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Preliminary master thesis report - Social Construction of
Leadership: are celebrity leaders trapped in
something bigger than themselves?

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Social Construction of Leadership: are celebrity leaders trapped in something bigger than themselves?

Abstract

The social construction of leadership emphasizes leadership as a co-constructed reality with regard to the complexity of the concept of leadership and social actors. Research describe how observers and participants within organizations overestimate the leaders' behaviors and their impact, and perceive them as heroes even though leadership disasters occur. This view of leadership leads to a bias toward leadership where individuals view leadership as a force responsible for organizational performance under ambiguous organizational events. To explore the concept of the social construction of leadership and great leadership disasters, a case study of the phenomenon based on analysis from archival records will be conducted. Three independent cases that have been presented in the media of celebrity leaders will be analyzed to explore how the popular press contributes to the social construction of leadership. We aim to analyze how each case connect, differ and have similarities with Chen and Meindl's (1991) study to explore the possibility of leaders being trapped in something bigger than themselves. This will be done by reviewing archival records published in the popular press. Further we want to identify whether there are any common mechanisms behind leadership disasters, which could explain leader failures to examine whether leadership disasters are repeatable processes. Lastly, we will examine whether it is possible to identify symptoms of leader downfalls, as well as to proactively identify leadership disasters before they arise at all.

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Figure 1: Tentative Plan

1.0 Introduction to thesis

The topic of our Master Thesis is social construction of leadership. More specifically, we would like to study the concept with regard to great leadership disasters, and how these events are constructed in the popular press. A theoretical explanation of the concepts will be represented in the literature review. However, social construction of leadership briefly views leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon, and our main focus will be on how the media participates to the society's understanding of leadership. This approach is particularly interesting due to the fact that the media has a great amount of power, and they have the ability to influence individuals' perceptions both implicitly and explicitly (Chen & Meindl, 1991, p. 521).

Social construction of leadership is important because it illustrates the complexity of the concept of leadership, and it highlights the process and outcomes of the interactions among social actors (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 175). There are conducted several studies of the construction of leadership, and also a few are taking the practical view of combining social construction and leadership failure. For example, Chen and Meindl's study from 1991 "The Construction of Leadership Images in the Popular Press: The Case of Donald Burr and People Express" used this perspective.

The topic will be studied in a Norwegian contemporary context. This makes our research especially relevant for Norwegian companies, as well as the public with regards to awareness of social construction of leadership and to receptiveness of the media's influence. Our research will also provide insight around why leaders have to go, based on both theory and media publications. This is particularly interesting in a Norwegian context, as there is little research concerning why leaders must go and there is no good explanation around it.

2.0 Literature Review

An important first step in all business research is the conduction of a literature review. This entails a thorough exploration of the existing literature and research within the field (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, we will in this chapter review the current knowledge regarding the concept of leadership, social constructionism

and the social construction of leadership. In addition, we will also look into the importance of identity, as well as individual identification and social validation.

2.1 Leadership

Leadership is a popular topic and there have been many studies of leadership over the last century. This is grounded in the assumption that leadership is causally related to organizational performance, and people believe that leader behavior influences organizational performance and effectiveness (Pfeffer, 1977).

However, the concept of leadership and its definitions remain unclear. Though, factors such as directing, influence, motivation, vision and purpose, as well as synergies and collective goal achievement are commonly expressed when explaining leadership. Yukl (2013) argues that this ambiguity can partially be explained by the fact that the term “leadership” is originally taken from the everyday language, and adopted into the scientific field without a proper redefining. As a result, it now exists a great number of different definitions of leadership. Other closely related, though different, terms such as management, supervision and administration, also contribute to even more perplexity about the concept and its definitions (Yukl, 2013).

