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# Thatcher, Thatcherism, and the Conservatives through the eyes of Norwegian newspapers

Master's thesis in English Language Studies with Teacher Education

Supervisor: Gary Love

November 2023



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## **Abstract**

This thesis is a study of the contemporary reaction to Thatcher, the Conservative UK party and government and Thatcherism in Norway in the period 1979-1990. The focus of the thesis is how the Norwegian newspaper reacted to and wrote about Thatcher and her Conservative government during three key stages in Thatcher's premiership: Thatcher's first general election win in 1979, the end stages and aftermath of the Miners' Strike, and the end of Thatcher's time as Prime Minister and shortly after. The thesis surveys and discusses reactions from four different newspapers in Norway to gauge how they wrote and reacted to each key event from 1979-1990, where after describing the reportage from each newspaper, it links it to the very limited existing historiography on the topic. At the end it links all three events together to see how the reactions and reportage changed over time and how it related to existing historiography and the general political development in Norway.





## **Acknowledgements**

After starting at NTNU in the fall of 2016, after six and a half years my time here has come to an end. It has been a long road with many challenges and opportunities. This thesis most of all has been challenging, but as I have reached the end of the road, I feel a small sense of pride that I was able to accomplish it after all.

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If any errors should remain in this thesis, they are solely my responsibility.

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# Introduction

## 1 Purpose of the study

The British Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the politics of her governments between 1979 and 1990 left their mark on British society but also on European and world affairs in the final phase of the Cold War. Over 30 years later, it would be true to say that both the impact of her policies and her personal legacy remain hotly contested (Farall, 2019). As a result, there exists a large and growing body of literature on Thatcher and the political project known as “Thatcherism” from a British perspective. But little has been done to research the reception of Thatcher and ‘Thatcherism’ in other countries and this is certainly true in Norway. Of course, the reason for this probably relates to the fact that Norway is a country famous for its commitment to social democracy and equality, which has meant emphasizing the importance of a large welfare state and strong trade unions.

Whereas the Nordic model of cooperation and interdependency stood strong in Norway, one could argue that it was in direct opposition to what Thatcher and Thatcherism represented. Nevertheless, these differences should make for an interesting comparison and one would have expected them to have generated significant public comment in the national press in Norway at the time. Therefore, the objective of this thesis is to research the reception of Thatcher and ‘Thatcherism’ in the Norwegian press during the period of her premiership from 1979 to 1990.

Thatcher and Thatcherism in and of itself could be argued to be of immense importance from a historical standpoint. One could very well argue that without Thatcherism the 1980s might have looked very different in Britain, or simply been connected to events from the 1970s or 1990s as the historiography of the 1980s in Britain are interconnected with Thatcher and Thatcherism in their standpoints (Hilton et al., 2017, p. 147-148 & 157). One could argue that the Conservative government under Thatcher and Thatcher herself had a moral and psychological vision for how the state should operate. It should be less involved in people’s affairs as well as instill values of self-reliability (Saunders, 2012, p. 40-42).

According to Letwin (2017, p. 17-48), Thatcherism was not one built on specific political plans but it envisioned a society that promoted traditional morals and ideas about individual and family responsibility. Letwin called these values “Vigorous Virtues”. Gamble (1994, p. 34-68) had similar thoughts on Thatcherism as Letwin but instead dubbed it enterprise, patriotism and independence. According to Gamble there was also a political development in the 1970’s and early 1980’s which led to the formation of what we today know as

Thatcherism, the emergence of the “*new right*”. Summarized, Thatcherism evolved in a conservative political climate wherein both ideas of new laissez-faire capitalism and traditional conservative control and authority were prized as what was needed to reverse the decline in economy and morals in Britain. Certainly, one would not have these categorizations of Thatcher and Thatcherism without Thatcher and her Conservative government enacting policies that displayed exactly these political convictions. E.g., The Conservative government under Thatcher cut taxes while increasing VAT and freeing up regulations around banking and trade which could be seen to be a part of Thatcherism’s plan for a more capitalistic market with less government intervention. It also incentivized citizens to be less reliant on the state and help themselves and did so with e.g., the “Housing act” to make people homeowners instead of renters subsidized by the state, while also rolling back on the state and its welfare policies. Another example of policy towards free-market policies was the infamous poll tax. All in accordance with a more laissez-faire capitalist outlook on politics. In accordance with the more traditional branch of conservatism which came with what Gamble dubbed the “*new right*”, the Conservative government under Thatcher enacted educational policies to have a tighter grip on the content and goals of attainment for the pupils, which can be seen as a more traditional conservative need for control of how the country led and educated (Thane, 2018, p. 351-356, 375-378 & 392-393). This traditionally conservative need for control is also exemplified by how the police force was strengthened to increase law and order and with how Thatcher was willing to crush the grip the unions had on the economy of the country (Green, 2006, p. 102-126).

As this was the political situation in Britain at the time, it behooves us to also look at the parallel political situation in Norway during the premiership of Thatcher and her Conservative government. Norway at the end of the 1970s had, after a long period of being governed primarily by a social democratic Labor government, changed towards a more right leaning political course. As the increase in living standards, the opportunity to own and buy more, became more apparent. A newer generation which had not seen and lived through as much of the hard times during and after the Second World War, grew up and the belief that there was a possibility for something other than collective social democratic rule sprung into Norwegian society. This also came simultaneously with the development of Norwegian society which was largely dependent on the technological achievements made in the market which affected the primary and secondary industries, which again affected the tertiary industry of service. This caused the landscape of Norwegian politics to shift towards a more liberal right leaning conservatism exemplified by former Prime Minister of Norway Kåre

Willoch from Høyre. This change was not as drastic as the one found in Thatcher's Britain but was still there. (Karlsen, 2020, p. 22-25 & Dahl & Klausen, 1983, p. 61-74). However, Norway needed to keep up with the changing political and economic reality of the western world even if that meant breaking away from long standing traditions of social democratic politics and economy. It was however not long lived as the more neo-liberal trend of governments exemplified by Willoch came to an end in late 1985 and from early 1986 it was again the Labour government with Gro Harlem Brundtland as Prime Minister who had the political power in Norway. The trend towards more market liberalism in Norway had however already started and did not stop even if it did not progress at the same speed as under Willoch. Important differences to note between Norway and the UK are oil and Unions. The finding of oil for a state as small and with a little population as Norway brought on a bigger sense of economic security. When it came to the Unions, instead of fighting with each other they focused on maintaining a cooperation between the government and unions for both the employers and employees. The economic stability that was provided seemed to stabilize Norwegian politics even though the more neoliberal market turns had come to stay in Norway as well in the 1980s (Olstad, 2017, p.233-260 & Sejersted, 2011, p. 379-386). However as mentioned earlier there is little research on the reception of the more aggressive Thatcherism in Norway.

This said, there is a small amount of information on this topic because the historian Hallvard Notaker once wrote a chapter comparing the impact of the prime ministerial visits of Harold Macmillan and Margaret Thatcher to Norway. Notaker's chapter focused on two aspects. First, the different political atmospheres when Macmillan visited Einar Gerhardsen in 1960 and Margaret Thatcher visited Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1986. Second, the differences between the two brands of conservatism that each UK Prime Minister represented (Notaker, 2012, p 277-297).

According to Notaker, Macmillan's visit to the Norwegian peninsula in the summer of 1960 was viewed and met with both enthusiasm and affection. The media reported only positively on Macmillan and the newspaper *Aftenposten* was barely able to contain its excitement about the visit. The overall tone in the Norwegian media was celebratory. Even the Labour Prime minister, Einar Gerhardsen, could not contain his enthusiasm, and when he gave a speech at the formal state dinner that was part of Macmillan's visit, he stated that the UK was a country which Norway needed no work to strengthen its ties with (Notaker, 2012, p.281&282).

But the picture painted of Thatcher's visit is one that Notaker characterizes as “*sour*” and even “*bitter*”. Notaker attributes this to the changes that occurred both in Britain and in Norway and the relationship between them in the 26 years that passed between the two visits (2012, p. 277). The Prime Minister’s visit in 1986 was fraught with protests and there was a need for the Norwegian newspapers *VG* and *Aftenposten* to explain why Thatcher’s visit was welcome and important. This had not been the case in 1960 when the newspaper headlines were only joyful about Macmillan’s visit (Notaker, 2012, p. 281-282 & 285).

The drastic change that occurred between these two visits is in Notaker’s view a result of not only the changes that happened within the Conservative Party of the UK but a culmination of the changes that occurred in both Norway and the UK during the 26-year period between the two visits. This correlates to the different brands of conservatism that the British Conservative Party of the 1960s and 1980s represented as well as the type of conservatism one had in Norway. The gap between Norwegian and British conservatism under Macmillan was less wide as they were both more moderate compared to the brand of conservatism being advocated by Thatcher. Thatcherism was strongly associated with individualism and free market capitalism, while the upper parts of the Conservative Party in Norway had their political convictions formed during the 1950’s and were committed to the concept of the welfare state in their ideology and political platform. This coupled with the fact that the ties created between Norway and the UK during the Second World War had lessened significantly since the visit from Macmillan explains a great deal of the difference in terms of the reception of the two prime ministers (Notaker, 2012, p. 292-297).

Notaker’s chapter offers us a valuable starting point for thinking about how to research the reception of Thatcher and Thatcherism in Norway, but in no sense has he explored the topic in any real depth because he limited his research to exploring the two prime ministerial visits. How the Norwegian press reported on Thatcher, the policies of the Thatcher governments, and the principles of Thatcherism between 1979 and 1990, and whether opinions varied across newspapers or if those opinions changed over time, has not been thoroughly researched. Therefore, this study aims to bridge the gap in this area by looking at how Norwegian newspapers viewed Thatcher and her social and economic policies at the time. Therefore, the main research questions in this thesis are the following: How did Norwegian newspapers report on Margaret Thatcher, Thatcherism, and the policies of the Thatcher government? What does the Norwegian newspaper coverage tell us about how Margaret Thatcher, Thatcherism, and the policies of the Thatcher governments were perceived in Norway at the time? Finally, it should be possible to use the answers to these



questions to reflect on what these newspaper responses to Thatcherism can tell us about Norwegian politics and society in the 1980s.

