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The Nordic Journalism Student

A cross-national study

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1. INTRODUCTION

Very often, the Nordic countries are viewed by scholars as holding a shared journalistic tradition. A recent example is Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini's influential *Comparing Media Systems* (2004), where the Nordic countries are placed in the "Democratic Corporatist" model as a type of media systems characterized by high newspaper circulation, strong professionalization and state intervention (but with protection for press freedom), a similar history of early democratization, consensus-based governments, a history of democratic corporatism, and a strong welfare state (2004:67-68). Interestingly, Hallin and Mancini see the Nordic countries not only to be much closer to this ideal type than the other countries they include in this type of media system (including Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria), but also sees the Nordic countries as extremely similar (2004:70). Also in terms of overall structure of societies, the Nordic countries are often thought of as very similar (it is for example common to speak of a "Nordic model" of the welfare state¹).

One could, based on this, ask (at least in the form of a null hypothesis) if there also exists a common "Nordic journalistic model", with common ideas and ideals for what journalism – and journalists – ought to be and aspire to?

Also, given that strong changes have taken place during the last decades in all the Nordic media systems – most prominently, the much stronger presence of large commercial actors and advertisement-based media on a national (and sometimes inter-Nordic) level – we find it particularly interesting to ask what aspirations and ideals the younger generation of prospective Nordic journalists have. Do they, for example, feel stronger animosity against traditional state-owned journalism than modern advertisement-driven publications? Do they share the ideals of a "watchdog" role for journalism, or do they rather feel journalism as a vehicle for personal self-realization? Do they want to work in newspapers, or do they prefer television and Internet-based publications?

To explore these questions further, we will look at some comparative differences between first-year journalism students in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

Until very recently, there has existed little systematic data on the students of journalism in the Nordic countries. With the exception of the studies of students of two Norwegian journalism schools done by Ottosen, Bjørnsen and Hovden in the period 1999-2005 (Bjørnsen 2003; Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen 2006) and the (now rather aged) study by Splichal and Sparks' *Journalists for the 21st century* (1994) - which included students from the schools of Tampere (Finland) and Oslo (Norway) - updated, relevant and *comparative* data for research on the Nordic journalism students has been in short supply. Because of this, a group of Nordic

¹ See for example Kildal and Kuhnle (2005).

researchers – self titled “The Hovdabrekka group” - carried out a questionnaire to first-year students at 19 Nordic schools of journalism in fall 2005, where 474 responded².

First we will give some background information on journalism education in the Nordic countries (2) and discuss the methodology and the data (3), with a short discussion of the comparison of countries (4). Then follows some findings on the major differences between the students in the Nordic countries according to their backgrounds (5.1), their motivations and aspirations (5.2), the student’s ideas of what are important competence for a journalist (5.3), their views on the press’ role and potential in society (5.4) and their attitudes to the journalistic profession (6.5). To explore closer the factors underlying these differences, we will then offer a series of multiple logistic regression analyses on the central questions (6). Finally, a summary is given.

2. JOURNALISM EDUCATION IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

The journalism education in the Nordic countries has many common features. The schools have developed their curricula in close cooperation, with common meetings and discussions through their whole existence. Nordic cooperation in the field of journalism training can be viewed in the light of a broad cooperation between the Nordic countries that was institutionalized during the 1950s. The Nordic Council had its first session in 1953, Finland joined three years later. The Nordic Course for Journalists was started in Aarhus in 1958 and has since functioned as a meeting place and an educational site for journalists already working in the media. Even before that, in the 20’s and 30’s short courses were arranged on a Nordic basis, and occasionally a common education was discussed, before the national programs got started.

In most of the countries the 1960’s was a period of rapid development of the journalism schools. A discussion was started about the need for research connected to the professional education. Gradually the journalism schools started to cooperate with universities, today most schools are part of, or associated with universities or other institutions of higher level education. A low rate of graduation has continued to be a problem, except for Denmark where an exam has been a requirement for entering the field. Another common feature in the Nordic countries has been the recent growth of new, competing programs, which the existing schools reluctantly have accepted. Even in Denmark, where DJH in Aarhus for a long period was the only journalism program, there are now three different academic programs³. A more detailed overview of journalism education in the Nordic countries is given in Appendix 1.

² The survey was planned and carried out by Jan Dyberg (Danish School of Journalism), Marina Gheretti (University of Gøteborg), Henrika Zilliacus-Tikkanen (University of Helsinki), Rune Ottosen (Oslo University College), Gunn Bjørnsen (then Bjørknes International College) and Jan Fredrik Hovden (Volda University College).

³ The Nordic programmes also share similarities with most of the European schools. In a report on the journalism training in Europe, Ami Lönnroth (1997) concludes that the member schools of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) in general have strong practical elements in their curricula, and favour short programs. A majority of the schools train students for all types of media, favour teachers with a background as journalists and include internships in the media in their programs. University training programs usually last between 4 and 6 years, and more practically oriented programs are shorter. Entrance exams are reported to give good results and reduce drop-out rates. They are still considerable, but also students who drop out tend to work for the media.

3. DATA AND METHOD

The data used in this paper is based on a web-based questionnaire administered to every first year student at 19 Nordic schools of journalism within three weeks after they started their education in the fall semester 2005⁴. 51% (474) responded⁵. Three of these schools were located in Finland (Jyväskylä, Tammerfors, Helsinki), three in Sweden (JMG Göteborg, MKV Mitthögskolan, Södertörn)⁶, three in Denmark (DJH Århus, Roskilde, Odense*) and ten in Norway (The university colleges of Oslo, Volda, Bodø and Kautokeino*, the universities of Stavanger and Bergen*, Gimlekollen*, Norwegian School of Management BI*, Bjorknes International College* and Norwegian School of Business Studies MI*).

For this paper, however, we have focused on the differences between the largest and most traditional vocational j-schools in each country, resulting in a selection of twelve j-schools (excluding all schools marked with an asterisk above)⁷, totaling 391 students (63 from Finland, 74 from Sweden, 90 from Denmark and 164 from Norway). If not exhaustive, we believe this sample of institutions include most of the largest and traditionally important schools of journalism in the Nordic countries, with the potential to make some generalizations about the differences between Nordic journalism students.

The questionnaire – which was offered in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Finnish translations – consisted of 74 questions covering a wide array of subjects including social recruitment (gender, social, geographical and ethnical background, age), motivation for studying journalism, preferences regarding their future journalistic working life (ex. preferred specialization and place of work), their views on the role of journalism in society, attitudes to the profession, journalistic ideals (ex. who they thought were the best journalists and newspapers,

⁴ An invitation was sent personally to all students via their email-address, which included a HTML-link to the questionnaire which could be filled out in their web browsers.

⁵ Note that the response rate varies much between the various institutions. Two institutions had a response rate below 30% (Södertörn and Odense), seven between 40 and 50% (BI, Gimlekollen, MI, Århus, Jyväskylä, Göteborg, Mitthögskolan), and the remaining between 50 and 76%. The national response rates were as follows: Finland 53%, Sweden 41%, Denmark 47% and Norway 56%. Even if we are here dealing with populations and not samples, the response rates must overall be considered somewhat low, if adequate used on a national level. It should also be noted that the survey had a relative high rate of “drop-off”: Of those who started answering the questionnaire, only 76% completed it. Even if this is a well-known problem with web-based surveys - cf. for example Couper, Traugott and Lamias (2001), it seems clear that our questionnaire was longer than the ideal length, and that this contributed negatively to the drop-off rate.

⁶ Note that the original plan was also to include the Swedish journalism education at Stockholm University in the sample, but the staff was unwilling to participate in the project.