2.1.1 The evolving view of leadership and followership

Another reason for the ambiguity around leadership is the lack of a shared understanding for the components and underlying mechanisms of leadership. More specifically, throughout its existence as an academic field, researchers and practitioners have understood the concept of leadership and followership differently. In contrast to leadership, followership refers to “the skills and qualities displayed by nonleaders” (Forsyth, 2014, p. 249). In their systematic review of leadership and followership research, Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe & Carsten (2013) structured earlier research within three different approaches to leadership research. The first is the leader-centric approach, which has received the most attention from researchers. As the name suggests, it focuses on the leader alone, with little attention given to followership. For instance, this includes studies on what the leader is (i.e. trait theories), what the leader does (i.e. behavior approaches) and the leader’s adaptability to situational factors (i.e. contingency theories). The early research of Taylor, as well as the newer theories of charismatic and transformational leadership, takes this leader-centric approach (Uhl-Bien et al., 2013).

In response to this view, it was argued that the followers also played an important role when constructing leaders. This follower-centric approach draws attention to followership in order to understand the concept of leadership. Specifically, it views leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon and the emergence of leadership as “generated in the cognitive, attributional, and social identity processes of followers.” (Uhl-Bien et al., 2013, p. 86). Thus, social construction of leadership has a follower-centric approach, and it also includes theories such as romance of leadership, implicit leadership theories and social identity theory of leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2013). For this reason, we will mainly focus on the follower-centric approach, and we will touch upon these theories later in our literature review.

The last approach includes the relational views, which acknowledges leadership as a mutual influence process between both leaders and followers. There are several theories within the relational view, though the Leader-Member Exchange Theory is probably the one that have received the most attention (Uhl-Bien et al., 2013)

2.1.2. Defining leadership

After a thorough review of existing theories and research, we chose Forsyth’s (2014) definition, which is based on a follower-centric approach. He defines leadership as “the process by which an individual guides other in their collective pursuits, often by organizing, directing, coordinating, supporting, and motivating their efforts.” (Forsyth, 2014, p. 249) Thus, this definition highlights the importance of an interpersonal process, illustrating that leadership is a complex concept that needs to be understood and interpreted in a collective context, rather than based on individuality. Moreover, he argues that there are five processes that are particularly important for understanding leadership. Firstly, within leadership, the process is reciprocal, meaning that there is a mutual relationship between the leader and the followers. In particular, it emphasizes the importance of followership. Secondly, leadership is viewed as a transactional process where the leader works together with the followers to achieve common success. It is viewed as a social exchange process, in which these successes are obtained through an exchange agreement. Followers exchange their inputs such as time, skills and energy for outputs such as transactional rewards. Thirdly, leadership goes beyond the transactional aspect, and also have a transformational process in which the

leader builds motivation, confidence and satisfaction among the group members, as well as promoting values and beliefs the organization stands for. Fourthly, leadership is a cooperative process where power and influence goes beyond legitimate power given by the leadership position. Thus, leadership also needs to be voluntarily given by the followers. Lastly, Forsyth views leadership as an adaptive and goal seeking process, where both organizational and individual goals are set to motivate and steer each members' effort (Forsyth, 2014).

2.2 Social constructionism

Social constructivism rejects the ontological position of objectivism and the idea that social phenomenon exists independent of the social actors of society. Instead, it favors the ontological position of constructivism, which states that these phenomena and their meaning are produced and revised by social actors. Thus, the term emphasizes that the world around us is created and shaped by human beings (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In the book *Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued that "reality" and "knowledge" is a result of social interaction and the development of shared mental models among social actors. While we in everyday life are satisfied with what seems real to us, philosophers often aim to identify a valid and reliable reality. However, this is difficult in sociology as it is a result of social relativity, meaning that there is no universal standard of what is to be considered true. Thus, sociology of knowledge is not able to discard assumptions and understandings based on lack of validity or reliability. From this point of view, everything that is socially viewed as true in a society is to be accepted as knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Several realities may also exist, and contestation is also possible. Stable social structures of reality are created through negotiation and consensus, though, these structures are simultaneously open to change as the interaction and the social understanding might evolve over time (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). However, this does not necessarily mean that new realities are produced. Rather, realities are often reproduced (Sandberg, 2001).

