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Abstract

This article engages with current discussions about public emotions by examining journalists' perceptions of the value of emotional expression in broadcast news. First, the study provides insight into how journalists assess the place and role of emotion in news reporting and the perceived emotionalizing of news. Second, it examines how the journalists' discourse about emotion is linked to their ideas of 'good journalism', as well as to their professional self-image. The data consist of in-depth interviews with television journalists working for both public service and commercial news programmes in Finland and in the Netherlands.

Keywords

emotion, journalism, news values, quality, television news

Introduction

In the aftermath of the Tsunami disaster in December 2004, Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen was asked in a special news programme how he had been affected by the tragedy that also claimed the life of many Finnish citizens. The reporter was not satisfied with the official compassionate view the Prime Minister provided. She insisted on going deeper: 'Several families, two at least, were lost from your own hometown. How hard is this for you personally? Could you tell us something about how you feel?' This interview is a telling example of the *emotionalizing of the public sphere*. Recent historical accounts propose that emotions have become increasingly central in western societies: we have witnessed the rise of 'therapeutic culture', focused on emotional discourse, and the creation of new forms of public spaces that are devoted to the display and scrutiny of emotion (Furedi, 2004; Lupton,

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1998; Nicholson, 1999). In contemporary media culture, emotionalism is typically linked with entertainment genres, such as talk shows and reality TV. However, it has also been claimed that emotion has gained more ground in news reporting, to the extent of becoming a new 'news value' (Allern, 2002; Meyer, 2003: 12). Recent events such as 9/11 have been seen to accelerate a trend towards embracing emotion as a legitimate part of the journalistic culture (Tumber and Prentoulis, 2003: 228).

Yet, the relationship between emotion and (quality) journalism is historically problematic. The ideals of modern journalism are linked to the classical public sphere model in which journalism provides an instrument for objective, dispassionate investigation and a forum for rational discussion. In journalism studies, then, 'emotionalization' has been typically discussed in the context of commercialization or tabloidization of journalism (Franklin, 1997; McNair, 1999; Sparks, 1998) and, correspondingly, emotion has been associated with increased 'entertainment values' or 'sensationalism'. Both in academic research and public debate, emotionality typically represents a decline in the standards of journalism and a deviance from journalism's proper social role; while 'quality' journalism informs and educates citizens by appealing to reason, other kinds of journalisms focus on pleasing their audiences by appealing to the emotions.

In this article, I address the question about the role and value of emotion in television news in the context of quality journalism, asking how the relationship between emotion and journalism has changed over the last decades. Emotion is not a new topic in journalism research, but the focus of research has been highly selective. The lion's share of emotion research has focused on emotional effects, particularly on emotional responses to real-life violence in news coverage. Regarding the form and content of news stories, studies on 'sensationalism' have looked at whether there are increasingly 'emotionally arousing' features in news (e.g. Grabe et al., 2001). Sociological and cultural studies approaches to news media have generally paid little attention to how emotion is inscribed in news texts or to the role of journalism in interpretations and enactments of emotions (e.g. Altheide, 2002; Kitch and Hume, 2007; Pantti, 2005; Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007).

To date, little scholarly attention has been paid to journalists' own perceptions, created in the daily practices of news work, of the use and functionality of emotional expression in television news. This study seeks to address this void, starting from the premise that the public value of emotion in news – what mediated emotional expressions may 'do' for the world (Ahmed, 2004) – depends partly on what kind of a role journalists think emotion should play in news and how they use it in their everyday work. In my study, based on interviews with television journalists working for both public service and commercial news in Finland and in the Netherlands, I look at journalists' assessment of emotion in news storytelling and their motivations for using emotion. Do journalists think that journalism has changed regarding the use of emotion, and if so, in what way? How do journalists perceive the place and function of emotion in news? And how is journalists' discourse on emotion linked to their self-image and their ideas of 'good journalism'?

