for the consequences of their news.

## **10. Summary and Conclusion**

By this essay I wanted to find out which kinds of journalistic ideals that can be found in Palestine. The essay does not try to generalise the Palestinian journalists and say that these findings are valid for all Palestinian journalists on the West Bank. The journalistic ideals that the twelve respondents have were in my interest because I believe they together give an image of the ideals of the Palestinian journalists. My respondents come from different kinds of media, they are men and women in ages from their early twenties to around sixty.

My mission was to answer three questions:

1. Which democracy- supportive journalistic ideals exist among the Palestinian journalists?
2. Which are the main aspects that have influence on the Palestinian journalists ideals?
3. What makes the Palestinian journalists compromise with their journalistic ideals?

When comparing the most common ideals within journalism studies that are closest related to democracy I found that the respondents were well aware of many of these “universal” ideals. All of the respondents reacted in a positive way when they talked about journalism as a part of democracy. I come to the conclusion that the respondents see them selves as workers for democracy. The

democracy in the West Bank is not strong, if existing at all, but there is a large number of people that are working to make Palestine democratic.

It is not an easy mission. There are many different forces that want to control the land and at the present these forces can't seem to settle the conflict peacefully or in a democratic way. At the same time many of Palestine's Arabic neighbour countries are going through a process that hopefully is going towards a democratic development.

One of the powers behind the change in the Middle East during 2011 is the media and the journalists. Without them I don't believe the uprising would spread throughout the Arab world. Palestine is in another position. Sure, they have a ruling party that was not elected democratically, but the freedom of speech is much greater in Palestine than in many of the countries where the people have started protesting against their governments.

One big problem for Palestine is of course the conflict with Israel. The conflict makes it hard for the journalists to live out their democratic ideals and also for democracy to root.

Even if the journalists and the people disapprove the government, they hate the occupation forces much more. This might make it easier for the government to avoid critics.

One problematic question is the one about objectivity. The respondents have well formulated opinions about objectivity and if it is important.

For me to follow the situation as an outsider it is easy to judge some of the statements the respondents make. Most would never highlight the Israeli's arguments as something equal to Palestinian arguments. First I saw this as biased and an undeveloped part of Palestinian journalism, but after a while I thought that "who can blame them?". Not taking the Palestinian side, as a Palestinian journalist, might cause normalization with the occupation. It might influence people to accept the occupation of the West Bank. Since the respondents don't want this normalization, they will not serve it through their work.

I can only look to my own country, Sweden, and to our constitution. It reads that it means treason to towards the country to in print invite another state to, with force, take over the country or the government. This is thus illegal in Sweden and I find it fair. The respondents feel that they are in the same situation. In some way it is biased, in another way it is not.

When I started planning this essay one of my interests was the question about objectivity in a conflict situation. Since media so often is used to promote one sides opinions I wondered if there is a scientific way to look at the issue. To find out what is the most reasonable way for domestic journalism in conflict situations. During the process of this essay I realized that the question is more difficult than I first thought and the situation in Palestine is unique. The conflict with the state of Israel has been going on since 1948 and the conflict between Palestinians and Jews about the land is even older. It is not fully comparable with any other conflict in the world. The question of objectivity in Palestine thus has a lot to do with the fear of normalization of the occupation of Palestine.

Most respondents see their job as a work for change in the society. The mission of being the public's servant is something the respondents all agree on. Non of them are in it for the money. You don't make much money as a journalist and I don't think even as a publicist. The respondents want to inform and give the truth to the people. This is an ideal that is to be found all over the world, in most societies. Many of the respondents in this essay, though, are more than most journalists, at least the ones working in democracies, really put to the test. Their will to serve the public with information is strong enough to sometimes risk their own lives.

Though the public service-ideal is strong this mission is not always completed because of the hostilities towards them. Some choose not to write about the sensitive issues, others write about the sensitive issues and get punished.

The role of the Watchdog in Palestine is, according to the respondents non-existing. Most don't seem to have even thought about the journalists as watchdogs. It seems like a very far fetched idea, to them, though a good one.

The independence of the Palestinian journalist varies. Many are working for news desks that are not controlled by the PA. The respondents from those stations seem to have greater possibilities to criticise the ones in power. The PA controlled news desks have more restrictions against criticising the government and especially the president.