Unfortunately, a common weakness among research is a superficial definition of social constructionism and its underlying assumptions (Sandberg, 2001). This can potentially lead to misunderstandings, and we therefore find it appropriate to present these assumptions in further detail. First, social constructionism views the

object and the subject of research as inseparable. However, it should be mentioned that some tension has occurred between researchers on this matter. Though, it is widely assumed that as social researchers, one is part of the social world that is being studied and factors such as experience, culture and historical time will mediate how reality is defined. As a result, our perception and understanding of reality cannot be objective, but is socially constructed. This also highlights the second underlying assumption, which is the rejection of an objective reality. Further, the concept takes a social, instead of an individualistic, epistemological perspective. From this perspective, reality and knowledge is defined and created through interaction of multiple individuals, instead of within each individual's own mind. Lastly, while research commonly uses language to express the objective reality, it does originate from the researcher. Therefore, from a social constructionism perspective, language cannot be objective. However, the extent to which language is socially constructed is debated (Sandberg, 2001).

2.3 Social Construction of Leadership

Leadership is one aspect of the social reality that has received a great amount of attention, together with other aspects such as male, female, management and identity (Sandberg, 2001). The latter will also play a central role further in this assignment. Social construction of leadership takes a social constructionist view, emphasizing leadership as a co-constructed reality (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Thus, the attention is on the interaction between the leader and the followers, and how these constructs of leadership are produced and reproduced. In that sense, how we define leadership - both in terms of personal characteristics as well as appropriate behavior - is a result of experiences and interactions with other people. Subsequently, collective perceptions and understandings of organization and leadership are created (Chen & Meindl, 1991). This is in line with Chen and Meindl's findings (1991) exploring the social construction of leadership in the popular press, and how media shaped the readers' perceptions of Donald Burr as a leader (Sandberg, 2001).

Further, Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich (1985) describe how observers and participants in organizations have developed a view of leadership that is highly romanticized and heroic. This is what they refer to as the romance of leadership. More specifically, it describes how observers and participants within organizations overestimate the leaders' behaviors and their impact, and perceive

them as heroes. In this view, leadership is perceived as an organizational process where leadership is the leading force responsible for organizational events and activities. Thus, the romance of leadership de-emphasizes the influence of other factors and overestimates the role of leadership (Felfe, 2005; Meindl et al., 1985). Observers and participants assume that leaders make all the difference, and give leaders the credit for organizational success (Blight, Kohles & Pillai, 2011). This is strongly associated with celebrity leadership, as it “consists of a public manifestation of the heroic illusion of leadership” (Arnulf & Gottschalk, 2013, p. 102).

This shows how the romance of leadership produce a bias toward leadership, in which individuals view leadership as a force responsible for organizational performance under ambiguous organizational events. The systematic bias appears as a result of subjective tendencies toward preferences that are based on “the ambiguity of relevant information and the perceived importance of events” (Meindl et al., 1985, p. 80; Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). The assumption of highly romanticized views of leadership does imply that leaders are held responsible for unsuccessful organizational events and results, even though leaders cannot control every factor that determine the outcomes (Salancik & Meindl, 1984). Similarly, Pfeffer (1977) also claimed that the leader’s success or failure is outside the leader’s control and may be partly dependent upon the circumstances unique to the organization.

Meindl et al. (1985) suggested that the romanticized conception of leadership have certain similarities to implicit leadership theories (ILT). ILT are underlying cognitive structures that each follower hold, and consists of assumptions, beliefs and expectations of the causes, the nature and the consequence of leadership. In other words, it is the followers’ mind-set, and this is unique to each particular follower. Interestingly, the followers ILT have an influence on how they perceive and evaluate leaders, and the romance of leadership is said to be a specific ILT with attention to the leaders outstanding influence for organizational success or failure. Thus, within implicit leadership theories, people have a tendency to evaluate high performance and success as a result of the leader’s behavior (Felfe, 2005).