This article, then, aims to widen the theoretical and analytical scope for 'emotion research' within media and journalism studies, which so far has focused on psychological effects or on emotion-eliciting elements in the content of news, by looking at journalists' meta-level discourse on emotion. Furthermore, my study seeks to make a contribution to the broader, multidisciplinary research on 'public emotions' that addresses the questions of

how emotions shape public life, but has not paid much attention to the role of news media in describing and prescribing public emotions. Given the visibility of emotion-saturated news events over the last few years and the appearance of new normative arguments about how journalism ought to contribute to public life by managing our emotions (Richards, 2007), this seems a particularly vital time to look at the issue of emotion in the news through journalists' own eyes.

Emotions, public life and news

There has been a revived interest across research traditions in how emotions shape public life. Abandoning the old opposition between emotion and reason, recent scholarship has examined the ways in which emotion interacts with thinking and, as a result, its function and consequences for social and political life. Three main arguments arise from the literature regarding the public role of emotion. First, emotions inform political and moral judgements (e.g. Marcus et al., 2000; Nussbaum, 2001). Second, emotions are powerful motivators for participation, as well as crucial to sustaining political action (e.g. Clarke et al., 2006). Third, emotions matter to the constitution of collective identities, to the formation and breaking of social solidarities (e.g. Ahmed, 2004).

The opposition between reason and emotion remains apparent in dominant conceptions of journalism. News is traditionally perceived as a site for discourses informed by objectivity (Tuchman, 1972) and therefore a field in which emotions do not belong. As Schudson (2001: 150) argued, 'Objective reporting is supposed to be cool, rather than emotional, in tone.' The typical claim is that a stress placed on emotions has resulted in a shortage of information, analysis and context (e.g. Miller, 2005). The emotion/reason dichotomy has been employed over the years to assist in drawing the line between 'quality' journalism and popular, tabloid or female journalism (Costera Meijer, 2001: 190; Gripsrud, 1992: 85; Harrington, 2008; Van Zoonen, 1998). While 'quality' journalism is traditionally conceived as being oriented towards the public sphere and characterized by 'hard' topics and rational-critical presentation, popular journalism puts emphasis on everyday life and provokes emotions over understanding. Thus, the emotionalizing of news is usually seen as evidence of a decay in journalistic quality: as a response to market forces, which require more attention to audience desires and 'human interest' perspectives. This shift has also been described as a 'feminization' of news narratives or as a dissolution of the gendered hard/soft and neutrality/subjectivity binaries as a consequence of the need to attract women and young people (e.g. Aldridge, 2001; Carter et al., 1998; Van Zoonen, 1998).

The question regarding how news media contribute to the emotional public sphere and how they might promote appropriate emotions needed for public engagement and the development of social solidarity is not often asked (see Costera Meijer, 2001; MacDonald, 2000; Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007; Richards, 2007). This question is relevant given that emotions are not merely personal expressions but that emotional experiences and practices are articulated by cultural discourses and governed by social rules (Hochschild, 1979). I would argue that news matters as a central site for emotion production, as an important source of political and moral emotions as well as a site of emotion management. Sociologists Walter, Littlewood and Pickering

(1995) suggest that the news narratives at the same time incite and regulate emotional responses, encouraging certain responses and suppressing others (Walter et al., 1995). In his book *Emotional Governance* (2007), Richards takes a normative stance and argues that journalists should actively manage public emotions in order to better contribute to public life: 'Journalism's traditional ethics of objectivity, accuracy and responsibility would be deepened by developing sensitivity to the broader emotional impacts of its work' (Richards, 2007: 64). Such a position, while grounded in an attempt to recast the place of emotions in the public sphere, does not easily fit the ideal values of journalism and a professional self-image, which have traditionally emphasized the rational and informative dimensions of journalistic practices over its affective or 'therapeutic' ones (Zelizer, 2004: 112).