⁷ The rationale behind the selection is due to two factors. First, because one in Norway did a much broader sample of institutions than in the other countries (MI is, for example a secondary school). Secondly, the students at Roskilde are excluded because the data received from this institution included both first- and second-year students (with no real possibility of separating out the first-year students), due to a misunderstanding with the IT-department of Roskilde. Although Södertörn and Odense both have quite low response rate individually (cf. footnote 5), we consider it defensible to include them in the national comparisons.

and what are important qualities for a journalist), what are the most important things to learn in a journalistic education, and their media use⁸.

4. A NOTE ON THE COMPARISON OF COUNTRIES

For Emil Durkheim and Max Weber, the comparative method⁹ was seen as central to sociology because it offered a solution to the (then) emerging science's problem of reconciling competing claims and generality in social research¹⁰. For both, the comparison of similar social phenomena across nations – for example capitalism (Weber) or the social facts of suicide (Durkheim) – was seen as offering the possibility of de-contextualizing local knowledge in favor of a more general, *sociological* knowledge.

Regarding journalism students in the Nordic countries, a comparative cross-national approach offer many promises. First, the differences in recruitment can tell us something about the varying status and profile of journalism in the different countries. Secondly, the presence of national vs. cross-national ideals and conceptions of journalism can be considered – as suggested by Splichal & Sparks (1994:58) – as informative of the degree of professionalization of journalism. Finally, looking at how the nationally varying journalistic ideals and norms are related to different historic conditions and present journalistic markets in the national context offers both the potential for a critique of traditional national explanations and a sensitizing to the role of such particular organizational contexts in shaping the young journalistic habitus and its aspirations.

Even if it seems possible to speak of a shared Nordic model of journalism education because of the many similarities in the organization and curriculum of journalism education (part 2), a cross-national comparison meets with many difficulties and uncertainties. First, even if it is relatively easy to pick out the few most important journalism schools in each country (which are relatively apparent by their history, their number of students and their links with the journalistic profession etc.), one should note that the principal differences between a journalism school and other forms of media studies are in many cases less clear, as many of the latter type studies – for example, general media studies at a university or a more practical film- and television-study at a private school - incorporate much journalism in their teachings and not infrequently lead to careers in journalism¹¹. Secondly, there are some differences in the length and content of different j-schools. Whereas most of the schools offer a 2-3 year course at bachelor level, Roskilde University Centre for example is a *kandidatuddannelse*, comparable to a full master degree, with 5 years of schooling and one year of paid internship. And whereas most traditional j-schools in the Nordic countries are state-driven, located at a university college or a university, private j-schools exist and are increasingly common, which often have somewhat different models for their study program and curriculum than the traditional schools. Even more

⁸ Most of these questions were adapted from a similar survey of Norwegian journalism students conducted in the period 1999-2004 Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen (2006).

⁹ Even if, as Durkheim Durkheim (1964) correctly pointed out, the word “comparative” used in relation to sociology is really a redundant term because all sociology, by nature, is comparative at some level, we will use this term.

¹⁰ Ragin and Zaret (1983:732)

¹¹ A good example of this is the Norwegian school Gimlekollen (a Christian private school, owned and run by the Norwegian Lutheran Mission), which have offered various media-related courses at secondary level – particularly related to radio- and television - since 1981. In 1996 they were granted the status of University College and offered a one-year study in Media communications, and a two-year study in journalism the year after. But even if their study program in “journalism” are only ten years old, the earlier courses at Gimlekollen has been an important career start for many Norwegian journalists.

important is that even if most j-schools aim for an all-purpose journalistic education (with a few exceptions, like the Norwegian school of business journalism), there usually exists a form of division of educational labor by tradition (and state politics) where ex. one school will specialize in print journalism and another in broadcast journalism, one will give extensive courses in cultural journalism but little on local news journalism etc. A general difference also exist between the university colleges and the universities, where the later are usually less “practical”, in the sense that less time is allocated to journalism in realistic newsroom-situations and mastery of technical equipment, and the former usually have stronger bonds with the profession etc.

For comparative reasons, we have thus found it imperative to reduce the original sample of institutions from nineteen to twelve, and focus on the most similar institutions in each country, those being the largest, oldest and most general study programs – all between 2-3 years on a bachelor level – leading towards a professional journalism career.

This however, leads to a more general question: What are we really looking for when we ask about differences between the journalism students in the different Nordic countries?

One the one hand, we are interested in the raw frequencies, wanting to know what kind of attitudes and ambitions that are dominant in the students, as this tells us something about the different composition of the journalistic inheritors in each country. In which country, for example, are the students willingness to work in a newspaper greatest? Such questions underlie the descriptions of national differences in part 5 of this paper.

On the other hand, we are also interested in suggesting an explanation for the perceived differences on a national level. We want – to follow the previous example - to know if there are some differences between the willingness to work in a newspaper that is *not* just the result of the various social composition of the students (age, gender, previous journalistic experience etc.), but need to be explained with the reference to differences between the nations on a more general level (like their national media systems/journalistic systems). For this reason, we will look closer on the differences between countries by controlling for some of the differences in the students experience and backgrounds by using multivariate logistic regression (part 6).

5. THE NORDIC JOURNALIST STUDENTS: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

5.1 WHO ARE THE NORDIC JOURNALISM STUDENTS?

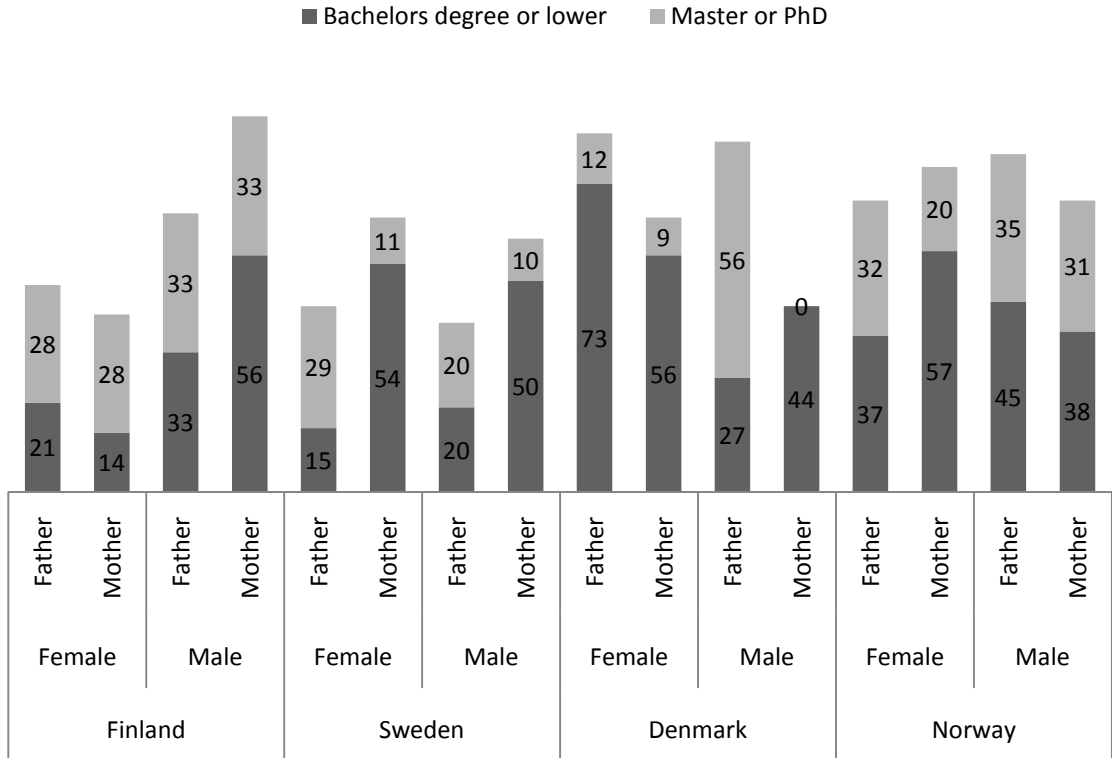
We should first note that journalism school usually comes at different points in the educational careers in the Nordic countries, which means that a career in journalism feature differently in their future plans and ambitions. For the Finnish and Norwegian students, journalism education appear to often be just the start of a longer educational career, where half of the students are both quite sure that they will take further education afterwards and many are uncertain that they ever want to work as a journalist. The Danish students, in contrast, are older (and more often male), the majority with some form of full time work experience, and most of them are fairly sure they want to work as a journalist directly after completing journalism school. The Swedish students place themselves somewhat in between the Norwegian and Finnish students in case of age and educational background, but they have more work experience and fewer plans taking further education.