Felke (2005) argued that personality influences romance of leadership as a specific ILT. Followers who share common traits with their leaders seem to consider leaders to be more powerful and influential. Moreover, it seems like there are different reasons for why followers take a favorable evaluation of leadership when their personality traits are similar. Firstly, when followers have positive self-assessment with regard to influence and control, this leads to a more positive evaluation of leaders in general. Therefore, the social construction may be a cause for similarity. Secondly, it is well known that similarity leads to attraction, and the perception of similarity may therefore serve as an explanation for the concept of romance of leadership. An alternative explanation can be that followers romanticize their leaders because this makes them able to attribute their own qualities to their leaders (Felke, 2005). Nye (2002) pointed out that people are social perceivers and as a consequence of our implicit leadership theories, we tend to attribute causality to leaders for organizational outcomes and view the leader as our most attributional target. A consequence of the attribution of causality to leaders and leadership is a symbolic view of the leader dependent on his/her success or failure (Pfeffer, 1977). Further, Felke (2005) discuss how people engage in followership and commitment to the leader, which is self-defined depending on the specific construction of leadership and how the social construction of leadership is a “result of an intersubjective collaboration, and negotiation on the basis of a shared system of leadership concepts” (p. 204).

2.4. Identity, individual identification and social validation

Another aspect of the social reality that is interesting in light of social constructivism and leadership is identity. Identity refers to how individuals define themselves or their social groups, and is an important factor for human functioning. It is widely acknowledged that human beings have an essential need for belongingness to groups and social validation of their own identity. The term identification refers to the extent to which an individual perceives the identity as part of their self-definition and important for their self-worth (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016).

Further, it is important to distinguish between social identity and personal identity. The former refers to identification within a collective group, such as a CFO within the Board of Directors, or within certain categories, such as gender or age. The latter refers to the more personal characteristics and composition of these

that makes the individual unique within the social group. Thus, the CFO's personality, attitudes and memories illustrate uniqueness and differentiate this leader from the rest of the Board of Directors. As identity and identification is a fundamental part of humanity and wellbeing, it is not surprising that identification is positively associated with several favorable outcomes such as leadership effectiveness (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016).

Thus, taking a social constructivist approach of leadership, the way the concept of leadership is socially defined is likely to influence a leader's identity and own perception of self (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). However, leader identity is quite an ambiguous concept as it is composed of multiple attributes and is unclear, contextual contingent, and socially constructed (DeRue, Ashford & Cotton, 2009). To understand the process of leader identity development, the concepts of leader identity claiming and leader identity granting needs to be explained. Claiming refers to how the individual who hold the leader role adjust their own behavior with their perceptions or understandings of leadership. Similarly, granting refers to how other people compare this individual's traits, skills and behavior to their own perceptions of leadership, and based on this either grant or do not grant the person with a leader identity within the social interaction. Then again, whether or not the identity is granted will affect the individual's own perception of his or her own leader identity.

This results in both positive and negative spirals of identity development. A positive spiral illustrates how an individual who originally claims and is granted the leader identity is likely to claim the identity even more and become more strongly granted with the leader identity. In contrast, a negative spiral has the opposite effect (DeRue et al., 2009). This illustrates that the construction of an individual's identity is a dynamic process that goes beyond an intrapersonal and cognitive act of the individual, and is highly influenced by social interaction and validation. It is important for an individual to be perceived positively by others and in line with their own identity, and interestingly, other people's perceptions also have an impact on a self-perception (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016).

Individual identification and the positive and negative spirals are also strongly related to heroic leadership and celebrity leadership. If other people view the

leader as heroic, it is also likely to affect the individual's own perception of his or her own leader identity. Thus, if others overestimate their own behaviors, they are likely to overestimate themselves as well. This can result in an external and internal view of the leader as something bigger than himself/herself.