The thing that stops the investigative journalism and the Watchdog-effect to function is the culture of self-censorship. Many of the respondents have experience from multiple cases of violation

against them when they tried to conduct their journalistic work. Journalists are getting detained, shot at and even killed. The threats come from different directions, mostly Israel, the PA and Hamas. The journalists don't always know where the red lines are, and thus withhold the self-censorship just to be on the safe side.

The self-censorship has at least two sides. One is about the threats I explained above. The other is about maintaining the situation and fearing the consequences for the society. In my interviews I found both some respondents taking the consequences into consideration before publishing something, and others not taking the consequences into consideration.

The first kind feel a responsibility towards the people and the struggle for Palestine. They become politicians in that way, since they might not report about sensitive issues concerning the politicians that they believe are the best for Palestine.

The other kind of respondent thinks that it is not their job to cover up for the politicians. It is their duty to report about them, so that in the end Palestine will be a more open society that can demand accountability from their politicians.

Palestine is densely populated with news desks and media institutions and the Palestinians know well how to consume news and credibility is important to survive as journalist. When interviewing the respondents I find great knowledge about how journalism can serve a democratic purpose, but the self-censorship is stopping this. Palestine has media laws which seem suitable for the free journalist, but the laws have to be followed. Today both politicians and other citizens violate the laws. This must be stopped. For journalism to have a democratic function the politicians and the people must get used to read uncomfortable news. It must be possible to hold the politicians accountable for their politics and their decisions.

An open society where the politicians are being watched by the journalists and held accountable for what they do, will also increase Palestine's credibility on the international scene.

## **11. Method**

This study consists of deep-interviews with Palestinian journalists. Because of the situation in Gaza where it is almost impossible to get into or out of the area, I chose to interview only journalists who live and work on the West Bank.

### **11.1. The problem**

The ideals of the Palestinian journalists and the ability to follow these ideals in reality is interesting to study for different reasons. While working with the essay I have not come across any former study that is made in this way in Palestine. Qualitative research on journalists ideals are few if they exist at all, and this essay is unique in its kind. The essay thus contributes to scientific knowledge about an issue that is highly relevant both scientifically and non-scientifically, which is an important for the essay's *raison d'etre* (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). For science it contributes with new information and lays a ground from where new research can be done especially about Palestinian journalism and/or about non-western journalists and journalists on one side of a conflict.

Non-scientifically the essay contributes with a very dense and deep understanding about journalism in Palestine and the terms and conditions that rule over the journalists.

It is good, according to Bryman (2008) if a qualitative essay brings new and better understanding about the studied group to the group's members. To this criteria I feel humble. Hopefully it can bring something new also to the journalists themselves, but I must let them be the judges of that. I do believe that the essay can bring a greater understanding of the group for outsiders, like aid organizations, and it can be a good way to learn about the level of journalism on the West Bank for future operations.

### **11.2. The theories**

Looking for theories about journalistic ideals will give you a lot of material. To find theories about journalist involved in domestic conflicts is much harder. Studies on journalistic ideals using deep-interviews in conflict zones is very uncommon, if at all existing. I have chosen to use theories about journalistic ideals that are often used to describe the universal situation. In my analysis I then compare these theories with my findings.

I started to write down my theories before I went from Sweden to Palestine. The core of the theories still remained throughout the whole work, but much also came afterwards, when I had more

knowledge about the situation in Palestine. The core theories about the ideals helped me create my questionnaire, and the part that came during and after my visit to Palestine helped me analyse the respondents answers.

According to Bryman (2008) qualitative research is done efficiently by starting of with a few theories that will help gathering data. The new knowledge that the data brings may create new questions and a tighter specification of the research questions so that the next interview will be more exact. In this essay this way of conducting research helped me, not coming up with new questions (the first questionnaire was already from the beginning fully efficient), but it helped me focus on the most relevant questions during the interviews and gave me more knowledge for the follow-up questions.

During the analytical part of the essay new theories became useful. While analysing the data I gained a greater understanding of what actually is the essence of the answers, which in turn required new theoretical base.