## **2 Research method**

The main primary sources used in this thesis are a range of Norwegian newspapers, which reported and commented on key events during Margaret Thatcher's career. An important aspect of this study is to research if there were any real differences between how the different newspapers were reporting on these matters. In doing so, the thesis employs a qualitative approach to look for themes and possibly recurring trends in the way the newspapers reported on the premiership of Thatcher and the policies and political results her government produced. The research paradigm which will be used leans heavily towards interpretivism owing to the explorative nature of the study and not assigning variables and values to the objects studied. Instead, the focus will be to interpret and understand the written sources, while also analyzing the meaning they give us and the context in which they were written. (Corbetta, 2003a, p. 17-27). The British and Norwegian secondary literature already written on Thatcher will be an invaluable guiding light in navigating the historical background and contexts surrounding Thatcher and Thatcherism. But since this thesis will be exploring a new topic with an interpretive approach, the method itself will be more inductive rather than deductive. Leading to a deeper understanding of a specific case. This also means that the results delivered from this method will be based on the primary sources wherein the secondary literature will be used to reflect on the thesis questions and to which degree the already existing literature around this topic matches the findings (Corbetta, 2003b, p. 8 & 24).

Since the primary source material which will be under the analytical scope will be the newspapers in Norway themselves, it will pose its own set of challenges. The access one has to older newspaper articles when working in the Humanities are varied. Internationally one does not often have great and easy access to specifically older newspaper articles. If one wishes to look at something that happened before everything started to be published online one would need access to a database where these older and printed sources are available. (Tanacković et. al, 2014, p. 12-13). Luckily in Norway, because of the Norwegian copyright law, students and employees at universities are mostly granted access to cultural documentation, e.g., old newspapers, automatically for the purpose of research and study (Copyright law, 2018 § 49). University students in Norway get this access through Nasjonalbiblioteket (the national library) and are granted access to scanned picture formats of

all newspapers published in Norway from as far back as 1763, if they have managed to digitize the newspaper you are looking for. There are however as always things to consider as both benefits and drawbacks in this case. Digital archives such as the ones we students in Norway have access to give us the ability to find newspaper articles fast through searching and limiting. However, unlike a database where one can search for words in the articles themselves, one can only search for the newspaper name and limit what timespan one is looking at publication wise.

This brings us to the point of being aware of our own biases both conscious and unconscious in our research. Since we have access to almost all the newspapers in Norway that were printed during Thatcher's premiership our bias in selection does not come down to availability but rather our own ideas of which newspapers are best to look at. However, since our database does not allow us to search for words it forces us to limit the scope of our findings to certain publication periods, which might make us miss out on valuable information. However, the rationalization that the media will focus its pressure on a hot topic around the time of an event mitigates this factor. The fact that our digital source of printed media is also easily available and easier to shift through compared to the original physical copies makes it easier to spend more time on the actual material we want to discuss. We also need to be aware of the fact that these newspapers do not provide us with the full story of the society of yesteryear, only a glimpse into a smaller part of it. Meaning it is wise to look at the content they provide with a grain of salt as they will undoubtedly assume the readers are aware of certain cultural and societal events, expressions and opinions which were common to know at the time and understanding they are from a past time where opinions and understanding of political and societal events and problems may have been very different (Bingham, 2010, p. 226, 228, 230). A lot of this is however mitigated by the historiography from the Norwegian perspective making us aware of at least the political opinions and shifts happening from the late 70's to the early 90's.

Therefore, the idea is to limit the media coverage to a few key events so as to be able to cover more newspapers in depth instead of a shallow overview of a lot of events. Newspapers themselves are a good way to conduct qualitative research as they give one the ability to look into unchanging sources from the past and do not require a live subject as one would need with in depth interviews. It can also be considered advantageous that the newspaper articles themselves were produced without any intent for research in mind and are then in a sense more objective from the point of view of the researcher studying them. Newspapers also being part of the mass media, especially so at the time of Margaret

Thatcher's time as prime Minister, is considered a great way to look at contemporary politics. The reason for this being how the media reflects the symbols and themes often used in politics and is a driving force in shaping opinions (Corbetta, 2003c, p. 2-3 & 17-18). This not only gives us a view into how the newspapers in Norway reported on Thatcher and the political situations which occurred around her, but also carries the potential of giving us additional insights into the opinion and politics in Norway at the time from a fresh perspective.

The events currently in mind are Thatcher's first election as Prime minister in 1979, Thatcher's visceral victory in the miners' strike in 1984-85, and the very end of her premiership and downfall. The reason for choosing Thatcher's initial rise to the position of Prime Minister is to gain insight into how the Norwegian newspapers reacted to a new female leader of the Conservative Party with a new and different way of looking at conservative party politics. It also gives us a neutral starting point to measure reactions from. Secondly, the reason for choosing the miners' strike is that Norway has and has had since after the Second World War, a strong union presence throughout its industry, as well as having been a social democratic country. This makes an event such as the Miners' strike something that would possibly have huge reactions from the Norwegian newspapers. Lastly, the reason for choosing the very end of Thatcher's premiership and subsequent downfall is to see how the Norwegian Newspapers reactions have changed, if at all, towards Thatcher and the Conservatives after a decade of Thatcherism and political change in both Norway and the UK. It also gives us a chance to see any possible reflection on the legacy of Thatcher and Thatcherism from the Norwegian press. Hopefully the decision to limit the media coverage on Thatcher to these key events in her career will make it easier to filter through the necessary newspaper coverage without too much difficulty.

Logically the thesis cannot be comprehensive and if other key themes of moments were chosen one might get some different results. However, these selections offer a logical place to start as well as a good even spread of chronology across Thatcher's premiership.

### **3 Newspapers used for analysis**

As it is with limiting the scope of events in Thatcher's premiership to reach the depth required for a proper discussion within the boundaries of this research paper, it also becomes necessary to limit the scope of Norwegian newspapers selected for this purpose. Therefore, four newspapers have been selected for this to make sure one can look closely enough at the reports made. The newspapers are *Adresseavisen*, *VG/Verdens Gang*, *Aftenposten* and

*Klassekampen*. The reason for choosing these four different newspapers is to give a variety of social and political perspectives as well as a little bit of geographical difference. Both *Adresseavisen* and *Aftenposten* are known to have a history of looking through a Norwegian conservative lens, which one might use to conjecture that they might be a bit more lenient or sympathetic when reporting on the Conservative government of Thatcher. *Klassekampen* on the other hand is known to be the newspaper on the left side of politics and was at the time of Thatcher's premiership solely run and funded by the Norwegian Workers and Communist Party. *VG* has a reputation and history of being more of a tabloid looking for the big headlines. As such, their coverage of events might be a bit less political but possibly also more in tune with the political and social opinion of the general public of the time. *Adresseavisen* is the only geographical outlier in this lineup as the other three newspapers were based in Oslo whereas *Adresseavisen* is a newspaper based in Trondheim and has a reader base in central Norway.

These Newspapers were also some of the largest in terms of market share, with the exclusion of *Klassekampen* which was relatively small comparatively, for their geographical region. The reasoning behind this was to also ensure enough coverage of the events in mind when exploring the reception of Thatcher and Thatcherism in Norway, as the market share and reach of smaller newspapers elsewhere might not be adequate to secure a satisfactory amount of sources to work with. *Klassekampen* was as mentioned the outlier here but was chosen for its specific very left leaning views. (Dahl, 2010, p. 22, 25, 192, 368).

The idea is that the current selection of newspapers will lend a variance of different perspectives while at the same time give enough depth to each event while keeping within the limits of this research paper.

## **4 Structure**

The structure this study will follow is quite simple. Each chapter after this introduction will look at a key event, either leading up to, during and at the end of the premiership of Margaret Thatcher and her government. Each chapter will look at its designated event through the eyes of the 4 selected newspapers mentioned previously. Each newspaper will contribute with its own perspectives and results whereas at the end of each chapter a small summary and discussion will take place for the event. At the conclusion of this thesis a larger summary and discussion will take place to tie it all together in relation to the existing historiography (of little there is) and pose questions for potential future research.

## ***Chapter 1: The rise of Margaret Thatcher in 1979***

This chapter analyzes the Norwegian press coverage of Margaret Thatcher's rise to the position of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the end of the spring campaign and election in 1979. Examining our 4 different newspapers *Adresseavisen*, *Aftenposten*, *Klassekampen* and *VG*, we begin our search on all of them on the 25th of April 1979. The inquiry for information in these newspapers regarding Thatcher's election victory ended for all of them on the 31st of May 1979. As mentioned previously the newspapers were chosen based on the fact that they provided something a little different from each other in terms of political or social viewpoint and geographical placement. Going through them categorically will hopefully yield some insight into how the newspapers in Norway wrote about Thatcher and the Conservatives when she became and started her time as Prime Minister.

### **The first victory of Thatcher by *Adresseavisen***

There were 11 articles dedicated to Thatcher and her government in the time frame mentioned earlier. Starting off with how *Adresseavisen* wrote about Thatcher and the Conservatives, we firstly note that many of the articles where Thatcher and the Conservatives are mentioned do not have an author and is therefore simply an unnamed piece decided on by the editorial team, or supplied by another form of correspondence such as another newspaper agency or official public unit without journalistic relations.

This appears already by the first mention in our search on the 26th of April, with an election update where the information has been supplied by reiterating information from a British polling of the expected election results (*Adresseavisen*, 1979, 26.4). As for how *Adresseavisen* wrote about Thatcher there was a mix of neutral and slightly positive viewpoints, while no negative viewpoints had been expressed politically or socially by how *Adresseavisen* wrote about Thatcher. The positives are expressed in their articles with examples being (Amdahl, 1979, 02.5, 03.5) where the Conservative political platform is described as being “*more robust*” while also bringing up more issues with Labour's political platform in comparison.

