The BBC's solutions-focused video stories on Facebook:
Practicing the 'dark arts' of solutions journalism

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

Petra Kovačević

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Journalism, Media and Culture

Cardiff University

September 2022

I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

III

SUMMARY

Journalism has been criticized for being too negative, and this is one of the main reasons for active news avoidance and rising levels of distrust among audiences. Among the proposed antidotes are socially responsible journalistic practices that aim to report beyond the problem, such as solutions journalism – a practice that is part of constructive journalism, and which focuses on reporting on solutions to societal problems. Inherent in this practice are two main ideas: to maintain the rigour of journalism ideals, but also to engage the audience and inspire social change and progress. Whether these ideas are implemented in practice, and how they are understood within the context of a particular newsroom, has not been studied until now. This case study of the BBC's practice called solutions-focused journalism focuses on the *BBC People Fixing the World* team and its solutions-focused video stories that are intended primarily for younger audiences and published on Facebook and the BBC's website. On the one hand, it explores the different understandings of solutions-focused journalism among journalists and editors. On the other hand, it explores if and how these ideas, along with solutions journalism guidelines, are implemented in the solutions-focused video stories and identifies the factors that enforce or compromise this. The findings show that, while journalists and editors care about the ideals and values of journalism, the presentation of solutions is often incomplete because of the tendency to exclude negative information, keep a dominantly positive tone, and simplify the narrative. The main factors that determine the production process are the chase for better audience metrics, the demands of social media platforms, and the audience preferences. This study prompts a necessary debate about the sustainability of solutions journalism's normative foundation in practice, and the resourcefulness of newsrooms to successfully implement its key ideas in today's media environment.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF SCREENSHOTS

Chapter 1:
INTRODUCTION

One morning, out of habit I visited one of the news websites I trust, and I was struck with another daily wave of 'doom and gloom' news. It was so overwhelming that I decided to write down the headlines. "Russia using nuclear plant like a shield – Ukrainian energy head", "Drought hits Europe's rivers and crops", "Alps glaciers melting faster as heatwaves hit", "Truce brings relief to Gaza, for now", "China conducts new military drills near Taiwan", "The newborns fighting for survival in Afghanistan", and the list went on. Which one did I click on? None. "The overall grimness of the news cycles" (Allsop 2022) has been here for years, but the war, the pandemic, the climate emergency and other issues in the world have led us to the point where people – including myself – are googling "tips for surviving the news", or even more likely – they are consciously accessing the news less and less. According to the last report by the Reuters Institute, among the most common reasons for avoiding the news is that it has a "negative effect on mood" and the rates of news avoidance across the world have been increasing (Newman et al. 2022, p. 13).

One thought from the recent opinion piece in *The Washington Post*, written by the journalist Amanda Ripley, sums it up rather eloquently: "If news sites were people, most would be diagnosed as clinically depressed right now" (Ripley 2022). Negativity has evolved into a dominant, but often unstated news value. However, there are some news organisations that have decided to go another way, and by this I do not mean that they decided to have one happy news story each Sunday morning. Instead, they "embraced editorial principles that incorporate a constructive approach" in order to respond to the "increasing tabloidization, sensationalism, and negativity bias of the news media" (Jørgensen and Risbro 2022, pp. 3-4). The practice called constructive journalism aims to see the world – as one of its founders and former head of news at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) Urlik Haagerup said – "with both eyes", and in this way present "the best obtainable version of the truth" (EBU 2016) and show that the world is not as bad as the media

present it to be. This means focussing on possible solutions to social problems, more contextualised reporting, and facilitating debates in communities (Constructive Institute 2022a), and ultimately, making people feel empowered to act and make changes in their societies. Constructive journalism found its permanent home at the Constructive Institute at Aarhus University in Denmark, but also in many newsrooms – *Deutsche Welle*, *The Guardian*, *The Huffington Post*, many public broadcasters in Europe, and media in other countries inside and outside of Europe.

Constructive journalism is often mentioned alongside solutions journalism. The two practices are positioned in research as "separate but intertwined" approaches that share the same core ideas – the aim to "act as an antidote to the negativity bias in traditional news" and to provide more "contextual, thematic reporting with an aim to increase trust and empower audiences" (Lough and McIntyre 2021a, p. 2). However, unlike constructive journalism, which points out the importance of reporting on solutions but still has a broader scope and is somewhat more conceptual, solutions journalism reports exclusively on responses and is a more hands-on approach with specific guidelines. According to its proponents' organisation, it is "leading a global shift in journalism" as it reports on how people are responding to problems in their communities (Porter and Hansen Shapiro 2022, p. 46).

Solutions journalism is, therefore, "one form of constructive journalism" (Lough and McIntyre 2021a, p. 13). It emerged in the U.S., backed by the non-profit organisation Solutions Journalism Network (SJN) that was founded in 2013 by the journalists David Bronstein and Tina Rosenberg (Thier 2021, p. 48). Even though there were attempts of solutions reporting before this outside of the U.S., the SJN was the first one to develop it into a concrete journalistic practice that focuses on one important aspect of constructive journalism – responses to social problems. It has been practiced in many newsrooms across the U.S. but also worldwide. Over 6000 journalists and 1,600 news outlets have submitted more than 13 thousand solutions stories to the Solutions Journalism Network and can be found using the so-called Solutions Story Tracker (Solutions Journalism Network 2022a).

Both constructive and solutions journalism are forms of so-called socially responsible journalism, a new umbrella term that has emerged in academia and that

is still in development (Hautakangas and Ahva 2018; McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021a; Ahva 2022a). These practices are dedicated to the highest standards of journalism, particularly to the notions of accuracy, fairness and transparency, but at the same time care about society's best interest and cover stories that move away from the narrative that focuses solely on problems; instead they nurture collaboration and stronger engagement with audiences along with more contextual reporting that should, ultimately, empower the citizens to act and support social change (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021c, pp. 172-173). In this way, constructive journalism and solutions journalism aim to fulfil both the watchdog role, but also the so-called "constructive" role which is oriented towards "social progress" and "hope" and has the main motive of providing "solutions to address social problems" (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 5). Therefore, the two central ideas of both practices are, first, the importance of a rigorous and critical reporting approach, and second, the aim of achieving better audience engagement – ranging from shareability and likeability of stories to the ideal of citizens who, inspired by constructive or solutions stories, decide to take action and change their community for the better.

I first encountered constructive journalism and solutions journalism in 2015. Now, seven years later, the ideas of these practices are still buzzing in professional and academic conferences, workshops are being given in newsrooms, and the Reuters Institute predicts that there will be more "constructive formats" and that newsrooms "will be trying to move coverage away from a catastrophic narrative" (Newman 2022). Jay Rosen, one of the main advocates of the civic journalism movement in the nineties, said this year in a keynote speech dedicated to constructive journalism: "Newsrooms that cannot find a way to treat problem-solving and knowledge transfer as a basic part of the news mix will, I think, become less and less valuable over time" (2022). This is a strong statement, in line with both constructive journalism and solutions journalism which hold many bold promises, some of which somewhat seduced me as a journalist.

However, I decided to study these practices further not because of my slight initial infatuation, but because of something that many senior colleagues had been telling me – that the ideas of constructive and solutions journalism are 'slippery' because

they are trying at the same time to inspire social change by making the audiences feel hopeful, but also to serve as a watchdog (Aitamurto and Varma 2018), and can, therefore, easily become simple positive news instead of "reporting done with the highest of journalistic standards" (Solutions Journalism Network 2022b). Perhaps this kind of criticism is the reason why the proponents of these practices point out that neither constructive or solutions journalism are positive news, referring to the reporting approach that is light and uncritical, and to feel-good stories about good people doing something nice (Atanasova 2018; Rosen 2022). Constructive journalism is, therefore, "a rich site for debate and analysis", particularly because of the potential "politicization and commercial appropriation of the notion" and because it is often an object of "ill-informed or derisory interpretations reducing the notion to 'uncritical reporting' or simply 'happy news'" (Mast et al. 2019, p. 494).

So far, research has been more concerned with audience effects and with how these practices were set up normatively and in the minds of journalists, and less with the point where all the promises are put to the test – the actual journalistic practice. In research, there has been a somewhat taken for granted assumption that when a newsroom does, for example, a solutions story, it is always a piece of "rigorous, compelling coverage" (Solutions Journalism Network 2022b), and that journalists' interpretations of constructive journalism or solutions journalism are directly translated into practice. But as studies have often shown, the gap between journalists' role perceptions and their practice can be significant (Mellado and Van Dalen 2014; Mellado 2015), and somewhat inevitable because of the hierarchy of influences in the news production process (Reese and Shoemaker 2016). For this reason, whether constructive journalism and related practices "can effectively contribute to the renewal of journalism culture and journalism practice is not clear yet" (Hermans and Drok 2018, p. 687), and the reporting practices in specific newsrooms should be studied more.

In this sense, examining how the BBC, "still probably the most prominent and respected" public broadcaster (Gardner 2017, p. 3), implements a reporting approach that focuses on solutions, is a valuable contribution to understanding these practices, particularly because of the BBC's dedication to "serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services

4

which inform, educate and entertain" (BBC 2019a, p. 12). The BBC's *solutions-focused journalism* and its solutions reporting projects are presented as "rigorous and compelling analyses of responses to problems" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4) and as "hard-hitting solutions journalism stories" that "thrive on social media" (Hutchings and Granger 2019). Since 2016, one of its projects called *People Fixing the World* has focused on podcasts, but also on short videos intended for social media platforms, and for connecting with particularly younger audience members which have been the BBC's most important target audience (Waterson 2019). In this way, the BBC is one of the rare media organisations that has a solutions project that focuses specifically on a video format, and that does this for online and social media audiences who are increasingly losing interest in news (Newman et al. 2022, p. 10).

For this reason, the main aim of this study is, for the first time, to conceptualise solutions-focused journalism to understand what the main ideas of this practice are and how they translate into practice in the context of its most long-standing project and its video team. This study uses a unique approach in the context of studying constructive journalism and solutions journalism, as it is the first one to focus on solutions reporting in one newsroom and to examine it by understanding both the journalists' and editors' interpretations of the practice, and by analysing the video stories that the team produces based on the existing academic and professional guidelines of solutions reporting (Bansal and Martin 2015; Kasriel 2016a; McIntyre and Lough 2021). Within this, I will identify specific factors that shape the way solutions-focused stories are ultimately told, and in this way, focus on the importance of context in which the production process is immersed – an aspect that other studies of constructive journalism or solutions journalism have not considered until now.

In this way, the study will contribute to the research into socially responsible journalism practices in several ways. First, it will open the debate about if and how the solutions journalism ideas are translated and implemented in journalistic practice and what factors in newswork support or inhibit this process. This is important because, so far, the normative ideas of these practices – designed by its proponents – have been somewhat taken for granted by researchers. This case study will aim to critically question them by examining the context of solutions

reporting in an actual newsroom at the BBC. This is particularly crucial in terms of the point that the proponents, but also some scholars, make: that socially responsible journalism practices are "not positive news or fluff reporting", but "rigorous reporting practices" (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021b, pp. 1-2). Second, following its findings, this study will contribute to both theory and practice with an advanced operationalisation of, so far, the only solutions journalism guidelines developed in academia and that have been based solely on one side of the production process – how journalists perceive solutions journalism and think that solutions reporting should be done (McIntyre and Lough 2021).

Third, other than studying the 'rigorous' aspect of solutions reporting, this study will also contribute to understanding in what way the BBC's team understands the notion of audience engagement and what is done in the stories themselves to connect with audiences, particularly in terms of narrative and of storytelling strategies. This is important because the promise of engagement is inherent in both solutions journalism and constructive journalism, yet it remains a largely ambiguous notion. Fourth, this is the first time a video form will be examined in the context of visual solutions journalism, and, therefore, this study will aim to advance the visual theoretical framework of this practice (Midberry and Dahmen 2020). Finally, this study will discuss the role of solutions reporting in the context of the BBC as a public broadcaster, but also of public broadcasting in general, particularly in the context of connecting with young audiences.

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. In the next three chapters, I will present the most relevant literature related to constructive journalism and solutions journalism. In Chapter 2 I will position constructive journalism and solutions journalism in the context of journalism as a practice, but also within existing academic research and debates around these practices. I will begin by identifying the main challenges of today's journalism that inspired the ideas of both practices, particularly the issue of negativity in news. Further, I will explain the ways in which constructive journalism and solutions journalism are defined, including in what aspects these practices overlap and differ. I will also explain how scholars have positioned them as socially responsible journalism practices and point out the inherent tension between two

roles of constructive and solutions journalism – the monitorial and the so-called constructive role of journalism.

Then in Chapter 3 I will review the existing studies of both practices that focus on different issues – those who practice them, audience reception, the content itself, but also the importance of context within which these practices are shaped. Here, I will establish that no study has been done that aimed to understand either of the practices by studying both sides of the production process – what is said and what is done. The last part of the chapter I will dedicate to constructive and solutions journalism in the context of public broadcasters, particularly the BBC and its practice of *solutions-focused journalism,* and explain why studying this practice and its project that focuses on video stories for young audiences on social media, is a valuable contribution to research, including the domain of visual solutions journalism.

In Chapter 4 I will present the main research questions and research aims. I will critically examine the third part of the literature related to professional and academic guidelines on how solutions should be reported on. Based on this, I will present the analytical framework I designed for studying solutions-focused journalism at the BBC. I will explain in what way I developed it, and present solutions journalism criteria that, according to its proponents, are necessary for a journalistic story to be a solutions story.

In Chapter 5 I will present my case study approach and introduce the main methods I use to study solutions-focused journalism and the BBC's team. I will argue for a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to conceptualize a journalistic practice that allows gaining a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of, in this case, solutions-focused journalism. I will present the three research phases and detail the way in which the chosen methods were employed. I will also point out the limitations of each method, and of conducting a case study.

In Chapters 6-8, I will present the findings of my study. First, in Chapter 6, I will present the different notions of how journalists and editors in the BBC's team understand solutions-focused journalism, and to what extent this is different from the ideas of solutions journalism proponents. I will also identify the main factors in

the team's newswork that enforce or compromise the implementation of their ideas and identify a significant gap between what the members of the BBC's team want their stories to be, and the frustration they express related to the factors they need to consider when they pack their stories for a specific audience, format, and platform. I will point out the unique features that the members of this team think a solutions-focused story intended for a social media audience should have.

Then, in Chapter 7, I will analyse the content of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories and if the main ideas of solutions reporting are implemented in them. I will particularly focus on the importance of rigorous portrayal of the problems and solutions and to what extent this is applied in the BBC's video stories. A significant discrepancy between what solutions-focused journalism should be, and what it is in practice, emerges as the most significant finding. In the interviews with the journalists and editors, I will identify the main reasons behind this, and again come back to the issues of platform, audience, and format.

In Chapter 8, I will examine the narrative structure and the employed storytelling techniques in the BBC's solutions-focused videos in order to understand how audience engagement – a significant aspect of solutions reporting – is achieved on the production side of solutions reporting. Here, I will point out that the ways of winning and keeping the audience's attention employed by the BBC's journalists significantly diverge from the established postulates of traditional storytelling. I will indicate the unique storytelling choices and the ways in which they compromise the aims of solutions reporting – particularly the requirement the present the problem-solving process and help the audience critically evaluate the solutions.

Finally, in Chapter 9 I will discuss the relevance of the findings of my study for journalism studies, particularly for research related to solutions journalism and other socially responsible journalism practices. I will point out the main contributions of my research and present the conceptualization of solutions-focused journalism based on the results of my study, though limited to the context of the BBC's project. I will specifically question the dedication to rigour in solutions reporting and point out that the distinction that the proponents of these practices make – that they should not be equated with positive news – may not always be reflected in practice. The

boundaries of these genres can often merge in the endeavour to make the audience feel a certain way. Additionally, I will present a more detailed operationalization of solutions journalism guidelines, which is also a contribution to the practice of solutions reporting and can be used as a resource in newsrooms. I will discuss the wider implications of this study's findings in the context of public broadcasters, particularly the challenges that newsrooms may encounter in the implementation of solutions journalism ideas. Finally, I will point out the limitations of my study and present the recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 2:
CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM AND SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM: PURPOSE, DEFINITIONS, AND IDEAS

2.1.   Introduction

Today many newsrooms are trying to "produce more journalism with fewer resources for a fragmenting audience" (Fisher et al. 2021, p. 1498). At the same time, journalists are "torn" between remaining dedicated to the professional values of journalism and fulfilling their social and democratic responsibility to the audience yet answering the demands of the market and the demands of the audiences – on which they ultimately depend on (Brants 2013, p. 20). However, there are still some of them wondering if changing their journalism would make a difference. Constructive journalism and solutions journalism both emerged within the journalistic practice and are trying to change the way journalists and newsrooms assess what is newsworthy, but also how they do their jobs. By focussing on the bright side and eliciting positive feelings, yet remaining critical, these two practices are taking on a challenging task. At the same time, their proponents consider them a significant contribution to better informing the citizens and inspiring them to act in their communities more actively and responsibly. Even though no study yet has shown that this actually happens, other studies point to simple, yet significant changes that solutions and constructive stories may elicit in audience members.

The literature review is divided into three chapters. This chapter presents the first part of the relevant literature related to the ways in which constructive journalism and solutions journalism are defined, both by proponents and scholars. It starts with the issues that inspired the ideas of constructive journalism and solutions journalism – the growing lack of trust in journalism along with the rising levels of news avoidance, which are in many respects a consequence of reporting that has become too negative and has focussed primarily on problems. Then, I position the two practices within the context of socially responsible journalism and explain in what way their ideas reinterpret the purpose of journalism in society.

## 2.2.	Lack of trust in journalism and growing news avoidance

Trust may be considered "the lifeblood of journalism's role in and contribution to people's sense making" (Brants 2013, p. 17). In other words, it is "possibly the most precious asset" of journalism (Porlezza and Russ-Mohl 2013, p. 45) and central to how journalistic practice is legitimised in democracies (Van Dalen 2020, p. 356). It is also an asset "on which news organizations capitalize to generate reputation and economic profit" (Hanitzsch et al. 2018, p. 4). In their conceptualisation of media trust, Hanitzsch, Van Dalen and Steindl define it as "the willingness of the audience to be vulnerable to news content based on the expectation that the media will perform in a satisfactory manner" (2018, p. 5).

However, the rising levels of distrust in journalism across many countries – often related to citizens' distrust in political institutions – are putting today's journalism in a difficult position (Brants 2013; Hanitzsch et al. 2018; Kalogeropoulos et al. 2019; Strömbäck et al. 2020; Fisher et al. 2021). At the same time, news organisations have been facing "digital disruption, failing business models and staff cuts" (Fisher et al. 2021, p. 1498), and are trying to find new sustainable business models in an environment where they are no longer the only gatekeeper. Today news organisations depend on platforms, such as social media, which have "drastically changed the distribution and production of news, with algorithms intervening in the implementation of journalistic standards" and have opened the doors to a "proliferation of misinformation or false or misleading content" (d'Haenens 2021, p. 451) – and to counter it, winning over audience's trust becomes even more imperative.

In the midst of these challenges for journalism, the lack of trust in journalism has been measured differently, but some common factors have been identified. A useful model is by Kohring and Matthes, who identified four dimensions of measuring trust in journalism: in the selectivity of topics, of facts, in the accuracy of depictions, and in journalistic assessment (2007, cited in Strömbäck et al. 2020, p. 141). Reviewing the studies of trust in journalism and news, I encountered the following list, which is a useful summary of identified key factors that influence trust:

- the reputation and recognition of the news brand,

- perception of bias in choice of sources and facts,
- the way opinion is distinguished from fact,
- level of transparency,
- the quality of journalism – particularly the issues of accuracy and objectivity of reporting, but also sensationalism and lack of in-depth reporting,
- the importance of local journalism as a factor of creating a relationship of trust with audiences (Fisher et al. 2021, pp. 1500-1504).

Additionally, the lack of trust is related to "a persistent pattern of negativity and cynicism in the news" (Hanitzsch et al. 2018, p. 4). But, not less importantly, it is related to people and their individual traits, or as Nelson and Lewis suggest, "perhaps people's approach to and trust in news is far more dependent on what *they* bring to the news, as opposed to what news brings to them" (2021, p. 17). In this sense, journalists are trying to understand the "ever-fragmenting audiences" that have different needs and consume news in more complex ways than before (Broersma and Peters 2013, pp. 1-2). More importantly, "an attentive citizenry can no longer be assumed" (Broersma and Peters 2013, p. 9), and with the "explosion of digital practices and platforms", new journalistic forms have been constantly emerging – but this has been happening "at the cost to institutional clarity and coherence" of journalism (Reese and Shoemaker 2016, p. 393). Audiences' news consumption habits and conditions have been rapidly changing as they are immersed into a "high-choice media environment" (Van Aelst et al. 2017) where news organisations are no longer the only ones demanding its attention. This has created a situation that can go two ways – "just as news can nowadays potentially be consumed anytime and everywhere, it can also be avoided anytime and anywhere" (Villi et al. 2022, p. 148).

2.2.1.   News avoidance and the issue of negativity

In this sense, one of the main reasons for the rising levels of news avoidance is the mentioned lack of trust in journalism (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020, p. 464). Avoiding the news may lead citizens to disconnect and not engage in society – which is seen, along with the growing distrust, as a considerable challenge for a functioning democracy (Blekesaune et al. 2012; Van Aelst et al. 2017; Strömbäck

2017) – particularly in terms of "social cohesion, effective politics, sustainable communities, and individual self-governance" (Broersma and Peters 2013, p. 9). Just like trust, news avoidance – be it intentional or unintentional – is related to both contextual and psychological conditions. On the one hand, the behaviour of avoiding news is affected by the "cultures of news consumption" (Toff and Kalogeropoulos 2020, p. 370) – social, cultural, and political factors in specific countries (Villi et al. 2022, p. 158; Hanitzsch et al. 2018, p. 19)– including what news is available to citizens and how it is distributed. Additionally, digital technology used for consuming news – with social media algorithms choosing what news may be consumed and increasing the risk of exposing the audiences to unreliable news (ACCC 2019, cited in Fisher et al. 2021, p. 1498) – further complicates the "theories of how people tend to deliberately seek out or avoid news" (Toff and Kalogeropoulos 2020, p. 369). Also, using social media to access news, along with the use of multiple sources of news on them, is correlated with lower levels of trust in news (Kalogeropoulos et al. 2019, p. 3683).

Of course, people have different individual needs and motivations for accessing or avoiding news, or for having trust in journalism. The reasons for news avoidance largely overlap with the factors that influence rising levels of distrust (Serrano-Puche 2020; Villi et al. 2022). Among intentional causes of news avoidance, other than the lack of trust, Skovsgaard and Andersen identified two other main reasons: first, that the news is too negative and makes the audience members feel bad, and second, that "the increasing amount of available news" is getting more difficult to navigate (2020, pp. 463-465).

Among these reasons, it is particularly negativity – and the fact that news has become a significant source of stress for many citizens because it overly focuses on problems in society – that is pointed out today as one of the biggest criticisms of news and the reason why audiences have been tuning out. The most recent reports by the Reuters Institute say that the key reason for the rise of news avoidance across the world is that news negatively impacts people's moods and makes them feel powerless to change anything for the better (Newman et al. 2019, p. 10; Newman et al. 2022, p. 13). Therefore, negative news is an "emotional driver of news avoidance" that ranges "from fear and despair to anger and disgust", and is particularly strong

among younger adults (Villi et al. 2022, p. 156). The exposure to this kind of news reflects negatively on mental health (Boukes and Vliegenthart 2017). In this sense, negativity as one of the central reasons for news avoidance was particularly prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kalogeropoulos et al. 2020; Broersma and Swart 2021; Mannell and Meese 2022; Newman et al. 2022).

Negativity can be understood either as news that contains a negative tone, or news that focuses on topics of conflict, incapability, or misconduct (Lengauer et al. 2011, pp. 184-185). Most news indeed seems to be bad news – covering topics of crime, war, death and other types of suffering, disasters, evil or simply put – deviance (Shoemaker and Reese 2014, p. 53). In this way, following these events is also related to the media's watchdog role of identifying threats in society. Leung and Lee (2015, p. 290) see bad news as a range of events and information that are considered undesirable by the society and that "elicit emotions of sadness, fear and/or anger". Even if harmony does exist, journalists are less likely to report on it (Schudson 2011, p. 44). Therefore, bad news and conflicts remain at the top of the list of contemporary news values (Harcup and O'Neill 2017, p. 1482) and significantly outweigh news about positive developments in society.

However, negativity has evolved from a news value to becoming an overarching news ideology that has had an economic and instrumental value in the struggle for people's attention because "conflict-centred negativity is more 'marketable' than positive news as it is more eye-catching, adds drama, stimulates interest, and is easy to understand even by uninformed audiences" (Lengauer et al. 2011, p. 182), and, therefore, is often related to sensationalism in journalism. Research shows that this kind of news attracts more attention and stronger reactions than positive news (Baumeister et al. 2001; Soroka and McAdams 2015; Soroka et al. 2019), even when the audience does not trust the news source (Baum and Rahman 2021). Shoemaker (1996, p. 38) described the inclination to follow negative news as an outcome of the evolutionary process: people are genetically wired to look out for threats and deviance in order to protect themselves. Therefore, bad news is something the audiences expect and that is genetically rooted in them, and journalists have been 'counting' on audience's attention pointed towards negative events and issues.

Even though some believe that this kind of news has an important informational value which is healthy for active citizenship (De Vreese and Tobiasen 2007), others feel that journalists have taken it too far and produced a contrary effect, with bad news making people feel more powerless (Woodstock 2014), having a negative effect on political engagement (Bennett 2009), causing distrust in political leaders (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2006), and, ultimately, turning the audiences away. Particularly young people under 35 point out the negative effect that news has on their mood as the main reason for avoiding it, and subsequently they "form habits of avoiding this negativity" (Eddy 2022). Younger audiences think that "news brands are overplaying the negative", and they want stories that inspire change "and provide a path to positive action" (Galan et al. 2019, pp. 41, 55).

Amid these challenges for journalism, engagement is increasingly seen as an important element in the relationship between journalists and audiences in terms of trust building (Robinson et al. 2021, p. 1222). For this reason, newsrooms have been trying to find effective ways of engaging with the audience and increasing "trust, connectedness, and social capital" (Lewis et al. 2014, cited in Wenzel 2020, p. 12), but also of improving "revenue flows" (Fisher et al. 2021, p.1498). The idea is that new ways of audience engagement "could move journalism towards more transparency and lead to greater trust" (Meier et al. 2018, p. 1053), and this has brought forth journalistic practices that want to change the way in which journalism should fulfil its democratic commitments, and the strategies used by newsrooms to connect with their audiences.

Practices that aim to address particularly the negativity bias in news, offer audiences something different, and in this way engage it on multiple levels are constructive journalism and solutions journalism. They are presented as potential solutions to intentional news avoidance in terms of how the news should be selected and presented (Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020).

2.3.   Constructive journalism and solutions journalism

The shared starting idea of solutions journalism and constructive journalism could be summed up as follows: the world is not as bad as the news present it. Their proponents want to regain the audience's trust in journalism (Hermans and Gyldensted 2019, p. 537) and dispel the main motives for news avoidance (Serrano-Puche 2020) by changing journalists' perspectives on what is worth reporting on. Both practices emerged within the journalistic profession – constructive journalism started off in the news department at the Danish public broadcaster DR, while solutions journalism was set up by journalists who co-founded a non-profit organisation in the U.S. called the Solutions Journalism Network.

Constructive and solutions journalism share the same goal – to "balance the overemphasis on problems and negativity in journalistic coverage and offer audiences forward-looking perspectives on how they can actively help steer society in desired directions" (Hautakangas and Ahva 2018, p. 731). In this way, the practices want to move away from "sensationalism, conflict frames, and negativity as criteria for newsworthiness", and "treat initiatives to address problems as a central news value that makes an issue newsworthy" (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 10).

Further, these practices both want to report on what went right in society and in this way – as their proponents claim – present the world more *accurately* (McCann 2016; Haagerup 2017; McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017). In this sense, they are positioned as "'necessary' and 'trustworthy' forms of journalism" that also address the criticisms of inaccuracy in journalism and "enable journalists to better reach the ideals of accuracy – the truth – in journalism" (Aiamurto and Varma 2018, p. 12). While both constructive and solutions journalism are a reaction to the same faults of journalism and share the same normative ideas and scope; the proponents of constructive journalism conceptualise it as a wider set of ideas to cover "potentials rather than the problems of society" (Bro 2019, p. 514), in comparison with solutions journalism which has a narrower focus and is practically a more elaborate approach.

2.3.1.   What is constructive journalism

For constructive journalism, it is important to tell stories "about progress, achievement, and collaboration" in societies (Bro and Gyldensted 2021, p. 29). However, there are differences in the way this practice has been conceptualised by its proponents (Bro 2019). First is the more active conceptualisation of constructive journalism proposed by Cathrine Gyldensted (2015) who suggested at conscious application of positive psychology techniques in news production. Here positive emotions – like happiness, hope, joy, and others – are seen as "key ingredients to helping constructive news stories achieve their goal of energizing and engaging readers", even when negative events are reported on (McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017, p. 27). The first possible positive psychology technique or element of constructive journalism is adding a "solutions-oriented framing of news" (1), while other possible elements are adding a future orientation in reporting (2), inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives (3), empowerment of citizens through nuanced interview questions (4), more contextualised reporting (5), or co-creation of news with citizens (6) (Hermans and Gyldensted 2019, pp. 538-539).

Second is the perspective on constructive journalism developed by the former DR news director and founder of Constructive Institute Ulrik Haagerup (2017), which is deemed as a more 'passive' approach towards journalism (Bro 2019, p. 516) because the focus is more on the changes in the process of news selection and production, without any reference to positive psychology techniques or the need to actively support change. The goal, however, is the same as for Gyldensted – to contribute to a more "fair, accurate and contextualised picture of the world" through focusing on solutions and covering nuances to reach "the best obtainable version of the truth", and promote democratic conversation in communities (Constructive Institute 2022a).

2.3.2.   What is solutions journalism

Just like constructive journalism, solutions journalism also wants to report on "themes of collaboration, reconstruction, and advancement in addition to the more typical themes of conflict, destruction, and tragedy" (McIntyre and Lough 2021,

p.1564). The Solutions Journalism Network, as the main proponent of solutions reporting, presents it as a "'rigorous, compelling coverage of responses to social problems" dedicated to the "highest journalistic standards" (2022b). Some even position it as a practice that aims to be an "extension of investigative journalism" (Li 2021a, p. 6). In this way, it is a journalistic practice that tries to be inspiring, but also "critical in nature" (Lowes and Devereaux Ferguson 2021, p. 64).

But while constructive journalism does not want to be "a cookie cutter toolkit" for journalism (Constructive Institute 2021), solutions journalism is conceptualised as a more focused, hands-on approach "nested" in constructive journalism (Lough and McIntyre 2021a, p. 4). Overgaard sums it up: "All solutions journalism is constructive journalism but not all constructive journalism is solutions journalism" (2021, p. 3). This practice reports on one element of constructive journalism – solutions or "workable responses to societal problems" (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021b, p. 8); it inspires action, but at the same time aims to present "the complete story" (Thier 2021, p. 47). In the next chapter I will summarise the main studies of both practices, but with slightly more attention given to solutions journalism because it has shaped into a conceptually clearer and practically more refined reporting approach with precise guidelines. However, before that it is important to understand the broader conceptual framework that both practices belong in.

2.3.3. What is socially responsible journalism

Constructive journalism and solutions journalism have been positioned under the umbrella of *socially responsible journalism* (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021a, Ahva 2022a), which originates from the social responsibility theory of the press (Peterson 1956). The main idea of social responsibility is that journalism inevitably affects society and has certain obligations towards it (McQuail 2013, p. 10), and puts in focus the "social impact that the news media have on human life" (Ahva 2022a, para 3). Human life in the context of social responsibility is tied to the universal ethical principles of respect for human dignity, truthtelling, and nonviolence (Christians and Nordenstreng 2004, p. 21). From being only one of the theories of the press, it has today evolved into a "normative ethos in journalism culture" that helps

journalists "make sense of what their goals or ideas should be" (Ahva 2022b). The sense of heightened social responsibility towards citizens and of serving the society *better* is a way to contribute to the fulfilment of journalism's main purpose – its key commitment towards democracy, "in which they are expected to critically inform the public, so that as citizens they can participate fully in that democracy" (Brants 2013, pp. 20-21). This notion has been a central "asset" particularly to public broadcasters in Western democracies, seen as "instrumental to social orientations of citizens and to social cohesion in society" (Bardoel and Brants 2003, p. 168).

However, those who position constructive journalism, solutions journalism, and other practices – such as peace journalism, conciliatory journalism, explanatory journalism, slow journalism, and others – as socially responsible journalism (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021a, Ahva 2022a); offer their own notion of social responsibility and attach an inherently more active perspective on what journalists' responsibilities are, while criticising the journalistic routines that disregard them. Even though all journalism should be socially committed, according to Karen McIntyre (2022), these practices are "extra committed" to consider society's best interest as they cover news "beyond the problem-based narrative", change journalists' perspectives on what is newsworthy, report on complex issues and work together with citizens. Social responsibility of journalism in this sense should be effected through strengthening engagement and achieving a higher level of collaboration with the audience, while the practices place importance on the provision of context in reporting to help citizens better understand complex issues and events (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021c, p. 173). Similarly, Ahva identified that the key elements of socially responsible journalism are "contextual truth-telling", giving citizens access to information and to action, support of dialogue but also critique, and care for human dignity (2022b).

I identify this understanding as a contemporary reinterpretation of the journalistic ideal-typical value or the "doctrine" of journalists providing a public service (Deuze 2005, p. 454), and an expansion of the understanding of news having a democratic value based primarily on *informing* citizens in a way that empowers them to act in society (Cushion 2012, p. 204). It has evolved into a pursuit of a more active relationship with the audience and journalists and taking on more responsibilities

and roles beyond solely providing information. This interpretation inevitably enforces the competing discourses about the purpose of journalism.

One the one hand, the practices of socially responsible journalism clearly move away from the idea of a detached journalist (Hanitzsch 2007), and embrace the role of a more active, socially committed journalist who not only informs and warns citizens about problems in society, but "should seek to contribute to society's best interests" (Hautakangas and Ahva 2018, p. 731). This includes listening to citizens, supporting their active participation in society, seeking solutions, and encouraging citizens to do the same, facilitating discussions and dialogues in communities that soften social boundaries and deepen understanding, and nurturing diversity of voices and social inclusion through reporting (Ahva 2022a, para 35).

On the other hand, while some journalists in the West would dismiss notions of journalism's social responsibility and even see it as "a transgression of journalism's normative and ethical core", there are nevertheless those who reject the neutral and detached position, but at the same time respect the traditional norms of the profession (Hanitzsch et al. 2019, p. 27). This also applies to socially responsible journalistic practices as they strive to be "thorough, accurate, fair, and transparent" (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021c, p. 172), and in this way dedicated to the highest professional standards of journalism. In this sense, the way that socially responsible journalism has been conceptualised so far (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021a; Ahva 2022a) is also sustained by the core values of the journalistic profession – such as truth-seeking, fairness, editorial autonomy, independence, and respect for professional codes of ethics (Deuze 2005; Kovach and Rosenstiel 2014). Therefore, the intentions of socially responsible journalism do not exclude but rather normatively support journalism's monitorial role and its aim to hold power to account and create "a critically minded citizenry" (Hanitzsch 2018, p. 55).

2.3.4.   The struggle over normative boundaries

The tension inherent in socially responsible journalism's roles of being both journalistically critical and more engaged towards citizens is also clear from the way in which constructive and solutions journalism have been normatively set up by their

proponents. These ideas have also been the starting point in the research of these practices, particularly those by the journalist Cathrine Gyldensted (2015) who was one of the main proponents of constructive journalism at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR), where the practice first set off, and later collaborated on conceptualising the practice also academically (McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017; McIntyre and Gyldensted 2018; Hermans and Gyldensted 2019). In discourses of the proponents of constructive and solutions journalism, an inherent "struggle over normative boundaries" is identified as these practices are trying to balance between two roles of journalism – the so-called "constructive" and the monitorial role (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 14).

2.3.4.1. *Watchdog, not positive news*

One the one hand, these practices nurture the journalism's 'traditional' monitorial role of acting as a watchdog, reporting 'rigorously' about what is happening, while respecting and implementing the journalistic ideals of objectivity, accuracy, and transparency (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, pp. 4-5). This includes informing citizens about public events, warning the public of wrongdoings, risks, and problems, and acting as the fourth estate (Christians et al. 2009, pp. 145-146). This is the central aspect of how both practices are legitimised, particularly in the face of criticisms that the avoidance of negativity may turn journalism "into a good-news-show that limits the attention for what is going wrong in the world and the exposure of abuse of power" (Hermans and Drok 2018, p. 687).

In this sense, one of the most prominent claims that the proponents of constructive and solutions journalism make to position the practices alongside other 'serious' journalism is that their stories are distinctive from "superficial and non-solution oriented" positive news stories (Lowes and Devereaux Ferguson 2021, p. 64). Even though positive psychology techniques imply "evoking positive emotions, such as hope or elevation, through news stories" (Baden et al. 2019, p. 1944), and positive news could be viewed as events that are "considered desirable by the members of the community", evoke joy, hope or enthusiasm and in this way reinforce social norms (Leung and Lee 2015, p. 290), Karen McIntyre makes a case that the "lack of

commitment to traditional journalism's core functions is the key difference between positive and constructive news" (2015, cited in McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017, p. 26).

In this way, these practices do not understand positive or good news as "stories with particularly positive overtones" (Harcup and O'Neill 2017, p. 1482), but as the unwanted opposite of adherence to the highest journalistic values. In this sense, the main proponent of constructive journalism Ulrik Haagerup (2017, p. 141) explains that the purpose of this practice is not to be positive news that sees the world with "just the other eye", but that "good journalism is seeing the world with both eyes". Therefore, while the two practices include an overall "positive tone" (Hermans and Gyldensted 2019, p. 547) as they focus on developments and effective responses to problems that inspire audiences to act, their proponents point out that – unlike positive or good news stories – they do it critically.

2.3.4.2.   *Constructive role, but not advocacy*

On the other hand, constructive journalism and solutions journalism also want to be "a constructive force in the society" that serves the audience better by focusing on effective solutions, accelerating social progress and being a "healing force in society" (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, pp. 5, 14). This is related to the notion of social responsibility. Journalists need to interpret stories and think about how they affect audiences or "what happens after the report" (McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017, p. 22). Caring about this should not be seen as bias, but as a different way of framing issues and creating meaning (McIntyre and Gyldensted 2018, p. 666). These efforts are framed as "proactive neutrality" in which journalists balance between supporting public values, but not in a way that would compromise their professional integrity (Rosen 1996, cited in Bro 2019, p. 512). While Aitamurto and Varma (2018, p. 4) call it the "constructive role", which is distinctive in the sense that it "embeds a premise that offering and covering solutions remain within the auspices of journalism", solutions journalism and constructive journalism also include elements of the facilitative role (Christians et al. 2009, p. 158) and the civic role (Mellado 2015, p. 601) as they want to promote dialogue in civil society, offer places for public debate,

include more citizens' perspective in reporting, and, therefore, support and strengthen participation in public life.

But regardless of the constructive role and the open focus of these practices on social progress and change, their proponents distance them from any notion of advocacy. Neither constructive or solutions journalism want to be perceived as "proponents for social good", and again rely on journalism's monitorial role by claiming to report "objectively" and "without preferences or values" in selection of stories (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 14), regardless of its efforts to support active citizenship. For solutions journalism, it is vital to cover and investigate solutions and their effectiveness, and not in any way advocate for them (Solutions Journalism Network 2020). Therefore, the Solutions Journalism Network "walks a delicate line — positioning solutions journalism as the antidote to journalism's tendency to focus on society's problems, while distinguishing it from advocacy for a specific solution to those problems" (Powers and Curry 2019, p. 2253). Nevertheless, Aitamurto and Varma (2018, p. 12) identify these practices as those that contain elements of "subtle" advocacy: inclusion or disregard of certain issues, topics, and voices, which is inherent in all journalism (Fisher 2016, p. 713).

2.3.4.3.   *The promise of audience engagement*

Finally, to fulfil the constructive role of serving the audiences better, the practices promise that telling stories which include constructive elements is ultimately more engaging (Terblanche 2020). In this sense, audience engagement is an inextricable and vital aspect of how both practices are conceptualised by their proponents (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 11). First, solutions and constructive news stories strive to be interesting, uplifting, and make the audience feel better about the world (McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017, p. 27). This is the first step in winning over the audience's attention and trust, which should hopefully lead to another level of engagement, or the most important scope of solutions journalism and constructive journalism – to fulfil its social responsibility of inspiring citizens to become more engaged in public issues and conversations in their communities, but also take concrete actions (Hermans and Drok 2018, pp. 684-685; Thier 2016, p. 330).

However, aside from these ideals, proponents invoke the more 'practical' aspect of audience engagement by presenting these practices as the potential 'formula' of success for media outlets, specifically in terms of achieving better audience metrics. For example, the Solutions Journalism Network 'promises' that well-told solutions stories increase reader engagement and are more shared on social media (2022c), while the Constructive Institute points out that audiences are more willing to pay for constructive news, and shares an example of how Facebook audience metrics improved for one news outlet (2022b). While this is not positioned as the main legitimisation of these practices, it is still an important aspect of attracting newsrooms to consider constructive or solutions journalism.

However, as studies of journalism have so far shown, what journalism should be or should do is one small part of what it actually is when and if these ideas are implemented in practice. Research that has so far examined how the ideas of constructive journalism and solutions journalism are understood, implemented, and ultimately received by audiences paints a picture that is far more complex than its normative foundations and its promises.

2.4.   Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the main criticisms of journalism today – particularly the prevalence of negativity and bad news – that are inherent in low levels of trust and high levels of news avoidance among audiences. At the same time, journalism has been facing additional challenges in a rapidly changing media environment and trying to find ways to be both successful and dedicated to its core values. These issues are central to how the ideas of constructive journalism and solutions journalism have been developed. Both these practices aim to address these issues by reporting on the positive developments in the world yet do it in a journalistically rigorous way. I presented the existent definitions of both solutions journalism and constructive journalism and pointed out in what way they are related. I also identified constructive journalism as a broader approach, while solutions journalism is one possible way of doing constructive journalism. Then, I positioned these two practices as two socially responsible journalism practices, and I explained what this

entails and in what way the concept of socially responsible journalism has been developed so far. Finally, I presented and discussed the two normative roles of both constructive and solutions journalism – to be a watchdog and a constructive force in society – that their proponents present as compatible, while some scholars see them as opposite. The following chapter is the second part of the literature review in which I will present and put in context the most significant studies of both practices that have been done so far, and explain how this has led me to the decision to study the BBC's solutions-focused journalism.

Chapter 3:
WHAT WE KNOW: CONSTRUCTIVE JOURNALISM AND SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM IN RESEARCH

3.1.   Introduction

The question of how constructive and solutions journalists and editors understand and interpret the ideas and the purpose of these practices, and whether and how this is implemented in their practice, has been approached by researchers somewhat inconsistently. The existing studies of practitioners and practices of solutions and constructive journalism remain quite scattered in terms of their scopes and approaches, but also separated as they predominantly focus on one side of the production process; while studies of audience reception are for now the most focused and elaborated area in terms of studying constructive and solutions journalism.

This chapter is the second part of the literature review. It provides a comprehensive overview of all the relevant studies of solutions journalism and constructive journalism that have been done so far, in which I point out that the way researchers have conceptualised these practices primarily stemmed from their proponents' normative ideas, rather than from actual practice. I make a case why conceptualising the practice by examining both what is said and what is done in the context of a particular newsroom is beneficial for understanding constructive journalism and solutions journalism and for assessing if they live up to their proponents' promises. I particularly point out the need to study these practices in the context of public broadcasters where constructive journalism first emerged, but also because they are "the principal guarantors of quality, diversity and, in the end, democracy itself" (Bardoel and Brants 2003, p. 167). This is followed by a brief recap of the BBC as a public broadcaster and a presentation of its practice called solutions-focused journalism. I particularly focus on one BBC's project that is dedicated to solutions reporting for younger audiences and make a case why examining its video production team and output intended for social media platforms would be a

contribution to the study of solutions journalism, and the related practice of constructive journalism.

3.2.   What journalists say

The identified struggle over normative boundaries between the monitorial role and the constructive role of journalism is also present in the studies that focused on one side of the production process – how journalists understand solutions and constructive journalism. Surveyed U.S. journalists highly value the fundamental role of constructive journalism of "portraying the world accurately", and equally strongly feel that journalism should be socially responsible (McIntyre, Dahmen et al. 2018, p. 1666). In terms of social responsibility, those who identify as constructive journalists believe in the purposes of this practice – that it has the potential of addressing concerns related to misinformation, reducing polarisation, engaging the audience, and increasing trust (Van Antwerpen, Turnbull et al. 2022a, p. 7).

Solutions journalists also confirm the adherence to the constructive role as they care about "themes that represent flourishing individuals and societies" (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1565), want to make the society better and leave a positive impact in society with their reporting (Lough and McIntyre 2018; Powers and Curry 2019). While the promise of audience engagement – concretely the increase of audience metrics – matters to some solutions journalists, they still assess it as a considerably less meaningful impact than the potential social outcomes of their reporting (Powers and Curry 2019, p. 2253).

At the same time, they also care about implementing the highest journalistic standards and see solutions journalism as a "serious, comprehensive form of news reporting" that should not be mistaken for "feel-good stories or positive news" (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1566). Based on interviews with solutions journalists, McIntyre and Lough offer the first academic conceptualisation of solutions journalism and incorporate the two roles – on the one hand, the practice should contribute to "a more accurate and balanced media landscape" and be journalistically "rigorous" and evidence-based, while on the other hand it should

focus more on the solution than the problem and provide audiences with information about how to act (2021, p. 1564).

However, the boundaries of constructive and solutions journalism are not as straight-forward as the proponents would want them to be. At times some solutions journalists move away from the normative non-advocacy imperative and feel that they must help to solve problems and even suggest solutions themselves – even though they do not perceive it as advocacy (Powers and Curry 2019, p. 2252). Similarly, McIntyre and Lough find that the relationship between advocacy and objectivity seems to be "more of a continuum than a dichotomy" for those who identify themselves as solutions journalists (2021, p. 1569). This is one of the reasons why both constructive and solutions journalism have been criticised. For example, those journalists who report on humanitarian crises see the use of a solutions-oriented approach as potentially unethical and even biased, even though their goal is to emotionally move audiences and spark political engagement (Kogen 2019, p. 11).

3.3. Audience reception: Fulfilling the constructive role

Before getting into what constructive and solutions journalists do to 'move' audiences, a question that seems to be most interesting to scholars is if they manage to do it. In their systematic review of studies of constructive and solutions journalism that have been done so far, Lough and McIntyre (2021a, p. 9) found that almost a third of them had focused on ways in which audiences engage with the stories, or in other words, if the practices fulfil the promises inherent in its constructive role.

Studies suggest that constructive and solutions stories do elicit more positive emotional responses among adults, who feel less negative when they read or watch them (McIntyre and Sobel 2017; McIntyre 2019; McIntyre 2020; Hermans and Prins 2020; Overgaard 2021; Rusch et al. 2021; Schäfer et al. 2022). Research suggests that the same is true for children (Van Venrooij et al. 2022), though, for them, constructive news "dispelled the attention toward negative information" presented in the stories (Kleemens et al. 2019, p. 578). Also, solutions and constructive stories

seem to increase audience interest in the topic, make people feel more empowered and increase the sense of self-efficacy (Curry and Hammonds 2014; Gielan et al. 2017; Overgaard 2021; Zhao et al. 2022), but also of societal cohesion and solidarity (Viehmann et al. 2022). However, while Skovsgaard and Andersen hope that "more fact-based, transparent, constructive, contextual, and slow" news can mitigate news avoidance and "reengage" audiences (2020, p. 470), the results of other studies which focused on how audiences engage with constructive and solutions stories are mixed.

3.3.1. Intention to act, trust, and the underestimated importance of narrative

Fulfilling the most important goal of the constructive role to serve the citizens as an incentive to act, remains inconclusive. So far, the studies have measured the intention to act, not the actual changes in behaviour. Members of stigmatised communities said that they would get locally involved when they read community stories with a solutions-oriented approach (Wenzel et al. 2018). Solutions photographs in articles had a positive effect on higher levels of behavioural intentions to act (Dahmen et al. 2019). However, other studies found that solutions stories and constructive stories did *not* increase the respondent's willingness to act (McIntyre and Sobel 2017; Meier 2018; McIntyre 2019; Schäfer et al. 2022), including children's (Van Venrooij et al. 2022). As regards solutions journalism, Thier pointed out that research which supports its "prosocial claims about social transformation is minimal" (2021, p. 54).

Moreover, whether constructive and solutions journalism achieve the difficult goal of winning over the audiences' trust – also remains unclear. Some studies do show that constructive and solutions news may lead to a perception of enhanced news credibility (Overgaard 2021; Thier et al. 2019), while in another study respondents found non-constructive stories more credible (Rusch et al. 2021). Also, some audience members find constructive stories uncritical or even a case of covert marketing (Meier 2018). Another study reported no significant difference between trust in journalism between those who read either constructive or non-constructive news stories (Van Antwerpen, Searston et al. 2022).

Another key aspect that several studies identified is that narrative and narrative engagement seem to play an important role in how audience members experience and relate to constructive and solutions stories – both mentally and emotionally. For example, the inclusion of solutions visuals in stories means higher interest and narrative engagement than the use of problem-oriented photographs (Dahmen et al. 2019, p. 282). Also, those who are more cognitively engaged with the narrative in solutions stories trust that they are more "fair, truthful, accurate, and comprehensive" (Thier et al. 2019, p. 13). The most engaging solutions narrative for audiences appears to be the one that focuses on how people can use presented solutions in their daily lives because they "are offered the prospect of an emotional and intellectual gain" (Rusch et al. 2021, pp. 16-17). Therefore, narrative seems to be a factor that may significantly contribute to the impact of constructive and solutions journalism, but altogether it has not yet received much scholarly attention.

3.4. Implementation of normative ideas in content

Understanding audience effects is incomplete without understanding the content – what constructive and solutions stories are in practice, including the process of their production. However, whether and how journalists and editors implement their understanding of constructive and solutions journalism in the production of stories, and what factors are decisive in this process – particularly in their effort to adhere to "traditional journalistic norms and practices" as they present solutions to social problems (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 9) – has barely been examined in research. Therefore, it is still unclear if constructive journalism or solutions journalism are done in a way that would achieve the desired audience effects and align with the ambitious goals of their proponents, but also practitioners – to inspire citizens to act in society and trust journalists more through both 'rigorous' and socially responsible reporting. This is vital because of the identified disconnection between role conception and performance, or the gap between "rhetoric and practice" in journalism – particularly for the watchdog role and the civic-oriented role (Mellado and Van Dalen 2014, p. 872) which are also inherent in how constructive journalism and solutions journalism have been conceptualised.

So far, in terms of constructive journalism there have not been any academic or practical guidelines how its ideas should be performed or implemented in content, but solely what elements make reporting distinctively constructive (Hermans and Gyldensted 2019). However, solutions journalism has developed more concrete practical guidelines – both journalistic (Solutions Journalism Network 2022d) and academic (McIntyre and Lough 2021) – on what each story needs to include to be a solutions story that is also journalistically "rigorous" (Solutions Journalism Network 2017).

In solutions journalism, reporting rigorously means focusing on two questions: *why* and *how* a solution works (Thier 2016, p. 330). Other than breaking down the solution, solutions journalism should "balance problem-solving with problem-revealing, acknowledging, and questioning the absence of certain solutions" (Li 2021a, p. 15). In this way, the inclusion of information about both the problem and the solution are equally important for comprehensive portrayal of the solution, including in their visual presentation (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, pp. 1174). Presenting both the problem and the solution has the potential to "be more effective at informing audiences about the problems themselves", while presenting the information about the problem is often not enough to understand it (Thier et al. 2019, p.13). Identifying both the social problem and its cause in a story is a "fundamental characteristic" that solutions journalism apparently shares with investigative journalism (Walth et al. 2019, p. 184).

Further, McIntyre and Lough (2021) offer the first academically operationalised guidelines for solutions journalism, though based solely on interviews with those who identify themselves as solutions journalists. Other than presenting the problem, its cause, and the solution, they point out that presenting how the solution is implemented, reliable evidence of its effectiveness, and limitations of the response, particularly contributes to "the rigour of a solutions journalism story" (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1567). In terms of fulfilling their constructive role, the guidelines also include the provision of "mobilizing information" that audiences can use and act on (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568). These guidelines will be revisited in detail in the following chapter.

3.4.1. Implementation of solutions journalism guidelines in practice

However, how these guidelines are followed in practice and implemented in solutions stories has been analysed in only one study so far. Li (2021a) assessed the role performance of solutions journalism in articles that reported on the COVID-19 pandemic and were submitted to the Solutions Journalism Network's online repository. The study analysed 395 articles from 25 countries (Li 2021a, p. 8) and explored the presence of solutions journalism 'attributes' in each story developed by proponents from the Solutions Journalism Network (Bansal and Rosenberg 2014). While these attributes overlap to a large extent with McIntyre and Lough's list of what information needs to be included (2021), they also add that a story needs to "convey an insight or teachable lesson" and include sources with direct experience of the solution (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 7).

Even though the chosen sample had previously been filtered by the Solutions Journalism Network which approves what stories will be available in its repository, the study found that one important aspect of 'rigour' – solution limitations – was significantly less reported on than other attributes of a solution (Li 2021a, pp. 13-14). This finding is even more relevant in the context of solutions journalism's monitorial role which implies adherence to the notions of "accuracy, fullness, relevance, and verification" (Christians et al 2009, pp. 147-148).

The study also identified a clear lack of a watchdog role of solutions journalism and pointed out the danger of making stories seem "overly optimistic or lack[ing] accountability", particularly in the U.S., where they "failed to question, criticize, or reflect on the state and federal responses to the pandemic" (Li 2021a, pp. 14-15). However, understanding why this happens was beyond the scope of Li's study. Similarly, another study compared solutions and investigative reporting characteristics and found the watchdog element of holding those in power accountable in merely 6.8 percent of solutions news articles (Walth et al. 2019, p. 186). This is indicative of potential problems in the alignment of the monitorial role – in which "adopting an active watchdog stance" (Christians et al. 2009, p. 146) is

inherent – and the constructive role of both constructive and solutions journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 5).

3.4.2.   Narrative and storytelling

The implementation of constructive journalism and solutions journalism ideas is not only related to what information is presented but also in what way. Storytelling is an important factor, particularly in terms of creating engagement – the way audiences experience the narrative may have an impact on reality construction, comprehension, emotions, and persuasion (Busselle and Bilandzic 2009, p. 322). Reality is represented and constituted through stories (Bruner 1991, p. 5) and for this reason, storytelling has a central role in the way people understand the world and "fashion their identities from available cultural materials" (Polleta et al. 2011, p. 112). It is "the knack of swiftly seizing the imagination of the audience and never letting it go" (Mackendrick 2004, cited in McErlan 2018, p. 29). In journalism, it is a way of making the news "more meaningful for audiences" (Boesman and Costera Meijer 2018, p. 997) through the use of different narrative modes (Wahl-Jorgensen and Schmidt 2020, p. 261). Although it went through various phases of appreciation in journalism, particularly because it challenged the praises for the inverted pyramid and the notion of objectivity in reporting, today "the idea that news must form a story to be appealing is common understanding in journalism textbooks and in journalists' everyday vocabulary" (Knobloch et al. 2004, p. 259). In this way, storytelling is often seen as "a necessary device or strategy to actually reach the audience by making news more attractive and exciting and thus usable" (Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer 2015, p. 166).

As storytelling made its way into journalism, the narrative emerged as an important aspect, particularly in the context of winning the audience's interest and attention. It is a "sense-making mechanism" that "links events together so as to make their relationship meaningful" (Fiske 2011, p. 130). News with a specific narrative form follows "the characteristics of stories in terms of structure, characters and plot" (Emde et al. 2015, pp. 608-609). Structuring the narrative means building tension in such a way that it compels the audience to watch it until the end, and here it is

important that the events are described by those who experienced them so the audience can identify and empathize with them (Van Krieken et al. 2017). In this sense, storytelling can be considered as the audience's "emotional reaction to the character" (Bucher 2018, p. 70) that enhances narrative involvement. Also, the tension in the narrative can be built with the use of various storytelling strategies, and subsequently, aim to evoke different emotions and reactions in the audience (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022). Research suggests that the use of different narrative structures in news may improve levels of retention and comprehension of news content (Machill et al. 2007). Nevertheless, storytelling is still often seen as a potential trap that values emotions over facts (Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer 2015, p. 159), which makes its relationship with "truth-seeking in journalism" complex (Boesman and Costera Meijer 2018, p. 1004). However, storytelling is becoming increasingly relevant in terms of creating audience engagement, particularly in light of the affordances of new technologies that are inspiring "new forms of storytelling" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Schmidt 2020, p. 268).

As I already pointed out, engagement is also important in the way constructive and solutions stories affect audiences. Creating an "absorbing narrative" in solutions reporting proves to be correlated with the level of faith that solutions stories are "fair, truthful, accurate, and comprehensive" (Thier et al. 2019, p.13). However, the studies of audience reception have so far predominantly focused on the effects of information presented in constructive or solutions stories rather than on the ways in which they are presented (Overgaard 2021). No study so far has focused on how narratives are structured in either constructive or solutions stories, or on the storytelling techniques used to present information in a way that is engaging for the audience.

However, in their solutions journalism guidelines, McIntyre and Lough (2021a, p. 1568) do point out that "the problem-solving process must be central to the narrative" but interpret it as the necessity to include more information about the solution than the problem. Further, the response should be "mentioned high up in the story so that readers know it is the focus of the story" (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568). Additionally, the Solutions Journalism Network mentions another important aspect that concerns storytelling, according to which more attention should be given

to the solution than to people related to it (Bansal and Rosenberg 2014, p. 6). Finally, Amanda Ripley (2019) from the Solutions Journalism Network advises journalists to "complicate the narrative" and "revive complexity in a time of false simplicity" because it makes audiences more curious and "leads to a fuller, more accurate story". Therefore, constructive and solutions narratives should be inherently more complex. But if and how this is done in journalistic practice remains completely unexplored in research.

3.4.3.   Context matters

Another aspect that the research into solutions journalism and constructive journalism has so far largely disregarded is the relevance of context that inevitably shapes how these ideas are understood and implemented. However, some case studies have identified nuances in the way these ideas are interpreted by journalists in different countries, or according to the situation or topic that is reported on.

The impulse of making journalism better by incorporating constructive or solutions journalism ideas is particularly strong in transitional democracies and developing societies. Journalists in post-genocide Rwanda who practice constructive journalism see it as a way of fostering hope and the country's reconstruction and merge it with the monitorial role because they want to create "social change through their work, while remaining dedicated to their traditional roles" – such as the duty of informing citizens and serving as a watchdog (McIntyre and Sobel 2018, p. 2137). Further, in the global pandemic, constructive journalists perceived themselves as educators who give hope and make reporting more contextual, but there were differences in terms of openly supporting social change and encouraging specific behaviours (Van Antwerpen, Turnbull et al. 2022b, p. 520). In Zimbabwe, one media outlet used constructive journalism elements to support the "safe nation narrative aimed at preventing public panic" during the pandemic (Tshabangu and Salawu 2021, p. 484). The meaning and implementation of constructive and solutions journalism ideas – just as in other journalism – remains dependent on political culture and other social, economic, and cultural constraints in the country (Kovačević and Perišin 2018; Allam

2019; Rotmeijer 2019) which shape the way these practices are understood and, ultimately, done.

Another important level that has received little or no scholarly attention is the way in which the ideas of either constructive journalism or solutions journalism are understood and implemented in specific newsrooms, particularly in the context of the unique economic, organizational, social, and political pressures (Shoemaker and Vos 2009). In the few studies that have approached solutions journalism or constructive journalism at a newsroom level, what has emerged is a heightened focus on how the practices contribute to better audience metrics.

In interviews with journalists and editors in the French regional press, Amiel and Powers (2019) found that practices like solutions journalism can easily turn into a "Trojan horse for marketing" in newsrooms, and become primarily commercially oriented practices useful for boosting audience engagement and revenues. However, audience research so far has shown that the promise of these practices achieving better audience engagement numbers – at least online and on social media – seems to be only partially fulfilled. While some studies confirm that constructive stories may be more liked and shared by audiences (Meier 2018; Hermans and Prins 2020; Overgaard 2021), other studies show no significant difference in online engagement between solutions and non-solutions stories (Curry et al. 2016; Lough and McIntyre 2021b).

Further, the only study that covered both sides of the production process in one newsroom – the journalists and their stories – was the one that examined the particular use of discursive strategies that improve reporting of climate change in one regional U.S. newspaper (Parratt-Fernandez et al. 2022). While it found that solutions and action-oriented frames were used even though journalists were not familiar with constructive journalism, it concluded that "demands for speed" and "economic cuts in the newsrooms" significantly determined how climate change was covered (Parratt-Fernandez et al. 2022, p. 11).

So far, merely one study approached solutions journalism in the context of a newsroom more comprehensively. Lough and McIntyre (2021b) studied how the largest daily newspaper in Alabama transitioned to solutions reporting through an

audience survey, sentiment analysis of social media posts, website analytics, and the final discussion of findings with the editor. However, the study focused more on the response, rather than the way the practice was implemented and shaped in this newsroom. While the newspaper embraced solutions journalism in order to increase audience engagement – again particularly but not exclusively in terms of audience metrics – the authors concluded that there are many other internal and external factors that need to be considered when assessing the success of a newsroom's 'solutions shift'. They encourage researchers to study solutions journalism "in a broader context than just by story or by topic" and suggest a multi-method approach (Lough and McIntyre 2021b, p. 206).

3.5. What is missing

Altogether, I identified four problems in the existing research of both practices.

First, no study has examined if and how the ideas of either constructive or solutions journalism are implemented in actual journalistic practice by exploring and comparing both journalists' and editors' perceptions and understandings of solutions and constructive journalism, but also if and how this is reflected in the content they make. This is particularly important in terms of fulfilling the constructive journalism's and solutions journalism's monitorial role, their normative adherence to highest journalistic values, and the desired distinctiveness from other good news stories that lack a 'rigorous' approach.

Second, as regards constructive journalism's and solutions journalism's role of achieving better audience engagement, in which narrative proves to be an important aspect of how audiences engage with constructive and solutions stories, research has not examined how these narratives are structured or the way in which information is presented. This is an important aspect because, on the one hand, it says more about how the normative ideas of these practices are implemented in production, and on the other hand, helps to understand what is done to connect with audiences.

Third, understanding the mentioned aspects remains limited if it is studied outside of the context of daily news production. So far, no study has aimed to move away from

normative ideas and comprehensively understand and conceptualise either of these practices in the context of a specific newsroom. In this sense, existing research has not identified the different factors that may impact the production process – from the selection of story ideas to the publication of solutions or constructive news stories. This is vital to understand if the goals of these practices are achieved, the potential gaps between rhetoric and practice, and the obstacles and opportunities these practices may encounter in the media environment.

Finally, regardless of the central notion of social responsibility in both constructive and solutions journalism, research has not explored the understanding or the implementation of either of these practices in the context of public broadcasters, even though the origin of constructive journalism ideas and practice is there. More importantly, the idea of social responsibility is inherent in public broadcasters, whose purpose "was built on obligations towards society in which information, quality, cultural enrichment and independence from state and commerce were the central ingredients" (Bardoel and Brants 2003, p. 167).

I consider the BBC, which embraced solutions reporting and has given it a distinctive name – so-called *solutions-focused journalism* – to be a valuable case for exploring all of the mentioned issues. The BBC is one of the most trusted brands worldwide, and still considered one of the most prominent public broadcasters, and a model for many newsrooms worldwide (Blumler 2016, p. 305). Also, coining a unique name for its practice reflects its determination to officially implement the practice within the organisation.

3.6. The BBC and solutions-focused journalism

Often mentioned alongside *The Guardian*, the British public broadcaster BBC stands out as one of the most prominent practitioners of solutions journalism and constructive journalism, not just in the UK but worldwide (Hutchings and Granger 2019; Constructive Institute 2022c). It is considered to be "a key provider in showing 'what's working' around the world" (Hotz 2019), but reports on solutions under a slightly different name: *solutions-focused* journalism. Emily Kasriel, the main person behind this practice at the BBC, says that the key idea of solutions-focused journalism is to "paint a fuller and more complete picture, to deliver a more accurate story of the world", referring to the need to broaden the perspective of what can be news (Kasriel 2016b). The unique name was coined to show that the BBC does not "provide", but only covers solutions (Kasriel, 2016c).