The study

The study is based on the analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with journalists, editors and editors-in-chief working in the newsrooms of public and commercial broadcasters in Finland (YLE1, MTV3 and TV Four [Nelonen]) and in the Netherlands (NOS and RTL4). The news programmes of all these broadcasters were selected as representatives of 'quality news'. In the television sector, both Finland and the Netherlands have a strong public service tradition coexisting with commercial channels. The deregulation of television markets that took place during the 1980s and 1990s changed drastically the television environment in both countries. In Finland, the era of a true dual system began in 1993 when MTV3, having operated under public broadcaster YLE's legal franchise and within its two channels, was given its own channel, thus becoming the third national channel. Another private operator, TV Four (Nelonen), was launched in 1997, and the following year TV Four started its own news broadcast, *TV Four's News*. In the Netherlands, the public broadcasting company NOS lost its monopoly in 1989 when commercial channel RTL Veronique (later RTL4) was launched. It was only then that the public broadcaster's news programme *NOS News* faced competition, as in the same year RTL started its own newscast, *RTL News*.

An individual interview was conducted with each journalist, with a duration of between one and one-and-a-half hours. The total corpus consists of 32 interviews conducted in Finland from January to May 2006 and in the Netherlands from September 2007 to January 2008. In each of the five newsrooms, the editor-in-chief, editors, reporters and news photographer were interviewed. The participants' years of professional experience range from six to 40 years; the majority of journalists, however, have more than 15 years of experience in journalism. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The analysis of the interviews progressed in two steps, moving from theme-based content analysis of the interviews to constructing journalists' shared interpretations of the role and value of emotional expression in their everyday work. The four main thematic categories addressed in the interviews were journalists' understanding of the changes in news regarding emotional expression, of what 'emotionality' means in TV news, of the function of emotional expression and of the relationship between emotional expression and the quality of news reporting.

The emotionalizing of television journalism

To begin with, it should be emphasized that, on the whole, the journalists in this study have a benign view of the presence of emotional elements in television news. They seldom constructed distinctions that are suggested by journalism scholars between 'quality news' and 'emotional news'. The normalness of emotion in television news is articulated through different arguments – and, at times, through reacting in a surprised or even angry manner to the interview topic, as the following quote demonstrates: 'You think that emotions in the news are bad! That is your starting point. . . . I am 90 percent convinced of that!' (news anchor, desk editor, NOS).

First, the 'reality argument' presented journalism as a window on the world, and emotions are seen as essential to journalism simply because they are essential to people's everyday life: 'Emotion is part of our everyday life, of course it should be there [in news]. We are uncovering life' (chief news editor 2, MTV3). Second, the 'medium argument' proposed that television is in essence an 'emotion medium', as compared to the print media. By this the journalists referred, on the one hand, to the visuality of television, which makes it particularly suitable for depicting emotions and evoking emotions, and, on the other hand, to the 'emotional mode' of consuming television news. As one participant stated, 'In the evening people are tired and emotions are pretty much present there on the sofa, although this is something that has not always been understood here at the newsroom' (chief news editor, TV Four). Third, the 'functionality argument' highlighted the importance of emotion in news storytelling: for instance, in examples that are used to illustrate abstract or complicated issues. Journalists pointed out that stories that are emotionally involving always prompt the most reactions from the public. Thus, emotional elements, such as news subjects' emotional responses or emotionally appealing images, make the news more poignant and enjoyable, or as one participant phrased it, 'Emotions lead to beautiful television' (deputy editor-in-chief, RTL4).

The journalists commonly shared the view that over the past decades there has been a change regarding the use of emotion in news: 'Emotion seems to be, more than before, a clear news element' (editor-in-chief, YLE1). For instance, while a fired male bank employee in tears in a report on the Finnish banking crisis in the early 1990s was remembered to be truly exceptional and thrilling, in a recent case of mass firings the emotional reactions of workers were perceived as primary material for news from the outset. In all the newsrooms, journalists chronicled a change in attitudes towards emotion, from a strict control over emotional expression to a more receptive and permissive approach:

About 15–20 years ago the situation was still such that we aimed for making a sort of clinical news. Nowadays, we even highlight [emotions], also in standard news stories, in a way that if there are any kind of emotions involved we will show them. (Chief news editor 1, MTV3)

This change is primarily seen as an outcome of a wider social change in practices and rules regarding emotional expression. Thus, the emotionalizing of news is first and foremost a reflection of the transformation of the emotional culture in late modern society, rather than being a development to which journalists themselves have actively contributed. In other words, journalists suggested that there are more emotions in news broadcasts

because news sources, from politicians to ordinary citizens, are expected (by society) to display their feelings: 'You have to express your emotions and, well, it shows on television too' (reporter home affairs 2, NOS). Journalists also pointed out some defining moments that contributed to the increase of emotional elements in television news, the death of Princess Diana being the most obvious one. Dutch journalists often referred to the rise and murder of populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 as a key event that led to a more public emotion-conscious reporting. Particularly for the public *NOS News*, it represented a moment of reorganizing the relationship with the Dutch public by keeping a closer watch on what the 'street' is feeling. Thus, the increase of emotional elements and testimonies in Dutch news was also connected to leaving behind the traditional top-down approach.

The journalists were more hesitant to connect the newly found acceptance of emotional expression to changes in the conditions of journalism, such as increased competition and shrinking audiences. For example, the editor-in-chief of the Finnish public service news claimed that regardless of the trend towards a more emotional style of reporting, 'squeezing tears from the eyes' has not become a conscious competition strategy. The connection between increased emotionality and perceived audience demands was often framed in terms of wider cultural trends, as in the following statement: 'All media . . . really look more for emotions; there is a real urge to connect to the *Zeitgeist* and with the audience' (deputy editor-in-chief, RTL4).

Besides detecting a change in the use of emotion, from abstinence to acceptance, journalists also depicted a different type of change towards exercising more cautiousness and sensitivity when dealing with emotions. Speaking in the context of disaster and accident reporting, some journalists emphasized the difference between their previous, ethically suspect practices and their present awareness of the negative consequences of full emotional disclosure. It seems that the journalists, who are often accused of adding to the suffering of victims of trauma, have internalized the message of the need to have compassion when gathering and disseminating information. Not everything that is learned is reported:

In the past years, like with the Estonia [ferry disaster in the Baltic Sea in 1994] and such, all journalists were running in the hospital corridors. We did too. Then years went by and new catastrophes happened and the knowledge started to spread that it is not ethically correct, if a person is in a shock and all over the place, clearly cannot control his own behaviour or decide if he really wants to appear in front of a million or two million viewers. However juicy that interview would be, it should be left unshown. And so have we done many times. (Editor home affairs, YLE1)

The idea of becoming more careful when dealing with emotions was also framed in terms of the perceived overflow of emotional expression in society and in television generally. Some journalists talked about the contemporary malaise of emotional indulgence and 'copied emotional behaviour', which has led to undesirable automatism in news reporting, such as broadcasting each 'silent march' and 'sea of candles'.

The locus of emotion

This section examines how journalists understand and define 'emotionality' in TV news: What does it mean, then, that news has become more emotional? Where exactly

is emotion located in TV news? There were three main ways to define emotionality: in terms of the emotional state of the news sources, emotionally engaging images and emotional topics and case studies. Furthermore, the question where emotions should *not* be located is also addressed; all participants despised journalists who display their personal emotions.

The emotional expression of the news sources

In journalists' accounts, emotionality, first of all, referred to the emotional states of sources, which corresponds to their view on the causes of the emotionalizing of news. The participants suggested that in the past (15–20 years ago) they were more wary of showing emotional expressions, particularly those of the elite. The 'news emotion' was typically associated with strong emotional expression such as crying and ordinary people expressing their grief and empathy after tragic events through emotional displays and ritual performances, such as assembling candles, flowers and teddy bears. Besides the 'big' emotions, the journalists also referred to more subtle emotional expressions as raw material for emotionally charged news. For example, emotion was spotted in the uncomfortable frown on the face of the Dutch Christian Democratic Party minister when he commented on a homosexual issue and in the Finnish Prime Minister's embarrassingly long silence after being confronted with the question about the connection between his divorce and public role. As a political reporter (MTV3) described it, 'Vanhanen became completely silent, he did not say anything, only stared. It was a truly emotionally appealing moment.'