Subsequently, this has the potential of awakening dark sides of leadership and white-collar crime (Arnulf & Gottschalk, 2013). The dark side of leadership theory highlights the potentially destructive nature of leadership. More specifically, it emphasizes how some leaders' behavior might be destructive to the organization as well as to the followers and colleges around them, despite that they may be perceived as flawless or infallible (Arnulf & Gottschalk, 2013).

The term white-collar criminals refer to successful, resourceful and highly educated people, who are willing to commit criminal behavior and cheat, lie or manipulate the truth. They are powerful and wealthy, and often given a heroic status, which make them prone to commit intentional criminal behavior without being easily detected. They seem to enjoy public recognition, and use their legitimate position, respect and authority within the community to violate the law. It is important to emphasize that these crimes are non-violent and financial related, such as fraud, theft or corruption. White-collar criminals tend to have narcissistic personality traits, such as self-centeredness and exploitativeness. Moreover, these crimes are business related, however, they usually aim for a personal gain but not necessarily an organizational gain (Arnulf & Gottschalk, 2013). This is not surprising, as research suggests that narcissistic personality traits are positively related to counterproductive work behavior (O'Boyle Jr, Forsyth, Banks & McDaniel, 2012).

3.0 Development of research questions

As the theory suggests, the perception of leaders is socially constructed and these external perceptions of the leader also affects the leaders' own identification and leader identity. With biases such as the romance of leadership and the tendency to view successful leaders in heroic ways, there is a possibility that these leaders may be perceived as something bigger than what they actually are. When they are on top, they are viewed as successful and heroic. In accordance to the theory, there is a possibility that this may result in them feeling superior above others and

more willing to undertake and justify dishonest and unethical behavior. Based on this, our first research question is:

1. *Are celebrity leaders trapped in something bigger than themselves?*

Celebrity leaders seem successful and unbeatable, and media play a central role in their exposure. However, as theory suggest, observers and participants within organizations overestimate the leaders' behaviors and their impact, and perceive them as heroes until something goes wrong. Chen and Meindl showed how the dramatic performance failure of People Express reconstructed the image of Donald Burr, from being perceived as a hero to unsuccessful. When leaders are on top they are viewed as heroes, but when they do mistakes they have a lot to lose as the case with Donald Burr. Therefore, by looking at celebrity leaders who was viewed as successful leaders we aim to look at different cases with Norwegian celebrity leadership disasters which could allow us to find some historical patterns that would give us the possibility to examine whether leadership disasters are repeatable processes. And if great leadership disasters are repeatable processes, we are interested in identifying whether there are any common mechanisms behind that could explain leader failures. This leads us to our second research question, which is:

2. *Are great leadership disasters a repeatable process?*

If there are repeatable tendencies of leadership disasters, an interesting question concerns whether there is possible to identify symptoms of these downfalls while the process is ongoing or before issues arise at all. Using theories of dark sides of leadership and white-collar criminals, we would like to explore the possibility of preventive and proactive actions in order to decrease the likelihood of these leadership disasters occurring. Therefore, we have also included the following research questions:

3. *Can these leadership disasters be proactively identified?*

4.0 Research Methodology

To explore the concept of the social construction of leadership and great leadership disasters, we will conduct a case study of the phenomenon based on analysis from archival records. This section will go further in depth on our research design, research method and other important methodological choices.

4.1. Research design

Research design gives the researcher a framework for the data collection, and the purpose of establishing design is to ensure that the research question is effectively addressed (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Based on our research question, a case study design is most appropriate. Case studies are intensive studies of one or a few units (i.e. organizations or parts of them, decisions, negotiations, discourse, a course of action, an act, a procedure, a statement etc.). Most case studies are based on the reconstruction of events and events that are relatively close in time. However, the crucial with case studies is access to a diverse and rich database on phenomena and context (Andersen, 2013).