Another example where one can see a positive tilt in how *Adresseavisen* reported on Thatcher and the Conservative Party is when *Adresseavisen* reported on Thatcher's speech from the throne (*Adresseavisen*, 1979, 16.5). In the article they specifically remarked on Thatcher's plan to effectivize and reduce the NHS bureaucracy. While the article itself quite objectively reported on the contents of the speech and how it related to the promises made

during the election campaign, how it chose to word itself when it came to its remark on Thatcher and the NHS seems to show a tilt towards preferring Thatcher and her Conservative government. When reporting that Thatcher's decision on the NHS would be looked at "*with scorn*" and that she "*would undoubtedly be accused of turning the NHS into a second-class service*" one can look at the wording. Undoubtedly accused sounds more as something a defender of the decision would write rather than a neutral or concurring party. This alone does not indicate that *Adresseavisen* favored Thatcher and the Conservatives directly, but it is part of the examples showing a positive trend for Thatcher at the time around her first election victory.

Another set of articles that point towards *Adresseavisen* having a certain preference or predisposition towards Thatcher and the Conservatives was a choice in article publication. During the chosen time frame, we find that *Adresseavisen* chose to publish two articles from George Gardiner (Gardiner, 1979, 10.5 & Gardiner, 1979, 19.5). Gardiner was a Conservative politician in the UK and a staunch Thatcherite. In the articles they chose to translate and publish by him, the viewpoint on Thatcher's plans and decisions are seen as positive while at the same time stating that their opponents, namely Labour and the unions, seemed to be in disarray. The fact that *Adresseavisen* chose to publish these articles, which were quite positive of Thatcher, and came from someone who was quite in support of Thatcher's viewpoints, does seem to lend even more credit to the idea that *Adresseavisen* had a positive view of Thatcher and the Conservatives at the given time.

A lot of the articles are also very neutral in their reports as they do not seem to favor any side and only mention the facts. This comes as no surprise with *Adresseavisen* being a long-standing Newspaper in Norway and does seem to have high journalistic integrity no matter their historically political ties. Good examples of these neutral reports are (Adresseavisen, 1979, 26.4, 05.5, 07.5). In these examples they typically quickly summarized results from a recent poll, and detailed the members and subsequent background of Thatcher's new government. This shows that while we do see examples of *Adresseavisen* seeming positive towards Thatcher they also had a neutral approach to how they chose to report on political events.

These positive and neutral articles and reports on Thatcher and the Conservative Party around the time of the 1979 election, coupled with the fact that there were no articles which seemed to express any negative viewpoint on Thatcher and her political party, indicates the following. *Adresseavisen* at the time of the 1979 UK election, had either not found or chosen not to publish any articles with a perceived negative viewpoint on Thatcher in the period of

25th of April to the 31st of May. Given *Adresseavisen*'s historical ties with the Norwegian political right, as mentioned earlier, it is not a huge leap of faith to assume that it was more of a choice of focus rather than an inability to find a negative angle to view things from. One can then with limited doubt conclude that *Adresseavisen* reported in a positive way on Thatcher and the Conservatives leading right up to and right after the 1979 UK election and that it was most likely at least slightly based on its conservative historical political ties.

### **The first victory of Thatcher by *Aftenposten***

In total there were 33 articles dedicated to Thatcher by *Aftenposten* in the time period 25th of April to the 31st of May. Exactly 3 times as many as were found in the same Time period by *Adresseavisen*. Unlike *Adresseavisen*, which had many articles which were not accredited to a specific journalist, *Aftenposten* seems to mainly have had foreign correspondents accredited for the articles they published about Thatcher and the Conservatives in this time period. There is particularly one journalist, John Crowo, who has written most of them. The fact that one foreign correspondent has written most of the articles published is highly likely to have influenced the impression we get from looking at them. *Aftenposten*, was also one of the newspapers which were politically tied to the conservative side of politics in Norway. This also undoubtedly influenced how the articles published are written and the impression we get them.

Before going on to mention specifically the content of the articles and how they portrayed Thatcher and the Conservatives one last mention is needed. Although there were 33 articles dedicated to Thatcher and the Conservatives by *Aftenposten* in this period, a lot of them were repeat articles, meaning they were the same article reprinted for another issue on the same day or for another day. Which poses the question why this was the case? *Aftenposten* being a big newspaper in Norway's most populous area could of course just have wanted to stay at the top of their game and made sure that there always was a lot to read in their issues and sell many newspapers. It is also possible that *Aftenposten*'s similar historical political party ties as *Adresseavisen* had, influenced how much they wanted to display the conservative side of politics through their newspaper. The exact reason is unsure but it is also likely that both sides are possible at the same time as economic and political interests do not need to be separated.

We find our first mention of Thatcher and the Conservatives on the 25th of April. The first mention was a quick update about recent poll elections where Labour was gaining ground

on the Tories and that Thatcher's dream of becoming Prime Minister was looking less likely as a result (Aftenposten, 1979, 25.04). The report was very neutral and gave only the facts without giving any favoritism towards one side or the other. Most of the articles written were positive of Thatcher and the Conservatives such as on the 26th of April and the second, third, fifth and tenth of May, where the topics were often about the high chances of winning the election or the challenges Thatcher and the Conservatives were facing but how they had a lot of support and were keeping their election promises (Crowo, 1979, 26.4, 02.5, 03.5, 05.5, 10.5). It is necessary to mention that none of the articles were singing Thatcher's praises, but were simply more positive towards Thatcher than negative or neutral.

As for negative articles, none were published. The closest one to any negativity found was on the 23rd of May where Crowo wrote about the tense situation around Heath and Thatcher when Heath declined Thatcher's offer to be the new US ambassador as well as the new general secretary of NATO. The report itself was neutral in its narrative but did not shy away from the tense situation. (Crowo, 1979, 23.5). The purely neutral reports were objective factoid pieces, not showing any favoritism to either side. The typical facts were about the results from polls, repeating statements from Thatcher regarding policy without offering a comment on the policy and detailing members of Thatcher's new government (Aftenposten, 1979, 25.4, 07.5 & Crowo, 1979, 27.4, 04.5, 07.5ab, 11.5, 16.5, 25.5 & Forsberg, 1979, 19.5).

As for something different one may not expect from the political pages, there was a more tabloid-like piece published in *Aftenposten* on the 19th of May about Thatcher's husband, Dennis Thatcher (Crowo, 1979, 19.5). The information about Dennis was fairly mundane, detailing his life and his support for his wife. The interesting part here is how having a supporting husband framed Thatcher positively with Thatcher being quoted "*When something has gone terribly wrong, Dennis is always there for comfort and support.*" One can easily categorize this piece as one which reflected positively on Thatcher. What makes this interesting is the fact that it was a less politically focused piece than the other positive ones. Whether the decision and motivation to write this type of piece about Thatcher was personal, political, economic or combination is not known. It does however show that *Aftenposten* decided to print a positive, but different type of article about Thatcher, perhaps to engage more with those who were less interested in the purer political pieces.

These positive and neutral articles and reports on Thatcher and the Conservative Party around the time of the 1979 election and subsequent victory, coupled with the fact that there were no articles which seemed to express any direct negative viewpoint of Thatcher and her political party, indicates the following. At the time of the election in 1979 *Aftenposten* had



chosen to not publish any negative articles about Thatcher or not found anything negative to write about. As it was with *Adresseavisen*, *Aftenposten*'s historical political ties most likely made it a decision rather than happenstance that there were no negative articles published by them. We can then with limited doubt assume that *Aftenposten* purposely painted a positive picture of Thatcher and the Conservatives as this is what they assumedly wanted to portray to their readers, which were a big part of the Norwegian population.

### **The first victory of Thatcher by *Klassekampen***

Switching over from two historically conservative newspapers in Norway we move towards the other side of the spectrum to *Klassekampen*. As mentioned earlier *Klassekampen* was the newspaper for far-left or communist supporters in Norway and as such, would view what happened regarding Thatcher and the Conservatives quite differently than newspapers with a conservative political history. The number of articles published by *Klassekampen* relating to Thatcher and the Conservatives in this timespan was only 9. This does not however mean that there is little information to pull from them. An interesting find regarding the articles is that none of them had an accredited author and as such one can only state that they were published by the newspaper, without knowing the variety of different individuals affecting the viewpoints stated in the articles.

The first mention from *Klassekampen* which relates to Thatcher and the Conservatives is also at the start of our search on the 25th of April. The article is not directly about the politicians, but about the fascist marches led by National Front in the UK, which *Klassekampen* dubbed “*Nazi-marches*”. While the article's theme is not the politicians up for election, it does however give valuable information about the stance *Klassekampen* had on the political scene in the UK at the time. In the article both Labour and the Conservative Party are called “*borgerlige*”, denoting the right wing and conservative parties in Norway. The closest translation an English speaker would understand is “bourgeois” (Klassekampen, 1979, 25.4). The fact that both Labour and the Conservatives were being called “bourgeois” says a lot about the political inkling of *Klassekampen* as not even Labour was considered far enough left for them. One can already then imagine that anything coming from Thatcher would be highly scrutinized in their eyes.

It then comes as no surprise that all of the 9 articles published by *Klassekampen* which directly or in some way related to Thatcher and the Conservatives were negatively inclined. We see this in examples such as on the 30th of April where *Klassekampen* wrote that

Thatcher's plans for a restriction on immigration from less industrialized countries was "...a racist immigration blockade and will severely impact family members of people having already moved to the UK." (Klassekampen, 1979, 30.4). Other examples would be on the fifth of May after she won the election where they brought up Thatcher's political past and being named "*Thatcher the milk-snatcher*" and on the 26th of May where *Klassekampen* wrote about Thatcher's plans to weaken the unions and get them to stay in line, while simultaneously showing support to the unions by quoting Ken Thomas from the Civil and public services association. "*We don't have anyone to lose, we actually need more people everywhere. My union will fight.*" (Klassekampen, 1979, 05.5 & 26.05).