Journalists assessed the value of news sources' emotional expression in terms of relevance, or whether emotional display was meaningfully connected with the story at hand. They emphasized that emotion should always have a specific function within a news story: it should either facilitate the understanding of a story or add an extra message to the story, rather than being the story itself. This is illustrated, for example, in a story about the decision to show the Dutch UN secretary, Yvo de Boer, breaking down in tears during the Bali climate conference in 2007, after being accused by the Chinese delegation of having been engaged in secret negotiations: 'Then we show that in that moment, although it is not relevant for the climate conference outcome, but you show the stress and tension that are involved in the negotiations' (editor-in-chief, NOS).

The assessment of what is relevant and what is not was related to the newsworthiness of emotional display. The same rules were applied to emotions as are applied to opinions: not everyone's emotions or all kinds of emotions are equally newsworthy. Emotions were deemed relevant when they are exceptional or unexpected, when they are collective (such as collective grief or resentment) and even more so if they are expressed by members of the elite: 'When the Crown Prince shows his third child you see a happy proud father. That is wonderful TV. That is excellent TV' (editor in-chief, RTL4). The newsworthiness of 'elite emotions' was highlighted by journalists' exceptional memory for politicians crying in public. Accordingly, some emotional expressions were seen to be too banal and predictable to contribute anything substantial to the story. As one journalist explained, it is often pointless to have the 'It's awful' response to tragic events:

When does it really add something? Well, if there is collective resentment among people, or so, about something, then you are of course allowed to show that. So, then it adds something if it is about the feeling of a larger group of people. And if it is a little surprising, something that it is not so common. When I think back on the item that I have seen at SBS or RTL [Dutch commercial broadcasters] about a killed soldier and a neighbour of his family saying 'It's awful', then I think 'That is an emotion which does not add anything' because anyone can come up with the idea that people who knew him are sad. (Reporter home affairs 2, NOS)

Engaging images

Second, images are seen as instrumental in bringing emotionality into news. One change in television journalism suggested by journalists was the increase of emotional elements in the image; while previously images focused on official buildings, nowadays they focus on individuals and, particularly, on ordinary people. The emotional power of images is such that they reveal the 'truth' without any explanations: 'The image is everything. When you have emotions, you do not need to say anything in the voice-over. Just show it' (deputy editor-in-chief, RTL4). Journalists shared the view that (emotional) images tell more than words and that emotional images in television news always have greater impact than an 'emotion-laden piece in a newspaper' (editor-in-chief, NOS):

If you want to show, for example, that people in Afghanistan are having a horrible time because of what is happening there, you can with images of one or two emotional events tell much more than if you would write the fact that again so many people have died. The impact is just much greater. (Reporter home affairs 2, NOS)

Emotional topics

Third, emotionality is connected to the news topic. While journalism scholars have traditionally made a distinction between 'sensational' topics that play on the emotions of news audiences such as showbiz and human interest stories and 'non-sensational' topics such as political or economic news, the recent scholarship has suggested that the emotional appeal of news is not bound by topic but is related to specific narrative and visual features that cut across news categories (e.g. Grabe et al., 2001). Even though all participants had a tendency to talk about emotions in terms of major news events such as disasters, most of them similarly proposed that the emotionality of a news story is not necessarily related to the topic. They emphasized, on the one hand, that real-life political and economic decisions are imbued with emotion (reality argument). On the other hand, they suggested that emotions engaged by storytelling can make 'serious' news categories more interesting and intelligible (functionality argument). Some journalists, however, argued that emotional content is more appropriate to some topics than to others. One experienced journalist made a sharp distinction between those news categories in which emotional address is justified by the topic and those that should be unemotional: 'Maybe it is harsh to say so, but I do consider it odd to raise emotions in news production, apart from these tsunamis and such global disasters, where it comes automatically. Crying does not really belong in news' (reporter home affairs, YLE).