### **11.3. Collecting the data**

I chose semi-structured deep-interviews as the way to get knowledge about the journalists. My intentions were to get information about the journalists core values in their work and I found this kind of method the only one that could bring forward this kind of information. According to Yin (2007) deep-interviews are used for answering the questions *how* and *why* to an existing situation. This supports my decision. Group interviews could be an alternative, but in this case the questions sometimes would be to sensitive to discuss openly. Another option would be an ethnographic approach where I would follow some journalists when they work. This combined with interviews could be a very efficient way to get a great view of the situation. Language barriers and time held me back. In the end semi-structured interviews was the only possible way.

### **11.4. The respondents**

There are several newspapers, radio stations and TV-stations in and around Ramallah and through my contacts in the Birzeit university and the university's media centre just outside of Ramallah I got in touch with some interviewees which in turn lead to more interviewees. It was important for the essay to get a good variety among the respondents. The variety of the respondents made it possible to compare different ideals and ways of looking at journalism. The greater variety among the respondents, the greater variety of ideals and the deeper into the Palestinian journalistic soul I will

get. I chose to interview respondents from different kinds of media, in different ages and with different gender. In the thesis there are three respondents working with radio, three with television, two with online media, two with newspapers and two in a news agency. Four of the respondents work in governmental media. There are four women and eight men among the respondents. It was very easy to find respondents that were willing to be interviewed. They were all very enthusiastic and were willing to reflect over and answer all sorts of questions.

### **11.5. The questions**

To answer the question formulation I have chosen theories about democracy and journalistic ideals that I find suitable. From these theories I formulated the questions for the interviews. I wanted the respondents to feel relaxed and feel that s/he is the expert of the topic (the respondents thoughts) so I formulated the questions in a way I thought would be on the right level. It was also important to make the questions as open as possible. Kvale (1996) says that it is important to make sure that the questions are free from bias. I have kept this in mind while I constructed the questionnaire. During the interviews I discovered a few words and questions that had to be reformulated, but to my surprise both during the interviews and during the work of analysing, I found that my questions and also the answers covered the purpose of the essay in a very satisfying way. I had to change the word “scrutinizing” into “investigative journalism”, which is easier to understand. Find the questions in the appendix. Of course none of the follow-up questions that are in the appendix.

### **11.6. The interviews**

Since I don't speak Arabic all the interviews had to be in English. I thus had to find respondents that either spoke English or find a good interpreter. In most cases I found English-speaking respondents. In one case the respondent did not speak English at all. His colleague had to help. The respondent said he felt comfortable with it. In another case the respondent spoke as much as possible in English, but got help from his sister sometimes. In a third case the respondent could speak English, but preferred to speak Arabic. His secretary translated.

The interviews took place mostly where the respondents work, and in those cases I managed to get private rooms so that they would speak more freely. Some interviews were made in a hotel lobby and one in the respondents home. The interviews took between one and a half and two and a half hours. Most took about two hours.

I followed the questionnaire pretty well, but if a respondent started to talk about a subject that I intended to ask about later I did not stop the respondent. To my delight most of the time the respondents and my questionnaire followed each other naturally. To get the interviews fully

functioning from the beginning it is recommended to make a test interview. This is for checking that the questions work with the respondents (Yin, 2007). Already from the start I felt comfortable with the questionnaire. I made the first interview to check that it would work out. After the interview I reflected over it and felt that it went more than well. The first interview was with one of the respondents with the least skills in English. Still the questions were easy enough for him to understand and answer. That made me sure that the questionnaire was sufficient.

I felt comfortable in the role of the interviewer and I knew I would since I have been working as a journalist myself for a few years. The interviewing role was not new to me.

I recorded all interviews for later transcription.

### **11.7. Writing up the essay**

Technology made this essay possible. To type every word from the recorded material down would have killed my enthusiasm for the essay. Instead I found software that could help me. By using Express scribe to work with the text and the sound simultaneously and using the voice recognition tool Nuance Dragon Speak time for the the transcription process diminished by weeks. I then used the software Weft QDA for the analysis. This tool helps you categorize your text into searchable words. I used the questionnaire and the theory to shape the search tree.

This essay looks a little different from the classic kind where the theories have one part, and the results and analyse have one part. To make the essay more readable and easier to understand I chose to put it all together. Now you don't have to browse between the parts to understand the connection between everything.

When the coding was done I went through the theory. Since the theory and the code words in the Weft- program derived from each other it was easy to search and find the most interesting material that related to the theories and the question formulation. I have tried to get the essay to follow in some sort of logical order where one theory and analyse naturally leads to the next.