With all the articles displaying the same type of negatively inclined ardor for Thatcher and the Conservatives, one can safely state that the reportage made by *Klassekampen* was negatively tilted and most likely the opinion of those working in and with *Klassekampen* at the time. Considering the political background *Klassekampen* had, this comes as no surprise as Thatcher was very much on the complete opposite side of the spectrum when it came to politics. Although this negative viewpoint was mostly expected, what was surprising was the lack of neutral articles mixed in with the negative ones. Comparatively there were quite a few neutral reports mixed in with the positive ones published by *Aftenposten* and *Adresseavisen*. The exact reasoning for this is uncertain, but perhaps this speaks to the more intense political conviction of *Klassekampen* and their readers at the time.

### **The first victory of Thatcher by VG**

Moving on to the last newspaper in our exploration we come to *VG*, which is the outlier in our search as it was the more tabloid focused newspaper. In total there were 16 articles published by *VG* in the election time frame with 13 of these articles being written by a *VG* journalist named Annemor Møst, meaning that in the same fashion as *Aftenposten*, there is a high likelihood that the angle from which the articles were written were influenced by the opinions and perceptions of that journalist. Another aspect to consider is that *VG* was and still is today owned by the same company that owns *Aftenposten*, meaning that there is a possibility of some shared political opinions assuming such a level of involvement from a company and editorial standpoint in the angle of the content published by them.

The first mention of Thatcher was on the 25th of April, with a tabloid focus on Thatcher and especially her husband Dennis (Møst, 1979, 25.4). Without much political focus they described Margaret and Dennis as a "power couple" and compared their situation to

other married couples where the man was head of state. Comparing Dennis' possible future situation to that of the "*First lady*" in the US the article concludes with a comment on how the "...*Brits are already used to having a queen with her prince consort and while Dennis won't be a prince, he at least supports his wife 100%.*" The article paints Thatcher and her husband in quite a positive light while not specifically being political.

Much like the two first newspapers we find a mix of positive and neutral reports with there being no negative articles published about Thatcher and the Conservatives. An example of a neutral report being the 27th of April where they detailed events in the campaign before the election and described which topics would matter for the election results. It also mentioned how the weather could affect the results as warm weather would make people forget the harsh winter under Callaghan's government, while rain and cold would make people remember and possibly vote for the Tories in hope for change (Møst, 1979, 27.4). Another example would be the 16th of May where they detailed the events when Thatcher gave her speech from the throne after winning the election. Other than detailing what was said the article gave no indication of like or dislike (Møst, 1979, 16.5).

An example of positive reportage regarding Thatcher and the Conservatives was on May 28th, where the topic was Thatcher's activities leading up to the election while traveling around England. The article went far in describing how she was "*feminine and petite, yet has a strong handshake.*" It also mentioned how some of her supporters which had shown up called her "*nearly perfect*", and how she was a friend to housewives promising that everything will become cheaper and easier once she is in power. The same admiration of personal qualities was given to her husband Dennis. The article finishes by stating that after a long day of campaigning she relaxes with a glass of whisky and that she "*may just be human after all.*" This article gives a very positive view of Thatcher but is not as political as the more politically aligned newspapers. Most likely a feature of that paper's tabloid affiliation. Another article which was positive about Thatcher after her election victory, published on May 14th, mentioned her political plan to recruit the director of Marks and Spencer, Sir Derek Rayner to help with budget cuts in public expenditure as an advising consultant for the government. The article further detailed that Thatcher, as well as her new cabinet members, were quite young in a political sense. It also mentions that she was being tactical in being open to learning well after her 50's and that her choice of "young and budding eagles" for her cabinet was a wise one when it comes to looking towards the future in politics. This article seems to have quite a positive opinion of Thatcher as a political person and focuses less on the sensationalist aspect of her "female political career" compared to the articles that will be

discussed below (Møst, 1979, 28.4 & 14.5).

*VG* having more of a tabloid focus, often focused on the more sensationalist aspect of Thatcher's persona. The fact that she was a woman entering the big leagues in politics was especially interesting to mention both directly and indirectly. This was apparent in the first article found on April 25th, where, as mentioned above, the focus was not political and read more as a tabloid feature (Møst, 1979, 25.4). Another article where such tabloid features were readily apparent was on May third, where the focus was on how Thatcher would manage as Prime Minister in number 10 as the facilities and sleeping arrangements were laid out for a man to be Prime Minister (Møst, 1979, 03.5). The articles from *VG* seem to be quite positive yet quite tabloid and sensationalist in their reporting, which is no surprise considering its focus is more tabloid than the party affiliated newspapers.

Just like with the two right-leaning newspapers, we can state that the reportage of Thatcher and the Conservative Party by *VG* leading up to and right after her 1979 election was on the positive side if not a bit differently focused.

### **Tying together Thatcher's first victory**

Examining the reportage of all four newspapers between the 25th of April and the 31st of May 1979 one can state the following. Three of the four newspapers, namely *Adresseavisen*, *Aftenposten* and *VG*, reported on Thatcher and the Conservatives in a manner which can be perceived positively. While some articles published by these three were neutral reports, only containing facts without any positive or negative inclination, the fact that the articles were only positive or neutral tilts the coverage from these newspapers positively. In direct opposition to the other three newspapers only negatively tilted articles were published by *Klassekampen*, meaning one can state that *Klassekampen* reported negatively on Thatcher and the Conservative UK Party.

The fact that *Klassekampen* reported negatively on Thatcher, the Conservative Party and their political platform and plans came as no surprise, as they in essence stood on the completely opposite side of the political spectrum than Thatcher. This is embodied further by *Klassekampen* setting themselves further to the left than even the UK Labour Party when calling Labour and the Conservatives "bourgeois". Although it came as no surprise that the left leaning newspaper was negatively inclined towards Thatcher and the Conservatives, it was unexpected that there would be such negative inclination towards Labour as well. This gives us valuable insight into the fact that just being on the left in one political country and

context does not guarantee support or even preference from a part of the left in another. Looking at the political situation in Norway at the time, together with the political affiliations these newspapers had, also gives us insight towards the coverage these newspapers gave. Both the conservative parties of Norway and the Conservatives in the UK had moved more towards a “new right”. However, this movement asserted itself with both an economically liberal side and a traditionally conservative side with emphasis on authority and control in which Thatcherism flourished in the UK.

Meanwhile, in Norway the move towards more laissez-faire conservatism had begun and was well under way, ending with a conservative prime minister in Norway exemplifying this very brand of conservatism, albeit to a less aggressive degree than in the UK, a couple years after Thatcher became Prime Minister. Since Norway, and especially the conservative side of Norway, was politically moving in the same direction as the UK, at least in an economic sense, helps us understand the following. While the political ties the newspapers had helps to explain the coverage they provided, the political context further solidifies it. *Aftenposten* and *Adresseavisen* would, in a context where the conservative political landscape in Norway was moving similarly to the UK, very likely report positively on policies and plans which were in tune with the conservative ideas of the time. As for *VG*, since the political opinions of the population were shifting in the same direction in the late 70’s and early 80’s it makes sense for them to report positively, albeit in a tabloid and sensationalist way, on those who were in tune with the political convictions of the day. As for *Klassekampen*, since they would have been diametrically opposed to this movement, it follows that they would report negatively on the phenomenon.

In conclusion, other than the negatively tilted newspaper coverage from *Klassekampen*, the newspaper coverage of Thatcher and the UK Conservative Party was positively tilted around the time of the 1979 UK election and was in accordance with the political shifts at the time.

## ***Chapter 2: Thatcher’s victory in the Miners’ Strike, 1984-85***

This chapter analyzes Norwegian press coverage of Margaret Thatcher’s victory over the National Union of Mineworkers, which ended in the early days of March 1985. Surveying our 4 newspapers, our inquiry lasts from the 25th of February 1985, until the 31st of March 1985. Going through them categorically will hopefully yield some insight into how the selected newspapers in Norway wrote about Thatcher and the Conservatives when she was Prime

Minister during the end stages of the Miners' strike and a few weeks after the strike was over.

### **Thatcher's victory in the strike by *Adresseavisen***

In total there were 12 articles relating to Thatcher and her government published by *Adresseavisen* in the time frame mentioned earlier. Similarly to the reports in *Adresseavisen* in 1979, most of the articles do not have a dedicated author. In this case it was 10 out of 12 articles. The first article published in the time frame of our search was on the 26th of February where the topic was the Miners' strike (*Adresseavisen*, 1985, 26.2). Surveying how *Adresseavisen* wrote about Thatcher, her Conservative Party and the strike we for the most part received a mix of neutral and slightly negatively tilted reports about the situation. To clarify they are not all simply separated into either neutral or negative reports, some are, but some are mostly neutral but are negative in their focus and what angle they report from.

Examples of simply neutral reports were published on the fourth, the 22nd and the 25th of March, and the reports simply summarize or mention events or statements such as on the fourth of March, where the article mentions how much the Miners' strike was estimated to cost and how it meant the industry would no longer have the capital needed to modernize and much equipment was lost due to lack of maintenance (*Adresseavisen*, 1985, 04.3b, 20.3 & 25.3b).