Since 2016, it has been practiced predominantly – but not exclusively – across the BBC World Service strands intended for overseas audiences. There have been specific BBC's multimedia online projects under the solutions-focused banner, such as the still ongoing *People Fixing the World* project about people finding solutions to problems in their communities, *Crossing Divides,* about people connecting in a polarised and fragmented world, *Tomorrow's Cities,* about technological solutions that will make lives better by 2050, the *My Perfect Country* series about solutions in different countries and how they can be effective elsewhere, and *So I Can Breathe* about cutting air pollution. Other than these projects, individual solutions-focused stories can be found in other strands of the BBC, online and offline, while BBC Radio 4 has a particular focus on this kind of reporting. Before understanding the reasons behind the implementation of this practice at the public broadcaster, it is first important to briefly explain the purpose of the BBC and why it has been in pursuit of new journalistic ideas and practices.

3.6.1. The BBC as a public broadcaster

The UK is "home to arguably the most well-known public service broadcaster" (Cushion 2012, p. 5), and "a trusted global brand that is synonymous with the highest quality media content" (IIPP 2020). The BBC, publicly owned and with its radio and

TV programmes both funded by the license fee since 1946 (BBC 2022a), was founded with the goal of "improving the knowledge, taste and moral awareness of audiences and enhancing the collective well-being and cohesion of the nation" (Hodkinson 2017, p. 140). "The broader principles" of the BBC were a model for other public broadcasters around the world (Hodkinson 2017, p. 141), and its editorial standards remain an international role model to this day. The aim of the BBC is to create and sustain public value. This notion is related to the broadcaster meeting the needs of its audiences (McQuail and Deuze 2020, p. 609), perceived by the organisation as "a measure of the BBC's contribution to the quality of life in the UK" (BBC 2004, p. 6). While public value can be broken down to its customer, individual value, and the citizen value related to "common welfare" (Lis et al. 2018, p. 29), the BBC says it creates it through supporting its five main public purposes – supporting civic life, cultural life, education, building "social cohesion and tolerance", but also through its global role as "the world's most trusted provider of international news and information" (BBC 2004, p. 8). In its journalism, the BBC aims to serve "all audiences" and support the public interest with its "impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services" and accurate, fair, and truthful reporting (BBC 2019a, pp. 12-13).

Other than its distinct public value, another important feature of the BBC – and theoretically of all other public broadcasters in democratic societies – is its independence from political, commercial, and other influences. The BBC positions it as one of its "fundamental values" – along with editorial integrity and impartiality – and among the reasons why audiences should trust the broadcaster (BBC 2019a, p. 246). In this sense, "the BBC has long enjoyed an international reputation for its – especially its journalism's – independence from political influence", and this independence was seen as a "prized essential" for a broadcaster that is dedicated to fulfilling the public interest (Blumler 2016, pp. 305-306). However, there were many periods in the BBC's history when this independence was tested, including the governmental pressures as to what should be reported on, and different government proposals for getting involved in bodies that oversee the broadcaster (Hodkinson 2017, p. 143). But some scholars see the BBC's potential and independence as continually contested. While it is considered to be "the most important institutional

enactment of public service ideals", its principles are not always reflected in performance and, for this reason, it is criticised for being "a compromised version of a potentially noble ideal", constricted, including financially, by different "elite networks of power" (Freedman 2019, p. 206).

Today, remaining distinctive in the UK is a priority for the BBC – a quite subjective notion attached to the organisation in 2014 by Ofcom, which refers to the need of keeping its content original, of high quality, and "different from other channels' programming" (Goddard 2018, pp. 190-191). Among other things, the BBC has been trying to distinguish its reporting from commercial media by focusing on its democratic potential and – at least in some areas – it has been successful. The online, television and radio news presented by the BBC and other UK public service broadcasters were distinctively more informative "about political, social and economic issues both domestically and internationally" than the news produced by other market-driven media (Cushion 2022, p. 17). However, Freedman would argue that this is more due to the "structural flaws of commercial news systems rather than the intrinsic performance of public media" (Freedman 2019, p. 208).

While the BBC considers itself to be "the world's most trusted international broadcaster" (BBC 2022b, p.3), just like other public broadcasters in the recent years it has been facing multiple pressures, putting at risk its core purpose of "serving as a central, trustworthy anchor in a country's media ecosystem" (Benton 2020). First, just like at other public broadcasters, the legitimacy of the BBC is challenged "in the age of individualisation and digitalisation" (Lis et al. 2018, p. 25). The BBC is facing "new audience behaviours, growing market pressures, significant cuts in public funding, as well as the wholesale restructuring of the BBC's governance and regulation" (Chivers and Allan 2022, p. 6). In this sense, it is dealing with a fast-changing media environment, particularly the "growth of global media players" – particularly platforms like Netflix, Disney, HBO, Hulu, Sky, and others – that offer new content on the "critical battleground" of online video services (BBC 2020, pp. 11-12). At the same time, it has been struggling to address the changing audience preferences and behaviours, the biggest problem being how to "attract and retain younger audiences" and create relevant and valuable content for this group (BBC 2019b, p. 3). Younger audiences engage with the BBC mostly online through "light

touch engagement across a variety of news topics", but overall do not think that the BBC helps them to "understand the world" (PWC 2019, p. 4, p. 17).

Second, "the very sustainability of current policy, regulation and public financing" of the BBC are being questioned and present a significant challenge for the public broadcaster. With a government plan to freeze the BBC licence fee for two years because of rising living costs in the UK, the BBC plans to implement "more radical changes", primarily a reduction of "content and services" (BBC 2022b, p. 3). In this sense, the BBC's financial future but also the broadcaster's editorial independence and the fulfilment of related public objectives are uncertain, particularly with the government's plans to abolish the license fee after 2027 and negotiate a completely new funding model for the public broadcaster (House of Commons 2022; Waterson 2022).

Nevertheless, for now, the BBC remains "the UK's number 1 media brand" (BBC 2022b, p. 6), and it has been trying to find ways to remain "innovative, relevant and distinctive" in the market (BBC 2020, p. 40). One of the chosen ways to do this has been by adopting the ideas of constructive journalism and solutions journalism and merging them into the practice of solutions-focused journalism.

3.6.2.   What is solutions-focused journalism

Solutions-focused journalism was set up by the BBC in 2016. Until now, there have been no studies of this practice, and the information about it has been available in the BBC's documents, articles, and in other publications in the media. The most important BBC's document is the *Solutions-Focused Journalism: Toolkit,* which in 23 pages defines what the practice should be – "rigorous and compelling analyses of responses to problems" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4). It was publicly available online but is not anymore. After a thorough read of this document, I identified that – other than the name – there were no significant differences between solutions-focused journalism and the way in which both solutions journalism and constructive journalism have been normatively set up – but with one important exception.

First, just like constructive journalism and solutions journalism, solutions-focused journalism is presented as a practice that aims to correct the focus on dramatic

events and problems in the news, and instead report on what is working in society. Other than giving "a more accurate picture of the world" – a notion repeated many times in the way this practice is normatively conceptualised in the *Toolkit* – practicing solutions-focused journalism should also "inspire those who seek to inform, serve the public good and help fulfil the BBC's public purposes without jettisoning our commitment to providing accurate, independent and impartial journalism which includes holding power to account" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 2). In this way, solutions-focused journalism is positioned as one of the ways to fulfil the BBC's purpose of informing citizens, which is inherent not only in public broadcasters, but in all journalism and its democratic purpose.

Second, this practice is also careful not to be equated with positive news – "tales with affirming narratives featuring people carrying out inspirational acts of generosity or achievement" – and points out its dedication to "rigorous coverage of responses to problems" (Kasriel 2016c). This means asking how a problem can be resolved and how a solution works, finding evidence of its effectiveness, and pointing out its limitations (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4). In this way, solutions-focused journalism shares the same normative dedication to 'rigorous' reporting as constructive and solutions journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018), and, within this, "complies strictly with the BBC editorial standards" (Kasriel 2016c) and, therefore, uses the BBC Editorial Guidelines (BBC 2019a) as the backbone of rigour in its solutions reporting. Therefore, reporting about solutions should not be "simplistic", and journalists should take more time to "critically examine the solution" (Kasriel 2016c).

Third, solutions-focused journalism shares the aim of solutions and constructive journalism to engage and empower audiences (Kasriel 2016a, p. 7), but there is one important element that makes solutions-focused journalism's ideas different. Even though it wants to "better serve" its audiences (Kasriel 2016c), the BBC does not want to be seen as an advocate for social change in any way because this may mean "crossing the line regarding BBC News impartiality" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 12), while the proponents of solutions journalism and constructive journalism position the purpose of this kind of reporting in the context of social change – inspiring citizens to become more active and engaged in society. In this way, the BBC is not concerned

with measuring the impact of their reporting but treats solutions-focused journalism as "just one of an array of tools to tell impactful stories" (Kasriel 2016c).

Additionally, the Toolkit presents a list of topic areas that can have a solutions-focused angle. The first four topic areas on the list are: "conflict prevention and resolution" in the world, politics, business and finance, and social affairs including crime. Other areas are science and technology, health, environment, education, and culture (Kasriel 2016a, pp. 11-12). One of the projects that covers a variety of topics worldwide is *People Fixing the World*.

3.6.2.1. *The BBC People Fixing the World project*

The leader in the BBC's solutions-focused coverage is the *BBC People Fixing the World* project, formerly known as *BBC World Hacks.* Founded in 2016, it is an online platform with podcasts and digital video stories about "people changing their world" (BBC World Service 2022). In pre-interviews for this study, the members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* project confirmed that video was the main format intended for reaching young audiences globally, and, therefore, the team invested their efforts primarily in crafting engaging solutions-focused video stories. When this project started in 2016, social media platforms were already considered the key platforms for connecting with younger audiences where "the share of young respondents (<35) watching videos (…) was higher than the general population" (Kalogeropoulos and Cherubini 2016). The BBC's team chose Facebook as the main social media platform to reach young people, as it was the most popular platform at the time (Greenwood et al. 2016). The project's Facebook page, though inactive since July 2020, has more than 171 thousand followers; while today their videos are shared by BBC World Service with over 6.5 million followers, and reposted by other BBC strands. Now the video stories are published on BBC World Service social media accounts. The podcast, other than being available on the BBC's website, is also aired on the BBC World Service radio programme.

3.6.3.　　　　The purpose of this practice at the BBC

The BBC states five main reasons why solutions-focused journalism is important for the organisation. First, it presents "a more accurate picture of reality" and enables the citizens "to make better judgments". In this way, it contributes to the civic value of the BBC. The other reasons are related to audiences who want stories about solutions that will make them feel more hopeful and empowered when presented with ideas how problems can be solved. Finally, this kind of reporting "appears to increase audience engagement" – particularly interest in the topic and shareability (Kasriel 2016a, pp. 5-7). In this way, solutions-focused journalism is presented as a practice that contributes to quality journalism at the organisation, but primarily as a way of meeting the audiences' preferences and engaging with them more effectively. Above all, it is inspired by the BBC's need to reach younger audiences. Solutions-focused journalism was set up after the BBC conducted research in 2015 on what young audiences internationally – who have been tuning out – really want. It found that "64 per cent of under 35s want news to provide solutions to problems, not just news that tells them about certain issues" (Scott 2015).

Young audiences between the ages of 16 and 34 are the main "key audience challenge" (BBC 2021, p. 44), but at the same time "key to sustainability" at the BBC (Ofcom 2019, p. 8), and, therefore, central to the BBC's most recent annual plans (BBC 2020, 2021, 2022b). The BBC needs to make content that young people will find both relevant and interesting, or otherwise risk "a lost generation of viewers" (Ofcom 2019, p. 10). This means producing content that is innovative and "experimenting with new storytelling techniques and formats to connect with young audiences" (BBC 2020, p. 50). Even though it does not make a direct link between its efforts to engage young audiences and solutions-focused journalism in its last three Annual plans (BBC 2020, 2021, 2022b), this practice is positioned among the broadcaster's priorities. In the BBC's Annual plan 2020/21 (BBC 2020, p. 37) "a new focus on solutions journalism" is highlighted, while the project *BBC People Fixing the World* is stated under the purpose "to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the World" (BBC 2020, p. 41). In the report published the following year, solutions-focused journalism remained among the BBC's priorities in terms of the

World Service and Radio 4, but also the broadcaster's creative plans (BBC 2021, pp. 29, 35).

In this way, it is presented as a practice that contributes to the BBC as a new way of connecting with audiences – especially young people – by providing "independent journalism of the highest quality" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 5). The BBC tries to strike a peculiar balance between fulfilling its public purpose of "providing impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them" (BBC 2019a, p. 12), and reporting in a way that particularly young audiences will find appealing and engaging.

3.6.3.1.   *Solutions reporting at public broadcasters*

The purpose of implementing either constructive journalism or solutions journalism at other public broadcasters is normatively set up along the same line. Just like the BBC, other public broadcasters are facing the challenge of connecting with audiences and staying relevant within "the market dominance of streaming giants, internet platforms, and other large commercial players in the digital age" (EBU 2021, p. 6). At the same time, digitalisation "facilitates accelerating individualisation in media choices and growing audience fragmentation" (Reiter et al. 2018, p. 211), which public broadcasters have found to be a significant challenge. But perhaps their biggest challenge has been to "justify the value of their journalism", particularly the broadcasters' democratic commitment (Cushion 2018, p. 4). Today, the legitimacy of broadcasters as publicly funded institutions in their countries is challenged by digitalisation, the "increasingly transnational market" and the rising "globalized culture industry" (Połońska and Beckett 2019, pp. 6-8), not to mention political and economic pressures. In this way, just like the BBC, public broadcasters are also trying to find ways of staying relevant, distinct, valued, but also funded in their countries.

Amidst these changes and challenges, constructive journalism – including solutions reporting – has spread across public broadcasters in the last seven years, particularly in Europe, as a set of fresh ideas and tools to help newsrooms engage their audiences. The academic literature on public broadcasting in this context is

almost non-existent, as neither constructive nor solutions reporting have been studied at public broadcasters, apart from one study that looked at the development and failures of an online debate system at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation DR (Løvlie 2018). Nevertheless, the start of constructive journalism in Denmark is documented by one Danish researcher (Bro 2019).

The concept of constructive journalism, introduced by the Danish public broadcaster DR and its head of news at that time, and currently the head of Constructive Institute, Ulrik Haagerup who wrote the book on *Constructive News* (2017); was also picked up by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) which coordinates public broadcasters. It has been giving workshops and supporting constructive journalism events, including the latest Global Constructive Journalism Conference organised by the Constructive Institute, the main proponent of the practice that the EBU partnered with (EBU 2022a). Since then, public broadcasters across Europe have adopted the ideas of constructive journalism, including solutions reporting, such as the Swedish broadcaster SVT, the Belgian broadcasters VRT and RTBF, the German broadcasters Deutsche Welle and ZDF, the Lithuanian broadcaster LRT, the Norwegian broadcaster NRK, the Italian RAI, the Irish RTÉ, and others.

Constructive journalism has been theorised to be one of the ways for journalism to "accomplish its public service function" (Hermans and Drok 2018, p. 688). Broadcasters predominantly describe the purpose of this practice as a way to connect with their audiences, regain their trust by being an antidote to negativity, but also by remaining dedicated to the highest standards of reporting and their purpose of informing citizens. For example, the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) established the Constructive Journalism Lab with the belief that it "can counter this negativity" by providing more context and pointing to "potential solutions" (Deutsche Welle Akademie 2022). As the proponents of both practices, DW frames this decision as a way of tackling the trend of news avoidance and the threat of "poorly informed citizens" who "cannot make informed decisions". For the director general of the Lithuanian public broadcaster LRT, solutions journalism is considered an "audience engagement format" (Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė 2022). While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to review how each public broadcaster has implemented the practice, it is sufficient to point out that the EBU positions the

purpose of constructive journalism and the related practice of solutions reporting as a way forward for public broadcasters. In their document about how journalism can be made better, the EBU encourages public broadcasters to "find a space for solutions" and mentions the DR as an example of good practice (Jääskelaäinen et al. 2018, p. 37).

For the President of the EBU Delphine Ernotte Cunci, public broadcasters should continue to shape "a safe, diverse and inclusive space to foster the best of content" (EBU 2022b) and here young audiences are pointed out as the "crucial audience for public service media", while their rapidly changing habits as the main challenge. Young people under 30 remain a group that "actively negotiates tensions arising from the evolving, uneven uses of digital media technologies" (Chivers and Allan 2022, p. 19). Reaching out to young audiences is important to all public broadcasters whose "very survival depends on establishing and maintaining their legitimacy with the next generations" (Borchardt et al. 2021, p. 78). In this sense, the EBU positions constructive journalism as a practice that is successful with the young generations of viewers because it "opens up their world with different perspectives" (Borchardt et al. 2021, p. 80). Whether public broadcasters who implement constructive journalism see this practice in the same way, and how they do it, remains completely unexplored in research.

3.6.4. Why study this practice at the BBC

Therefore, studying solutions reporting at the BBC, particularly in the context of their most prominent solutions-focused project *People Fixing the World,* is valuable for at least four reasons.

First, it is important to understand the purpose of implementing constructive journalism ideas, including those of solutions journalism, in the context of a specific public broadcaster. The shared aim of constructive journalism and solutions journalism to report on events and people who are not presented in the media and contribute to more informed but also more active citizens who will be more knowledgeable and inspired to act in democratic society; is also inherent in the

purpose of public broadcasting (Połońska and Beckett 2019, p. 6). In this way, it is worth exploring if these aims also remain relevant and reflected in practice.

Second, studying specifically the BBC in the context of solutions reporting is important because of the reputation of this organisation and its editorial standards as being a journalistic role model worldwide. If and how the rigour in reporting is implemented in the BBC's solutions reporting shows if the broadcaster manages to uphold its values when adopting the ideas of solutions journalism, but it also shows in what way it is trying to adapt to the changing media environment.

Third, the focus of the BBC's project on young audiences and how this newsroom makes its stories to engage them can show in what way this public broadcaster is trying to connect with the most challenging and yet most relevant group. Even today, six years after the project took off, according to the most recent *Reuters Digital News Report*, video on social media is increasingly becoming a source of news for younger generations – a format which they find both engaging and easier to access (Newman et al. 2022, pp. 27-28).

Fourth, this project is one of the few, not only at the BBC, that focuses on solutions reporting in the video format. In this sense, visual analysis of either constructive or solutions stories, including photography, is limited. Even though videos have been considered in the development of the first theoretical framework for visual solutions journalism (Midberry and Dahmen 2020), the framework itself focused primarily on photographs – the only visual format that has been studied so far in the context of solutions reporting (Lough and McIntyre 2019; McIntyre, Lough et al. 2018; Dahmen et al. 2019; Li 2021b).

3.7.   Visuals and solutions journalism

In journalism, visuals and text "work together at the multimodal level to create a gestalt meaning" (McIntyre, Lough et al. 2018, p. 975). Video is the most complex visual form because – just like film – it constrains the viewer to "a continuous voracity" where, unlike in photography, things and people "emerge" and "leave" (Barthes 2000, pp. 55-57). In photographs and in videos, text or the "linguistic message" is an "anchor" or one of the ways to "fix the floating chain of signifieds" in

visuals that are by nature "polysemous", and in this way, the text "dispatches" the audiences towards meanings "chosen in advance" by those who produce them (Barthes 1977, p. 156). Here, it is the congruence or matching between visuals and text that can result in different meanings, and "when the two messages conflict, the ambiguity of meaning jars the viewer's mind" into reinterpretation (McIntyre, Lough et al. 2018, p. 975).

However, images still tend to leave a bigger impression on the audience. They can be more persuasive, and, combined with negative emotions, can be decisive in people's behavioural intentions (Powell et al. 2015, p. 996, 1010). Images altogether "exert a more powerful influence on memory and perceptions than text" (Coleman 2010, pp. 242-243). Gibson and Zillmann call it the "picture superiority effect of information acquisition", and explain that images stored in memory have the power to influence judgment more than text alone; whereas in journalism they can have "considerable influence on the readers' perception of the issue addressed in the [news] story" (2000, pp. 357, 364). In news, visuals are integral to how journalists create meanings and serve as "a vehicle for news frames by visualizing and emphasizing a particular aspect of an issue" (Powell et al. 2015, p. 998), but they, nevertheless, remain one of the "neglected areas" in research (Machin and Polzer 2015, pp. 1-2).

In solutions journalism, the relationship between photographs and text proves to be "complicated and nuanced": photos oriented towards conflict can "mitigate the article's positive effects", but audiences expressed the highest behavioural intentions to act when solutions stories contained a conflict-oriented photo (McIntyre, Lough et al. 2018, p. 983). Lough and McIntyre (2019) found that, in solutions stories, those photos which were more graphically appealing reflected success factors of the solution, and that humanising the story visually was used to establish an emotional connection with the audience, and enhance the perception of success. Also, articles containing solutions-oriented photos reported higher levels of narrative engagement and behavioural intentions than articles that used photos representing the problem (Dahmen et al. 2019, pp. 282-283). In this way, the power of visuals, as well as their congruence with text, is an important and delicate aspect of journalism, while text-image incongruence may change the way the problem or the solution are represented and subsequently understood (Lough and McIntyre 2019, p.

586). However, the relationship between visuals and text in the context of solutions journalism, or constructive journalism for that matter, has not been explored.

Furthermore, in the first theoretical framework of visual solutions journalism, Midberry and Dahmen (2020, p. 1164) extract aspects of photojournalism and ethics that may help solutions journalism to achieve its aims through visuals, and point out three important elements that also make the solutions stories 'rigorous': making the visuals comprehensive, humanising but also precise. In the context of video, it is the combination of moving images and text that can create nuanced meanings and understandings, but how this is done in solutions journalism has not been studied so far, nor does the theoretical framework of visual solutions journalism (Midberry and Dahmen 2020) incorporate this complex form. Additionally, examining if the BBC's solutions-focused video stories are committed to "rigorous" portrayal of responses, particularly to please young audiences on social media platforms, is necessary in order to understand if solutions reporting can uphold its founding ideals in practice. Therefore, as "the visual message presented in a news story may have a greater effect on the reader than the text" (Lough and McIntyre 2019, p. 596), examining how video stories report on solutions is a vital contribution to the field of visual solutions journalism.

3.8.   Chapter summary

In the overview of the studies of constructive journalism and solutions journalism that have been done so far, I identified important problems that have not been researched yet and that are indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of these practices. The most important problem is that the practices of producing neither constructive news nor solutions news stories have been studied in an actual newsroom by examining both sides of the production process – the journalists and editors on the one hand, and the content on the other. This includes the issue of making these stories engaging for the audience, where narrative and storytelling play an important role – however, both remain a completely unexplored area in research. Additionally, no study identified specific factors which may facilitate or compromise the implementation of the main ideas of either constructive journalism or solutions

journalism in actual practice. In the pioneering attempt to study a solutions reporting practice, I explained why I chose to focus on the BBC – it is a public broadcaster with an international reputation, which produces a solutions-focused video format intended particularly for young audiences on social media – the most challenging group for newsrooms today. Additionally, video has never been studied in the context of these practices, though it is the most complex visual format, rising in popularity.

In the following chapter, I will present the main research questions and aims. Chapter 4 also contains the third part of the literature review. I will thoroughly pick apart and compare the existing guidelines on solutions journalism within the profession and in research. Based on this, in the same chapter, I will also present the analytical framework that I designed to examine solutions-focused journalism in the context of the *BBC People Fixing the World* video production team and its content. I will particularly focus on two aspects: studying the notion of journalistic 'rigour' in the content of the BBC's solutions-focused videos, and the main normative guidelines on storytelling in solutions reporting. Additionally, this framework can be used to study any solutions reporting practice, and may thus also be considered a contribution to solutions journalism research.

CHAPTER 4:
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1.   Introduction

This is the first study which focuses on solutions-focused journalism at the BBC and aims to conceptualise it as a journalistic practice, though only in the context of the project *BBC People Fixing the World* and its video output. This can best be achieved if it is compared with the related practice of solutions journalism, as they share the same scope of reporting exclusively on solutions. Therefore, I approached the BBC's practice by exploring the ideas which the two practices may and may not share, both in theory and in practice. This inevitably extends to constructive journalism, as it shares some of the same normative ideas and scope with solutions journalism. For this reason, I reviewed the existent guidelines on solutions reporting and designed a unique analytical framework which guided my study and which I present in this chapter, along with the main research questions and aims of my research.

Specific recommendations that journalists need to follow in their reporting inevitably point to the main elements or building blocks of a journalistic practice. Therefore, the starting point for the design of the analytical framework is the review of the three existing sets of guidelines on how solutions should be reported on. The first set refers to the first academic operationalisation of solutions journalism guidelines by McIntyre and Lough (2021), the second is a practical set of guidelines made by the main proponent of this practice: the Solutions Journalism Network (Bansal and Martin 2015; Solutions Journalism Network 2022e), while the third is the BBC's only publicly available document which defines solutions-focused journalism (Kasriel 2016a).

In this chapter, I present my research aims and research questions which should lead to a comprehensive understanding of the BBC's practice in the unique context of one small newsroom, its video production team, and its aim to address particularly younger audience members. Then I present and critically compare these guidelines, identify nine elements of solutions reporting, and create a nuanced list of

eleven solutions journalism criteria – divided into three groups – which constitute the foundation of exploring solutions-focused journalism in this study.

4.2.　　　　Aim and research questions

The main aim of this study is to examine the BBC's solutions-focused journalism as a journalistic practice and offer its first conceptualisation, though in the limited context of one solutions-focused project. On the one hand, I study the different understandings of solutions-focused journalism among journalists and editors and identify the key ideas which arise. On the other hand, I study the solutions-focused video stories and explore if and how these ideas, along with solutions journalism criteria that I developed as part of the analytical framework, are implemented in them.

The research questions that this study aims to answer are:

1) How do journalists and editors in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team understand solutions-focused journalism?
   a) What are the key ideas present in their understanding of the practice?
   b) What are the main factors in the production process which determine the way solutions-focused video stories are made?

2) Does the *BBC People Fixing the world* team implement the solutions journalism reporting criteria in solutions-focused video stories?

3) Does the *BBC People Fixing the world* team implement the solutions journalism storytelling criteria in solutions-focused video stories?

   a) What are the storytelling approaches in solutions-focused video stories used to engage the audience in terms of interest?
   b) In what way are these approaches in line with traditional postulates of storytelling (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022)?

By exploring these research questions, the conceptualisation of solutions-focused journalism in the context of the BBC's project will be done by positioning the practice in relation to:

a) The practices of constructive journalism and solutions journalism

b) The BBC as a public broadcaster

c) Journalism as a practice

Another related aim of this study is to contribute to the practice of journalism by advancing the operationalisation of solutions reporting guidelines, first set up by McIntyre and Lough (2021).

The solutions journalism reporting and storytelling criteria that the research questions explore are set up in the analytical framework which I designed for this study.

4.3.   Analytical framework
4.3.1.   Identification of main solutions journalism elements

It is important to point out, as I already established in the previous chapters, that both solutions journalism and constructive journalism normatively strive to be positioned alongside 'rigorous' journalistic practices which adhere to "traditional journalistic norms and practices" (Aitamurto and Varma, 2018, p. 9). This notion can also be identified in solutions journalism guidelines – both academic (McIntyre and Lough 2021) and professional (Bansal and Martin 2015; Solutions Journalism Network 2022e), but also at the BBC which sets up solutions-focused journalism as inextricable from the organisation's editorial values and guidelines (Kasriel, 2016a). Therefore, all three solutions journalism guidelines share the same scope: not only to report on solutions but to do it in a way that upholds the main values of the journalistic profession, particularly accuracy and objectivity (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 2). However, reporting exclusively on solutions means that there are additional guidelines which make this practice somewhat distinct. In order to identify and extract the main elements of solutions journalism and use them to assess solutions-focused journalism, first it is important to understand how each of the three sets of solutions journalism guidelines is operationalised and compare them.

4.3.1.1. *The first set of academic guidelines for solutions reporting*

The three sets of guidelines that inspired my analytical framework differ both in their extent and scope. In the previous chapter, I presented the study of McIntyre and Lough (2021) in which they conceptualise solutions journalism for the first time. The authors also include a list of solutions journalism guidelines as to what each solutions story – at least according to the journalists they interviewed – is expected to have. These are so far the only guidelines for solutions reporting which are a result of academic inquiry, and the authors call it the *operationalisation* of solutions journalism guidelines. They are the following:

- "The story should include the cause(s) of a social problem, but should be framed in a way that gives more weight to a response to that problem. In other words, the problem-solving process must be central to the narrative, meaning the story should include more information about the response than about the problem. The response might be mentioned in the lead. If not, it is mentioned high up in the story so that readers know it is the focus of the story.
- The response must be tangible, not hypothetical.
- The story should be rigorous and comprehensive. To do so, it should include the 'who, what, when, where, why' elements, but should pay special attention to *how* the response is implemented.
- The story should include hard evidence of the impact of the response. Hard evidence means reliable data, not anecdotal information.
- The story should explain the limitations of the response.
- The story should include mobilizing information, or information audiences can use, and specifically information about how audiences can contribute to the solution or otherwise act in a way that supports social change." (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568).

The authors point out that particularly three of these criteria contribute to the "rigour" of a solutions-oriented story: explaining how the solution works, laying out "reliable numerical data" suggesting that it works, and pointing out the solution limitations (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1567). Interestingly, the presentation of the problem

and its cause is not included, even though other studies point it out as critical in terms of understanding the solution that is presented (Li 2021a; Thier et al. 2019; Walth et al. 2019), including visually (Midberry and Dahmen 2020). What is unique in these guidelines is the importance that the interviewed solutions journalists give to the inclusion of information about how people can get involved.

4.3.1.2. *Professional guidelines by the Solutions Journalism Network*

Second, parallel to this academic 'prescription' for solutions journalism, are the professional practical guidelines promoted by the Solutions Journalism Network. It is a set of extensive guidelines published in *The Solutions Journalism Toolkit* (Bansal and Martin 2015), which include ten concrete questions a journalist ideally – though not necessarily – should cover when making a solutions story:

"1. Does the story explain the causes of a social problem?

2. Does the story present an associated response to that problem?

3. Does the story get into the problem solving and how-to details of implementation?

4. Is the problem-solving process central to the narrative?

5. Does the story present evidence of results linked to the response?

6. Does the story explain the limitations of the response?

7. Does the story convey an insight or teachable lesson?

8. Does the story avoid reading like a puff piece?

9. Does the story draw on sources who have ground-level understanding, not just 30,000-foot expertise?

10. Does the story give greater attention to the response than to a leader/innovator/do-gooder?" (Bansal and Martin 2015, pp. 6-7).

In these guidelines, the causes of a problem are pointed out as important because they "clarify the opportunity for a solution to create leverage and impact" (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 6). Unlike the academic guidelines, these additionally point out the importance of sources, the inclusion of "an insight or teachable lesson", include a warning that the story should not be a "puff piece", but also broad guidelines related

to the narrative and storytelling in solutions stories. Stories should focus on the problem-solving process in which "the tension is located in the inherent difficulty in solving a problem", and even though they should include "characters grappling with challenges", the focus should be more on the solution than on people in order not to slip into positive news that "celebrate individuals and inspirational acts" (Bansal and Martin 2015, pp. 6-7).

Further, the same guidelines are distilled into four main criteria to be applied when producing a solutions story, presented on the Solutions Journalism Network's website:

"1. A solutions story focuses on a response to a social problem – and how that response has worked or why it hasn't.

2. The best solutions reporting distils the lessons that makes the response relevant and accessible to others. In other words, it offers insight.

3. Solutions journalism looks for evidence – data or qualitative results that show effectiveness (or lack thereof).

4. Reporting on limitations is essential." (Solutions Journalism Network 2022d).

Therefore, these organisational guidelines overlap with the three most important academic guidelines that McIntyre and Lough identify as the assurance of journalistic 'rigour' (2021, p. 1567). However, the Solutions Journalism Network additionally highlights the relevance of insight and lesson, and in this way reinforces the purpose of solutions journalism to engage and inspire the audience to act.

4.3.1.3. *What solutions-focused journalism at the BBC should be*

Third, the BBC in its *Solutions-Focused Journalism Toolkit* (Kasriel, 2016a) lays out a broader set of guidelines as to what solutions-focused journalism is:

- "Solutions-focused journalism presents rigorous and compelling analyses of responses to problems.
- It asks HOW questions. How can problems be solved? How are they solved elsewhere? How exactly does a particular solution work – or fall short?

- It examines the limitations of solutions and asks if they are only appropriate in one particular context, or if they could also work in other places.
- It sticks to the highest journalistic standards and BBC Editorial values, assessing all the evidence and applying hard metrics where possible. Where these don't exist, it shares the fact that there is a lack of evidence with audiences" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4).

These guidelines show that the way solutions-focused journalism has been set up significantly overlaps with the previously presented sets of guidelines. The importance of 'rigour' – showing how the solution works and presenting evidence and limitations of the response – is also underlined by the BBC.

Additionally, the *Toolkit* states that the role of journalists is to question "the claims of organisations who say their solution is best" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 3) and, therefore, solutions-focused stories should not be equated with positive stories at the end of a programme, hero-worship stories or NGO puff pieces. In this way, the BBC clearly separates this practice from any notion of good news stories, light features, but also marketing; and aims to establish it as a serious journalistic practice.

Further, even though it wants to make solutions-focused stories "compelling", it is unclear what is meant by that. The BBC says it wants to "empower" audiences and provide them with "ideas on how they can solve problems" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 7); but – unlike other guidelines – it does not mention the relevance of providing insight or mobilizing information to audiences. The vagueness around the question as to how the stories should be told to 'empower' the audience may be related to the clear separation that the BBC makes between solutions-focused journalism and any notions of advocacy. The *Toolkit* states that the BBC should not "be perceived as an advocator of change" or "be seen to endorse a specific solution" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 12). In this way, the audiences should be compelled by the solution that is presented, but this should not be reported on in a way that supports – directly or indirectly – people, organisations, or even the notion that change is necessary or desirable.

4.3.1.4.   *The nine elements of solutions reporting*

Therefore, the guidelines for solutions-focused journalism in the BBC's document are not significantly distinctive from the other sets of guidelines. The main ideas of solutions-focused journalism, while less extensive, predominantly overlap with those of solutions journalism in both the academic and the professional set of guidelines. There is a shared endeavour to present the story 'rigorously', but also the need to make the story engaging – but the BBC approaches the notion of engagement more cautiously than the Solutions Journalism Network as it does not want to endorse social change.

These guidelines are central to the design of the analytical framework for this study. It was done in two stages – first, I identified the solutions journalism elements within the guidelines, then I formulated the standards of solutions reporting that emerge from the guidelines, and that are related to the solutions journalism elements. For this, I used the analytic strategies of the general inductive approach of inquiry, whose goal is "the development of categories into a model or framework that summarizes the raw data and conveys key themes and processes" (Thomas 2006, p. 240).

 I compared these presented sets of guidelines and extracted altogether nine main elements of solutions reporting that these guidelines address, and that indicate key elements that should be present in solutions stories. In this sense, I looked for key meanings present in the guidelines about what is necessary in solutions reporting. The guidelines were evaluated to identify the distinct and shared features in solutions journalism. Based on this, I developed categories which I identified as distinct elements of the solutions journalism practice. These elements are predominantly related to the information that should be presented in a solutions story, but also the way it should be presented, and the purpose of this kind of reporting.

The following are the elements of solutions reporting I identified applying the above described procedure.

1. PROBLEM

The first element of solutions reporting is the point from which each solutions story should start – the problem. The BBC does not explicitly mention the problem or the

way it should be presented in solutions-focused stories, while other guidelines focus on presenting the cause of the problem. Presenting the problem itself seems to be implied as none of the guidelines point it out directly or give details on how it should be presented. For McIntyre and Lough (2021) what is additionally important is that journalists put more emphasis on the solution than the problem in their stories. However, it is important to note the distinction between solely presenting the problem and further explaining its cause and the context in which it arose.

2. SOLUTION

The focus of solutions reporting is on responses to social problems and, according to journalists interviewed by McIntyre and Lough (2021, p. 1568), the solution should be "tangible". Therefore, solutions stories should not report on solution ideas, but on those solutions that are implemented in real life.

3. SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION

Across all sets of guidelines, there is a clear focus on *how* a solution is implemented. This means looking at the problem-solving process and the details of how the response addresses the problem, or why it does not. It is crucial not only to say what the solution is but present how it works.

4. SOLUTION LIMITATIONS

A solution should be presented critically. This means pointing out its limitations, shortcomings, or drawbacks, but also – as all guidelines imply – *explaining* them. For the BBC, this includes assessing the scale of the solution and asking if it is "only appropriate in one particular context" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4) or if it can be applied elsewhere. The same is true for the Solutions Journalism Network, which says a solution should be placed "in context", and a story should elaborate on why it may work for one community, "but may fail in others" (Solutions Journalism Network 2022d). Additionally, the Solutions Journalism Network frames limitations as "imperfections" that journalists should not "shy away from" (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 7), which implicitly remind them that no solution is perfect – even though its inventors may present it as such.

5. EVIDENCE OF SOLUTION EFFECTIVENESS

Evidence that a solution is effective is central in all the guidelines; however, there are differences in terms of the type of evidence that should be presented. For solutions journalists in McIntyre and Lough's study, it is about "hard evidence" which is reliable (2021, pp.1567-1568). However, the other guidelines expand the academic operationalisation of evidence of solutions effectiveness as they do not necessarily exclude evidence which is not "hard metrics" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4) or "data" (Solutions Journalism Network 2022d). The Solutions Journalism Network extends it to "qualitative results that show effectiveness" (2020), though it does not explain what this entails. Additionally, the BBC is the only one which points out that the lack of evidence should be reported on.

6. SOURCES

The Solutions Journalism Network (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 7) points out that sources in solutions stories should "have a ground-level understanding, not just 30,000-foot expertise", which means that the interviewees should in some way be directly related to the solution. Similarly, the BBC's solutions-focused journalism document says journalists should use "grassroots sources" and those "working on the ground" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 8). The academic guidelines mention the importance of asking the 5 W's, one of them being the question 'who' (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568), but do not elaborate on the type of sources.

7. INSIGHT

Insight is not identified as an element of solutions-focused journalism, nor was it pointed out by journalists in McIntyre and Lough's study. As I already indicated, the BBC wants to empower the audience, but at the same time, not do anything that will make it seem like an endorser of a specific solution or organisation or an advocate for change. This is, however, an important element for the Solutions Journalism Network, and a distinctive element, or even aspiration of solutions journalism tied to its "constructive" role of showing "how society could move forward" (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 4). For this organisation, a solutions story offers lessons on how the world can be made better, and reports about the response in a way which is "relevant and accessible to others" and, therefore, insightful (Solutions Journalism Network

2020). However, the way insight is operationalised by this organisation remains somewhat vague as there are no clear guidelines in what way this should be incorporated in a journalistic story. It is framed less in the context of production, and more in the context of how the audience should ideally engage with the story by being brought "to an insight about how the world works and, perhaps, how it would be made to work better" (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 7).

8. STORYTELLING

How solutions stories should be told is not detailed in any of the guidelines, but it is acknowledged. In the first guideline that concerns the presentation of the problem, McIntyre and Lough (2021, p. 1568) also include two other important points – that the narrative of the story should be "problem-solving", and that the solution itself should be mentioned early so it is clear that it is, unlike the problem, the focus of the story. However, the authors explain that making the problem-solving process central means giving more information about the solution than about the problem. The Solutions Journalism Network (2022d), which also emphasises the problem-solving narrative, has a different explanation: narratively, the story should be built around tension inherent in solving the problem. In this way, the relationship between the problem and the solution is at the centre of a solutions narrative.

Additionally, the organisation addresses characters in the solutions narrative and points out that the focus of a solutions story should be on the response, and not on the people related to it (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 7). At the same time, both the Solutions Journalism Network and the BBC are careful to stay away from any hero-worship in solutions reporting (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 8; Kasriel 2016a, p. 3). Bansal and Martin say that characters, unlike heroes, are "more rich, three-dimensional", and that solutions stories should also include their "dark moments" and challenges (2015, p. 17). In this way, the guidelines somewhat address the following aspects of storytelling: the narrative structure, the notion of narrative tension, and characters.

9. PURPOSE

All three sets of guidelines address in different ways the purpose of solutions reporting. However, what is clear is their determination to distinguish this kind of

reporting from puff pieces or any form of advocacy. In this way, the monitorial role of solutions reporting is also present in the guidelines. This is particularly important for the BBC. McIntyre and Lough (2021, p. 1568) find that solutions stories should also include so-called "mobilizing information" for the audience – how they can get involved, support change, or any other information they can "use". In this way, the purpose of reporting on solutions is twofold – it should be journalistically 'rigorous' and without any notions of advocacy or bias; however, it may also include information which moves each story beyond solely informing the audience about the solution. Nevertheless, this is not supported by the BBC's vision of solutions-focused journalism (Kasriel 2016a).

4.3.2.   Solutions journalism criteria as the main framework

The presented elements of solutions journalism and the way each is operationalised in the three sets of guidelines of solutions reporting, led me to the second stage in the design of the analytical framework, following the general inductive approach (Thomas 2006). From each solutions journalism element identified in the previous stage of designing this analytical framework, I developed criteria stating what element and in what way should be presented in a solutions story. In other words, I established what the 'standard' that each story should follow is, so that it is in line with the normative ideas of the practice. These criteria guided my methodological choices and my research design to study solutions-focused journalism at the BBC.

Here, it is important to clarify why I use the word "criterion" instead of "guideline" in the analytical framework. While a criterion is "a condition or fact used as standard by which something can be judged or considered" (Cambridge Dictionary 2022a), a guideline is "a piece of information that suggests how something should be done" (Cambridge Dictionary 2022b). Here, "criterion" implies a very clear standard according to which a journalistic story can be systematically judged as a solutions story, while a "guideline" explains how this should be done.

 In the nine elements of this practice and the related sets of guidelines, I identified and extracted two types of solutions journalism criteria and separated them into two groups – those dedicated to reporting, and those related to storytelling. This is in line

with the two main aims of solutions journalism – as identified in Chapter 2 – to be journalistically rigorous, but also engaging for the audience. In addition, I detected two criteria which are in a separate, third group.

4.3.2.1.   Solutions journalism criteria: Reporting

I identified the following six criteria which address the aspects of the solution and the problem-solving process to be reported and which are, according to the presented guidelines, needed so the audience can make an informed evaluation of the response that is presented. Implementation of these criteria means answering the most important questions of solutions journalism: *how* and *why* a solution works (Thier 2016, p. 330). The criteria are:

- Presentation and explanation of the problem and its cause;
- Presentation of a tangible solution that exists and is actively implemented;
- Explanation of how the solution is implemented (how it works);
- Presentation and explanation of evidence of solution effectiveness;
- Presentation and explanation of solution limitations;
- Inclusion of sources who have direct experience with the solution.

The understanding and implementation of these criteria are explored in all three research phases of my study which are presented in the following chapter. These criteria are particularly important in the context of solutions journalism's dedication to 'rigour' and critical presentation of the response.

4.3.2.2.   Solutions journalism criteria: Storytelling

Moreover, as for the analytical framework, in the guidelines I identified and extracted three solutions journalism criteria that concern storytelling – an important element of how solutions journalism is presented in the guidelines – or *how* the aspects of a solution, including the problem, are presented and the meaning constructed. This concerns the way the narrative is structured, how different aspects of the problem and the solution are positioned in the narrative, but also how sources are presented,

or in storytelling terms, who the characters are and what their roles in a solutions story are. These criteria are the following:

- The problem-solving process central to the narrative;
- Presentation of the solution early in the story;
- Focus on the solution, not the persons related to the solution.

Storytelling is particularly important to solutions journalism. It is related to the notion of audience engagement, inherent in this practice. Making the audience interested and motivated to follow a story is one of the key factors that determine how each person processes the information that is presented (Emde et al. 2016, p. 611). Interest is framed in constructive journalism literature as one of the "positive emotions" that inspires the audience to further explore and learn about what is presented (Frederickson 1998, cited in McIntyre and Gyldensted 2017, p. 27). In this sense, sparking the audience's interest and sustaining it, is the first level of solutions journalism's audience engagement goals, the highest being the ideal of social change and more active citizens inspired by solutions reporting.

4.3.2.3. *Solutions journalism criteria: Other*

Finally, these are the two criteria which I categorised as 'other', because they are not related either to 'rigour' or to storytelling but are nevertheless relevant for the practice of solutions reporting. They are related to the two identified solutions journalism elements of insight and purpose:

- Presentation of a teachable lesson or insight that shows how the world works and how it can be improved;
- Presentation of information about how audience members can get involved or find out more about the solution.

Even though specific information on how people can get involved is not something that the Solutions Journalism Network (2022e) includes in their guidelines, and insight is not something that solutions journalists mentioned to McIntyre and Lough (2021), it is important to examine both criteria in the context of the BBC's solutions

reporting because of the clear distance it makes from any notions of advocating for change or endorsing a particular response (Kasriel 2016a, p. 12).

4.4.   Chapter Summary

In this brief, but important chapter, I presented the research questions and the main aims of this study, critically approached the relevant literature that concerns rules and recommendations how solutions should be reported on, and then I presented the analytical framework for studying the BBC's practice. I explained how I came to the eleven solutions journalism criteria and in this process, I identified the nine elements of solutions journalism. I divided these criteria into two main aspects of reporting on solutions – one is the information that is presented, and the other is the way the stories are told. The advantage of this framework is that it can be used to evaluate any solutions reporting practice and is not exclusive to the study of the BBC's solutions-focused output. Also, as this framework is primarily based on guidelines how solutions *should* be reported on, it contributes to understanding how solutions journalism is normatively set up (Aitamurto and Varma 2018), in this case in the context of the more practical aspect of solutions reporting. In this way, it expands and deepens the understanding of how solutions journalism's main normative ideas are intended to be implemented. It critically approaches the first and only academic operationalisation of solutions journalism (McIntyre and Lough 2021) and, based on these and the professional sets of guidelines (Bansal and Martin 2015; Kasriel 2016a; Solutions Journalism Network 2022e), it operationalises how solutions should be reported on in a more comprehensive way. The additional value of this analytical framework is that it is the first one to address the aspect of storytelling standards in solutions journalism separately, which has not been done so far in studies of this practice and is relevant in the context of research that points out the importance of creating "absorbing" and engaging solutions narratives – both textually and visually (Thier et al. 2019, p. 12; Dahmen 2016; Dahmen et al. 2019). Exploring how these criteria and elements are understood in the context of a particular newsroom, and if and how they are implemented in solutions reporting, will reveal the sustainability and actual scope of solutions journalism ideas in practice.

The presented criteria are the foundation of the research design presented in the following chapter. It details how both sides of the production process at the *BBC People Fixing the World* video team were approached and explored – the journalists' and editors' ideas and understanding of their practice, and the solutions-focused video stories they make. The research questions were explored in three research phases using a triangulation of methods – content analysis and narrative analysis of videos, followed by interviews with journalists and editors on the team, and thematic analysis of obtained interview data.

CHAPTER 5:

CHOSEN METHODS TO STUDY THE IDEAS AND PRACTICE OF BBC'S SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED JOURNALISM VIDEO TEAM

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research design of my case study of the practice of solutions-focused journalism in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team, with a specific focus on solutions-focused video stories intended for attracting younger audiences on online and social media platforms. This research is analytically and methodologically unique as it seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of solutions-focused journalism as a novel journalistic practice at the BBC and offer its first academic conceptualisation. By comprehensive I mean that it examines both sides of the solutions-focused journalism production process in the team – how journalists understand this practice, how this is reflected in their video stories, and what the crucial factors which determine the ideas and the way in which they are implemented in news content are. So far, this approach has not been used in studies of solutions journalism or the related practice of constructive journalism.

In my research, I apply Yin's definition of a case study as an empirical method that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (2018, p. 15). I treat solutions-focused journalism as a phenomenon, so I investigate it as a novel journalistic practice, in terms of how it is understood and done within a particular newsroom. This case study, therefore, has an exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory dimension as it aims to understand solutions-focused journalism and its boundaries in the context of the BBC as a public broadcaster, related practices, and of journalism in general. For this reason, a triangulation of methods is used.

Case study research is "an all-encompassing mode of inquiry, with its logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis" (Yin

2018, p. 16), which will be presented in this chapter. First, it is important to understand the value of examining a journalistic practice by studying both sides of the production process. Further, I will lay out my research design and explain how it follows the analytical framework presented in the previous chapter. Here, I will also present the three main phases of my study and their aims, including the sample used in each phase and the details about how each chosen method is used, and commenting on their limitations. Consequently, I will point out the limitations of conducting a case study in general, and of this particular study. Finally, I will discuss the ethical issues that might arise in my study, particularly in interviews, and lay out the necessary steps to address them.

5.2. Understanding a journalistic practice by studying both ends of the production process

Studying a journalistic practice means looking at the news production process – those who make the news, and the news itself. In media research, case studies about specific newsrooms – journalists and the stories they produce, and the relationship between the two – were separate at first. Researchers did not often approach news production within journalistic practices holistically, but instead focused on segments that they assessed as crucial: the news stories, the various routines and processes in the newsroom during news production, or the various journalistic role conceptions that presumably influence the way the news is done. In early research, the survey-based approach addressed the different journalistic role conceptions (e.g. Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Hanitzsch et al. 2011), while the other line of research looked at the news stories (e.g. Benson and Hallin 2007; Esser 2008). News content analysis was first used to examine the way in which it reflects social and cultural issues, values, and phenomena (Hansen and Machin 2013, p. 86). The relation between how journalists understand journalism and how they do it was assumed, and the variation in the role conception was presumed to be the same in news content (Patterson 1998). But that assumption was soon abandoned, and researchers started to investigate the correlations between people, content,

organization, and other influences in the chain of news production. This implied using multiple methods of inquiry.

Singer (2017, p. 6) proposed that "just as the optimal performance of contemporary journalism involves a holistic amalgamation of inward-facing professional sensibilities and outward-facing social ones, the optimal conduct of contemporary journalism research is similarly holistic." In this sense, the divide between qualitative and quantitative approaches is "a false dichotomy" that needs to be overcome (Singer 2017, p. 207). In journalism studies, the combination of research methods has become increasingly common (Albaek et al. 2014). Many questions can best be answered by using both the positivist and the interpretative methods (Robinson and Mendelson 2012, cited in Singer 2017, p. 207). The combination of methods "helps bolster confidence in the objective reality of a research finding and validates it if the data from two or more methods point towards the same conclusion" (Lindlof and Taylor 2011, p. 274). A recommendation is that the choice of methods should be guided by the strategy "to attack the research problem with an arsenal of methods that have non-overlapping weaknesses" (Brewer and Hunter 2006, p. 4), which means using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Recent trends in media research have seen a resurgence of content analysis, but more often in combination with other methods. It has become integrated into studies of media content, journalists, organizations, sources, and the production of news (Hansen and Machin 2013, p. 87). Unlike quantitative data, qualitative research is reflexive and allows to examine and gain a well-developed understanding of the diverse and shifting meanings and relationships that people create (Lindlof and Taylor 2011, p. 72). Therefore, incorporating qualitative within quantitative methods is particularly helpful in research when the aim is to expand the understanding of a complex phenomenon (Wimmer and Dominick 2006, p. 117). Van Dalen, De Vreese and Albaek (2017, pp. 196-197) point to clear trends towards the emergence of common standards for mixed-methods research on journalistic role performance in the latest generation of studies. This includes a stream of case studies that focus on newsrooms and specific aspects of their journalistic practices. However, in the research of solutions journalism and constructive journalism, this is still not the case, and what happens in the production of solutions or constructive news stories

is still a largely unexplored area. Rather, the case studies examined specific aspects either of journalists' and editors' perceptions and understandings of the practice in specific countries (McIntyre and Sobel 2018; Rotmeijer 2019; Dodd 2021; Kovačević and Perišin 2018), or the content itself (Zhao and Xiang 2019), including how specific topics were covered (Zhang and Matingwina 2016; Jenkins 2021).

In order to conceptualise solutions-focused journalism at the BBC, a triangulation of methods was used in this study to explore the practice from both ends – the ideas of those who practice it, and the stories that they produce. I studied the notions and understandings of solutions-focused journalism among journalists and editors through interviews and, additionally, I used thematic analysis to identify the themes present in different aspects of how they describe this journalistic practice – such as the ideas about the practice, the relationship with the audience, the production process itself, and the stories. I also studied the BBC's solutions-focused video stories through content analysis and narrative analysis to understand if and how they differ from or align with the journalists' and editors' understanding of solutions-focused journalism, and with the guidelines on solutions reporting.

5.3.   Research design: Methodological choices

The study consisted of three research phases:

Phase 1: Exploration of the implementation of solutions journalism reporting criteria through the analysis of all solutions-focused video stories published from the beginning of the project until April 2019.

Chosen method: content analysis

Phase 2: Study of storytelling strategies used to spark the audience's interest, and the implementation of solutions journalism storytelling criteria through the analysis of a purposive sample of solutions-focused video stories selected by journalists as their best work.

Chosen method: narrative analysis

Phase 3: Understanding of different notions of solutions-focused journalism by the editors and journalists in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team, and identification of

the reasons why solutions journalism criteria explored in the previous research phases are implemented in a certain way.

Chosen methods: semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis of interview data

5.3.1. Combining interviews with analysis of videos

With the use of these four methods, the aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of solutions-focused journalism in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team, particularly in video production. Interviews with the editors and journalists were combined with the analysis of solutions-focused video stories to comprehensively conceptualise the practice by examining both sides of the production process. The goal was to understand the main ideas of solutions-focused journalism that the members of this team have, but also to compare and examine if and how the main criteria of solutions reporting are implemented in the video stories that they make. Thematic analysis of interview data was additionally used to identify the main themes in how journalists and editors at the BBC understand solutions-focused journalism and describe the production process, and to identify the main factors they pointed out as decisive in the context of solutions reporting and making video stories.

5.3.2. Why content analysis and narrative analysis

More importantly, the combination of content analysis and narrative analysis, which were used to examine both text and visuals in solutions-focused video stories, was chosen for two reasons. First, content analysis as a quantitative research method "for making replicable and valid inferences from texts" (Krippendorff 2019, p. 24) is useful as it allows to systematically identify *what* solutions journalism criteria are implemented, and how often. It is well complemented by narrative analysis as a qualitative approach that – among other things – studies how experiences are understood and meanings created (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015, p. 6); and is, therefore, a suitable method for examining *how* these criteria – if implemented – are incorporated in the content and form of solutions-focused narratives. This helps understand better what is said about both the problem and the solution. Second,

storytelling is an important feature of reporting – it not only shows what aspects of meaning are prioritised but shows in what ways journalists aim to connect with their audiences, and how they perceive audiences' preferences. The chosen methods were used in line with the analytical framework designed specifically for this study.

5.3.3.   Research design informed by the analytical framework

In the previous chapter, I presented the analytical framework for studying solutions-focused journalism at the BBC. It consists of three groups of solutions journalism criteria. The first group of criteria includes what a BBC story needs to have to be considered a *solutions* story, but also a journalistic story that is done 'rigorously'. The second group of criteria is related to storytelling choices, while the third group includes other relevant solutions journalism criteria related to elements of insight and information on how to get involved.

The research design was created according to the criteria in the analytical framework. In Tables 1, 2 and 3, I present an overview of how each solutions journalism criterion was covered in each research phase.

Table 1: Solutions journalism reporting criteria and research design

1. SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM CRITERIA: REPORTING	Research phase 1: Content analysis	Research phase 2: Narrative analysis	Research phase 3: Interviews
	Solutions-focused video stories		Editors and journalists
Presentation and explanation of the problem and its cause	Operationalised as a set of 4 variables	Presentation of problem and cause of the problem operationalised as events in the narrative	Operationalised as an interview question
Presentation of a tangible solution that exists and is actively implemented	Operationalised as a set of 2 variables	Presentation of solution operationalised as an event in the narrative	Operationalised as an interview question
Explanation of how the solution is implemented (how it works)	Operationalised as a set of 3 variables	Presentation of solution implementation operationalised as an event in the narrative	Operationalised as a set of interview questions
Presentation and explanation of hard evidence of solution effectiveness	Operationalised as a set of 3 variables	Presentation of hard evidence operationalised as an event in the narrative	Operationalised as a set of interview questions
Presentation and explanation of solution limitations	Operationalised as a set of 4 variables	Presentation of solution limitations operationalised as an event in the narrative	Operationalised as a set of interview questions
Inclusion of sources who have direct experience with the solution	Operationalised as a set of 8 variables	Study of characters within narratives	Operationalised as a set of interview questions

Table 2: Solutions journalism storytelling criteria and research design

2. SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM CRITERIA: STORYTELLING	Research phase 2: Narrative analysis	Research phase 3: Interviews
	Solutions-focused video stories	Editors and journalists
The problem-solving process is central to the narrative	Study of the way problem and solution are positioned and related within the narrative	Operationalised as a set of interview questions
Presentation of the solution early in the story	Identification of solution and study of storytelling strategies used in introductions of solutions-focused stories	Operationalised as an interview question
Focus is on the solution, not the persons who are in any way involved with the solution	Study of the role of people and their relation to the solution presented in the narrative	Operationalised as an interview question

Table 3: Other solutions journalism criteria and research design

3. SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM CRITERIA: OTHER	Research phase 1: Content analysis	Research phase 2: Narrative analysis	Research phase 3: Interviews
	Solutions-focused video stories		Editors and journalists
Presentation of information about how audience members can get involved or find out more about the solution	Operationalised as 2 variables		
Presentation of a teachable lesson or insight that shows how the world works and how it can be improved	Operationalised as a variable	Insight operationalised as an event in the narrative	Operationalised as an interview question

Before the interviews with the members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team, the first step was the analysis of the solutions-focused video stories – identification and evaluation of their reporting and storytelling choices and techniques.

5.4. Phase 1: Content analysis of BBC's solutions-focused video stories

The first research phase explored the following research question:

Does the *BBC People Fixing the World* team follow the solutions journalism reporting criteria in solutions-focused video stories?

This part focused on the presence of six out of nine solutions journalism elements and implementation of related criteria dedicated to what the proponents of the practice perceive as 'rigorous' presentation of both the problem and the solution in each solutions-focused story. Content analyses "count occurrences of specified dimensions and they analyse the relationships between these dimensions" (Hansen and Machin 2013, p. 91), in this case between solutions journalism elements. The aim of this method is "to provide a systematic means for quantifying textual and thematic features across a large number of texts" (Deacon et al. 2007, p. 132) and is, therefore, applicable in this context as it enables the researcher to systematically operationalise and check if a specific solutions journalism criterion occurs in each story. It also means checking if a solutions journalism element is presented not only textually, but also visually.

5.4.1. Sample and access

The unit of analysis was a solutions-focused video story published both on the *BBC People Fixing the World* website and on the project's Facebook page. For the purposes of this study, a video story is defined as a pre-edited or scripted news package. Each was watched and analysed from beginning to end. The stories were watched multiple times and coded manually in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The coding sheets were then imported into the SPSS software.

The sample for the content analysis was a population of all solutions-focused video stories published on the website and the Facebook page of the *BBC People Fixing the World* project, starting from the first video published in November 2016, until the last story published at the end of March 2019. The decision was to analyse all the stories published within the project from its start until one month before the content analysis was conducted, in order to perform a systematic and exhaustive study of solutions-focused video stories made and published by the BBC's team. The idea to

encompass all the stories published until I started coding is related to the "general rule" that "if you want to paint a broad picture, you need a big canvas" (Deacon et al. 2021, pp. 148-149). The sample included a total of 119 video stories. All are publicly available on the BBC's website, therefore there was no issue in terms of accessing the material. For the content analysis, each video was recorded using the built-in screen recording tool in Windows. The content analysis was conducted in April and May 2019.

5.4.2.   Coding frame: Variables operationalised

For the content analysis, each of the six criteria was operationalised as a separate set of variables in the coding frame. This was done to check if each element of solutions journalism is presented both textually and visually and leads to a more in-depth understanding of how these criteria are implemented in the video form. The textual presentation means looking at the information present in either the voiceover, captions, or soundbites. The visual representation implies exploring if this information is distinctly visually represented. Here, visual representation implies the use of visuals and/or graphics directly related to the information that is presented. If information is, for example, presented through a soundbite and we only see the person who is talking, this means that the element is not visually represented. Further, if there are visuals related to another aspect of either the problem or the solution, it also means that there is no direct visual representation. *How* this is done and what kind of visuals are used was studied in the following research phase.

For each of the six solutions journalism criteria related to reporting on both the problem and the solution, multiple sets of variables were created which concerned the information that is presented, the sources related to it, and the way information is visually represented. In this way, the criterion about including sources who had a direct experience of any kind with the solution was operationalised as variables inherent in the other five criteria. The coding frame consisted of 23 nominal variables related to these six criteria. It is presented, along with the operationalisation of variables, in Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8:

Table 4: Variables related to the problem and its cause, and their operationalisation for the content analysis of BBC's solutions-focused video stories

CODING FRAME: VARIABLES AND CATEGORIES FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS		
1. PROBLEM AND CAUSE	Variable	Operationalisation
Information	1. Is the problem presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	The problem is directly addressed in the story, either in text or in visuals (or both).
	2. Is the cause of the problem and the context within which it arose presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	The story presents the reasons why the problem happens and what causes it–either in text or in visuals (or both).
Sources	3. Who presents the problem? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who receives the solution, 5 – other (state who) More than one answer is possible.	1 – journalist telling the story in the voiceover/piece to camera/text on the screen 2 – the person presented as the one who came up with the idea or concept for the solution 3 – for example, if the solution is a special type of school, the teacher working in the school provides the solution. If the solution is a special coffee shop, the waiter/server who works there provides the solution. 4 -the person/more people/group/animals that receive and benefit from the solution, use it in their lives, have personal experience of implementing the solution. 5 – it could be someone that criticizes a solution, perhaps an expert in this topic; or someone who is not involved in the process of solution invention, provision, or implementation.
	4. Who explains the cause of the problem? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who)	See operationalisation for variable 3.

	5.	Is there at least one interviewee who shares their personal experience of the problem? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	A person shares how they were personally affected by the problem. It can also be a soundbite in which both the solution and the problem are mentioned together.
Visual representation	6.	Is the problem itself visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	This includes visuals in which the problem that is described is explicitly shown, and the audience is visually presented with information on how the problem is manifested. This does not include visuals that do not represent the problem at all but are used while the problem is presented. For example, if the theme of the story is pollution, and the journalist in the voice-over is presenting the problem, if the visuals feature a bridge and a river, or the sky, or visuals of the city – without visually showing what pollution looks like or what it causes – then the problem is not visually represented.
	7.	Is the cause of the problem visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	This refers to visuals which represent the cause of the problem, but at times the same visuals may represent both the problem and its cause. For example, if a story is about elderly people being lonely, a visual that shows a person who is alone and who observes the people passing by, may be seen as both a visual of the problem – the people are lonely, and of the cause of the problem – they do not have family, or they do not live close enough to visit them.

Table 5: Variables related to the solution and their operationalisation for the content analysis of BBC's solutions-focused video stories

2. SOLUTION	Variable	Operationalisation
Information	8. Is the solution presented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	A solution or response is presented as a means of dealing with a problem and overcoming it.
	9. Is the solution tangible or hypothetical? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	If the solution is tangible, it means that it exists and is used in the physical reality. If it is an object, it is produced and used. If it is an event, it took place and people were aware of it. If it is a concept (for example, a special type of a school), it is implemented daily (classes are held). A hypothetical solution is an idea or a theory that has not been in any way implemented in real life situations. This includes solutions that are in the trial period. However, this does not mean that the idea cannot be visually demonstrated, for example, with the use of animated graphics.
Sources	10. Is the person or organisation which invented the solution given a voice in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	This means that the person is presented as an interviewee.
	11. Is the person or the organisation which provides the solution given a voice in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	See operationalisation for variable 10.

Table 6: Variables related to the solution implementation and their operationalisation for the content analysis of BBC's solutions-focused video stories

3. SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION	Variable	Operationalisation
Information	12. Does the story include details on how the solution is implemented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	Information about the ways this solution works, the ways it is or can be used, and how it manifests in real-life situations. This also includes hypothetical solutions in trial test runs that are not yet implemented in real life, but the audience is presented with details how the solution works and what its effects should be if it is applied.
Sources	13. Is at least one person who implements the solution presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	This is the person who receives the solution and benefits from it in some way. It cannot be a place or an animal.
Visual representation	14. Is solution implementation visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	Visuals of how the solution works, and in what way it responds to the problem.
	15. Is the person who implements the solution visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	The person who receives the solution is visually represented in interaction with the solution and/or the benefits of solution implementation.