One problem I had writing up the essay was to get all the respondents into the analyse. Some of the respondents had much more detailed answers. This has much to do with the language barrier. Had I spoken Arabic, then this essay would have even more data to analyse from. The respondents that did not speak English did not have as long answers as the ones that spoke fluent English. This made the non-speaking respondent's answers not exist in the same amount as the others. Their quotes were seldom the best to express a certain point of view. I have preferred the better formulated quotes at the expense of the less well formulated ones. I always kept their points of view in mind, though. Their opinions are not absent in the essay.

## **11.8. Trustworthiness**

This part is normally about reliability and validity, but since I have used Alan Bryman's "Social research methods" when working with the essay, I will here use his instrument called "Trustworthiness". Since reliability and validity has more in common with quantitative research methods it kind of misses the point with qualitative research, he argues.

### **11.8.1. Transferability**

This is one way be sure about the trustworthiness. Transferability is, according to Bryman, comparable with external validity, but since external validity is more of a quantitative tool to measure how applicable the study is in a wider sense, the transferability shall give a depth and a large amount of data for others to compare with other studies. Showing a large amount of detailed information about the studied object makes it possible for others to check if they come to the same conclusions in other similar scenarios. Using long paragraphs of text where the respondents are quoted creates this thick description which makes it possible to re-analyse what the respondent has said and use the data for new studies. Most of what the respondents said is left out in the actual essay though. Around twenty-four hours of interview could never find space in one essay. All interviews still exist both as recorded sound and in a transcribed document and shall be available, as you can read about below.

### **11.8.2. Dependability**

Instead of reliability I use the term dependability (Bryman, 2008, Lincoln and Guba, 1984). This means that it shall be possible for others to follow the procedure of how the essay was made. There shall be tracks to see that proper procedures have been followed. This essay is not very complex in that way. I have described the theories thoroughly and also explained well enough which the interviewees are. Their names are not always mentioned. This is for their sake. None of them told me that they wanted to be anonymous, but still I decided to only use the names where I found it necessary or for the sake of dramaturgy. I don't mean to act as if I know what is best for them more than they do themselves, but I want to be sure that this essay wont be used against any of the respondent in any way.

For this essay I have all interviews documented in text and as recorded audio. Because of the amount of text they can't possibly be fitted into this thesis, but they shall be available by contacting the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication at the University of Gothenburg. Also my codes in my software shall be available. I used the free software Weft QDA.

### **11.8.3. Confirmability**

This is all about me being objective enough to draw fair conclusions. I have through the whole essay tried to use words that are not filled with good or bad connotations. I have also done this during the interviews and when choosing the theories. The theories are available in the reference list to check and the interviews are available both as texts and sound to hear how the interviews sounded.

This thesis is not about who is right and who is wrong. I find no reason for falsification of the results.

In some parts where I try to analyse the answers through the respondent's point of view I tried to put myself in the respondent's situation. These parts could, but should not, be misinterpreted as my opinions. Since the essay partly is about why the respondents have certain ideals it is crucial to do this. In my opinion it is always important to try to put yourself in others situation.

Throughout the writing when I have not been sure about how to formulate myself to keep a neutral language I have thought about an Israeli journalist that I know and thought what he would have said about the formulation. Then I have thought about Palestinian journalists in the same way. If the formulation worked for both sides I felt safe.

## 12. Reference list

### 12.1. Books and articles

**Altheide, D. L.** (1976). *Creating reality*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

**Bryman, Alan.** (2008) *Social research methods*, New York, Oxford University press Inc.

**Weaver, D.H.** (2004) "Journalists: international profiles" in *Global Journalism: Topical Issues and Media Systems*, eds. A.S. De Beer and John Calhoun Merril, Boston: Pearson/ Allyn and Bacon, pp145-146.

**Deuze, M.** (2005), What is journalism? Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered, *Journalism*, 6, 442.

**Djerf Pierre, M and Weibull, L.** (2001) *Spegla, granska, tolka: aktualitetsjournalistik i svensk radio och TV under 1900-talet*, Stockholm, Prisma

**Giddens, A.** (1984) *The Constitution of society: Outline the theory of structuration*, University of California Press.