We should from this expect the Finnish and Norwegian students to have least experience from journalism, but in fact, almost the reverse is true: almost half of them have previously done paid journalistic work (26% fulltime in Finland, 18% in Norway), whereas somewhat fewer of the Danes and just one in five Swedes. The weaker integration into the journalistic profession of the Swedes is also noticeable by their lack of family ties with journalists (no one of our 62 Swedish students had a father or mother who have worked as a journalist, whereas this is true for 7-8 percent of the students from the other countries). We should also note that they are the least likely to say that they have been interested in journalism since adolescence (true for just one in six Swedes, where this is true for nearly half the Finns, and somewhat fewer Norwegians and Danes).

Regarding other national differences in the students social recruitment, we find this a difficult question to give a clear answer to, as social differences get their meaning and force from differences related to the *national* level. For example, the capital value related to having a father with a master degree or a job as a 2ndary teacher will vary with these possessions relational position in each particular country's social space (Bourdieu 1984).

Easier to spot and less problematic are the major differences in recruitment between the sexes in each country. In general, the Nordic female students are markedly younger than the male students, with all that follows (like less work- and educational experience on average)¹². In term of their parents, the differences vary. In Finland and Denmark, the female students appear to have somewhat less educated parents than the men, but the Swedish and Norwegian male and female students are more evenly matched (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Fathers and mothers educational level, by country and gender of respondent. Percentages.



¹² Finland here offers an interesting exception, as the females are on average almost four years younger than the male students and have less frequent previous paid experience as journalists, but they have more often educational experience and work experience.

Table 1 Indicators of social background and selected social characteristics for students of journalism. Percentages.

	FINLAND		SWEDEN		DENMARK		NORWAY		Fin	Swe	Den	Nor
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M				
N=	35	11	47	15	46	26	101	32	46	62	72	133
% Female									76	76	64	76
Age												
20-21	51	27	39	27	7	4	24	38	46	36	6	27
22-24	37	45	46	13	42	35	38	34	39	38	39	37
25-27	11	9	4	33	29	15	23	22	11	11	24	23
28 or older	0	18	11	27	22	46	16	6	4	15	31	14
Educational level¹³												
2 nd school	59	80	47	38	61	50	24	33	64	45	57	26
1-2 yrs higher education	24	10	38	54	8	36	39	43	20	41	18	40
3 yrs+ higher education	18	10	16	8	32	14	37	23	16	14	25	34
Fathers educational level												
No higher education	52	33	56	60	15	17	31	21	47	57	16	28
Basc. Dg. or lower	21	33	15	20	73	28	37	45	24	16	57	39
Master Dg. or PhD	28	33	29	20	12	56	32	34	29	27	27	33
Parent journalist	10	0	0	0	9	6	6	10	8	0	8	7
Previous experience from journalism												
No	36	20	42	77	47	27	32	24	33	50	40	30
Yes, unpaid	27	20	38	8	29	32	26	31	26	31	30	27
Yes, paid part-time	12	30	16	8	18	36	25	24	16	14	25	25
Yes, paid full-time	24	30	4	8	5	5	17	21	26	5	5	18
Work experience (non-journalistic, fulltime jobs)												
No	76	90	56	25	34	5	72	67	79	49	23	71
1-2 yrs	18	10	31	25	45	27	21	23	16	30	38	22
3+ yrs	6	0	13	50	21	68	6	10	5	21	38	7
Plans to take further education afterwards												
Yes	71	30	22	0	13	14	51	37	61	17	13	47
Not sure	12	10	28	62	41	18	9	33	11	36	33	15
No	18	60	50	38	46	68	40	30	27	47	54	38
Became interested in journalism									33	42	49	46
... during childhood / adolescence	31	36	49	20	59	32	49	35	41	16	28	22
... during 2ndary school	40	45	13	27	18	44	19	29	26	42	23	33
... later	29	18	38	53	23	24	32	35	33	42	49	46
Certain that they want to work as a journalist												
Completely certain	21	10	30	29	54	67	43	40	18	30	58	42
Fairly certain	35	60	50	43	33	19	34	17	41	48	28	30
Uncertain	44	30	20	29	13	14	23	43	41	22	13	28

¹³ Note that Denmark choose – for reasons of compatibility with previous surveys at DJH - to ask a somewhat different question for educational level than the other Nordic countries, and the categories are thus not completely comparable. Whereas one in Norway, Sweden and Finland offered the categories “Primary school”, “1-2 yrs 2ndary school”, “3-4 yrs 2ndary school”, and five categories (1-5 years) for “higher edu” for educational level, Denmark asked for “Primary school”, “Youth education”, “Shorter further education”, “Medium long education” and “Long further education”, with examples suggesting these four later categories to be roughly equivalent with 2ndary school, 1-2 years higher education, 3-4 higher education and master level education. This applies for both the respondent and the parents’ educational level.

5.2 MOTIVATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

This section discusses the motivations and aspirations of journalism students in the Nordic countries, where three patterns are identified in the survey data. First, that the students are practical idealists. Secondly, that the students aspire to the most prestigious positions and media. Third, that the role models of the students are primarily TV journalists, and most often high profile correspondents. The three patterns and the differences between countries and gender will be discussed below.

PRACTICAL IDEALISTS

The first overall pattern is that the Nordic journalism students to a high degree are motivated by the same factors. In the survey, the students were presented with twenty different motivations for choosing the journalistic profession and asked to grade them. The most important factor of all of students across country and gender was “Having a varied and lively work”. The least important factor for all students with only small differences from country to country and from males to females was “Becoming a celebrity”. The twenty suggested motivations can roughly be grouped in three different families of motifs; practical motifs, idealistic motifs and personal motifs. In all four countries, the overall motivation for future journalists is a mix of practical motifs (for instance having a varied and lively work, having a job with freedom and independence) and idealistic motifs (for instance fighting injustice and working with political issues). Personal motifs (such as status, wages and the possibility of becoming a celebrity) play a smaller role when the Nordic students are asked about their motivations for joining the journalistic profession. All in all this points to a generation of journalism students who are at the same time motivated by making a difference working in the picture of the classical fourth estate role of the press, when at the same time being motivated by the pragmatic everyday features of journalism: *Practical idealists* might be the best term to describe the Nordic journalism students.

From country to country there are small but interesting differences in the motivations listed by the students. The Danish students are the group least motivated by journalism being a “creative work” but the group most motivated by “the pleasure of communication” and “the pleasure of writing”. Compared to the other students, the Finnish student put most (and significant more) emphasis on “self-realization” as an important factor for choosing the journalistic profession. Also, the Finnish students are more motivated than their fellow Nordic students by “High status” or more specifically, by gaining a high status by becoming a journalist.

Figure 2 Motivations for becoming a journalist. "Very important" or "somewhat important." Percentages.



Table 2 Journalism students' motivations for becoming a journalist. "Very important" or "somewhat important". Percentages.