Our case is a social construction of leadership presented in the media where we want to explore how the popular press contributes to the social construction the concept of leadership. Further we want to look at different reviews in the popular press of leaders and draw a timeline within each case to see how they connect, differ and have similarities with the study done by Chen and Meindl (1991). Case studies provide several different possibilities and we find it appropriate to conduct a study based on the research design Concept- and Theory Development where the aim is to study a single case as an example on the social construction of leadership. Within this design, all attempt to generalize imply that one looks over the single case (Andersen, 2013). We will study three independent cases, which illustrates great leadership disasters.

4.1.1 Case 1: Tore Tønne

The Case of Tore Tønne deals with the former politician and business leader Tore Tønne who was prosecuted and later charged for grossly negligent fraud. He took his own life on December 21, 2002 after it was revealed that he had private loans with Kjell Inge Røkke and received salary for an employment relationship while raising early retirement from the state as released deputy health minister. The case received great attention in the press, and the media covered the event extensively,

made it their mission to make sure that the details around his actions was available to the public. It has been questioned if they drove him to suicide (Breirem, 2007; Hippe, 2003; Tvedt, 2016).

4.1.2 Case 2: Christine Meyer

This Case of the former chief executive officer of the Statistics Norway, Christine Meyer is both a personal conflict and a research dispute. The case involves that Meyer was released as leader when she reorganized the research department in a controversial way. Former finance ministers, top politicians and staff at Statistics Norway expressed concern about the consequences of the reorganization. Further, the case became an open conflict between Meyer and the Norwegian Finance Minister Siv Jensen. Meyer refused to meet Jensen without a lawyer saying she was exposed to political pressure, while Jensen said that she did not trust Meyer. Meyer and the Finance department negotiated a final package, and agreed on that Meyer left as CEO for the Statistics Norway (Sandnes & Oterholm, 2017).

4.1.2 Case 3: Trond Giske

Trond Giske, was the deputy chairman of the Norwegian political party “The Labor Party”. The Case of Trond Giske includes that several women have accused him for sexual harassment and improper behavior. The case is based on anonymous sources, and the events are not either place-or time-arranged. It also does not contain comments from someone who feels offended (Zondag, Kinn & Ording, 2018). Giske is temporary released from office as deputy after the warnings that had come against him. The case is still ongoing (Aaser & Grøttum, 2018).

4.2 Research Method

While research design gives a framework for data collection, a research method represents the technique(s) used to collect the data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We find it most appropriate to use archival records of media coverage, as this gives us rich information about how the cases are constructed in the popular press.

The use of archival records as a source for collecting evidence has like any other research methods both strengths and weaknesses (Yin, 1994). Regarding the former, this method provides us with a broad coverage of the phenomena, in terms of a large span of time, an extensive amount of events, as well as several different

contexts where social construction occurs. Additionally, the evidence is exact, detailed and precise, and it is stable which gives us the opportunity to review the evidence over again. The fact that the evidence itself is independent of the case study also gives an advantage, though this does not mean that the methodological shortcomings of the selection process does not occur.

Regarding weaknesses, the use of archival records often has low retrievability of information, and the researcher may not always have full access to all information. Also, the archival records of social constructionism and leadership is quite extensive, and despite full access, it may be challenging to collect all relevant data as well as objectively and rationally evaluate it. Another weakness is reporting bias, which refers to a potential bias of the author, and questions the reliability and validity of the information. However, this is not a shortcoming of this assignment, as the purpose is to identify how leadership is constructed in the popular press. Thus, we are studying reporting biases, and how these again affect social construction of leadership (Yin, 1994).