Two articles fell under the mostly negative category. An article published on March 6th where the article described how even though the strike was considered over there was still strike action in parts of England and Scotland, particularly because of the lack of amnesty for those fired during the strike. After detailing the desperation of the miners, the article finishes with Thatcher stating that amnesty for those who were convicted of unlawful picketing during the strike was not on the table and a quote from her stating in the house of commons "*I hope the miners soon will return to normal work. That's how competitive industry is supposed to be built.*" Positioning Thatcher in a rather negative light when contrasting it to the desperate situation of the miners. The other article, published on March 15th, detailed how former PM Edwards Heath accused Thatcher of lacking "*honorable conduct and furthering policies with a twisted focus*". The article recounts Heat's history and how he was ousted as the leader of the Conservatives as well as mentioning how Thatcher had in recent years gotten more and more criticism from members of her own party although the latest from heath was the most aggressive one and brings to light the disharmony within the Conservative Party. (*Adresseavisen*, 1985, 06.3 & 15.3)

Articles which were a mix of neutral and negative were published on February 28th and March third and were showing the disharmony evident in the UK as a result of the strike. They also detailed the desperation of the miners and the Thatcher government's and NCB's unwillingness to compromise their stance in the strike (Adresseavisen, 1985, 28.2, 04.3a). Another good example was published on March fifth and focused on how the miners have returned to work, but that it was because of a need to survive and that the country and people of the UK would feel the wounds and bitterness for years to come. Interestingly, in this article they interviewed one Matthew Hall, a member of NUM, who thought that the fight was not over and people did not want it to be, but were forced to. It is interesting that *Adresseavisen* published an article such as this as it does more for the miners' cause than it does towards making Thatcher and her Conservative government look good, even if indirectly. Hall was quoted "*I know the guys are ready to fight for those who were fired. That's why it's sure that there will be new strikes if we don't gain any ground on this matter. But we know that this all depends on Maggie Thatcher.*" (Grøtte, 1985, 05.3)

Seeing as these articles then were not directly negative of Thatcher and the Conservatives but were so indirectly through the angle they were writing from, positioning the difficult situation of the miners against the unyielding Thatcher government one could argue that they were slightly negative at least towards the consequences of how the Thatcher government handled the strike.

Seeing as the articles published by *Adresseavisen* around the end of and after the Miners' strike were either neutral, negative or a combination of both one can conclude with the following. *Adresseavisen* at the end of and shortly after the end of the Miners' strike had either not found or chosen not to publish or pursue any articles with a perceived positive viewpoint on Thatcher and her Conservative government between the 25th of February and the 31st of March 1985. We can then also state that *Adresseavisen* reported only neutrally and negatively on Thatcher and her Conservative government during this time.

### **Thatcher's victory in the strike by *Aftenposten***

In total there were 30 articles relating to Thatcher and her government published by *Aftenposten* in the time frame mentioned earlier. Just like in 1979, unlike *Adresseavisen*, which had many articles which were not accredited to a specific journalist, *Aftenposten* seems to mainly have had foreign correspondents accredited for the articles relating to Thatcher and the Conservatives in this time period. Particularly one journalist, Ivar Granaasen, had written

most of them which arguably have influenced the impression we get from reviewing them. Identically to 1979 there were a number of repeat articles present in the selected time frame.

We find our first mention of Thatcher and the Conservatives on the day after we begin our search, on the 26th of February, which mentions how the strike seems to be ebbing out after over another 3800 workers returned to work the previous day. Goes on to mention how Scargill asked the union leaders for more support but how few of them could see how they could give more to the striking action considering where it was heading. It also mentions how the NCB and Thatcher government had worked hard since the last meeting with NUM to get more miners back to work (Granaasen, 1985, 26.2). As for how *Aftenposten* wrote about the situation, most of the articles were either neutral or negatively angled, or a combination of both.

Starting with the positive reportage of Thatcher and her Conservative government, we find an article on March 7<sup>th</sup> making a feature of secretary of state for energy Peter Walker. It detailed why he was chosen as secretary of state for energy, how he handled it, especially how he handled Scargill by being “...*mindful, experienced and moderate.*” The article also theorizes that he might be the one to take over and rebuild the Conservatives if Thatcher does not win her next election (Granaasen, 1985, 07.3b). It was positive towards Walker and views the way he handled the miners’ strike positively and theorizes a good career for him in Thatcher’s government. However, it does at least unintentionally state that the way forward for the Conservatives seems to be more moderate and that Thatcher needed this moderate type of politician to deal with the miner’s strike. Which could insinuate that the more immutable brand of conservatism Thatcher stood for could not handle the problems the UK faced. Considering the positives were more on Walker and his political handling of things this article put more on the positive and negative side for Thatcher and the Conservatives.

The other time was not an article, but an ad found on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, where the title itself is very positive and reading, “*Good old England: Maggie’s best*”. The ad mentions the grandeur of Number 10, how much history it has and how Maggie herself resides there. It also claims that all the other nice tourist things to do in London are “*of course related to Maggie.*” While not an article, it takes up a whole page with a large picture of Thatcher smiling outside the famous nr 10 door. Even when presuming high economic interest to have such an ad in their newspaper, the people responsible for what went into print at *Aftenposten* still made a conscious choice of what to put in there. (Aftenposten, 1985, 09.3).



Surveying examples from neutral reports we start with an article published February 28th, which talked about how the NCB and government now counts the strike as being over since the latest reported numbers showed that more than 50% of the miners had returned to work and Scargill being quoted that the NCB used “*erroneous numbers*”. It was written neutrally without showing any support for either side (Granaasen, 1985, 28.2b). Another neutral example would be on the 13th of March where a short update on the strike mentioned how the last bastion of strikers in Polmaise Scotland gave up the strike as they continued after NUM capitulated earlier in the month. It neutrally and objectively detailed how the miners initially wouldn't give up until the 750 who lost their jobs were reinstated and how the NCB and government did not want to give in to that demand (Aftenposten, 1985, 13.3).

Examining the negative articles, they usually put Thatcher in a negative light without directly stating they disagreed with her. On the 6th of March an article detailed how the mining communities have been severely divided as a result of the strike. The article is objective and neutral in the way it reports on the subject, but the focus is heavily on the negatives of the strike and how it has affected the miners. It also paints Thatcher and Scargill in a negative light by naming them the big actors and insinuating that this was the consequence that they “*were expecting*.” when preparing for the strike (Granaasen, 1985, 06.3). Another good example was on March 19th where an article focuses on how a massive quantity of what was considered “truly British” in Britain, was now, at least economically, mostly controlled by foreign interests. The big examples being named were the auction company Sotheby's, the newspaper industry, London theater, hotels, the automotive industry in Britain, the real estate market and finally the exclusive trade name Harrods. The article goes on to state that “*the British are bitter about how yet another British trade name is now in the hands of foreigners*.” (Granaasen, 1985, 19.3). Another good example was published on March 30th and details the criticism Thatcher and the Conservatives was getting from both the clergy and the academic circles of Britain and that Thatcher used her visit to Oxford to show her bitterness towards not getting an honorary PHD. An article which shows how much criticism Thatcher was facing, how she responds to it with bitterness, and makes no effort to defend her, is therefore considered negative. (Granaasen, 1985, 30.3c)

Seeing as the articles published around the end of and after the Miners' strike were either neutral, negative or a combination of both, with only two slightly positive examples, one can conclude with the following. *Aftenposten*, at the end of and shortly after the end of the Miners' strike had either not found or chosen not to pursue many articles with a perceived positive viewpoint on Thatcher and her Conservative government between the 25th of

February and the 31st of March 1985. Therefore, it is possible to further conclude that *Aftenposten* reported mostly neutrally and negatively on Thatcher and her Conservative government in this time period.

### **Thatcher's victory in the strike by *Klassekampen***

In total there were 15 articles relating to Thatcher and her government published by *Klassekampen* in the selected period of inquiry. Unlike 1979 where none of the articles had an accredited author there were a variety of named authors this time with the most prominent one being Halvor Fjermeros. Examining the articles, we find that the articles were either negative of Thatcher and her government, showing strong support to the miners indicating lack of support towards the Thatcher government, or a combination of both with only one article being neutral.

Starting with the one neutral article published March second, we find a short update about the strike where it mentioned how 3 new districts have voted to return to work and how delegates from all mining districts will meet the following Sunday to vote on the strike and only states shortly what has happened (Klassekampen, 1985, 02.3).

Regarding articles which were not directly negative of Thatcher and the Conservative government the following are good examples. On March first, a short article which quickly mentions an event at the students' society in Trondheim in support of the striking miners in England (Klassekampen, 1985, 01.3). March fifth, where there was a short piece detailing the economic support gathered in Norway must be sent to the miners asap, as well as continued support being needed for the fellow workers in need (Fjermeros, 1985, 05.3a). Lastly, on the 11th of March *Klassekampen* published an interview with two women from "Women against pit-closures" who believed that NUM was not broken and that the strike would intensify for a larger fight again as the conditions have worsened. Furthermore, it details the declining relations between the scabs and those who had not broken the strike action (Bjørndal, 1985, 11.3).

Surveying the negative articles, which was most of them, we find the following. On the fifth of March an article details how after 12 months of struggle the miners were returning to work and how the losses they had as a result economically negatively affected their future prospects. Furthermore, it stated that Thatcher and the NCB were not able to "humiliate" NUM by making them sign a new contract. In detailing how the loss stings for the defeated miners it states that "*Thatcher has fully shown that no means of coercion were too crude to be*

used.” (Klassekampen, 1985, 05.3). Another article from the fifth of March stated “*Margaret Thatcher entered the miners’ strike the same way she entered the Falklands war. With a crushing supremacy of forces, without regard for the human or economic costs. Thatcher was entering to win.*” The article focuses on how the miners fought valiantly and how they had the odds against them from the start as the “*enemy*” as the journalist have called them, namely the police, the NCB and the government, had a much easier fight the whole way through. All the while the miners had little means of fighting back. Ends the article by calling the government that let this happen a “*capitalist dictatorship type-Thatcher.*” (Øyan, 1985, 05.3)

Considering that the overwhelming majority of the articles were either directly or indirectly negative of Thatcher and the Conservatives it is safe to conclude with the following. *Klassekampen* had either not found or chosen not to publish or pursue any articles with a perceived positive view of Thatcher and the Conservatives. Most likely it was much the other way around, considering their strong Communist Party affiliation, and what was pursued near wholeheartedly was a negative angle.

### **Thatcher’s victory in the strike by VG**

In total only 5 articles relating to Thatcher and her government were published by VG in the selected time frame, quite a reduction from the 16 found in 1979. They were mostly neutral with one of them being more positive, and only three were related to the strike. The first article relating to our inquiry was not found before the 4th of March, the day after the strike officially ended.