**Jamal, A.** (2001) *State-Building and Media Regime : Censoring the Emerging Public Sphere in Palestine* *International Communication Gazette* 2001 63: 263.

**Kvale S.** (1996) *Interviews – An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Sage Publications, Inc.

**Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.** (1985) *Naturalistic Inquire*, Beverly Hills, Sage

**Marshall, Cathrine & Rossman, Gretchen B.** (2006) *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publ. (4:th ed.)

**Morley, D.** (1976). *Industrial conflict and the mass media*. *Sociological Review*, 24, 245-268.

**Nossek, H.** and Rinnawi, L. (2003) Censorship and freedom of the press under changing political regimes. *The international journal for communication studies*. London, Thousand oaks & New Delhi

**De Burgh, H.** (2000) *Investigative journalism, context and practice*, London, Routledge. Delhi, vol 65(2): 183–202.

**Glasser, T.L. and Ettema, J.S.** (1989) Investigative journalism and the moral order, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol 6, Issue 1.

**Graber, D.A.** (2003) The Rocky Road to New Paradigms: modernizing news and citizenship standards, *Political Communication* 20(2), pp. 145 -9.

**Hanitzsch, T.** (2007) Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Towards a Universal Theory, *Communication theory*, Vol. 17 Issue 4

**Linz, J.J.** 8 (2000) *Totalitarian and Authoritarian regimes*, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers

**Patterson, T.E.** (1998) Political roles of the journalist. In Graber, D.A., Norris, P. and McQuail, D. (Eds.) *The politics of news, the news of politics*. Washington, DC., CQ Press.

**Pintak, L. and Ginges, J.** (2008) The Mission of Arab Journalism: Creating Change in a Time of Turmoil. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13: 193 originally published online 2 June 2008

**Pintak, L.** (2011) *The New Arab journalist, Mission and Identity in a Time of Turmoil*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

**Ramaprasad, J.** (2001) A profile of journalists in Post- Independence Tanzania, *Gazette*, 63(6), 539-55

**Ramaprasad, J. and Kelly, J.D.** (2003) Reporting the news from the World's rooftop: A survey of Nepalese journalists, *Gazette*, 65(3) 291-315

**Rugh, William A.** (2004) *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

**Schudson, M.** (1978) *Discovering the news: a history of American newspapers*, New York, Basic Books.

**Schudson, M.** (2001) The objectivity norm in American journalism, *Journalism*, vol 2, no 2

**Schudson** (2008) *Why democracies need an unlovable press*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

**Siebert, F., Peterson, T. and W. Schramm** (eds) (1963) *Four Theories of the Press*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

**Wiik, J.** (2007) Granskningsidealet. In Asp, K. (Ed.) *Den svenska journalistkåren*. Göteborg, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, JMG.

**Yin, R.K.** (2007) *Fallstudier: design och genomförande*. Malmö: Liber

## **12.2. Internet sources**

### **National Union of Journalists Code of Conduct:**

<http://media.gn.apc.org/nujcode.html>

### **Al- Jazeera Code of Ethics:**

<http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus/2006/11/2008525185733692771.html>

### **BBCs editorial guidelines:**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/guidelines/>

### **European Neighborhood Journalism Network:**

<http://www.journalismnetwork.eu/>

### **JMCC-opinion poll about reliability in the news:**

<http://jmcc.org/documentsandmaps.aspx?id=439>

**MADA:** <http://www.madacenter.org/madaeng/>

### **Independent media in extremely controlled countries:**

Vietnam: [radiotiengnuoctoi.com/english.htm](http://radiotiengnuoctoi.com/english.htm)

Burma: [mizzima.com](http://mizzima.com)

Eritrea: [assenna.com](http://assenna.com)

## 13. Appendix

### Questions Palestinian journalists

#### 1. Which are the differences and similarities between the Palestinian journalists professional ideals and the ideals in theories of democratic journalism?

Why did you become a journalist?

Describe the way to that decision.

#### Public service

Is journalism important in any way? How?

Is there a democratic reason for journalism? Describe.

If no: What is your purpose, working as a journalist?

Do you agree if I say that a purpose of journalism is to inform the public?

If yes: Why is that important?

What kind of information is important for the public to get?

How do you argue about the variety and diversity of the information to the media consumers concerning political issues?

What responsibility does the journalist have to show diversity in that information?

Is there a limit in the breadth of information?