Table 7: Variables related to evidence of solution effectiveness and their operationalisation for the content analysis of BBC's solutions-focused video stories

4. EVIDENCE OF SOLUTION EFFECTIVENESS	Variable	Operationalisation
Information	16. Is hard evidence or reliable data that show the impact of solution implementation presented? 1–Yes, 0 – No	Hard evidence is reliable data about solution effectiveness that has been collected independently, scientifically, and by a reliable source. It can be numerical data, but also qualitative data from an independent report or academic research. This does not include anecdotal information.
	17. If yes, what is it? 1 – Numerical data, 2 – Qualitative data.	Numerical data refers to any statistics, concrete numbers that prove the effect of the solution. For example, it can be the number or the percentage of people who have received the solution; a study that numerically proves the effectiveness of the solution, etc. Qualitative data is reliable evidence – for example, a descriptive report that confirms or disapproves the effectiveness of the solution.
Sources	18. Who presents the evidence? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who)	See operationalisation for variable 3.

Table 8: Variables related to solution 'imitations and their operationalisation for the content analysis of BBC's solutions-focused video stories

5. SOLUTION LIMITATIONS		
Information	19. Are there solution limitations presented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	Presentation of downsides of a solution or obstacles to solution implementation. It does not have to be directly referred to as a limitation. Instead, it can be mentioned or described in a soundbite as part of the solution description. Additionally, if a journalist *questions* the scale of the solution, but does not establish if it can scale or not, this is not considered a limitation.
	20. If yes, how many limitations are reported? 1 – 1, 2 – 2, 3 – 3 or more	
	21. Is there any feedback from the sources related to the solution about the limitations that are presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	Any of the sources related to the solution give direct feedback or react to limitations presented in the story.
Sources	22. Who points out the limitations? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – expert, 6 – the person who directly opposes the solution	More than one answer is possible. For categories 1,2,3,4, see operationalisation for variable 3. An expert is the person who is knowledgeable in the domain of the problem and the solution. The person who directly opposes the solution is the one who is openly against the solution being implemented. If there is more than one limitation presented by multiple sources, clarify in notes which person presents which limitation.
Visual representation	23. Is/are the limitation/s visually represented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No	The aspect of the solution or solution limitation that does not work or encounters obstacles is visually represented.

5.4.3. Additional variables

In addition to the ones that are related to the six solutions journalism criteria, the other variables included in the coding frame, and included in the first part of the coding sheet, are the following:

24. Title of the story (descriptive)
25. Date of publication (descriptive)
26. Name of the journalist (descriptive)
27. Story length
28. Story topic

    The topic of the story is evaluated in relation to the problem that the solution responds to. When assessing what the story topic is, it is asked what problem is trying to be solved. For example, if a story is about communal housing for young people who are lonely and socially anxious, the story topic is considered to be mental health, not housing.

Here it is important to note that some of the codes for variable 28 were developed and added after coding.

Further, the solutions journalism criterion from the group of "Other" criteria, which concerns the presentation of information about how audience members can get involved or find out more about the solution, was also operationalised as a pair of variables:

29. Is there information on how people can get involved with the solution?
    1 – Yes, 0 – No
    Information about how to find out more about the solution, how it can be implemented, how people can get involved.
30. If yes, who presents it?
    1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who)
    See operationalisation for variable 3.

The variables were first tested in a pilot study.

5.4.4.   Pilot study

The coding frame was piloted before the content analysis was conducted. The first version of the coding frame designed for content analysis was tested in a pilot study in March 2019. This was vital to "see how easy the variables and values are to operationalise, and to gain some sense of their comprehensiveness" (Deacon et al. 2007, p. 130). Ten percent of the sample was selected, while stories were chosen using an online tool called 'Research Randomizer' (Social Psychology Network 2022). The piloting was useful as it singled out the variables that needed to be further clarified, but also those that were added or excluded from the coding frame. The coding manual was detailed to ensure rigour and thoroughness.

First, the piloting suggested that variables 19-23 needed to be more clearly operationalised. While the element of solution limitations was initially operationalised as "downsides and criticisms" of the solution, the pilot study showed different nuances in terms of presenting solution limitations. For this reason, it was operationalised as either presentation of the downsides of a solution or obstacles to solution implementation presented in the story.

Second, criticism of solutions that did not include pointing out the concrete downsides or obstacles to solution implementation was identified in the pilot study. In the stories, it was presented as general disapproval or opposition to the solution idea. Therefore, the additional variable about opposition to the solution was added and operationalised for the coding frame:

31. Is anyone presented who directly opposes or disapproves of the solution?

    1 – Yes, 0 – No

    The person is presented as an interviewee and openly expresses opposition or disapproval of the solution and/or how it is implemented.

This is important as it shows the extent of the implied 'rigour' in solutions reporting, that is to say if and how journalists put solutions under scrutiny, and what kind of criticism is present in the portrayal of the solution.

Third, even though evidence of solution effectiveness was first operationalised as any evidence demonstrating that the solution works, this was narrowed down after the pilot study to what McIntyre and Lough call "hard" evidence (2021, p. 1568). This refers to reliable data-based evidence, albeit not necessarily exclusively numerical. As the Solutions Journalism Network points out, it can also be "qualitative results that show effectiveness" (2022d). However, as the organisation's definition is somewhat vague, for the purposes of content analysis I included only qualitative data on solution effectiveness that was provided either by the solution inventor, or experts independent of the solution – be it in reports or academic research. I did not include anecdotal evidence because the visual representation of solution implementation in videos can already be considered anecdotal evidence that a response is working.

Fourth, the solutions journalism criterion of including insight or a teachable lesson within a solutions story – which was explored in the initial version of the coding frame – was first excluded because of obstacles in the operationalisation of the variable. It was difficult to identify an insight or a lesson in a solutions-focused video story, as it was sometimes subtle, open to multiple interpretations, and therefore not easy to unambiguously identify in a specific voiceover or soundbite. Also, if insight is understood as "a clear, deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation" (Cambridge Dictionary 2022c), or "apprehending the inner nature of things or of seeing intuitively" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2022), I estimated that it was something that can primarily be identified in the person who has an insightful observation rather than in the content itself.

However, I took descriptive notes during the process of coding with regards to this element and identified potential points in the story where it was explicitly present, and I discussed this element in interviews with the editors and journalists. Subsequently, based on the findings, I devised a new operationalisation of the variable and rewatched all the stories in the sample to code it. However, as this was done in December 2020 – more than a year and a half after the coding of the other variables – the limitation was that this variable had not been tested for inter-coder reliability. Another limitation was that the operationalisation was developed inductively, therefore I allow that there may be other ways of presenting an insight or

89

a teachable lesson. For these reasons, reliability could not be ensured in the context of this variable. However, its operationalisation in itself is a valuable finding in the context of this criterion.

32. Is there an insight or a teachable lesson in the story?

    1 – Yes, 0 – No

    The insight or a teachable lesson are coded only if they are explicitly present in the story. They can be present anywhere in the story but are most prominent as part of the ending. Insight can be an invitation to think critically about the impact or the scale of the solution, or a provision of hope about the future of the solution and the progress it may bring. A teachable lesson can be directly offered by the interviewee as a promise that, if the lesson is learned, it can bring positive results. A story can also be framed as a teachable lesson and presented as, for example, a series of steps and explanations how a solution can be effective in solving the problem if it is applied elsewhere.

Therefore, the final version of the coding frame for content analysis used in the first phase of this research consisted of a total of 32 variables, of which 29 were nominal and 3 were descriptive (Appendix 1). The coding frame already presented in Tables 4-8 was finalized after a pilot study had been conducted. The coding manual is presented in Appendix 2.

5.4.5.   Inter-coder reliability

The nominal variables in the coding frame were checked for inter-coder reliability. A research randomiser was used to select 7 percent of the stories within the sample. The size of the subsample was chosen because the literature recommends between 5 and 10 percent of the sample for inter-coder reliability testing (Lacy et al. 2015, pp. 26-27), but also because this is a very detailed coding scheme and I needed to take into consideration the other coder's time. The second coder was a final-year postgraduate student in journalism with sufficient research and coding experience at the Department of Journalism and Media Production at the University of Zagreb.

The ICT was done using a free online tool called 'ReCal2: Reliability for 2 Coders' (Freelon 2022). Krippendorf's Alpha was used as a measure of agreement between the coders. The results of the ICT showed that there were no significant differences identified in the coding of the nominal variables that would compromise the validity of the results and the reliability of the coding frame, except for variable 20.

The results showed between 87.5 and 100 percent agreement (0.73-1.0 KA) for 27 variables. The scores are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: ICT scores for content analysis

Variable		ICT score
1	Is the problem presented?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
2	Is the cause of the problem and the context within which it arose presented?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
3	Who presents the problem?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
4	Who explains the cause of the problem?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
5	Is there at least one interviewee who shares their personal experience of the problem?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
6	Is the problem itself visually represented?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
7	Is the cause of the problem visually represented?	0.762 KA (87.5 percent agreement)
8	Is the solution presented in the story?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
9	Is the solution tangible or hypothetical?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
10	Is the person or organisation which invented the solution given a voice in the story?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
11	Is the person or the organisation which provides the solution given a voice in the story?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
12	Does the story include details on how the solution is implemented?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
13	Is at least one person who implements the solution presented?	0.615 KA (87.5 percent agreement)

14	Is solution implementation visually represented?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
15	Is the person who implements the solution visually represented?	0.727 KA (87.5 percent agreement)
16	Is hard evidence or reliable dana that show the impact of solution implementation presented?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
17	If yes, what is it?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
18	Who presents the evidence?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
19	Are there solution limitations presented in the story?	0.762 KA (87.5 percent agreement)
20	If yes, how many limitations are reported?	0.565 KA (75 percent agreement)
21	Is there any feedback from the sources related to the solution about the limitations that are presented?	0.727 KA (87.5 percent agreement)
22	Who points out the limitations?	0.762 KA (87.5 percent agreement)
23	Is/are the limitation/s visually represented in the story?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
27	Story length	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
28	Story topic	0.857 KA (87.5 percent agreement)
29	Is there information on how people can get involved with the solution?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
30	If yes, who presents it?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)
31	Is anyone presented who directly opposes or disapproves of the solution?	1.0 KA (100 percent agreement)

For variable 7, the disagreement occurred in one story about a town in the UK that had a plan to end loneliness among the elderly. The coder who assessed that the cause of the problem was visually represented in the story understood the same visuals – an elderly woman standing alone in her house by the window, watching people pass by – as being a visual representation of both the problem and the cause of the problem, the cause being that they either did not have family or that it was far away. This possibility was, therefore, added to the coding manual.

For variable 13, there was also one disagreement between the coders in a story about turning fatberg into fuel in one city. Here, one coder assessed that the city itself was the one receiving or implementing the solution. However, this was modified in the coding manual to make clear that the solution could be received, in this study, by a person, because the focus is on the sources used in solutions-focused video stories.

Furthermore, the scores for variables 19, 20, 21 and 22 are related. The disagreement between coders for variable 19 in one story, meant disagreement in the other three related variables. The second coder assumed, even though the variable was not operationalised in this way in the coding manual, that solution limitations also included the journalist *questioning* the extent of the solution. However, this is not the same, as limitations were coded as specific information about obstacles or restrictions in solution implementation, or informed judgments made by the journalists about the scale of the solution. For this reason, the variable was additionally clarified in the coding manual for any future researchers who might want to replicate the study, by saying that a solution limitation does not refer to *questioning* the scale of the response but establishing what the scale of the solution is.

Second, there was another disagreement between the coders in terms of variable 20, and for this reason it showed a value in the inter-coder reliability test that is below the smallest acceptable level of 0.667 KA (Krippendorff 2019, p. 354), even though Landis and Koch (1977, p. 171) see it as moderate strength of agreement between two coders. The other disagreement was due to the subtleties of how the limitations were presented in another story. While journalists can refer to them directly, at times the limitations were present in soundbites by being briefly mentioned among other information about the solution and solution implementation. In this way, it was necessary to carefully examine all the information that was presented within the story, without expectations that it would always be clearly labelled as a downside of a solution or an obstacle to solution implementation. This note was also added to the coding manual.

For variable 28, there was one disagreement between the coders in a story about housing for young people made in a way that they could connect and have common areas for studying and relaxing. One coder assessed that the topic was housing, while

the other one estimated that it was mental health. This was important in terms of clarifying what the topic of a solutions story was. It should be assessed in relation to the problem that is presented. In this case, the story was framed as a way of solving the problem of loneliness and social anxiety among young people; therefore, I assessed that the story topic mental health was more accurate. This clarification was added to the coding manual.

5.4.6. Limitations of content analysis in this study

The content analysis contributed to gaining a comprehensive overview of solutions journalism elements and their implementation in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories, but it is important to bear in mind that "the method tends to skate over complex and varied processes of meaning-making *within* texts" (Deacon et al. 2007, p. 119). To be specific, I identified the presence of specific solutions journalism elements, but not *how* they were included in each story. However, the narrative analysis and interviews in the following research phases complemented these limitations as they explored both the meaning and what was behind it. Additionally, the coding frame presented here is highly nuanced because of the nature of the research questions, but also of solutions journalism itself. Even though the analytical framework had been carefully designed, the variables were operationalised according to the decisions I made, and such decisions are, as Deacon et al. (2007, p. 132) say, "ultimately produced by the researcher's subjective judgment of what is significant". Nevertheless, this content analysis is robust and reproducible, as the steps that this method implies were carefully followed, while both the analytical framework and the coding frame were meticulously designed – to the best of my abilities.

5.5. Phase 2: Narrative analysis of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories

In the second research phase, I conducted a narrative analysis of a smaller sample of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories that journalists and editors point out as their own or their colleagues' best work. This is the first study that uses narrative

analysis as a research method to explore a journalistic practice related to constructive journalism and solutions journalism. The research question that I explored was the following:

Does the *BBC People Fixing the World* team follow the solutions journalism storytelling criteria in solutions-focused video stories?

As part of this question, I further focused on these two aspects:

a) What are the storytelling approaches in solutions-focused video stories used to engage the audience in terms of interest?

b) In what way are these approaches in line with traditional postulates of storytelling (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022)?

This is the first study that examines video stories that report on solutions, including the specific storytelling approaches used in these stories to arouse and keep the audience's interest. This is important in order to understand what storytelling choices journalists make to engage the audience and the factors that determine these choices. In this research phase, the study explored how the following solutions journalism storytelling criteria were implemented, and to what extent they were in line with the rules of effective storytelling identified in the literature (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022):

- The problem-solving process central to the narrative;
- Presentation of the solution early in the story;
- Focus on the solution, not the persons related to the solution.

I critically examined the implementation of these three criteria in BBC's solutions video stories. I was not only interested in how each criterion was fulfilled, but also which established elements of good storytelling practices were used and which were avoided when these criteria were respected. Therefore, I also aimed to identify and discuss the potential shortcomings of solutions-focused journalism regarding the used storytelling techniques in terms of engaging the audience.

5.5.1. Sample

I chose a purposive sample of solutions-focused video stories by asking five video journalists to share between one and three video stories they were most proud of, and that they considered their best work within the *BBC People Fixing the World* team. Two editors and two radio journalists were asked to share one to three stories they considered the best examples of solutions-focused video journalism done by colleagues in their team. Asking them to share what they considered the *best* work was necessary as it was also indicative of the most important aspects of doing solution-focused journalism according to them – which may be different from the normative ideals of either solutions journalism or constructive journalism. In this way, this research phase also contributed to the first research question which examined how the journalists and editors in this team understood solutions-focused journalism as a practice. However, it is important to highlight that they were not asked to share the best examples of *storytelling* in solutions-focused journalism, but what they *overall* considered to be the best stories.

Nine members of the team were asked to share the stories in pre-interviews over e-mail between July and October 2020. This was done so these examples and results of the narrative analysis could also be discussed in interviews, which were central to the subsequent research phase. One radio journalist, who had also produced some of the video stories, chose only one story; while the other radio journalist chose one story which overlapped with the choice of one video journalist. The video journalists chose two or three stories. Editors suggested three stories in total, of which two were already selected by the journalists who made them. Therefore, as the editors and radio journalists' suggested stories overlapped with the choices of the video journalists, there were a total of 15 solutions-focused video stories in the sample for narrative analysis.

5.5.2. Exploring the two functions of journalistic narratives

Storytelling in journalism is seen, among other things, as a way of narrating in journalism and giving form to content (Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer 2015). The practice of narration or how journalists tell their stories has become increasingly

prominent as media outlets try to grab the audiences' attention and keep them interested and engaged with their content. Journalism's goals to inform and engage have positioned journalistic narratives on a continuum between their two main functions:

- The *intriguing* function, which refers to the author's attempt to develop narrative tension within a plot that revolves around a complication and a resolution.
- The *configuring* function, which means that a journalist tries to make sense of events and focuses on "creating a retrospective understanding", "pointing out casual relations" and "giving meaning to what happened" (Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013, pp.80-82).

In other words, journalists create narratives "to both make sense of the event and engage or immerse the audience" (Harris and Taylor 2021, p. 212). Accordingly, journalistic narratives in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories were explored in two ways. The first involved studying the way narrative tension is created in a story to sustain the audience's interest. The other referred to identifying the causal relations between different elements in each story – particularly between the problem and the solution – and how the journalists create meaning.

5.5.3.   Narrative structure

The first step was to analyse the way narratives in solutions-focused video stories are structured, i.e. to identify the events and their sequence. This meant exploring the plot of each story, which refers to "the way an author tells a story and arranges for events to occur" (Berger 1997, p. 66). It also helped to understand the causal relationships between those events as part of the configurative function. Identifying events, in this case, meant exploring the presence and the positioning of some of the solutions journalism elements recognised in the analytical framework – the problem and its cause, the solution, solution implementation, solution limitations, evidence of effectiveness, insight, and information on how the audience can get involved. It also implied searching for other potential events as part of these elements, such as the cause of the problem, information about how citizens can get involved in a solution,

or any other events in the plot which may arise. The ways narratives were structured helped to further identify the storytelling strategies that spark interest in audience members and that were used in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories.

5.5.4. Narrative tension and storytelling approaches

The second step in this narrative analysis concerned narrative tension, which is central to keeping the audience interested in the story. According to the narratologist Baroni (2009, cited in Vanoost 2013, p. 81), two kinds of narrative tension shape the plot – one that happens in stories where events are chronologically presented and the instability of the situation evokes *suspense* in the audience, and the other, in which the audience members experience *curiosity* because the events are not presented chronologically and there is some 'mystery' that needs to be solved. In Todorov's view (1986, p. 61), a plot is driven by change: an initial equilibrium that is disrupted and followed by multiple disruptions, and this eventually leads to a resolution and the new equilibrium is established in the end. Similarly, the author differentiates between two forms of creating interest within a narrative – curiosity as a storytelling approach in which the audience is first presented with the effect, and then the story gradually discovers the reason *why* or the cause. Alternatively, suspense is created when the cause is presented first, so that the audience becomes interested in *what* happens next and how the story ends (Todorov 1986, pp. 52-53). Besides suspense and curiosity, Knobloch and colleagues (2004) and Bermejo-Berros and colleagues (2022) identified in literature and tested a third storytelling strategy that creates narrative tension: *surprise*. Here, important information is not presented, and the audience is not even aware of its existence. When it is finally presented, it comes as a surprise.

Moreover, the exploration of narrative tension in this study did not solely focus on the text, but on visuals, as well. This refers to studying how each event in the narrative was visually represented, and if this was congruent with what was textually presented, and with the events that preceded it or followed it. Additionally, it helped to understand what events and meanings in the narrative were visually supported, and therefore more salient.

In this way, as part of the intriguing function, the presence of three storytelling strategies were identified, and the role of narrative tension explored. In terms of the three solutions journalism criteria that I focused on in this research phase, this meant identifying how the relationship between the problem and the solution was developed in order to assess if the narratives were indeed *problem-solving*. It also involved examining how the beginning of the story was structured, what was done to grab the audience's attention, and what was later done to keep it.

5.5.5.   Voices in solutions-focused stories central to narrative involvement

Finally, the third step of this research phase was dedicated to the third solutions journalism storytelling criterion, which moves the focus from the people to the solutions. If and how this criterion was fulfilled was explored by studying how voices were presented in the stories and the extent to which they were transformed into characters "who do the actions that lead to the resolution of the story" (Berger 1997, p. 66). Characters are central to narrative involvement or engagement which is "the interest with which viewers follow the events as they unfold in the story" (Moyer-Gusé 2008, cited in Oschatz et al. 2021, p. 410). They are the main way audiences connect with the story. Thus, it was relevant to explore the apparent contradicting nature of this criterion in relation to storytelling postulates. I studied the representation of people connected either to the problem or the solution within each story and if they developed any character traits and if they were used to drive the narrative. Here the focus was not on listing all the traits that may have emerged in solutions-focused stories, but only if they were developed to the extent that it was the character who drove the narrative. I specifically looked at the way in which these characters were textually and visually presented in order not to 'overshadow' the solution.

5.5.6.   The use of visuals in storytelling

Videos are both textual and visual narratives, and storytelling techniques are constructed using both what is said and what is shown. It is important to study the role of visuals in solutions-focused video stories as the interactions between the

visuals and the text create unique messages for the viewer. "How it is put together – the images and explanations woven into it, and the position of the narrator in relation to the events and audience – all convey something important about a narrative's meanings" (Bell 2013, p. 143). This study responds to Lough and McIntyre's (2019, p. 596) call that future research should "examine the complex relationship of words and images and how the conflict between the two may support or negate the effects of solutions text", and here, it was done for the first time in the context of video.

Through the narrative analysis I examined what visuals were used to represent specific solutions journalism elements and I particularly focused on congruency – conflict or overlap between the text and the visuals. This is important in terms of the power of visuals to convey messages beyond what is said or change the meaning of what is textually presented, seeing as "the presence of visuals contributes to, and in some cases overwhelms, the message in the story" (Lough and McIntyre 2019, p. 585). In this sense, I also examined the visual relationship – if any – between the problem and the solution in the presentation of the problem-solving process. Additionally, I focused on how the people connected to the solution were visually represented, and in what way this potentially contributes to the construction of meaning in solutions-focused video stories.

5.5.7.   Limitations of narrative analysis in this study

"Narrative might be ubiquitous", but individual narrative studies – like this one – "are nuanced and specific" (Squire et al. 2014, p. 113), and, therefore, largely exploratory, and inevitably subjective. Further, using narrative analysis to examine the three solutions journalism criteria could not be generally applied to all the BBC's solutions-focused stories, as this was a small and purposive sample. Therefore, I do not claim that this part of the study can be reproduced. Here, I cannot assess if each criterion was fulfilled in the BBC's stories, unlike the solutions journalism reporting criteria in the first research phase. Nevertheless, considering that the members of the team were asked to submit what they considered the *best* work, the findings should be indicative of solutions-focused journalism's appreciated storytelling choices and approaches. These are also discussed in the following research phase.

5.6.   Phase 3: Interviews with the journalists and editors and thematic analysis

In the third research phase the study explored the following research question:

How do the journalists and editors in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team understand solutions-focused journalism?

a) What are the key ideas present in their understanding of the practice?
b) What are the main factors in their production process which determine the way solutions-focused video stories are made?

Additionally, this research phase also explored the two other research questions, as it aimed to identify the reasons *why* each solutions journalism criterion related either to reporting or storytelling was or was not implemented in the BBC's solutions-focused stories. In this way, the findings of the first and the second research phase were presented to interviewees and discussed.

For this part, semi-structured interviews with the members of the BBC's team were conducted. Interview data related to the first research question was then analysed using the method of thematic analysis.

5.6.1.   Access and selection criteria for the interviewees

Nine interviewees in total were selected for this study. While it may seem like a small sample of interviewees, it is important to note that at the time of the study this BBC's team was small, and the number of its members who worked on video stories was even smaller. When I conducted the interviews, there was one editor and eight journalists on the team. Therefore, this was a highly targeted sample of only those journalists and editors who were or still are related to the project and the solutions-focused journalism practice at the public broadcaster. In terms of understanding and conceptualising solutions-focused journalism at the BBC, this was the most important group of practitioners as they worked solely on solutions-focused stories as members of this team.

Gaining access and getting in touch with the journalists and editors at the *BBC People Fixing the World* team for interviews required a lot of work and pre-interviewing. Even though the authors of both the podcasts and the videos produced by this team are often named under the stories on the project's website, their contact details were not publicly available. For this reason, I got in touch with one member of the team, a radio journalist who has given multiple interviews in the media about the project and his work in solutions-focused journalism. This person shared the contact details of the current editor on the team, who, in turn, shared the details of the other current and former members of the team whose video stories I analysed. Seven journalists were further contacted, and six of them accepted to be interviewed for this study, while one failed to respond after multiple requests. The radio journalist who was first contacted for this study was also selected as one of the interviewees. Therefore, altogether seven journalists were interviewed in this study.

At the time when the interviews were conducted, two of the interviewees worked predominantly on podcasts in the team, while the other five focused on video. Of those who worked in video, three were also video journalists who shot and edited the solutions-focused stories themselves. At times the radio journalists also worked as producers for the video team, and the video and the radio teams worked together on almost all stories. All the members participated in pitching and commissioning meetings. Therefore, the interviewees were knowledgeable about everything happening in the team. At the time of interviewing, three of the seven journalists were already former members of the team who had moved on with their careers either within or outside the BBC but were keen to talk about their experiences with solutions-focused reporting.

Besides the journalists, two editors were interviewed – one who was the head of the team during the period when I was conducting the interviews, and one who founded the *BBC World Hacks* project, which was later renamed *BBC People Fixing the World*.

Additionally, before the interviews were conducted, the journalists and editors were asked to share links to between one and three video stories they considered their own or their colleagues' best work. These stories were analysed in the second research phase.

5.6.2.   Interviewing method

The interviews with the members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team were semi-structured to ensure the flexibility that is necessary for the exploratory part of this study, which seeks to establish how journalists and editors understand solutions-focused journalism as a journalistic practice, but also how they frame it in the context of their organisation and its purpose. In order to conceptualise this practice and identify different factors which are crucial in the production process, the semi-structured form of interviews is the most suitable as it implies asking follow-up questions that may arise and allow the researcher "to trawl around for new issues", while "free-format questioning generates richer data" (Deacon et al. 2007, pp. 72-73). I followed a clear list of questions but expanded on the points assessed as relevant for the purpose of this study. If the interviewee answered a question as part of the answer to another question, the question was skipped.

5.6.3.   Questions

Each interview consisted of two parts, while the questions were divided into four sections. The interviewees were first asked to share their understanding of the BBC's solutions-focused journalism, their notions of 'rigorous' reporting within this practice, and how this was achieved in their team. The interviewees were also encouraged to talk about the dominant factors in their news work that determined how solutions-focused video stories were made. In the second part of the interview, the interviewees were presented with the main findings of the content analysis and the narrative analysis and asked to comment on the results and provide explanations for them, along with their understandings of each solutions journalism criterion.

The questions were phrased and arranged differently with each interviewee depending on the topics and themes that emerged in each interview; however, a level of consistency was ensured during the interviews, as the researcher kept a checklist of all the questions and topics that needed to be covered.

The questions and topics covered in the interviews with the journalists are the following:

PART 1: JOURNALISTIC EXPERIENCE AND ROLE ON THE TEAM

1) You work/ed as a journalist on the *BBC People Fixing the World* team. How did that happen and what was your previous background in journalism? (In the question, refer to the particular experience of each journalist previously researched)

2) How long have you been on the team, what have you worked on so far?

PART 2: UNDERSTANDING OF SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED JOURNALISM

3) When did you first hear of solutions journalism? Did it appeal to you and why?

4) There are many proponents of both constructive and solutions journalism. The BBC has its own handbook of solutions-focused journalism. Could you explain what this practice is, in your own words, and how you understand it? (How is this in line with what it means to be a journalist for you? In what way is it different than doing 'good' journalism?)

4) Solutions journalism, constructive journalism, and projects like this have been getting more and more attention. Some say it is a way to do better journalism, while others say it can easily become happy, positive news. What do you think? (Relate this to the BBC's role as a public broadcaster)

5) When you are working on a story, do you think about who your audience is? (Social media, young audience, ways to approach them)

6) Do you pitch solutions story ideas to your editors at the BBC or are they assigned to you? If you pitch ideas, how do you select the ideas that could be interesting to the team and the audience?

PART 3: SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED JOURNALISM – REPORTING

→ in this part of the interview the researcher referred to particular stories made or produced by the interviewee that had been analysed in the first research phase

7) The handbook of SFJ says it is doing *rigorous* reporting and presenting both the opportunities and limitations of a certain solution. In what way is this reflected in your work and your stories?

8) What does the production process of a solutions story look like? Does reporting about solutions change in any way the thinking process and the production process behind the story?

9) What information about the solution do you always make sure to include in your stories?

10) Do you think a journalist should report on solutions of which there is yet no hard evidence that they are effective? (Present results of content analysis that concern evidence)

11) Do you think solution limitations should always be reported on? What do you think could be the possible reasons for not including them? (Present results of content analysis that concern solution limitations)

12) In what way do you present the problem in a solutions story, what information do you include? (Present results of content analysis that concern the problem and its cause)

13) Depending on the results of content analysis and narrative analysis, ask about other elements of solutions journalism: insight and information about taking action

PART 4: SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED JOURNALISM–STORYTELLING

→ in this part of the interview the researcher referred to particular stories made or produced by the interviewee that had been analysed in the second research phase

14) At the very beginning of solutions-focused video stories there is usually an introduction between 20 and 30 seconds long. How important do you think the introduction is? What is its purpose in a video story – should it be a teaser or something else? Do you give it much thought when doing a story and how do you construct it?

15) An important thing is to keep the audience interested throughout the whole story. How do you do it? How important is storytelling in telling a solutions story? Do you think about any specific techniques you use to build tension, to sustain interest? (The relation between the problem and the solution and how they are positioned)

16) The Solutions Journalism Network says that stories should focus on the solutions and not the individual. Do you think that is possible, especially in terms of video storytelling? How important are the characters in your stories? Examples? (Other than storytelling, this question also covered the solutions journalism element of Sources)

The additional questions for each journalist, except the one interviewee who only made podcasts, concerned the solutions-focused video stories they had shared as their best work, but also other stories in the sample that for some reason stood out in either the content analysis or the narrative analysis.

Furthermore, while the editors were asked the same questions as the journalists, some of them were slightly different. They were modified to fit their role and responsibility within the team, while additional questions were posed about the editorial process in the commissioning and production of the stories, but also about the project itself as part of the BBC. An additional question was added for the founding editor to better understand how and why the project had been set up at the public broadcaster.

ADDITIONAL SET OF QUESTIONS FOR EDITORS:

- What are the reasons for setting up *BBC World Hacks* at the public broadcaster?
- What is the main idea behind the project *BBC People Fixing the World*? Who is your audience and what is the scope of this project and your stories?
- What should your audience ideally gain from watching your stories?
- How important are social media in this context?

- How do you choose what becomes a story? What does the story selection process look like?

- Tell me about your relationship with the journalists who are doing a story. What is the editorial process behind solutions stories and in what ways is it similar and perhaps different than being an editor for another 'regular' programme?

- What do you make sure, as an editor, that each story includes? (Do you need to remind the journalists of it? Do you give them any instructions for story production?)

- What are you most proud of in your team's work and what do you think can be improved?

The pre-interviews and interviews were conducted between July and October 2020 via video calls on Zoom and Skype given the epidemiological situation at the time. The initial idea was to do it face-to-face and to observe the production process in the newsroom and in the field. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, except for the interview with the founding editor, which lasted around 90 minutes and was the most extensive. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed manually.

5.6.4. Thematic analysis of interview data

In the second step of the third research phase, a data-driven approach of thematic analysis of the interview data was used. Braun and Clarke, who wrote extensively about thematic analysis as a method in social sciences, pointed out that it "is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities" (2012, p. 57). This includes looking at evident and intricate aspects of what the interviewees say, and the meanings they create in relation to the practice. The purpose of using this method was to find those patterns which are relevant to the first research question in this study that is exploratory and concerns the interviewee's understanding of solutions-focused journalism as a journalistic practice, and as a practice within the BBC.

Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility – it is an inductive approach that does not impose any concepts or ideas that guide how the data is coded and interpreted, but values consistency and coherence when approaching data (Braun and Clarke 2012, pp. 58-59). The goal was to recognise and interpret the themes related to the following three aspects which concern the journalists' and editors' understanding of the practice:

- what solutions-focused journalism is
- understanding of audiences and engagement
- features of a solutions-focused story.

In the thematic analysis I followed the "six-phase approach" explained by Braun and Clarke (2012, pp. 60-69; 2022). This approach is analytically insightful because it helps to closely engage with the data, yet rigorous because it "ensures a systematic engagement with meaning and patterning across the entire dataset, so theme development is based on a robust and detailed analytical interrogation" (Braun and Clarke 2022, p. 54). In this case, I used thematic analysis as both a deductive approach – because the research questions and the three aspects that I was exploring led me in the coding process – but also inductive because I focused on the perspectives and experiences of my interviewees that I did not anticipate, but which may be meaningful in relation to my research question. Therefore, I did not limit the coding process only to the three aspects of the practice that I mentioned.

In the first phase, I immersed myself in the interview transcripts – I read and re-read the transcripts to familiarise myself with the data, thought about how the journalists and editors made sense of solutions-focused journalism and what it means, and took note of the parts that were relevant to the research questions.

Second, I manually developed codes – meanings and ideas – that I identified as potentially relevant in terms of the three presented relevant aspects of the practice. Coding is an "attentive practice" of finding "repeating narrative signals and identifying patterns that give shape and coherence" (Mihas 2020, p. 113), or the search for meaning – both explicit and underlying. My coding process consisted of two parts suggested by Turner (2020, pp. 120-122) – first I broke the segments of interviews into "basic common codes" or descriptive codes in which I identified

topical areas that each interviewee covered – such as "social media", "social audience", "video production", "positive news", etc. This was useful to have an overview of the topics that the interviewees covered. Then I used interpretive coding in a systematic and consistent way to identify meanings in the interview data that were related to my research question and the three aspects that I was particularly interested in. For both the descriptive and the interpretive codes, I used "analytically-meaningful descriptions" or "code labels" (Braun and Clarke 2022, p. 35). Next to the code labels, in both stages of coding I kept notes of what each code meant and how it was related to what I was studying, in order to systematically track the development of the codes and keep a consistent coding system (Turner 2020, p. 118). This also means that some segments of interview data may have multiple code labels. Within this, I grouped what I identified as related codes in order to recognise themes with more ease in the next phase of thematic analysis. It is important to note that the coding was performed in each stage in multiple rounds in order to refine the codes.

Third, I identified and constructed provisional broader meanings or themes – "shared patterned meaning *across* the dataset" (Braun and Clarke 2022, p. 35) between the interviewees, and in relation to the research question. A theme is "a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis 1998, p. 4), and as Braun and Clarke (2012, p. 63) make clear – a theme does not emerge but is created by the researcher who identifies similarities and overlaps between codes. Therefore, I looked for patterns in the codes, clustered together those that were connected into "candidate" themes and explored these initial patterns of meaning (Braun and Clarke 2022, p. 79). Subsequently, I developed themes, but also subthemes – "salient elements of a theme" or layers within the themes (Braun and Clarke 2022, p. 86). As part of this, I studied the relationships between the identified themes and grouped them according to the aspect of solutions-focused journalism that I was studying.

In the fourth phase, I reviewed the validity but also the viability and boundaries of my initial themes and made sure that there was a clear distinction between them. This included narrowing down or expanding some initial themes. Then I produced "a set

of well-worked-up (but still provisional) themes" (Braun and Clarke 2022, p. 102) in relation to the research question, and regrouped the interview data that supported it. In my case, phases three and four merged, and I conducted the two processes simultaneously.

In the fifth phase, I refined, defined, and named each theme and subtheme, and made sure that they together made "a coherent overall story about the data" (Braun and Clarke 2012, p. 66). I regrouped the themes related to the three aspects that I explored. Additionally, I selected extracts from interviews that illustrated each theme. In the final phase, I presented the results of the thematic analysis, which is dealt with the in following chapter.

I analysed the interviews and extracted the codes and subsequently the themes manually, without using any qualitative analysis software. This is because many of the questions in the interviews I conducted were open-ended and designed in such a way to reveal different nuanced approaches – both apparent and implicit – of the editors and journalists that ultimately gave shape to this practice within the team. Therefore, I assessed that analysing data manually would provide more precise and reliable results for the purpose of my research, particularly because this was the first time that I had conducted thematic analysis. However, it is important to note here that my journalistic experience in doing interviews, producing interview transcripts, and selecting soundbites for my TV and radio packages, proved to be very useful as it provided me with a set of skills I employed in this research phase.

5.6.5.   Limitations of interviews and thematic analysis in this study

The use of semi-structured interviews, which is less standardised and more informal, means that the "intervening presence of the interviewer" is bigger (Deacon et al. 2007, p. 73). Additionally, the form of the interviews can make it more difficult to conduct valid comparisons. The semi-structured form of these interviews also brought forth the ability of the interviewer to follow the flow of the conversation, what was said, and the list of questions that needed to be covered. Even though there was a clear structure of topics and questions that needed to be answered, there was always a risk that the interviewer may inadvertently forget to pose some

questions. It is also important to note that the interviews took place over video calls on Zoom and Skype. Some studies find that both the researchers and participants see it as a highly convenient, easy, interactive, and secure way of qualitative interviewing (Archibald et al. 2019, p. 7) and that it is less costly, easier to adapt to the interviewee's availability, all in the atmosphere of their homes (Oliffe et al. 2021, pp. 3-4). However, not interviewing the participant in person means that the interviewer must adapt to the interviewee's current environment and circumstances, and it is more difficult for the interviewer to notice body language and expressions when specific questions are asked (Oliffe et al. 2021, p. 7), and which may be a useful cue for the interviewer to expand more on certain topics.

Thematic analysis is at times seen as 'something and nothing' method that has "limited interpretative power" if it is not used within a clear theoretical framework (Braun and Clarke 2013, p. 180). However, this study is guided by a clear framework of aspects that need to be explored in order to develop a comprehensive overview of how this specific journalistic practice is understood by those who practice it. Of course, just like narrative analysis, this is a qualitative method of data analysis, and therefore entails "an element of evaluation and judgment and taste" (Berger 2016, p. 27). For this reason, I aimed to ensure a high level of reliability or "consistency of judgment" (Boyatzis 1998, p. 144) in the way I identified and defined the themes in this research phase, by using the mentioned six-phase approach (Braun and Clarke 2012). However, I did not use a second coder and therefore could not ensure the highest level of reliability. Nevertheless, a clear conceptual framework in the development of themes strongly suggests that I did not steer too far from the intended path and the related research question.

5.7.   Limitations of a case study

This case study "comprises an all-encompassing mode of inquiry, with its logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis" (Yin 2018, p. 16). It is an overall highly nuanced approach to studying a journalistic practice. A combination of four research methods was used and each has its set of drawbacks, even though they do complement each other in terms of gaining an in-

depth understanding of how solutions-focused journalism is understood and how it is ultimately practised. While the use of content analysis on a population of all solutions-focused video stories published before the coding may be empirically the most solid phase of this study; the use of qualitative methods to understand storytelling, but also the ideas of those who make the stories, was necessary to achieve the main research aim of conceptualising this practice.

As this is a study of how solutions-focused journalism is understood and done by the only team on the BBC which is exclusively dedicated to this practice, it is arguably a small case study within the domain of solutions journalism. Indeed, focusing on one small newsroom that does solutions reporting has its limitations. The most common criticism of choosing to do a case study is that its findings cannot be generalised, therefore I cannot make conclusions about related practices, or even solutions-focused journalism as a whole, because I did not interview all the journalists who do solutions reporting at the BBC or analyse all their stories. Additionally, I focused only on video stories because I explored solutions-focused journalism not only as a journalistic practice, but in the context of the BBC's efforts to connect with younger audience members through this format.

This study is, nevertheless, valuable for four reasons because the point of a case study is not generalisability, but the demonstration of "how and in what ways our findings may be transferable to other contexts or used by others" (Simons 2009, p. 164). First, studying how solutions are reported on at the BBC – a public broadcaster with clear editorial guidelines – allows to examine how this kind of journalistic practice is practiced in the context of a public broadcaster with a unique purpose. Second, the BBC is a well-funded broadcaster with solid financial conditions to establish this practice and, therefore, has the 'luxury' of developing a distinctive, nuanced approach to solutions reporting. Third, as the BBC is often highlighted as one of the most prominent practitioners of solutions reporting, it is worthwhile to study if it lives up to its reputation among the proponents of constructive journalism and solutions journalism. Finally, the strength of this research lies in the fact that it is the first academic attempt to understand a solutions reporting practice as a whole and within a specific context, and thus sheds light on different opportunities and obstacles to implementing solutions journalism and related ideas in a particular

newsroom. In this sense, it is methodologically unique and the most extensive so far. It is important to note that studying the production of solutions-focused stories through ethnographic observation would have yielded valuable insights; however, this was not possible as research was predominantly conducted during the pandemic when access to newsrooms was restricted.

5.8. Ethical considerations

The JOMEC Research Ethics Committee gave a favourable ethical opinion and confirmed that interviews may be conducted and recorded according to guidelines. The interviews were arranged over email. The interviewees were provided with an electronic interview consent form (Appendix 3) and a participant information sheet (Appendix 4). Eight interviewees signed the consent form either manually or electronically, while one interviewee gave consent over email. The interview data used in this study is anonymised so the interviewees could share their experiences and views, especially those who are more sensitive in relation to their organisation, more freely. It is important to note that in the findings chapters, some stories which are specifically presented can nevertheless be tied to the journalists by a quick search as their work is in the public domain and the information about the names of the authors is listed on the BBC's website below almost all the videos analysed in this study. For this reason, whenever a specific story is mentioned, I do not include the number of the interviewee. Nevertheless, as I do refer to them as editors and journalists, I cannot claim that their identities are completely anonymised. Interviews were audio-recorded. The transcripts are available upon request.

5.9. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented the choices of methods and in what ways they were used in the study. I additionally addressed their limitations, along with the limitations of conducting a case study. However, the advantages and the value of researching the BBC's solutions-focused journalism in this way were also pointed out in this chapter. I would like to reiterate here that this study is methodologically unique in the context

of practices related to constructive and solutions journalism, and that this is the first study that uses this kind of approach and aims to examine a practice comprehensively. I would also like to make a note of my professional background as a journalist, with experience in both the editorial process and in production, which significantly contributed to sharpening my decisions on what to look for in my study and assessing what questions would allow me to gain an in-depth understanding of this journalistic practice.

In the next three chapters, I will present the findings of my three research phases. In the following chapter, I will first present part of the results of the third research phase in which I conducted interviews with the journalists and editors followed by a thematic analysis of the interview data. I will present the main ideas of solutions-focused journalism as perceived by the members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team, along with the main factors that, according to the interviewees, significantly shape the way they choose their topics and make their solutions-focused video stories.

Chapter 6:

THE NOTIONS OF SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED JOURNALISM

IN THE *BBC PEOPLE FIXING THE WORLD* TEAM

6.1.   Introduction: How solutions-focused journalism ideas are understood

In order to explore how solutions-focused journalism is defined and applied within the team that has been the founder and the forerunner of this practice at the BBC, and what its purpose is in the context of this public broadcaster; the first step was to find out how it is understood and evaluated among the members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team.

Examining how the ideas of solutions-focused journalism are understood by the journalists and editors in the context of a particular newsroom at this public broadcaster contributes to the first conceptualisation of the BBC's practice that does not rely solely on how it is officially presented by the organisation (Kasriel 2016a; 2016b; 2016c), but on how it is understood and done within a particular project. This is important because normative claims of journalism, including those made by proponents of solutions journalism, should not be taken for granted as they often do not "live up to these expectations" (Eldridge II and Steel 2016, p. 818). The shared values "to provide balanced, accurate, relevant, and complete information to audience members" remain at the heart of journalism, its unique social responsibility and status, despite new technology paradigm shifts (Elliott 2020, p. 31). However, the way in which practitioners have interpreted these values and understood the roles of their profession throughout history remains unique across different journalism cultures (Hanitzsch et al. 2019). At the same time, their ideas and understandings seldom remain unchanged when translated into practice due to various factors, such as economic, organisational, social, political, and other pressures (Mellado and Van Dalen 2014).

Lough and McIntyre (2018) investigated journalists' perceptions of solutions journalism and found that journalists mostly related it to investigative reporting, but

with a more prominent element of social action. In this way, they confirmed the two normative roles of solutions journalism – to be a watchdog, but also a constructive force in society (Aitamurto and Varma 2018). McIntyre and Lough (2021) showed that solutions journalists take on many of the ideas presented by the Solutions Journalism Network. But there are still nuances in interpretations of this practice – for example, some solutions journalists think they should also suggest solutions, which pushes the boundaries of this practice, whose proponents are trying to present it as non-advocacy (Powers and Curry 2019, p. 2252). How the ideas of solutions reporting are understood is additionally significantly shaped by the pressures specific for the country and media organisation in which it is done (Kovačević and Perišin 2018; Allam 2019; Rotmeijer 2019; Zhao and Xiangb, 2019; Tshabangu and Salawu 2021). Therefore, while journalists are conscious of how solutions journalism is normatively set up, the way they evaluate it is significantly related to the Solutions Journalism Network's ideals, but still dependent on multiple other factors.

To find out if solutions-focused journalism lives up to its own ideas, and the ideas of solutions journalism; it is first important to examine what these ideas are according to the journalists and editors in the mentioned team. Understanding how solutions-focused journalism is interpreted and evaluated by the journalists and editors who practice it at the BBC is particularly important in relation to the organisation's specific public service mission to serve its audiences "through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output", and the related values of accuracy, fairness and impartiality that should guide its journalism (BBC 2019a, p. 12). At the same time, solutions-focused journalism at the BBC is presented as one of the ways to remain relevant and reach new audiences, particularly young people (Hutchings and Granger 2019; BBC 2020; BBC 2021). This is why it is conceptualised by the organisation as both a "rigorous" and "compelling" practice (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4).

The research question that this part of the study will address is:
How do the journalists and editors in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team understand solutions-focused journalism?

    a) What are the key ideas present in their understanding of the practice?

b) What are the main factors in the production process which determine the way solutions-focused video stories are made?

For this, I explored how the members of the BBC team understand and describe solutions-focused journalism by focusing on the following three aspects. First, I explored what solutions-focused journalism is according to journalists and editors. Second, I studied the parallel need to be 'compelling' – particularly how they perceive their audiences and in what ways they choose to engage with them. Third, I identified the unique features of solutions-focused stories as perceived by the journalists and editors in this team. Within this I identified the key factors that shape how the solutions-focused video stories are made.

In this way, this part of the research focused on how the normative ideals of solutions journalism are interpreted and perceived at the newsroom level, and what the specific factors that shape these interpretations, and ultimately the practice, are. It contributes to understanding the struggle over normative boundaries – between the monitorial and the constructive role – in solutions journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018; McIntyre, Dahmen et al. 2018; Powers and Curry 2019; McIntyre and Lough 2021), but within the specific context of one newsroom. This is important because existent studies have not paid much attention to what may shape the understanding and the implementation of solutions journalism ideas, including the target audience, the format of the stories, and the platform where the stories are published, but also the organisation and its goals. In this sense, this is the first case study that takes into consideration the factors that impact and shape solutions reporting in practice – here, in the context of video intended for social media, but also in the context of a public broadcaster.

This part of the study was carried out in two research phases. First, I conducted semi-structured interviews with nine former and existent members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team – editors and journalists. The interviews were conducted via video calls over Skype and Zoom between July and October 2020. Gaining access to the members of this team was at times difficult as they are a small team and setting up the interviews extended over a longer period than I had first anticipated. All the interviewees electronically signed a consent form to be

interviewed for the purpose of this study before the interviews were conducted. I interviewed a total of seven journalists – of which two are radio journalists, while others do both video and radio – and two editors, one former and one current leader of the team.

Second, after I transcribed all the interviews, I used the data-driven approach to thematic analysis. For this, I used the Braun and Clarke's "six-phase approach" (2012; 2022) to explore evident and intricate aspects of what the interviewees had said about solutions-focused journalism. I divided the interview data into three main subsamples related to the three aspects that I explored, identified codes, observed patterns, and subsequently developed themes and subthemes.

Therefore, in this chapter, I present the key ideas of solutions-focused journalism identified in journalists' and editors' understandings of the practice obtained through semi-structured interviews. I identify the dominant themes present in the interviewees' understandings of solutions-focused journalism in the context of the BBC as a public broadcaster.

In the first part, I examine the themes related to journalists' and editors' notions of solutions-focused journalism and identify the need to present it as a rigorous journalistic practice that is positioned in opposition to positive news, even though solutions-focused stories also should have a dominantly positive tone. Additionally, it is perceived by journalists and editors as a practice that aims to contribute to the BBC's mission as a public broadcaster.

In the second part, I identify that this practice is perceived as an antidote and answer to the audience's fatigue with bad news stories, i.e. a way for the BBC to win over their trust with stories they would want to listen to and watch. The team has established a strategy of telling solutions-focused stories in a way that wins over the audiences' attention on social media. Here, it is Facebook, along with reliance on audience metrics, which significantly shapes the way solutions-focused journalism in this team is ultimately both perceived and done.

Then, I present the themes related to the features of solutions-focused stories as perceived by this team. I identify three distinct demands imposed on the production

process – to be positive, interesting, and simple – and identify the expected features of solutions-focused video stories to address these demands.

Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I make a case that solutions-focused journalism, as presented by those who practice it, is interpreted by the interviewees in light of the responsibilities and mission of the BBC as a public broadcaster; but in practice, the need to reach a wider audience and achieve success in terms of numbers significantly moves it away from the ideals of what solutions-focused journalism should be (Kasriel 2016a), and pushes it into the domain of what one interviewee calls "the dark arts of solutions journalism".

6.2. Solutions-focused journalism according to the editors and journalists in the team: Identified themes to describe the ideas and the practice

Thematic analysis shows that the three studied aspects of how solutions-focused journalism is understood are tightly connected. The main finding that emerges from the interview data and the identified themes is that the members of this team are stuck between two worlds: the need to protect their journalistic integrity, and the need to please the perceived expectations of their target audience – young people on social media – but also to adapt to the platform. The themes and subthemes are presented in Table 10:

Table 10: Themes and subthemes in the journalists' and editors' understanding of solutions-focused journalism

Subsample	Themes	Subthemes
WHAT SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED JOURNALISM IS (SHOULD BE)	Not positive news	Striking a positive tone
	'Rigorous' reporting	Extensive prior research
	Fulfilling the BBC's mission as a public broadcaster	Making journalism better
UNDERSTANDING OF AUDIENCES AND ENGAGEMENT	Antidote to bad news	
	Wishing for social change, but not endorsing it	
	Focus on young people across the globe	Short social video as the key format
	Social media platforms significantly shape the practice	Audience metrics as the main measure of success
		Fight against algorithms
		Learn as you go
	Practicing the "dark arts" of solutions journalism	
FEATURES OF A SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED STORY	To be positive	
	To be interesting	Surprise
		Uniqueness
		Inquiry
		Relatability
	To be simple	Adapting to the platform
		Chasing a formula

In Part 1, I first present the themes that reflect the way in which the journalists and editors on the team understand solutions-focused journalism and what it is. However, what I found was that the ideas of solutions-focused journalism were described by the interviewees more in the context of what they think these ideas *should be*. Later in the interviews, when they interpreted them in the context of the project's audience and the production of solutions-focused video stories for social media, significantly different themes were identified.

6.3. Part 1: What solutions-focused journalism is (should be)

Just like the BBC's *Toolkit* (Kasriel 2016a), the interviewees describe solutions-focused journalism as a 'rigorous' journalistic practice. They do this by positioning it in opposition to positive news by taking a strong stance that BBC's solutions-focused journalism is *not* positive or good news stories.

6.3.1. 'Not positive news'

In interviews, there is a clear tendency to present solutions-focused journalism as a serious journalistic practice within the BBC that does more than just present solutions. The members of this team do not want their stories to be mistaken for positive news. One radio journalist on the team sums it up:

> There's a desire not to be, to differentiate yourself from just good news in order to be taken seriously… and because it's not what we're doing. Granny loves to juggle. Dog surfing. We're not that. There's a lot of serious hard journalists at the BBC, any sense that we're choosing nice happy stories to make you feel good… It's important to make it clear that we're not doing that. (Interviewee 7)

In this way, solutions-focused stories are described as the opposite of positive news or good new stories which, according to the interviewees, lack the necessary journalistic 'rigour'. This is in line with the BBC's *Toolkit* which defines solutions-focused journalism by using the same rhetoric. It states that solutions-focused journalism is not hero worship, puff pieces, magic bullets, advocacy, or a nice story at the end of the programme (Kasriel 2016a, p. 3).

However, one of the editors clarifies that positive news and the BBC's solutions-focused news stories still have one thing in common – a promise that the story is going to have an overall "positive tone":

> Solutions-focused journalism still allows you to make a promise to the audience that says 'this will be about changing the world in a good way, this will lead you somewhere positive… The emotional tone you're going to strike is similar to those other things. The difference is that…and it's very difficult…I drilled the journalists really well in being good journalists while also striking this positive tone… But a lot of people will go into 'positive' journalism. You need to be very conscious… Okay you've made this positive comment in the first 7 seconds but what you need to do afterwards needs to retain the highest journalistic values. (…) You can't just focus on the human character of the… Because if you've done that, you're just going for the inspiration, positive journalism. You're not doing the public service element of it, which is asking serious question about this. That's the difference… by the end of the video you should have a sense if this idea is a pioneer start, whether there's something in it, or whether it's half and half. (Interviewee 8)

In this way, the need to make a solutions-focused story positive needs to be balanced with the need to meticulously investigate each solution.

6.3.2. 'Rigorous' reporting on solutions

In this sense, what stood out in the understanding of solutions-focused journalism is the tenacity to approach every solution rigorously and present all its aspects to the audience. As one radio journalist said, "our process is pretty rigorous in terms of amounts of journalism that goes into everything we do" (Interviewee 7). Otherwise, for them, showing solely what the solution is would mean doing just another positive news story.

The members of the team explained that this means reporting on the positives and the downsides of a certain solution. In this way, they pointed out the same three of the four solutions journalism guidelines (McIntyre and Lough 2021) as the key elements of 'rigour' in their solutions-focused video stories: explaining how a solution works, presenting the limitations of solutions, and assessing all the available evidence of its effectiveness. However, they did not address the cause of the problem.

The current editor of the team said that there is an established list of things that a journalist needs to cover once a story idea is commissioned:

> What's the problem and is that problem something that people from different countries would care about'? Is it relatable to different people? What is the potential solution? How does it work? Who's behind it? Where is it being used? What's the evidence that it's working? What are the positives? What are the downsides? Potential downsides, limitations… Yeah. So those are the main things we kind of go through for every story. Those are the things we discuss. Not every story will necessarily tick every box. But you've got to be able to… And evidence… We got to have that discussion, whatever that level of evidence is – anecdotal, experimental… we need to have that discussion. (Interviewee 9)

A related subtheme that is also apparent in the interviews is that 'rigour' was often spoken of in the context of the amount of work that needs to be invested in each solutions-focused story, but – as the interviewees said – this is not necessarily apparent in the final product. The current editor stressed that working on one solutions-focused story may sometimes take up to a year.

In this sense, reporting on solutions is at times "complicated", according to the interviewees, as it implies extensive research on what is behind a solution. One journalist, who is a former member of the team, was doing video stories for another strand called *BBC Stories* at the time when the interview was conducted. They said that pitch meetings at *BBC People Fixing the World* were "really dense because people kept questioning evidence and the depth behind a solution". Unlike *BBC Stories*, where the focus is on finding a compelling character with an interesting personal experience, according to this journalist, working on solutions-focused stories involves a different kind of work. They compared the story that they did for *BBC Stories* about a man who was bullied in Toronto for wearing a turban, and a solutions-focused story about a mental health initiative in Italy for *BBC People Fixing the World*:

> For a BBC Stories film, I probably wouldn't read academic journals or randomise control trials… Obviously in Stories, you know, in the one about Turbans… I talked to a few people from Sikh community, I knew the challenges of wearing a turban, I found the person, it resonated well… While for People Fixing the World stuff… Does this have ground impact? Someone's done good PR… It's a different kind of research. You might not have the most in-depth conversations and ask about emotions (…), but you ask a lot of technical questions. You have to educate yourself on a topic. (…) You speak to countless experts, you read countless reports, a lot of academic journals… A story about treating mental

health in Trieste…you have to really deep dive in and see actually ... They are saying that 'we treat mental health in this unique way', then you need to talk to experts and universities and ask if it is really unique. (Interviewee)

Furthermore, what is also apparent in the interviews is that the journalists and editors stressed the importance of extensive research for each story because they want to break down, as the current editor called it, "a slight misconception that solutions-focused journalism is just nice stories" (Interviewee 9). Therefore, doing positive news stories and solutions-focused stories seems to be positioned on the opposite sides of the spectrum for these journalists and editors. This is very much in line with both how the practice is organisationally conceptualised (Kasriel 2016a), and how the Solutions Journalism Network (Bansal and Martin 2015) and solutions journalists (McIntyre and Lough 2021) position it. Additionally, the notion of 'rigour' present in the journalists' and editors' interpretation of the practice is also in line with the discourses of solutions journalism proponents used to legitimise the practice (Aitamurto and Varma 2018). Further, practicing solutions-focused journalism was often presented by the interviewees as a means of fulfilling the BBC's purpose, but also improving the state of journalism at this organisation.

6.3.3.   Supporting the BBC's mission as a public broadcaster

Above all, this team at the BBC cares strongly about maintaining their journalistic and editorial integrity in solutions reporting, which they relate to supporting their organisation's role and reputation as an internationally recognised public broadcaster. For the journalists and editors, doing solutions-focused journalism implies a higher level of responsibility expected of the BBC, and that is more than just entertaining the audience with interesting solutions. In this sense, solutions-focused journalism should contribute to improving the state of journalism at the BBC. The editors and some journalists pointed out the importance of showing the world as it is, including positive developments. They evoked the *Toolkit*'s definition of solutions-focused journalism as the one that provides "more complete coverage" and presents "a more accurate picture of reality", and, therefore, corrects "the sum total of our journalism" at the BBC (Kasriel 2016a, p. 5). The current editor explained that this means having an expanded perspective on what to report on:

> Although you've got problems in the world... If you're doing just that, you're not reporting the whole story. You're stopping half-way. Solutions journalism goes one step further. These are the problems... This is what people are trying to do to solve them. (Interviewee 9)

The founding editor of the project described this need to move away from reporting only on problems as a personal revelation they had on the field:

> I will give you an anecdote. I did a lot of journalism in foreign affairs reporting. I would frequently find myself in a village where something bad happened... I was in Sri Lanka and thought 'this is the moment where I have to make the person cry'. Because that's what makes the video. If I say, 'this person is suffering', and show her while she's smiling, it's not going to work. I need to ask them about the most painful thing that happened and make them emotional... and it's like there is cynicism in the whole exercise. We do the journalism in order to change the world. We think we need to shock our audiences into feeling some kind of emotional resonance with a difficult situation. But in the end, what's the purpose of this in terms of constructively changing the world? We go to a place and...we talk about that. About what they are facing. So what? A British audience will suddenly do what? How will this structurally affect the situation that we want to change? (Interviewee 8)

Like this editor, the other interviewees also pointed out their journalistic ideals that led them to joining the *BBC People Fixing the World* team, particularly the need to move away from problem-based narratives. Reporting on positive events and responses to these problems was tied by the interviewees to the project's target audience – young people.

6.4.   Part 2: The audience and how to engage with it

The way the interviewees talked about their audience is twofold. On the one hand, the journalists and editors presented it as intelligent, younger, solutions-oriented people who are in search of inspiration and more positive stories. Some interviewees hoped that their stories can encourage the audience members to discuss how issues can be solved, and to act and make their community or the world a better place. In this sense, the members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team digress from the 'rule' stated in the BBC's *Toolkit* (Kasriel 2016a, p. 12) that they should not advocate for change, and are more in line with other solutions journalists who see this practice as a way to empower audiences (Powers and Curry 2019; McIntyre and Lough 2021). On the other hand, the interviewees often referred to the audience with a sense of

frustration in terms of engaging with it, particularly because of its short attention span. They are additionally frustrated with producing video stories for social media where 'what works' is very different from what the interviewees were used to in TV or radio journalism.

6.4.1.   Wishing for social change, but not endorsing it

Solutions journalism has a distinct constructive role of inspiring audiences to act and solve social issues. The journalists and editors in this team take a similar position. The *Toolkit* makes clear that the BBC "must not advocate for change or be perceived as an advocate of change" and remain impartial (Kasriel 2016a, p. 12). The interviewees similarly pointed out that they make sure not to act as advocates or endorse specific solutions in their reporting, and to simply inform about them based on 'what is there'. However, when they talked about their audience and the project, they showed a personal inclination for reporting on solutions, and inspiring citizens to bring positive changes in society that would have an impact. In this sense, the interviewees tend to present solutions-focused journalism as an inspiration for change, but on a more general level. Therefore, it is the solution itself that should serve as inspiration, but the interviewees' wish to inspire social change should not be apparent in their reporting.

6.4.2.   Antidote to bad news, particularly for young people across the globe

When asked who they thought solutions-focused stories are for, both the journalists and the editors mentioned the general audience's fatigue with the way the world is reported on. They presented solutions-focused journalism as a way of reaching anyone who is put off by 'regular' news and is in search of different content. Audiences are turned away by "the way we [the BBC] currently choose to select, frame, and tell stories, focusing mostly on dramatic events and problems and less frequently on what is working" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 2). The interviewees also presented solutions-focused journalism as a necessary antidote to negativity and bad news, but also as content that the audience desires, particularly young people.

The interviewees agreed with the BBC's *Toolkit* (Kasriel, 2016a) that the practice of solutions-focused journalism, including the project *BBC People Fixing the World*, is primarily intended for young audiences. Appealing to this age group is a prominent theme in the interviews. According to the BBC's audience research quoted by Kasriel (2016a, pp. 2, 6), but also the journalists and editors I interviewed, young people across the globe between the ages of 16 and 24 are significantly more interested in stories with a solutions-focused approach. One of the radio journalists on the team explained that this project was a way to expand the reach of BBC World Service overseas. Another journalist on the team explained:

> They wanted some stuff that wasn't so bleak as the rest of the news. (…) As a network you constantly need to do that. Old people won't be here forever. Young people, global young people, were very keen on getting solutions rather than just grim, gloomy news. (Interviewee 7)

Other journalists in interviews expanded on their understanding of the audience that is interested in solutions. According to the interviewees, solutions-focused journalism is not exclusively for young people. One video journalist, who is now a former member of this team, made a point that the audience on Facebook – the key social media platform at the time for audience engagement with solutions-focused videos – also includes other age groups, even "fairly old people" (Interviewee 1). Nevertheless, the founding editor of the project said that solutions-focused journalism at *BBC People Fixing the World* is primarily intended for the upcoming digital consumers, especially on social media platforms, and recounted how the project started:

> What's that phrase they teach you… If it bleeds it leads? I think this is not appealing to this demographic. Being a social media editor, and understanding the social web well… I understood the digital publishing needs of this environment…I knew what would travel well in social video. I knew that inspiration will do well…good news, positive news or campaigning journalism for the social good would do well… However, I did not feel that was the value of a public broadcaster. I didn't feel it was a path we should go down just because it works well on the internet. I guess I was searching for a way to do something that would do well in the social publishing space but fulfil our mission as a public broadcaster. So, this notion of solutions-focused journalism kind of seemed the space to move in. I put together a pitch, asked for a lot of money…and to my shock they gave me. (Interviewee 8)

Reaching young people through Facebook was assessed as a suitable strategy in 2016, but since then the platforms and apps that this audience uses have significantly changed. As the interviews were conducted in 2020, both the editors and the journalists showed they were conscious of this change, but many pointed out that producing social videos for Facebook in the first three years of the project was the most significant shift for them. They had to acknowledge the changes brought about by the social media platforms and the new audience behaviour and preferences, which meant abandoning the 'logic' they had used before in radio and television and adapting to the new circumstances and expectations.