Emotional journalists

As a final point, it should be noted that the idea of journalists themselves being a locus of emotion was commonly rejected. While advocates of ‘journalism of attachment’ (e.g. Bell, 1998) have defended an emotional form of journalism (in the context of war and atrocities), that is, including journalists’ personal feelings and sense of morality in the reporting, the participants were against ‘authorial’ emotions, that is, emotionally charged reporters. Emotional expressions are legitimate as a part of the story world but journalists should not take in emotions from the events and people they are reporting on. Thus, the journalists rejected the connection between ‘emotional news’ and journalists’ own ‘emotional attachment’. Some Dutch journalists gave the example of a ‘deviant emotional involvement’ by an NOS correspondent who, while reporting live from Belgrade in 1999, was showing distress and wearing a protest badge against NATO bombing. When expressing their general dislike for ‘crying reporters’, the journalists referred to the core journalistic values of objectivity, and detachment, which commands journalists to ignore their personal feelings: ‘I really do not understand how a journalist could look upset while reporting because it all starts from the fact that we do not commit ourselves to anything’ (editor-in-chief, MTV3).

The function of emotion in news

Regarding the function of emotion in news, journalists argued, on the one hand, that emotion *facilitates the intelligibility of the news story* and, on the other hand, that emotions *shape the way in which the viewers watch news*. These two main functions are not unconnected since they are both about managing the viewers’ attention.

Journalists shared a view that emotion is ‘a good way to get something across’, echoing the findings of studies that have examined viewers’ limited capacity to learn from broadcast news. These studies have shown that emotion guides attention in such a way that more information is processed for emotional messages than for calm messages and that, furthermore, emotion may improve viewers’ memory recall and comprehension (e.g. Lang et al., 1995). The view of emotion as a narrative technique that helps deliver information was illustrated in different ways. Emotion is described, for example, as a thought-provoking and attention-capturing rhetorical device: ‘Through emotion you can pass on to issues. It is a bit like if you watch Reko Lundán’s [Finnish playwright] social dramas: it is through emotion that you start opening the issue’ (chief news editor, TV Four). Or, emotional expression is seen to provide an intellectual shortcut for telling a story: ‘[Emotion] is an element that is in fact very suited to telling a really big story in a very short time, sometimes even in a few seconds’ (reporter home affairs 1, NOS). However, a Finnish reporter working for TV Four, which has differentiated itself from competitors by a distinct visual narrative, claimed that journalists generally are not very skilful at infusing emotion into news stories. He argued that journalists should gain more ‘emotional literacy’, that is, that they should become less like ‘social scientists’ and more like filmmakers in order to properly employ emotion and benefit from it in news reporting (reporter home affairs/cultural affairs 1, TV Four).

The idea of emotion as facilitating the intelligibility of a news story was often discussed in terms of identification; namely, when viewers can make a meaningful connection between news and their own lives by identifying or ‘suffering’ with the characters who share their views, feelings or experiences of an issue or event (cf. Grabe and Zhou, 2003: 316). Thus, emotional testimonies of news sources work to interpret what news, especially often abstract political and economic subjects, and their consequences mean to the general public: ‘I think that letting someone who has an experience of it to summarize the issue in an emotionally appealing way, I think that it is a very good way to deliver the message’ (reporter home affairs/cultural affairs 2, TV Four).