	FINLAND		SWEDEN		DENMARK		NORWAY		Fin	Swe	Den	Nor
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M				
N=	35	11	47	15	46	26	101	32	46	62	72	133
Varied and lively work	94	100	100	93	98	96	100	93	96	98	97	98
Work with interest subjects	100	100	98	100	98	71	98	97	100	98	88	98
Creative work	94	82	96	79	80	67	98	93	91	92	75	97
The pleasure of communication	82	82	93	71	93	100	93	73	82	88	95	88
A job with freedom and independence	79	91	87	93	85	63	90	100	82	88	77	92
Meet interesting persons	88	91	96	79	88	75	89	80	82	67	86	90
The pleasure of writing	79	45	87	79	98	96	88	77	71	85	97	85
Participate in public debates	82	82	70	57	95	71	90	93	89	92	83	87
Fight injustice	68	73	78	79	70	63	85	70	69	78	67	82
Explaining/simplifying complicated issues	65	55	67	57	85	46	66	63	62	65	70	65
Help individuals	68	36	70	79	35	54	77	60	60	68	55	73
Travel	65	45	72	57	45	71	75	67	60	72	42	73
Self-realization	88	91	61	36	58	63	67	57	89	55	59	64
Investigate the powerful	62	64	57	64	45	63	65	80	62	58	52	68
Journalistic identity appeals to me	53	64	59	29	60	38	48	57	56	52	52	50
Secure employment	44	27	54	21	38	13	55	57	40	47	28	56
Good wages	26	18	37	14	40	50	46	47	24	32	44	46
Can work in hometown	24	36	24	7	33	33	36	40	27	20	33	37
High status	44	36	30	14	18	17	27	30	42	27	17	28
Becoming a celebrity	3	9	4	7	0	38	8	3	4	5	14	7

Gender differences regarding the question of motivation are small but interesting. To “work with interesting subjects” is an important motivation for students in all the Nordic countries, only when it comes to Danish females, this motivation is only a little above average. “The pleasure of writing” is also a general motivation factor in all the Nordic countries only male students from Finland seem to put less emphasis on this question. “Explaining/simplifying complicated issues” is moderately important as a motivation for Nordic journalism students expect for male Swedish students who values this motivation factor more than any other student group in Denmark, Finland or Norway. Two questions in the survey show great divides between the genders. To “Help individuals” are more important for Finnish females than for Finnish males, it is more important for Swedish males than Swedish females, more important for Danish males than females, and again more important for Norwegian females than males. Another interesting ‘gender divider’, expect for Norway, is the importance of “secure employment” when choosing journalism as a profession which is very significant to the females students in Denmark, Finland and Sweden. In Finland 44 females to 27 males thinks secure employment is very important, in Sweden it is 54 females to 21 males and in Denmark it is 38 females to 13 males. Norway is the only exception from this gender dividing motivation factor as 55 females to 57 males express that secure employment is important.

PRESTIGIOUS POSITIONS

The second overall pattern is that Nordic journalism students are ambitious and well aware of the status hierarchies of the profession in the sense that their motivations and aspirations aim towards the most prestigious journalistic positions. In all four countries, most students are motivated by working with prestigious topics such as society/politics, culture and international conflicts. They also aspire to get jobs in the most prestigious national newspapers and on national public service television.

One of the sociological characteristics of journalistic practice is that the status hierarchies are visible in the everyday work and production of the profession: We know that political news are valued more in the internal status hierarchy as political news is front page material. In the same way, we know that the human interest

stories put in the back of the newspaper indicates a less prestigious position in the internal professional hierarchies of the journalists (Schultz 2005). The data from the survey indicates that the status hierarchies of the profession are already partially internalized in the journalism students before they start working as journalists.

The survey asked the Nordic student what their interests was for working with different topics (14 classical journalistic topics). The overall picture of all countries point towards four topics that interest the students the most: Society/Politics, Culture, International Conflicts and Developing countries. The runner-ups in all Nordic countries are Multicultural topics, entertainment, religion, crime, popular science and consumer journalism. The four topics less interesting to the students as a whole (or only very interesting to a small percentage of the students) are emergencies/accidents, health/family, sport and economy.

Table 3 Students preferred journalistic specializations. "Very interested" or "somewhat interested". Percentages.

	FINLAND		SWEDEN		DENMARK		NORWAY		Fin	Swe	Den	Nor
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total			
N=	35	11	47	15	46	26	101	32	46	62	72	133
Culture	91	90	73	50	81	41	90	79	76	67	92	83
Society/politics	78	70	65	75	92	91	80	93	90	67	66	88
Int. Conflicts	66	80	63	67	89	59	72	72	69	63	78	72
Entertainment	47	50	65	42	57	68	70	72	69	63	76	67
Developing countries	69	70	63	67	92	50	69	59	67	52	76	66
Multicultural topics	75	40	58	33	89	55	74	38	48	60	61	71
Crime	41	40	45	50	51	77	57	62	52	50	68	58
Religion	56	40	55	33	86	36	63	41	40	46	61	59
Popular science	59	50	60	25	43	32	56	59	57	52	39	57
Consumer	69	60	38	50	51	55	47	14	67	40	53	39
Emergencies/accidents	31	50	40	33	24	45	54	38	52	50	22	45
Health/family	63	20	55	33	32	5	52	21	36	38	32	50
Sport	31	40	35	50	41	55	29	62	33	38	46	37
Economy/trade	25	60	18	33	35	23	27	55	33	21	31	33

Looking at all of the students in all four countries it is evident that the interest in the classical 'hard news' areas of journalism are very high. This is interesting in itself but also interesting because of the historical change in Nordic journalism towards a more 'service oriented journalism' (Eide 2001) which has meant a move from specialist journalists to generalist journalists and a move from hard news towards more consumer/soft news. This could point to the interpretation that the interests of the students do not match the future journalistic labor market very well. Only a few students will get jobs working with the prestigious political journalism whereas there will be more and more jobs in general reporting or in areas as health journalism, family journalism, lifestyle journalism, sports and niches like economy and trade journalism. Gender to the gender, the interest in journalistic topics might be one of the biggest gender dividers in the survey. For almost all topics in all countries, there are significant differences in what the female students and the male students are interested in working with.

Figure 3 Students first choice of future place of work. Percentages.

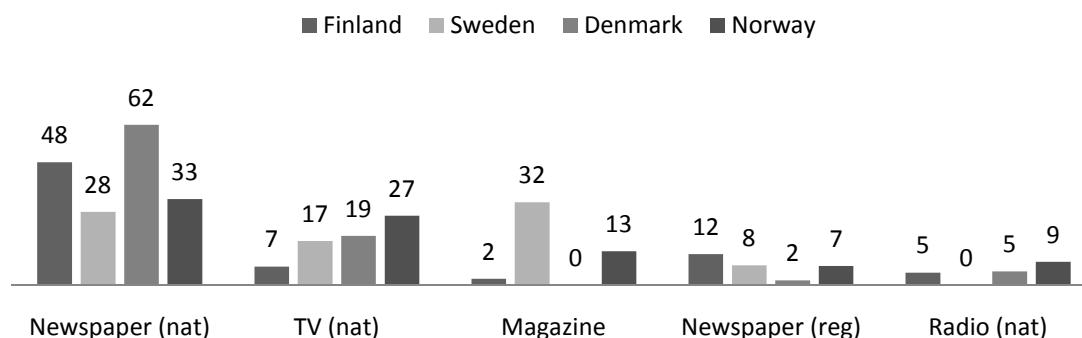


Table 4 Students first choice of future place of work. Percentages.