6.4.2.1.   *Short social video as the key format*

The chosen way to reach young audiences is chiefly through short social videos, even though the project also includes a podcast that is aired on BBC World Service radio and is available online on the *BBC People Fixing the World* website. In the interviews, the journalists and editors dominantly spoke about the solutions-focused video stories and the podcast – or 'radio programme' as some refer to it – as being separate, even though they often reported on the same solution. The former member of the team who worked on both explained the difference between these two solutions-focused formats:

> You explain what the problem is, the solution is, you meet the characters, and you go on a journey: is this going to work? And it would be a bit disappointing if at the end you found out it's rubbish… So, the way we do it is kind of different for video, radio, or social media… Depends how much time you have. In the radio People Fixing the World, we spend a long time, two thirds in, the caveat corner… everything is great, but let's be a bit critical. What are the numbers of this, is this having an impact, is this realistic, is it going to work, maybe bring in a set of experts that will be sceptical a bit and cast doubts. It may sound positive, but it's not gonna scale… In the radio you can definitely do that. In videos you've only got about 3 minutes to tell a story. (Interviewee 1).

Therefore, video is perceived as a more complex format than the podcast. The team needs to approach it in a more careful way in order to select and present what they assess as the most important information, while other details are saved for the podcast. The way this team makes the videos is predominantly determined by

Facebook as the key social media platform where audiences engage with the solutions-focused stories.

6.4.3. Facebook and audience metrics as significant factors that shaped the practice

When the interviews were conducted, the team members talked about focusing on creating a strong presence on Facebook, but in the past tense. In July 2020, the Facebook page stopped being updated, and now it is the BBC News, BBC World Service, BBC Africa, and other strands that share solutions-focused stories on their social media accounts. The current editor explained that this was a decision at the organisational level that affected many other BBC projects and altered their social media presence.

When referring to the beginning of the project and exploring Facebook as a publishing platform for the solutions-focused video stories, both the founding editor and one of the first video journalists on the team mentioned the enthusiasm in the team when some of the first stories they produced became viral and gained them many new followers. The said journalist remembers the period when solutions-focused stories thrived on social media and points out the first story they did that quickly became viral:

> At that time, it was very big, it connected with people, it was positive, but also human…they saw that this guy really cared. (Interviewee 4)

However, the initially exciting Facebook journey for the *BBC People Fixing the World* team soon turned into a fight against algorithms. According to the interviewees, at first, their solutions-focused stories had a good reach and there was a higher chance of them becoming viral, but very quickly this became more difficult. The founding editor said that it soon became apparent that journalism and social media platforms had different goals:

> The power of the Internet for journalism is huge because it allows people to pursue their interests and their questions. The problem is … the platforms that we have to work with are not fundamentally interested in that problem. They are interested in another problem… How to commercially maximise the attention and the time that people spend on platforms. Sometimes those two things mix well, sometimes they don't. I'm not saying it because I hate this

technology. But I do think that the only real solution to this problem is not just what we create as storytellers, but also the publishing spaces that we use, and the control we have over them. (Interviewee 8)

They added that the idea of solutions-focused videos on social platforms was a way to bring the audience on a journey and inspire them to, for example, listen to the podcast about the same solution on their website. However, they soon became convinced that "social platforms do not want the same thing" and said that they are not sure if the team managed to achieve this relationship between the two formats.

Social media was also initially seen by the team as an opportunity for engaging with the audience in new ways by, for example, continuing the conversation about the solutions, even if people did not watch the whole story. One video journalist further explained:

> The comments underneath are the most interesting part. As a journalist I read them to know what people thought of stories and to get ideas for future stories. I sometimes come in and comment 'I made this, and you might want to look at this.' Really, social media is like a starting point for a bigger conversation, you can't necessarily have everything in video. And people's attention spans are much shorter as well. People watch the first 15 seconds and write a comment. (Interviewee 1)

Other journalists mentioned getting "very nice emails" from audience members. But in terms of engagement with their stories, the interviewees explained it predominantly with reference to audience metrics. The team focused on likes, shares, and views on Facebook as the main indicator of tuning into the audience's preferences, but also of the demands of the platform. In this sense, metrics on Facebook were the main measure of success of the project, but also significantly impacted journalists' decisions in the production process. However, many pointed out that they soon became disappointed with the platform as it did not allow them to establish the relationship with their audience that they hoped for. Even though they chose and crafted the stories in such a way to inspire better metrics in terms of likes and shares, the audience retention rate did not improve, according to the interviewees. The interviewees said that the audience on social media lost interest very early in the story, and this was a highly frustrating factor that they aimed to address. The journalists on the team believe that not many people who click on their stories actually watch them until the end – regardless of how well-told and

interesting they are – because this is not something to expect of social media audiences.

The video journalist who moved on to make documentaries after leaving this team, said that the demands of the audience, the platform, as well as the fact that "nobody believes Facebook anymore", were among the reasons why they became "bored" with solutions-focused journalism:

> There were big talks at the time. All the media were… When Facebook arrived, what do we do now? Do we play their game or not? And everybody did. Maybe it wasn't the best idea. I don't know. That's the question. There are arguments like… people are there. But are they? (…) I mean, you will always have a format. (…) That was an upgrade from television where you have a time slot. In digital it's if the story is twelve minutes, we tell it in twelve…It was great. On YouTube or iPlayer in the UK. You have time to tell stuff. On social media I'm not sure. I don't know how…I don't know how they travel, what's their impact, if the impact is really meaningful or not. (Interviewee 4)

Adapting to Facebook and finding out how to make solutions-focused video stories that would resonate best with the audience on the platform was, nevertheless, presented as a professionally useful experience by most of the interviewees because it involved learning new approaches to producing videos for a different platform, even when some of them did not like it.

6.4.4.   'Learn as you go'

When the interviews with *BBC People Fixing the World* team members were conducted, the project had existed for about four years. The interviewees recounted the way the team was set up and in what ways the actual practice of reporting on solutions and story production developed. In terms of translating solutions-focused journalism ideas to practice, the dominant theme identified in the interviews was the fluidity of the practice and the 'learn as you go' approach. Both the journalists and the editors said that there were no established formulas or set rules on how to report on solutions and win the audience's attention, but it was a slow process of trial and error of finding out 'what works'. The founding editor said that "the craft was difficult" and the team "learned to get better at it with time" (Interviewee 8).

A video journalist who joined the team when it was founded explained that the way they did solutions-focused video stories changed significantly as they gained more experience and got to know the audience. They said there was "no welcome pack or big meeting", but an understanding that "you kind of evolve into it":

> At the beginning when I joined, I just carried on doing the programmes as I used to… I just wanted to make sure that they would get accepted at our pitch meetings, so I tried to explain and justify solutions journalism stories. Overtime as I learned more about it, I suppose the stories I would do would change, based on if they would work as solutions journalism. (Interviewee 1)

The same journalist is the author of the highest number of solutions-focused videos for *BBC People Fixing the World*, and they were also the author of related podcasts. At times the same journalist does both formats, but other times a radio journalist and a video journalist cover the same story together. As *BBC People Fixing the World* is both a video unit and a radio unit, the founding editor of the project said they usually deliberately paired up a video journalist and a radio journalist, all in order to "create creative tension". This practice continued after the current editor took over. But this tension was already apparent in the pitching meeting. According to the radio journalist who also works as a producer on the team, finding a solution that would work well in both video and radio is at times a real challenge:

> And often for practical reasons stories that you pitch need to work for both. And I found that video people tend to pitch stories that can be told across 4 minutes. That's very challenging for radio producers. We would pitch stories that would last 23 minutes and that would make quite a boring video. But I didn't really care about video (laughs). I was just trying to pick a story with some kind of moral complexity, a series of revelations that can take place over 23 minutes. (Interviewee 6)

Therefore, according to the interviewees, it took some time for the two sides to adapt to this way of working together, but also to thinking about what the other one needs from a story, be it in the pitching stage or during story production. Additionally, the radio unit at times does stories that the video unit does not cover. This applies mostly to follow-up programmes about what evolved, changed, or did not work out with a specific solution. The video unit does not usually do follow-ups. Their focus is on the 'here and now', especially on social media with its specific demands according to which solutions-focused stories develop some unique features.

6.5.　　　　Part 3: Features of a solutions-focused story

The focus on young audiences and publishing on social media raised distinct concerns for this solutions-focused team, e.g. finding ways of sparking audience interest and inspiring engagement in the form of likes, comments and shares, as well as addressing the audience's short attention span and tuning into their expectations of social video stories in terms of narrative and length. Within this, I identified three distinct demands imposed on the way solutions-focused video stories are made and told.

6.5.1.　　　　To be positive

First, a solutions-focused video story for a social audience needs to be positive and report on a brilliant, workable solution that makes the world 'a better place'. The current editor of the team said that the team produces "interesting stories that have a positive element to them", and that are "well told" (Interviewee 9). Each story should leave the audience inspired and hopeful about the world, their own lives, and the future. This team wants to reach the audience, strike a similarly positive tone, but again attract young, solution-oriented people.

Therefore, the intent to evoke positive reactions, according to the interviewees, contributes to making their stories compelling for the audience, but also more 'likable' on social media. One video journalist explained that "there's this element that we want to make it uplifting, we want to make it shareable" (Interviewee 1), referring to Facebook as the key platform for the solutions-focused video stories produced by the team. However, one radio journalist further explained that this 'positive element' has a different shape in solutions-focused journalism than it does in positive news. It is "still reporting", but the process of story selection is done through a specific filter:

> We pitch a lot of stories. Maybe one in ten get commissioned. The reason they do is that the solutions genuinely work, and they tell you something interesting about the world, and they've got interesting people involved in them. In that filter process you choose stuff that you want to have a certain effect. We want our programme to be positive, for example. Like, roughly speaking. We do some not positive stories and we do have not positive bits in our positive stories. Overall, we want to attract people who want solutions to problems. (Interviewee 7)

133

Therefore, the story is – unlike in positive news – not chosen because of the positive element, but if it strikes a positive tone, this is a welcome feature. For this reason, the team predominantly chooses to report on solutions that work and that are successful.

6.5.2. To be interesting

The second key demand that makes solutions-focused journalism for social video somewhat distinct, according to the interviewees, is – as one former video journalist on the team phrased it – "it's not always good news, I think it's interesting news" (Interviewee 3). This need to be *interesting* was mentioned by all the interviewees as decisive in the process of pitching and story selection in this team. The interviews show that this team has a common established set of features that make a solutions-focused story interesting. Two of these features concern the solution itself, while the other two are related to storytelling.

6.5.2.1. *Four features of an 'interesting' solutions-focused story*

1. Surprise

First, the audience's attention should be grabbed by producing interesting stories about solutions that, as another radio journalist explained, "have a little bit of spice" (Interviewee 7). The ingredient of this spice, and the main feature of an *interesting* solutions-focused story, is *surprise*. The more surprising a solution is, the higher is the possibility that the story will get commissioned. According to the interviewees, it is often related to the unusual nature of the solution or the idea behind it. The current editor said that, for them, surprising the audience extends to any type of journalism that aims to be compelling, and described what kind of a reaction the solutions-focused stories should ideally provoke in the audience:

> It's got 'o be something like 'Oh wow!' 'A-ha!' (…) It might just be: 'Hm, I haven't thought of that.' 'Oh my God, that's amazing.' 'Interesting.' 'Oh, that could make a difference.' There's got to be a sort of moment 'Hmmmm'… that's worth reading or listening to. (…) If you want the audience to listen, there's got to be some element of that. (Interviewee 9)

One radio journalist referred to this need to be surprising as "slightly frustrating to hear", as some solutions that may be considered relevant, may not be covered in the podcast:

> If there's a huge government initiative to make a very minor change to education policy, that's a solution that we wouldn't cover. It would be extremely hard for us to tell that story over 23 minutes in a compelling way to a global audience. (Interviewee 6)

For this reason, the interviewees also often related surprising solutions to the importance of their visual quality or surprising visuals that have the potential to immediately captivate the audience.

2. Uniqueness

Furthermore, the second feature of an interesting solutions-focused story is its uniqueness. For pitching meetings, journalists look for solutions that are new and innovative, ideally not yet reported on in other media. When mentioning uniqueness, the interviewees often referred to people who are trying to solve problems using an original approach that has not been seen before. The radio journalist on the team said:

> We look for specific projects that will catch people's imagination, that are innovative, different, have an idea behind them that is interesting. (Interviewee 7)

One former video journalist on the team at one point in the interview called solutions-focused journalism "innovation journalism" and emphasised the transfer of knowledge between different cultures through solutions-focused stories:

> Sometimes solutions don't work, but it is people trying to fix things. It is innovation journalism. You have to do the journalism that's not just cat videos. I find that a bit annoying when people look at it like that. For me I tend to want to put an international spin on it. It is a viewpoint. Looking at what you can learn from other cultures, languages, traditions, ideas… (…) Quite an important component of it is looking abroad. 'Cause solutions can come in many forms. (Interviewee 3)

Journalists additionally made clear that many solutions may seem unique, but that they are worthy to be covered only if they have an impact. In this way, uniqueness is a welcome feature but not crucial to making the story interesting or worthy to be commissioned.

3. Inquiry

Another feature of an interesting solutions-focused story is inquiry. This is related to storytelling. As already stated in this chapter, the interviewees emphasised that the focus of their stories is not the solution itself but focusing on the process of how – and if – it works. For the journalists and editors, it is the fact that they make an inquiry into the solution – investigate, explain, and pick it apart – that makes a solutions-focused story even more appealing to the audience. Many interviewees talked about taking the audience on a journey by exploring if a solution works and in what way. It is this process that, according to the interviewees, keeps the listener or the viewer interested in the story after their attention is grabbed.

4. Relatability

The final feature of an interesting story about a solution is that audience members find it relevant or even relatable. In this sense, the journalists said that, storytelling-wise, it is important to find and introduce characters who either invented, or in any way benefit from the solution so that the audience can connect with them. However, the current editor said they are always careful that the character does not overshadow the solution:

> One of the things that people relate to in stories is people. Human endeavour. What other people are doing and going through. I think for me what that means… it's not sort of hero worship thing. 'Oh, look at this guy, he's great, or woman, she's brilliant.' The human element helps you to connect with the story. I wouldn't shy away from human characters. But there must be something more to it than someone doing something nice. (Interviewee 9)

The importance of characters in terms of solutions-focused storytelling will be revisited in Chapter 8.

6.5.3.   To be simple

In the attempt to make a solutions-focused story that is appealing to a social audience, the main theme that arose in the interviews was the demand of *simplification*. The journalists said that they assess the amount of information that the audience can take in and simplify the story. One radio journalist on the team compared it to the process that happens in news stories as well:

> Telling a straight-forward simplified narrative that people kind of understand. Which is something all the news outlets do all the time with bad news. Right. If you're doing good news, you have to be goody-goody and not tell it in a very opaque, ambiguous, convoluted way. I think for mass market journalism and not journal articles or for very long articles in the Atlantic, I think for a mainstream audience a certain amount of simplification is required to make the stories salient. (Interviewee 7)

The demand to be simple was related to the need to adapt to the social media platform.

6.5.3.1.   Adapting to the platform

At the beginning of the project, the team produced two different versions of every video – one for the BBC website, the other – shorter version – for Facebook. However, this was done with only a couple of stories. This soon changed and the same version of the story was then published on both platforms. The video journalist explained the process of simplification that happened when they were structuring their first solutions-focused video story for the shorter social media version:

> We spent a lot of time putting it together. It was about 12 sentences. I was very conscious there had to be an element of non-confusion, but… You didn't have to give away everything in the beginning. (…) You need to grab the attention enough to be able to not give away so much so you can have a little bit… It was basically kind of like… I was basically competing for attention. (Interviewee 4)

They added that they had to be conscious of the platform and the format the whole time and that "five seconds was maybe the longest that I could hold anything" because "after that, they were gone'. Another video journalist called it a "very needy" style of storytelling:

> It's like pleeease watch meee, please give me some of your time. It's not like 'this is how it is and you're going to be sucked in'. It's a people-pleasing style. (Interviewee 3)

In this sense, another video journalist called the social media platforms, including Facebook, "unforgiving", and added that it is all about finding the perfect first shot and the first quote that need to grab the viewer, unlike documentaries, in which the story slowly unfolds.

According to the interviewees, this often means that scepticism around a solution needs to be included in the story in careful doses. Another video journalist summed it up as follows:

It's not that you don't want criticism, but it's like breaking the spell of a journey you're going on. I agree it's a danger that positive solutions journalism story, if you try to complicate it by adding scepticism, it's going to make it more difficult on social media. But we were learning as we did it, I always include scepticism… I don't want people weighing in saying: why did you ignore that? I want to be able to say: we asked that question. What I do… I ask critical question in the video and that goes in the social media version as well. (Interviewee 1)

Therefore, the solutions-focused journalists in this team are trying to maintain a sensitive balance between giving the audience enough information to critically assess a solution, but also keeping the story light and simple. What happened in this process, according to many – but not all – of the interviewees, was the emergence of formulas that to an extent dictate how stories about solutions are chosen, made and told.

6.8.3.2.   *Chasing a formula*

In relation to the demand to make the stories simple, a prominent theme that surfaced in the interviews was that this gradually pushed journalists into coming up with formulas of working on and telling these stories. According to the interviewees, this happened spontaneously as they were keeping track of what worked better with their audience, particularly in terms of its short attention span. One video journalist said that these formulas were not a product of "any big theory":

I suppose as you do this sort of things, you kind of got a time limit at the things you do, they revert to a formula. (Interviewee 2)

In the interviews, the journalists mentioned 'the formula' in all three stages of solutions-story production: story selection, story production in the field, and storytelling. On the subject of storytelling, one video journalist described that there exists – according to their view – a "binary" and "black and white" formula in telling solutions-focused stories for video (Interviewee 4), and this is related to the mentioned demand to make the stories simple. For this they blame social media, which are becoming "extremely simplistic and polarizing". Another video journalist recapped it like this:

Keep it positive. Leave the problem and go back to the positive. (Interviewee 3)

According to the founding editor, many of the "internalised storytelling maxims" for video and radio were challenged by social media, and solutions-focused journalists had to find new ways of telling stories, somewhat different from what they knew before. Even though one journalist talked about the importance of looking at what works in terms of a particular story and denied a formulaic approach, this was a prevalent theme in the interviews. The storytelling formula and how journalists understand it will be explored in depth in Chapter 8.

6.6. Practicing the "dark arts of solutions journalism"

This peculiar video format for solutions-focused stories and its features, along with the audiences' content preferences, was presented by the interviewees as an altogether steep hill to climb. The intention to reach new audiences means looking for ways to spark their interest, but also inform and educate them. One video journalist on the team said that they "hope" that solutions-focused videos are made in such a way that young people can make up their own mind about a solution, but remained sceptical and added:

> We do question things, and [make an effort] that things don't come across as just easy and obvious. But at the same time…we are making, trying to entertain the audience and make people watch. (Interviewee 2)

The need to strike a positive tone and captivate a global audience, but at the same time ask serious questions, seems to have led this practice to a place of tension between two forces – how to be compelling and journalistically rigorous at the same time. This further shows the divide all the interviewees are constantly crossing – on the one hand, solutions-focused journalism as a practice that strengthens their dedication to journalism and the values of the public broadcaster; on the other hand, as a practice that looks for new ways to captivate the audience, appease the platform and be successful in terms of metrics. In this sense, the interviewees often came back to the fact that the audience, ultimately, wants positive news. They want to reach the same audience, strike a similar positive tone, but again offer them more than 'just happy news'. One radio journalist expressed their concerns about this matter:

> But then there is a problem because as a journalist you want to run a mile from the idea of making a story because it's going to make somebody feel a certain way… What we do, what we're trained to do, the last thing in the world that I would want to do is make a story…choose a story and pitch a story because I thought it would make somebody feel a certain way. I just want to report what's true and what's really happening. And so, I do feel that… I think for all solutions journalists there is a tension. And I do think there is a way to solve it. I still did things that I really believed in and that I thought were of value and still met the brief. (Interviewee 6)

As a team, they are constantly trying to improve their storytelling to inspire the audience to stay with their stories longer, but at the same time they are doubtful that the social audience stays with their solutions-focused video stories until the end. The founding editor said that the story needs to be "very well crafted" to ideally achieve two goals:

> I think we'd be morons if we made assumptions that the audience stays until the end. The data doesn't say that. So, you have to adjust your storytelling to that. What you want is two things. You want the casual audience to understand this story, they've got enough about it and have the basics… Here's a great idea – no evidence yet, or if only we can get more evidence, or here's evidence, why aren't others doing it. So, you should know where you stand on that before you start so that minimal information gets across to the person. What you also want is to be able to potentially generate the journey for the percentage of people who want to know more. (Interviewee 8)

But the editor cautiously assessed that, while social media do help journalists reach a wide audience, they do not "set you up for that onward journey".

All things considered, it is worth mentioning one radio journalist who said that, unlike the Solutions Journalism Network, which is a "very goody, goody strand of solutions journalism" and "very much out of the school of investigative journalism", the *BBC People Fixing the World* can in comparison be seen as practicing the "dark arts of solutions journalism", even though their aim is not to just "do a nice story", but "proper journalism" (Interviewee 7).

Here, it is important to note that two video journalists I interviewed said they were no longer on the team because the formulaic approach in working on solutions-focused stories, according to them, limited their creativity. One of them said that focusing on numbers on Facebook soon became the most important measure of a story's success, which they did not agree with. According to this journalist, tuning into the social audience's interests went so far that some journalists became "more

interested in getting the story commissioned, than actually going deep into a story and seeing what's really going on there" (Interviewee 4).

Nevertheless, the founding editor thinks that bringing in the "solutions-journalism format" was a good choice for the BBC as it "encourages a new paradigm", regardless of the obstacles the team encounters in their work and the fact that they personally feel "a bit let down by the social media space":

> I tried and I think we did alright! (…) It's not enough for people to get two minutes on something alone and never go on a journey. If that's all that happens, then you haven't fully delivered on your journalistic mission, I think. We brought a sufficient number of people into deeper conversation about some really important issues. And… some of them would go out to become the solutions people of the future. I think we captured something that was going on, that is still going on, which is people wanting to make the world better. (Interviewee 8)

The current editor, when asked what they thought needs to be changed or improved in the team, said that it is still a challenge to find new ways of engaging the audience more:

> Just creatively you can always do new things, try new things, just making sure you keep moving… this possibly goes back to human elements of stories, using it a bit more for engagement. That doesn't mean losing all the other analytical stuff. It's just adding a little bit extra that people care maybe but wouldn't come at the cost of anything. Limitations, evidence…we wouldn't shift the focus. Just use other techniques to lift engagement. (Interviewee 9)

This again comes back to the identified tension inherent in the production of solutions-focused stories by this team – between doing journalism and engaging the audience. In short, the way the former and the existing members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team conceptualise solutions-focused journalism is predominantly in opposition to positive news, quoting the BBC's *rigorous* journalistic process. The focus on investigating a solution by presenting both its advantages and its downsides is closely related to the way solutions journalism is conceptualised by the Solutions Journalism Network. Nevertheless, the requirement to grab and keep the audience's attention in practice, according to the interviewees, means that a story also needs to strike a tone that is both positive and uplifting, and, therefore, liked by the audience and shareable. This positions solutions-focused journalism between the journalists', the editors', but also the BBC's notions what journalism should be, and the numbers pointing to what the audience expects and appreciates.

6.7.   Softening the edges of solutions reporting

In this way, the *BBC People Fixing the World* team positions solutions-focused journalism as a serious journalistic practice within the organisation, but with somewhat softer edges. Even though some of the interviewees mention the contribution of this practice to journalism and its democratic purpose; the primary motivation for the implementation of this practice is the need of the BBC World Service to reach young audiences online. The interviewees presented the practice, in the first place, as an approach to improve audience metrics; rather than a project that primarily aspires to strengthen the BBC's journalistic output.

This means that the BBC and solutions-focused journalism have a slightly different starting point than the practices of constructive journalism and solutions journalism, of which the principal motivation is to inspire social change (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 10). For the BBC, this practice is – above all – a means and a new project that helps it reach new audiences. It is set up as a practice that gives the audience what they ask for, not as what journalists think the audience needs. For this team, what the audience wants is seen as a requirement that they need to fulfil. Journalists and editors in this team invest significant effort to adapt the way they tell their stories to the audience's expectations, but also to the demands of the social media platforms where young audiences can be most easily reached. This creates a specific pressure for solutions-focused journalists on this team, as it is not enough to merely report on solutions, but report on them in such a way that would appeal to young audiences. There is a strong focus in this newsroom on making the stories successful in terms of metrics, but also a sense of doubt as to whether this is possible, and of frustration because of the need to constantly adapt. In this way, the audience, the platform, and the focus on audience metrics are crucial for how solutions-focused journalism in this team is shaped.

The fact that young audiences have become a priority for the BBC, including this team, is also reflected in the way the journalists and editors describe solutions-focused stories. Being snappy, interesting, inquisitive, having a surprising premise, and reporting on a solution that is both innovative and relatable are the key criteria in

story selection in the BBC's team. In this way, the practice further differs from solutions journalism and the Solutions Journalism Network that puts emphasis on the investigation and meticulous examination of a solution, and the tension that should be "located in the inherent difficulty in solving a problem" (Solutions Journalism Network 2022d). Conversely, in the BBC's stories the focus is on showing successful, impressive, surprising solutions and how they work – all in the short video format.

The pressure to meet the young audiences' expectations opposes the journalists' and editors' need to abide by the highest journalistic standards by rigorously and thoroughly covering solutions around the world. Stressing the importance of a rigorous journalistic process in solutions reporting, with a focus on limitations, evidence, and in-depth research, points to an inherent relevance of implementation of the values stated in the BBC Editorial Guidelines (BBC 2019a), such as accuracy and impartiality. However, the intention to critically assess a solution and give the audience what it *needs* constantly clashes with the necessity to grab the audience's attention, and not bore them with what the journalists on the team call "scepticism". Therefore, it is not surprising that all the interviewees defined solutions-focused journalism first and foremost in opposition to positive news, as their stories also want to be engaging and positive, but – unlike positive news stories – not uncritical of the solutions.

In the light of this, the most important aspect to focus on is what happens to journalism in the process of maintaining the peculiar balance between being compelling and journalistically rigorous. The interview data presented in this chapter points to a difficulty that the whole of the BBC encounters, which is apparent from its annual plans: on the one hand, the need to remain a pillar of the highest editorial standards and quality journalism and, on the other hand, the need to stay relevant, engage audiences and successfully compete with other media. Paradoxically, in this solutions-focused team, the aim to stay distinctive and distinguishable in terms of producing high quality journalism clashes with their pursuit of ways to capture the attention of particularly young audiences on social media. Therefore, the demands of the organisation, and the mentioned tension, greatly shape this practice. However, it is important to note that these notions cannot be applied to the whole of solutions-

focused journalism at the BBC, as this study focuses solely on one specific team. Nevertheless, as this is the only solutions-focused team at the BBC, their perceptions and understandings of this practice are valuable in terms of conceptualising it, especially in the context of a public service broadcaster which is "still the prototype of the public service model" (Holtz-Bacha 2021, p. 230).

Therefore, the findings presented in this chapter contribute to gaining a more nuanced perspective on how solutions journalism ideas can be interpreted in the context of a specific newsroom. Striking a balance between being rigorous and engaging that this team experiences has not been identified so far as a source of tension for solutions journalists, but treated as two equally important and complementary goals (Lough and McIntyre 2018; Powers and Curry 2019; McIntyre and Lough 2021). The BBC journalists and editors also confirm the importance of the monitorial role of solutions reporting, which they relate to the reputation and mission of their organisation. As for the constructive role of empowering audiences, they interpret it slightly more in the context of its usefulness to attract audiences, than of its purpose to improve journalism.

This points to a complex and layered role of the concept of audience engagement, which so far, the proponents of solutions journalism have presented more on the level of empowering and inspiring audience members to act and support social change (Aitamurto and Varma 2018), and less on the level of boosting audience metrics and growth. The metrics, as the findings show, have a crucial role in how journalists and the audience understand and talk about the practice of producing social media video stories. In this way, this BBC's team "equates engagement with audience growth rather than as a normative concern of journalism: increasing their societal involvement" (Gajardo and Costera Meijer 2022, p. 2). Like in many other news organisations, audience engagement in this team is "merely instrumental and commodified" and measured quantitatively through "manifest categories of engagement" – number of clicks, likes, shares, comments, and reach (Broersma 2019, p. 2).

This finding significantly dispels the allure of solutions journalism ideas and shows that this practice can be understood in a more instrumental way – as a potential to

bring success to a newsroom or media outlet, in this case to the BBC, and for its goals to be recognised by younger audiences. This is more in line with the research into solutions journalism in the French regional press, where journalists see this practice as a way to grow their audience, and the authors conclude that solutions journalism as a practice "legitimates and valorises marketing discourses" (Amiel and Powers 2019, p. 244). In this way, the normative boundaries of solutions journalism are stretched and reinterpreted in actual practice, including the way in which journalists and editors interpret these boundaries.

This part of the study opens a new discussion in solutions journalism research on how the different demands imposed on a specific newsroom – in this case, the organisational pressure to have a successful project, the related need to adapt the story and its format to the audience and subsequently to the platform and its algorithms – can significantly shape the way solutions reporting practice is understood, perceived, and news decisions are made in today's "dramatically restructured news environment" (Reese and Shoemaker 2016, p. 397), in which the *BBC People Fixing the World* team operates. These demands or factors imposed on the production process, or the different levels that influence news work, have not been studied at all until now in the context of either solutions or constructive journalism. Thus, these findings move the discussions further from what solutions reporting normatively should be, to how these ideas are appropriated in the face of specific expectations within a newsroom.

In the context of the BBC as a public broadcaster, the findings show that the journalists and editors in this team are trying to balance between the organisation's particular business goals of staying relevant in the face of commercial competition, and the public service goals of delivering quality journalism. In this way, though it focuses on a small team, this study contributes to understanding how the BBC responds to digitalisation – competing for audience's time and attention, coming to terms with the international platforms that control how media content is reached, and the challenges of becoming digital amidst organisational resistance at public broadcasters (Donders 2021, pp. 25-26). The focus on audience metrics at public broadcasters is, according to Rotermund, problematic, because audience metrics "could not be fairly interpreted as indicators of the relevance of public media

channels for and to the public" and the "interfaces of online apps support man-machine interactions and not cultural values, although they may reflect them" (2017, pp. 79-80). In this way, the BBC's project plays along with the platform in order to capture the audience's attention, but the broadcaster's need to create quality content is challenged by the social media platform's goal to monetise the audience's attention (Liu 2022). Therefore, this part of the study also contributes to understanding "the phenomenon of platform dependency" (Meese and Hurcombe 2020, p. 2) in the context of this newsroom organisation and its need to succumb to the "social media logic" (Van Dijck and Poell 2013), while trying to preserve its role as a public broadcaster, but also as a significant factor in the context of practicing solutions journalism and implementing its ideas on social media.

In what way these challenges, particularly the tension between being rigorous and engaging, are translated into the solutions-focused video stories is studied in the following chapter. I analyse these stories and test the implementation of solutions journalism guidelines (McIntyre and Lough 2021), some of which ensure that each story includes elements that show the solution is an object of rigorous journalistic questioning. Does the BBC in its solutions-focused stories fulfil its mission as a public broadcaster of having an informative quality: helping to "generate an active and informed citizenry" (Cushion 2012, p. 183) and to increase knowledge about the world, especially among those that it is trying to reach? More importantly, does it stay committed to rigorously presenting the solutions, or does it adopt "a market-friendly agenda of the softer news topics" (Cushion 2012, p. 194) in its attempt to connect with young people on Facebook? These questions are vital in assessing if solutions-focused journalism, as practiced by this team, is both distinctive from market-driven news – such as positive news – but also to further explore its unique features, concretely in terms of social video which this team sees as the main way of reaching young audiences.

Chapter 7:
THE LACK OF 'RIGOUR' IN THE PRESENTATION OF PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN THE BBC'S SOCIAL VIDEO STORIES

7.1.   Introduction: Are solutions journalism guidelines followed in practice?

The solutions journalism guidelines ensure that each story focuses on a response to a social problem but is also a piece of 'rigorous' journalism that critically examines its advantages, downsides, evidence that it works, and how it works (McIntyre and Lough 2021; Bansal and Martin 2015; Solutions Journalism Network 2022e). The way that the BBC, as "the most famous example of public service media" (Nielsen, 2017, p. 36), follows these guidelines in its solutions journalism project *BBC People Fixing the World* helps to understand solutions-focused journalism beyond its normative ideas, in actual journalistic practice. This is particularly important in the context of public service media, which should be "a significant, if limited, space for critical coverage, diverse voices, and independent journalism" (Freedman 2019, p. 205), and of the BBC's efforts to be recognised and appreciated by its audiences, particularly the younger audience. Since Li (2021a), who studied the implementation of solutions journalism guidelines in stories shared by the Solutions Journalism Network, this is the first study that does this – albeit in the context of a particular newsroom. Also, this is the first time that solutions reporting is studied at the BBC, and the first study which focuses exclusively on video.

As the findings of the previous chapter showed, the BBC's solutions-focused team is, on the one hand, dedicated to meticulous investigation of solutions – just like the proponents of solutions journalism; but on the other hand, there are specific factors imposed on the production process in the practice of making solutions-focused video stories for social media – particularly in the context of making them engaging. Therefore, it is vital to explore how this tension is reflected in these videos and if journalists manage to uphold the ideas of solutions reporting and the journalistic values of their organisation, while pursuing social audiences and good metrics on Facebook.

The research question that this chapter explores is:

Does the *BBC People Fixing the World* team implement the solutions journalism reporting criteria in solutions-focused video stories?

In this chapter I present the results of my first and third research phases, in which I conducted content analysis of the *BBC People Fixing the World* solutions video stories, and semi-structured interviews with the journalists who produced them, along with their former editor and their current editor. The solutions journalism guidelines were operationalised as two sets of criteria in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I explore those criteria, which are related to how solutions and problems are reported on, while in the following chapter I explore those that concern storytelling. The solutions journalism reporting criteria include the following:

- Presentation and explanation of the problem and its cause;
- Presentation of a tangible solution that exists and is actively implemented;
- Explanation of how the solution is implemented (how it works);
- Presentation and explanation of evidence of solution effectiveness;
- Presentation and explanation of solution limitations;
- Inclusion of sources who have direct experience with the solution.

Additionally, I explore the implementation of the following two solutions journalism criteria which are not crucial in terms of rigorous presentation of a solution, but concern elements deemed important by some solutions journalists (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568) and the Solutions Journalism Network (Bansal and Martin 2015):

- Presentation of information about how audience members can get involved or find out more about the solution;
- Presentation of a teachable lesson or insight that shows how the world works and how it can be improved.

Each criterion is operationalised as a separate set of variables, designed with the view to better understand how solutions journalism ideas are reflected in the BBC's stories, specifically in terms of video. There are in total 32 variables in the coding frame for content analysis of all the 119 video stories published between November 2016, when the project began, and March 2019. In the interviews, the results of the analysis were presented to the editors and journalists, and they were asked to

comment on each point, provide possible explanations and their understandings of each criterion.

This part of the study opens and advances several debates. First, it opens a new debate in solutions journalism research – if the adherence to "traditional journalistic norms and practices" and 'rigorous' reporting, a discourse used to legitimise this practice (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 9), is indeed reflected in content. This is important in order to assess if solutions journalism 'fulfils' its normative promises, and to what extent and in what form its ideas are reflected in practice. In this way, I explore and compare how the ideas of the journalists and editors presented in Chapter 6 are reflected in their stories, and if they manage to overcome the challenges they pointed out, and remain dedicated to their organisation's editorial standards.

Second, the need to 'rigorously' report on solutions is for the first time explored in the context of video using the first theoretical framework for visual solutions journalism, intended primarily for photographs (Midberry and Dahmen 2020). In this way, the study evaluates the suitability of this framework in the context of video production.

Finally, studying how the journalists and editors in the BBC's team explain the reasons behind what solutions journalism elements are included in their solutions-focused video stories helps to understand how the demands related to the audience, publication platform, and format – identified in the previous chapter – manifest in the stories. This helps to understand the production side of solutions reporting that has been predominantly overshadowed by studies of audience reception, while very little is known about the characteristics of solutions reporting and the decisions that journalists and editors make in this process.

The results in this chapter are divided in two main sections. In the first section, I present the findings concerning the ways a problem that a solution responds to is presented – if it is presented, who presents it, and in what way – visually and in terms of information provided. I specifically focus on the presentation of the cause of the problem because this is an important aspect that helps to better understand and critically assess the applicability and impact of the response.

In the second section, I present the findings related to the solution, particularly those criteria that ensure that each solutions story is a piece of rigorous reporting (McIntyre and Lough 2021), such as the importance of hard evidence of solution effectiveness, presentation of its limitations, and an explanation of how the solution works. I additionally explore the relevance of insight for solutions journalists, and the presence of mobilizing information.

Finally, I discuss why the BBC predominantly fails to fulfil the solutions journalism reporting criteria, but more importantly, I focus on the fact that solutions are too often presented in an uncritical way, as many important elements of solutions reporting are left out. The interviewees confirm that the demands of producing videos for Facebook – to be positive, interesting, and simple – are among the main reasons for these results. In this way, I point out the contribution of this part of the study – not only in terms of conceptualising solutions-focused journalism at the BBC, but also of identifying different factors within a newsroom that shape a solutions reporting practice.

7.2. Implementation of the solutions journalism reporting criteria in BBC's videos

The results point to a discrepancy between the way solutions-focused journalism was conceptualised by the members of this team in Chapter 6, and the extent to which and the manner in which they are implemented in the BBC's solutions videos for the social media platform. While the findings of the content analysis point to a clear focus on the solution and the way it is implemented, less attention is given to the problem and the context in which it arose, including the cause of the problem. Furthermore, the criteria that ensure that the solution is not just presented, but that its effectiveness is critically assessed through the provision of hard evidence and presentation of solutions limitations, are not respected in more than half of the stories in the sample. The responsibility of solutions journalists "to bring to audiences the complete story" (Thier 2021, p. 47) is, according to the findings that I present in this chapter, predominantly not fulfilled in the BBC's solutions-focused stories.

7.2.1.   Topics and duration of solutions-focused video stories

But first, it is important to address the main topics in the BBC's solutions videos. The most frequently covered solutions topics are: environment, health, and children's well-being. Those and the other topics that were identified are presented in Table 11[1].

Table 11: Topics of solutions-focused video stories

The topic of the solutions-focused story	N=119
Environment and sustainability	27.7 percent (N=33)
Health	13.4 percent (N=16)
Children's well-being	9.2 percent (N=11)
Mental health	6.7 percent (N=8)
Planning and development	5.9 percent (N=7)
People with disabilities and their well-being	5.0 percent (N=6)
Community building	4.2 percent (N=5)
Transport and traffic	4.2 percent (N=5)
Gender equality	3.4 percent (N=4)
Peacebuilding	2.5 percent (N=3)
Crime	2.5 percent (N=3)
Refugees	2.5 percent (N=3)
Poverty	1.7 percent (N=2)
Third age	1.7 percent (N=2)
Agriculture and farming	1.7 percent (N=2)
Corruption	0.8 percent (N=1)
Police	0.8 percent (N=1)
Housing	0.8 percent (N=1)
Media	0.8 percent (N=1)
Language	0.8 percent (N=1)
Animals	0.8 percent (N=1)
Cyber security	0.8 percent (N=1)
Consumer issues	0.8 percent (N=1)
Anti-radicalisation	0.8 percent (N=1)

The current editor said that when a story gets commissioned, the topic itself is not as important as the solution, and disagrees that there are certain topics that are more likely to be chosen for a story:

> I don't think there's any one type of story. Solutions can cover so many things. Health, personal well-being, technology, … There are so many things that I think… it sounds very simplistic. But it's got to make me say: 'that's interesting'.

---

[1] All the percentages in the tables presented in this chapter are rounded to one decimal place.

And that it's not just me who finds it interesting. It's got to be something I would think that other people would care about. (Interviewee 9)

However, the target audience may be part of the explanation for this result. The founding editor explains that the *BBC People Fixing the World* was set up to attract young audiences which, according to the editor, are not "heavy news users" and are "optimistic by their nature", and therefore desire stories about solutions to problems their generation cares about:

> This new generation, which I find tremendously interesting as a demographic, they're such fascinating people who are likely to change the world in massive ways. A lot of editors roll their eyes when they hear about the millennials… and I just think 'thank God for the millennials', you know. (…) These guys are questioning gender norms, climate issues, all sorts of stuff… I just think this demographic, especially in some markets that the [BBC] World Service is trying to reach, are a fascinating group of people. And I think emotional note of the audacity of hope, on the promise of some level of academic rigour, are not turnoffs for them, they are turn-ons. (…) Things change really fast and there's an opportunity to shape things. You see all these [audience] surveys, they want some kind of social value. (Interviewee 8)

While it is not fair to assess what problems and responses are more important than the others, it is important to note that the BBC's solutions stories in the sample barely cover topics such as conflict, war, extremism and other forms of harm, or issues in politics and governance, such as corruption, legal affairs, economic and other equality. This is surprising because in the BBC's *Toolkit* for solutions reporting, conflict prevention and resolution, politics, business, and social affairs are listed as the main "BBC news topic areas to which SFJ could be applied" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 11). Therefore, there is a tendency to disregard the topics that have an inherent negativity bias when producing solutions-focused videos for a social audience.

Regarding the duration or length of the solutions-focused video stories, the findings show that they are predominantly short – 45.4 percent of them are between two and a half and three and a half minutes long (coded as 3 minutes). Overall, 60.5 percent of the stories are under three and a half minutes long (Table 12).

Table 12: Duration of BBC's solutions-focused video stories

Story length (duration)	N=119
1 minute	1.7 percent (N=2)
2 minutes	13.4 percent (N=16)
3 minutes	45.4 percent (N=54)
4 minutes	27.7 percent (N=33)
5 minutes	13.2 percent (N=9)
6 minutes	1.7 percent (N=2)
7 minutes	0.8 percent (N=1)
9 minutes	0.8 percent (N=1)
13 minutes	0.8 percent (N=1)

This finding is not surprising as the interviewees often pointed out the necessity to make the solutions-focused video stories short for the social media audience, but also because, at the time, the Facebook algorithm did not support longer videos. Keeping the videos short entails making decisions what information to include and what to exclude.

7.2.2. Presentation of problems in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories

Presentation of the problem is crucial for understanding the solution and its impact. According to the *Solutions-Focused Journalism Toolkit*, however, journalists should only "encapsulate the problem", and do not need to present it in detail – particularly if the audience is already aware of it (Kasriel 2016a, p. 9). The findings show that this is exactly what is done in the solutions-focused video stories, and subsequently, the cause of the problem is for the most part disregarded. This is important because, as some studies showed, audience members feel best informed when a solutions story presents both the problem and the solution (Murray and Stroud 2019); but also because this is a normative expectation of solutions journalism (Thier et al. 2019, p. 13; McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568; Li 2021a, p. 15). In this project, the focus is predominantly on successful solutions and their implementation, while negative aspects – including the problem itself – are reduced or omitted.

7.2.2.1.　　　　　*Problem presented, cause disregarded*

As can be seen in Table 13, 96.6 percent of the stories in the sample do present the problem. There is an apparent effort made by the team of journalists to dedicate a specific place in their solutions stories to this information. In the stories where that is not the case, the problem is either presumed or 'hidden' in a soundbite. For example, in a story about a shopping mall in Sweden where everything that is for sale is recycled, the problem of an insufficient level of awareness about waste reduction and the importance of recycling for the environment is not in any way mentioned either by the journalist or the interviewees. However, in the soundbites of people who shop there, information is provided about the importance of raising awareness about the preservation of the environment. In this way, it is assumed that environmental issues exist, and that this mall is a welcome concept.

Table 13: Presentation of the problem and the cause

Information	
Is the problem presented?	Yes: 96.6 percent (N=115)
	No: 3.4 percent (N=4)
Is the cause of the problem and the context within which it arose presented?	Yes: 43.7 percent (N=52)
	No: 56.3 percent (N=67)
Sources	
Who presents the problem?	Journalist: 78.2 percent (N=90)
	The person who invented the solution: 11.3 percent (N=13)
	The person who provides the solution: 2.6 percent (N=3)
	The person who receives the solution: 0.9 percent (N=1)
	Journalist + the person who invented the solution: 2.6 percent (N=3)
	Journalist + the person who provides the solution: 1.7 percent (N=2)
	Journalist + the person who receives the solution: 2.6 percent (N=3)
	Other: 0 percent (N=0)
Who explains the cause of the problem?	Journalist: 67.3 percent (N=35)
	The person who invented the solution: 21.2 percent (N=11)
	The person who provides the solution: 1.9 percent (N=1)
	The person who receives the solution: 1.9 percent (N=1)
	Journalist + the person who invented the solution: 1.9 percent (N=1)
	Journalist + the person who receives the solution: 3.8 percent (N=2)
	Other: 1.9 percent (N=1)
Is there at least one interviewee who shares his or her personal experience and understanding of the problem?	Yes: 45.2 percent (N=52)
	No: 54.8 percent (N=63)
Visual representation	
Is the problem visually represented?	Yes: 73.9 percent (N=85)
	No: 26.1 percent (N=30)
Is the cause of the problem visually represented?	Yes: 55.8 percent (N=29)
	No: 44.2 percent (N=23)

However, as is shown in Table 13, 56.3 percent of the stories in the sample do not fulfil the other part of the first criterion, which states that the cause of the problem must be explained. Therefore, while the problem is presented, the context in which it arose and the cause of the problem are not presented in more than half of the stories in the sample.

The interviewees were all surprised when presented with this finding. One journalist said:

> I'm really quite surprised because our process is pretty rigorous in terms of amounts of journalism that goes into everything we do. (Interviewee 7)

Nevertheless, both the editors and the journalists offered their reasons for not presenting the cause of the problem, or at least not presenting it directly. The first reason is the demand to simplify the story for the social audience, while the second related reason is the length of the video. A former video journalist on the team identified an approach in the way the problem is treated in the BBC's solutions videos:

> Sometimes there are complicated stories, and you have to very consciously simplify it, (…), otherwise it's going to take you too long to do. You're already having to go through loads of transcripts, footage, getting the right shots to make this formula work. Often that would be: Keep it positive. Leave the problem and go back to the positive. (Interviewee 3)

The current editor said that the duration of these videos entails judging what bits of the story need to be included, but explained why not including the cause of the problem does not mean it is not present in a solutions story:

> Perhaps also when you look at the solution to a problem… when you're looking at *how* it solves it and *why*…does that also reveal the cause of a problem? (…) Actually, when you're addressing the problem, by talking about a solution you're revealing an underlying problem. If the solution tackles the cause and not just the symptoms of a problem, then you are addressing the cause perhaps. (Interviewee 9)

Another video journalist thinks that the way the journalist presents the solution may help the audience to also understand the problem:

> When the person is talking about a solution, they often remind about the problem in quite a lot of ways… (…) I think that does come down to filmmaker in the interview to make sure the link isn't lost. Kind of constantly aware of the problem throughout the piece. (Interviewee 5)

The third reason for not including the cause of the problem is a presumption made by some interviewees that the audience is already familiar with it. As one video journalist explained, it is only necessary to "recap the problem" and "make them care again" about it. More explanations are needed when the problem is not that common:

> In some rare cases you can tell people about a problem that they didn't know existed or maybe a problem that doesn't affect your life, for example water sanitation in a poorer country. In those situations, you need to spend a bit more time explaining why this is a problem for some people in some parts of the world. There is no 'one size fits all' for every solution journalism story, you need to adapt it to a particular story. (Interviewee 1)

However, I identified stories in the sample where the cause of the problem is not presented, even though it could be considered complex. For example, in a story about an initiative that unites young Israelis and Palestinians, the conflict is mentioned, but the cause of this conflict is not explained. In another story about a talent show in Nepal that awards honest government workers in order to 'fight corruption', the reasons why Nepal is the third most corrupt country in the world are not addressed at any point.

7.2.2.2.   *Journalists as the dominant voice in problem presentation*

Furthermore, as the results in Table 13 show, when presented, both the problem (78.2 percent) and its cause (67.3 percent) are predominantly explained by the journalist in the voiceover or in captions. Even though the journalist, along with the editor, ultimately controls all the elements of a story (i.e. their inclusion or exclusion, and where within the story they are positioned) this finding shows that the problem and its cause are presented primarily by the journalist, while the other voices are disregarded. While a problem can be presented through, for example, voices who have experienced the problem or those who are experts and can explain both the problem itself and what caused it to the audience, this is less frequent in the BBC's solutions video stories. It assumes even greater responsibility of journalists in terms of what information they choose to present.

This result may also be related to what the interviewees said about the problem not being the focus of the story and the need to dedicate as much time as possible to solution presentation. Only one journalist emphasized the importance of having a

human voice when the problem is presented, especially in terms of emotions that the personal experience of the problem can provoke in audience members. In a story about an app that helps children with autism in Turkey, the story starts with a crying mother whose son cannot get proper education for her son:

> I really like emotion in stories… for me it is my personal style. I like to really show what the problem is and let it breathe. (…) With autism app for tablets, for autistic children… I don't think you appreciate why that's unusual until you know the problem. A lot of sad stories do well… For me it was a risk worth taking. I think what was key… (…) You have to get it absolutely right so the people would care. Obviously 'I'm not sleeping because of my son's education, that immediately is intriguing for people to stay. A lot of people can relate to being worried about your kids, sleepless nights… (Interviewee)

In this sense, content analysis shows that 45.2 percent of the stories include a person who shares a personal experience of the problem in at least one soundbite. In the other 54.8 percent of the stories, even when the story mentions the problem and its cause, it does not provide the audience the opportunity to understand the problem through a connection with the person in the story who shares it, but only with the ones who create or benefit from the solution.

7.2.2.3.   *Visual representation of the problem and the cause*

Information represented through visuals, together with information provided in the voiceover and the soundbites, creates meaning. As presented in Table 13, the problem is visually represented in 73.9 percent of the stories that mention it. The interviewees confirmed that this is on their 'to-do list' when they are working on a solutions video story.

Of the stories that visually represent the problem, most of them – particularly those that concern the environment – do this directly with the use of a sequence of shots or still photographs to show pollution, problems with plastics, draught, floods, and similar environmental issues. This confirms the journalists' and editors' dedication to include it into the story. In four stories in the sample, the problems are presented with the use of archive footage or photographs. For example, in a story about facades being painted in different colours to cheer people up, archive shots show the same area seriously affected by war in the recent past.

The topics related to health, mental health, and children's health and education are predominantly visually represented through metaphors. This may be related to questions of ethics and permission. In one story about shoes that help people with Parkinson's disease, the way in which the disease manifests is not visually presented. However, the body of a woman who uses the solution is shown in black and white, instead of colour, every time she either speaks about the problems she had while walking, or when the journalist mentions it in the voiceover.

At times the journalist does a piece to camera and takes the audience to the problem. In a story about a solution to the problem of a lack of public toilets in one German city, a journalist walks down the street seeming to look for something, followed by visuals of signs saying 'closed' or 'customers only' or 'staff only'. There is also a door to a public toilet with a lock on it. In a story about secret home-testing kits that help people take control of their sexual health, the problem of this being a taboo in Nigerian society is visually presented with shots of people's feet in bed, along with shots of hospital workers.

However, in 26.1 percent of the stories, the problem is not visually represented. There are stories in the sample that use neutral visuals to present the problem – for example, shots of open spaces, such as a wide shot of a bridge, a road or a city with people passing by – combined with text over screen, voiceover, or both, that provide an explanation of what the problem is. In other stories, textual presentation of the problem is accompanied by visuals of the solution. In this way, there is incongruence in the way the problem is presented, and this may negatively affect the understanding of it, including its severity and significance. For example, in one story about an initiative that aims to fight social anxiety and physical inactivity of children by closing streets once a week so children can play, the problem is presented through visuals of the solution – children playing happily in the street.

The journalists explain in the interviews that this happens on two occasions: first, when the problem is well-known to a general audience – for example, the importance of education, staying happy, fit, or healthy; and second, when it may entail ethical considerations, for example in stories about health or mental health issues. In this

way, the message that is conveyed to the audience becomes complex, as the visuals show one thing, while the voiceover or a soundbite presents the other.

Furthermore, as seen in Table 13, in the stories that do mention the cause of the problem, it is visually presented in 55.8 percent of them. However, the visuals that represent the problem significantly overlap with the visuals used to present the cause, as they are often presented together in the narrative. But in a few stories, the cause of the problem is visually represented with action sequences. In a story that presents a response to the problem of fatberg in sewers, one of the causes of the problem is both described in the voiceover and visually shown using two shots – meat cooked in a pan and later the oil from it being spilt in the sink. Here, another visual approach that I identify is the use of animated graphics. In a story about a response to the problem of policemen sometimes acting recklessly under high levels of stress, the journalist explains that certain changes in the physical body are those that cause unsuitable reactions. One of them is tunnel vision. It is explained with the use of a graphic animation that shows the audience what tunnel vision looks like.

7.2.3. Presentation of solution implementation in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories

Unlike the problem, the solution and its implementation are the focus of the BBC's solutions video stories. What the solution is and how it works is central to these stories, both visually and textually, as the findings in Table 14 show.

Table 14: Presentation of solution implementation

Is the solution presented in the story?	Yes: 100 percent (N=119)
	No: 0 percent (N=0)
Does the story include details on how the solution is implemented?	Yes: 98.3 percent (N=117)
	No: 1.7 percent (N=2)
Is the solution tangible or hypothetical?	Tangible: 94.1 percent (N=112)
	Hypothetical: 5.9 percent (N=7)
Is the solution implemented in real life?	Yes: 92.4 percent (N=110)
	No: 7.6 percent (N=9)
Is the solution implementation visually represented?	Yes: 98.3 percent (N=117)
	No: 1.7 percent (N=2)

7.2.3.1. Tangible and hypothetical solutions

The solution is presented in all the BBC's video stories, and in 94.1 percent of them it is tangible. These responses include physical objects, initiatives, policies, or campaigns that result in tangible results. This is even more to be expected, as video is a visual format that demands something tangible that can be shown to the audience.

In seven stories the solution is hypothetical. Two of them visually stand out. One of them is a story about an initiative to make airplanes wheelchair accessible. The story is told through the personal story of the solution inventor, a woman whose child is in wheelchair. While the story includes extensive use of graphic animations that show why wheelchairs cannot fit in an airplane and what needs to be done for that to work, the solution is entirely hypothetical. Another story that covers a hypothetical solution and uses graphics is about an idea by an airplane engineer about a circular runaway that would positively affect the environment. It is important to note that four of the seven stories that cover hypothetical solutions were published at the beginning of the project, therefore, this criterion was predominantly not fulfilled only in the early stages of the BBC's solutions project. The former editor (Interviewee 8) explained that some of these video stories were part of "Think Again" videos that were "published under a BBC World Hacks banner".

7.2.3.2. How the solution is implemented

The focus of the BBC's solutions stories is how the solution works. 98.3 percent of the stories include details about how a certain response is implemented, or in terms of hypothetical solutions, should be implemented in real life. This is not surprising, as a certain solution and the way it works are almost inseparable, especially in a story that has a strong visual component. The journalists and editors confirmed in the interviews the importance of answering this question:

> I think for me it was questions… (…) Okay, so they managed to do this… but how? (…) They're doing this… but why? Yeah. Curiosity. That's why the story had to be surprising. You have to be invested in the *how* and the *why*. And if you weren't, the story failed. (Interviewee 3)

Even in terms of hypothetical solutions, for example those that are in their trial or testing period of implementation – one device that protects women from attackers and one experiment that uses bacteria which eat methane gas to make food for animals – the audience can see how it works in the trial period and can imagine how it may work in real life.

In terms of visual presentation of solution implementation, this is done in nearly all the stories in the sample, with the exception of two stories. These were among the first ones published by the project, and they present solely ideas for hypothetical solutions and were, as the former editor explained, part of the "Think Again" project.

Visually, solution implementation is the most dominant part of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories, and the journalists and editors confirmed that this is the central visual component in their videos. Most of their efforts in the field are invested in gathering action sequences of how the solution works as this is, according to the journalists, visually the most attractive, but also the most important aspect of presenting the solution to the audience, particularly if it comes as a surprise.

7.2.3.3. *Sources that present the solution*

In terms of the criterion stating that sources who have directly experienced the solution – either as those who invented it, provide it, or receive it – should be included in the story (McIntyre and Lough 2021; Bansal and Martin 2015), the findings of the content analysis show that this is a relevant aspect in the BBC's solutions video stories (Table 15).

Table 15: Sources that present the solution

Is the person or organisation which invented the solution given a voice in the story?	Yes: 78.2 percent (N=93)
	No: 21.8 percent (N=26)
Is the person or organisation which provides the solution given a voice in the story?	Yes: 83.2 percent (N=99)
	No: 16.8 percent (N=20)
Is at least one person who implements the solution presented?	Yes: 80.7 percent (N=96)
	No: 19.3 percent (N=23)
Is anyone presented who directly opposes or disapproves of the solution?	Yes: 6.7 percent (N=8)
	No: 93.3. percent (N=111)

The findings show that 78.2 percent of the stories in the sample include the voice of the person who invented the solution. Furthermore, in 83.2 percent of the stories at least one person who provides the solution is presented, while in 80.7 percent of them a person who receives the solution is included. These three roles appear to be central in the BBC's solutions video stories, but also to the journalists themselves, who emphasised their relevance in the interviews in terms of connecting with the audience. The person who receives the solution is particularly important, according to the interviewees, because of the need to visually represent solution implementation, ideally through a person.

Additionally, the results show that 6.7 percent of the stories in the sample include interviewees that directly oppose or do not support the solution that is being presented in the story. This means that only eight stories in the sample include any kind of direct or open disagreement or lack of support for the solution that is being presented.

7.2.3.4.   *Hard evidence that a solution works*

Even though explaining how a solution works is considered one of the aspects of 'rigorous' presentation of responses (McIntyre and Lough 2021); inclusion of hard evidence or reliable data that prove the impact of solution implementation is, along with the criterion concerning the presentation of solution limitations, the point in which this team's adherence to 'rigorous' solutions reporting fails the test. As can be seen in Table 16, half of the stories in the sample (49.6 percent) quote reliable data that confirm a successful impact of solution implementation.

Table 16: Hard evidence that a solution works

Is there hard evidence or reliable data that show the impact of solution implementation?	Yes: 49.6 percent (N=59)
	No: 50.4 percent (N=60)
If yes, what is it?	Numerical data (statistics): 66.1 percent (N=39)
	Qualitative data: 33.9 percent (N=20)
If yes, who presents the evidence?	Journalist: 88.1 percent (N=52)
	The person who invented the solution: 5.1 percent (N=3)
	The person who provides the solution: 3.4 percent (N=2)
	The person who receives the solution: 1.7 percent (N=1)
	Journalist and the person who invented the solution: 1.7 percent (N=1)

When hard evidence is presented, it is predominantly statistics (66.1 percent), provided by the journalist. However, the journalists often present it as hard evidence, but do not clearly present who or what provided these numbers. They use words such as "studies show", "initial studies suggest", without naming any specific study or its source. For example, in a story about a system in Germany that helps members of neo-Nazi groups to leave them, the journalist points out in the voiceover that "since year 2000, Exit has successfully deradicalised almost 700 people", but this information is not attributed to any source.

Furthermore, there are stories in which evidence is related to sources that are not independent, such as the solution inventors themselves. In a story about city trees built from moss that store pollution, the only evidence is a piece of information in the voiceover stating that "inventors claim that one moss tree in a city is like having 275 regular trees". While this may be considered a form of evidence, it should be clearly separated or labelled as unreliable data, as it is not confirmed by an independent source. It is expected that solution inventors, especially if it is a for-profit business, will point out those numbers that are in their favour. In four stories in the sample, it is clearly stated by the journalist that they searched for hard evidence, but without success. This begs the question – why were half of these solutions reported on if there was no proof of their impact?

When presented with these findings, all the journalists said that evidence is, in fact, one of the central points in the process of solutions story research and production, including the pitching meetings. The current editor said that there is a lot of work invested in the research of solution effectiveness, but not all is apparent from the video story itself:

> If you're presenting something as a solution, there's a lot you don't necessarily see in the final product. We've got to be fairly confident that there is some evidence or reason to believe that there's a good chance that it is effective. There might be limitations, but there must be something in it… for us to believe there's possibly something in it. (Interviewee 9)

However, it does not necessarily need to be *hard* evidence. Sometimes if the solution is assessed as interesting and there is *some* evidence about its effectiveness, it still may be reported on. The current editor explains that the team makes a distinction between two levels of evidence, of which both are considered relevant in terms of choosing what solution to report on – first is scientific research, second is anecdotal evidence. Therefore, a solution may be reported on even if there is no hard evidence about its effectiveness, but as the editor added, "when you don't have evidence, we need to be clear what level of evidence we're talking about" (Interviewee 9).

For example, in one story, the journalist comes back to the same small school somewhere in Africa after one year to check if the children wear special expandable shoes they received as a donation from a charity. This can also be considered a form of evidence as it is something journalists use as both a storytelling and a research technique. However, in this specific story, the solution is presented as impeccable, without any limitations or imperfections; therefore, it can easily be mistaken for a charity's promotional video.

Furthermore, all the journalists and the editors – without exception – referred to the format as one of the principal reasons for not presenting the evidence, even though they said that they always collected evidence as part of their research:

> We know we've done the research, we've seen what the evidence is. That doesn't sometimes necessarily make the video. Sometimes maybe… something might not make the video because it ruins the pacing or the impact… but if someone wants to come and question it, or raise the issues, we know we got answers to these questions." (Interviewee 5)

Another journalist agreed that doing a solutions video for the online and social audience is about keeping it interesting, and that sometimes means excluding some information such as evidence:

> I guess I can watch any video and say… this is the bit where it's getting a bit boring. Perhaps with the solutions thing it's the kind of boring bit where you have to do the explainer. Suddenly explain the details of it. Even the kind of criticisms of it or something like that. People on Facebook or online video click through so many things… They want to be amazed and interested. Point in which they kind of… have seen enough really. (Interviewee 2)

Therefore, the BBC's team does not rely exclusively on *hard* evidence in the process of story selection, even though they confirmed that some level of evidence is necessary. Also, this evidence does not necessarily need to be included in a solutions video story, and according to the interviewees, it is often a storytelling choice related to the platform where it is published and the audience it is intended for. This again evokes the findings from Chapter 6 which identified the three expectations of solutions-focused video stories produced for Facebook – to be positive, interesting, and simple. Dwelling too much on evidence is at times seen as being in opposition to achieving these goals.

7.2.3.5. *Presentation of solution limitations*

When the journalists and editors were asked what information about the solution they include in their stories, limitations – another central element of 'rigour' in solutions reporting – were mentioned as part of their 'checklist' without exception. However, as shown in Table 16, this is done in only 43.7 percent of the BBC's solutions video stories. In the other 56.3 percent, no potential drawbacks of the solutions are presented at all. There is nothing that can be improved, nothing that needs more work or that in any way needs to be modified. Even when the story does present limitations, in 69.2 percent of these stories, merely one limitation is presented. In only one story in the sample, three or more limitations are presented.

Table 17: Presentation of solution limitations

Are there any reported solution limitations?	Yes: 43.7 percent (N=52)
	No: 56.3 percent (N=67)
If yes, how many limitations are reported?	One limitation: 69.2 percent (N=36)
	Two limitations: 28.9 percent (N=15)
	Three or more limitations: 1.9 percent (N=1)
Who points out the limitations?	Journalist: 55.8 percent (N=29)
	The person who invented the solution: 9.6 percent (N=5)
	The person who provides the solution: 1.9 percent (N=1)
	The person who receives the solution: 5.8 percent (N=3)
	Expert: 5.8 percent (N=3)
	The person who opposes the solution: 3.8 percent (N=2)
	Vox pop: 1.9 percent (N=1)
	Journalist + the person who invented the solution: 3.8 per cent (N=2)
	Journalist + the person who provides the solution: 1.9 percent (N=1)
	Journalist + the person who receives the solution: 3.8 percent (N=2)
	Journalist + expert: 1.9 percent (N=1)
	Journalist + Vox pop: 3.8 percent (N=2)
Is there any feedback from the sources related to the solution about the limitations that are presented?	Yes: 50 percent (N=26)
	No: 50 percent (N=26)
Is the limitation visually presented in the story?	Yes: 48.1 percent (N=25)
	No: 51.9 percent (N=27)

In terms of the sources who present the limitations, in 55.8 percent of the stories this is done exclusively by the journalist. Just like in the presentation of the problem and its cause, here again the journalists take the lead in presenting the downsides of the solution. This means that the limitations are not so much a matter of discussion in the story that includes opinions and experiences of different voices, but rather information that is briefly presented by the journalists. In the stories that include any reference to limitations, in 50 percent of them, those who either invented or provide the solution are given the opportunity to comment on the limitations.