Finally, journalists acknowledged the role of emotion in shaping the way in which the viewers watch news. News is also about storytelling and the emotions engaged by the narrative content typically work to both trigger and maintain the interest of the viewers. In all narratives, emotions are a central device that producers of news have for managing the attention of their audiences, as illustrated by the following quote:

[There are emotions in the news] so that people can stand watching it and become interested in it. I do not know if the message gets across more easily that way, but we have to, it is a tough competition, keep people watching so that they stay interested. Nobody can stand watching like these blah blah blah long-winded facts. It does not get across to anybody. (Political reporter, MTV3)

The management of the audience’s attention through emotional address, although it is not at odds with the function of providing understanding, may, of course, be economically beneficial. However, the journalists did not approach the function of emotion in news from this point of view. There was only one exception to this general unwillingness to address the use of emotion in terms of economic necessity: an editor of the Finnish commercial news programme *MTV3 News* stated that the harsh competition simply demands ‘something more rousing all the time’.

Emotion and journalistic quality

In this section, I look more closely at the relationship between journalists’ values and their discourse on emotion. While a few journalists negatively emphasized, on the one hand, the relationship between emotion and entertainment and, on the other hand, the opposition between emotion and reason, emotionality as such, on the whole, was not perceived as something either good or bad. The general view was that whether or not emotional expression presents a danger to journalistic quality depends entirely on *how emotion is used and with what intentions*. The ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ uses are perfectly summed up in the following quote: ‘It all comes down to the question of whether journalism uses emotions to make the story more attractive or uses emotions to evoke feeling and get better ratings’ (research journalist, NOS). This statement also illustrates the conceptual problems and contradictions in the professional discourse on emotion, especially regarding intentions and outcomes; journalists should produce ‘emotionally attractive’ news stories to attract attention and retain interest but not in order to *consciously* seek commercial profit.

In everyday language, the term emotionality typically has a connotation of excess or irrationality: we are, for instance, 'carried away with' emotion. Such a view was also deeply embedded in journalists' ideas about emotional elements in news. While emotion may add to the task of providing information, *excessive emotionality* inevitably represents a threat to these objectives. Working with emotions requires great caution and restraint. Consequently, the most important question regarding emotion seemed to be: 'how much emotion is too much?' This is vital since getting the measure right is what distinguishes 'good' journalism from 'bad', sensation-seeking journalism: 'When you use emotions in a populist way it lowers quality. I can say that certain programmes of SBS [Dutch commercial broadcaster] and *De Telegraaf* [popular newspaper] lower the quality of news' (news presenter, desk editor, NOS). Thus, the emotional style of news reporting is commonly used as a means of distinction between quality journalism and other journalisms. In quality news, emotion features as a slave of reason but in other kinds of news it is elevated to the role of master: 'In *Heart of the Netherlands* [tabloid news show on the SBS] emotions are central. In our newscast emotions are never central' (editor-in-chief, NOS).

Similar to focusing excessively on emotions, employing *non-authentic* emotions was also regarded as characteristic of lower quality news reporting. Whereas 'authentic' emotions point outwards to the world, that is, to the story and the subjects of the news report, 'artificial' emotions are consciously constructed by journalists: 'In Britain television news is really like the yellow press. . . . Reporters actually construct emotions for the news subjects' (photojournalist, YLE1). The journalists emphasized that emotions should come naturally, and not be forced or sought after by the journalists: 'Emotion comes from, like, if we tell the story through people, through a case, so then emotion either is there or it is not. We do not try to artificially, say, chase or pursue it' (chief news editor 2, MTV3). The reasoning about authentic emotions is extended to claim that emotional storytelling actually emerges from journalists' subconscious rather than conscious goals: 'I think that the subconscious is working all the time, so that when you are writing a story, you instinctively try to get the emotion in it. It is like something that can never be planned' (political reporter, MTV3). Some Finnish journalists, however, pointed out some ritual topics (such as Independence Day celebrations and the funeral of the Swedish Prime Minister Anna Lindh) in which the emotional elements of reporting are carefully planned and reflected on within the newsroom.