	FINLAND		SWEDEN		DENMARK		NORWAY		Fin	Swe	Den	Nor
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total			
N=	35	11	47	15	46	26	101	32	46	62	72	133
Newspaper (national)	44	60	24	42	49	86	30	45	48	28	62	33
Television (national)	6	10	17	17	22	14	32	10	7	17	19	27
Magazine	3	0	37	17	0	0	16	3	2	32	0	13
Newspaper (regional)	13	10	10	0	3	0	7	7	12	8	2	7
Radio (national)	3	10	0	0	8	0	5	21	5	0	5	9
PR/communication	13	0	2	0	5	0	1	0	10	2	3	1
News Agency	6	0	5	17	3	0	1	7	5	8	2	2
TV/Radio (regional)	0	0	0	8	5	0	2	3	0	2	3	2
Other	12	10	5	0	5	0	5	3	11	3	4	6

The divide between aspirations and future job market is evident also when Nordic journalism students are asked what their first priority of working place is. Especially for Denmark and Finland but also significant for Norway and Sweden, the national newspaper is the most sought first priority for the journalism students. National television is the second choice for all the countries. When it comes to working at other media the picture is less clear. Swedish students are significantly interested in working in the magazine/popular press which is also a wish for many Norwegian students and some Finnish students. No Danish students at all has indicated an interest in working in the magazine/popular press as a first priority. The Danish students have also indicated almost no interest in working with regional television, internet news/we, film, specialist magazines, trade/company magazines or in photo bureaus which points towards a very narrow area of interest for Danish journalism students compared to Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish students.

THE SYMBOLIC POWER OF TELEVISION

The third finding regarding the motivations of Nordic journalism students is the symbolic power of television to consecrate journalistic role models in all Nordic countries. The survey asked journalism students in all four countries to name a journalistic role model.

Table 5 Journalistic role models by country. Percentages.

Finland: Arvi Lind (13%), Hunter S. Thompson (10%) Other named by one student: Anna-Lena Lauren, Bosse Ahlgren, Christoffer Herberts, Hannes Heikura, Illka Malmberg, Jukka Ukkula, Kari Lumikero, Leif Salmen, Linda Skugge, Mirja Pyykkö, Pontus Dammert.

Sweden: Stina Dabrowski-Lundberg (16%), Jan Guillou (6%), Janne Josefsson (6%)

Denmark: Ulla Terkelsen (14%), Frodi Holm Knudsen (8%), Lars Fogt (8%), Mette Fugl (6%), Poul E Skammelsen (6%), Jens Olav Jersild (4%), Niels Thorsen (4%), Ole Sippel (4%)

Norway: Anne Grosvold (15%), Åsne Seierstad (8%), Hans W Steinfeld (7%), Marie Simonsen (5%), John Pilger (3%), Bjørn Hansen (2%), Christian Borch (2%), Frode Græsvik (2%), Fredrik Skavlan (2%), Knut Olsen (2%), Per Egil Hegge (2%)

Number in paranthesis = Percentage of students in this country (which have named a role model) which have named this person. Only those mentioned by at least two students (three in Norway) included, except for Finland where also role models named by one student are included.

Open question: "Name 1-2 persons you think are good role models for journalists".

Table 6 The best newspaper, tv- and radio-channel for news and coverage of society by country as considered by the students. Percentages.

Finland:	<u>Best newspaper:</u> Helsinki Sanomat (59%), Hufvudstadsbladet (9%), Suomen kuvalehti (6%), Voima (6%), Hesari (6%) <u>Best TV channel:</u> YLE (59%), MTV 3 (21%) <u>Best radio channel:</u> YLE (41%), Radio Vega (23%)
Denmark:	<u>Best newspaper:</u> Politiken (57%), Jyllandsposten (14%), Ekstrabladet (10%) Information (7%) <u>Best TV channel:</u> Danmarks Radio (54%), TV2 (35%) <u>Best radio channel:</u> DR 85% (P1 38% P3 32%), Radio 100 (12%)
Sweden:	<u>Best newspaper:</u> Dagens Nyheter (62%), Aftonbladet (16%), Göteborg-posten (12%), Svenska Dagbladet (5%) <u>Best TV channel:</u> SVT (77%), TV4 (14%), Kanal 1 (4%) <u>Best radio channel:</u> SR 69% (P1 33% P3 25%), P4 (16%)
Norway:	<u>Best newspaper:</u> Aftenposten (42%), Dagbladet (17%), VG (13%), Morgenbladet (7%) <u>Best TV channel:</u> NRK (71%), TV2 (27%) <u>Best radio channel:</u> NRK 77% (P1 23% P2 18% P3 18%), P4 (17%)

Percentages in paranthesis = percentages of those who have suggested a newspaper/channel in this country.

Firstly, the answers to the question show that there are very many different role models from country to country and in the Nordic countries as a whole. Most of the role models are mentioned by only one student and the role models mentioned are everyone from Hunter S. Thompson to a Danish sports journalist, to a Finnish cultural journalist etc. This point towards the interpretation that there are almost as many journalistic role models as there are journalism students. However, the survey shows that in each country there are a handful of journalists who are named as a role model by more than one student.

Second, the survey therefore indicates each Nordic country has roles models for a whole generation. Looking at who these role models are, it is evident that it is almost the same type (close to stereo type) of journalist in all the four Nordic countries: The middle aged, experienced, ‘serious’ TV journalist (most often with a background as a correspondent or political reporter although on of the Swedish role models includes a famous interviewer/cultural journalist).

Thirdly, the typical Nordic journalist role model is not only a middle aged, experienced TV journalist, but a special breed of TV journalist: The list of role models in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden includes reporters with different beats – mainly foreign correspondents but also a few political reporters and general reporters – but what they have in common is that they all work with explaining complex issues or interpreting current situations. The finding is interesting as one might have expected to find “the investigative reporter” or the “TV personality” or “the iconic writer at the serious newspaper” on top of the list of role models. But this is the case. The survey clearly points towards a picture of the typical Nordic journalist role model for students being an interpretive/informing TV journalist.

The answers to this one question in the survey can be interpreted in lines of Pierre Bourdieus’ analysis of the power of television (Bourdieu 1998). In this perspective journalism in general has a specific power to consecrate certain people, issues, etc. TV in particular exercises a strong symbolic power of consecration which helps to explain why the Nordic students mention interpreting/informing TV journalists as role models even though their motivations points towards more varied interests in different roles (investigative, writing, etc.) and even though most students dream of working at a national newspaper as their first priority.

5.3 IMPORTANT COMPETENCE AND SKILLS FOR A JOURNALIST

What kind of knowledge, skills and traits that are important qualifications in journalism is a topic scarcely researched internationally (Splichal and Sparks 1994; Deuze 2006). In Norway the issue is also seldom discussed outside the walls of the journalism teaching institutions. As opposed to in countries like the US, Australia and Canada where journalism education in the last decade has regularly been a hot topic also among editors and journalists (Adam 2001; Compton? 2001; Adams and Duffield 2005), Norwegian journalists express little concern about this in the public space. Interviews with Norwegian editors also demonstrate that they have little concrete knowledge of the actual content of the journalism studies. Their preferences for different J-schools appear to be mostly based on “gut feeling” and experiences with trainees (Libell and Vogt 2002).

What constitutes journalistic competence is a vital part of the core of professional values in journalism (Bjørnsen 2003; Deuze 2006). Ideas about competence also reflect ideas about what journalism is about – and for -, both at an analytical and emic descriptive and normative level. The diversity of journalism programs around the world mirrors the diversity of perceptions of journalism’s role in society. At the same time journalism education around the globe becomes more and more similar due to the fact that they all encounter similar challenges in the age of globalization (Deuze 2006). Also for journalism education, the world has become smaller.

So; what are important traits for a good journalist – seen through the eyes of the new Nordic students?

Table 7 Important traits for good journalists. "Very important". Percentages.