Interestingly, in 5.8 percent of the stories, the limitations are pointed out by the person who receives the solution and could comment most extensively on the advantages and the downsides of this experience. This shows that, even though solution implementation is visually and textually dominant in the story, those who receive the solution are used to show it but are rarely 'allowed' to criticize it. This appears to be the journalist's prerogative.

However, in seven stories in the sample, solution inventors point out the limitations themselves. This is most often related to the issue of scaling up, but at times a limitation is presented as a challenge on their journey that they overcame, rather than a limitation of the response. For example, in one story about an entrepreneur who made aerial pipes to get fresh water to residents of a slum in Nairobi, the local mafia started cutting the pipes. The solution inventor made a deal with them by employing their family members to work at his water supply facility.

Moreover, when a limitation is textually presented in a story, it is visually presented in 48.1 percent of them. In other stories, limitations are accompanied by visuals of the solution and how it works, which can reduce the significance of the limitation for the audience.

These results point to clear under-representation of solution limitations in the BBC's video stories. The current editor identified the format as one of the possible reasons for these results and said that "in videos sometimes there's not enough room to go into that". The editor, along with the journalists whom I interviewed, reminded me that each solutions story is told in two formats, and that in the podcast there is more time to talk about limitations and pick the solution apart, unlike in video for social media. One journalist said that doing it for video is about having a "very limited amount of time to engage the audience", and adds that not including a limitation may happen, but that "we were careful not to present it as magic bullets" (Interviewee 5).

Another reason for the exclusion of solution limitations in videos, besides duration, is again related to the platform and the demands to make the videos positive and interesting:

> There's this element that we want to make it uplifting, we want to make it shareable… So you're kind of explaining the idea, you're putting it out there. And then you're commenting the criticism underneath in the comments. (Interviewee 1)

The same journalist made a note that social video should not be done as TV packages and that the aim is not to "create a rounded picture that you would in a news package", but a video where the journalist is "creating a starting point for a conversation". Including limitations means "complicating" the story:

> It's not that you don't want criticism, but it's like breaking the spell of a journey you're going on. (Interviewee 1)

Therefore, it is the demand of making the solutions-focused videos simple that again emerges as one of the main reasons for leaving out the rigorous elements in solution presentation.

The former editor who started this project mentioned the "Think Again" videos that were published under *BBC World Hacks* as something that may have 'spoiled' the results. However, in the sample I identified two stories that contained that label in the title, and four other stories that were produced in a similar way. Even without them in the sample, that would still make less than half of the stories that present the solution without pointing out any limitations. The former editor said:

> As a previous editor I should be taking this as a problem. To answer that directly… The craft was difficult. And we learnt to get better at it with time. (…) In my team I hired some of the best VJs and radio journalists I could find. Radio journalists had a 23-minute slot. Audio is already a format that finds ideas a bit easier than video. My video makers were confronting a very difficult balance. How do you keep the thing compelling, and video is an emotional medium… It is more difficult to do this form of journalism in short-form video than any other format… I think we got there in most of the cases, and I'm proud that we did. But I won't pretend that every video we made in the first six months was absolutely on balance. If in your analysis the limitations were not mentioned at all… that's a problem. (Interviewee 8)

Therefore, the two out of three most important solutions reporting criteria related to hard evidence and limitations were predominantly not fulfilled in the sample. The repercussions of this will be addressed in Chapter 9.

7.2.4. Mobilising information

As anticipated, the results show that no BBC's solutions video story includes information about how audience members can get involved or find out more about the solution. The BBC makes a clear point in the *Toolkit* that the stories must not advocate for any solution or solution inventor, and adds that "unlike others in the SFJ space, we do not measure success through impact or audience action" (Kasriel, 2016a, p. 12). For Solutions Journalism Network, but also according to McIntyre and Lough's operationalisation of solutions journalism, stories should include so-called "mobilising information", so the audience is given the opportunity to act and get involved in a specific solution implementation (2021, p. 1568). In the interviews, this is a point where the members of this team implicitly referred to the BBC's editorial standard of impartiality. Some journalists pointed out that, if the audience is interested in a specific solution, they can look it up themselves because the names of the solutions and their inventors are presented in the stories. Therefore, unlike the solutions journalists interviewed by McIntyre and Lough (2021), the BBC's team do not support the inclusion of this kind of information in their videos. This may also be related to the finding from Chapter 6 about the journalists' and editors' disapproval of any notions of advocacy in their solutions reporting.

7.2.5. Insight or a teachable lesson

As I explained in Chapter 5, from the content analysis I initially excluded the criterion of a solutions-focused story including an insight or a teachable lesson in a story, because the operationalisation and measurement of this variable was difficult due to the vagueness of this concept. This is because insight is related to "a clear, deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or solution" (Cambridge Dictionary 2022c), and it is therefore related primarily to the audience's impression of a story. Similarly, as I found during the pilot study, a lesson can be explicit, but also implicit and dependent on the individual impression of the viewer. Nevertheless, this is a distinct and very important aspect of solutions reporting (Bansal and Martin 2015; Solutions Journalism Network 2022d), so I took notes during the coding process about any points in the stories that could be understood

as direct and intentional presentation of an insight or a teachable lesson, talked to journalists and editors about it, and revisited all the stories after the interviews had been conducted.

In interviews, neither journalists nor editors mentioned an insight or a teachable moment as an element in the BBC's solutions video stories, but they did point out the effort to end each story with an uplifting tone. One journalist said that ending a story with a soundbite was a common practice for the BBC's solutions video stories, and most often it included information about what was next, but also about hopes and plans for the future:

> So if you're down from the challenges, you then try to find something positive to end on. They hope they will get 1 million pounds from the government, and everything will be okay. The end. And normally try to finish with a bite from them and not something from the narrator. (Interviewee 3)

In this way, hopes that the solution will scale up or that it will bring progress to a community could be considered an insightful element consciously implemented by the journalists in the production of solutions-focused stories.

Further, in the videos of one video journalist who produced almost one quarter of all the stories in the sample, I identify the use of questions in a voiceover posed at the end as an element of insight that may widen the audience's perspective by inviting it to question and assess the suitability of the solution. For example, in a story about recycled clothing that can be rented and then returned, the journalist asks at the end: "Could it disrupt the global fast fashion industry? Or is it just a solution for middle class parents?"

But the question is not always posed by the journalists at the end. In a story about the ban on plastic bags to preserve the environment in Kenya, at the end of the story, one professor who studies the ban says that anything that cannot be recycled, should not be in circulation. The story then ends with his questions: "Are we the generation that is going to crush the aquatic life? Or are we the ones who are going to sustain life on Earth? I think we are able to do it." In this way, hope, but in this case also an invitation to act, are used to inspire the audience at the end of the story. This is something that is done exclusively in soundbites. In this way, the journalists do not endorse the solutions or advocate for change directly, but the choice of soundbites

to end the story may be considered an implicit support for change, which they did express in the previous chapter.

Also, in one story that also ends with a soundbite – in this case of the person who provides the solution – there is again an invitation to think about the solution and its relevance, but it mixes the positive and the negative tones. The story focuses on the town of Naples, Florida, which is helping residents to adopt a healthier lifestyle and live longer. The person in the last soundbite says: "Would you rather live in a place where you live longer, happier, and healthier, or you're sick and sad and die earlier?"

Therefore, the following two elements may be considered insightful for the audience of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories:

1. Invitation to think critically about the impact or the scale of the solution
2. Hope about the future of the solution and the progress that it may bring

In terms of teachable lessons in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories, I again identify the ending as the point where the audiences are to be inspired to learn something from the solution that is presented. For example, a story about a child who recorded a safety announcement for one station on the London underground ends with her soundbite saying that adults should listen to children more because they are sometimes right. In this way, the soundbite is framed as a lesson for the audience. Similarly, in a story about a talent show that rewards honesty among government workers in Nepal, a teachable lesson is offered in the last soundbite. The solution co-inventor says that the voices of those who do good need to be heard, they need to earn respect, and in this way, the corruption will eventually fall.

Still, some stories show that neither insights nor teachable lessons should be sought as an element tied to a specific voiceover or soundbite within a story. I identified six stories that are in their entirety presented as a teachable lesson told through a personal experience. One example is a story about Iceland and what the country did to cut teenage drinking. The whole story is presented as a teachable lesson to other countries as to the way this can be done. The results of solution implementation are presented at the very beginning of the story, as if to drag the attention by saying: 'this amazing thing was achieved, now let us teach you about the five things they did to get there'.

In this way, the teachable lesson in a solutions-focused story can be:

1. A direct lesson offered by the interviewee in the form of 'if you keep doing this, it will make things better'
2. The whole story framed as a teachable lesson for others about how the solution can help them; it may include steps of how it can be implemented.

Therefore, this small qualitative inquiry of all the stories in the sample of content analysis does bring some insightful findings, though I would not claim that it completely clears up the ambiguity of how this element can be measured on the production side of solutions reporting. While the BBC's team does not deem this element relevant, it is sometimes present. After I did the interviews and came back to rewatching all the 119 videos in the sample, I identified 12 (10.1 percent) stories in total that include at least one of the four elements. However, as I made clear in Chapter 5, there can still be other ways in which an insight or a teachable lesson is implicitly or even explicitly presented in the story, so I do not see this as a reliable finding, but more as a useful exploration in the context of untangling the element that is important to the proponents of solutions journalism.

7.3.   Positive, interesting, simple, but not so 'rigorous'

While the journalists and editors on the team understand solutions-focused journalism as a 'rigorous', but also engaging practice, the BBC's stipulation that "all the relevant facts and information should be weighed to get at the truth" (BBC 2019a, p. 30) is not always reflected in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories. According to the findings presented in this chapter, responses to problems are often not rigorously presented in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories – at least according to the way 'rigour' has been conceptualised in the context of solutions reporting (Thier 2016; Midberry and Dahmen 2020; McIntyre and Lough 2021). The criteria assessed as central assurances that a solutions story is also a 'rigorous' journalistic story that presents the cause of the problem, solutions limitations, and hard evidence of solution effectiveness are predominantly not fulfilled in the BBC's solutions video stories. This information is, according to the proponents of solutions journalism, necessary so the audience can assess the appropriateness of the

solution. Therefore, the BBC's video stories present solutions in a positive tone, but often lack a critical perspective as they choose to focus on the success of the solution.

Stating or showing the problem is not enough. I argue that the cause of the problem is even more important in terms of presenting a solution to a problem, as no problem can be fixed by avoiding, forgetting, or not understanding what or who caused it. Not including information about the cause of the problem opens a specific discursive environment for solution presentation, as the audience members need to assume what causes the problem. Further, the exclusion of solution limitations or any voices that oppose or criticise the solutions means that the presentation of a solution focuses predominantly on its positive aspects. In this way, the audience is not given the opportunity to critically examine the applicability or the appropriateness of a specific solution in relation to the problem and its cause.

In terms of hard evidence, the BBC's team expands the understanding of the acceptable level of evidence of solution effectiveness. The findings show that reliable evidence is not always crucial in story selection. Sometimes if the solution itself is assessed as interesting and there is *some* evidence of its effectiveness, it still may be reported on. By pointing out that anecdotal or soft evidence is sometimes sufficient for the solution to be reported on, the team loosens up the understanding of the solutions journalists interviewed by McIntyre and Lough (2021, p. 1568), who said that the rigour of a story is based on reliable "hard" evidence. But in video, the need for reliable evidence may be even more important, as visual representation of solution implementation may implicitly present the solution as successful, while the visual evidence may be solely anecdotal. The level of evidence about solution effectiveness should, therefore, be made clear to the audience.

The uncritical presentation of solutions in many of the BBC's video stories refutes the notion that solutions stories "are not positive news, or journalism aimed at uplifting audiences, although they may invoke positive emotions" (Thier 2021, p. 49). Therefore, the BBC's solutions-focused videos move away from fulfilling normative ideas of solutions journalism of "adding rigorous coverage of solutions" and telling "the whole story" (Solutions Journalism Network 2020). This way, the monitorial role

of solutions journalism – emphasised by its proponents, who position the practice alongside other 'traditional' journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018) – is not identified in these stories. In the case of this video project, solutions-focused journalism is practiced differently than the members of this team would want, and differently from the way solutions journalism has been conceptualised.

The interviews point to the challenges of doing solutions-focused journalism in a video format intended for a social audience on Facebook, which significantly reshape the practice of solutions reporting. Demands to make the stories positive, interesting, and simple, lead journalists to the conscious exclusion of elements that may "complicate" the story and make the audience lose interest and tune out. The problem and solution limitations are understood by this team as inherently negative and, for this reason, the videos are told in a way that the uplifting tone surrounding the solution is dominant – textually and visually. Therefore, I identify a conscious intent to minimise the amount of negative information in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories, and to enhance the focus on the positive aspects and success of the solutions. This is, again, related to the team's focus on metrics which show, according to the interviewees, that the audiences tune out when the story is "complicated" by descriptions of the problem or the downsides of the response. Additionally, the Facebook algorithm determines the length of the videos. In other words, the fulfilment of solutions journalism's monitorial role and the related dedication to rigorous and meticulous investigation of solutions is overshadowed by the need to win over the audience's attention with impressive solutions that are working, and to adapt to the platform's rules. The journalists and editors in this team are not as successful as they hoped in Chapter 6 that they would be able to maintain the delicate balance between being rigorous and engaging in their solutions-focused video stories.

In this way, the study contributes to opening a new discussion in the research of solutions journalism and related socially responsible practices, as it critically questions the normative foundation of solutions journalism being a journalistically rigorous approach and acting as a watchdog (Aitamurto and Varma 2018; McIntyre and Lough 2021), but also the way that the practice has been normatively positioned in opposition to positive or happy news stories (Hermans and Drok 2018, p. 687). As

the findings in this chapter show, most of the BBC's video stories lack the solutions journalism elements – solution limitations, evidence of impact, and comprehensive presentation of the problem – that make them distinguishable from light news stories about positive people and events. In practice, solutions can be reported on without the critical tone that the Solutions Journalism Network, but also the BBC's team, care about. A discussion and more research are needed about what is and can be done in the production of solutions stories to ensure a level of 'rigour', but also what this 'rigour' should entail.

Additionally, the methodological approach that I used here – examining both sides of the production process – what the journalists and editors say, and how this is reflected in the stories they make contributes to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complexities in implementing solutions journalism ideas in practice, which so far has been largely disregarded by researchers of both constructive journalism and solutions journalism. In this sense, more attention needs to be given to the specific factors that impact the production of solutions stories, particularly to the notion of audience engagement in newsrooms. As this case study has so far shown, each newsroom interprets the purpose of solutions journalism in relation to its main goals. This means that the practice can have many different forms, other than the one created and promoted by its advocates, and that the ideals of fulfilling both the monitorial and the constructive role of solutions journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018) are prone to different interpretations, and, consequently, different outcomes. In this way, positioning socially responsible journalistic practices, such as solutions journalism, as "thorough, accurate, fair and transparent" (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021c, p. 172) is only a normative expectation, rather than a direct reflection of what they are in practice. This expectation should be put under more scrutiny and more studies are needed to examine if and how these ideas are implemented in newsrooms.

Additionally, even though video is a far more complex format in terms of engaging readers than a news article (Filak 2014, chapter 5), the findings enhance the significance of Midberry and Dahmen's study of visuals in solutions articles in which many "fell short of including rigorous visual reporting" (2020, p. 1174). The visual representation of the examined elements of solutions reporting in the BBC's video

stories significantly digresses from the importance of comprehensive and precise visual coverage of both problems and responses pointed out in the authors' theoretical framework for visual solutions journalism. The necessity to "capture the gravity of social problems" (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, p. 1174) is often substituted – both visually and textually – with the need to focus on the positive sides of the solution. Visual storytelling that comprehensively approaches both the problem and the solution will be studied in the following chapter, but the results of the content analysis already show that the problem is treated – both textually and visually – more as an illustration, rather than as a story element that is equal to the solution. The lack of a humanising element and personal experiences of the problem contribute to this. Additionally, visual representation of the response when solution limitations or the problem are textually presented means that, in solutions videos, there are multiple opportunities for incongruence between textual and visual framing, which can have different audience effects (McIntyre, Lough et al. 2018). I argue that more precise guidelines are needed in the context of visuals in solutions journalism – be it photography, video, or other visual elements – particularly in the context of clarifying what a 'rigorous' representation of the solution should entail. In this way, this study contributes to refining the visual theoretical framework for solutions journalism, while specific guidelines based on the findings will be presented in Chapter 9.

Now, it is important to study how the identified discrepancies, particularly the complexities of engaging with the audience on Facebook, are reflected in storytelling of the BBC's video stories. The main features of solutions storytelling for social video are the focus of the following chapter, particularly the ways of winning over and keeping the audience interested in the narrative. The solutions journalism storytelling criteria are explored in the following chapter, but also critically discussed in terms of the established storytelling postulates of engaging the audience. This is additionally important in the context of the identified demands of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories to be positive, interesting, and simple. In what ways the narrative is simplified, yet interesting, how it is structured and what strategies are used to build a connection with the audience – all point to the specific storytelling choices made by the BBC's team. Additionally, it shows how journalists make sense

177

of the solution and the problem-solving process. This helps to better understand the production side of solutions reporting, particularly what journalists do to inspire engagement in the context of video and the specific social media platform.

CHAPTER 8:

STORYTELLING STRATEGIES USED TO SPARK AND SUSTAIN INTEREST IN SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED VIDEO STORIES

8.1. Introduction: Storytelling and engagement in solutions reporting

Besides "rigorous", the BBC wants to make its solutions-focused stories "compelling" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 4). Reporting on solutions in a way that engages the audience to feel, understand, but ideally also act, is central to the way solutions journalism is presented by its proponents as an antidote to bad news and a potential inspiration for inactive citizens (Aitamurto and Varma 2018). As the findings in the previous two chapters showed, making the videos interesting, and, therefore, engaging for the social media audience is one of the central goals of this team. In fact, it is so important that it often undermines the efforts to rigorously pick apart solutions. As the journalists and editors primarily assess the success of the project based on engagement levels indicated through audience metrics, presenting the solutions in a compelling way remains central to the way the BBC's video stories are told.

In this sense, an important aspect of how the audience engages with a story is storytelling. Today the digitalisation of journalism has transformed how journalists tell stories (Wahl-Jorgensen and Schmidt 2020, p. 268), but has also positioned storytelling as "journalism's panacea" – a "noble pursuit" that is no longer in opposition to quality journalism, but an opportunity for "engaging citizens with better and high-quality information" (Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer 2015, p. 168).

Storytelling matters to solutions journalism, as well. It is positioned in the solutions journalism guidelines (Chapter 4) as an important element of establishing a connection with the audience, but also of getting across the facts about the solution and the problem more effectively. The storytelling criteria in solutions reporting state that:

- The problem-solving process must be central to the narrative
- The solution should be presented early in the story
- The story should focus on the solution, not on people related to it.

For now, studies have shown that narratives which report on solutions engage the audience – both cognitively and emotionally – more than problem-based narratives (Dahmen et al. 2019), and that solutions stories are trusted to be more accurate (Thier et al. 2019). In this sense, the journalists and editors in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team also suspect that presenting 'interesting' solutions possesses an inherent power of making the audience more interested and involved (Chapter 6). However, what is done *within* the solutions narratives to spark and build engagement has not been studied yet, even though the proponents of solutions journalism do consider the narrative to be an important aspect of solutions stories (Bansal and Martin 2015; Ripley 2019). Therefore, in this chapter I explore the third research question – if and in what way the *BBC People Fixing the World* team follows the solutions journalism storytelling criteria in solutions-focused video stories.

Studying if the BBC's solutions-focused team respects the three storytelling criteria does not say much if this is not explored in the context of the format, platform, and the intended audience. In this sense, social media video as "the new frontier of journalism" (Kalogeropoulos and Kleis Nielsen 2018, p. 2208) is of particular interest. With the emergence of new narrative modes for audience engagement in the new digital environment (Wahl-Jorgensen and Schmidt 2020, p. 261), it is important to explore how journalists structure their solutions-focused videos to achieve better narrative engagement, and yet respect the three storytelling criteria. This means exploring the specific storytelling approaches used in the BBC's stories to engage the audience, particularly in the context of captivating and keeping its interest. The journalists pointed out the importance of presenting the solution through an inquisitive tone, but also of shaping the story in a way that the audience can relate to it (Chapter 6). Therefore, the specific storytelling techniques used in the BBC's solutions-focused videos must be examined in the context of these efforts.

For these reasons, I additionally explore the following two questions:

a) What are the storytelling approaches in the solutions-focused video stories used to engage the audience in terms of interest?

b) Are the identified storytelling approaches in line with the traditional storytelling postulates (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022)?

Also, the visuals in the BBC's stories are studied in the context of the three solutions journalism storytelling criteria, but also in light of the first theoretical framework for visual solutions journalism, which states that solutions visuals should be:

1) Comprehensive – show both the problem and the solution

2) Precise – present the content of the story in the right context

3) Humanising – show people who interact and engage with the solution (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, pp. 1164-1166).

To explore all these questions, I combined narrative analysis and semi-structured interviews. The narrative in the selected video stories is examined by looking at the visuals in conjunction with the text – the voiceover, the soundbites, and the captions on the screen. All the interviewed members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team were asked in pre-interviews over email to think about two to three stories they think are their best solutions-focused journalism videos. There are 15 stories in total in the sample.

These stories, and the results of the narrative analysis, were then discussed in the interviews with the journalists and editors. Additionally, in the interviews, I examined the interviewees' notions of good solutions storytelling, and how they implemented these ideas in their solutions-focused videos.

Through narrative analysis, I studied storytelling in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories in the context of the two functions of the narrative – the "intriguing" function of developing narrative tension that keeps the audience interested, but also the "configuring" function of establishing causal relations within the narrative and creating meaning (Vanoost 2013). This means looking at:

- The narrative structure – the ways in which the problem and the solution are positioned in the narratives and presented in the BBC's solutions-focused

stories, both textually and visually. I identified if a problem-solving process is presented, what the different events related to the problem or the solution in the narrative are and explored the causal relationships established between them, all in order to understand what meanings journalists communicate to the audience in their solutions-focused video stories.

- Narrative tension and storytelling approaches – studying the intriguing function by examining if the established storytelling postulates are applied and how – in what way the plot develops in the BBC's stories, the presence of conflict, changes, disruptions or enigmas in narrative development (Todorov 1986), and if narrative tension is shaped through techniques of evoking either suspense, curiosity, or surprise (Todorov 1986; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Knobloch et al. 2004; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022).

- Building narrative involvement through characters – the role of characters in the stories, along with the idea that the purpose of storytelling is to establish an emotional connection between the character and the audience member (Bucher 2018, p. 70), is also worth exploring in the BBC's video stories, particularly in the context of the contradicting criterion stating that the story should not focus on people.

By focusing on these aspects of storytelling and the narrative, this part of the study opens a so far completely unexplored area of identifying storytelling approaches to narrative engagement on the production side of solutions reporting, concretely in the context of strategies employed to spark and keep the audience's interest. This also helps to understand better in what way the members of the BBC's team understand its audience and their preferences in the context of social media, but also how this may have an impact on the storytelling choices. Additionally, examining the narrative in this chapter also means critically evaluating the three storytelling guidelines created by solutions journalism proponents (Bansal and Martin 2015) and solutions journalists (McIntyre and Lough 2021), and to what extent they are effective in creating narratives that are considered engaging according to the established rules of good storytelling. Finally, visual storytelling in solutions journalism is studied for the first time in the context of video, making this an opportunity to identify how

narratives are both visually and textually structured to present both the problem, the solution, and their different aspects.

The findings in this chapter are divided into four sections. In the first section, I lay out the most common story structure or a storytelling 'formula' of the BBC's solutions-focused videos. In the second section, I identify and name three types of solutions video introductions that use different storytelling strategies to grab the interest of the BBC's social audience.

In the third section, I present the apparent lack of storytelling strategies used to develop narrative tension and keep the audience's interest. Instead of focusing on the dynamic relationship between the problem and the solution, the BBC's solutions stories in the sample are predominantly concerned with solution description. Furthermore, I identify different relations between solutions story elements and the ways they create or dilute tension in the narrative. I additionally provide three examples of stories that, unlike other stories in the sample, do use different storytelling strategies to create tension in the narrative.

In the fourth section, I identify idea-led and character-led solutions stories. I describe the roles of characters in the solutions narrative development in the BBC's videos and assess them as predominantly secondary to the solution. While this is in line with the solutions journalism criterion about individuals being less important that solutions in stories, this limits the space for narrative development. In the last section, I raise the main questions that I address in the following chapter.

8.2. Typical narrative structure of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories: Towards a formula

Before getting into the implementation of storytelling criteria, it is important to present the most common way in which the narratives of the BBC's stories are structured. The narrative structure in Figure 1 was identified as a formula that the *BBC People Fixing the World* team applies when making solutions video stories. The journalists and editors confirmed in interviews that this is the most common narrative structure of their stories. The formula was identified after each story in the sample was watched multiple times, and the solutions journalism elements were

noted as events in the narratives. I soon noticed an overlap between the stories in terms of what elements are presented, but also where they are positioned in the story.

Figure 1: BBC's solutions video story structure 'formula'

INTRODUCTION		PROBLEM		SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION			
PROBLEM	SOLUTION	CAUSE	EFFECT	HOW IT WORKS	EVIDENCE	LIMITATIONS	LESSON/INSIGHT/FUTURE

As presented in Figure 1, there are three distinct blocks in every story in this exact order: introduction, followed by the problem, and then solution implementation. Possible story elements in each block are also shown. However, the presence and order of story elements in each block may vary. For example, sometimes solution limitations may be presented before hard evidence about solution effectiveness, but also – as confirmed in the previous chapter – solution limitations or hard evidence may not be presented at all.

The fixed position of the two story blocks – problem and solution – point to temporal and causal linearity of the narrative of selected BBC solutions video stories. First, there is a problem, then, there is a solution to it. There are no discontinuities in the narrative or parallel story lines, only one main story line. This choice to tell a linear narrative for a social media audience is in line with the latest study on new storytelling formats in online journalism, which found that linear forms of storytelling are more effective in grabbing and keeping the audience's attention, but also in helping it understand what is presented (Kulkarni et al. 2022). It is also something that Lewis noticed long before online media and argued against the inverted pyramid and for the potential of the narrative for conveying meaning in television news (1985, cited in Fiske 2011, pp. 305-306). Even though the linear narrative (Knobloch et al. 2004, p. 262) inherently has the potential to evoke suspense because the audience wonders what comes next, in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories this is significantly disrupted by the first block, Introduction, and how it is structured.

Introduction has its own mini structure that significantly sets the tone of the story. It presents limited information about either the problem, the solution, or both. What information is included, and the way it is positioned in this block, creates different types of storytelling strategies to pull in the audience at the beginning of the narrative. Here, I identify two storytelling strategies that evoke curiosity and suspense about the story that follows, and one structure that resembles the inverted pyramid and spoils the tension at the very beginning.

8.3.　　　　Three types of introductions in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories

The narrative analysis shows that the solutions journalism storytelling criterion stating that the solution should be mentioned early or "high up in the story" (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568) is clearly and consciously implemented in the introductions of the BBC's videos in the sample.

The relevance of this criterion is confirmed in the interviews by both the journalists and the editors. In the introduction, the solution must be presented textually and visually. Introduction is understood by the journalists and editors as a separate block in the BBC's solutions video stories. All the interviewees, without exception, referred to a story's introduction, especially the first 5-7 seconds, as an element that takes up most of their attention when they are preparing a video story for a social audience – either for the Facebook page, the YouTube channel or digital audience on the BBC's website. One journalist (Interviewee 4) called social platforms "unforgiving" when it comes to crafting an effective introduction to a social video story.

In 13 of the 15 stories, the introductions are edited as part of the video story, but function as a separate, self-sustained entity, almost as a 'micro-story'. Nearly all *BBC People Fixing the World* videos in the sample, except the two that were published in the first year of this project, have an introduction that is between 20 and 35 seconds long and presents what the story is about. This is followed by the project's name (*BBC Worldhacks* or *BBC People Fixing the World*) and often the story title. It is after the introduction that the story begins (again) – at times it continues the narrative set

in the introduction, but more often it starts anew, repeating information that was just presented in the introduction.

According to the interviewees, this almost formulaic approach in terms of the introduction of a solutions video story has become established with time and it is crafted in line with the platforms where it is being presented – Facebook, but also the BBC's website. One former member of the team, a video journalist with experience in making documentaries, understands it as a counter-intuitive formula that journalists need to accept in order to adapt to these platforms:

> It's very much for the social audience. You have to front-load everything. Tell them the story in 5 seconds so they'd stick. They have to know what's at stake straight away, so they'd stay. Which is a weird thing to do… I've learned to do that now. If you're writing a story, you want to give little bits of information, you want suspense. But with video you want to put all your best footage at the top. The whole story at the top. Then you slowly unpack it. You almost want a trailer first. 'This is what you're going to see, please stay for longer'. They've got to stay for the first 3 seconds. After that, if you've got them sucked in, they'll probably stay until the end. (Interviewee 3)

Another video journalist (Interviewee 1) says they see it as "building a story arc, but on a micro-level" with the scope of competing for audience's attention. I identified and named three approaches of introducing a solutions story – Spoiler, Teaser and Promise. While the Teaser and the Promise use apparent storytelling strategies and introduce different kinds of tension at the beginning of the narrative; the Spoiler is structured similarly as the inverted pyramid because it lays out the most important information right away, but the solutions idea itself may still – according to the interviewees – awaken curiosity or even surprise in the audience.

8.3.1.   Spoiler

'Spoiler' is the name I gave to the first and the most common type of introduction in the BBC's solutions videos within the sample. Both the problem and the solution are immediately presented and followed by the story title. They are told through a voiceover or combined with one or multiple soundbites. The structure is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Structure of the Spoiler introduction

INTRODUCTION 1: SPOILER		
This is the solution	This is the problem	This is how the solution works
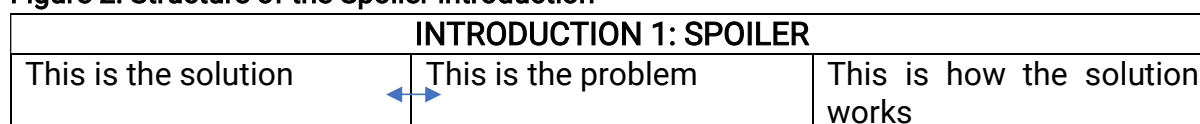
The most important information from the following two story blocks is revealed at the very beginning, while the rest of the story presents other details. The arrow in Figure 2 indicates that the problem may be presented before or after the solution. Solution is immediately presented to the audience. This type of introduction spoils the story arc at the beginning and resembles the traditional news structure of an inverted pyramid. The potential of building suspense by, for example, giving textual and visual clues and gradually revealing the solution is ruled out. Here, the audience immediately knows what the story is about and is left in sort of a 'take it or leave it' situation, where curiosity may concern the question: 'How does this solution work'? Nevertheless, even the answer to the question "how" can often be assumed because it is visually and at times textually presented in the introduction of the videos. In this way, I identify no apparent storytelling strategy to capture the audience's interest (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022) or fulfil the intriguing function of the narrative (Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013, pp. 80-82). This structure is closest to the inverted type which reveals immediately – just like the inverted pyramid – what the story is about, leaving no space for evoking either suspense, curiosity, or surprise (Knobloch et al. 2004, p. 262).

Another journalist (Interviewee 7) on the team explained that the introduction is structured in this way because the social audience prefers a "linear narrative" and an immediate straightforward answer as to what the story is going to be about. The team does not want to waste audience's time, but the journalists and editors also think that the solution itself is interesting enough to keep their attention, even if it reveals what it is about at the very beginning. However, this understanding of what constitutes a linear narrative is different from Knobloch et al. (2004), who relate it to suspense and gradual presentation of information. In other words, this type of introduction is not linear, and spoils the storytelling potential of creating anticipation in the story. When presented with this type of introduction, the founding editor of this project said that it is the solutions idea itself that should not be underestimated in

terms of grabbing the audience's attention. They called it "the audacity of hope" and said:

> Audacity in a way that…some of these solutions are themselves so audacious that it's a great hook, whether they work or not. Somebody is trying to get water out of the air so people can drink. Pretty damn audacious. Another person is trying to…mmm…to create runways that will save energy because they are circular. The audacity of the solution itself is the emotional hook, as opposed to the crappiness of the situation. That could be an emotional hook, too. Oh look, people can't get enough water, look at this poor person, thirsty, children dirty, awful… Instead, we could go with audacity of the problem and that is completely journalistically fine. And that, I think, creates emotional resonance that the video really needs. Emotional resonance coming from the hugely compelling nature of the character or the kind of human suffering of the problem. You've already got 7 or 14 seconds to get the audacity of hope. (Interviewee 8)

Interviewed journalists confirmed that this is a conscious choice, even though many did not agree with it. Again, they relate this approach to what the social audience expects. One journalist explained:

> If you do it in a gradual way, the first minute is going to be a problem. But if you tell them right at the start 'There's an exciting solution to this problem', then they might be more interested in the problem. It is very explicit. It's not very subtle, our videos. We're not trying to make them subtle. We're trying to make them shareable, exciting, interesting. (Interviewee 7)

One example of this type of intro is a story titled 'Rewards for your rubbish'. Here, a voiceover in the introduction starts with the solution:

This team of young Nigerians has found a way to transform trash from the slums into cash for the people living there.

This is accompanied by three visuals that succinctly describe what that 'way' or the solution is: a man with a huge smile transporting bags of plastic bottles on a bike, a close-up of recycled plastic bottles and a shot of the same man packing the bottles while smiling and talking to a mother carrying a child. It is followed by a soundbite of a woman who invented the solution, in which she explains what problems are being tackled:

(…) my community is getting cleaner, there is less malaria because the gutters are flowing, and I'm actually making some extra money.

The soundbite is accompanied by visuals of people in different situations packing plastic bottles in a bag. Therefore, in this story, the introduction gives a clear idea what the solution is, how it works, and connects it to the problem.

Screenshots 1-4: Video story 'How to get rewards for your rubbish', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (13 August 2018)

The video journalist who made this story said that starting with the solution has become "a bit of a mantra" for solutions videos intended for social media platforms because starting with the problem does not work:

> There was my second ever video and I started with a problem…and it just… it started on a tone of tension. (…) That one was my worst performing story. After that one… I was like–what happened? I had this great main character, basically got overexcited by seeing the accidents…. All my best footage was people having accidents... And people didn't like that. No one wants to see people having accidents. Or not this audience at least. (…) So it's: start with a solution, the good news. Then have the problem so that your solution makes sense. (Interviewee)

Nevertheless, the current editor of the team to an extent disagreed that there exists a formulaic approach to crafting the introduction:

> I wouldn't say there's a formula. (…) But if you just start the video by just going into the problem, your audience looks at it… it feels like 'Oh God, just another story about problem'. So, if you manage to get a little pre-title making it clear that there's a solution in there… it gives a flavour at the top that it isn't a depressing story about a problem, we're going to talk about a solution to it.

That's why we want to mention the solution near the beginning, so it's clear that it's a solutions piece. (Interviewee 9)

However, presenting the solution is one thing, while presenting the idea that there is a solution is another, specific to the following type of introduction.

8.3.2.   Teaser

The second type of introduction takes on a different approach. Here, the problem is presented, while the audience is only teased about the solution, both textually and visually. There are some clues about the solution, but it is not made clear what it is or how it works. The introduction encourages the audience to wonder and make assumptions about both aspects. The structure is presented in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Structure of the Teaser introduction

INTRODUCTION 2: TEASER	
There is a solution – but what is it and how does it work?	This is the problem

Here, the two storytelling strategies I identify are curiosity and suspense. Narrative tension is built around the enigma or question (Todorov 1986, p. 61; Lewis 1985, cited in Fiske 2011, pp. 305-306) about what the solution is. The journalist strategically reveals only some information but does not provide the full answer for the audience, creating both anticipation and curiosity. Curiosity is aroused through the presentation of the idea of a positive outcome – there is something that successfully solves the problem, but the audience does not know how this happened or what it is; while suspense is developed in anticipation of what the solution is and how it works (Knobloch et al. 2004, p. 262).

In a story called "The baby tackling bullying at school", the solution and how it works is presented as something intriguing. Captions on the screen, instead of the voiceover, say:

Getting ready for work… This is Naomi. She's seven months old and she's got a job teaching 9 & 10-year-olds. She may be cute… but it's serious work.

This is combined with visuals and the natural sound of a smiling baby being dressed by its mother, and a wide shot of the baby in a classroom surrounded by other older

children. What follows is the solution inventor, who explains what the long-term goal of the solution is, but this soundbite does not in any way reveal what the solution itself actually is.

Screenshots 5-8: Video story 'The baby tackling bullying at school', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (22 January 2018)

Interestingly, in the introduction of this story, the problem is not presented. If we come back to the founding editor's introduction element of *audacity*, here, it is the unusualness of the solution that contributes to the wait and anticipation of what comes next in the story.

In the introduction of the story "Five ways Iceland created a teenage revolution", it is the problem and the tension inherent in the opposition between the effects of the problem and of the solution that are used as a hook for the audience. The story starts with archive footage of young people fighting in the street with captions on the screen saying:

Teenagers in Iceland in the 80s & 90s were out of control. This is followed by a soundbite of a person we do not see: *This was a huge problem. A huge problem.*

A close-up of a bottle of beer and a cigarette in someone's hand is overlaid by captions saying:

In 1998 42% of 15-16 yr olds said they'd got drunk. Now it's only 5 percent.

A man in a soundbite explains that the city of Reykjavik went from being the worst in Europe to being the best, and concludes:

And that's kind of incredible, isn't it?

Screenshots 9-12: Video story 'Five ways Iceland created a teenage revolution', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (13 November 2017)

Here, the problem is presented, but the solution is yet to be revealed – we are not sure what it is or how it solves the problem. This is followed by information that there was a successful change that ended the problem. After the introduction, the story later presents what this change is and how it happened.

The editor of the project says that teasing the story can sometimes border with overpromising, and that can chase away the audience:

> My worry is that if you're too subtle there's a real issue I think online with clickbait and overpromising. If you're too teasy, you would just feel really annoyed. Wait until the end, and you watch and think…'For crying out loud! That was rubbish.' (Interviewee 9)

Similar to the Teaser, yet revealing even less information, is the third type of introduction I named Promise.

8.3.3.   Promise

The final type of introduction builds tension in the narrative with a view to creating both suspense and curiosity in the audience, but in a different way from the Teaser. This type of introduction is the least common in the analysed video stories – it appears in two stories. Unlike in the Teaser, the problem is presented through a personal experience in a soundbite, creating an emotional hook for the audience. The solution itself is only briefly referred to at the end. What is presented is the fact that there is an opportunity to solve the problem – a change that can be made to overcome the problem. This introduction promises that a different, more favourable outcome for the protagonist is possible, but we do not yet know what it is or how it can be achieved – we are just promised that a change for the better is possible. The structure of this type of introduction is presented in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Structure of the Promise introduction

INTRODUCTION 3: PROMISE	
This is the experience of a person who is afflicted by the problem.	There is hope of a solution.

In a story about an app that helps autistic children in Turkey where they cannot easily get a place in school, first we see a mother crying and saying:

These 10 years, day by day…

The woman rubs her eyes and captions on screen say:

Sedef has spent 10 years fighting to get her autistic son a proper education.

The soundbite continues:

...day and night, I didn't sleep one single night.

This is followed by a shot of the same woman hugging and kissing her son with a caption on the screen:

Getting a place at school can be a huge challenge for autistic children in Turkey.

The shot changes to a close-up of a tablet in someone's hands with a game on it, with captions saying:

But could games like this help them get an education?
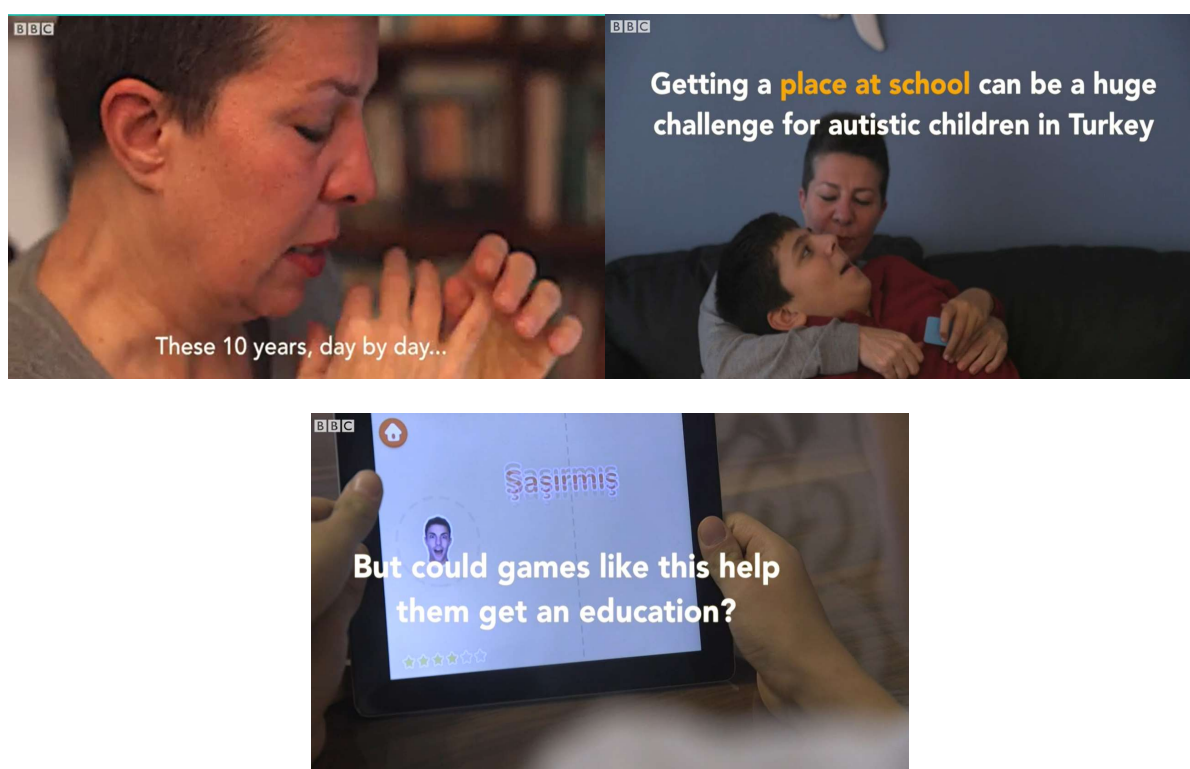
Screenshots 13-15: Video story 'How brotherly love led to an app to help autistic children', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (25 January 2019)

This introduction starts with an emotionally charged soundbite concerning a personal experience of the problem – both visually and textually. This is followed by an opportunity to make a change for the better – to solve the problem and establish a new equilibrium. The journalist who made this story explained the reasons why they structured the introduction in this way:

> I don't think you appreciate why that's unusual until you know the problem. A lot of sad stories do well… For me it was a risk worth taking. I think what was key… (…) You have to get it absolutely right so the people would care. 'Obviously, I'm not sleeping because of my son's education'… That immediately is intriguing

for people to stay. A lot of people can relate to being worried about your kids, sleepless nights… (Interviewee)

However, what all interviewees expressed is a sense of doubt if audiences on social media watch their solutions stories – or journalistic stories in general – until the end. In this sense, both the journalists and the editors mentioned high drop-off rates after 30 seconds or less, even on their most successful stories in terms of numbers of views. The three presented types of introduction show that the intriguing function of the narrative (Baroni 2009, cited in Vannost 2013, pp. 80-82) relies more often on the features of the solution (Spoiler), rather than on storytelling. What is done to keep the audience's attention until the end is another challenge for the BBC's solutions journalists.

8.4. Problem-solving process and narrative tension: Solution description instead of a journey

According to the following solutions journalism storytelling criterion, the problem-solving process should be central to the narrative. If this is understood as McIntyre and Lough (2021, p. 1568) operationalise it – giving more information about the solution than the problem – then the criterion may be considered to be predominantly implemented in this sample of the BBC's solutions-focused stories. However, if the problem-solving process is understood as basing the narrative on the tension or difficulty of solving the problem (Bansal and Martin 2015, pp. 6-7), then this is rarely the case in the BBC's stories.

The sizes of story blocks in Figure 5 illustrate the average amount of both time and information provided about the problem and the solution. The size of the story block 'Problem' is smaller than the block 'Solution Implementation' because journalists dedicate significantly less time to it in their stories.

Figure 5: Average ratio of dedicated time to the problem and the solution in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories

PROBLEM		SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION			
CAUSE	EFFECT	HOW IT WORKS	EVIDENCE	LIMITATIONS	LESSON/INSIGHT/FUTURE

One video journalist said that it all depends on a particular story, but often it is a familiar problem, so there is no need to go into in-depth explanations of it:

> Usually, I would spend less time on the problem. You need to say what the problem is to understand the whole point of the solution. Usually, the problem is already known to some degree to the audience, whereas the solution should be completely brand new. The problem you are just kind of recapping for them. (Interviewee 1)

This tendency was also confirmed in the findings presented in Chapter 7 – it is the journalist who presents information about the problem, and the cause of the problem is too often avoided or underrepresented. One video journalist on the team (Interviewee 5) thinks that even though the problem is briefly presented, it is still implicitly present afterwards because understanding solution implementation for the audience means subconsciously comparing it to the problem.

In terms of narrative tension as understood by Todorov (1986) and Baroni (2009, cited in Vanoost 2013), I identify the following potential points of tension in the structure of BBC's solutions-focused video narrative, presented with arrows in Figure 6:

Figure 6: Potential points of narrative tension

INTRODUCTION		PROBLEM		SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION			
PROBLEM	SOLUTION	CAUSE	EFFECT	HOW IT WORKS	EVIDENCE	LIMITATIONS	LESSON/INSIGHT/FUTURE
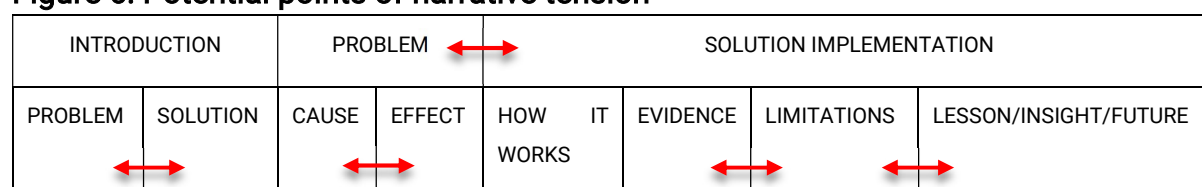
Here, the relationship between the problem and the solution implementation is the central point of tension in the narratives of the BBC's solutions video stories because it has the potential to create a central disruption and, subsequently, a disequilibrium that should be resolved and eventually taken to a new equilibrium at the end of a story (Todorov 1986, p. 61; Fiske 2011, pp. 139-140). However, the results of the narrative analysis show that this relationship is often simplified. The problem is isolated in the narrative, moving the focus away from the problem-solving process, and putting it onto the solution description and the ways in which it is implemented. In this way, both the intriguing function, but also the configuring function of the narrative, are minimised (Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013, pp. 80-82). First, I

examine the way in which the problem is positioned in the narrative of the stories that I analysed.

8.4.1. The isolated problem

In 10 of the 15 stories in the sample, the problem is positioned in a way that isolates it from the rest of the narrative. Once the problem is presented, it is rarely incorporated later in the narrative. There is no development in the relation between the problem and the solution throughout the story. The problem is passively positioned and after it is presented, the story does not actively deal with it again at any point. For this reason, the story block 'Problem' is put between brackets in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Position of the problem in the narrative
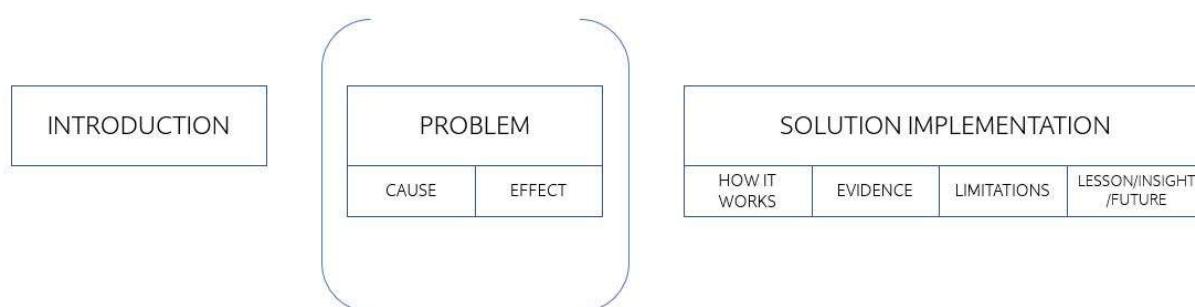
The editor of the project said the intention is not to complicate the story neither textually nor visually:

> If you're chopping and changing too much between solution-problem-solution-problem… You've got to keep a clean and simple narrative so it's easy to watch. When you're editing a script, sometimes you can try out different things… chopping and changing, or things in different order... But sometimes this can get a bit confusing. (Interviewee 9)

For example, in a story about a "magic table" that helps reduce apathy in dementia patients, the problem is mentioned after the introduction in captions on the screen:

Dementia affects 50 million people around the world. Apathy is a common symptom. The lack of motivation means people can become inactive.

197

This is followed by a soundbite of a person who invented the table, in which they explain that their muscles and joints become stiffer.
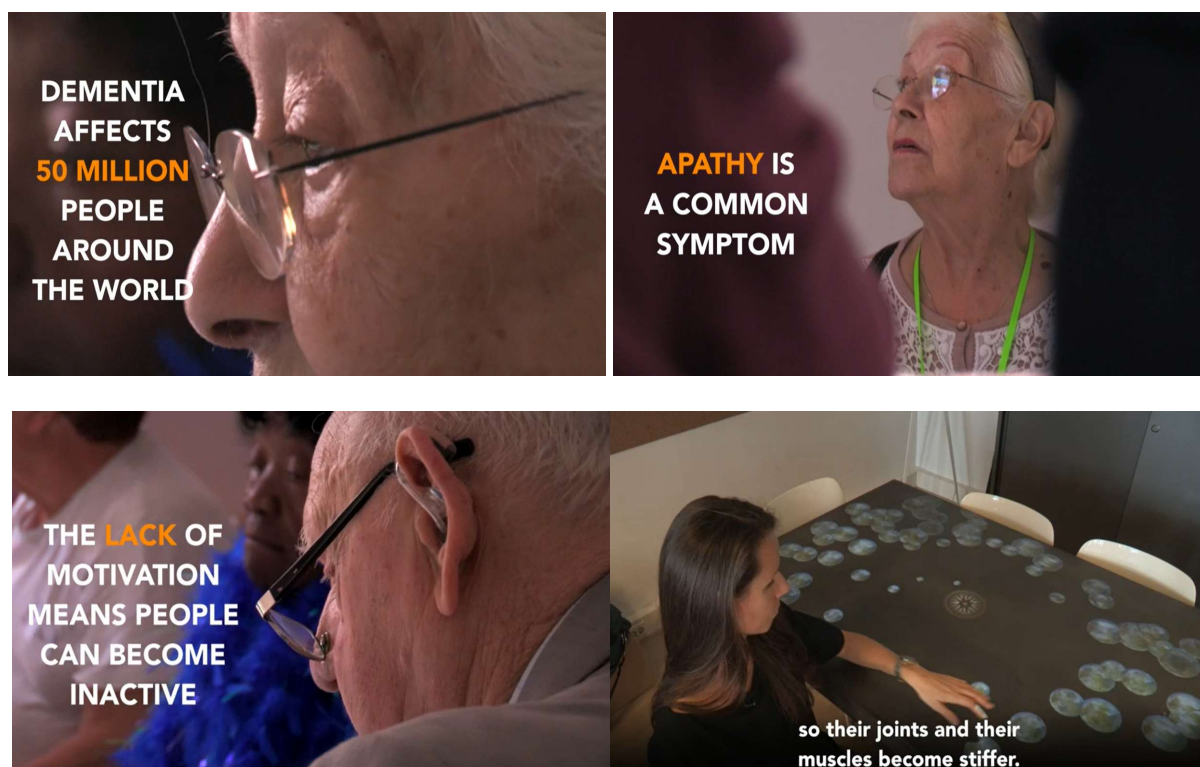
Screenshots 16-19: Video story "Magic table' helping dementia patients', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (25 September 2018)

The story then presents the solution – the magic table and the games created to motivate the patients to move their hands. This is the only piece of information in the whole story about the problem and it is not in any way referred to later in the narrative. Therefore, it is incorporated in the narrative after the introduction, but there are no other places in the narrative where the problem is further explained. This need not to complicate the narrative so the story is easier to understand may be counterproductive in terms of the configuring function of the narrative – the need to develop clear causal relations in the story (Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013, p. 82). In this case, the audience is not presented with the nuances of the problem-solving process and, therefore, given the opportunity to evaluate the success of the solution in relation to the problem and its effects. Later in the story, when the solution implementation is presented, its effectiveness is evaluated in relation to the problem only implicitly in a soundbite of a family member of one person affected by the illness: *And this gives her something just extra to keep her mind active.*

In another story about the 'Fog Catcher', a man who invented nets that catch water from the clouds and help people in the slums of Lima to water their crops, the problem is presented after the introduction with captions overlaying the air-footage of slums in the deserts of Peru:

Globally, 1 in 10 people lack access to clean, running water. Millions living in slums lack water infrastructure. Abel is trying to find a solution to this problem.

When the main character is mentioned, we see him walking up a hill, immersed in fog. This story is almost five minutes long, but the problem is briefly referred to. Later in the narrative the journalist does not get back to it or expand on it.

Screenshots 20-22: Video story 'The fog catcher who brings water to the poor", published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (01 December 2016)

These two stories are examples of a narrative where the problem, once presented, does not reappear later in the story. This kind of isolation of the story block 'Problem' in the narrative is at odds with the necessary focus on the problem-solving *process*. According to Cambridge Dictionary, a process is "a series of actions that you take in order to achieve a result" (2022d). The core of this process is the active relation between the problem and the solution. This process includes identifying the problem

and its underlying causes, followed by the invention, implementation, and evaluation of the solution in relation to the problem.

In stories where the problem is isolated or not presented at all, the actions of solving the problem are not central to the narrative of the selected BBC solutions-focused stories. There is no process or journey from A to B – from the problem to the solution – but solely the solution itself and the way it is implemented. Using Todorov's vocabulary (1986, p. 61), the process of changes or actions that leads to a new equilibrium and resolves the disequilibrium caused by the main disruption – the problem – is not portrayed in the narrative.

What is central to the BBC's solutions narrative is a description of the new equilibrium that is already in place. There is no attempt, journey or process that leads to the resolution of a problem – it is already resolved, and the audience is just presented with the 'aftermath' of it. The potential tension between the problem and the solution is, therefore, reduced to a causal and temporal 'before-after' description of what is there. The problem precedes the solution, and the solution is created because of the problem. There is no plot – no events in-between that eventually lead to an outcome. Additionally, grouping the visuals of the problem at the beginning of the narrative and not including them later in the story means there is no tension created by opposing visuals of the problem and the solution.

This linearity in the narrative and in the relation between the two poses a limitation on the solutions narrative in terms of tension. However, there are other minor potential points of narrative tension throughout the solutions narrative. Within the story block 'Problem', it can be created in the relation between the cause and the effect. But as presented in the previous chapter, the cause of the problem and the context within which it arose are presented in less than half of the stories in the sample. Therefore, the absence of the cause – textually and visually – also diminishes tension in this story block.

8.4.2. Solution description and the 'caveat corner'

After the problem, the following story block identified in the BBC's solutions narrative is 'Solution implementation'. This block dominates the narrative and is structured

primarily as a description of the solution and how it works. I identify it as a *description* because of the already mentioned simplified relation between the problem and the solution that dilutes tension and reduces opportunities for plot development.

The second reason is the way solution limitations and hard evidence about solution effectiveness are incorporated into the narrative. The journalists and editors mentioned in the interviews that they have a special name for the place in the narrative where the two are presented: the so-called "caveat corner". Here, it is important not to forget the results of the content analysis presented in Chapter 7, which showed that the stories predominantly do not even include this information. The narrative analysis in this research phase showed that it is not a 'corner', but what I identify as a 'fleeting moment' in the narrative, where evidence and a solution limitation are mentioned, and then the story about the solution implementation continues in a positive tone, almost as if this never happened.

Therefore, I identify presenting evidence and solution limitations as a minor disruption in the narrative that does not cause any significant disequilibrium or create tension in the narrative (Todorov 1986). They may, for a moment, break or disrupt the uplifting tone around the solution implementation, but not in a way that would change or redirect the narrative, and thus form a storytelling strategy that evokes suspense, surprise, or curiosity. Therefore, this disruption, if present, is not used as a story component that contributes to building tension in the narrative.

For example, in the already mentioned story with a Spoiler introduction about getting rewards for rubbish, in the last third the journalist presents hard evidence about solution effectiveness and then says: *But scaling up has not been easy.* The person behind the solution continues in a soundbite:

I *think one of our biggest challenges is actually raising funds because we have a good model. It's something that works. And it's just now, coming up with the funds to get us to scale. Because right now we are in a few communities around Lagos, but we don't really have a very large coverage.*

The story then switches to information about the long-term plans for the project. Therefore, here, the solution limitation is presented by the journalist and explained

further by the person who invented the solution. However, it does not present a significant setback in the narrative, but merely a brief disruption.

Another story about a university scheme that rewards buying hot drinks in reusable cups, thus reducing coffee cup waste, uses a similar model. After hard evidence about solution effectiveness is presented, the journalist directly asks the interviewee behind the solution: *But this might work on a campus; that means it's not going to work on the high street where people have a lot more choice?* The interviewee gives a short answer, and the story ends with another soundbite where the person expresses satisfaction with how successful the scheme is.

In these two examples, there is at least a soundbite in which a person expands on the limitation or refers to it in some way. However, in the stories where the solution limitation is presented only in the voiceover – in 55.8 percent of them according to the results of the content analysis (Chapter 7) – this disruption in the narrative is even shorter and, therefore, smaller. In terms of visuals, the content analysis also showed that in 48.1 percent of the BBC's solutions videos the limitation is visually presented. Not presenting the limitation visually also diminishes the potential for visual tension between the visuals of how the solution works, and the visuals of its aspects that can be improved or that are causing significant setbacks to solution implementation.

As the main reason for this, the journalists and editors pointed out the lack of time to tell the story. The editor (Interviewee 9) said that in the videos "sometimes there's not enough room to go into that". The radio journalist (Interviewee 6) said that video is "more difficult" than radio in this context. A video journalist summed it up like this:

> When you're packing everything into 2 minutes, you're spending a lot of time explaining what the solution is… So, at the end you might mention a bit of scepticism. Sometimes we do that… but the race against the clock is to tell the audience about the solution. (Interviewee 1)

Therefore, the potential of the 'caveat corner' in terms of storytelling is not recognized in most of the stories in the sample, and, therefore, does not contribute either to the intriguing function of the narrative, or – as findings in Chapter 7 confirm – its configuring function in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories (Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013). Even though journalists said that the lack of time and the

need to keep an uplifting tone reduce the space in their stories for the downsides of a solution, this creates ineffective storytelling strategies, at least according to the established postulates of creating narrative tension (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022).

8.4.3.   Wrapping up the story with an uplifting tone

Providing an insight or a teachable lesson for the audience, as I showed in the previous chapter, is not a priority for the members of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team. Nevertheless, I did notice four storytelling devices during the coding process of the content analysis that may bring the audience to an insight or can be understood as a form of lesson (Chapter 7). In the sample chosen for narrative analysis in this research phase, the stories predominantly end with a soundbite of the person who invented the solution or the person who benefits from it. The soundbites are positive and end the story on an uplifting note. They focus on either hopes or plans about the future, or an inspirational lesson for the audience – two of the four possible elements that I already identified in the previous chapter. Those stories that do not end with a soundbite, end with a natural sound, such as children singing to the baby in the story about learning empathy and care in school to reduce bullying.

In a story about the mental health revolution in Trieste, Italy, the story ends with a soundbite of a person who is tackling mental illness. Here, the future or the success of the solution is related to the future of the main character whose experiences are central to understanding the solution. The reporter's question is heard: *What are your hopes for the future?* The person is visually presented as standing on the seashore, looking towards the horizon and saying: *To help all the people that… get through what I got. Because I love people and I think everyone has to have hope for the future.*

Further, an example of a story ending with a lesson is the one about an innovative idea to bring clean water to Nairobi's Kibera slum. It ends with an inspirational soundbite of the man who invented it: *We in the community wear the shoes of poverty, of struggle. We know where the pain comes from. So, if we come together,*

we can solve it. Visually the person is presented and then this is followed with a shot of children drinking water, as presented in Screenshot 23.

Screenshots 23: Video story 'An ingenious way to bring clean water to a slum', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (12 October 2018)

Ending solutions stories in this way is in line with the uplifting and hopeful tone that the founding editor pointed out as necessary for the young social audience:

> Some of them are looking for a feel-good stroke, the world is not so bad. But… especially if you are in age in life, between 14 and 35, they are not like the classic news consumer on TV who's 55-65 and male. Hugely pessimistic about everything. […] Whereas young people who use social platforms are optimistic by their nature. Partly because of their age…and partly because of all the problems we have. Things change really fast and there's an opportunity to shape things. (Interviewee 8)

In this way, the aim to bring hope or optimism to the audience is apparent both in the introduction and at the end of the BBC's solutions video stories.

8.4.4.   'Complicating' the narrative

Three stories in the sample stand out. They do not have the formulaic narrative structure identified in the other stories. The journalists in these stories are doing what some of their colleagues consider 'complicating' the narrative. Here, the relation between the problem and the solution is the central point of tension that is used as a building block in narrative development. Different aspects of the problem are presented, while the solution is presented and evaluated in relation to the problem throughout the narrative. This makes the problem-solving process central to the narrative of these stories.

The first one is about the Great Green Wall in Africa (3 minutes), a solution to bring dry lands back to life by planting trees. As presented in Screenshots 24-29, the video

journalist builds the narrative by placing the 'before' and 'now' in opposition, not just after the introduction, but throughout the whole story. Details about solution implementation are incorporated in the narrative together with soundbites in which people compare what it was like before the Great Green Wall, and how it is now. Also, certain aspects of the problem are presented later in the narrative, making the relation between the problem and the solution more dynamic than in the previous examples. Placing the problem in opposition to the solution creates tension throughout the narrative, as presented in Figure 8:

Figure 1: Solution story structure where tension between problem and solution implementation is central to the narrative

This opposition is done using a temporal 'before and now' comparison, as presented in screenshots.

When there were no trees the wind used to dig up and erode the soil. But it is more protected now

Before, there was widespread drought and hunger here

Then the tree planting took place, and then a garden for the women to grow crops

Before, people used to migrate. But nowadays they

just follow the line of The Great Green Wall for jobs. They no longer leave

AMELIE
TREE PLANTER

Before the wall we didn't have work, but now we have jobs and economically it's good

Screenshots 24-29: Video story 'The Great Green Wall of Africa', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (25 September 2017)

The second story is about 'tablet teachers' in Kenya, a U.S. education initiative (5 minutes). The tension in this story is built on three things: questions, opposition between the characters who champion and those who oppose the solution, and opposition between the problem and the solution. The journalist is positioned as the critical narrator who poses questions and creates anticipation throughout the narrative. They question both the problem and the solution – does the problem exist, and if it does, is this a good solution? This critical tone is set already in the introduction in captions over the screen: *Will this revolutionise African schools or just make money for Silicon Valley*? Tension is also created in the relation between two characters whose soundbites are positioned in such a way to function as a dialogue – the woman behind the solution and a principal in a public school who does not support this solution, or the notion that there is a problem at all. As presented in Screenshots 30-34, the journalist builds tension by following every new piece of information about the solution with a 'but'. Every aspect of the solution, once it is presented, is questioned by the journalist, and the characters offer their perspectives in soundbites.

Screenshots 30-33: Video story 'Can US entrepreneurs solve a 'crisis' in African schools?', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (18 December 2018)

While discourse is not in the focus of this analysis, it is important to note that the critical tone is created not only through the structure of the narrative, but also by including pieces of information that put the solution in a wider context. I argue that this also functions as a welcome disruption that enhances narrative development. For example, even though pupils say that they love school, and their parents think it is affordable, the journalist puts it into perspective by reminding the audience that, regardless of this, the solution is backed by a for-profit business and not a charity.