The traditional ideal of dispassionate factual reporting is not congruent with the view of journalism as emotion-laden storytelling. The conflict between subjective emotions and objective reporting on emotions was resolved, on the one hand, by the rejection of 'authorial' emotions (journalists' own emotions) and 'artificial' emotions as discussed earlier, and, on the other hand, by rejecting journalists' influence on the emotional effects of reporting. The journalists stressed that emotion cannot be employed in news reporting for creating a certain response. As the following example demonstrates, evoking emotions does not belong to journalists' conception of good journalism:

I am not adverse to emotion, but I do not think that it should be triggered or blown out of proportion. You have to record it when it presents itself but you should not cause it yourself. . . . We are not after stirring up protests. . . . We are also not here to get everyone marching to the Binnenhof [House of Parliament in The Hague] and setting fire to it. (Editor-in-chief, NOS)

The primary role the journalists ascribed to themselves regarding emotion is that of an uninvolved witness: the task of a journalist is to 'register', not to manage emotions in a sense of aiming to a certain emotional effect. As one journalist stated, 'Saying "Boys, stay calm!" is not our job. If things are getting out of hand, then we only register that they are getting out of hand' (reporter home affairs 1, NOS). There were, however, obvious contradictions within this professional self-image and its rejection of responsibility for the emotional consequences of journalistic work. On several occasions journalists brought forward the positive 'impact' of emotional narratives beyond capturing the viewers' attention, such as raising awareness and compassion for the victims of disasters. And, of course, journalists' discussion of ethics and emotional distance shows that the 'management' of public emotions is very much part of daily news work, even if it is not labelled as such. Both Dutch and Finnish journalists, for instance, highlighted the difference between international news and national news regarding the direction (positive/negative) and intensity (weak/strong) of emotion. Thus, while international news is typically characterized by hotter and more negative emotions, news about national issues is bound to include calmer and more positive emotions because it 'simply concerns people who themselves can also watch television' (editor-in-chief, NOS).

Discussion

This study, taking a view on emotional expression in news, illustrates how journalists' discourse about emotion is engaged in maintaining journalists' professional reputation and negotiating what counts as 'good journalism'. Certain ideological values are so embedded in the professional self-definition that, as Deuze (2008: 16) has argued, journalists 'talk about them every time they articulate, defend or critique the decisions they and their peers make'. When talking about emotions, journalists stressed their focus on information, their sense of ethics and their objectivity and neutrality in dealing with emotions. In this respect, there are no essential differences between Dutch and Finnish journalists or between journalists working for commercial broadcasters and public broadcasters.

Some academic commentators have connected the emotionalization of news to the growing commercialism of broadcast journalism, or to the 'entertainment values' of news media which stress drama and evocation of emotions over information and the social and historical contexts of events. Not surprisingly, the respondents rejected this view and instead framed the increased acceptance of emotion as an adaptation to late modern social and cultural contexts. Although they saw that emotions have become more acceptable elements of news, this development has not changed the traditional values or roles of journalism. For the respondents in this study, emotion did not present a challenge to the rationales of factuality and objectivity. On the one hand, presenting and interpreting 'relevant' individual and collective emotions were seen as a part of journalism's aim to reveal reality, as 'facts', without which the whole truth is not told; on the other hand, the main objective of emotional storytelling was to enhance the political and social knowledge of the audience, to facilitate the understanding of news. One question was to find out how journalists perceived their role in the regulation of public feeling.

Like journalists' own emotional engagement, any active attempts to evoke or influence the public's emotions were rejected. This rejection of responsibility, like the idea of journalism merely following changes in society, certainly echoes journalism's claim to be only the messenger of reality, although we could also see it as undermining journalism's social importance.

However, even if the respondents were able to fit emotional expression into the public service value of broadcast news, this does not mean that they were not critical towards 'emotional news'. The discourse on emotion was highly negative, and focused on dangers embedded in emotional expression. Moreover, within all newsrooms, traditional views of journalism, based on the reason/emotion and information/entertainment binaries, were present. Importantly, however, the journalists did not simplistically distinguish 'good' journalism from 'bad' journalism on the grounds that the latter is concerned with emotion; instead, they highlighted the different ways and motivations for using emotions.

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