	FINLAND		SWEDEN		DENMARK		NORWAY		Fin	Swe	Den	Nor
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total			
N=	35	11	47	15	46	26	101	32	46	62	72	133
Curiosity	75	60	77	70	78	90	95	86	71	76	82	93
A sense of language	88	70	62	50	75	38	85	68	83	59	61	81
Thoroughness	88	30	69	60	67	43	75	79	74	67	58	76
Knowledge of society	78	70	54	40	61	33	84	75	76	51	51	82
A sense of justice	69	50	54	50	39	24	63	39	64	53	33	58
A creative personality	66	40	36	50	33	24	52	39	60	39	30	49
Understand human nature	53	20	38	40	28	52	39	25	45	39	37	36
Efficiency and speed	44	20	31	10	19	10	43	36	38	27	16	42
Compassion	31	20	33	10	8	48	30	18	29	29	23	28
Political neutrality	13	20	15	0	14	10	24	18	14	12	12	23
A certain “cheek”	19	10	8	0	8	43	13	7	17	6	21	12
Broad life experience	22	20	8	20	6	0	16	11	21	10	4	15
A close relation to sources	6	0	8	20	3	5	13	14	5	10	4	13
Knowing “what sells”	3	0	3	0	6	43	8	18	2	2	19	10
A charming personality	9	0	5	0	0	5	14	11	7	4	2	13
Respect for authorities	3	10	3	0	0	0	1	4	5	2	0	2

Curiosity is the trait that gets the highest score among the new students in general, in Denmark and Norway in particular. This is not a surprising in the light of the heroic model of a journalist as an particularly inquisitive individual who sniffs out the good story before anyone else.

When asked which of the list of traits in Table 7 they felt to be most important, curiosity crowns the list. 33% of the Swedish students put this trait as the most important, 45% of the Norwegian, 47% of the Danes but only 10% of the Finns, who rank both “Knowledge of society” and “Understand human nature” higher (the Finns, however are more dispersed in their ranking than students in the other countries). “A sense of language” and “Thoroughness and accuracy” are ranked as number two and three overall. The Norwegian and the Finnish students value language skills most (81-83%) while the Swedes and Danes least (59-61%). This result is in line with Splichal and Sparks’ study of journalism students in 22 countries; here Norway was ranked as number two among all countries in a similar question (Splichal and Sparks 1994).

It may be comforting for society (and the editors, also, we assume) to see that thoroughness is considered to be twice as important (70%) as efficiency (33%) among the next generation of journalists. In the light of the increasingly hectic work situations in the newsrooms – with the Internet as an important factor – this result may even be seen as surprising¹⁴. These attitudes, however, do of course tell us little about how the actual decisions in the dilemmas between thoroughness and speed are handled in the daily life in the newsrooms. The Norwegian and Finnish students seem to value thoroughness most (74-76%), the Danish least (58%).

In general, there appear to be more similarities than extreme variations among the students of the different countries when evaluating journalistic traits. Even so, the national differences are interesting, if complex in their interpretation, as it is hard to know if the students answers are to be taken as indicative of a moral ideal (something the journalist “ought” to have to fulfill his/her role in society) or as an evaluation of the practical importance and regard of these traits in today’s newsrooms. For example, one in five Danish students consider “knowing what sells” as an important trait for a journalist. Do this mean that they (or Danish journalists more generally) have a more economic liberalist ideal of the journalist’s role? Or is it simply that they have more experience with the newsrooms realities (as they have more experience from journalistic work)? They also score the trait “A sense of justice” significantly lower than the other students: Do their answer express a different moral ideal for the journalist (or lack of one), or simply a personal observation that “a sense of justice” is a quality seldom requested by an editor when selecting a journalist to cover a story? The same problems haunt the findings that the Fins value knowledge of society and creativity higher than their fellow students in their neighboring countries, while the Norwegian students in score most traits higher (a sign of insecurity, perhaps?).

When asked an open question about traits, the students list many traits not appearing in our survey, including engagement, joy of storytelling, strong will, brightness, uncompromising, ability to listen, unprejudiced and humble. In these answers – if often contradictory – we might also see elements of other traits that are considered virtues in journalism¹⁵.

An interesting difference between newsrooms and j-schools in this respect is that newsrooms appear to regard (often vague) personal traits, like a “nose for news” as very important – as seen, for example, in job advertisements for journalists, where formal qualities (like a journalism education) are almost never mentioned (Høyer and Ihlen 1998). In J-schools, however, personal traits are as good as never explicitly put on the agenda. Does this reflect that the educators believe that personal traits cannot be learnt? Or that they believe them to be of low importance? Or simply inadmissible?

¹⁴ Results from a longitudinal study of Norwegian journalist students find a similar result, and also that this trend remains stable in the course of the students’ careers. After three years in the newsrooms the Norwegian journalists still believe that thoroughness is as important as they did as students Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen ((forthcoming)).

¹⁵ We are her reminded of the concerned reflections from a journalism educator after having discussed how cynicism and arrogance are treasured in journalism: “*I would want students to be able to say out loud the words “I don't know.” I would want them to imagine working in a newsroom where “I don't know” is the trigger for a story, not a sign that the reporter needs to be transferred to the home-and-garden section.*” Huber-Humes (2007)

5.4 THE JOURNALIST AND SOCIETY: VIEWS ON THE PRESS'S ROLE AND POTENTIAL

OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS SOCIETY

In democratic societies journalists and the media are expected to make an impact on the democratic and political process in the society. But what specifically is expected from the journalist will change from country to country (Weaver and Wu 1998). In an earlier survey of Norwegian journalist students, 'informing about political issues' was on top of the list of options describing obligations towards society. After working for three years as journalists, 90% of the respondents found this 'very important'. Also, 87% considered 'watching over the powerful and revealing abuses of power' very important. These are approximately the same percentages the respondents gave as students (Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen (forthcoming)).

The research issue in this Nordic approach is: Does this strong emphasis on the "watchdog role" have a similar strong standing in the other Nordic countries? If we look at the statement "A defender of individuals affected by injustice", the Norwegian cohort had the highest score with 61% and the Danish cohort had the lowest score with 26%. The Swedish and Finnish cohorts were closer to the Norwegian position with 55% and 38%. If we look at some of the other statements it can be justified to claim that the watchdog-role is weaker within the Danish journalist community than the other Nordic countries. If we turn to the statement "A journalist should regard himself an investigator of the powerful in society" we again see that the Danish student has the lowest score - only 43% "totally agree" with that statement. The Finnish and Swedish have a higher score, with 69% and 70% respectively. In the Norwegian cohort, 58% of the respondents "totally agree".

Table 8 Important tasks for the press in society. Percentage "totally agree".

	FINLAND		SWEDEN		DENMARK		NORWAY		Fin	Swe	Den	Nor
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total			
N=	35	11	47	15	46	26	101	32	46	62	72	133
Bring forwards various opinions	80	44	74	44	68	58	70	43	72	68	64	64
Simplify and explain complicated issues	73	67	71	22	82	74	59	39	72	61	79	54
Facilitate public debate	80	56	74	56	38	16	69	57	74	70	30	66
Investigate the powerful	77	44	66	89	29	68	56	64	69	70	43	58
Give objective information	90	33	71	22	62	26	56	54	77	61	49	55
Stimulate the public to new ideas	83	78	60	44	56	37	64	21	82	57	49	53
A defender of individuals	43	22	57	44	12	53	67	43	38	55	26	61
Criticize injustice	53	56	51	44	18	42	57	57	54	50	26	57
Provide experiences	47	11	43	0	32	32	59	29	38	34	32	52
Contribute to inter-cultural understanding	47	33	51	22	29	16	50	18	44	45	25	42
Be a neutral reporter of happenings	73	44	54	33	44	11	32	14	67	50	32	28
Be free from special interests	50	33	31	11	32	21	15	11	46	27	28	14
One who influence public opinion	20	22	17	0	21	16	32	32	21	14	19	32
Provide recreation	23	11	20	11	21	53	23	14	21	18	32	21
Spokesperson for the local community	43	0	14	11	12	37	25	7	33	14	21	21
One who can educate the public as consumers	37	11	17	33	29	53	14	0	31	20	38	10
Tell the truth regardless of consequences	17	11	23	67	6	21	16	21	15	32	11	17
Mirror common opinions	20	0	20	11	3	0	14	7	15	18	2	12
Ensure that media businesses do well	0	0	3	0	3	37	3	7	0	2	15	4

A hypothesis to explain these differences is that the Danish journalism education to a less extent than the other Nordic countries put emphasis on the journalist's obligation to serve the society. In the Norwegian press system it's a strong ethos linked to journalists obligations to society. It's stated in the ethical charter (<Vær Varsom plakaten>) and in the program for the national trade union (Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen 2007). The Norwegian media researcher Odd Raaum (1999) has underlined that the journalist obligation towards society is a strong historical tradition and that this is very much emphasized in the teaching and the literature at the journalism education.