The third story presents a solution to a mental health problem in Japan called hikikomori. It predominantly affects men who drop out of society and close themselves in their rooms. 'Rental sisters' talk to them and gradually help them to reintegrate in society. This story is almost 13 minutes long. Its structure resembles the classic narrative arc of five stages, or the linear type of narrative (Boyd et al. 2020, p. 3; Knobloch et al. 2004, p. 262). However, here, the journey of overcoming the problem is told through personal experiences of not one, but multiple characters – two hikikomori, one family member and two rental sisters. The problem-solving process is presented as one big journey, but through parts of the individual journeys of the characters. These journeys are separated into different chapters and are visually divided by graphics in the narrative. However, regardless of this visual separation, part of the journey of each protagonist is presented, and the protagonist in the subsequent chapter seems to continue this journey, but in its own specific circumstances. The story structure is presented in Figure 9:

Figure 2: Five-stage structure of the Hikikomori solutions-focused story

INITIAL EVENT	EXPOSITION	COMPLICATION	CLIMAX	OUTCOME
PROBLEM/ DISEQUILIBRIUM	CONTEXT (PROBLEM AND SOLUTION)	OBSTACLES TO SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION	OVERCOMING THE PROBLEM	NEW EQUILIBRIUM
Protagonist 1: Experience	Protagonists 1 and 2: Experiences	Protagonists 3 and 4: Experiences	Protagonist 5: Experience + Surprise	Results
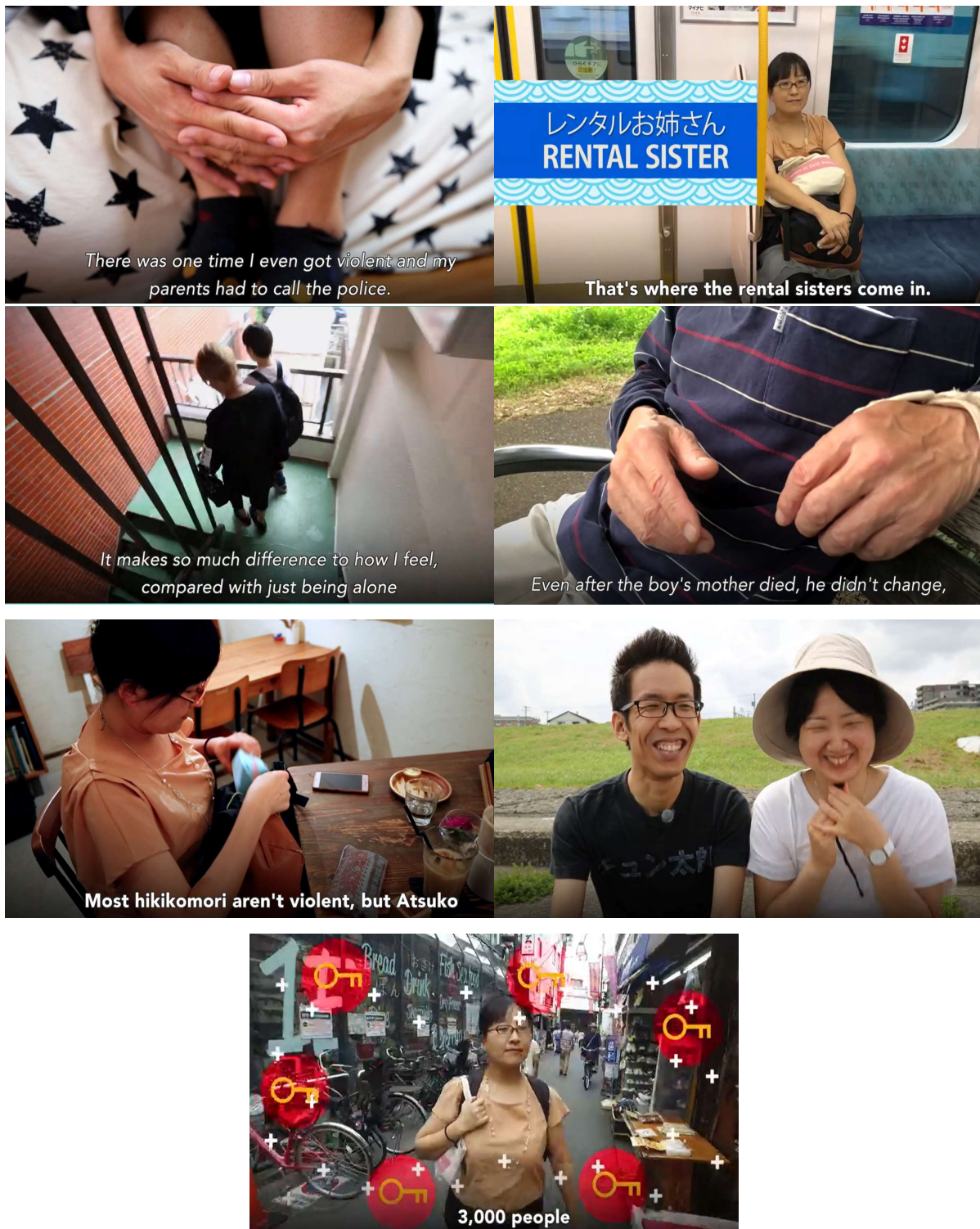
Screenshots 34-40: Video story 'Rent-a-sister: Coaxing Japan's young men out of their rooms' published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (18 January 2019)

Between the stages, there are disruptions to the narrative in which the journalist expands the context of each stage by adding hard evidence and opinions of experts. This narrative structure creates suspense throughout the whole of the story – the

audience is presented with information step by step, including the obstacles, and it is not certain until the end if the solution is effective or not. However, the video journalist who made this story said that it would be difficult to tell the story using the same structure if it was 3 or 4 minutes long. Both the video journalist and the editor who chose it confirmed that this story was very successful on Facebook and on YouTube. The journalist concluded that the story owes its success to the fact that it is "100 percent characters".

8.5.　　　Characters and two types of solutions-focused video stories

The third solutions journalism criterion related to storytelling says that the focus of the story should be the solution, not people. When asked about the importance of characters in their stories, the journalists and both editors provided a twofold answer. On the one hand, they said strong characters are a very important component of storytelling in their stories. On the other hand, they said that there is a rule in pitching meetings and later, when producing and making the stories, that the focus should be on the solution, in order not to slip into making a story that is "positive journalism" (Interviewee 8). The interviewees distinguish between an 'idea-led' (sometimes also referred to as 'theme-led') and a 'character-led' story. The editor said that their stories are a combination of character and solution:

> The human element helps you to connect with the story. I wouldn't shy away from human characters. But there must be something more to it than someone doing something nice. So… we do get pitched ideas sometimes by freelancers. And when you break it down, it's someone doing something nice. In itself, that's not enough. There's got to be something in that solution that makes it different. Maybe surprising, innovative, relatable for other people… There's got to be something more than someone doing something nice. That isn't enough. So, I think you can have a combination of character and solution. For me… I wouldn't knock out character. When you're talking about storytelling, what people are listening to… that really matters. (Interviewee 9)

The former video journalist on the team thinks that characters are most important, but in pitching meetings it is the idea of a good solution that wins, regardless of the character:

> It was meant to be like people-led and character-led. But in reality, it was always theme-led. This is the story about…tech recycling thing. How can we put a

> human face on that? (…) It's easier to find stories that way. You need to go with the topic first, find a charity, NGO, find a good case study… (Interviewee 3)

According to another video journalist, this often means a lot more 'producing' in the field:

> Especially in the digital film the characters are key. But sometimes it can be… You know like… Comparing it to the films I did for BBC Stories where you really need to find the right characters. With solutions stuff it's a bit hard. Because if the solution is amazing, and the person behind it isn't that interesting… Sometimes you just need to work very hard as a producer. That's a challenge because you always don't want to not cover the solution. (Interviewee)

Another video journalist said that they are sometimes surprised because journalists usually rely on engaging characters to tell the stories, but with solutions journalism – more than in other forms – it is about the "power of the idea". They mentioned a story that had more than 45 million views on Facebook and that was not character-led at all:

> For example, in the shopping mall story, that is an interesting example to go back to, Anna is an amazing character. Very good speaker, very charismatic, great soundbites, but she only appears in the video for a few seconds … (…) And she's like a very striking person, a very good speaker, so she could have been more in it … But the reason why this video did so well is because of the power of the idea. Not because of her. (Interviewee)

This story – about a shopping mall in Sweden where all is second-hand and recycled – and the other two stories from this video journalist in the sample are all theme-led. In this specific story, there is no character who has more than one soundbite in the story. Also, no character is visually presented outside the soundbite – there are no action sequences involving them. In this sense, this story does not have characters, but soundbites of five people who are connected to the solution but are not central to the narrative in any way. Storytelling-wise, the success of this story on social media is even more interesting as there is no problem presented at any point – it is implicitly assumed. In this sense, it is possible that at times the power of the idea may override the need for traditional storytelling techniques. However, I argue that caution is needed when the success of a story on social media is measured by the number of views. The drop-off rate for videos on social media is, in this sense, equally important, but this data was not available.

For the video journalist who assessed their two solutions-focused stories in this sample as character-led and thinks that the emotional connection between the members of the audience and the character is key, the success of the stories that are idea-led is not surprising, but making the character central to the narrative would, according to them, make it perhaps even more successful:

> I've seen a lot of stuff where the character was not really important, and it went big. But I haven't seen something that people connected to and that didn't have a strong character. (Interviewee 4)

If this distinction between the idea-led and character-led stories is viewed in the context of the storytelling criterion about focusing on the solution instead of the individual, the predominant perspective of the journalists and editors is that this criterion is indeed respected. The focus on interesting solutions in pitching meetings means that characters are less important even in the first phase of story selection. According to the results of narrative analysis, the focus on the solution (idea-led story) is present in ten of the fifteen stories in the sample.

8.5.1.   Characters in idea-led solutions stories

The narrative analysis showed that the main elements of idea-led solutions stories are:

1) Characters presented as voices that present the solution and its implementation, while personal experiences and views are rarely included,

2) Visuals of characters used primarily to describe solution implementation,

3) Voiceover (journalist as a narrator) drives the narrative, soundbites are a supplement or an addition to the information provided by the journalist.

First, the characters are predominantly used as a human face to put on a solution. Textually and visually the narrative focuses on the solution and the solution implementation, while personal experiences, emotions or attitudes of individuals involved are rarely presented. In this sense, these characters function more as voices that present the solution, less as people with unique experiences that the audience can potentially relate to and connect with.

For example, in a story about collecting plastic rubbish and getting cash rewards, the narrative is built according to the BBC's formula I already presented. Here, there are two characters who present the solution visually and, to a smaller extent, textually. First, there is the woman who invented the solution. There are four soundbites in the story where she talks about the impact of the solution, explains how the solution works, mentions a solution limitation, and finally says what she hopes will happen next with her project. As she has the highest number of soundbites in the story, she may be understood as the main character. However, other than in soundbites, she is visually presented only once, when she is officially introduced in the narrative as an entrepreneur who has an idea.
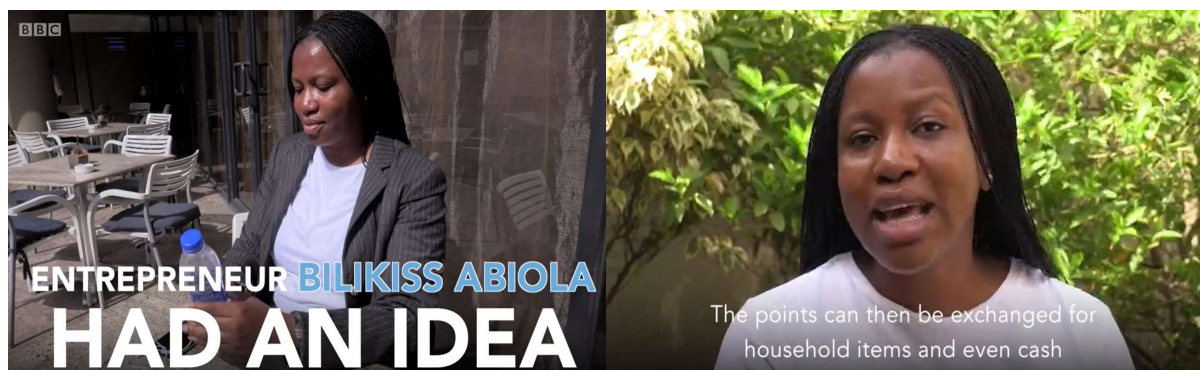
Screenshots 41-42: Video story 'How to get rewards for your rubbish', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (13 August 2018)

In this story, visual action sequences that present how the solution works are presented through a man who rides a bike, weighs, and picks up plastic waste collected by citizens, and takes it to the place where it is recycled. This character, while visually present from the very beginning of the story, is officially introduced in the middle of the narrative. Here, he says he is grateful to have this job and then explains the efficiency of the solution. After this, the story does not come back to him visually or textually until the very end – the last shot – where he is shown riding his bike and smiling.

Screenshots 43-46: Video story 'How to get rewards for your rubbish', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (13 August 2018)

Therefore, the distance between the characters and the audience in this story is created by the choice of soundbites that do not function as a potential emotional hook for the audience but primarily as a vehicle for solution description.

The second feature of idea-led solutions stories are visuals used predominantly to present how the solution works. In a story about recycling chewing gum litter, the designer who invented the solution is visually and textually presented very early in the story. However, throughout the story there are only two soundbites of her – one close to the beginning and another one at the very end:

As a designer, I was completely amazed there was nothing being done to actually recycle chewing gum.

I do believe that through right design we can actually change the way people behave.

Visually, the actions of this character are very limited – sitting down or standing, with only one action sequence where the person interacts with the solution in an active way by handing over a bag of chewing gum to a moulding specialist (presented in Screenshots 48-52).
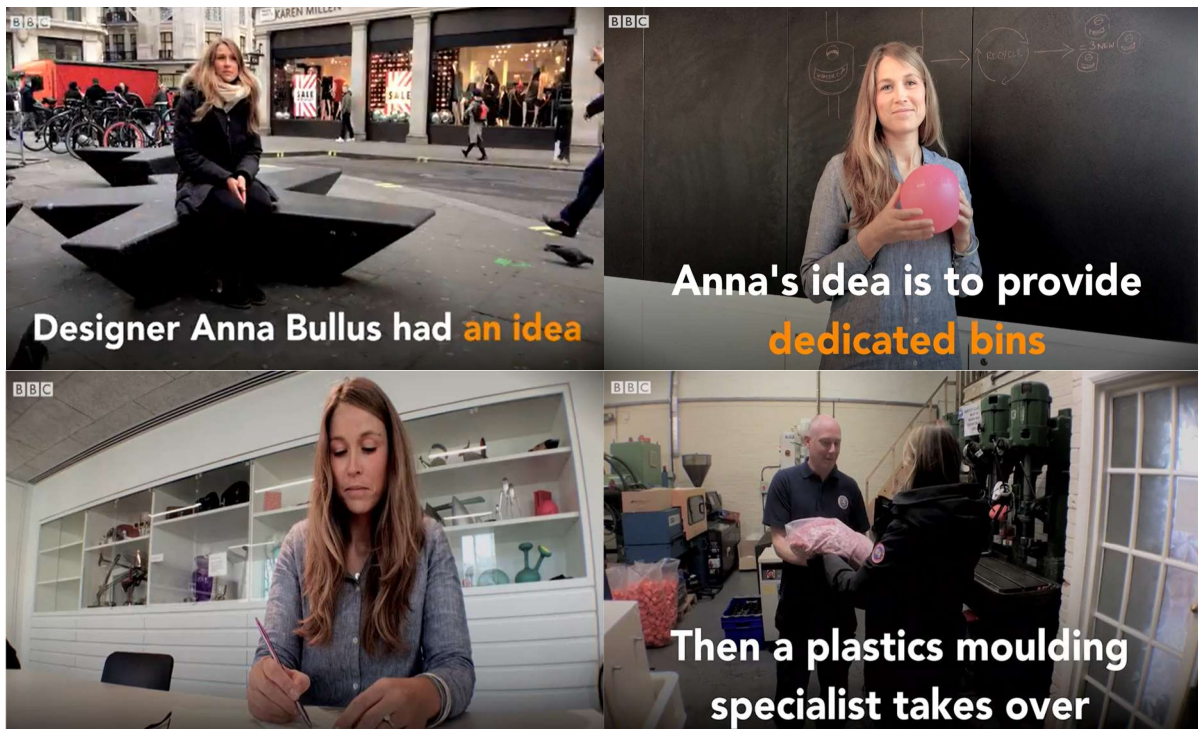
Screenshots 47-51: Video story 'The designer stamping out chewing gum litter', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (6 March 2018)

This story is also a good example of the third feature of idea-led solutions stories – a voiceover that drives the narrative. Here the journalist tells the story about the solution, while the inventor and one vox pop are used as confirmations or extensions of what was already said in the voiceover. Just like here, the role of the narrator or the journalist is of great importance in the other idea-led solutions stories. It is the voiceover and captions on the screen that move from one solutions story element to another, while the characters in the soundbites only complement the main ideas already presented by the journalist. Therefore, it is the journalist who controls the narrative in the idea-led solutions stories.

8.5.2. Characters in characters-led solutions stories

The first main feature of character-led solutions stories that distinguishes them from the idea-led stories is that the characters not only describe the solution, but share their personal stories and experiences, including their opinions and attitudes towards the solution. Textually, the presentation of the solution is often interwoven with the characters' interpretations of what it means to them and to those who the solution is intended for.

However, it is important to note that this does not mean that information about the solution is not presented. In all the five character-led solutions stories in the sample, information about the solution and the solution implementation is also included – either through the characters themselves or in the voiceover. Therefore, the focus on the character does not necessarily mean that the relevant information about the solution – what it is, how it works, whether it is effective, and whether there are any obstacles – are avoided.

Moreover, the second main feature of a character-led solutions story is that it visually stays close to the characters. Visuals present the person in different situations and on different locations, while the camera is often dynamic as it follows them. In this way, the narrative has visual features of a journey that the audience is taken on with the character, and gets to know the solution also through their personal perspective.

The focus on the characters who drive the narrative about a solution is also apparent and already explained in the Hikikomori story, whose protagonists share their intimate personal experiences as part of the problem-solving journey. Here, I provide examples of three other character-led solutions stories.

The story about Trieste's mental health revolution – a different way of treating people with mental health problems in an Italian city – focuses on a young woman, Sara, who benefits from the solution. The first seconds of the story are her intimate personal experience: *When I was nine years old, I began to hurt myself with burns on my hands. I began to hate myself. One day I decided that I had to die.* The story then presents community mental health centres in Trieste and how they work. The narrative keeps coming back to Sara – sometimes visually, sometimes both visually and textually – whose personal experience of receiving the solution provides an additional layer of understanding the solution for the audience. Her intimate soundbites, together with the story of her journey of getting better, make her the face of the solution that is being presented.
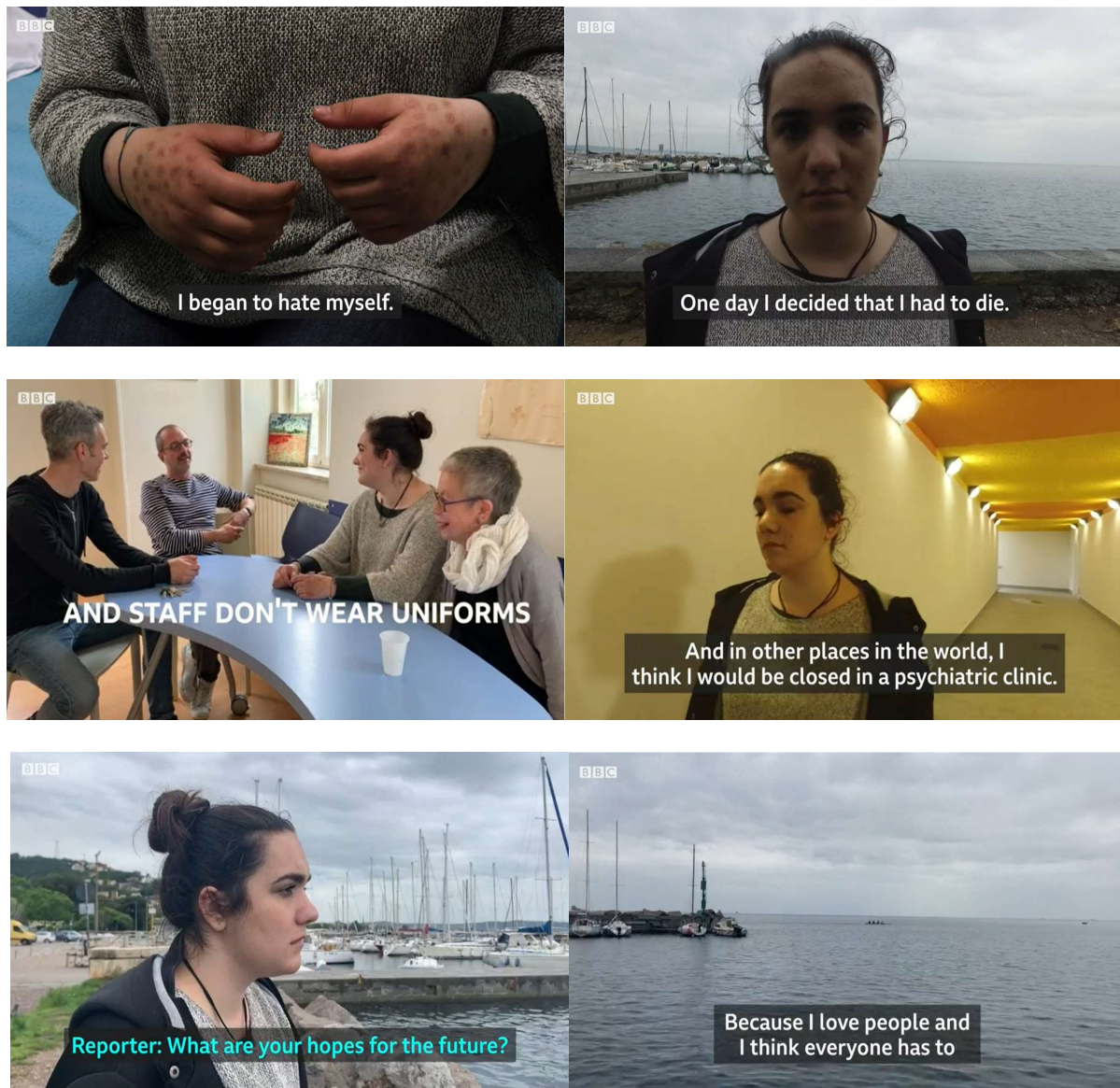
Screenshots 52-57: Video story 'Trieste's mental health revolution: 'It's the best place to get sick", published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (17 July 2019)

The journalist who made the story said in the interview that presenting the solution through a person was necessary for the audience to understand it better:

> You really wanted to let her story breathe for as much as possible. (…) These are the challenges she faces. (…) It would've been very difficult in a video to go and compare it to a mental health system somewhere else. You just had to emphasize why this is different. (Interviewee)

The second story is called the "Fog Catcher". The focus on the character is already apparent in the story title. Here, it is the person who invented the solution, Abel Cruz, who the audience follows in the story. It is important to note that it is the introduction that positions the character as central to the story. Abel shows and

explains his solution, but also what it means to him. The journalist in the voiceover gives Abel's personal background and explains further what inspired him to invent the solution. Interestingly, while many of the soundbites focus predominantly on facts and descriptions (like in the idea-led solutions stories), it is the visual representation of the main character that portrays him more as a human being who invented a solution, rather than as an entrepreneur who invented a business. He walks on the hill where the nets that collect water are, he is not formally dressed, and he interacts with a woman who grows her vegetables there.
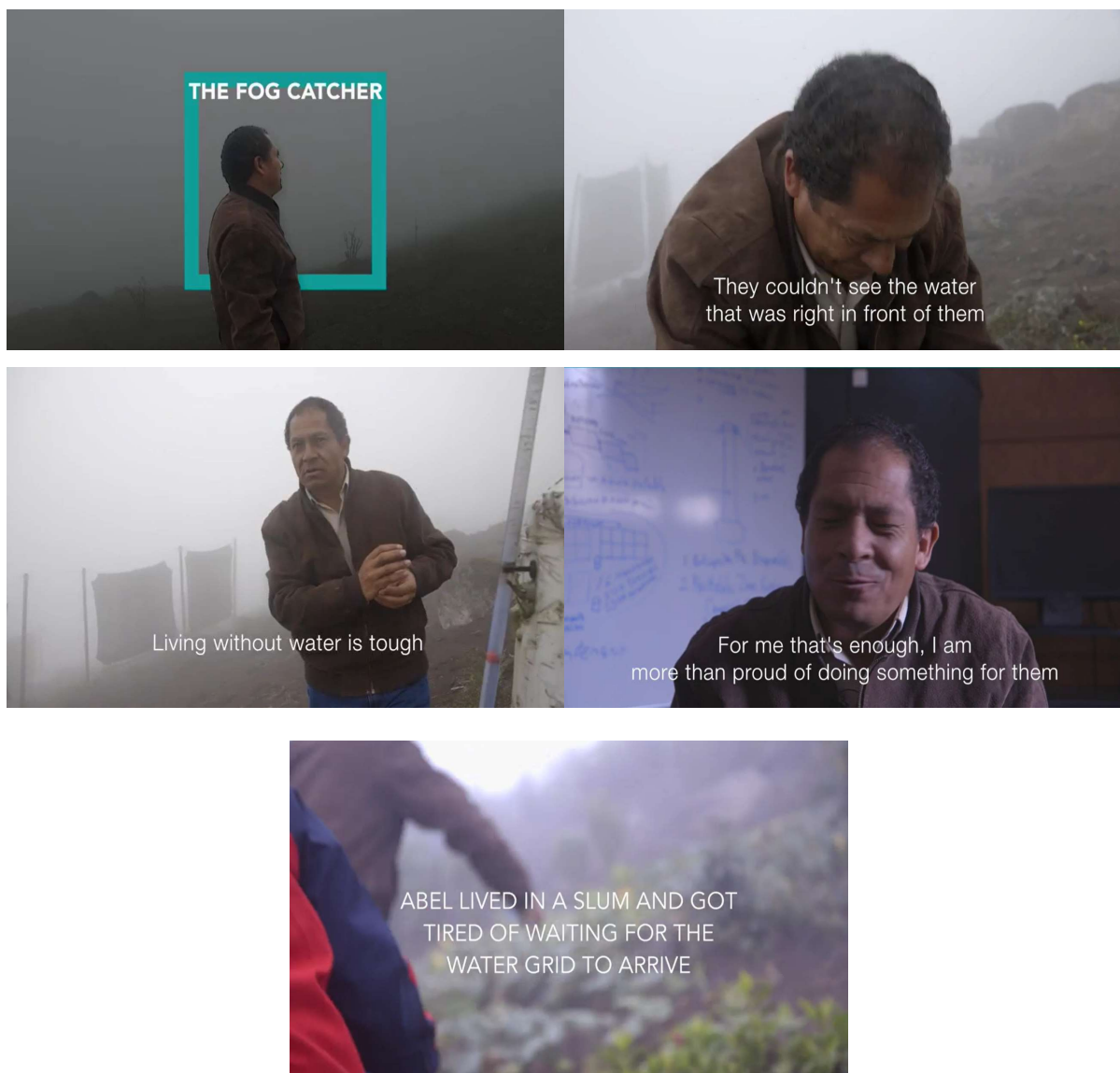
Screenshots 58-62: Video story 'The fog catcher who brings water to the poor', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (01 December 2016)

Besides Abel, the story includes the person who receives the solution – a local resident, Teresa, who now waters her crops thanks to the nets that catch fog. Teresa

is presented picking her vegetables and later in her home with her family, preparing food. In soundbites, she explains in what way the family benefits from the solution and how this impacts their day-to-day lives. Teresa is also presented in another situation: buying drinking water. Here, she explains in what way this is reflected on her family's budget. In the case of both characters in this story, other than compelling visuals that present them in different personal day-to-day situations, it is the choice of soundbites that contributes significantly to the way they are positioned in the narrative.

Screenshots 63-66: Video story 'The fog catcher who brings water to the poor', published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (01 December 2016)

Another story – the only one in the sample that tells the story about a solution that is, contrary to the other stories in the sample, not successful – is called "The 'sun king' who built a solar city in China". He is not just a solar entrepreneur, but a person that – as the journalist states – perhaps dreamt too big. He is the only character that appears in the story. The narrative presents his journey of solution invention and implementation, including the benefits and the downsides of the solution. Soundbites chosen for the story are those in which the character gives a rather personal, intimate perspective on his journey, while the journalist in the voiceover gives more context for the solution. The 'solar king' openly admits that his solution

was not the success that he dreamt of: *When people ask me: 'Are you proud of Solar Valley?' I would say that not really. The purpose was to promote, to copy that, but now there is only one Solar Valley in the China and in the world.* Visually, the video journalist presents the character as someone who 'leads the way' and shows the audience around the Solar Valley.
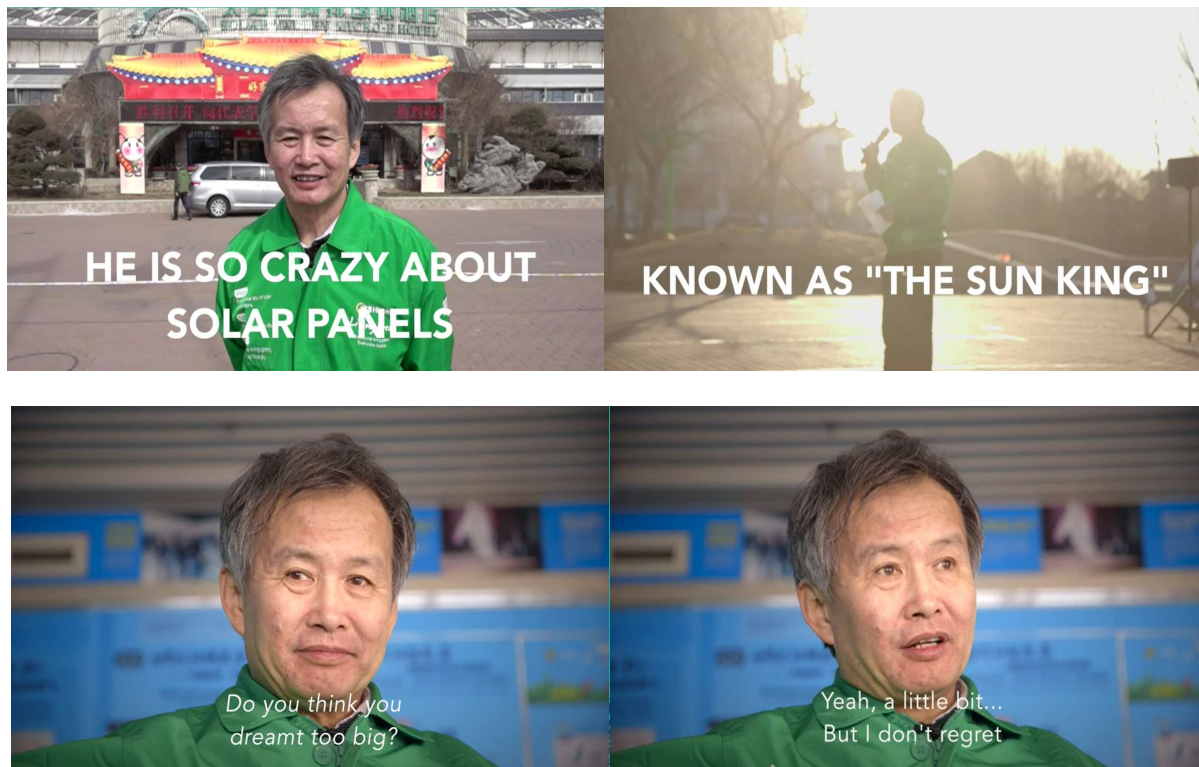
Screenshots 67-70: Video story 'The 'sun king' who built a solar city in China' published on the BBC People Fixing the World website (07 March 2017)

Therefore, in the narratives of character-led solutions stories, the audiences learn about the solution primarily through a character. Someone revealing their hopes, dreams, attitudes or sharing personal stories of solution invention or implementation has the potential of building a connection with the story through characters and their unique personalities. Portraying the problem-solving process through a person who shares their emotional insights – both positive and negative – creates disruptions and improves the narrative tension in the narrative (Todorov 1986). While the voiceover is still there, it is the journalist that provides 'the bigger picture' of the solution, while the characters share their personal perspective. In this way, the biggest 'fear' of hero worship, pointed out in solutions journalism guidelines (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 8; Kasriel 2016a, p. 3), is overcome.

I argue that these stories are more aligned with the mentioned rules of storytelling which emphasize the importance of characters and their emotional testimony which, according to Bas and Grabe's study, increases "encoding, storage, and retrieval of news information for citizens positioned at both higher and lower educational segments of society" (2015, p. 176). Furthermore, I argue that without the characters who share their personal experiences of the problem and the solution, it is more difficult to create a connection between the story and the audience, and make people watch the story until the end. The writer Martha Alderson (2020) states that characters are the way to reach any audience and adds: "For only when we connect with the characters on an emotional level, does the interaction become deep and meaningful". Also, characters are those who bring action into a story. Rabiger (2016, chapter 10, para. 2) advises that "today's audiences expect a story with movement, so consider dropping us into the middle of the action and releasing items of expository information as they become necessary". Without characters, there is no action, and without action – there is no plot. Therefore, the journalists' conscious efforts not to position characters in the centre of the solutions-focused video stories is also related to the absence of plot. In the following chapter, I will discuss and argue why this approach is beneficial for solutions storytelling. The story can still focus on the solution and have a compelling main character.

8.6.   Visuals in solutions-focused video stories

It is important to address the role of visuals in the BBC's solutions-focused narratives, concretely in the context of Midberry and Dahmen's (2020) first theoretical framework on visual solutions journalism, which states that visuals should be comprehensive, precise, and humanising.

First, presenting the problem visually in the first part of the story can be considered comprehensive visual solutions journalism (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, p. 1164) – because the problem and the solution are both visually presented at some point in the narrative. However, the narrative analysis shows that the problem isolated at the beginning of the story not only spoils opportunities for creating tension in the narrative between the complication (problem) and the resolution (solution) – which

may engage the audience further – but also reduces the opportunity to understand the solution in relation to the problem and evaluate the problem-solving process. In this way, the question is if isolating the problem and dedicating significantly less space in the video to present it visually emphasises the "salience of that perspective in audiences" (Zillmann et al. 1999, cited in Midberry and Dahmen 2020, p. 1164), or makes the solution more visually salient.

Second, visual solutions journalism should be precise, which means that the visuals should accurately reflect what is presented, and visuals related to one topic should not be used in a different context (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, p. 1165). Here, the authors of the framework are primarily concerned with the sources of visuals and point out the importance of original visuals. However, I argue that the need for precision in solutions visuals should be expanded in videos to achieve congruence between the text and the visuals. As I have pointed out in this chapter and the previous chapter, when the solution is criticised or its limitations are presented, this is too often accompanied by visuals of the solution that works successfully. This also happens when solution evidence is discussed. In this way, the need to keep an uplifting tone in visuals may negatively affect the meaning of how the solution is presented textually. Therefore, this can also be seen as a lack of precision in terms of visuals.

Third, visual solutions journalism should be humanising – visuals should personalise the story and "evoke empathy" in the audience through "intimate" and "candid moments" of "human relationship" and "human action", not just in presenting the solution, but also the problem and how it affects people (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, pp. 1165-1166). However, the findings show that characters and their personal moments are rarely the focus of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories. Additionally, both the content analysis and the narrative analysis show that personal experiences are rarely included in problem presentation. It is also important to note that, just because people are used to present the solution, it does not make it automatically "humanising". As I pointed out, solution implementation is often presented through people who receive the solution, but this is done on a level of illustration, rather than as a way for the audience to connect and empathise with the person.

Overall, I would argue that visuals are predominantly used in the BBC's stories to attract the attention of the audience and contribute to an uplifting tone, and less to enhance either the comprehension of the problem-solving process and the critical evaluation of solution effectiveness, or to establish a connection between the audience and the story.

8.7. 'Wow' effect, but no real connection with the audience

According to the findings presented in this chapter, storytelling matters to the journalists and editors in the *BBC People Fixing the World* team, but it is significantly shaped by perceived social audience preferences, its short attention span, and the platform. The demands of making the stories simple for social media, but also uplifting, significantly determine the way the stories are structured and told. The main idea of the interviewees is that the interest in the story depends on the solution idea itself, which should be impressive, create a 'wow' effect, and thus persuade the audience to discover more about it and stay with the story. Many storytelling decisions identified in this chapter are at odds with the rules of traditional storytelling for effective narrative involvement (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022). The team developed a specific formula of narrative structure, with a clear intention to make it uncomplicated for the social audience. However, this creates little opportunity for creating narrative tension, which is one of the crucial elements in terms of capturing and sustaining the audience's interest.

Even though the BBC's stories do respect the criterion of presenting the solution early in the story, they predominantly do it in a way that the most significant piece of information about the response is revealed in the first 20-30 seconds of the video. Among the three different versions of the introduction, two of which are more effective in terms of creating narrative tension, the most prominent and most used one is the 'Spoiler', which frontloads the most important piece of information about the solution immediately, but is consequently not intriguing, and uses no storytelling techniques to further keep the audience's attention.

Furthermore, the solutions journalism storytelling criterion about making the problem-solving process central to the narrative is predominantly not fulfilled, with the exception of the three stories in the sample that I described above. In storytelling, the team does not focus on investigating how the problem can be solved, but on describing what the solution is – even though they claim to make their stories 'inquisitive' (Chapter 6). In this way, the problem is isolated at the beginning of the narrative, and the relationship between the solution and the different aspects of the problem that it is trying to address is not the focus of the narrative. Rather, the stories focus on how the solution works, but without relating it to the problem. Here, I identify a clear tendency to keep an uplifting tone and not complicate the narrative with the problem, the limitations of the solution, or the discussion around solution effectiveness. Again, the need to simplify the story for the social audience is the main reason for this, but on the production side, this creates a countereffect in terms of developing narrative tension necessary to engage the audience.

In terms of the criterion concerning the need to have solutions instead of people in the centre of the narrative, the findings show that most of the stories are idea-led, meaning that this criterion is respected. In these stories, people are used predominantly as voices that describe the solution instead of people who experience it. However, the character-led stories in the sample showed that it is possible to have strong characters in solutions-focused stories, yet include all the information necessary for understanding and evaluating the solution and its relation to the problem. Focusing on the power of the solution idea, instead of on the character – which is "one of the most important elements" of the narrative (Harris and Taylor 2021, p. 213) – is counter-intuitive to many of the journalists on the team, but also an ineffective storytelling approach, at least according to the established postulates about the importance of emotional engagement with the characters necessary for the audience to connect with the story (Ryan 2015, p. 108). Therefore, the identified need of journalists to make the stories interesting by making them relatable is suppressed by the decision to rely predominantly on the 'wow' effect that the solution itself may achieve. In this way, traditional storytelling approaches to win over, build and keep the audience's attention and interest are perceived as too 'complicated' for the Facebook audience.

224

In this way, the narratives of the BBC's solutions-focused videos have an altogether weak intriguing function (Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013, p. 81), as little is done after the introduction to develop narrative tension and keep the audience engaged. Additionally, the configuring function of the narrative (Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013, pp. 82), which should establish causal relationships between different elements, shows that the solution is significantly more salient than the problem. I argue that the way the problem and the solution are divided in the narrative reduces the opportunities for the audience to actively evaluate the solution in relation to the problem, and to critically assess the problem-solving process, including the applicability and the effectiveness of the solution.

All the findings presented in this chapter, but also in Chapters 6 and 7, point to a clear transformation of the ideas of solutions-focused journalism in practice, when faced with the social media audience, platform, and format. The pursuit of audience metrics and the related need to adapt to the audience and the platform by making stories that are interesting, positive, and simple not only minimise the intention to rigorously investigate solutions, but – paradoxically – fail to use the power that storytelling has to keep the stories interesting.

The findings presented in this chapter open and contribute to several debates around the narrative in the context of solutions journalism. To start with, this is the first time that specific storytelling strategies are explored in the context of solutions narratives and their potential of narrative involvement. In this sense, the study contributes to the research of solutions journalism narratives, because it is the first one to identify the main events, their relations and position, and to assess their subsequent potential to engage the audience. The relationship between the problem and the solution is identified as the central point of narrative tension and, therefore, an important potential source of narrative engagement. In the case of the *BBC People Fixing the World*'s video stories, this relation is rarely used as a device for narrative development or audience involvement.

Second, this study is the first one to explore characters in solutions stories and to identify the difference between using people as voices and developing them into characters in solutions narratives. In an attempt not to slip into hero worship, and to

keep the solution itself in the spotlight, the BBC's team focuses on idea-led stories and thus rarely uses the potential of creating emotional and narrative engagement through characters. This also means that there is less opportunity for developing a plot. However, I did identify the stories that are character-led, yet did not slip into hero worship or moved the focus away from the solution. In this sense, in the following chapter, I make a case why characters should be treated as an important storytelling element, and why the solutions journalism storytelling criterion – that the focus of solutions stories should be on the solution, and not people (Bansal and Martin 2015, pp. 6-7) – should be revaluated and rephrased.

Third, this study is the first one to explore the production side of developing solutions narratives, and to identify the factors that determine journalists' storytelling choices – an area of both solutions journalism and constructive journalism that has been completely unexplored until this study. In the BBC's team, the imperative of keeping a positive tone overrides the journalists' intentions to examine and present different nuances of the problem and the solution, and therefore, determines their storytelling strategies. This part of the study shows that the employed strategies – or more precisely, the lack of them, along with the need to keep the story predominantly positive, are significantly dependent on the journalists' and editors' perception of their target audience, but more importantly, the publication platform and audience metrics about 'what works'. In this case, packing a solutions story into a video format for a social audience means developing formulas that are counter-intuitive to many of the journalists in the team. Complexities in the narrative are consciously avoided, and this results in stories that do not have a plot but are focused on solution description. Interest is not narratively developed, but the team relies primarily on the power of the solution idea to attract the audience. In this sense, future studies should explore the different types of narrative engagement that newsrooms want to achieve in their solutions reporting, and the ways in which this engagement is crafted in solutions narratives. Also, the power of the solutions idea as a narrative device itself should be further studied, both in terms of practicing solutions reporting, and audience reception.

Fourth, this is the first time that solutions visuals are studied on the production side of solutions reporting. Arousing interest and creating narrative engagement through

text and visuals turns out to be significantly complex in the video form, particularly in terms of their congruence and the message that is communicated to the audience (Lough and McIntyre 2019; McIntyre, Lough et al. 2018). The way words and visuals are used in solutions videos, but also their effects, should be studied further. Additionally, the findings presented in this chapter contribute to the refinement of Midberry and Dahmen's theoretical framework for visual solutions journalism (2020) and its three elements of making the visuals comprehensive, precise, and humanising. In the following chapter, I will present the most important aspects of visual solutions reporting in the context of video, and extend the conceptualisation of these three elements based on the findings of this study.

The next chapter is dedicated to the main discussion of the findings presented in this and the previous two chapters in the context of the BBC, the practice of solutions journalism, but also of journalism as a practice. I conceptualise solutions-focused journalism within the limits of the BBC's project and discuss the value of this practice in the context of the BBC's purpose, but more importantly, I discuss in what way the findings of this study are indicative of bigger issues that need to be further explored in the context of solutions reporting and related socially responsible practices.

Chapter 9:
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1.   Introduction to the main debates

In the first study of the BBC's practice of solutions-focused journalism, I focus on the project *BBC People Fixing the World* – the only team exclusively dedicated to producing solutions-focused stories at this public broadcaster. The goal is to understand and conceptualise solutions-focused journalism as a practice in the context of this team, because the BBC is held up by the proponents of solutions journalism and constructive journalism as 'proof' that their ideas must be worthwhile if one of the most reputable public broadcasters has taken them on (Hare 2016; Green 2021; Constructive Institute 2022c). The question is if the proponents of solutions journalism are right in pointing out the BBC, and if solutions journalism at the broadcaster adheres to its main claims. I explore this by focusing on the team's video production for the social media platform, which is also published on the BBC's website. This means focusing on how the journalists and editors in this newsroom understand solutions-focused journalism, but also if and how the solutions journalism guidelines – that concern both how solutions should be reported on, and how the stories should be told – are implemented in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories. In this sense, this is the first study that approaches solutions journalism in practice by examining both sides of the production process, and that, based on findings, aims to advance McIntyre and Lough's (2021) operationalisation of solutions journalism, which was based solely on interviews with solutions journalists.

This study opens and advances several debates. First, addressing these questions means understanding what happens to the normative ideas of solutions reporting once they need to be implemented by journalists in actual stories within a specific newsroom and the complexities of today's media environment – in this case, at a public broadcaster. In this way, I examine the sustainability of solutions journalism's normative ideas in actual practice, particularly the need to be both journalistically 'rigorous' and engaging at the same time, and the related endeavour of its

proponents to separate the practice from positive or happy news stories. Based on its findings, this study prompts the necessary debate about whether and how solutions-focused journalism and related practices fulfil their promises, despite the hierarchy of influences in which each production process is inevitably immersed.

Second, studies have so far focused on either the journalists or their stories, but this was done predominantly out of context as none identified the specific factors at the newsroom level that shape important decisions made in the production process, including the wider role of the organisation and its audience goals. In other words, no research considered or identified the specific factors that either enforce or disrupt the implementation of the ideas behind constructive journalism, solutions journalism, or other related practices, and which undoubtedly shape the way a certain practice is ultimately understood and done. Therefore, a case study of a specific solutions-dedicated newsroom within one organisation is useful to gain an in-depth understanding of possible decisive factors that shape how a solutions story is told, and in what way the normative ideals are interpreted and implemented. Additionally, this is the first time a solutions reporting practice is studied in the context of packing stories for a social media platform. The identified factors may not be the same for all newsrooms, but this opens the debate about the need to consider the obstacles and challenges that constructive and solutions journalism may inevitably face in practice. In this sense, audience engagement is identified as a somewhat ambiguous notion in the context of solutions journalism that can steer the practice and its goals in different directions – for example, understand it primarily as a tool for boosting audience metrics.

Third, being engaging and compelling is an important aspect of how solutions journalism is presented by its proponents, but until now it was unclear how the solutions stories are told, made, and structured to achieve this goal. This is the reason why a part of this study is dedicated to narratives and storytelling strategies used in the BBC's solutions-focused video stories, but also to the reasons behind the journalists' storytelling decisions. Understanding how stories are told helps to understand better in what way the BBC's team wants to engage with its audience. In this case, storytelling proves to be significantly dependent on the publication platform, the format, and the perceived audience preferences.

Fourth, by focusing for the first time on the production side of making solutions *video* stories, this study aims to advance and expand the theoretical framework for visual solutions journalism – which was designed primarily for photojournalism (Midberry and Dahmen 2020) – by studying the choices of visuals in the BBC's solutions-focused stories, but also if and how they are congruent with what is textually presented, and the potential nuances of what messages about the solution are communicated to the audience in video as the most complex visual form.

Fifth, this study offers the first conceptualisation of solutions-focused journalism at the BBC and discusses the role of this practice in the context of this organisation's mission as a public broadcaster, and of public broadcasters in general.

Sixth, based on the findings, the study advances the operationalisation of solutions journalism (McIntyre and Lough 2021) by proposing the ways in which some guidelines need to be modified in order to fulfil the goals of being both rigorous and engaging. Additionally, I argue for an inductive approach in conceptualising solutions journalism – the one that takes into consideration both how the practice is understood and done and does not take the normative ideas of its proponents at face value.

Finally, I argue that many of the obstacles that solutions-focused journalism encounters are germane to all of journalism and discuss the ability of solutions journalism and related practices to address these issues and, therefore, whether their promise of improving journalism can indeed be fulfilled.

In this chapter, I will summarise the main findings of this study, present the main debates and discuss the contributions of this research to journalism studies – particularly the research concerned with socially responsible journalistic practices – but also its implications on the BBC as a public broadcaster, and on journalism as a practice. I also point out the limitations of this study, along with recommendations for future research.

9.2.   The key findings of this study

Before I summarise the main findings, it is first important to be reminded how the study was set up. Chapter 2 first positioned solutions journalism and related practices in the context of socially responsible journalism, a concept that has emerged very recently and whose authors use it as an umbrella term for practices that want to improve the state of today's journalism and bring back the audience's trust. These practices – such as solutions journalism, constructive journalism, peace journalism, slow journalism, and others – report beyond the problem-solving narrative, and wish to serve the citizens through better engagement, collaboration, but also a stronger sense of journalistic responsibility, and in this way fulfil journalism's main purpose and contribute to a functioning democracy (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021a; Ahva 2022a, para 11). Solutions journalism and constructive journalism proponents criticise today's journalism for focusing too much on the negative, and advocate for reporting that also shows the other side of the world – one that it is full of hope, progress, and solutions to what is not working in societies. Even though their proponents present it as a complementary goal, within these practices there is a normative struggle between fulfilling journalism's watchdog role – holding power to account, pointing out what is wrong, being impartial, accurate, and critical – and the constructive role that points out the need to offer and report on solutions as another prerogative and responsibility of journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 5).

However, in research, the way solutions journalism and the related practice of constructive journalism have been conceptualized relies significantly on the proponents' definitions and journalists' interpretations. For this reason, I argue that it is necessary to approach solutions reporting practice for the first time from a different perspective – conceptualise it based on how it is both perceived and done, and not solely on what it is thought to be or what it should be. In this way, I explore if the practice lives up to its normative expectations and conceptualise it from the perspective of the journalists and editors, and by examining the video news output in the BBC's solutions-focused team.

In this sense, I study the interpretation and implementation of two main normative ideals of solutions journalism – reporting in a way that is both journalistically

232

"rigorous" and engaging (McIntyre and Lough 2021, pp. 1566-1567). This means studying what information is presented, and the storytelling approaches used to captivate the audience's interest. Therefore, in Chapter 3, I also point out the importance of studying how solutions stories are told and what storytelling strategies are used to win over and keep the audience's interest. Until now, studies have predominantly focused on audience reception of solutions stories and constructive stories, and among other things, found that the narrative has an important role in terms of how audience members engage with them (Dahmen et al. 2019; Thier at al. 2019).

I study solutions reporting in the context of the BBC's team dedicated to this practice, which the BBC has named solutions-focused journalism. I explained in Chapter 3 why I chose to focus on solutions reporting at the BBC – first, the broadcaster is highlighted as one of the most important solutions journalism practitioners, and second, it holds the status of "the world's leading international broadcaster" (Tryhorn 2013) and still one of the most prominent media outlets in the world that others look up to (Starkey 2019, British Broadcasting Corporation, para 15). I chose to focus on the BBC's solutions-focused video output because it is a completely unexplored, yet the most complex format in the context of visual solutions journalism, a research area in which "further emphasis must be placed on the creation and selection of images that accompany solutions-oriented news stories" (Lough and McIntyre 2019, p. 596).

In Chapter 4, I presented the original analytical framework designed for this study, which is also suitable for studying any other solutions reporting practice. From the available sets of professional and academic solutions journalism guidelines, I extracted the main solutions journalism elements and developed the main reporting and storytelling criteria suitable for a comprehensive study of this kind of journalistic practice. In this way, I critically examined and evaluated McIntyre and Lough's (2021) first operationalisation and conceptualisation of solutions journalism, but also the professional guidelines for solutions reporting by the Solutions Journalism Network (Bansal and Martin 2015; Solutions Journalism Network 2022d) and the BBC itself (Kasriel 2016a). Further, in Chapter 5, I explained my methodological choices for studying both sides of the production process in the BBC's solutions-focused team,

and used – among other methods – narrative analysis for the first time in the studies of solutions journalism in order to understand the different nuances of how the stories are told in order to win over the audience's attention, but also keep the story interesting until the end.

9.2.1.　The struggle between rigour and engagement

The findings were then presented in three chapters. In Chapter 6, I focused on the journalists' and editors' understandings of solutions-focused journalism, their main ideas, but also the main factors in their news work which, according to them, determine how solutions-focused video stories are made. By using thematic analysis of the interview data, I established that the ideas of what solutions-focused journalism is significantly overlap with the normative ideas of both solutions journalism and constructive journalism. The members of the team defined the practice primarily by what it is not or, at least, by what it should not be – simple positive news stories about good things happening in the world. Just like the proponents of solutions journalism and constructive journalism, who position the practice in opposition to happy news, the journalists and editors on the team also strive to present it as a rigorous, meticulous, and thorough coverage of solutions to social problems. This means conducting extensive prior research, and reporting on both the virtues and the flaws of a specific response – how it works, what its limitations are, and what the evidence that it is indeed effective is. Inherent in their ideas what solutions-focused journalism should be are the BBC's editorial values, along with the importance of journalistic and editorial integrity related to the organisation's international reputation. Also, by reporting on solutions, the team feels that it is contributing to the BBC's mission of acting in the public interest and creating distinctive content, and that it overall improves the quality of journalism at the broadcaster. Unlike the proponents of solutions journalism and constructive journalism, the team is careful not to be perceived as an advocate for solutions, but its members did express hope that their reporting inspires positive changes in society.

However, the adherence to the normative ideas of solutions journalism, and the importance of rigorous reporting for the BBC, took a different turn when the journalists and editors talked about their audience and the actual practice of covering solutions stories, particularly in the context of video production. While they welcomed solutions-focused journalism as an antidote for negative news stories, the focus on young digital audiences online and on Facebook – which was when the project started in 2016 perceived by the team as the most popular social platform – proved to be a significant source of frustration for many of the interviewees, as they tried to adapt to the audience's preferences – particularly its short attention span.

Besides the audience expectations – which are different for this audience than for the TV or radio audience that the journalists on this team were used to – another important factor that shapes the practice of telling solutions-focused stories is the publication platform, and the need to craft a video format in a way that plays in line with Facebook's algorithm. This means that the length of the video, along with the way the story is told, are tuned according to what the platform favours in a particular period. In this sense, assessing what works in video on Facebook means following audience metrics, which proved to be the most significant factor that shaped solutions-focused journalism in this team. The success of the story is measured according to the numbers of shares, likes, and comments. In this way, audience engagement with solutions stories is assessed through metrics, and the goal is to make videos that have a high reach. For the team, this was a learn-as-you-go experience, but with time they developed formulas of selecting topics and story structure that worked best for the social audience and the platform.

These factors determine specific expectations of the distinct feature that each solutions-focused video story should have in order to engage the audience and result in favourable metrics. First, it should have a predominantly positive tone, be uplifting, and report on a successful solution. Second, it should be interesting – and this for the team means that the solution should preferably be surprising, somewhat unique, and told in an inquisitive and relatable way so the audience can easily connect with the story. Third, the story should be simple – it should not be saturated with information, and it should be told in a way that is easy to understand and is, therefore, more in line with the audience's preferences on social media.

But perhaps the most important finding in this context is that the journalists and editors do not believe that their audience watches their stories until the end, while many are convinced that it is almost impossible to keep their attention and interest on social media. Even though the team did not provide exact numbers, many of them mentioned high audience retention rates very early in the story – a factor that they find very frustrating, yet at the same time it inspires them to make an effort to craft the stories in a way that will be liked by the audience and supported by the algorithm. However, as Chapter 7 showed, this comes at a cost.

9.2.2. Engagement matters more

While the BBC's team said that their solutions reporting remains rigorous, in line with the highest journalistic standards, and, therefore, should match the McIntyre and Lough's (2021) conceptualisation of solutions journalism as a rigorous practice; the question remains if their journalism can be as rigorous as they claimed. The tension between the two worlds – the one in which the team members care about meticulously covering solutions, and the other, in which they are preoccupied with audience engagement results and are packing their stories into a positive, interesting, and simple format that pleases the audience and the platform, is reflected in the content of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories. The results of the content analysis presented in Chapter 7 are the biggest empirical contribution of this study. The chapter explored the question whether the solutions reporting criteria are implemented in the BBC's videos. Explaining how the solution works, presenting the limitations of the solution, and providing hard evidence of its effectiveness are the three solutions journalism reporting criteria that – according to McIntyre and Lough (2021) – contribute to the rigour of a solutions story.

However, other than presenting how a response is being implemented, the other two criteria are not fulfilled in more than half of the stories in the sample. Solution limitations are presented in 43.7 percent of the stories, and among those that do present it, in 69.2 percent of them only one limitation is presented. Hard evidence – reliable independent data about solution effectiveness – is provided in 49.6 percent of the stories. Additionally, the cause of the problem – which I also argue is an

important element of rigour in solutions reporting – is presented in only 43.7 percent of stories, and therefore, is significantly disregarded as an element of solutions-focused video stories. These findings show that the responsibility of journalists "to bring to audiences the complete story" (Thier 2021, p. 47) is predominantly not fulfilled in the BBC's solutions-focused stories. Visually, the representation of the problem and the solutions limitations is often substituted with visuals of the solution and how it works, which means that the visual coverage is often neither comprehensive nor precise. Also, the prerogative of the journalist to present the negative aspects in the story diminishes the visual humanising element in the presentation of the problem or the downsides of the solution.

Additionally, the importance of including insight or a teachable lesson in solutions stories about "how the world works and, perhaps, how it would be made to work better" (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 7) is not shared by the BBC's team – in the interviews, its members did not identify it as an important element of their reporting, though this concept still remains a bit vague in the context of solutions journalism. Nevertheless, in the analysis of their videos I did find elements that may be considered insightful and that are present in 10 percent of the stories. Further, the element of including mobilizing information so the audience can get involved with the solution, pointed out by the solutions journalists in McIntyre and Lough's study (2021), is something that this team is strongly against and that is not present in any of their stories. This is related to the journalists' and editors' caution, shared by the organisation, "not to fall into the trap of advocating, even inadvertently, for a particular approach or giving the impression that we are doing so" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 12).

These findings are in stark contrast with the journalists' and editors' determination that a solution should be explained in a comprehensive way that allows the audience to evaluate it. The reasons to omit specific information are confirmed by the findings from Chapter 6: the pursuit of the audience's attention on Facebook and the BBC's website, and the expected demands of making the video stories positive, interesting, and – most importantly – keeping them simple. Here, I identified a conscious intention to minimise the amount of negative information about the solution and the problem it addresses, and to focus on the positive aspects of the solution and why it

is successful. In this sense, focusing too much on the problem and the downsides of the solution is seen as too negative by the journalists of this team and, therefore, off-putting for their social audience. According to the members of this team, focusing on nuances of the problem or the solution complicates the story, and the audience quickly loses interest. This is why this information is either omitted or reduced, and briefly presented by the journalist. Even the choice of topics of solutions-focused video stories – environment, education, health, children – shows that there is a tendency to avoid topics with an inherent negativity bias – such as conflict – and select softer news topics that are generally more favoured by the social media audience. Additionally, the need to be positive and focus on successful solutions is also reflected in the form of evidence that the team accepts when choosing to focus on a solution – it does not necessarily need to be reliable evidence; it can also be anecdotal. In this way, if the solution has other traits that make it interesting, it may be reported on.

9.2.3.   The power of the idea, the weakness of the narrative

Furthermore, as the findings presented in Chapter 8 show, this tendency to omit or minimise specific elements in solutions stories – particularly those that are perceived to be overly negative and 'complicated' – not only diminishes the journalistically rigorous approach, but also the opportunity to create a compelling and intriguing narrative – at least according to the established postulates of effective storytelling strategies (Todorov 1986; Knobloch et al. 2004; Baroni 2009, cited in Vanoost 2013; Bermejo-Berros et al. 2022). In Chapter 8, I explored the question how the three storytelling maxims of solutions journalism are implemented, and what kind of impact this may have on narrative engagement, particularly sparking and keeping audience's interest. The demands to make the stories uplifting, interesting and simple for social media, significantly shape the way the solutions-focused video stories are told and the narratives structured. The focus on the positive aspects of the solution, along with the need to simplify the stories for a social audience, reduces the opportunities for narrative tension which should keep the audience interested and engaged.

This is reflected in the most common structure of the BBC's videos. I identified it as a formula that the team created in order to adapt to the platform and to the audience's preference for a softer approach. While journalists assess the first seconds of the video detrimental in terms of grabbing the audience's attention, I identified a counter-intuitive approach in the most common introduction structure that I called the Spoiler. Here, the solution is immediately presented at the beginning of the story, and no apparent storytelling strategies are used to evoke suspense, surprise, or curiosity that would keep the audience interested in what comes next. Two other introduction types – the Teaser and the Promise – do employ more effective storytelling strategies but are not as common as the Spoiler.

Moreover, even though I identified the relationship between the problem and the solution as the main potential source of tension in the narrative, I found that significantly less time and space is dedicated to the problem in the BBC's stories, and that this element is predominantly isolated in the narrative. Instead of covering the problem-solving process, the stories focus on describing the solution and how it is implemented without explaining how this addresses the specific aspects of the problem. I also identified another potential point of disruption in the narrative: the so-called caveat corner in the story where journalists discuss the solution limitations and the available evidence of its effectiveness. However, the tendency to leave out this information, as presented in Chapter 7, also reduces the possibility to disrupt the positive tone of the narrative and 'complicate' it. While I did present the stories that, according to the storytelling postulates, successfully complicate the narrative and add a critical tone in addition to the positive tone, this remains an uncommon storytelling approach in this team.

The role of people in these narratives is also interesting. The fear of slipping into hero worship pushes the journalists to focus on the idea of the solution and use people as voices, rather than characters who drive the narrative. In this sense, perhaps the most interesting finding that emerged in Chapter 8 is the editors' and journalists' perspective that it is the power of the solution idea itself that pulls the audience on social media into the story and keeps it interested until the end. This is the explanation that the team provided not only in terms of having stories that are idea-led instead of character-led, but also when asked about why they reveal the

most important information about the solution so early in the story. Nevertheless, there are also stories that are character-led – they include all the solutions journalism elements, yet tell the story through a journey of a person, which was assessed as a more effective storytelling approach that allows the audience to connect with the story.

In sum, the main theme that emerged in the findings in all three chapters is the identified struggle between the need to present the most relevant aspects of both the problem and the solution, and the need to engage the audience on Facebook and tune into its preferences, but also adapt to the publication platform. In the case of the BBC, findings showed that audience engagement matters more, but most importantly, that engagement is understood primarily on the level of audience metrics used to measure the success of the project. In this way, solutions-focused journalism in practice is conceptualised as a tool for boosting audience engagement and attracting young audience members with positive stories about solutions, while the normative ideal of rigorously picking apart the responses to social problems often remains on the level of wishful thinking among the journalists and editors, and results in storytelling decisions that are at odds with the established postulates of storytelling but, according to the interviewees, in line with the platform and audience's expectations. This opens several important debates.

9.3. Normative foundation of solutions journalism questioned in practice

The first and the most important contribution of this study is that its findings question the sustainability of solutions journalism's normative foundation in practice, and the resourcefulness of the newsrooms to successfully implement its key ideas in today's complex media environment. This is done for the first time in solutions journalism and constructive journalism research. Until now, studies have taken the normative ideas of solutions journalism for granted – particularly its commitment to "rigorous coverage of solutions" (Solutions Journalism Network 2022b) – and did not critically explore if and how they manage to be implemented in practice of a particular newsroom and its solutions reporting output. This is important because its proponents use it as the main discourse for legitimising the

seriousness of the practice in the context of journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018, p. 12). Focusing on this question reveals that what the proponents hope solutions journalism to be is not always realised in practice – at least in the case of the BBC's project.

What the proponents and solutions journalists present as the main and complementary strengths of solutions reporting (Lough and McIntyre 2018; Powers and Curry 2019; McIntyre and Lough 2021) – being journalistically rigorous and dedicated to the highest journalistic standards, but also engaging audiences and regaining their trust by reporting on events that would not have been considered newsworthy before – turns out to be, in this case study, the main point of weakness. While solutions journalism and constructive journalism have been presented as practices that inherently know how to do both, findings show that for the BBC's practice this is not an easy task.

The normative struggle between the monitorial role and the constructive role of solutions journalism and constructive journalism (Aitamurto and Varma 2018) is also translated into the practice of solutions reporting at the BBC. Particularly, the normative promise of rigorous and critical coverage of solutions is not fulfilled in more than half of the BBC's solutions-focused video stories. The dominant focus is on the solution, its positive aspects, and its success, while the problem and other nuances of the solution which may be considered inherently negative are too often diluted, or entirely avoided. The other normative promise – that of solutions reporting being an engaging practice that inspires the audience by reporting on positive and successful responses to problems – imposes itself as the dominant goal of solutions-focused journalism in practice. The need to win over the audience's attention on social media proves to be more important than the shared sense of responsibility in this team to cover solutions in a meticulous way, and this significantly determines the ultimate shape of solutions-focused journalism in the context of the BBC's project.