4.3 Sample and population

The population is not finally decided, but we consider looking at Dagbladet, Dagens Næringsliv, NRK (Norsk Rikskringkasting), Aftenposten and Hegnar. However, we need to further evaluate the material and see which sources that is the most appropriate regarding influence, the cases and trustworthiness. Note that the three cases we are going to analyze took place at different times and that two of the cases still are ongoing. We will use a purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling form (i.e. not random). This gives us the opportunity to sample the data that is relevant to the research questions and each case (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4.4 Analysis of Data

If we look at content, headings and the journalists' different use of words (positive vs. negative reviews) we might get a broader understanding of how the media construct and shape the view of Tore Tønne, Christine Meyer and Trond Giske. In our analysis, we will pay attention to reporting bias to see how media influence participants perception, as this is subjective. Further, we will study our findings in light of the theory.

5.0 Tentative plan for completion of thesis

In order to illustrate our tentative plan, as well as to keep track of our project, we have made a Gantt Chart (Figure 1). The chart illustrates the timetable of our research project, as well as the specific tasks involved (Bryman & Bell, 2015). As illustrated in the chart, we have specified seven milestones for our project: the formulation of our research question, the hand in of preliminary report, the completion of the literature review, data collection and data analysis, finishing first draft and the hand-in of the final assignment. Notice that the tentative plan is subject to changes, however, we will strive to meet our deadlines in order to not fall behind.

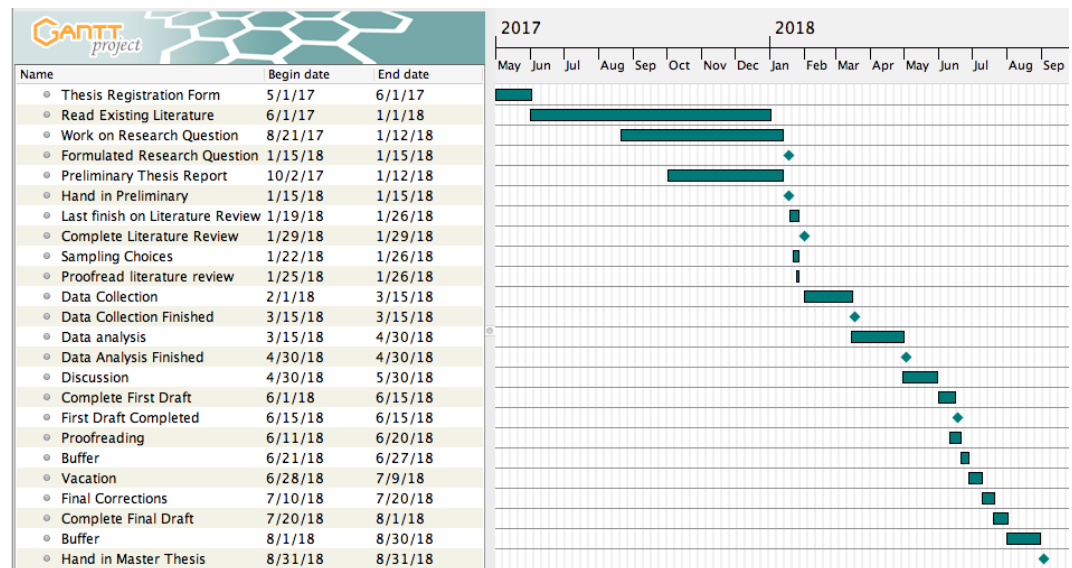


Figure 1: Tentative Plan

After handing in the preliminary report, we will focus on completing the literature review. When this is finished, our plan is to visit the National Library of Norway in order to get access and information of media publications covering our three separate cases. This is an essential step in order to start the data collection. The aim is to draw conclusions from different media publications in order to answer our research questions. We will look at content, headings and the use of words (positive vs. negative reviews) to get a broader understanding of how the media construct and shape the view of Tore Tønne, Christine Meyer and Trond Giske and we will pay attention to reporting bias. We will study our findings in light of the theory.

We will also work independently, and divide tasks and responsibilities between us. Throughout the semester, we will meet regularly to ensure progress and quality of our research project, and to evaluate each other's work. This will give us the opportunity to more easily identify any need for changes, and to make necessary corrections along the way.

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