Are there points of view that does not belong in the Palestinian media?

Which are they and why?

What relation should you as a journalist have to politicians and their whereabouts?

Should the journalist take the political situation into consideration when choosing how to approach obvious news?

Why?

Have you ever avoided publishing news because of the impact it might make on the media consumers?

Should journalism criticise the ones in power?

If yes: Why?

In what way?

If no: Why not?

Should journalism scrutinize the ones in power?

What do you mean with scrutinizing?

How do you scrutinize? Any examples?

Do you feel free to scrutinize the ones in power?

Is there anything journalism should not be allowed to criticise?

Journalism can have a watchdog-effect on the ones in power. If politicians know that what they do might end up in the news they might stay away from irregularities. Should journalists have this power?

Is this position for journalists possible in Palestine today?

Who should regulate what is written in the news?

Are there any threats with journalism? Could journalism be dangerous?

How should Palestinian journalists handle different political stand points?

Should they be treated equal?

Could partiality affect the credibility of the media? How?

What is your opinion about partisan media?

What is your opinion about the possibility for partisan media to scrutinize the ones in power?

Do you feel that you have an important roll being a Palestinian journalist?

What is good journalism to you?

Describe a good journalistic report.

In what way was it good?

What is bad journalism to you?

Describe a bad report.

In what way was it bad?

## **Objectivity**

Does objectivity exist?

What is objectivity to you?

Is it possible to be objective?

Is objectivity important to you as a journalist?

Should journalists try to stay objective?

Do you think about objectivity when you work?

Has it ever been hard to stay objective in your work?

Should a journalist put his/her own opinion into a report?

Why/why not?

Do you try to keep your own opinion out of your work?

Do you think the media consumer can tell which political opinion you have by reading/hearing your reports?

Is there a problem if they can?

Is balance in reporting something you consider in your work?

How?

Would you say that the journalistic profession contains a roll of interpreter and analyser?

If yes: How do you think a journalist should work with interpretation and analysing?

### **Immediacy**

How do you work with dead lines in your job?

What are your thoughts about getting news out fast?

Is it important to be up-to-date with the news?

Which possibilities and difficulties are there with getting the news out fast are there for you and your colleagues?

### **Ethics**

How do you reason about relevance in the news?

Is there a difference between public characters and others?

Where do you draw the line?

Would you like the Palestinian media to be more conservative or liberal here?

How do you reason about publish the names on the people figuring in the new?

How do you reason about sources?

How many should it be?

Are some sources better than others?

Do you let the people you mention make comments in the story you write?

Is this important?

Why/why not?

Sometimes news contain wrong information.

What do you think should be done if that happens?

How does your media work with these events?

### **Self-censorship**

Are there any political taboos within Palestinian media on the West Bank and Jerusalem?

Which are they?

What could happen if you don't respect them?

Is there a difference between what the law says about media regulations and the practice of journalism?

Is there a self-censorship in Palestine?

If yes: What effects does it have on the democracy in Palestine?

If no: Many outside observers say that it is. How do you respond to their critics?

Is self-censorship a good way to conduct journalism?

Are there any options to self-censorship?

### **Living up to the ideals**

Do you find it difficult to live up to the ideals we have been talking about?

Which are the biggest problems?

How do you tackle them?

## **2. In what way does the Palestinian- Israeli conflict affect the journalistic ideals among the Palestinian journalists?**

What is your relation to reporting about Israeli politics?

Should you be objective in this reporting?

Can you be objective in this reporting?

Do you approach Israeli politics the same way you approach Palestinian politics?

Is it important to take sides in the conflict from a journalistic point of view?

Is it important to take sides in the conflict for you personally?

Would it be possible for a Palestinian journalist to report from an Israeli point of view?

Which problems do you see with that?

Would it be safe?

What would you think of a Palestinian journalist taking sides for Israel?

Should you be allowed to do that as a Palestinian?

If no: Don't you find that problematic considering freedom of speech?

Can journalism promote peace?

Should it promote peace?

Is there a conflict between good journalism and peace-building?

If no: Do you think your ideal way of reporting about the conflict is the best way to promote peace?

### **Foreign media**

Do you take part of foreign news?

Do you see differences between Palestinian journalism and other journalism?

What do you think about the ideals of western media, concerning the things we have been talking about?