In other words, practicing the ideals of solutions-focused journalism, keeping the tenets of 'good journalism', but at the same time successfully engaging the audience, proves to be hard work, or as Deuze (2019, p. 2) would say: "When the unit

of analysis becomes what news workers do and under which conditions they do it – a messy reality emerges." The findings of this study show that practicing solutions-focused journalism is indeed a 'messy reality' in which journalists and editors face multiple obstacles in their intention to critically present the solutions, adhere to the main values of their profession, their organisation; but also attract the young audience, pack the story into the most appealing format and adapt to the rules of the social media platform. Therefore, the normative foundation of solutions journalism, particularly its two goals of being rigorous and engaging at the same time, can be differently interpreted and implemented in practice. The intention to rigorously present solutions does not necessarily need to be translated into practice, and the promise of better audience engagement inherent in solutions journalism is interpreted in the context of a specific newsroom and its goals.

9.3.1. Factors crucial to how the solutions reporting ideas are interpreted and implemented

In this sense, the second contribution of this study is that it opens the debate about specific demands imposed on newsrooms, and in the production process, that determine the way a solutions reporting practice is understood and done. The complexities of the production process itself and the hierarchy of influences that have an impact on the way a story is chosen and made in a particular newsroom have not been identified or considered so far in studies of solutions journalism. This helps to understand the different opportunities and challenges that either support or disrupt the implementation of normative ideals behind these practices, and ultimately – at least in the case of the BBC – define them. As the findings of this study show, they significantly transform the way journalists intend to report their stories.

In the case of the *BBC People Fixing the World*, the key factors that shape solutions-focused journalism are measuring the level of audience engagement through audience metrics, and Facebook as the publication platform whose algorithms determine the format of the video story. I identified the focus on audience engagement – understood by this team primarily through the central and pervasive

role of audience metrics – as the main factor which disrupts the implementation of solutions journalism criteria that ensure that stories are told according to the highest journalistic standards. The need to produce engaging video stories that perform well on social media is central to the production process in this team. The journalists bend their values, but also their storytelling instincts, to appeal to its perceived audience and adapt to Facebook and its algorithm – in hope of more views, likes, shares and comments.

The findings evoke Kristensen's study, in which the author suggests a new news value that emerges in digital newsrooms today – the so-called "expected reception" which "reflects the different levels of influence the audience has on journalism in a digital age", particularly through digital platforms (2021, p. 16). Even though news values are not the focus of this study, its three dimensions are useful in terms of understanding the importance of the identified main factors that shape the way solutions-focused video stories are done in the BBC's team:

1) *Expected audience experience*: The team does stories which are expected to provide the audience with "a good experience" and make them feel positive about the story they watched, and subsequently, about the BBC.

2) *Expected audience behaviour*: Stories are done in such a way to appeal to the audience on a specific platform – in this case on Facebook – and inspire likes, shares, and comments, but also make them come back.

3) *Expected algorithmic behaviour*: Stories are told in a format that is "expected to be prioritised by social media algorithms/search algorithms" (Kristensen 2021, p. 16).

In this sense, the BBC's team chooses stories and makes them in a way that will primarily result in favourable audience metrics, and the expected reception turns out to be the leading value when solutions-focused video stories are made. The editors and journalists choose an approach that will make the audience feel overall positive and motivate it to be active on their Facebook page. The stories are, therefore, largely crafted according to the expectations of the social audience, and the expectations of the platform itself.

9.3.1.1. Factor 1: The ambiguous notion of audience engagement

The studies of the effects of solutions or constructive news stories are particularly interested if the highest goals of these practices are being fulfilled: that the audience members change their behaviour or express behavioural intentions of getting involved in a solution (McIntyre and Sobel 2017; Meier 2018; McIntyre 2019; Wenzel et al. 2018; Schäfer et al. 2022). However, the measure of engagement and success for this team is not if the audience gets actively involved in solutions – it is audience metrics. While in a survey carried out among solutions journalists, audience size and social media metrics were not a relevant measure of impact of their reporting (Powers and Curry 2019, p. 2249), in this newsroom they are most important – even though it is not something that the members of the team are happy about. Solutions-focused journalism is inevitably immersed in a news landscape of a social media platform, where the economy is "ruled by user attention" (Costera Meijer 2020, p. 391). The journalists and editors in this team focus on audience engagement numbers not because the aim of their newsroom is to engage them as citizens and contribute to democracy (Costera Meijer 2020, p. 392), but because they are adapting to a news environment where journalism functions more and more as a business (Kleis Nielsen 2020).

While the BBC's journalists and editors are overall not happy with this, the study confirms that journalistic norms are challenged online, and that what the audience wants, reflected in audience metrics, can significantly dictate what stories are reported on and in what way (Lee et al. 2014; Vu 2014; Tandoc Jr. 2015; Welbers et al. 2016), but also that it can negatively affect the quality of news (Fürst 2020). Additionally, this study confirms that the BBC's journalists also perceive chasing audiences and "pursuing journalism that will do good" as two opposing goals (Nelson and Tandoc 2019, p. 1973), and that audience metrics are perceived by journalists as a way to focus "on producing news that people want to know", rather than to orientate towards citizens and fulfilling journalism's democratic purposes (Belair-Gagnon et al. 2020, p. 348). But as findings in Chapter 6 showed, on the one hand, the team is constantly in search of new ways and formulas to make their videos a success, and on the other hand, they are not convinced that there is anything they can do to win over the audience on social media.

The difficulty in keeping the audience interested may be explained by the fact that, as Ferrer-Conill and Tandoc warn, editors and newsrooms are "constrained by the affordances of their tools", and audience metrics provide a "limited understanding of the audience, let alone having a dialogue with the audience" (2018, p. 448). Additionally, this team's central intention to make stories that young audience members on social media will find interesting, may not be fulfilled by focusing on metrics only. As Costera Meijer and Groot Kormelink argue, if and why people click (or watch) something on the web is much more complex and cannot be flatly assessed as the absence or presence of user's interest (2016, p. 346).

This finding about the BBC's distinct understanding of audience engagement in the context of this project contributes to a new debate in solutions journalism research – that the normative promise of audience engagement inherent in solutions journalism is in practice an ambiguous notion that can be interpreted on different levels in the context of specific newsrooms and their unique audience goals. The ideals of solutions journalism proponents – particularly the one about inspiring citizens to act in their communities and implement positive changes – do not necessarily need to be the leading idea that shapes how solutions are reported on in a particular newsroom. In this way, newsrooms can adopt the ideas of solutions reporting, but shape them in such a way that they match the purpose that the newsroom intended for it.

9.3.1.2. *Factor 2: Platform matters*

It is important to point out the role of publication platforms in the context of solutions reporting that emerged in this study, and that has not been considered before in the context of this practice. The heightened appeal that positive news has on social media (Al-Rawi 2019) suggests that stories about successful solutions are welcome on their platforms. However, solutions-focused journalism succumbs to the "phenomenon of platform dependency" (Meese and Hurcombe 2020, p. 2) and the team makes video stories in such a way that its priority is not reporting on what its members think is important, but what best addresses the platform's demands and meets the young audience's preferences.

This is the point where the demand of making the stories positive, interesting, and simple emerged as the most important feature of solutions-focused video stories for a young social audience. The video production of the BBC's project relies significantly on Facebook as the individual social media platform where audience engagement is to a large extent algorithmically shaped (Burgees and Hurcombe 2019, p. 362). Just as the team thought it found the right 'formula' for Facebook, the algorithm changed, while the journalists felt forced to continue playing by the platform's rules. Therefore, this study is yet more proof how an external platform "extends its influence to the journalistic field, with news organisations found to be adjusting to Facebook's internal rules" (Tandoc and Maitra 2018, p. 1691). In this sense, the *BBC People Fixing the World* is one of many newsrooms where "the presence of the audience in editorial decision-making processes continues to grow" (Ferrer-Conill and Tandoc 2018, p. 436), but more importantly, where journalists and editors "appropriate news values in compliance with the logic of the content curating social media algorithm" (Lischka 2021, p. 433).

In this sense, the team dominantly adapted a softer reporting approach that is typical of news stories shared on Facebook (Lamot 2022, p. 518). Omitting important information necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the solution because the team fears it will ruin the positive tone, choosing softer topics, and not complicating the narrative in order not to 'burden' the audience, are all related to the social media logic that the team adapted to in the production process. For this reason, the positive overtone of solutions-focused stories is their key feature, but also a slippery terrain in terms of the divide that journalists and editors make from the notions of producing 'just positive news'.

9.3.2.   On becoming positive news

Another related normative debate around solutions journalism that this study critically approaches for the first time is the way solutions reporting is positioned by its proponents in opposition to positive news. The proponents of solutions journalism, and the team at the BBC, identify positive news as a lower form of journalism that is characterised by a non-rigorous reporting approach, and can be

characterised as a so-called "puff piece" with the intention to "advance an agenda or make people feel good" (Bansal and Martin 2015, p. 7). While this is the most important discourse that the BBC's team uses in order to position solutions-focused journalism, the content of its videos paints a different picture, where the need to uphold a dominantly positive tone excludes many important elements – such as solution limitations, evidence, more comprehensive presentation of the problem and its cause – that lead to an incomplete presentation of the solution.

At this point, it is also important to get back to the BBC's document that states solutions-focused journalism is not hero worship, NGO puff pieces, magic bullets, advocation, or a "quirky or heart-warming 'and finally' piece" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 3). The lack of journalistic scrutiny in more than half of the stories, along with their efforts to make the stories uplifting, brings them closer to these types of stories. Therefore, this study shows that many of the stories produced by this team can indeed be considered positive or happy news stories about interesting solutions – what editors and journalists clearly said their stories are not. The main reason behind this unwanted transformation is the mentioned focus on audience engagement on social media.

The three distinct expectations of solutions-focused video stories – to be positive, interesting, and simple – means that the BBC's team recognised elements that make social media posts viral: positive news stories that inspire awe; unexpected, odd, or surprising; but also, that have social significance, so different people can find it relatable (Al-Rawi 2019, pp. 71-76). Additionally, the team also recognised the potential of shareability of positive news stories, which audience members may do either to present themselves to others in a better light, or to make themselves feel better (McIntyre and Gibson 2016). In other words, the central rationale in this team was to focus on positive emotions as a vehicle for making its videos shareable and engaging on Facebook. This is not surprising. Constructive journalism, solutions journalism, and other restorative narratives are considered to be "emotion-driven journalistic movements" that share a clear tendency to include positive emotions in their reporting, and therefore, inspire positive emotions and behaviours in the audience (Lecheler 2020, p. 288). In this sense, the BBC recognised the potential of solutions reporting to address the needs of its young audiences that are keen to find

out more about positive developments and solutions in the world (Scott 2015), and that are fed up with bad news. However, in the case of this project, the focus on creating and evoking positive emotions pushed to the side the intention to meticulously present the solutions.

Nevertheless, it is also important to stress that there is value to positive news stories, and that the BBC's solutions-focused video stories should not be dismissed because they are not always as rigorous as their makers hope them to be. Leung and Lee (2015, pp. 291-292) mention the significance of good news stories in terms of media's cultural role "in articulating, reflecting and reinforcing social norms and values", including stories about heroes, achievements, and virtue. Also, studies showing that audiences do appreciate news that make them feel better should not be disregarded, including negative stories with a 'silver lining' approach (McIntyre and Gibson 2016). However, it should not be overlooked that many of the stories in the sample still *do* fulfil all the solutions journalism criteria and are proof that a solutions-focused video story can still be positive and present a solution in a more comprehensive way.

Most importantly, the notion that solutions stories "are not positive news, or journalism aimed at uplifting audiences, although they may invoke positive emotions" (Thier 2021, p. 49), cannot entirely be applied to the BBC's solutions-focused video stories. The debate around constructive journalism being an object of "ill-informed or derisory interpretations reducing the notion to 'uncritical reporting' or simply 'happy news'" (Mast et al. 2019, p. 496) seems to extend to solutions-focused journalism, as well. Therefore, presenting solutions-focused journalism strictly as a *rigorous* journalistic practice is inaccurate, and this normative notion should also not be taken at face value.

In this way, by showing that in practice it is a lot less journalistically rigorous than in theory or than the journalists want them to be, this study highlights perhaps the most controversial debate within solutions and constructive journalism: that without enough caution, these ideas can create a loophole for proliferation of stories that have nothing to do with austere journalism standards. As the findings of this study show, many of the BBC's stories can be identified as pieces of positive news stories,

instead of journalistically 'rigorous' reports. This contributes to the debate about the legitimacy of solutions journalism, constructive journalism and similar practices that are presented as a remedy for negative news, dedicated to the highest standards of reporting.

9.4. Storytelling and creating narrative engagement in solutions reporting

Furthermore, the goal of solutions reporting to engage the audience is also explored for the first time in the context of the development of narrative engagement or involvement in the production of solutions stories. In this way, the study contributes to understanding the way solutions narratives are structured and identifying the storytelling strategies that are used to achieve the first level of engagement – grab the audience's attention and make it interested in the solution. In this way, this research also contributes to studies of the new user-engaging storytelling formats on social media, especially in the context of digital video.

In the case of the BBC's project, I encountered a paradox. On the one hand, the team focuses on engaging the audience on social media to like, comment, and share the videos, and tries to adapt to its preferences and the platform to achieve this. On the other hand, striving for good engagement numbers has pushed them towards making storytelling choices that the journalists themselves find counter-intuitive, but that are also not in line with the established storytelling postulates of creating and developing tension in the narrative – an important element of inspiring the audience to be intrigued and keep watching the video story. Additionally, even though journalists want to make their stories relatable, they are also cautious not to turn their stories into typical human-interest stories. For this reason, they decide to make stories that are dominantly idea-led, and, therefore, the potential of creating emotional engagement through characters that drive the narrative is reduced. This is a surprising choice because Facebook and social media favour human-interest topics (Lischka and Werning 2017, cited in Lishcka 2021, p. 432). Additionally, the demands of simplification and positivity negatively reflect on the informative quality of the BBC's stories, but also on the implementation of engaging storytelling strategies.

Instead of using established storytelling strategies or including strong characters, it is the 'power of the idea' that emerges as the main driving force in solutions-focused storytelling, the one that should prompt the 'wow' effect in audience members and keep them exalted throughout the whole duration of a story. This is an important finding for solutions journalism storytelling, but at the same time almost ironical, as the name of the BBC's project implies it is about *people* who are fixing the world. Here, I identify avoiding characters in solutions-focused stories as the perceived "risk of increasing narrativity" leading to a potential "thematic imbalance" between the solution and the person, and the mentioned fear of "oversimplification" when the story is personalised (Machill et al. 2007, p. 186). In these kinds of stories, it is the solution that is given specific character traits that will hopefully inspire and draw the audience, not people. This argument about the power of the solution idea should not be disregarded, because as one study found, the story topic was a decisive factor in increased effects of a solutions story, regardless of photo orientation (Dahmen et al. 2019, p. 282).

The focus, therefore, becomes the attraction – surprising and impressing the audience with a brilliant solution, or the 'power of the idea', while storytelling strategies that evoke either curiosity, suspense, or surprise are seldom used. In this way, there is less potential to develop a plot, or to increase narrativity. The journalists' pursuit for simplicity and positivity decreases the chance of critically presenting the problem-solving process, but also of developing dramaturgy, and creating a plot that would further engage the audience. In this sense, if a plot is understood as the vital element of storytelling – along with characters and structure (Emde et al. 2016, pp. 608-609) – then it is also fair to ask if some of the solutions-focused video stories can be considered a *story* at all. Therefore, the distinct features of solutions-focused video stories often result in an incomplete picture of the solution, and additionally counter the established rules of storytelling and the use of successful storytelling strategies that keep the story interesting.

However, it is also important to note that attracting the audience's attention with an impressive idea at the beginning of a story is not the same as storytelling. Ekström distinguished between three basic intentions of TV journalists when they are addressing their audience: to offer information, storytelling, and *attractions* "that are

spectacular, shocking or extraordinary enough to attract and fascinate presumptive viewers" (2000, p. 467). While the basis for audience involvement in storytelling is the "lust for adventure, the pleasure of hearing a story, the propensity to empathise, to experience suspense and drama", in attraction it is the "lust to gaze, the allure of pictures that make a strong impression, seeing something out of the ordinary, something spectacular, suppressed and/or forbidden" (Ekström 2000, p. 468). Thus, I assess the first and most common introduction to solutions-focused video stories as Ekström's "staging of attractions" (2000, p. 477) – presenting a solution, both visually and textually, in such a way that the allure is more important than the information.

Further, the identified formula of the typical narrative structure in the BBC's solutions-focused stories additionally confirms the journalists' intention to simplify the story for social media and use a linear form of storytelling that the young social audience prefers (Kuklarni et al. 2022). However, the need to attract the audience at the beginning of the story by immediately presenting the solution and its main ideas, spoils the potential suspense that a linear narrative can evoke (Knobloch et al. 2004, p. 262). As was seen in Chapter 6, the journalists and editors pointed out that they did not feel that they managed to find a way to keep the audience's attention until the end of their videos, regardless of the efforts they were investing in 'cracking' the enigma posed by the Facebook's algorithm and the short attention span of audiences on social media platforms.

I argue that the role of storytelling is crucial in the creation of understanding and context for each solution that is presented. Contrary to this team's fears, more information about the solution and the problem may create more opportunities for narrative tension and therefore increase interest within the storyline, which journalists on the team identified as their biggest challenge in terms of storytelling. Also, it would expand the space where the audience could critically evaluate the solution. Ultimately, this would create a real *problem-solving* narrative in which solution is not just there to be admired but also questioned. As the study by Machill et al. (2007) showed, the use of different narrative devices to present the news improves audience retention and comprehension. Additionally, studies confirmed that young audiences prefer "narrative storytelling" (Zerba 2008; Sambrook 2019).

Moreover, the identified linear narrative format for social media constructed by this team can be disrupted and contain nonlinear sequencing, but can also subsequently be reinstated. This way, it remains linear but complicates the narrative "in interesting ways" (Richardson 2000, p. 685), thus increasing the audience's interest. From this perspective, what the interviewees perceive as 'complication' in the narrative – for example dwelling on the drawbacks of a solution – would not necessarily obstruct its linearity or make a story less interesting.

This way, along with the uplifting tone, I also suggest a parallel critical tone in solutions storytelling, which I argue is useful for a comprehensive presentation and understanding of the solution, but also for narrative tension and interest in the story. Some of the stories presented in Chapter 8 are proof that the positive and the critical tones do not exclude each other, but function together as a narrative device that widens the audience's perspective of the solution, and like in the study of local news programmes by Lang et al. (2003), makes the story more memorable, while not reducing audience attention or interest.

Therefore, this study opens the question of storytelling in solutions journalism and how narratives can be produced to achieve the most important promise of this practice – engage the audience and make it care about the solution. The identification of the main points of narrative tension in solutions narratives, the role of characters, and the importance of the solutions idea itself to attract the audience's attention may function as a useful starting point for other future studies that will explore the storytelling strategies in solutions narratives, and the effects that they can produce.

More importantly, the findings of this study contribute to understanding the factors that impact solutions storytelling. The way stories are told is also dependent on the newsroom's goals, the intended audience, and the chosen publication platform, and therefore, the development of narrative engagement should be examined in the unique context of the factors that drive and impact the production process of solutions reporting.

9.5.   Solutions journalism guidelines re-evaluated

Another contribution of this study is the design of an analytical framework for researching a solutions reporting practice (presented in Chapter 4). It was made based on the academic (McIntyre and Lough 2021), but also professional guidelines of solutions journalism (Bansal and Martin 2015; Solutions Journalism Network 2022d), and of the BBC's solutions-focused journalism (Kasriel 2016a). This framework was designed to study the BBC's practice but can be used as the starting point for examining the implementation of solutions journalism ideas in any other newsroom.

Thus, the present study is the first one to test the implementation of the so far only academically operationalised list of solutions journalism guidelines:

- "The story should include the cause(s) of a social problem but should be framed in a way that gives more weight to a response to that problem. In other words, the problem-solving process must be central to the narrative, meaning the story should include more information about the response than about the problem. The response might be mentioned in the lead. If not, it is mentioned high up in the story so that readers know it is the focus of the story.
- The response must be tangible, not hypothetical.
- The story should be rigorous and comprehensive. To do so, it should include the 'who, what, when, where, why' elements, but should pay special attention to *how* the response is implemented.
- The story should include hard evidence of the impact of the response. Hard evidence means reliable data, not anecdotal information.
- The story should explain the limitations of the response.
- The story should include mobilizing information, or information audiences can use, and specifically information about how audiences can contribute to the solution or otherwise act in a way that supports social change" (McIntyre and Lough 2021, p. 1568).

However, in the analytical framework that I designed for my study, I do not refer to them as guidelines, but solutions journalism *criteria*, because – as I explained in

Chapter 4 – criteria are a standard by which something should be judged, while guidelines are precise details about how this standard should be implemented. Based on the study of the presence and implementation of the solutions journalism criteria in the BBC's team and in the solutions-focused video stories, I suggest a more refined operationalisation of McIntyre and Lough's guidelines.

Here, I present a list of two sets of solutions journalism criteria and the related guidelines that should be implemented in any story that wants to be considered a solutions-focused or a solutions story:

a) Reporting about the solution

    1. Presentation and explanation of the problem and its cause

The story should include and explain the problem, the cause, and the context in which it arises. The cause of the problem should be treated as integral to problem presentation, yet also as an element that needs to be separately presented and explained – not implied. Different perspectives on the problem and its effects should be presented so that the audience has all relevant information to evaluate the appropriateness of the solution.

    2. Presentation of a tangible solution that exists and is actively implemented

The story should present a solution that is not an idea but is implemented in real life. The solution itself may not be physically tangible if it is, for example, a policy, but its results need to be tangible and visible. The story must explain what the solution is, including where, when and by whom it was both invented and implemented.

    3. Explanation of how the solution is implemented

The story should present and explain the problem-solving process. This includes details on *how* a solution works and how it responds to the problem and its different aspects.

    4. Presentation and explanation of evidence of solution effectiveness

The evidence of solutions effectiveness and impact can have different levels and quality – it can be reliable, hard evidence, or anecdotal evidence; it can be

independent or dependent on the solution inventor, and it can be numerical or descriptive. These details should be made clear to the audience, along with when there is no evidence.

5. Presentation and explanation of solution limitations

The story should present and explain all relevant limitations or downsides of a solution, and limitations in the actual implementation of the solution. The limitations of the solution can be related also to the reach and the impact of the solution in terms of responding to the problem.

6. Inclusion of sources who have direct experience with the solution

This includes the people who invented the solution, those who provide the solution, or those who receive and implement the solution in their lives. However, the story should also present sources who have direct experience of the problem as well. The story should also present any relevant criticism or opponents of solution implementation, including response or feedback to this criticism. Also, it is important to include experts who can independently evaluate the solution and its different aspects.

Additionally, a solutions story may include the following:

7. Presentation of a teachable lesson or insight that shows how the world works and how it can be improved

Insight in a solution story can be an invitation to critically think about the impact or the scale of the solution, or the provision of hope about the future of the solution and its progress. A teachable lesson can be presentation of the benefits that the application of the solution can bring, or the story about how the solution is implemented, presented as a series of steps and explanations how a solution can be effective in solving the problem if it is applied elsewhere.

8. Presentation of information about how audience members can get involved or find out more about the solution

This criterion was not supported by the BBC's team and was not implemented in their stories, so I cannot present a guideline based on the results of this study.

Nevertheless, I am keeping it here because it was an important aspect for the solutions journalists interviewed by McIntyre and Lough (2021).

b) Solutions storytelling

Second, I significantly modified the understanding of the guidelines related to storytelling in solutions journalism. A solutions story should adhere to the following storytelling criteria and the related guidelines:

9. The problem-solving process central to the narrative

The story needs to develop an active relationship between the problem and the solution in the narrative. In this sense, the problem should not be isolated in the narrative, and the focus should not be solely on the solution description. This relationship may increase the narrativity in the story, but also help the audience to evaluate the response and its effectiveness more effectively and critically in relation to different aspects of the problem. In this sense, different storytelling strategies to engage the audience may be used throughout the story; however, this should not be done at the cost of the comprehensiveness and accuracy of problem and solution presentation.

10. Presentation of the solution early in the story

The response should be mentioned early in the story so that the audience knows it is the focus of the story, but this does not mean that all the important information about the solution should be presented immediately. Different storytelling strategies may be used to arouse interest in audience members and persuade them to stay with the story.

11. Focus on the solution, but tell it through people

Diversity of personal perspectives, views, and experiences of both the problem and the solution contributes to a comprehensive portrayal of the solution and the problem-solving process. However, the difference between fact and opinion should be made clear (BBC 2019a, p.47). Solutions may be presented through one or multiple characters who are a vital storytelling element because they can drive the narrative and make the story more relatable for the audience. However,

all other solutions journalism reporting criteria also need to be respected so the story does not slip into hero worship.

The presented guidelines may be used in research of solutions reporting, but also as a practical checklist in newsrooms that implement solutions journalism.

9.6. Advancing the theoretical framework of visual solutions journalism

This study also contributes to advancing the first theoretical framework of visual solutions journalism by Midberry and Dahmen (2020). Focusing on videos for the first time, it helps to identify additional nuances of visual representation in solutions stories. According to the existent framework, visuals should be comprehensive, precise, and humanising. In their framework, the authors are trying to maintain a balance between suggesting a rigorous visual portrayal in solutions stories and avoiding "compassion fatigue" (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, pp. 1164, 1166). It seems that this is exactly what the BBC's team was trying to do but ended up visually and textually under-representing the problem and the solution limitations, and putting emphasis on the solution. Nevertheless, this finding has useful implications for the theoretical framework.

First, the element of making visual solutions journalism comprehensive – so that it includes both the problem and the solution – becomes more complicated in video. The findings of this study show that the problem, while visually represented, is still significantly visually under-represented in comparison with the solution. The response and how it works is visually more dominant and salient in the BBC's solutions-focused stories. This can be considered problematic because an overemphasis on the solution "runs the risk of giving the impression that the problems are resolved" (Wenzel et al. 2016, cited in Midberry and Dahmen 2020, p. 1164), and therefore, the audience can also make that conclusion.

Additionally, the question is raised whether visually isolating the problem in videos, and not relating it later to the visuals of the solution, contributes to a comprehensive visual representation in a solutions story. The importance of comprehensive portrayal of both the problem and the solution was connected by Midberry and Dahmen (2020, p. 1164) with rigour and thoroughness of solutions journalism. In this

case, and based on the findings of narrative analysis, I argue that comprehensiveness in the context of visual solutions journalism should be expanded to building a visually more dynamic relationship between the problem, the solution, and its various aspects throughout the video story. In this sense, a comprehensive visual representation should include a visual representation of the cause of the problem, the context in which the problem arose, but also the use of these visuals as an active component next to the visuals of the solution. This would help create a visually more active relationship between the problem and the solution, and perhaps help the audience to understand better the effectiveness and the applicability of the solution, and how it responds to the problem.

Second, I argue that the element of precision in visual solutions journalism should be expanded to congruence between the text and the visuals in solutions stories. While Midberry and Dahmen (2020, p. 1165) relate being precise to visually "accurately" presenting the story – in the right context and using the original visuals – I argue that precision is also needed in the way journalists create meaning through the visuals and text that are used in the videos to present specific solutions journalism elements. This means that the choice of visuals and text should form a congruent message, a fixed meaning, and that there should be no contradictions that may "create a different gestalt interpretation than from the story alone" (Lough and McIntyre 2019, p. 586). Particular caution should be dedicated to the need to keep an uplifting tone in solutions stories, and therefore, make sure that this tendency does not compromise the accuracy of both textual and visual representation of the problem, the solution, and its various aspects. This means that, for example, textual presentation of solutions limitations should be also visually represented, and other visuals that downplay the importance and the severity of the limitations should not be used.

Third, the element of making visual solutions journalism humanising means that "the ideal is to also include emotive, relatable images of people engaged in solutions to offer people hope" (Midberry and Dahmen 2020, p. 1166). However, the authors warn against overwhelming the audience with images of suffering, and therefore, implicitly suggest the salience of portraying people who are successfully solving the problem or implementing the solution. I suggest that the humanising element should include

both the visual representation of personal experiences of the problem and the solution, particularly the process of solving the issue. This would also be more comprehensive, and at the same time, help the audience to relate with the characters in the story and understand better what is presented. Additionally, in the context of humanising visuals, it is important to note that just because a person is visually represented, it does not make it automatically 'humanising'. As the findings of this study showed, people are often used as voices that present the solution, rather than characters that help with narrative development and inspire the audience to connect with the story.

9.7.   Solutions-focused journalism at the BBC

This study contributes to the research of solutions journalism as it offers the first conceptualisation of solutions-focused journalism at the BBC, though limited to the context of the BBC's project and its video production unit. Here, it is useful to get back to the quote from one of the journalists in the team, presented in Chapter 6: those who think that reporting about solutions should be done exclusively in the way that the Solutions Journalism Network conceptualised it, may consider *BBC People Fixing the World* as a team that at times practices the "dark arts" of solutions journalism.

The BBC's mission to act in the public interest – the provision of "information that assists people to better comprehend or make decisions on matters of public importance" and the prevention of "people being misled by the statements or actions of individuals or organisations" (BBC 2019a, pp. 14-15) – is not always reflected in its solutions-focused video stories. The audience is often not presented with a comprehensive recount of the problem and the solution, as the journalists focus on the simplicity of presentation and on keeping a dominantly positive tone. Therefore, the information necessary to make an informed assessment of a solution is not always provided. Cornered by the perceived audience's preferences, the rules of Facebook and its algorithms, the need to make the video stories visually attractive, short, and the ultimate goal of reporting good numbers and making the project a success, the central endeavour of this team distilled into focusing on engagement

rather than the quality of journalism, and therefore, it uses the ideas of solutions reporting primarily as a tool for boosting audience metrics. This is not a conclusion that could have been made if the study focused only on the journalists' and editors' notions of solutions-focused journalism.

The biggest factor which shaped this practice turns out to be the BBC itself. The striving for the project's success on social media and the chase for views, likes and shares, stems from the BBC's efforts "to attract and retain younger audiences", which is key to the public broadcaster's sustainability today (Ofcom 2019, pp. 3, 8), both in terms of its financial future and its mission. While the central focus on audience engagement "has carried with it an implicit orientation toward for-profit media" (Belair-Gagnon et al. 2019, p. 562), in the case of the BBC, I identify it as a way to "renew the appeal of public service broadcasting" (Enil 2008, cited in Belair-Gagnon et al. 2019, p. 562) by trying to produce content that this audience will find both relevant and interesting. Even though this does not automatically translate into winning over future licence fee payers as *BBC People Fixing the World* does not focus exclusively on the UK audience, I identify it as part of the public broadcaster's wider audience engagement strategy which contributes to the creation of the BBC's distinct image and lasting relationship with the new generations.

For this reason, I argue that setting up solutions-focused journalism at the BBC is more about improving business than, as the BBC's *Toolkit* states, an attempt to improve the quality of journalism at the broadcaster and "help the public have a more accurate understanding of the world and enable them to make better judgements" (Kasriel 2016a, p. 5). It is a reaction to the BBC's efforts to successfully compete and remain relevant in the market, and connect with the audience. Here, the quality of this relationship, and the success of this project, is measured primarily through audience metrics. This is so important that the current editor, when asked what the hopes for the future of the *BBC People Fixing the World* project are, highlighted "better audience engagement". However, the imperative of audience engagement proves to be an obstacle for many journalists in the team, and it is the main reason they give to justify the lack of rigour or context in their solutions-focused video stories, which is the central notion of solutions journalism and other socially responsible practices.

Further, the way that solutions-focused journalism is conceptualised in this team evokes the warning by Amiel and Powers that "journalism models" such as solutions journalism have the potential to become a tool "designed for marketing purposes" (2019, p. 243) that may diminish and erode the quality of journalism. However, in this case, the solutions-focused video stories inadvertently became promotional videos of different organisations and people behind specific solutions – not because this is the goal of the BBC's team, but because the omission of important elements of rigorous portrayal of the solution may create this impression. If they were published without the BBC's banner, many of the stories that I analysed could be seen as fun and positive promotional videos depicting interesting solutions. The focus on attractive visuals, along with the uplifting tone that shows the solution and people around it in the best possible light, contributes to a solution presentation that would also work well in marketing.

In this way, the "strong ethos of public service broadcasting free of commercial pressures" (Johnson 2021, p. 112) is endangered by the need to compete in the race for audience's attention. This study confirms that – at least in this case – the BBC does not really know how to deal with its "existential crisis" as a public broadcaster and does not offer "a distinctive service compared to market-driven media" (Cushion 2022, p. 4). This is in line with Freedman, who says that the PBS in the UK "have failed to adequately safeguard their future in an environment marked by constant technological change and an increasingly distrustful audience" (2020, p.1). Even though the broadcaster's overall efforts "to build stronger links with younger audiences" have improved (Ofcom 2021, p. 3), the findings of this study show that the way this 'link' is built by this solutions-focused project does not fulfil solutions journalism's goals of being both rigorous and engaging. The BBC's praised "ability to entertain with a grand ambition to inform, educate, stimulate and enrich", and in this way treat the audience "as citizens rather than consumers" (Barnett and Seaton 2010, cited in Hendy 2013, p.103), is not reflected in its solutions-focused video stories. Also, the "distinct civic value" of empowering citizens "to participate in the democratic process", which is the most important value of the BBC's journalism (Chivers and Allan 2022, pp. 17-18), is not reflected in the solutions-focused video stories.

Therefore, solutions-focused journalism in this team is conceptualised as instrumental to achieving the organisation's audience goals. The ideas of solutions journalism, while relevant to journalists and editors and their notions of how solutions-focused journalism should be practiced, are transformed when met with the demands of the audience and the publication platform. The positive overtone of solutions stories is used as the main vehicle for engaging the audience, but it often overshadows the need to rigorously pick apart solutions.

9.7.1.   Solutions reporting in the context of public broadcasters

The main question here is if solutions journalism, practiced and interpreted as it is in the BBC's team, is the solution to public broadcasters' aims of staying relevant and of finding solutions to their uncertain future. This is important because, for public service media, "relevance often equals existence" (Public Media Alliance 2022). As Gardner puts it, "the challenge for public broadcasters is to figure out how to artfully, strategically insert themselves into a crowded, competitive, private sector-dominant global media landscape in a way that understands that people have many options, and that the purpose of public media is to provide value where marketers can't or won't" (2017, p. 13). Public broadcasters have been in search of ways to remain relevant and distinctive in the eyes of their audiences, particularly young people who they have been struggling to reach online (Schulz et al. 2019, p. 19), and for which broadcasters constantly need to innovate in order to address their changing preferences and behaviours (Sambrook 2019).

While Hermans and Drok optimistically said constructive journalism can help media "accomplish its public service function" (2018, p. 688), as this study shows, this function is inevitably immersed in a particular set of demands, expectations, and changes. This study shows that in practice journalists compete for audience's attention online, and can easily slip into making light, happy news stories without the necessary journalistic 'rigour' that is important to public broadcasters, and that contributes to the democratic value of news, particularly its "informative quality" of helping people understand the world and actively participate in democratic processes in their societies (Cushion 2012, p. 2). In this way, these practices –

particularly their promise of offering audiences news that is inherently more positive – in practice, may be an appealing tool to attract audiences but may not automatically contribute to the public value of public service media (Chivers and Allan 2022). In this sense, I argue that solutions stories would be more valuable to public broadcasters and to audiences if their priority is quality engagement through which public broadcasters promote democratic participation (Council of Europe 2009, p. 6), and not just any kind of engagement.

In this sense, storytelling may be a useful device to achieve this. As I already argued, a better understanding of the narrative, of the value of narrative tension and of developing characters could help journalists and editors at public broadcasters to find new ways of successfully approaching younger audiences, while upholding the highest standards of their profession. As some of the stories by the BBC in this study showed, this is possible, and there are ways to strengthen a solutions narrative and potentially make it more interesting and engaging for the audiences.

Therefore, the results of this study, especially the identified obstacles to implementing the highest standards that matter to journalists, are a useful warning sign and even guidance to other public broadcasters that see constructive, solutions journalism or related practices as an approach to get closer to their diverse young audiences. Doing solutions reporting that is distinctive, relevant, and engaging, means maintaining a difficult balance that can easily, but not necessarily derail the purpose of public broadcasters. In this way, the study urges that another important debate be opened in the research of solutions journalism and related practices – how public broadcasters implement them and balance the need to fulfil their public service value and remain relevant, particularly among young audiences.

9.8.   Studying solutions journalism and related practices

Moreover, this study shows that conceptualising a journalistic practice based on how it is presented by those who practice it or those who promote it – the way research has been done so far – should be reconsidered. While normative notions of what a certain practice should be do function as guidance for practitioners in their work, the definitions offered by the Solutions Journalism Network, Constructive Institute, or other similar organisations should be critically examined through

academic studies of actual practices in specific newsrooms. Even though the ideas of these practices are present in the minds of journalists, editors, and even journalism lecturers; the way they interpret them is merely one part of the answer to the question what these practices actually are.

In this way, my study contributes to research that aims to academically position related practices by suggesting an inductive, rather than deductive approach. It adds to the literature on conceptualisation of these practices by making a shift within the domain of studying solutions reporting, as it is the first one that seeks to conceptualise a practice by taking into consideration both sides of the production process – the stories and those who make them.

While this approach is certainly not new within journalism studies in general, it is new in the area of constructive and solutions journalism research. Lough and McIntyre (2021a, p. 11) systematise existent studies and suggest four new directions in research – examining audience effects and theory, internationalisation of the field beyond Europe and the US, establishing a definition of solutions journalism as a form of constructive journalism, and using the Journalistic Compass framework by Peter Bro. With my study, I open and further suggest another future direction in constructive and solutions journalism studies: the use of an inductive approach – looking at the practice itself, the stories, and the context of story production to better understand these practices and the viability of the ideas behind them.

9.8.1. Limitations and future studies

In addition to this study's contributions, it is equally important to stress its limitations. This is a small case study of a team that practices solutions reporting. It touches upon many different areas of solutions journalism, but any broad conclusions about the practice, or even about solutions-focused journalism at the BBC for that matter, cannot be made. However, the findings of this study are a strong indication of the obstacles that these practices may face in the implementation of their main ideas.

Nevertheless, focusing on only one specific case of solutions reporting at one public broadcaster may be narrow, but it is valuable for two reasons. First, focusing on the

BBC, which still holds a significant international reputation in terms of maintaining the highest journalistic standards, helps to assess the potential and the challenges that these practices may face at the newsroom level – regardless of the specific conditions in which other newsrooms function, and which may have a smaller scope or more modest resources than the BBC. Second, the ideas of constructive journalism were originally developed at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation and were taken on by many members of the European Broadcasting Union. In this sense, looking at one specific case of a public broadcaster may be valuable guidance to other broadcasters that share the same mission, but also the same problems. Newsrooms that practice constructive or solutions journalism inevitably start from the same ideas that the BBC started from, but also, along the way, mimic each other and draw lessons from each other's experiences with this type of journalism.

In this sense, future research should further examine the role and scope of solutions journalism and related practices in the context of public broadcasters, particularly in the context of fulfilling the public service mission. Within this, studies should employ a more comprehensive approach of studying solutions journalism and related practices in the context of specific newsrooms, and not take journalists' perceptions and interpretations for granted. Therefore, studying both sides of the production process is essential. Employing ethnography as a method to explore different conditions that impact the implementation of solutions journalism ideas in a newsroom would also be a valuable approach that I could not employ in this study because of the access restrictions amidst the Covid pandemic.

Additionally, even though this study expands McIntyre and Lough's 'rigour' in solutions journalism (2021) to include the importance of covering the problem and its cause, this notion remains ambiguous and should be further explored in the context of solutions journalism, but also other socially responsible journalistic practices, along with what needs to be done in the production process of solutions stories to ensure it is implemented. Also, the notion of insight that the Solutions Journalism Network (2020) deems important – particularly how this is achieved in the making of solutions stories – should also be further explored because it is, as I pointed out in Chapter 5 and later in the findings presented in Chapter 7, an ambiguous notion that is not easy to identify or to measure.

Another important limitation of this study is that it focuses only on the production side of solutions reporting at the BBC, while it does not examine how the audience engages with these stories – particularly young people who are the target audience of this project, and who differ across age, education level, gender, but – in this case – also country. Even though many studies so far have focused on audience reception of solutions journalism and constructive journalism, as Lough and McIntyre pointed out, research should further explore if this kind of reporting "indeed has distinct effects" (2021a, p. 14). In this sense, future studies should also explore narrative engagement among audiences and how different storytelling techniques in either solutions or constructive stories may enhance the normative goals of these practices – make the audience feel a certain way, but more importantly, inspire it to act. Also, the perception of solutions journalism and related practices and their ideas should be explored particularly among young audience members in order to identify how stories can be made both relevant and engaging for this diverse group.

Further, the exclusive focus on video in this study, including storytelling techniques in this format, may be considered a limitation of this study, because it presumes a very niche approach to studying ways of connecting with the audience, which does not have to be the same for solutions stories across different formats, platforms, but also audiences. Nevertheless, the study does point to unique audience engagement strategies as vital factors in terms of implementing the normative ideals of solutions reporting, which other studies before did not consider.

Moreover, my experience as a practising journalist influenced my understanding of effective storytelling techniques and the choice of authors who describe them. This may be considered a limitation, though I think that my practical experience adds a further dimension to the study. Nevertheless, as audiences have been changing and journalists have been developing new innovative formats to address their preferences – what was considered effective storytelling before, or when I was a journalism student, does not necessarily need to be the only way to engage the audience today. In this study, the BBC's team tried a new way, but found that it was not very successful as it hoped to grab and keep the audience's attention. Therefore, studies should explore the different types of narrative engagement that newsrooms want to achieve in their solutions reporting, and the ways in which this engagement

is crafted in solutions narratives. Also, the power of the solutions idea as a narrative device itself should be further studied, both in terms of practicing solutions reporting, and audience reception.

As regards studying visual solutions journalism, the limitation of this study is that it focuses on a video format in the limited context of one project and the specific digital platform it is intended for. Even though the findings were useful for refining the theoretical framework by Midberry and Dahmen (2020), future studies should investigate what visual meanings are created in other video formats, and the different nuances in congruence between text and video, including the effects it can create in audience members, including narrative involvement and comprehension.

The final limitation of this study that I identify is that it did not focus on other factors that shape a specific journalistic practice and that were beyond the scope of this study. Here, the focus was only on the factors that the journalists and editors raised in the interviews and deemed relevant in the context of solutions reporting in their newsroom. Future studies should examine, for example, the political, cultural, or economical context of solutions reporting practices at the BBC and in other newsrooms, which may help to position these practices in a wider perspective, and to better understand editorial decisions in terms of audience engagement, along with the obstacles that stop journalists and editors from implementing their own, and their organisation's editorial values.

9.9. Final conclusions

The most important finding of this study, and a contribution to this field of journalism studies, is that solutions journalism encounters in practice the same obstacles that other journalism does, and that neither this practice, their proponents, nor the BBC, have found a way to overcome them. This study shows that the promise of solutions-focused journalism, but also of solutions and constructive journalism, to make journalism more accurate and complete can easily fail to be fulfilled. Solutions journalism is trying to make journalism better, yet in the design of its normative foundation its proponents did not take into consideration the hierarchy of influences (Reese and Shoemaker 2016) or the fast-changing nature of the audience

preferences – particularly on digital platforms – that have been not only limiting the capacity of journalism to fulfil its democratic purposes, but that question the very purpose of this practice today. In this case, it is these influences which prevent the BBC's team from implementing their ideas of good solutions-focused journalism in practice. In this sense, there is also the question of the sustainability of other related socially responsible journalism practices that share the mission of supporting citizen participation and social change by reporting beyond the problem-based narrative (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021a). Their dedication to rigorous journalism – being "thorough, accurate, fair and transparent" (McIntyre Hopkinson and Dahmen 2021c, p. 172) – is commendable, but their proponents still do not offer specific strategies of tackling the "increasing turbulence and change" within the profession (Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2016, p. 809).

But perhaps the more important question that arises is if the criticisms of journalism, not just at the BBC, can be addressed by constructive and solutions journalism's main goal – showing that the world is also full of hope and optimism? Can just changing the story solve, or somehow avoid the problems of journalism? Based on the findings of this study, I argue that the decision to change the story and focus on what is positive does not automatically make journalism better nor does it solve the challenges it has been facing. It does focus on events, people and stories that are inherently more positive, but does that help people who have been avoiding the news to be more informed about the world, or does it just make them feel better? Is this the new purpose of journalism? These are the questions that future studies interested in the boundaries of journalism need to explore. While some solutions journalism proponents would say that solutions stories may inspire people to act and to face the negativity and the issues in their community, for now this is only wishful thinking as there is still no proof of this, while solutions journalism proponents have yet not found a way to measure the impact and "social outcomes" of solutions reporting (Powers and Curry 2019, p. 2253). Its evidence of this for now remains largely anecdotal.

In conclusion, solutions-focused journalism and related practices should, therefore, either redefine their scope, or develop concrete ways of ensuring successful implementation of their ideas in practice. If they fail to do so, there may be more

examples of newsrooms which use the discourses of these practices for better audience engagement, but are under different pressures which prevent them from investing the same amount of effort to maintain the highest level of reporting.

Additionally, in my active engagement with solutions journalism research in the last six years, I have noticed that the researchers themselves sometimes function as proponents of this practice in their papers and that they somewhat romanticise the ideas of socially responsible journalism practices. Even though I fell in love with constructive journalism at first sight, perhaps other researchers should also shift their focus to studying the production side of solutions reporting and similar practices in the context of newsrooms for two reasons. First, to remind themselves that love is beautiful, but it is also blind. Second, based on their findings, to develop strategies that will make solutions journalism ideas sustainable and move them away from falling into the 'dark arts' category.

REFERENCES

Ahva, L. 2022a. Socially Responsible Journalism: Diverse Responses to Polarisation. In: Allan, S. ed. *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism*. 2nd edition [Unpublished]. Oxon and New York: Routledge, Chapter 36.

Ahva, L. 2022b. *Nordic Forum Talk 13: What "social responsibility"? Dialogue with Karen McIntyre and Laura Ahva*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV3BdvcknpQ&ab_channel=Sovittelujournalism i [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Aitamurto, T. and Varma, A. 2018. The Constructive Role of Journalism. *Journalism Practice*, pp. 1-19. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2018.1473041

Albaek, E., van Dalen, A., Jebril, N. and de Vreese, C.H. 2014. *Political journalism in comparative perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Alderson, M. 2020. Connecting with Audiences Through Character Emotions. *Writers Store* 24 November. Available at: https://writersstore.com/blogs/news/connecting-with-audiences-through-character-emotions [Accessed: 07 September 2022].

Alexander, B. 2017. *The new digital storytelling: creating narratives with new media*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger.

Allam, R. 2019. Constructive Journalism in Arab Transitional Democracies: Perceptions, Attitudes, and Performance. *Journalism Practice* 13(10), pp. 1273-1293.

Allsop, J. 2022. On the grim news cycle, and shutting it out. *Columbia Journalism Review* 19 July. Available at: https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/abortion_uvalde_news_avoidance.php [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

Al-Rawi, A. 2019. Viral News on Social Media. *Digital Journalism* 7(1), pp. 63-79. doi: 10.1080/21670811.2017.1387062

Amiel, P. and Powers, M. 2019. A Trojan horse for marketing? Solutions journalism in the French regional press. *European Journal of Communication* 34(3), pp. 233-247.

Archibald, M.M., Ambagtsheer, R.C., Casey, M. G. and Lawless, M. 2019. Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18, pp. 1-8. doi: 10.1177/1609406919874596

Atanasova, D. 2018. The rise of constructive journalism: a sign that social scientists should update their analytical frameworks? *LSE's weblog* 7 August. Available at: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2018/08/07/the-rise-of-constructive-journalism-a-sign-that-academics-should-update-their-analytical-frameworks/ [Accessed: 04 September 2022].

Baden, D., McIntyre, K. and Homberg, F. 2019. The Impact of Constructive News on Affective and Behavioural Responses. *Journalism Studies* 20(13), pp. 1940-1959.

Bansal, S. and Rosenberg, T. 2014. *Reporting on Solutions Internationally: A Toolkit by the Solutions Journalism Network and Pulitzer Center*. Available at: https://www.park.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Solutions-Journalism-Toolkit.pdf [Accessed 09 June 2022].

Bansal, S. and Martin, C. 2015. *The Solutions Journalism Toolkit.* Available at: https://reedkath.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/new-sjn-toolkit-20162.pdf [Accessed: 22 June 2022].

Bardoel, J. and Brants, K. 2003. From Ritual to Reality. Public Broadcasters and Social Responsibility in the Netherlands. In: Lowe, G. and Hujanen, T. eds. *Broadcasting and Convergence. New articulations of the public service remit.* Göteborg: Nordicom, pp. 167-187.

Barthes, R. 1977. Rhetoric of the Image. In: Heath, S. ed. *Image – Music – Text.* New York: Hill and Wang, pp. 152-163.

Barthes, R. 2000. *Camera Lucida*. 2nd edition. London: Vintage Books.

Bas, O. and Grabe, M. E. 2015. Emotion-Provoking Personalization of News: Informing Citizens and Closing the Knowledge Gap?. *Communication Research* 42(2), pp. 159-185.

Baum, J. and Rahman, R.A. 2021. Negative news dominates fast and slow brain responses and social judgments even after source credibility evaluation. *NeuroImage* 244, pp. 1-14.

Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., and Vohs, K. D. 2001. Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology* 5(4), pp. 323-370.

BBC. 2004. *Building public value. Renewing the BBC for a digital world.* Available at: https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/policies/pdf/bpv.pdf [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

BBC. 2016. *A distinctive BBC*. Available at: https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/reports/pdf/bbc_distinctiveness_april2016.pdf [Accessed: 20 August 2022].

BBC. 2019a. *BBC Editorial Guidelines*. Available at: bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines [Accessed: 05 November 2021].

BBC. 2019b. *BBC Annual Plan 2019/20*. Available at: https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/annualplan/annualplan_2019-20.pdf [Accessed: 01 September 2022].

BBC. 2020. *BBC Annual Plan 2020/21*. Available at: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/annualplan/annual-plan-2020-21.pdf [Accessed: 25 August 2022].

BBC. 2021. *BBC Annual Plan 2021/22*. Available at: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/annualplan/annual-plan-2021-22.pdf [Accessed: 25 August 2022].

BBC. 2022a. BBC TV licence fee: What is it and why is it under threat? *BBC News* 17 January. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-51376255 [Accessed: 28 August 2022].

BBC. 2022b. *BBC Annual Plan 2022/23*. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/documents/bbc-annual-plan-2022-2023.pdf [Accessed 25 August 2022].

BBC World Service. 2022. *BBC People Fixing the World*. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04grdbc [Accessed: 27 August 2022].

Belair-Gagnon, V., Nelson, J.L. and Lewis, S.C. 2019. Audience Engagement, Reciprocity, and the Pursuit of Community Connectedness in Public Media Journalism. *Journalism Practice* 13(5), pp. 558-575.

Belair-Gagnon, V., Zamith, R. and Holton, A.E. 2020. Role Orientations and Audience Metrics in Newsrooms: An Examination of Journalistic Perceptions and their Drivers. *Digital Journalism* 8(3), pp. 347-366.

Bell, S. E. 2013. Seeing narratives. In: Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. eds. *Doing Narrative Research*. London: Sage, pp. 142-158.

Bennett, L.W. 2009. *News: The Politics of Illusion*. 8th edition. New York: Longman.

Benson, R. and Hallin, D.C. 2007. How States, Markets and Globalization Shape the News. The French and US National Press, 1965-97. *European Journal of Communication* 22(1), pp. 27-48.

Benton, J. 2020. A new set of threats to the BBC – internal and external – challenges its role as anchor of U.K. media. *Nieman Lab* 28 September. Available at: https://www.niemanlab.org/2020/09/a-new-set-of-threats-to-the-bbc-internal-and-external-challenges-its-role-as-anchor-of-u-k-media/ [Accessed: 28 August 2022].

Berger, A.A. 1997. *Media Research Techniques.* 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Berger, A.A. 2016. *Media and Communication Research Methods. An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 4th edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Bermejo-Berros, J., Lopez-Diez, J., Gil Martinez, M. A. 2022. Inducing narrative tension in the viewer through suspense, surprise, and curiosity. *Poetics*, pp. 1-16. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2022.101664

Blekesaune, A., Elvestad, E. and Aalberg, T. 2012. Tuning out the world of news and current affairs—An empirical study of Europe's disconnected citizens. *European Sociological Review* 28(1), pp. 110–126.

Blumler, J.G. 2016. To be independent or not to be independent, that is the question. BBC-UK Government relations, 2016. *Publizistik* 61, pp. 305-320.

Boesman, J. and Costera Meijer, I. 2018. Nothing but the Facts?. *Journalism Practice* 12(8), pp. 997-1007.

Borchardt, A., Simon, F.M., Corbin, L., Kurczabinska, J., Mulhall, E., and Czirjak, E. 2021. *EBU News Report 2021-22: What's next? Public Service Journalism in the Age of Distraction, Opinion & Information Abundance.* Available at:

https://www.ebu.ch/files/live/sites/ebu/files/Publications/strategic/open/News_report_2021.pdf [Accessed: 25 August 2022].

Boukes, M. and Vliegenthart, R. 2017. News Consumption and Its Unpleasant Side Effect. Studying the Effect of Hard and Soft News Exposure on Mental Well-Being Over Time. *Journal of Media Psychology* 29(3), pp. 137-147.

Boyatzis, R.E. 1998. *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Boyd, R.L., Blackburn, K.G., Pennebaker, J.W. 2020. The narrative arc: Revealing core narrative structures through text analysis. *Science Advances* 6, pp. 1-9.

Brants, K. 2013. Trust, Cynicism, and Responsiveness. The uneasy situation of journalism in democracy. In: Peters, C. and Broersma, M. eds. *Rethinking journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 15-27.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2012. Thematic Analysis. In: Cooper, H., Camic, P.M., Long, D.L., Panter, A.T., Rindskopf, D. and Sher, K.J. eds. *APA Handbook od Research Methods in Psychology*. 2nd edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 57-71.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2013. *Successful Qualitative Research: A practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2022. *Thematic Analysis. A Practical Guide*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Brewer, J. and Hunter, A. 2006. *Foundations of multimethod research: Synthesizing styles*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bro, P. 2019. Constructive journalism: Proponents, precedents, and principles. *Journalism* 20(4), pp. 504-519.

Bro, P. and Gyldensted, C. 2021. Constructive Journalism. Portraying the World Accurately through Positive Psychology Reporting. In: McIntyre Hopkinson, K. and Dahmen, N. S. eds. *Reporting Beyond the Problem: From Civic Journalism to Solutions Journalism.* New York: Peter Lang, pp. 29-45.

Broersma, M. 2019. Audience Engagement. In: Vos, T.P., Hanusch, F., Dimitrakopoulou, D., Geertsema-Sligh, M. and Sehl, A. eds. *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies* [Wiley Online Library]. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118841570.iejs0060 [Accessed: 07 September 2022].

Broersma, M. and Peters, C. 2013. Introduction. Rethinking journalism: the structural transformation of a public good. In: Peters, C. and Broersma, M. eds. *Rethinking journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 1-12.

Broersma, M. and Swart, J. 2022. Do Novel Routines Stick After the Pandemic? The Formation of News Habits During COVID-19. *Journalism Studies* 23(5), pp. 551-568.

Bruner, J. 1991. The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry* 18(1), pp. 1-21.

Bucher, J. 2018. *Storytelling for Virtual Reality: Methods and Principles for Crafting Immersive Narratives*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Burgess, J. and Hurcombe, E. 2019. Digital Journalism as Symptom, Response, and Agent of Change in the Platformed Media Environment. *Digital Journalism* 7(3), pp. 359-367.

Busselle, R. and Bilandzic, H. 2009. Measuring Narrative Engagement. *Media Psychology* 12(4), pp. 321-347.

Cambridge Dictionary. 2022a. *Criterion*. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/criterion [Accessed: 27 July 2022].

Cambridge Dictionary. 2022b. *Guideline*. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/guideline [Accessed: 27 July 2022].

Cambridge Dictionary. 2022c. *Insight*. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/insight [Accessed: 06 September 2022].

Cambridge Dictionary. 2022d. *Process*. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/process [Accessed: 07 September 2022].

Chivers, T. and Allan, S. 2022. *What is the Public Value of Public Service Broadcasting? Exploring challenges and opportunities in evolving media contexts*. Available at: https://www.pec.ac.uk/assets/publications/What-is-the-Public-Value-of-Public-Service-Broadcasting-PEC-Discussion-Paper-Jan-2022.pdf [Accessed: 21 August 2022].

Christians, C. and Nordenstreng, K. 2004. Social Responsibility Worldwide. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 19(1), pp. 3-28.

Christians, C.G., Glasser, T.L., McQuail, D., Nordenstreng, K. and White, R.A. 2009. *Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Coleman, R. 2010. Framing the Pictures in Our Heads. Exploring the Framing and Agenda-Setting Effects of Visual Images. In: D'Angelo, P. and Kuypers, J.A. eds. *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 233-261.

Constructive Institute. 2021. *Explainer: What is Constructive Journalism*. Available at: https://youtu.be/hrFuQ4SjUO4 [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Constructive Institute. 2022a. *What is Constructive Journalism?* Available at: https://constructiveinstitute.org/what/ [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Constructive Institute. 2022b. *Constructive Journalism Pays Off.* Available at: https://constructiveinstitute.org/why/constructive-journalism-pays-off/ [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Constructive Institute. 2022c. *Solutions Focused Journalism*. Available at: https://constructiveinstitute.org/what/solutions-journalism/ [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Costera Meijer, I. and Groot Kormelink, T. 2016. Revisiting the Audience Turn in Journalism: How a user-based approach changes the meaning of clicks, transparency, and citizen participation. In: Franklin, B. and Eldridge, S.A. eds*. The Routledge Companion to Digital Journalism Studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 345-353.

Costera Meijer, I. 2020. Journalism, Audiences, and News Experience. In: Wahl-Jorgensen, K. and Hanitzsch, T. eds. *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. 2nd edition. New York and Oxon: Routledge, pp. 389-405.

Council of Europe. 2009. *Strategies of public service media as regards promoting a wider democratic participation of individuals*. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/168059bf76 [Accessed: 20 August 2022].

Curry, A. L. and Hammonds, K.H. 2014. *The Power of Solutions Journalism*. Available at: https://engagingnewsproject.org/enp_prod/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/ENP_SJN-report.pdf [Accessed: 08 May 2022].

Curry, A., Jomini Stroud, N. and McGregor, S. 2016. *Solutions Journalism & News Engagement*. Available at: https://mediaengagement.org/research/solutions-journalism-news-engagement/ [Accessed: 08 May 2022].

Cushion, S. 2012. *The democratic value of news: why public service media matter*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cushion, S. 2018. *PSM Contribution to Democracy. News, Editorial Standards and Informed Citizenship*. Available at: https://www.academia.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EBU-MIS_PSM-Contribution-to-Democracy_2018.pdf [Accessed: 27 August 2022].

Cushion, S. 2019. *The Range and Depth of BBC News and Current Affairs: A Content Analysis.* Available at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/174205/bbc-news-review-content-analysis-full-report.pdf [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Cushion, S. 2022. Are public service media distinctive from the market? Interpreting the political information environments of BBC and commercial news in the United Kingdom. *European Journal of Communication* 37(1), pp. 3-20.

Dahmen, N.S. 2016. Images of Resilience: The case for Visual Restorative Narrative. *Visual Communication Quarterly* 23(2), pp. 93-107.

Dahmen, N. S., Thier, K. and Walth, B. 2019. Creating engagement with solutions visuals: testing the effects of problem-oriented versus solution-oriented photojournalism, *Visual Communication* 20(2), pp. 271-288.

Deacon, D., Pickering, M., Golding, P. and Murdock, G. 2007. *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*. 2nd edition. London: Bloomsbury.

Deacon, D., Murdock, G., Pickering, M., and Golding, P. 2021. *Researching Communications. A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*. 3rd edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

De Fina, A. and Georgakopoulou, A. 2015. *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

De Vreese, C. H. and Tobiasen, M. 2007. Conflict and identity: Explaining turnout and anti-integrationist voting in the Danish 2004 elections for the European Parliament. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30(1), pp. 87–114.

Deutsche Welle Akademie. 2022. About DW Akademie's Constructive Journalism Lab. *DW Akademie* 17 June. Available at: https://www.dw.com/en/about-dw-akademies-constructive-journalism-lab/a-57840015 [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Deuze, M. 2005. What is journalism? Professional identity and ideology reconsidered. *Journalism* 6(4), pp. 442–464.

Deuze, M. 2019. What Journalism Is (Not). *Social Media + Society*, pp. 1-4. doi: 10.1177/2056305119857202

d'Haenens, L. 2021. Reclaiming the public square in times of post-truth and platformisation: A crucial mission for public service media. *European Journal of Communication* 36(5), pp. 450-453.

Dodd, B. 2021. *Solutions Journalism. News at the Intersection of Hope, Leadership, and Expertise*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Donders, K. 2021. *Public Service Media in Europe. Law, Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Routledge.

Donsbach, W., and Patterson, T. E. 2004. Political news journalists: Partisanship, professionalism, and political roles in five countries. In: Esser, F. and Pfetsch, B. eds. *Comparing political communication: Theories, cases, and challenges*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 251–270.

EBU. 2016. 2016 *News Xchange concludes with call for more constructive journalism*. Available at: https://www.ebu.ch/news/2016/12/2016-news-xchange-concludes-with-call-for-more-constructive-journalism [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

EBU. 2021. *EBU News Report 2021-22. What's next? Public Service Journalism in the Age of Distraction, Opinion & Information Abundance*. Available at: https://www.ebu.ch/files/live/sites/ebu/files/Publications/strategic/login_only/News_report_2021.pdf [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

EBU. 2022a. *Polarization, pandemics, populism…it's more vital than ever that #journalists #listenlouder! We're supporting the 4th Global Constructive Journalism Conference on 22 June where these themes will be discussed. Join us online!* [Twitter] 15 June. Available at: https://twitter.com/EBU_HQ/status/1537055331288813570 [Accessed: 27 August 2022].

EBU. 2022b. *EBU Annual Report*. Available at: https://www.ebu.ch/resources/annual-report-2022 [Accessed: 27 August 2022].

Eddy, K. 2022. The changing news habits and attitudes of younger audiences. *Reuters Institute* 15 June. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/young-audiences-news-media [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Ekström, M. 2000. Information, storytelling and attractions: TV journalism in three modes of communication. *Media, Culture & Society* 22(4), pp. 465-492.

Eldridge II, S. and Steel, J. 2016. Normative expectations. Employing "communities of practice" models for assessing journalism's normative claims. *Journalism Studies* 17(7), pp. 817-826.

Elliott, D. 2020. Essential Shared Values and 21st Century Journalism. In: Wilkins, L. and Christians, C.G. eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Mass Media Ethics*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, pp. 30-42.

Emde, K., Klimmt, C. and Schluetz, D.M. 2016. Does Storytelling help Adolescents to Process the News? *Journalism Studies* 17(5), pp. 608-627.

Esser, F. 2008. Dimensions of political news culture: Sound bite and image bite news in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Press/Politics* 13, pp. 401-428.

Ferrer-Conill, R. and Tandoc, E.C. Jr. 2018. The audience-oriented editor. Making sense of the audience in the newsroom. *Digital Journalism* 6(4), pp. 436-453.

Filak, V.F. 2014. *Convergent Journalism Writing and Producing Across Media* [Safari O'Reilly Collection]. 2nd edition. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis. Available at: https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/convergent-journalism-an/9781138775008/?sso_link=yes&sso_link_from=cardiff-university [Accessed: 07 September 2022].

Fisher, C. 2016. The advocacy continuum: Towards a theory of advocacy in journalism. *Journalism* 17(6), pp. 711-726.

Fisher, C., Flew, T., Park, S., Young Lee, J. and Dulleck, U. 2021. Improving Trust in News: Audience Solutions. *Journalism Practice* 15(10), pp. 1497-1515.

Fiske, J. 2011. *Television Culture*. 2nd edition. Oxon: Routledge.

Freedman, D. 2019. "Public Service" and the Journalism Crisis: Is the BBC the Answer? *Television & New Media* 20(3), pp. 203-218.

Freedman, D. 2020. *Losing Its Aura? Public Service Broadcasting in the UK*. Available at: http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/london/16579.pdf [Accessed: 31 January 2022].

Freelon, D. 2022. *ReCal2: Reliability for 2 Coders*. Available at: http://dfreelon.org/utils/recalfront/recal2/ [Accessed: 20 September 2022].