Inspecting how VG wrote about the strike right after it ended, we can look at the 3 articles which came out on the 4th and 5th of March. On March fourth, an article summarized how the strike nearly took a full year, how Scargill sacrificed almost all his prestige and how he admitted that he did it to win against Thatcher. It also detailed how the strike had been a huge burden on the economy of Britain. The article tries pinning the blame on Scargill which could be seen as, if not support for Thatcher, dislike for Thatcher's and the NCB’s adversaries (VG, 1985, 04.3a). Another article from March fourth summarized the end of the strike. It detailed the situation outside the building where the end of the strike was voted on by NUM and mentions how there were “*mixed emotions from the workers outside as Scargill delivered the message that the strike was over,*” As the previous article, it talks about how Scargill could be blamed as he was the one plotting to strike (Strømme, 1985, 04.3). Lastly, on March fifth an article detailed how Scargill said that the battle was not lost, nor did his

members suffer a total defeat and they would continue with “*guerilla-warfare against the employers*” to ensure that their demands would come through for those who were fired during the strike. It also mentions how there was still strike action going on in Kent and Scotland. It was neutrally written but perhaps slightly negative towards Scargill as it mentions his intentions for Guerilla-warfare against employers (Strømme, 1985, 05.3).

Two of the articles were not related to the strike. One article from the fourth of March reiterates a report from *The Observer* about the phone surveillance leak from MI5. It mentions how Thatcher ordered a report to be made on the issue, how apparently the government was planning to use more money on intelligence services than previously planned and how the house of commons have had multiple people expressing worry that the intelligence division were attracting the wrong kinds of people. *VG* offered no comments on the situation making it a neutral report (VG, 1985, 04.3b).

The last article from *VG* published on March 25th, speculates if Thatcher will be able to solve the conflict in Northern-Ireland as she has apparently been reported to have had a few meetings with the Irish President and had come to an agreement to improve the relations in the region. The article seems to first put Thatcher as a problem-solver but then quickly switches to a more sober tone from the British secretary reminding us things take time. As slight as it was, the article does put Thatcher in a relatively positive light (Strømme, 1985, 25.3).

Seeing as most of the articles were neutral regarding Thatcher and the Conservative Party with only a few slight positives one can conclude that *VG* had either not found or chosen not to pursue articles with much of either a positive or negative viewpoint of Thatcher and her Conservative government. This makes it possible to state that *VG* reported neutrally on Thatcher and the Conservatives between the 25th of February and the 31st of March in 1985. It is however peculiar that there would be so few reports considering it is significantly less than in 1979.

### **Tying together Thatcher's victory in the strike**

Having examined the reportage we can state that *Klassekampen* reported Negatively on Thatcher and the Conservatives, which came as no surprise considering their left leaning allegiance. *VG* on the other hand had quite the change considering the huge drop in articles and also in going from mostly positive reports to mainly neutral ones. *Adresseavisen* and *Aftenposten* both reported mainly neutrally and negatively on Thatcher and the Conservatives,

making it a big change from the more positively tilted reports found during the 1979 election, especially considering both newspapers are historically tied to a conservative political view.

The conclusion is that the newspapers who previously reported positively on Thatcher and the Conservatives had moved to a more neutral and negative view of her and the Conservatives. This also matches the political development in Norway at the time considering that by the mid-1980s the political opinion in Norway had shifted more away from the laissez-faire conservatism and strong state Thatcher and her Conservative Party represented. In conclusion we can state that the coverage by these newspapers were in tune with the political shifts in Norway at the time. Yet, the drop in articles from *VG* is difficult to ignore considering how inclined they were to write about the subject in 1979. It is possible that the lack of reports this time could be a result of the audience *VG* was writing for. A strike in a foreign land with many difficult economic factors to consider without much personal drama, sensationalism or intrigue might not have been the types of news *VG* was aiming to report much on.

### ***Chapter 3: The downfall of Thatcher in 1990***

This final chapter analyzes Thatcher's fall from grace and eventual resignation. Our inquiry into this matter starts on the 1st of November 1990 and ends on the 8th of December 1990. Going through them categorically will hopefully yield some insight into how the selected newspapers in Norway wrote about Thatcher and the Conservatives when it came to the end of her premiership, the leadership challenges against her and a short time after her resignation.

#### **Thatcher's downfall by *Adresseavisen***

In total there were 21 articles relating to Thatcher and her government published by *Adresseavisen* in the aforementioned time frame, marking a big increase in the number of articles published compared to 1979 and 1985. As for how *Adresseavisen* reported on Thatcher and the Conservatives during this timeframe we encounter negative, neutral and positive reports.

The interesting part is that there was a shift from neutral and negatively tilted articles to more neutral and positively tilted ones and this shift happened in accordance with Thatcher's resignation as leader of the Conservatives and Prime Minister. This is evident as the first article which can be construed as positively tilted was published on the 21st of

November, the day before Thatcher announced that she would not be a candidate on the second ballot in the Conservative leadership election and effectively stepped down as Prime Minister. Said article focused on how no matter what happened to Thatcher's premiership no one could question that she would leave a mark on Britain's political history. The article compares Thatcher to Churchill and states that she "*ruled her country with determination to the point where Thatcher was synonymous with Prime Minister* " but unlike Churchill "*she lacked the warm edges in her personality to make opponents forgive and forget*". Furthermore, it stated that she has not been without luck in her premiership, but that her success was hugely part to "*determination one has not seen since the time of World War 2*" The article further argues that part of the resentment towards Thatcher within the Conservative Party in 1990 was a result of the fact that the reforms associated with the 1980s were associated with Thatcher and Thatcher alone and not her political supporters in government. The article ends with a statement question about how there was no doubt that Thatcher was the correct PM for the 1980s but would she be the correct one for the 1990s? The article is very positive of Thatcher and reads almost like an homage to her (Schwarck, 1990, 21.11).

Before this article however the articles regarding Thatcher and the Conservatives were very negatively tilted with the following being good examples. An article from November second which detailed Howe storming out of Thatcher's government in response to Thatcher's political views on Europe and how it happened after Howe could not contain his disdain for Thatcher's political platform in regards to Europe any longer and bombarded Thatcher's ideas. The article states that the timing could not be worse "*for the crisis-stricken Thatcher*" and that Howe leaving "*would not make her situation any better, rather the opposite.*" (Schwarck, 1990, 02.11). Another negative example came out on November 6th when *Adresseavisen* wrote about the connection between Thatcher and the worsening conditions for Britain's poor and stated that the number of poor children has "*doubled since Thatcher came to power in 1979.*" (Adresseavisen, 1990, 06.11). Lastly, on November 21st *Adresseavisen* published an article which detailed how Thatcher did not manage to secure the majority needed to stay in power as the leader of the Conservatives outright and a second election was needed. It further stated that "*Thatcher's position is weakened and she might be forced to withdraw from the position of Prime Minister*" as a result of the political discord happening in the Conservative Party (Adresseavisen, 1990, 21.11).

After Thatcher effectively made her intentions to step down clear the shift towards more neutral and positive reports happened. A report from the 23rd of November detailed her career as Prime Minister positively up until the introduction of the poll tax, which the article deemed to be “*hated*” and ends with how Howe spoke out against her in the House of commons in his resignation speech. The article further details her possible successors as well as telling what prominent people in Norway thought of Thatcher such as the PM of Norway Brundtland stating “*Her strong personality has put its mark on British and European politics the last decade*” and the leader of Høyre, the Norwegian Conservative Party, Syse stated that “*she was a strong and leading figure in international politics*” and “*not at all the ice cold woman many would have one believe her to be*” The article does not shy away from the fact that Thatcher lost and the negative opinions of her, but also mentions her positive aspects. It was a neutral article with such a mix, but yet more positive than the reports earlier in the month (Adresseavisen, 1990, 23.11). On November 28th an article detailed how Major won the ballot as leader of the Conservatives and new PM of Britain. The article was positive in the sense that it calls the election “*exciting*” and the focus is now on “*reunifying the party*”. It also mentioned how Major had full support from Hurd and Heseltine, completing the positive and relieving picture (Hansen, 1990, 28.11). Lastly, a feature about Major as the new leader of the Conservatives and that while not everyone knows him very well, “*everyone likes him*”. It detailed his life and political career and how not even Labour could accuse him of not knowing the layers of the country as like no other Conservative politician in the country as “*he understands society from the bottom up.*” (Schwarck, 1990, 29.11).

Considering the articles in the aforementioned time frame one can state the following. *Adresseavisen* reported negatively on Thatcher and the Conservatives until she was no longer going to be the future face of the Conservatives. At that point the reports became more positive and optimistic. We can then conclude that at the end of Thatcher's premiership *Adresseavisen* reported negatively on Thatcher and the Conservatives while she still was Prime Minister, but when she effectively was out of the running and a new Conservative leader had been chosen *Adresseavisen* reported positively regarding the Conservatives.

### **Thatcher's downfall by *Aftenposten***

Similar to the increase in articles published by *Adresseavisen*, *Aftenposten* had an increase as well. In total there were 38 articles dealing with Thatcher and the Conservative Party. The same pattern of switching from a negative view to a positive one was also found when

examining the articles and reports published by *Aftenposten*, and in this case it also happened after Thatcher decided to step down.

When examining the negative reports before Thatcher stepped down the following are good examples. On November second, an article detailed Howe's resignation and how it was a major blow for Thatcher as well as spreading doubt about her and the Conservative Party. The article stated that it was clear that "*the sitting government is divided on important questions. It is not the best base to build a political platform on which could give new hope for the future.*" (Dragnes, 1990, 02.11). Another article from November fifth speculated on whether Heseltine would challenge Thatcher and how he struck a major blow towards her when he published a letter condemning her views on EC politics which accused her of putting the Conservative Party's future in danger because of her views on the EC. The article also stated that Thatcher was described as "*being old and not grounded in reality anymore*", and mentioned how the most recent polls had shown Labour increasing their lead on the Conservatives. It ended the report by mentioning how many thought Thatcher should resign (Dragnes, 1990, 05.11). An interview from November 10th with the Norwegian writer Richard Hermman, who was according to the article widely recognized as being the champion when it came to describing the British and their situation to the Norwegian people made comments about Thatcher such as "*I do not relate Thatcher to the sides of England I like best*" and "*Had she left three years ago she would have left with a legacy as one of the greatest of our time. But now she sits in such a mess that the day she leaves she will leave as the loser.*" Clearly quite negative comments, but a slightly saving comment is made in that he states. "*No one can question that she cleaned up a crisis-stricken Britain...but her cure was much too harsh in regards to the human cost.*" The article is not negative in and of itself but the fact that *Aftenposten* chose to publish such damning words on Thatcher makes it Negative (Andenæs, 1990, 10.11).