If we look at comments to the statement: "Journalists should serve as a spokesperson for the local community" the differences are less dramatic. 21% of the Danish respondents "totally agree" to that statement, 33% of the Finns. A possible hypothesis for this is that Finland is arguably the Nordic country which has the most active discussion on the notion of "public journalism" (Ruusunoksa 2006)¹⁶, and that this debate among Finnish journalists is probably reflected in the attitudes among journalist students.

The Norwegian and Swedish students appear to share a high level of social responsibility when respectively 61% and 55% of the students totally agree with statement that it's the task of the journalists to "protect individuals against injustice". Again the Danish students have a different position than their Nordic colleagues; only 26% of the Danish respondents are in total agreement with that statement. Since all these group of questions follow a certain pattern, I think it can be justified in concluding that the differences between the Nordic students suggest a more individualistic journalist role in Denmark. A part of this pattern could also be that the Danish students are the most eager to pursue consumer issues. 38% of the Danish students think it's a task to pursue the audience consumer interest while just 10% of the Norwegian students feel the same way. Here the Finnish and Swedish student are in a middle position, since respectively 31% and 20% support this position. Further research should go deeper into the issue of whether Danish journalism promote a more commercial oriented and less watch dog oriented journalist role.

THREATS TOWARDS JOURNALISM

In the Norwegian survey aforementioned, 90% of the students claimed that 'concentration of ownership' posed a threat, to a 'great extent' or 'some extent', to a 'critical and free press' (Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen (forthcoming)). In the Nordic survey we raised the research question whether there is a common understanding among the Nordic students on what should be regarded as a threat to journalism.

One of the questions posed in the Nordic study was whether it should be regarded as a threat to freedom of the press if "several media companies are owned by the same company". If we combine the categories "great danger" and "some danger", the Finnish students are most concerned. 93% of the Swedish students acknowledge this as a threat while the Norwegian and Finnish students follow closely with respectively 85% and 84%. The Danish students are less worried - 62% consider such concentration of ownership as a threat. Again we see that the Danish students appear less critical to the news industry than their Nordic colleagues.

The Nordic countries share a history with a strong state-controlled public service television and radio (Syvertsen 1997). In the last 25 years, all countries have experienced deregulation and commercial television channels have been established. The strong public service tradition has still a high standing and this is probably

¹⁶ Public journalism – a theme much discussed in US - is that the media should be an arena a meeting place in the local community to discuss and raise issues of common interest to the public. For this debate, see for example Glasser (2007).

the reason why between 55-67% of the respondents in the Nordic countries see “state ownership of media” as a danger against the freedom of the press¹⁷.

Table 9 Perceived threats against a free and critical press. "Great danger" and "Some danger". Percentages.

	FINLAND		SWEDEN		DENMARK		NORWAY		Fin	Swe	Den	Nor
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total			
N=	35	11	47	15	46	26	101	32	46	62	72	133
Political party ownership	83	33	74	78	81	83	89	83	71	75	82	87
Cross-ownership	79	100	94	89	66	56	86	83	84	93	62	85
Investors demand for dividends	90	100	77	67	69	44	89	79	92	75	60	86
Self-censorship by journalists	83	78	81	78	53	83	89	62	82	80	64	82
Journalists lack of knowledge on society	83	56	77	56	75	28	80	69	76	73	58	78
Increasing work tempo	83	89	81	67	53	22	80	76	84	78	42	79
Too much focus on the national capital	69	33	74	56	50	44	82	69	61	70	48	78
Foreign ownership	66	67	58	56	53	39	77	79	66	58	48	78
"Pack mentality" of journalists	59	44	55	67	53	39	79	59	55	58	48	74
State ownership	66	22	52	67	56	61	69	62	55	55	58	67
Advertisement-based media	55	67	58	33	34	33	70	69	58	53	34	70
Weaknesses in the professional ethics	76	33	68	67	50	22	54	52	66	68	40	53
The sources increased journalistic proficiency	52	33	42	22	34	28	52	48	47	38	32	51
The public's need for simplification	55	78	26	33	28	33	52	45	61	28	30	50

These findings express an ambivalence to the issue of state interference in the media market. Countries like Norway and Sweden have historically have had systems of state subsidies for the printed press (Høst 2004). Among journalists in the news industry there is ambivalence to this system of support. The idea of state support to secure and greater differentiation in the press market is controversial. It can be argued that state support strengthen the freedom of the press since it can support newspapers representing different angels and perspectives that wouldn't normally survive in the market. On the other hand it can be argued that state interference in the market in itself is a challenge to press freedom. These potentially different approaches to the issue of state interference might be one explanation for the ambivalence among the respondents.

When we asked about “Media owned by political parties” as a possible threat to freedom of the press, we saw bigger differences between the countries than the question of state ownership. The historical background to this question is interesting. In Sweden and Norway the political parties have been in control of the newspapers to a much greater extent than in Denmark and Finland (Østgaard 1978). Today the parties have lost control over the press in all the Nordic countries. Since the journalism students have grown up a long time after the party press system was removed, the historical differences mentioned above seem to play little or no role. The Norwegian students seem to be most critical towards the party press: 87% say that party press pose a “great” or “some” danger to freedom of the press. In Sweden - which had almost as strong party press as Norway - the figure was lower, 75%. In Denmark which had a weak party press tradition the figures were 82%. We can only speculate why the differences are that big. Perhaps this is because in the public debate in Norway the

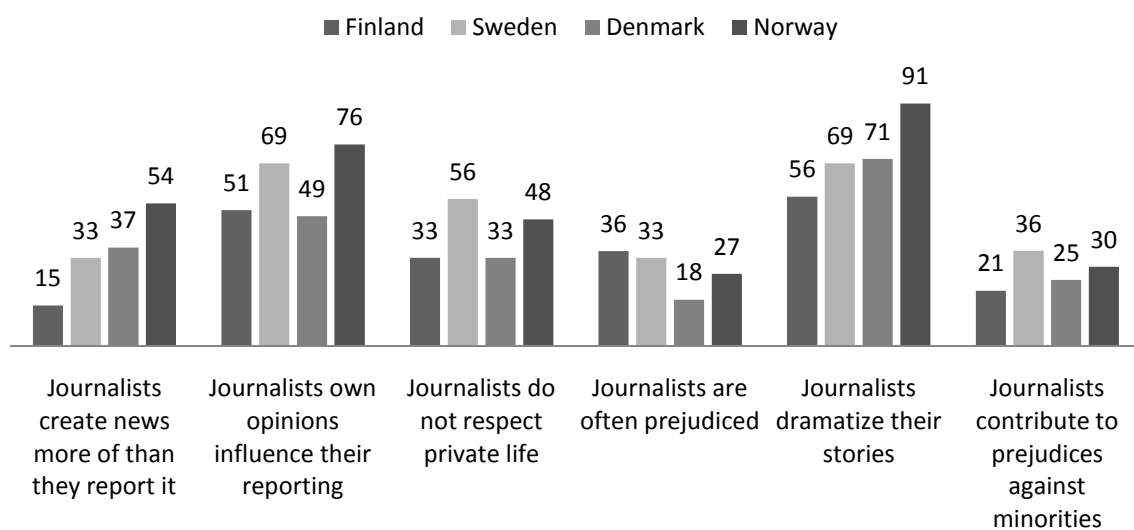
¹⁷ A similar question was used in the Slavko Splichal and Colin Sparks' survey among journalism students in 22 countries, published in 1994. Here respondents from a former totalitarian state like Bulgaria answered quite differently than the Norwegian and Finnish students. While the Bulgarian students probably identified this question with the period of state-controlled totalitarian regime and saw state ownership as a threat, the Finnish and Norwegian students then as now to a much smaller extent saw state controlled media as threat to freedom of the press Splichal and Sparks (1994:83-83).

transition from the party controlled to a market driven press is usually framed as “liberation” from parties (Eide 2001)?