Fürst, S. 2020. In the Service of Good Journalism and Audience Interests? How Audience Metrics Affect News Quality. *Media and Communication* 8(3), pp. 270-280.

Gajardo, C. and Costera Meijer, I. 2022. How to tackle the conceptual inconsistency of audience engagement? The introduction of the Dynamic Model of Audience Engagement. *Journalism*, pp. 1-21. doi: 0.1177/14648849221080356

Galan, L., Osserman, J., Parker, T. and Taylor, M. 2019. *How young people consume news and the implications for mainstream media.* Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/FlamingoxREUTERS-Report-Full-KG-V28.pdf [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė, M. 2022. We, the media, need humility – opinion. *LRT.lt* 7 May. Available at: https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1688992/we-the-media-need-humility-opinion [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Gardner, S. 2017. *Public Broadcasting: Its Past and Its Future*. Available at: https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/media_elements/files/000/000/115/original/Topos_KF_White-Paper_Sue-Gardner_V2.pdf [Accessed: 15 August 2022].

Gibson, R. and Zillmann, D. 2000. Reading between the photographs: the influence of incidental pictorial information on issue perspectives. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 77(2), pp. 355-366.

Gielan, M., Furl, B., and Jackson, J. 2017. *Solution-focused News Increases Optimism, Empowerment and Connectedness to Community*. Available at: http://michellegielan.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Solution-focused-News.pdf [Accessed: 08 May 2022].

Goddard, P. 2018. The Value and Impact of the BBC? In: Freedman, D. and Goblot, V. eds. *A Future for Public Service Television*. London: Goldsmiths Press, pp. 189-192.

Green, G. 2021. The express guide to solutions journalism. *LinkedIn* 21 May. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/express-guide-solutions-journalism-giselle-green/ [Accessed: 15 August 2022].

Greenwood, S., Perrin, A. and Duggan, M. 2016. Social Media Update 2016. *Pew Research Centre* 11 November. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/ [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Groot Kormelink, T. and Costera Meijer, I. 2015. Truthful or Engaging?. *Digital Journalism* 3(2), pp. 158-174.

Gyldensted, C. 2015. *From mirrors to movers*. Lexington: GGroup Publishing.

Haagerup, U. 2017. *Constructive News*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Hanitzsch, T. 2007. Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory. *Communication Theory* 17(4), pp. 367-385.

Hanitzsch, T. 2018. Roles of Journalists. In: Vos, T. P. ed. *Journalism. Vol. 19 of Handbooks of Communication Science Series*. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton, pp. 43-61.

Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Mellado, C., Anikina M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I., Coman, M. et al. 2011. Mapping Journalism Cultures Across Nations: A Comparative Study of 18 Countries. *Journalism Studies* 12(3), pp. 273–293.

Hanitzsch, T., Van Dalen, A. and Steindl, N. 2018. Caught in the Nexus: A Comparative and Longitudinal Analysis of Public Trust in the Press. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 23(1), pp. 3-23.

Hanitzsch, T., Ahva, L., Oller Alonso, M., Arroyave, J., Hermans, L., Hovden, J.F., Hughes, S., Josephi, B., Ramaprasad, J., Shapiro, I. and Vos, T.P. 2019. Journalistic Culture in a Global Context. In: Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Ramaprasad, J. and de Beer, A.S. eds. *Worlds of Journalism. Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 23-46.

Hansen, A. and Machin, D. 2013. *Media and Communication Research Methods*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Harcup, T. and O'Neill, D. 2017. What is News? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies* 18(12), pp. 1470-1488.

Hare, K. 2016. How the BBC's looking for the solutions to the world's big issues. *Poynter* 18 November. Available at: https://www.poynter.org/tech-tools/2016/how-the-bbcs-looking-for-the-solutions-to-the-worlds-big-issues/ [Accessed: 15 August 2022].

Harris, J. and Taylor, T. 2021. Narrative in VR journalism: research into practice. *Media Practice and Education* 22(3), pp. 211-224.

Hautakangas, M. and Ahva, L. 2018. Introducing a New Form of Socially Responsible Journalism. *Journalism Practice* 12(6), pp. 730-746.

Hendy, D. 2013. *Public Service Broadcasting*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hermans, L. and Drok, N. 2018. Placing Constructive Journalism in Context. *Journalism Practice* 12(6), pp. 679-694.

Hermans, L. and Gyldensted, C. 2019. Elements of constructive journalism: Characteristics, practical application and audience valuation. *Journalism* 20(4), pp. 535-551.

Hermans, L. and Prins, T. 2020. Interest matters: The effects of constructive news reporting on Millennials' emotions and engagement. *Journalism*, pp.1-18. doi: 10.1177/1464884920944741

Hodkinson, P. 2017. *Media, Culture and Society*. London: Sage.

Holtz-Bacha, C. 2021. The kiss of death. Public service media under right-wing populist attack. *European Journal of Communication* 36(3), pp. 221-237.

Hotz, J. 2019. 54 News Outlets with Dedicated Solutions Journalism Sections. *The Whole Story* 31 March. Available at: https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/34-news-outlets-with-dedicated-solutions-journalism-sections-9ef0214a7c43 [Accessed: 06 September 2022].

House of Commons. 2022. *BBC Licence Fee (Abolition) Bill*. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0080/210080.pdf [Accessed: 28 August 2022].

Hutchings, N. and Granger, J. 2019. BBC News shows that hard-hitting solutions journalism stories can thrive on social media. *Journalism.co.uk* 13 March. Available at: https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/bbc-news-shows-that-hard-hitting-

solutions-journalism-can-thrive-on-social-media/s2/a735912/ [Accessed: 28 August 2022].

IIPP. 2021. *Re-imagining public value with the BBC*. Available at: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/research/projects/re-imagining-public-value-bbc [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Jääskelaäinen, A., Olij, M., Woodford, I., Kurczabisnka, J., Dubin, J., Jimenez, L. and Mulall, E. 2018. *50 Ways to Make It Better. EBU News Report 2018.* Available at: https://www.ebu.ch/publications/strategic/login_only/report/news-report-2018-50-ways-to-make-it-better [Accessed: 27 August 2022].

Jenkins, F. 2021. China's Projection of Soft Power in terms of Constructive Journalism: A Media Content Analysis of Constructive News Coverage of South Africa by *China Daily* and *South China Morning Post* in 2015 and 2018*. Transcience* 12(1), pp. 24-43.

Johnson, H. (2021). The BBC – lost Reithian values?. Editorial, *Communications Law* 17(4), pp. 112-113.

Jørgensen, K.L. and Risbro, J. 2022. *Handbook for Constructive Journalism*. Available at: https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/A-Handbook-for-Constructive-Journalism-IMS-and-CI-2022.pdf [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

Kalogeropoulos, A. 2018. Online News Video Consumption. *Digital Journalism* 6(5), pp. 651-665.

Kalogeropoulos, A. and Cherubini, F. 2016. *The Future of Online News Video*. Available at: https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2016/future-online-news-video/#online-video-consumption [Accessed: 27 August 2022].

Kalogeropoulos, A. and Kleis Nielsen, R. 2018. Investing in Online Video News. *Journalism Studies* 19(15), pp. 2207-2224.

Kalogeropoulos, A., Suiter, J., Udris, L. and Eisenegger, M. 2019. News media trust and news consumption: factors related to trust in news in 35 countries. *International Journal of Communication* 13, pp. 3672-3693.

Kalogeropoulos, A., Fletcher, R. and Nielsen, R.K. 2020. Initial surge in news use around coronavirus in the UK has been followed by significant increase in news avoidance. *Reuters Institute* 19 May. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/initial-surge-news-use-around-coronavirus-uk-has-been-followed-significant-increase-news-avoidance [Accessed: 31 August 2022].

Kasriel, E. 2016a. *Solutions-Focused journalism: Toolkit*. London: BBC News.

Kasriel, E. 2016b. Introducing a new tool for news: Solutions-Focused Journalism. *BBC Academy* 30 August. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/academy/entries/f58f050c-91dd-4469-8af3-b3ecfc72a0e7 [Accessed: 31 August 2022].

Kasriel, E. 2016c. Why we need Solutions-Focused Journalism. *BBC Academy* 31 August. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/academy/entries/be8991c7-c1c7-42e6-a371-f40278838fa2 [Accessed: 31 August 2022].

Kleemans, M., Dohmen, R., Schlindwein, L. F., Tamboer, S.L., de Leeuw, R.NH. and Buijzen, M. 2019. Children's cognitive responses to constructive television news. *Journalism* 20(4), pp. 568-582.

Kleinnijenhuis, J., van Hoof, A.M. and Oegema, D. 2006. Negative News and the Sleeper Effect of Distrust. *Press/Politics* 11(2), pp. 86-104.

Kleis Nielsen, R. 2020. Economic Contexts of Journalism. In: Wahl-Jorgensen, K. and Hanitzsch, T. eds. *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. 2nd edition. New York and Oxon: Routledge, pp. 324-340.

Knobloch, S., Patzig, G., Mende, A. and Hastall, M. 2004. Affective News: Effects of Discourse Structure in Narratives on Suspense, Curiosity, and Enjoyment While Reading News and Novels. *Communication Research* 31(3), pp. 259-287.

Kogen, L. 2019. News You Can Use or News That Moves? Journalists' rationales for coverage of distant suffering. *Journalism Practice* 13(1), pp. 1-15. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2017.1400395

Kovačević, P. and Perišin, T. 2018. The Potential of Constructive Journalism Ideas in a Croatian Context. *Journalism Practice* 12(6), pp. 747-763.

Kovach, B. and Rosenstiel, T. 2014. *The elements of journalism*. 3rd edition. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Krippendorff, K. 2019. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Kristensen, L.M. 2021. Audience Metrics: Operationalizing News Value for the Digital Newsroom. *Journalism Practice*, pp.1-18. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2021.1954058

Kulkarni, S., Thomas, R., Komorowski, M. and Lewis, J. 2022. Innovating Online Journalism: New Ways of Storytelling. *Journalism Practice*, pp.1-19. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2021.2020675

Lacy, S., Watson, B. R., Riffe, D. and Lovejoy, J. 2015. Issues and Best Practices in Content Analysis. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 92(4), pp. 1-21.

Lamot, K. 2022. What the Metrics Say. The Softening of News on the Facebook Pages of Mainstream Media Outlets. *Digital Journalism* 10(4), pp. 517-536.

Landis, R. and Koch, G.G. 1977. The Measurement of Observer Agreement for Categorical Data. *Biometrics* 33(1), pp. 159-174.

Lang, A., Potter, D. and Grabe, M.E. 2003. Making News Memorable: Applying Theory to the Production of Local Television News. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 47(1), pp. 113-123.

Lecheler, S. 2020. The Emotional Turn in Journalism Needs to be About Audience Perceptions. *Digital Journalism* 8(2), pp. 287-291.

Lee, A.M., Lewis, S.C. and Powers, M. 2014. Audience Clicks and News Placement: A Study of Time-Lagged Influence in Online Journalism. *Communication Research* 41(4), pp. 505-530.

Lengauer, G., Esser, F. and Berganza, R. 2011. Negativity in political news: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings. *Journalism* 13(2), pp. 179-202.

Leung, D.K.K. and Lee, F.L.F. 2015. How Journalists Value Positive News. *Journalism Studies* 16(2), pp. 289-304.

Li, Y. 2021a. Assessing the Role Performance of Solutions Journalism in a Global Pandemic. *Journalism Practice*, pp. 1-21. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2021.1990787

Li, Y. 2021b. The Synergistic Effects of Solutions Journalism and Corporate Social Responsibility Advertising. *Digital Journalism* 9(3), pp. 336-363.

Lindlof, T. and Taylor, B. 2011. *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Lis, B., Nienstedt, H., and Günster, C. 2018. No public value without a valued public. *International Journal of Media Management* 20(1), pp. 25-50.

Lischka, J. A. 2021. Logics in social media news making: How social media editors marry the Facebook logic with journalistic standards. *Journalism* 22(2), pp. 430-447.

Liu, P. 2022. Social Media Platforms Compete For Creators' Attention. Creators Choose Them All. *Forbes* 7 July. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/phoebeliu/2022/07/11/social-media-platforms-compete-for-creators-attention-creators-choose-them-all/?sh=32543d6a20c1 [Accessed: 07 August 2022].

Lough, K. and McIntyre, K. 2018. Journalists' perceptions of solutions journalism and its place in the field. *#ISOJ Journal* 8(1), pp. 33-52.

Lough, K. and McIntyre, K. 2019. Visualizing the Solution: An analysis of the images that accompany solutions-oriented news stories. *Journalism* 20(4), pp. 583-599.

Lough, K. and McIntyre, K. 2021a. A systematic review of constructive and solutions journalism research. *Journalism*, pp. 1-20. doi: 10.1177/14648849211044559

Lough, K. and McIntyre, K. 2021b. Transitioning to Solutions Journalism: One Newsroom's Shift to Solutions-focused Reporting. *Journalism Studies* 22(2), pp. 193-208.

Løvlie, A.S. 2018. Constructive Comments? Designing an online debate system for the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. *Journalism Practice* 12(6), pp. 781-798.

Lowes, M. and Devereaux Ferguson, S. 2021. Solutions Journalism: Strategies for Effecting and Managing Change. *Canadian Journal of Media Studies* 17(1), pp. 60-85.

Machill, M., Köhler, S. and Waldhauser, M. 2007. The Use of Narrative Structures in Television News. An Experiment in Innovative Forms of Journalistic Presentation. *European Journal of Communication* 22(2), pp. 185–205.

Machin, D. and Polzer, L. 2015. *Visual Journalism*. London and New York: Palgrave.

Mannell, K. and Meese, J. 2022. From Doom-Scrolling to News Avoidance: Limiting News as a Wellbeing Strategy During COVID Lockdown. *Journalism Studies* 23(3), pp. 302-319.

Mast, J., Coesemans, R., Temmerman, M. 2019. Constructive journalism: Concepts, practices, and discourses. *Journalism* 20(4), pp. 492-503.

McCann, S. 2016. *Solutions Journalism is Biased! (And Other Myths)*. Available at: https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/solutions-journalism-is-biased-and-other-myths-4b8f2beb69bf [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

McErlan, K. 2018. *Interactive Narratives and Transmedia Storytelling*. New York and London: Routledge.

McIntyre, K. and Gibson, R. 2016. Positive News Makes Readers Feel Good: A "Silver-Lining" Approach to Negative News Can Attract Audiences. *Southern Communication Journal* 81(5), pp. 304-315.

McIntyre, K. and Gyldensted, C. 2017. Constructive Journalism: Applying Positive Psychology Techniques to News Production. *The Journal of Media Innovations* 4(2), pp. 20-34.

McIntyre, K. and Sobel, M. 2017. Motivating news audiences: Shock them or provide them with solutions? *Communication & Society* 30(1), pp. 39-56.

McIntyre, K., Dahmen, N. S. and Abdenour, J. 2018. The contextualist function: US newspaper journalists value social responsibility. *Journalism* 19(12), pp. 1657-1675.

McIntyre, K. and Gyldensted, C. 2018. Positive Psychology as a Theoretical Foundation for Constructive Journalism. *Journalism Practice* 12(6), pp. 662-678.

McIntyre, K., Lough, K. and Manzanares, K. 2018. Solutions in the shadows: The effects of incongruent visual messaging in solutions journalism news stories. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 95(4), pp. 971-989.

McIntyre, K. and Sobel, M. 2018. Reconstructing Rwanda. How Rwandan reporters use constructive journalism to promote peace. *Journalism Studies* 19(14), pp. 2126-2147.

McIntyre, K. 2019. Solutions Journalism. The effects of including solution information in news stories about social problems. *Journalism Practice* 13(1), pp. 16-34.

McIntyre, K. 2020. "Tell Me Something Good": Testing the Longitudinal Effects of Constructive News Using the Google Assistant. *Electronic News* 14(1), pp. 37-54.

McIntyre, K. and Lough, K. 2021. Toward a clearer conceptualization and operationalization of solutions journalism. *Journalism* 22(6), pp. 1558-1573.

McIntyre, K. 2022. Nordic Forum Talk 13: *What "social responsibility"? Dialogue with Karen McIntyre and Laura Ahva*. Available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV3BdvcknpQ&ab_channel=Sovittelujournalism i [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

McIntyre Hopkinson, K. and Dahmen, N. S. 2021a. *Reporting Beyond the Problem: From Civic Journalism to Solutions Journalism.* Peter Lang: New York.

McIntyre Hopkinson, K. and Dahmen, N. S. 2021b. Introduction. In: McIntyre Hopkinson, K. and Dahmen, N.S. eds. *Reporting Beyond the Problem: From Civic Journalism to Solutions Journalism.* Peter Lang: New York, pp. 1-10.

McIntyre Hopkinson, K. and Dahmen, N. S. 2021c. Moving Forward: Bringing Clarity to Productive and Socially Responsible Reporting. In: McIntyre Hopkinson, K. and Dahmen, N.S. eds. *Reporting Beyond the Problem: From Civic Journalism to Solutions Journalism.* Peter Lang: New York, pp. 171-180.

McQuail, D. 2013. *Journalism and Society*. 1st ed. London: Sage Publications.

McQuail, D. and Deuze, M. 2020. *McQuail's Media&Mass Communication Theory*. 7th edition. London: Sage.

Meese, J. and Hurcombe, E. 2020. Facebook, news media and platform dependency: The institutional impacts of news distribution on social platforms. *New Media & Society*, pp. 1-18. doi: 10.1177/1461444820926472

Meier, K. 2018. How does the audience respond to constructive journalism?. *Journalism Practice* 12(6), pp. 764-780.

Meier, K., Kraus, D. and Michaeler, E. 2018. Audience Engagement in a Post-Truth Age. *Digital Journalism* 6(8), pp. 1052-1063.

Mellado, C. 2015. Professional roles in news content: Six dimensions of journalistic role performance. *Journalism Studies* 16(4), pp. 596-614.

Mellado, C. and Van Dalen, A. 2014. Between Rhetoric and Practice: Explaining the gap between role conception and performance in journalism. *Journalism Studies* 15(6), pp. 859-878.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. 2022. *Insight*. Available at: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/insight [Accessed: 06 September 2022].

Midberry, J. and Dahmen, N. S. 2020. Visual Solutions Journalism: A Theoretical Framework, *Journalism Practice* 14(10), pp. 1159-1178.

Mihas, P. 2022. Strategies for Coding and Categorizing Data. In: Vanover, C., Mihas, P. and Saldaña, J. eds. *Analysing and Interpreting Qualitative Research. After the Interview*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, pp. 113-116.

Murray, C. and Stroud, N.J. 2019. *The keys to powerful solutions journalism*. Available at: https://mediaengagement.org/research/powerful-solutions-journalism/ [Accessed: 08 August 2022].

Nelson, J.L. and Lewis, S.C. 2021. Only "sheep" trust journalists? How citizens' self-perceptions shape their approach to news. *New Media & Society*, pp. 1-20. doi: 10.1177/14614448211018160

Nelson, J.L. and Tandoc Jr., E.C. 2019. Doing "Well" and Doing "Good": What Audience Analytics Reveal About Journalism's Competing Goals. *Journalism Studies* 20(13), pp. 1960-1976.

Newman, N. 2022. *Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions 2022*. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Newman%20-%20Trends%20and%20Predictions%202022%20FINAL.pdf [Accessed: 05 September 2022].

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A. and Nielsen, R.K. 2019. *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019*. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/DNR_2019_FINAL_0.pdf [Accessed: 01 September 2022].

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C.T., Eddy, K. and Nielsen, R.K. 2022. *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022*. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital_News-Report_2022.pdf [Accessed: 01 September 2022].

Nielsen, R. 2017. Media Capture in the Digital Age. In: Schiffrin, A. ed. *In the Service of Power: Media Capture and the Threat to Democracy*. Washington, DC: Centre for International Media Assistance, pp. 33–42.

Ofcom. 2018. *Ofcom's annual report on the BBC*. Available at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/124422/BBC-annual-report.pdf [Accessed 05 November 2021].

Ofcom 2019. *Ofcom's annual report on the BBC*. Available at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/173735/second-bbc-annual-report.pdf [Accessed 05 November 2021].

Ofcom 2020. *Ofcom's annual report on the BBC*. Available at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0021/207228/third-bbc-annual-report.pdf [Accessed 05 November 2021].

Ofcom. 2021. *Ofcom Annual Report on the BBC 2020-21*. Available at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0029/228548/fourth-bbc-annual-report.pdf [Accessed: 21 August 2022].

Oliffe, J. L., Kelly, M.T., Gonzales Montaner, G. and Yu Ko, W. F. 2021. Zoom Interviews: Benefits and Concessions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20, pp. 1-8. doi: 10.1177/16094069211053522

Oschatz, C., Emde-Lachmund, K. and Klimmt, C. 2021. The Persuasive Effects of Journalistic Storytelling: Experiments on the Portrayal of Exemplars in the News. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 98(2), pp. 407-426.

Overgaard, CSB. 2021. Mitigating the consequences of negative news: How constructive journalism enhances self-efficacy and news credibility. *Journalism* 0(0), pp. 1-18. doi: 10.1177/14648849211062738

Parrat-Fernandez, S., Chaparro-Dominguez, M., Gilbert, G.S. 2022. Discursive Strategies for Climate Change Reporting: A Case Study of *The Mercury News*. *Environmental Communication*, pp. 1-15. doi: 10.1080/17524032.2022.2048043

Patterson T.E. 1998. The political roles of the journalist. In: Graber, D., McQuail, D. and Norris, P. eds. *The Politics of News; The News of Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, pp. 23–39.

Peters, C. and Broersma, M. 2013. *Rethinking journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. Oxon: Routledge.

Peterson, T. 1956. The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press. In: Siebert, F., Peterson, T. and Schramm, W. eds. *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 73-103.

Polleta, F., Chen, P.C.B., Gardner, B.G. and Motes, A. 2011. The Sociology of Storytelling. *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, pp. 109-30.

Połońska, E. and Beckett, C. 2019. Introduction: What's Happening with Our Democracies? In: Połońska, E. and Beckett, C. eds. *Public Service Broadcasting and Media Systems in Troubled European Democracies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-20.

Porlezza, C. and Russ-Mohl, S. 2013. Getting the facts straight in a digital era: journalistic accuracy and trustworthiness. In: Peters, C. and Broersma, M. eds. *Rethinking journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 45-59.

Porter, C. and Hansen Shapiro, E. 2022. *Developing Journalism Collaborations for Local Impact.* Available at: https://collaborativejournalism.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2022/05/SJN_LMP_2022_Collaborative_Scaffolding.v.1.pdf [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

Powell, T.E., Boomgaarden, H.G., De Swert, K. and De Vreese, C.H. 2015. A Clearer Picture: The Contribution of Visuals and Text to Framing Effects. *Journal of Communication* 65, pp. 997-1017.

Powers, E. and Curry, A. 2019. No Quick Fix: How Journalists Assess the Impact and Define the Boundaries of Solutions Journalism. *Journalism Studies* 20(15), pp. 2237-2257.

Public Media Alliance. 2022. Public media and the fight for young audiences. *Public Media Alliance* 16 February. Available at: https://www.publicmediaalliance.org/public-media-and-young-audiences/ [Accessed: 20 August 2022].

PWC. 2019. *BBC News & Current Affairs Review: PWC Research*. Available at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/174075/bbc-news-review-pwc-summary-report.pdf [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Rabiger, M. 2016. *Developing Story Ideas: The Power and Purpose of Storytelling* [Safari O'Reilly Collection]. 3rd edition. New York: Routledge. Available at: https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/developing-story-ideas/9781317351467/ [Accessed: 07 September 2022].

Reese, S.D. and Shoemaker, P.J. 2016. A Media Sociology for the Networked Public Sphere: The Hierarchy of Influences Model. *Mass Communication and Society* 19(4), pp. 389-410.

Reiter, G., Gonser, N., Grammel, M. and Gründl, J. 2018. Young Audiences and their Valuation of Public Service Media. A Case Study in Austria. In: Lowe, G.F., Van den Bulck, H. and Donders, K. eds. Public Service Media in the Networked Society. Göteborg: Nordicom, pp. 211-226.

Richardson, B. 2000. Linearity and Its Discontents: Rethinking Narrative Form and Ideological Valence. *College English* 62(6), pp. 685-695.

Ripley, A. 2019. Complicating the Narratives. The Whole Story 27 June. Available at: https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/complicating-the-narratives-b91ea06ddf63 [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Ripley, A. 2022. Opinion: I stopped reading the news. Is the problem me – or the product? *The Washington Post* 8 July. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/07/08/how-to-fix-news-media/ [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

Robinson, S., Jensen, K. and Dávalos, C. 2021. "Listening Literacies" as Keys to Rebuilding Trust in Journalism: A Typology for a Changing News Audience. *Journalism Studies* 22(9), pp. 1219-1237.

Rosen, J. 2022. *What does Constructive Journalism Construct?* [Keynote speech to Boon Institute]. Bonn Institute, 28 April 2022. Available at: https://www.bonn-institute.org/news/what-does-constructive-journalism-construct [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

Rotermund, H. 2017. Digital Media Culture and Public Service Media in the Platform Era. In: Ferrell Lowe, G., Van den Bulck, H. and Donders, K. eds. *Public Service Media in the Networked Society*. Gothenburg: Nordicom, pp. 75-90.

Rotmeijer, S. 2019. 'Words that work?' Practices of constructive journalism in a local Caribbean context. *Journalism* 20(4), pp. 600-616.

Rusch, R., Simon, E., Otto, K. and Flintz, D. 2021. The Impact of Constructive Television Journalism on the Audience: Results from an Online Study. *Journalism Practice*, pp. 1-21. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2021.1901599

Ryan, M. 2015. *Narrative as Virtual Reality 2: Revisiting Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Sambrook. R. 2019. The challenge of engaging young audiences. *Policy and Evidence Centre weblog* 23 December. Available at: https://pec.ac.uk/blog/the-challenge-of-engaging-young-audiences [Accessed: 20 August 2022].

Schäfer, S., Greber, H., Sülflow, M. and Lecheler, S. 2022. A Matter of Perspective: An Experimental Study on Potential of Constructive Journalism for Communicating a Crisis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, pp.1-23. doi: 10.1177/10776990221095751

Schudson, M. 2011. *The sociology of news*. New York: Norton.

Schulz, A., Levy, D.A.L., Nielsen, R.K. 2019. *Old, Educated, and Politically Diverse: The Audience of Public Service News*. *Reuters Institute Report*. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/The_audience_of_public_service_news_FINAL.pdf [Accessed: 20 August 2022].

Scott, C. 2015. 5 key research findings about young online audiences from BBC World Service. *Journalism.co.uk* 30 November. Available at: https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/five-key-research-findings-about-young-online-audiences-from-bbc-world-service/s2/a588021/ [Accessed 08 November 2021].

Serrano-Puche, J. 2020. Constructive Journalism: a response to users' motivations for news avoidance. Cuadernos 46, pp. 153-177.

Shoemaker, P. 1996. Hardwired for News: Using Biological and Cultural Evolution to Explain the Surveillance Function. *Journal of Communication* 46(3), pp. 32-47.

Shoemaker, P. and Reese, S.D. 2014. Mediating the message in the 21st century: a media sociology perspective. 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.

Shoemaker, P. and Vos, T. 2009. *Gatekeeping Theory*. New York: Routledge.

Simons, H. 2009. *Case Study Research in Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Singer, J.B. 2017. Triangulating Methods in the Study of Journalistic Role Performance. In: Mellado, C., Hellmueller, L. and Donsbach W. eds. *Journalistic Role Performance: Concepts, Contexts, and Methods*. New York: Routledge, pp. 206-220.

Skovsgaard, M. and Andersen, K. 2020. Conceptualizing News Avoidance: Towards a Shared Understanding of Different Causes and Potential Solutions. *Journalism Studies* 21(4), pp. 459-476.

Social Psychology Network (2022). *Research Randomizer*. Available at: https://www.randomizer.org/ [Accessed: 20 September 2022].

Solutions Journalism Network. 2017. *What is Solutions Journalism?* Available at: https://medium.com/@soljourno/what-is-solutions-journalism-c050147bb1eb [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Solutions Journalism Network. 2020. *Solutions Journalism: What is it and why should I care?* Available at: https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/solutions-journalism-what-is-it-and-why-should-i-care-e5acd0ab5332 [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Solutions Journalism Network. 2022a. *Solutions Story Tracker*. Available at: https://www.solutionsjournalism.org/storytracker [Accessed: 03 September 2022].

Solutions Journalism Network. 2022b. *Basic Toolkit: Introduction.* Available at: https://learninglab.solutionsjournalism.org/en/courses/basic-toolkit/introduction/welcome [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Solutions Journalism Network. 2022c. *Basic Toolkit: Why Solutions Journalism?* Available at: https://learninglab.solutionsjournalism.org/en/courses/basic-toolkit/introduction/why-solutions-journalism [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Solutions Journalism Network. 2022d. *Basic Toolkit: How do I know it's Solutions Journalism?* Available at: https://learninglab.solutionsjournalism.org/en/courses/basic-toolkit/introduction/how-do-i-know-its-solutions-journalism [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Solutions Journalism Network. 2022e. *Basic Toolkit.* Available at: https://learninglab.solutionsjournalism.org/en/courses/basic-toolkit/ [Accessed: 06 September 2022].

Soroka, S. and McAdams, S. 2015. News, Politics and Negativity. *Political Communication* 32(1), pp. 1-22.

Soroka, S., Fournier, P. and Nir, L. 2019. Cross-national evidence of a negativity bias in psychophysiological reactions to news. *PNAS* 116(38), pp. 18888-18892.

Squire, C., Davis, M., Esin, C., Andrews, M., Harrison, B., Hydén, L. and Hydén, M. 2014. *What is Narrative Research?* New York: Bloomsbury Collections.

Starkey, G. 2019. British Broadcasting Corporation. In: Merskin, D.L. ed. *The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Mass Media and Society* [Google Books version]. California: SAGE Publications, [no pagination]. Available at: https://tinyurl.com/5a8uwbur [Accessed: 15 August 2022].

Strömbäck, J. 2017. News Seekers, News Avoiders, and the Mobilizing Effects of Election Campaigns: Comparing Election Campaigns for the National and the European Parliaments. *International Journal of Communication* 11, pp. 237-258.

Strömbäck, J., Tsfati, Y., Boomgaarden, H., Damstra, A., Lindgren, E., Vliegenthart, R. and Lindholm, T. 2020. News media trust and its impact on media use: toward a framework for future research. *Annals of the International Communication Association* 44(2), pp. 139-156.

Tandoc, E, C. and Maitra, J. 2018. News organisations' use of Native Videos on Facebook: Tweaking the journalistic field one algorithm change at a time. *New Media & Society* 20(5), pp. 1679-1696.

Tandoc Jr., E.C. 2015. Why Web Analytics Click. Factors affecting the ways journalists use audience metrics. *Journalism Studies* 16(6), pp. 782-799.

Terblanche, D. 2020. Engage your audience with constructive journalism. *Journalism.co.uk* 3 January. Available at: https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/engage-your-audience-with-constructive-journalism/s2/a748328/ [Accessed: 02 September 2022].

Thier, K. 2016. Opportunities and challenges for initial implementation of solutions journalism coursework. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 71(3), pp. 329–343.

Thier, K., Abdenour, J., Walth, B. and Dahmen, N.S. 2019. A narrative solution: The relationship between solutions journalism, narrative transportation, and news trust. *Journalism*, pp. 1-20. doi: 10.1177/1464884919876369

Thier, K. 2021. Solutions Journalism. Reporting on the Response is Just as Newsworthy as Reporting on the Problem. In: McIntyre Hopkinson, K. and Dahmen, N.

S. eds. *Reporting Beyond the Problem: From Civic Journalism to Solutions Journalism.* New York: Peter Lang, pp. 47-60.

Thomas, D.R. 2006. A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation* 27(2), pp. 237-246.

Todorov, T. 1986. *Poetika*. Beograd: Filip Višnjić, Zavod za izdavačku delatnost.

Toff, B. and Kalogeropoulos, A. 2020. All the news that's fit to ignore: How the information environment does and does not shape news avoidance. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 84, pp. 366-390.

Tryhorn, C. 2013. BBC is in a 'soft power' battle with international broadcasters. *The Guardian* 13 November. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/media-blog/2013/nov/13/bbc-broadcasters-tony-hall-worldwide-audience-cctv-al-jazeera [Accessed: 15 August 2022].

Tshabangu, T., and Salawu, A. 2021. An evaluation of constructive journalism in Zimbabwe: A case study of *The Herald*'s coverage of the coronavirus pandemic. *Journal of African Media Studies* 13(3), pp. 477-490.

Turner, D. 2020. Coding System Design and Management. In: Vanover, C., Mihas, P. and Saldaña, J. eds. *Analysing and Interpreting Qualitative Research. After the Interview*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, pp. 117-132.

Van Aelst, P., Strömbäck, J., Aalberg, T., Esser, F., de Vreese, C., Matthes, J. and Hopmann, D. et al. 2017. Political Communication in a High-Choice Media Environment: A Challenge to Democracy?. *Annals of the International Communication Association* 41(1), pp. 3-27.

Van Antwerpen, N., Turnbull, D. and Searston, R.A. 2022a. Perspectives from Journalism Professionals on the Application and Benefits of Constructive Reporting for Addressing Misinformation. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, pp. 1-22. doi: 10.1177/19401612211072782

Van Antwerpen, N., Turnbull, D. and Searston, R.A. 2022b. What's Positive in a Pandemic? Journalism Professionals' Perspectives on Constructive Approaches to COVID-19 News Reporting. *Journalism Studies* 23(4), pp. 506-524.

Van Antwerpen, N., Searston, R., Turnbull, D., Hermans, L. and Kovacevic, P. 2022. The effects of constructive journalism techniques on mood, comprehension, and trust. *Journalism* 0(0), pp.1-24. doi: 10.1177/14648849221105778

Van Dalen, A. 2020. Journalism, Trust, and Credibility. In: Wahl-Jorgensen, K. and Hanitzsch, T. eds. *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, 2nd edition. New York and Oxon: Routledge, pp. 356-371.

Van Dalen, A., de Vreese, C.H., Albaek, E. 2017. Mixed Quantitative Methods Approach to Journalistic Role Performance Research. In: Mellado, C., Hellmueller, L. and Donsbach W. eds. *Journalistic Role Performance: Concepts, Contexts, and Methods*. New York: Routledge, pp. 189-205.

Van Dijck, J. and Poell, T. 2013. Understanding Social Media Logic. *Media and Communication* 1(1), pp. 2-14.

Van Krieken, K., Hoeken, H. and Sanders, J. 2017. Evoking and Measuring Identification with Narrative Characters – A Linguistic Cues Framework. *Fronitiers in Psychology* 8, pp. 1-16.

Vanoost, Marie. 2013. Defining Narrative Journalism through the Concept of Plot. *Diegesis* 2(2), pp. 77-97.

Van Venrooij, I., Sachs, T. and Kleemans, M. 2022. The effects of constructive television news reporting on prosocial intentions and behavior in children: The role of negative emotions and self-efficacy. *Communications* 47(1), pp. 5-31.

Viehmann, C., Ziegele, M., and Quiring, O. 2022. Communication, Cohesion, and Corona: The Impact of People's Use of Different Information Sources on their Senses of Societal Cohesion in Times of Crises. *Journalism Studies* 23(5-6), pp. 629-649.

Villi, M., Aharoni, T., Teneboim-Weinblatt, K., Boczkowski, P.J., Hayashi, K., Mitchelstein, E., Tanaka, A. and Kligler-Vilenchik, N. 2022. Taking a Break from News: A Five-nation Study of News Avoidance in the Digital Era. *Digital Journalism* 10(1), pp. 148-164.

Vu, H.T. 2014. The online audience as gatekeeper: The influence of reader metrics on news editorial selection. *Journalism* 15(8), pp. 1094-1110.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Williams, A., Sambrook, R., Harris, J., Garcia-Blanco, I., Dencik, L., Cushion, S., Carter, C. and Allan, S. 2016. The Future of Journalism: Risks, threats and opportunities. *Digital Journalism* 4(7), pp. 809-815.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. and Schmidt, T.R. 2020. News and Storytelling. In: Wahl-Jorgensen, K. and Hanitzsch, T. eds. *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. 2nd edition. New York and Oxon: Routledge, pp. 261-276.

Walth, B., Smith Dahmen, N. and Thier, K. 2019. A new reporting approach for journalistic impact. Bringing together investigative reporting and solutions journalism. *Newspaper Research Journal* 40(2), pp. 177-189.

Waterson, J. 2019. BBC at risk of losing young audiences, according to Ofcom. *The Guardian* 24 October. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/2019/oct/24/bbc-at-risk-of-losing-young-audiences-according-to-ofcom [Accessed: 04 September 2022].

Waterson, J. 2022. BBC licence fee to be abolished in 227 and funding frozen. *The Guardian* 16 January. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/jan/16/bbc-licence-fee-to-be-abolished-in-2027-and-funding-frozen [Accessed: 28 August 2022].

Welbers, K., Van Atteveldt, W., Kleinnijenhuis, J., Ruigrok, N. and Schaper, J. 2016. News Selection Criteria in the Digital Age: Professional Norms Versus Online Audience Metrics. *Journalism* 17(8), pp. 1037-1053.

Wenzel, A. 2020. *Community-Centered Journalism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Wenzel, A., Gerson, D., Moreno, E., Son, M., Morrison Hawkins, B. 2018. Engaging stigmatized communities through solutions journalism: Residents of South Los Angeles respond. *Journalism* 19(5), pp. 649-667.

Wimmer, R. and Dominick, J. 2006. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. Boston: Thomson Wadworth.

Woodstock, L. 2014. The news-democracy narrative and the unexpected benefits of limited news consumption: The case of news resisters. *Journalism* 15(7), pp. 834-849.

Yin, R.K. 2018. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zerba, A. 2008. Narrative Storytelling: Putting the Story Back in Hard News to Engage Young Audiences. *Newspaper Research Journal* 29(3), pp. 94-102.

Zhang, Y. and Matingwina, S. 2016. A new representation of Africa? The use of constructive journalism in the narration of Ebola by China Daily and the BBC. *African Journalism Studies* 37(3), pp. 19-40.

Zhao, X. and Xiang, Y. 2019. Does China's outward focused journalism engage a constructive approach? A qualitative content analysis of Xinhua News Agency's English news. *Asian Journal of Communication* 29(4), pp. 346-362.

Zhao, X., Jackson, D. and Nguyen, A. 2022. The Psychological Empowerment Potential of Solutions Journalism: Perspectives from Pandemic News Users in the UK. *Journalism Studies* 23(3), pp. 356-373.

APPENDIX 1:
CODING SHEET FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Case number:

Hyperlink:

24. Title of the video story: _____

25. Date of publication: DD.MM.YYYY.

26. Name of journalist: _____

27. Story length:

00:30-01:29 – 1	01:30-02:29 – 2	02:30-03:29 – 3	03:30 – 04:29 – 4	04:30 – 05:29 – 5	05:30 – 06:29 – 6	06:30 – 07:29 – 7
07:30 – 08:29 – 8	08:30 – 09:29 – 9	09:30 – 10:29 – 10	10:30 – 11:29 – 11	11:30 – 12:29 – 12	12:30-13:29–13	

28. Story topic:

Politics/Economic Policy–1	Business/Finance/Money–2	Crime/Police–3	Social Affairs–4	Legal Affairs–5	Corruption–6
Refugees–7	Peace Building–8	Community Building–9	Anti-radicalisation–10	Poverty–11	Environment and Sustainability–12
Planning and development–13	Agriculture and Farming–14	Education–15	Children's Health and/or Education–16	Health/Medicine/Medical Profession–17	Mental Health–18
Third Age–19	Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment–20	People with disabilities–21	Tourism–22	Transport and Traffic–23	Consumer Issues–24
Cyber Security–25	Animals–26	Language–27	Culture–28	Sex–29	Media–30
Housing–31					

PROBLEM AND CAUSE

1.	Is the problem presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
2.	Is the cause of the problem and the context within which it arose presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
3.	Who presents the problem? 1 – Journalists, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who receives the solution, 5 – Other (state who) More than one answer is possible.
4.	Who explains the cause of the problem? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who)
5.	Is there at least one interviewee who shares their personal experience of the problem? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
6.	Is the problem itself visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
7.	Is the cause of the problem visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No

SOLUTION

8.	Is the solution presented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
9.	Is the solution tangible or hypothetical? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
10.	Is the person or organisation which invented the solution given a voice in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
11.	Is the person or the organisation which provides the solution given a voice in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No

SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION

12. Does the story include details on how the solution is implemented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
13. Is at least one person who implements the solution presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
14. Is solution implementation visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
15. Is the person who implements the solution visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No

EVIDENCE OF SOLUTION EFFECTIVENESS

16. Is hard evidence or reliable data that show the impact of solution implementation presented? 1–Yes, 0 – No
17. If yes, what is it? 1 – Numerical data, 2 – Qualitative data
18. Who presents the evidence? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who)

SOLUTION LIMITATIONS

19. Are there solution limitations presented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
20. If yes, how many limitations are reported? 1 – 1, 2 – 2, 3 – 3 or more
21. Is there any feedback from the sources related to the solution about the limitations that are presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No
22. Who points out the limitations? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – expert, 6 – the person who directly opposes the solution
23. Is/are the limitation/s visually represented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No

29. Is there information on how people can get involved with the solution?
1 – Yes, 0 – No

30. If yes, who presents it?
1 – journalists, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who)

31. Is anyone presented who directly opposes or disapproves of the solution?
1 – Yes, 0 – No

32. Is there an insight or a teachable lesson in the story?
1 – Yes, 0 – No

APPENDIX 2:
CODING MANUAL FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Case number:

Hyperlink:

Please copy the hyperlink to the video on the BBC's website.

24. Title of the video story: _____
Please write down the title of the story that is positioned under the video published on the BBC People Fixing the World website.

25. Date of publication: DD.MM.YYYY.

26. Name of journalist: _____
If there is no name of the journalist under the video that is published on the website, please write "Not available".

27. Story length:

00:30-01:29 – 1	01:30-02:29 – 2	02:30-03:29 – 3	03:30 – 04:29 – 4	04:30 – 05:29 – 5	05:30 – 06:29 – 6	06:30 – 07:29 – 7
07:30 – 08:29 – 8	08:30 – 09:29 – 9	09:30 – 10:29 – 10	10:30 – 11:29 – 11	11:30 – 12:29 – 12	12:30-13:29–13	

Please check the duration of the video on the BBC People Fixing the World website and choose the corresponding story length.

28. Story topic:

Politics/Economic Policy–1	Business/Finance/Money–2	Crime/Police–3	Social Affairs–4	Legal Affairs–5	Corruption–6
Refugees–7	Peace Building–8	Community Building–9	Anti-radicalisation–10	Poverty–11	Environment and Sustainability–12
Planning and development–13	Agriculture and Farming–14	Education–15	Children's Health and/or Education–16	Health/Medicine/Medical Profession–17	Mental Health–18
Third Age–19	Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment–20	People with disabilities–21	Tourism–22	Transport and Traffic–23	Consumer Issues–24
Cyber Security–25	Animals–26	Language–27	Culture–28	Sex–29	Media–30
Housing–31	Other (please state what)–32				

The story topic should be assessed in relation to the problem that is presented, or the aspect of the problem that the solution is trying or is succeeding to address. For example, if the story is about housing for young people that is designed in a way to facilitate many opportunities to meet and spend time together in order to reduce loneliness and social anxiety, then the story topic is mental health, not housing.

1.	Is the problem presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *The problem is directly addressed in the story, either in text or in visuals (or both).*
2.	Is the cause of the problem and the context within which it arose presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *The story presents the reasons why the problem happens and what causes it–either in text or in visuals (or both).*
3.	Who presents the problem? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who receives the solution, 5 – other (state who) More than one answer is possible. *1 – journalist telling the story in the voiceover/piece to camera/text on the screen* *2 – the person presented as the one who came up with the idea or concept for the solution* *3 – for example, if the solution is a special type of school, the teacher working in the school provides the solution. If the solution is a special coffee shop, the waiter/server who works there provides the solution.* *4 -the person/more people/group/animals that receive and benefit from the solution, use it in their lives, have personal experience of implementing the solution.* *5 – it could be someone that criticizes a solution, perhaps an expert in this topic; or someone who is not involved in the process of solution invention, provision, or implementation.*
4.	Who explains the cause of the problem? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who) *See operationalisation for variable 3.*
5.	Is there at least one interviewee who shares their personal experience of the problem? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *A person shares how they were personally affected by the problem. It can also be a soundbite in which both the solution and the problem are mentioned together.*
6.	Is the problem itself visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *This includes visuals in which the problem that is described is explicitly shown, and the audience is visually presented with information on how the problem is manifested. This does not include visuals that do not represent the problem at all but are used while the problem is presented. For example, if the theme of the story is pollution, and the journalist in the voice-over is presenting the problem, if the visuals feature a bridge and a river, or the sky, or visuals of the*

	city − without visually showing what pollution looks like or what it causes − *then the problem is not visually represented.*
7.	Is the cause of the problem visually represented? 1 − Yes, 0 − No *This refers to visuals which represent the cause of the problem, but at times* *the same visuals may represent both the problem and its cause. For example,* *if a story is about elderly people being lonely, a visual that shows a person who* *is alone and who observes the people passing by, may be seen as both a visual* *of the problem − the people are lonely, and of the cause of the problem − they* *do not have family, or they do not live close enough to visit them.*

SOLUTION

8.	Is the solution presented in the story? 1 − Yes, 0 − No *A solution or response is presented as a means of dealing with a problem and* *overcoming it.*
9.	Is the solution tangible or hypothetical? 1 − Yes, 0 − No *If the solution is tangible, it means that it exists and is used in the physical* *reality. If it is an object, it is produced and used. If it is an event, it took place* *and people were aware of it. If it is a concept (for example, a special type of a* *school), it is implemented daily (classes are held). A hypothetical solution is an* *idea or a theory that has not been in any way implemented in real life* *situations. This includes solutions that are in the trial period. However, this* *does not mean that the idea cannot be visually demonstrated, for example,* *with the use of animated graphics.*
10.	Is the person or organisation which invented the solution given a voice in the story? 1 − Yes, 0 − No *This means that the person is presented as an interviewee.*
11.	Is the person or the organisation which provides the solution given a voice in the story? 1 − Yes, 0 − No *See operationalisation for variable 10.*

SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION

12. Does the story include details on how the solution is implemented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *Information about the ways this solution works, the ways it is or can be used, and how it manifests in real-life situations. This also includes hypothetical solutions in trial test runs that are not yet implemented in real life, but the audience is presented with details how the solution works and what its effects should be if it is applied.*
13. Is at least one person who implements the solution presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *This is the person who receives the solution and benefits from it in some way. It cannot be a place or an animal.*
14. Is solution implementation visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *Visuals of how the solution works, and in what way it responds to the problem.*
15. Is the person who implements the solution visually represented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *The person who receives the solution is visually represented in interaction with the solution and/or the benefits of solution implementation.*

EVIDENCE OF SOLUTION EFFECTIVENESS

16. Is hard evidence or reliable data that show the impact of solution implementation presented? 1–Yes, 0 – No *Hard evidence is reliable data about solution effectiveness that has been collected independently, scientifically, and by a reliable source. It can be numerical data, but also qualitative data from an independent report or academic research. This does not include anecdotal information.*
17. If yes, what is it? 1 – Numerical data, 2 – Qualitative data *Numerical data refers to any statistics, concrete numbers that prove the effect of the solution. For example, it can be the number or the percentage of people who have received the solution; a study that numerically proves the effectiveness of the solution, etc. Qualitative data is reliable evidence – for example, a descriptive report that confirms or disapproves the effectiveness of the solution.*
18. Who presents the evidence? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who) *See operationalisation for variable 3.*

SOLUTION LIMITATIONS

19. Are there solution limitations presented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *Presentation of downsides of a solution or obstacles to solution implementation. It does not have to be directly referred to as a limitation. Instead, it can be mentioned or described in a soundbite as part of the solution description. Additionally, if a journalist questions the scale of the solution, but does not establish if it can scale or not, this is not considered a limitation.*
20. If yes, how many limitations are reported? 1 – 1, 2 – 2, 3 – 3, 4 or more – 4
21. Is there any feedback from the sources related to the solution about the limitations that are presented? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *Any of the sources related to the solution give direct feedback or react to limitations presented in the story.*
22. Who points out the limitations? 1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – expert, 6 – the person who directly opposes the solution *More than one answer is possible. For categories 1,2,3,4, see operationalisation for variable 3. An expert is the person who is knowledgeable in the domain of the problem and the solution. The person who directly opposes the solution is the one who is openly against the solution being implemented. If there is more than one limitation presented by multiple sources, clarify in notes which person presents which limitation.*
23. Is/are the limitation/s visually represented in the story? 1 – Yes, 0 – No *The aspect of the solution or solution limitation that does not work or encounters obstacles is visually represented.*

29. Is there information on how people can get involved with the solution?
1 – Yes, 0 – No

Information about how to find out more about the solution, how it can be implemented, how people can get involved.

30. If yes, who presents it?
1 – journalist, 2 – the person who invented the solution, 3 – the person who provides the solution, 4 – the person who implements the solution, 5 – other (state who)

See operationalisation for variable 3.

31. Is anyone presented who directly opposes or disapproves of the solution?
1 – Yes, 0 – No

The person is presented as an interviewee and openly expresses opposition or disapproval of the solution and/or how it is implemented.

32. Is there an insight or a teachable lesson in the story?
1 – Yes, 0 – No

The insight or a teachable lesson are coded only if they are explicitly present in the story. They can be present anywhere in the story but are most prominent as part of the ending. Insight can be an invitation to think critically about the impact or the scale of the solution, or a provision of hope about the future of the solution and the progress it may bring. A teachable lesson can be directly offered by the interviewee as a promise that, if the lesson is learned, it can bring positive results. A story can also be framed as a teachable lesson and presented as, for example, a series of steps and explanations how a solution can be effective in solving the problem if it is applied elsewhere.

APPENDIX 3:
INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: The BBC's solutions-focused video stories on Facebook:

Practicing the 'dark arts' of solutions journalism

SREC reference and committee: PPG0145

Name of Chief/Principal Investigator: Petra Kovačević

**Please
initial box**

I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 10/09/2020, version 01 for the above research project.	
I confirm that I have understood the information sheet dated 10/09/2020, version 01 for the above research project and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without any adverse consequences.	
I understand that data collected during the research project may be looked at by individuals from Cardiff University or from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in the research project. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.	
I consent to the processing of my personal information – name, email, work position, signature–for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be held in accordance with all applicable data protection legislation and in strict confidence, unless disclosure is required by law or professional obligation.	

I understand who will have access to personal information provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the research project.	
I understand that after the research project, anonymised data may be made publicly available via a data repository and may be used for purposes not related to this research project. I understand that it will not be possible to identify me from this data that is seen and used by other researchers, for ethically approved research projects, on the understanding that confidentiality will be maintained.	
I consent to being audio recorded for the purposes of the research project and I understand how it will be used in the research.	
I understand that anonymised excerpts and/or verbatim quotes from my interview may be used as part of the research publication.	
I understand how the findings and results of the research project will be written up and published.	
I agree to take part in this research project.	

_____   _____   _____

_____

Name of participant (print)   Date   Signature

PETRA KOVAČEVIĆ   _____   _____
Name of person taking consent   Date   Signature
(print)

Researcher

Role of person taking consent

(print)

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR RESEARCH

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP

[RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE: The BBC's solutions-focused video stories on Facebook: Practicing the 'dark arts' of solutions journalism]

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others, if you wish.

Thank you for reading this.

1.   What is the purpose of this research project?

This study is a postgraduate student project in Journalism Studies at the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Culture. The study aims to contribute to understanding of different journalistic practices—in this case constructive journalism, solutions journalism and solutions-focused journalism. The focus is on video storytelling and on ways that different ideas of these practices are implemented by journalists and editors in stories that they produce. Research involves analysing video stories and talking to journalists and their editors in the *BBC People Fixing the World* newsroom.

2.   Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are either an existing or former member of the *BBC People Fixing the World* team (either journalist, producer or editor), and perhaps also one of the authors of the video/TV story that is analysed.

3.   Do I have to take part?

No, your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, we will discuss the research project with you and ask you to sign a consent form. If you decide not to take part, you do not have to explain your reasons and it will not affect your legal rights.
You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in the research project at any time, without giving a reason, even after signing the consent form.

4.   What will taking part involve?

It involves an interview either online (Zoom, Skype or other app) or face-to-face with the researcher. The interview will be audio recorded. The interview should last between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

5.   Will I be paid for taking part?

No.

6.   What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Research about solutions audiovisual storytelling is until now almost non-existent, and your team was chosen for study as the most influential leader in the field of solutions(-focused) video journalism. Your participation is important to make this study wholesome. Your thoughts, descriptions and explanations will help to understand better the stories that are being analysed, the journalistic and editorial process behind it, and your professional ideas about reporting on solutions. Conclusions of this study may also be of help to you and your team. This is not only a significant academic contribution, but above all an opportunity for academic research and journalism practice to work together and think about new ideas and practical ways of improving the practice.

7.   What are the possible risks of taking part?
None.

8.   Will my taking part in this research project be kept confidential?
All information collected from or about you during the research project will be kept confidential and any personal information you provide will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation. Please see 'What will happen to my Personal Data?' (below) for further information.

9.   What will happen to my Personal Data?
The personal data collected in this research project are your name, your email, your work position and your signature. However, in the study itself (thesis or other academic publications related to this research project) you will be identified solely by your profession, level of work experience and your relation to the stories that are studied. Therefore, your name will not be mentioned in any way. However, if you choose, you can be identified by name in this study.
Cardiff University is the Data Controller and is committed to respecting and protecting your personal data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation. Further information about Data Protection, including:

- your rights
- the legal basis under which Cardiff University processes your personal data for research
- Cardiff University's Data Protection Policy
- how to contact the Cardiff University Data Protection Officer
- how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office

may be found at https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/data-protection

Your personal data collected in this study will be kept up to a year after the researcher has successfully defended her thesis. After this, the research team will anonymise all the personal data it has collected from, or about, you in connection with this research project, with the exception of your consent form. Your consent form will be retained

for two more years and may be accessed by members of the research team and, where necessary, by members of the University's governance and audit teams or by regulatory authorities. Anonymised information will be kept for a minimum of three years but may be published in support of the research project and/or retained indefinitely, where it is likely to have continuing value for research purposes. It will not be possible to withdraw any anonymised data that has already been published.

10.   What happens to the data at the end of the research project?

Data collected during this research project will be used by the researcher for other academic publications published after the PhD thesis is defended (and the research project finished). It may also be used in future studies by the researcher related to constructive and solutions journalism. The thesis will be publicly available online and in Cardiff University library.

Any personal data will be removed before the mentioned forms of sharing this research project take place.

11.   What will happen to the results of the research project?

Other than in the PhD thesis, the intention is to publish the results of this research project in academic journals and present findings at conferences. Verbatim quotes from participants may be used in presentation of findings. Participants will not be identified by name in any report, publication, or presentation.

12.   What if there is a problem?

If you wish to raise a complaint, or have grounds for concerns about any aspect of the manner in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this research, please contact researcher's supervisors Dr Stephen Cushion CushionSA@cardiff.ac.uk and Dr Janet Harris HarrisJ14@cardiff.ac.uk. If you feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you may contact the Chair of JOMEC's Research Ethics Committee Dr Damian Carney via CarneyD@cardiff.ac.uk .

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, you may have grounds for legal action, but you may have to pay for it.

13.   Who is organising and funding this research project?

The research is organised by Petra Kovacevic and Cardiff School of Journalism, Media & Culture in Cardiff University, supervised by Dr Stephen Cushion and Dr Janet Harris. The research is currently funded by the researcher and the Croatian Science Foundation.

14.   Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the JOMEC Research Ethics Committee.

15.   Further information and contact details

Should you have any questions relating to this research project, you may contact us during normal working hours:

Researcher Petra Kovacevic, <u>KovacevicP@cardiff.ac.uk</u> , +385911710989

Thank you for considering to take part in this research project. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records.

APPENDIX 5:
LIST OF VIDEOS

1. The people trying to reunite a divided island (15 March 2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p073nk0k

2. How Japan is helping pensioners stay happy and have fun (07 March 2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p072vz7g

3. The app helping children grieve for their parents (06 March 2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p072rhcx

4. 'No men allowed'–the gym getting women fit and into work // The gym
   creating businesswomen (11 February 2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p070kq42

5. Integrity Idol: The talent show that rewards honesty (07 February 2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0704xlr

6. The shopping mall where everything is recycled (29 January 2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06zd8hw

7. How brotherly love led to an app to help autistic children// Educating Turkey's
   autistic children (25 January 2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06z38vt

8. Rent-a-sister: Coaxing Japan's young men out of their rooms (18 January
   2019)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06y5hmn

9. Can US entrepreneurs solve a 'crisis' in African schools? (18 December 2018)
   https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06vyvk3

10. Smart ships using wind and bubbles to save fuel (12 December 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06vcj4k

11. How 'Buddy Benches' are making playtime less lonely (03 December 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06t4wz6

12. The city turning streets into gardens (20 November 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06sbtzz

13. Why this man will fix your broken stuff for free (13 November 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06rnl1x

14. Can laser shoes help people with Parkinson's walk? (16 January 2019)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06y56ry

15. This country banned plastic bags–should we all do the same? (05 November
    2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06qtqm2

16. What is 'Green Cake' and why did this woman invent it? (02 November 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06qlkmg

17. The city that gives you free beer for cycling (23 October 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06pjwck

18. Can a cooking pot help save the rainforest? (17 October 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06nzz0d

19. An ingenious way to bring clean water to a slum (12 October 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06nkq9t

20. Fighting fires with goats (10 October 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06nfy9d

21. The school beating the odds with music (28 September 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06md8jj

22. 'Magic table' helping dementia patients (25 September 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06m36n3

23. Reviving Italy's ghost towns with an unusual hotel (25 September 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06m36n3

24. Meet Mumbai's singing and dancing plogging club (7 September 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06kk8td

25. A clever way to make a living out of rubbish (3 September 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06k5d4t

26. How to get rewards for your rubbish (13 August 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06hbqxj

27. Scanning homeless people to donate money (7 August 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06gtr60

28. Can India's "quack" doctors be trained in 100 hours? (2 August 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06g93pm

29. Why millions listen to this girl's advice (20 July 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06f7szb

30. Beating the stigma of STIs with secret home-testing kits (18 July 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06f2g19

31. Using roads to make power and toilet paper (11 July 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06dgkhk

32. Glasses made to measure... for $1(5 July 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06ctptf

33. Simple steps that could help you live to 100 (29 June 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06cfjqm

34. Simple change helps campus cut coffee cup waste (22 June 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06bsrpj

35. How young people and farmers are helping each other (12 June 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p069vvm8

36. Half a House (08 June 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p069jj55

37. The $1m prize for a gadget to keep women safe (07 June 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p069csw4

38. 'I'm a student, this way I get free food' (01 June 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p068v09t

39. Clever bins that save money (25 May 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0687jbp

40. Volunteers with speed guns strike back (09 May 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p066n8jk

41. A simple way to get school children fit (30 April 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p065s5v6

42. The school bringing a divided community together (25 April 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p064p0hn

43. The peace talks with a difference (20 April 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p064nkk2

44. The town tackling loneliness (10 April 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p063s70l

45. 'I dreaded being sent from hospital back to the streets' (22 March 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p061z35p

46. How to stop birds crashing into buildings (14 March 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0613qsm

47. The designer stamping out chewing gum litter (6 March 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06059d6

48. Reusing surplus medication left in drawers (22 February 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05z0rmm

49. Gaining confidence by playing the fool (12 February 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05wwtsd

50. Nigeria's soil-free salad farm (06 February 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05x96yw

51. The experiment that's rewarding good deeds (29 January 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05wfrk8

52. The baby tackling bullying at school (22 January 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05vpw3f

53. The gym made out of melted knives (15 January 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05tyx9f

54. The drones saving lives (04 January 2018)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05srvxn

55. Growing feet? Try expandable shoes (26 December 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05rkndh

56. The woman who wants to get wheelchairs on planes (04 December 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05q2fq1

57. The supermarket chain selling 'surplus food' (04 December 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05q1k33

58. The secret ring helping women protect themselves from HIV (29 November 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05pkv4s

59. How to deradicalise a Nazi (23 November 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05nzmdh

60. The simple recipe for a happy street (20 November 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05nls20

61. How one country dramatically cut teenage drinking (13 November 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05mw7rd

62. How making maps can save lives (08 November 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05mffb8

63. The city where you will never get caught short (31 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05llhhg

64. Rainbow paint job to cheer up Kabul (25 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05kyft0

65. The drones that stop wildlife poaching (18 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05k9gr4

66. How a girl who cannot speak was given a unique voice (11 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05jng53

67. The Viking club where men fight their demons (11 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05jn3ns

68. The Liverpool app that sidesteps the banks (11 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05jn0d0

69. Why 'cervical selfies' are helping lead the fight against cancer (09 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05jh3j1

70. The country making sure women aren't underpaid (06 October 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05j46gw

71. The Great Green Wall of Africa (25 September 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05h6qsd

72. How to make sushi from methane gas (18 September 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05gh7h1

73. How one girl's illness changed what a nation eats (01 September 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05dxz37

74. A Blood Bank on a Smartphone (25 August 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05d9xzx

75. How to save a young mother's life with a condom (31 July 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05b5b8t

76. The disease-busting grandmas fighting bird flu (19 July 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0593bxg

77. Why strangers make good therapists (19 July 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p059368q

78. He's been shot three times. How do you make it stop? (17 July 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p058xx69

79. Cutting cow farts to combat climate change (13 July 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p058ggv7

80. Think Again: 'There is no obesity crisis' (05 July 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p057q8bh

81. Is this the school of the future? (03 July 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p057n1qj

82. Designers reinvent the tree to beat pollution (28 June 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05761y7

83. Fatberg hunters: Turning fat from the sewer into fuel (27 June 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0572yfx

84. The condom king has changed the way people understand sex (19 June 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05639my

85. Allowing mums in jail to hug their children (16 June 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p056365b

86. The woman who wants you to rent used baby clothes (07 June 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0556kgp

87. The day cyclists rule the roads (31 May 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p053rjgz

88. The stickers that save lives (30 May 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p054dpzw

89. Can plastic clothes save the oceans? (22 May 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p052fqct

90. The project turning goats into water (15 May 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0530nmz

91. Should we throw underwear in the compost heap? (11 May 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p052m4k3

92. Box proves women are 'smoother' drivers (03 May 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p051t6wc

93. The 'Uber for ambulances' serving the poor (28 April 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p051dpq8

94. The charity helping disabled people with sex (27 April 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0518nt3

95. Could plastic roads help save the planet? (24 April 2017)
    https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p050z42h

96. The fridge for sharing free food (19 April 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p050g593

97. The postmen who deliver care to the elderly (07 April 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04zch34

98. A radical solution to expensive childcare (03 April 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04xlk2d

99. The women saving lives with sewage (27 March 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04y65ns

100.   Feeling lonely? It might be your house (22 March 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04vzsj6

101.   The bikes you can rent and leave anywhere (21 March 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04xkxm2

102.   Will circular runways ever take off? (15 March 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04wyxlq

103.   'Why I chose refugees for housemates' (13 March 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04wpx88

104.   The 'sun king' who built a solar city in China (7 March 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04w2q0b

105.   The food waste fighter (24 February 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04txs1z

106.   How smartphones became 'eyes' for the blind (22 February 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04tq5w2

107.   Think Again: Protect your toaster from cyber hackers (16 February
2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04t40j5

108.   Superblocks: Barcelona's bid to end air pollution (07 February 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04s618p

109.   How Peru is solving its height problem (31 January 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04rfqz1

110.   Do we need a new word for vagina? (25 January 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04qqv3w

111.   Work permits for Syrian refugees (10 January 2017)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04nwsbr

112.   The man who knows when the power's going out (24 December 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04m40fq

113.   Why theatres should welcome noisy audiences (12 December 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04ktkbq

114.   Helping US police not to pull the trigger (08 December 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04kpq78

115.	How to get through Christmas without buying anything (6 December 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04k8yx0

116.	The fog catcher who brings water to the poor (01 December 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04jrykr

117.	A solution to Arab sexism: Teaching girls to fight back (28 November 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04j7y41

118.	A solution for refugee suffering: Give them cash (23 November 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04hk9yv

119.	Think Again: Here's a way to stop mass shootings in America (20 November 2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04gvyd2