There was also a slew of articles, published between the 15th and 22nd of November, focusing on the discord happening in the Conservative Party because of Heseltine's challenge towards Thatcher as leader of the Conservatives and how the party was struggling. (Dragnes, 1990, 15.11a, 16.11, 20.11, 22.11a).

Examining the articles after Thatcher had stepped down the following are fine examples. On November 23rd, we find an homage to Thatcher with statements such as "*Not even her enemies could avoid having respect for her*" and "*her effort will be left standing. No other than Margaret Thatcher could have had the strength to carry out the brutal battle with Britain's unions and the sick conditions in the employment sector.*" The rest of the article



continues to praise her efforts and how it was only her economic policies, which backfired, that caused her to lose in the end (Aftenposten, 1990, 23.11). A report regarding the shocking turnaround on the polls for Labour was published on November 23rd, as the polls showed the Conservatives leading no matter which of the three candidates were to be selected as leader of the Conservatives (Dragnes, 1990, 23.11c). Another example, found on the 24th, discussed how all three candidates had a softer political profile than Thatcher and “*will listen more and be fairer to the people but that no matter who wins the first task will be to unify the party.*” The article further comments on how their softness would be positive for the party (Dragnes, 1990, 24.11). Lastly, on the 29th of November, an article about Major as the new leader of the Conservatives. The article outlined his life and political career and how he was a “*mellow fellow*”, and they expected “*a middle road between Thatcher and Heseltine with Major in command*” as he is not as blue as Thatcher but not exactly the same as Heseltine (Aftenposten, 1990, 29.11). The article is very positive towards Major and the Conservatives as the article deems him a good fit for the political climate ahead.

Seeing as how the articles published by *Aftenposten* in the selected time frame followed the same pattern as the ones published by *Adresseavisen* in the same period it is safe to conclude with the following statement. At the end of Thatcher’s premiership, the articles published by *Aftenposten* regarding Thatcher and the Conservatives were tilted negatively up till and around the time of her decision not to continue as leader of the Conservatives and Prime Minister. Subsequently, the articles became positively tilted around the time and after this point had been reached.

### **Thatcher’s downfall *Klassekampen***

Examining *Klassekampen* we find 19 articles related to Thatcher and the Conservatives, making it a slight increase compared to 1985. Unlike the reports seen from *Adresseavisen* and *Aftenposten*, *Klassekampen* did not have a shift from negative to positive reports around the time of Thatcher stepping down. There was a slight shift however. Most of the articles were negative or a mix between negative and neutral, until sometime after it had become clear that Thatcher was stepping down. After that, four articles could be considered simply neutral reports.

Surveying how *Klassekampen* reported negatively on Thatcher and the Conservatives, the following are good examples. On November fifth an article with the title “*Thatcher should resign*” detailed how a recent poll showed that over 60% of Brits thought that Thatcher should

resign and how it was the first one after Howe resigned from government (Klassekampen, 1990, 05.11). Another article from November 15th discussed how Thatcher was being challenged as Heseltine announced his candidacy for leader of the Conservatives and detailed how Heseltine was sparked into action by Howe's last speech in the House of Commons. It further mentioned how Howe Brought up the Topic of Thatcher's future as leader of the party by asking the party members to "*reevaluate their relationship with Thatcher*". The article was Negative of the Conservatives as a whole but reports very objectively on the facts making it a neutrally written article, but with a negative focus (Johansen, 1990, 15.11). On the 22nd of November we found an article focusing on Thatcherism which stated that "*No matter if Margaret Thatcher wins or loses the Conservative election the ground pillars of Thatcherism will live on.*" It further details how Thatcher and her Conservative government split the country into a rich south and a poverty stricken north and how Thatcher "*...did not hesitate to use the whole apparatus of violence to ... crush the workers and their trustees.*" The article ends with talking about the poll tax and how "*If Heseltine takes over this unpopular tax might get reworked, but other than that the legacy of Thatcherism will live on in all its social injustice.*" It would be difficult to argue that this paints a negative picture of both Thatcher and the Conservatives (Klassekampen, 1990, 22.11). Lastly, a short article about Major becoming leader of the Conservatives was published on the 29th of November. The article was very critical of Major and stated that his poor upbringing "*...is used for all it's worth to cover up the worst results of Thatcherism.*" The article quickly discussed that Major did not signify any breaks from Thatcherism and that he would only try to remove "*unwanted growths from Thatcherism*" to make sure the Conservatives would win the next election (Klassekampen, 1990, 29.11a).

As for the four neutral articles, the first one was published on November 27th. It briefly detailed how Heseltine seemed to be in the lead to win and had a lot of support because of his offensive stance on the poll tax and mentioned how the poll tax was Thatcherism's biggest blunder (Brekke, 1990, 27.11). Two of them were published on the 29th of November where the first was a short side article about how Thatcher's resignation was sincerely apologized by the Kremlin as many in the Soviet Union liked her. It also mentioned how such an Homage to Thatcher by the Kremlin was in sharp contrast to how they wrote about her 10 years prior. The second one detailed how Major became Prime Minister the day before and mentions how he now must do away with the most damaging parts of Thatcherism and unify the Conservative Party. Furthermore, it details how the poll tax, which was a part of the recent debate and Thatcher's downfall, most likely will not be

removed with Major as Prime Minister, but only changed a bit as he does not represent a big break from Thatcher's economic views being her previous Secretary of Finance (Klassekampen, 1990, 29.11b & Johansen, 1990, 29.11). Lastly, on the first of December there was a short piece on the front page with a picture of Major where it states that Major is more EC friendly than his predecessor but does not accept the idea of a European monetary union (Klassekampen, 1990, 01.12).

Seeing as most of the reports from *Klassekampen* were negative, with only four out of 19 articles being considered neutral we can conclude with the following. *Klassekampen* reported negatively on Thatcher and the Conservatives during the end of and right after the end of Thatcher's time as leader of the Conservatives and Prime Minister. Furthermore, there is a slight possibility that the four neutral articles indicate some sort of less negative reportage on the Conservatives after Thatcher was viewed as being done. However, since there were only four neutral articles out of 19, and not every article after Thatcher effectively dropped out was neutral, it makes it difficult to say that there was any connection at all.

### **Thatcher's downfall by VG**

Examining the final set of articles on how Norwegian newspapers reported on Thatcher and the Conservatives we turn our attention to *VG* one last time. In the selected time frame, there were 33 articles published regarding Thatcher and the Conservatives. A huge increase in articles published compared to the previous events. As for how *VG* reported on Thatcher and the Conservatives during this time frame, we see a similar trend being followed as was done by *Adresseavisen* and *Aftenposten*, wherein the articles are negatively tilted before Thatcher decided to step down, but became more positive after that decision had become clear. An added feature was that the articles had more of a tabloid focus after it became clear that Thatcher was going to resign from her post.

Starting with the negatively angled articles the following are excellent examples. On November 6th *VG* published an article which discussed the anxiety in the Conservative Party and surrounding Thatcher as her EC views were not widely supported. It further detailed how Howe walking out might cause her to lose her place at the wheel. It goes on to mention that this was not the first time a political death has been prophesied for her and she has masterfully ridden all the storms thrown her way so far, but that this time it looks particularly serious for her. It also detailed how Heseltine went out with a public letter in which he accused Thatcher of "jeopardizing the party's future because of her attitude to European politics." The article

ends with detailing how the polls were showing the Conservatives lagging behind and that many then thought Thatcher should resign (VG, 1990, 06.11). On November 10th, another article discussed the discord in the Conservative Party and how Thatcher's leadership style was being questioned by many in the party. It ends with how the party was falling down on the polls even in traditionally conservative constituencies (Krog, 1990, 10.11). An article which discussed Howe's resignation speech was published on the 14th of November. It predicted that the speech "*increased the chance of Thatcher's main opponent, Michael Heseltine*", and stated that even if Thatcher manages to secure a slim victory against Heseltine "*she would need to give up the premiership after a grace period.*" The article finishes by detailing the struggles and the hostile environment flourishing within the Conservative Party (Krog, 1990, 14.11). Lastly, an article published on November 16th titled "*Rotten tricks behind the facade*". The article details the hidden ways the Conservative election battle is performed with loud political speeches and hidden talks in offices and tea rooms. The article finishes by detailing how Thatcher was preferred by Conservative veterans but that Heseltine was preferred by the polls. Something that Heseltine used to his advantage and stated "*just as it was when Thatcher challenged Edward Heath.*" (Krog, 1990, 16.11) Detailing the hidden and toxic way in which the upcoming election was to be held can only be viewed negatively. It does however suit the more tabloid focused VG's platform.

Surveying the articles after Thatcher decided to step out of the race, one finds the same positive trend. An article about Thatcher's resignation and how it was the end of an era was published on the 23rd of November. The article discussed how she left her mark on Britain and British politics like no other and how much she got done as PM. It did however also detail how her colleagues felt she was not in tune with the times when the 1990s came around. It further discussed how very few PM's have been so loved and so hated at the same time and how she carved her way to the top, but at the end was surrounded by only yes men and echo chambers. The article ends by stating that "*Few would believe it would happen this way.*" The article seems more like a sensationalist tabloid homage than a serious political article but is in a way praising Thatcher for her service (VG, 1990, 23.11a). On the 28th of November VG published an article which detailed how Major won the election for leader of the Conservatives and new PM of Britain and called the election "*exciting*". It further mentioned how the focus was now on "*reunifying the party*". The article goes on to mention how Major has full support from Hurd and Heseltine, completing the positive and relieving picture (VG, 1990, 28.11). Lastly, published on December second, a feature about Major and his family. The article detailed where they were from, how they were celebrated in their hometown of

Huntingdon and how the wife would prioritize family and stay at home. The article further mentioned that even though Major's wife was shy and did not like publicity, she would play her role for her husband and travel to London as much as she could. The article is not very political and focuses on the typical tabloid features such as family and background, treating them more like celebrities. It does however count positively because it gave a good impression of the family as normal and down to earth (Krog, 1990, 02.12).

The pattern seen in *VG* regarding Thatcher and the Conservatives, was very much the same as the one followed by *Adresseavisen* and *Aftenposten*. The articles published before Thatcher decided to step down were negative towards Thatcher, the Conservatives and what was happening in the Conservative Party. The articles after Thatcher dropped out of the race were however much more positive in their choice of word and how they reported on Thatcher and the Conservative Party, albeit with a bit more tabloid and sensationalist focus at times.

### **Tying together Thatcher's downfall**

Summarizing the reports from the end of Thatcher's premiership we can state the following. *Klassekampen* reported negatively on Thatcher and the Conservative Party through the whole process. Some speculation came up regarding if *Klassekampen* softened up a bit in how they reported on the Conservatives after Thatcher resigned, but the small number of examples made it impossible to state if there was any correlation. Therefore, the conclusion remains that they reported negatively. As for the rest of the newspapers, *VG*, *Aftenposten* and *Adresseavisen*, they all followed the same pattern. The reports on Thatcher and the Conservatives were negatively tilted until Thatcher decided that it was best for her and the party to step down. After that the reports became positively tilted and hopeful, with an added feature of tabloidism from *VG*.

Since the political climate in Norway had started to move away from the politics of Britain by the middle of the 1980s and had by the time of Thatcher's downfall pretty much given up on the same hardline conservative politics that Thatcher stood for. This is further illustrated by the fact that Norway had since 1986 had its own Labour government, which was shortly replaced by a Conservative government in late 1989, and elected again in the early days of November 1990. With this one can conclude that the reports on Thatcher and the Conservative Party During the time frame of the 1st of November and the 8th of December 1990 were in line with the political opinion in Norway at the time.

It is however interesting that there was such a change in opinion from three out of the four newspapers when a change in leadership happened. Exactly why is impossible to say without further specific research into this event specifically. It may however be apt to speculate that the change in Conservative leadership in Britain possibly gave hope to the idea that the politics and policies furthered by a new Conservative Party with a new leader would be more in line with the political opinion of Norway as Major and the other candidates were stated to be softer Conservatives than the controversial giant that was Margaret Thatcher.

## ***Tying together Thatcher's premiership***

This thesis provides an ample range of knowledge towards answering the questions of how the Norwegian newspapers reported on Thatcher and her Conservative government across the premiership of Margaret Thatcher, as well as how Thatcherism and the acts of Thatcher's Conservative government were perceived in Norway. Additionally, it provides a glimpse into Norwegian politics and society in the 1980s.

Reviewing the conclusions from all three chapters and examining the totality of how the articles published in the selected time frames portrayed Thatcher and the Conservatives one can state the following. Around the time of the general election in 1979 *Adresseavisen*, *Aftenposten* and *VG* all reported in a positive manner on Thatcher and the Conservative Party. The exception from this positive view was *Klassekampen* which only published articles with a negative view of Thatcher and the Conservatives.

During the final stages and aftermath of the Miners' strike in 1985 the reportage had moved to more negative and neutrally angled articles from *Adresseavisen* and *Aftenposten* while the articles from *Klassekampen* remained negative as before. *VG*'s coverage of events had dropped remarkably to only five articles, whereas only three of them were related to the strike itself. Speculation that *VG* might not have been very interested in writing about the strike was also brought up, as it was perhaps the event with the least amount of personal sensationalism, drama and intrigue.

Lastly, during the end of Thatcher's premiership and her subsequent downfall the reportage on Thatcher and the Conservatives went through a change after Thatcher effectively stepped down. *Klassekampen*'s articles remained negative, but the reports from the other three were mostly negative of Thatcher and the Conservatives before she stepped down and were more positively angled towards both Thatcher and the Conservatives after.

One aspect to note before analyzing how the results relate to the existing historiography, is how Thatcherism as a topic was not really touched upon before Thatcher's downfall. Before this, as the examples have shown, Thatcherism was not written about. Even when Thatcher decided to resign, the focus was mostly on the politicians and the political party. Some articles from *Klassekampen* did mention the phenomenon after she withdrew from the ballot, but it was far from the norm. One way to interpret this is that while the term had become a phenomenon in British politics it may have been more common in Norway to refer to the politicians and political parties when mentioning their politics, as the most common way they were referred to throughout the articles this thesis explored was

“Thatcher”, “the Conservatives” and “Conservative government”. Assuming this to be the case one then needs to assume that there was little separating the reception of Thatcher and the Conservatives and the reception of Thatcherism in Norway.

Considering how three out of the four newspapers mostly reported on Thatcher and the Conservative Party in a manner which was in tune with the political shifts occurring in Norway, across the span of Thatcher’s premiership, we can look back to the introduction and Hallvard Notaker. His review on the different atmospheres surrounding the visits of Macmillan and Thatcher to Norway further enlightens the results.

As stated previously, Notaker wrote that the factors which created the different atmospheres in the visits were a widening gap from the relationship created during the Second World War and the brands of conservatism in each country developing differently between the time of Macmillan and Thatcher. This fits into the changes happening in Norwegian politics in the early 1980s as there was a move towards conservatism, but the brand of conservatism was not as drastic as the one fronted by Thatcher and the Conservatives in the UK. Additionally, since Norway’s political opinion moved away from conservatism by the middle of the decade, the popular political opinion was even further away from the brand of conservatism which Thatcher represented. One can then argue that the results of our findings in chapter one and two are supported by Notaker’s view on the political developments that happened in both countries when he reviewed the two Prime Minister visits to Norway.

As for the results from the third chapter in this thesis, one can argue that one can extend the support from Notaker until the time period the third chapter dealt with as well. The reasons being firstly, that the articles about Major and the other candidates in the UK Conservative election in 1990 described them as being milder and less confrontational than Thatcher, which can be understood as them being less removed from the brand of conservatism that the Norwegian conservatives and general population would find agreeable. Secondly, the overall results gathered from the reports and articles published in November of 1990, which switched from negative to positive in response to a possibly less confrontational form of conservatism, coupled with the fact that we know from Norwegian historiography that Norway moved more away from conservatism by the mid-1980s. Based on this the results of the thesis indicates that the movement from more positively angled articles and reports, to more negatively angled and back to positive again at the end of Thatcher’s time as Prime Minister of the UK, seems to be in alignment with the general political shifts in Norway and the existing historiography which relates to the topic of the thesis.

It is interesting, but not surprising that the small amount of existing historiography



aligns in such a way with the results gathered from this thesis. Even though the results do not break away from existing historiography, it expands and enlightens the topic significantly considering the limited knowledge on the reception of Thatcher and Thatcherism in Norway through the eyes of the selected newspapers.

As stated in the introduction the thesis is not comprehensive as it does not include the entirety of Thatcher's time as Prime Minister, nor does it encompass the entirety of the Norwegian newspapers which reported on the topic at the time. This does however open the door towards further research where one could examine different events in Thatcher's premiership, such as the Falklands war, the reception of the poll tax or even the articles and reports published around the time of Thatcher's visit to Norway in 1986. Expanding, exchanging or narrowing the database of newspapers used also opens up new ways in which one could examine this topic. Considering that the selection used in this thesis aimed for differing perspectives it would be interesting to analyze the same or different events using only conservative newspapers to examine how a larger part of the conservative media in Norway reacted to Thatcher, Thatcherism and the UK Conservative Party during Thatcher's time. The results of this thesis have definitely contributed towards shedding light on this topic, but more research would undoubtedly make the picture of how Thatcher and Thatcherism were perceived in Norway at the time considerably clearer.



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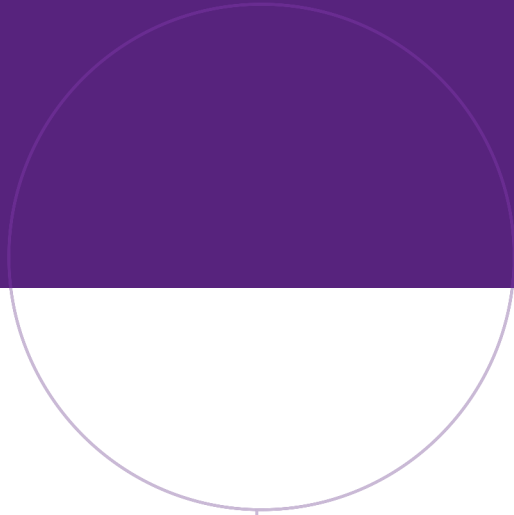
## **Appendix**

### **Thesis relevance for future work as an educator in the Norwegian education system**

After many long years at NTNU and having completed a Master's thesis I have learned many lessons that will follow me into my future career as a teacher in the Norwegian education system. Simply completing a bigger piece of work such as this is in and of itself valuable knowledge as it has given me further understanding in what it means to build a project from start to finish. This is relevant as comprehensive research, evaluating different sources, academic writing, revising and rewriting the work you have done are all abilities which students in the Middle and High school levels of education are expected to have some knowledge of after they have graduated.

Additionally, the knowledge I gained about the topic of my thesis is highly relevant. Since this thesis is a deep dive into reactions to certain political events from a foreign country through the eyes of the Norwegian media it gives me firsthand experience and knowledge when it comes to how one can evaluate such a process. This is extremely important as both my future work as an English language teacher and a social science teacher will contain topics and themes where one will explore outside the domain of Norwegian domestic politics and work with both foreign and domestic sources.

Since the new teaching plans from the Norwegian department of education also has a bigger focus on interdisciplinary topics it becomes even more relevant as it gives me the ability to more easily integrate English and social science topics.



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