5.5 THE STUDENT AND THE JOURNALIST

Also interesting to note is that the students appear to give somewhat different evaluations of the journalistic profession. In general, the Norwegian students (and to some lesser extent the Swedes) are most likely to agree to critical judgments on the journalistic profession, the Danish least, which may be explained by that more of the Danish students have experience of journalistic work and therefore identify stronger with the profession.

Figure 4 Agreement (total or somewhat) to negative judgments on the journalistic profession. Percentages.



6. NORDIC DIFFERENCES? A MULTIVARIATE APPROACH.

An analytic problem with the discussions so far is that they focus on the apparent differences in the attitudes of the Nordic students, but tell us little of the underlying causes for these opinions. As the Nordic students differ on many important criteria which we would believe are important in determining their basic journalistic preferences – for example gender and if they have previous experience of journalism or not. This make it difficult to say to what degree a difference in – for example - the ideal of “watch dog” are indeed related to different national and journalistic traditions internalized by the students, or if it is more an “effect” of internalized values from previous working experience of journalism, an experience which is very differently distributed among the students from different countries.

To control our previous findings, we include here a series of multiple logistic regressions on selected answers from the students (Table 10), where we try to separate the “effect” of country from various background differences (predictors)¹⁸. In each case, the preferences of the students are coded into a yes/no question (ex.

¹⁸ For readers not well acquainted with quantitative methodology: logistic regression is a statistic technique where one try to determine whether each of a set of independent variables has a unique predictive relationship to a dichotomous dependent variable. The independent variables may be dichotomous, polytomous, or interval in their level of measurement. The basic difference between linear and logistic regression is that the later technique is better suited for the treatment of categorical data, and lacks many of the strict linear restrictions and assumptions in linear regression.

“Have a magazine as their first choice for future workplace” or think that “Doing creative work” is very important for them), and then tested against a model listing of various possible influences, including a) country, b) gender, c) age, d) previous paid journalistic experience, e) previous higher education, f) if father or mother have journalistic experience, and if g) father has completed some form of higher education. All variables are coded 1 for yes and 0 for no, except for age which are coded in jumps of three years per unit (20-22, 23-25 etc.). Because of the relative small size of the sample, we have chosen a simple model with relatively few predictors.

Even if our specified model pass the basic criteria of explaining the differences observed in all regressions enclosed in the table (satisfying Hosmer and Lemeshow's Goodness of Fit Test at a 95% level of significance), the general ability of the model to accurately predict the responses are satisfactory in most cases¹⁹, even if our model could still be improved. In this case, however, we are satisfied with using the results to control for the importance of the included factors.

¹⁹ An example of the postestimation classification tables shows that the model correctly “guessed” the correct yes/no answer to preferred future work place 63% of the cases for Newspaper, 77% for Television, 92% for Radio 92% and 86% for Magazine 86%.

Table 10 Multiple logistic regression table. Odds ratios (individual z-coefficients in paranthesis).

	FINLAND	SWEDEN	DENMARK	NORWAY	Female	Age3 (yrs)	Prev. paid jou. exp	Higher education	Father or Mother jou. exp.	Father higher education	Goodness-of -Fit (H-L)
If working as a journalist in the future, would want to work in... (1st choice)											
Newspaper	2,7*	1,2	3,3**	1,3	0,6*	1,0	2,1**	0,8	2,1	1,1	0,64
z	(2,2)	(0,5)	(2,8)	(0,7)	(-2,1)	(0,1)	(2,8)	(-0,8)	(1,5)	(0,5)	
Television	0,1**	0,5	0,5	0,9	2,4*	1,0	1,0	0,9	0,6	0,8	0,32
z	(-2,7)	(-1,6)	(-1,3)	(-0,2)	(2,5)	(0,3)	(0,1)	(-0,3)	(-0,9)	(-0,6)	
Magazine	0,4	5,6**	a	2,1	3,1*	1,0	0,4	1,3	a	0,7	0,62
z	(-0,8)	(2,9)		(1,2)	(1,9)	(-0,2)	(-1,8)	(0,6)		(-0,9)	
Important reasons for wanting to be a journalist ("very important")											
Participate publ. debate	0,9	0,6	0,3*	1,1	2,3**	1,0	1,2	1,5	1,0	2,2**	0,16
z	(-0,3)	(-1,4)	(-2,5)	(0,3)	(2,9)	(-0,1)	(0,8)	(1,4)	(-0,1)	(2,9)	
A job with freedom and independence	0,4	0,6	0,4*	0,9	1,5	1,0	1,4	0,9	1,1	1,0	0,09
z	(-1,9)	(-1,2)	(-2,1)	(-0,4)	(1,6)	(1,1)	(1,2)	(-0,6)	(0,1)	(-0,1)	
Do creative work	1,3	0,5	0,3**	1,1	1,9**	1,0	0,9	1,6	0,8	0,8	0,37
z	(0,5)	(-1,6)	(-3,1)	(0,2)	(2,2)	(0,0)	(-0,3)	(1,7)	(-0,4)	(-0,9)	
Investigate the powerful	1,2	1,0	0,8	1,7	0,5*	1,0	1,0	1,7*	0,9	1,0	0,25
z	(0,3)	(0,0)	(-0,5)	(1,4)	(-2,1)	(-0,9)	(-0,1)	(2,0)	(-0,2)	(0,0)	
Journalistic topics interested to work with ("very interested")											
Society/political news	1,4	1,1	3,1**	2,0	0,9	1,0	0,8	1,3	0,8	1,2	0,29
z	(0,7)	(0,2)	(2,8)	(2,0)	(-0,4)	(0,4)	(-0,9)	(1,0)	(-0,5)	(0,8)	
Entertainment	0,1**	0,2**	0,2**	0,5*	1,2	1,0	1,4	0,6	1,4	0,7	0,39
z	(-4,2)	(-3,3)	(-3,7)	(-2,1)	(0,6)	(-1,3)	(1,1)	(-1,7)	(0,6)	(-1,1)	
Culture	0,5	0,7	0,4*	0,9	1,4	1,0	1,1	0,7	1,4	1,1	0,48
z	(-1,8)	(-1,1)	(-2,1)	(-0,4)	(1,2)	(0,6)	(0,3)	(-1,2)	(0,6)	(0,3)	
Consumer topics	0,3	0,2*	1,2	0,2*	1,2	1,0	2,7*	2,0	0,6	0,6	0,15
z	(-1,8)	(-2,5)	(0,4)	(-3,3)	(0,5)	(0,2)	(2,7)	(1,8)	(-0,7)	(-1,6)	
Sport	0,2	0,9	2,2	1,6	0,3**	0,8**	1,4	0,7	0,8	0,7	0,44
z	(-1,9)	(-0,1)	(1,5)	(1,0)	(-3,8)	(-2,5)	(1,1)	(-1,0)	(-0,4)	(-1,2)	
Traits and qualities that are seen as important for a good journalist ("very important")											
A sense of justice	1,2	0,7	0,4*	1,2	2,0*	1,0	1,0	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,18
z	(0,5)	(-1,0)	(-2,2)	(0,4)	(2,5)	(-0,8)	(0,0)	(-0,8)	(-0,3)	(-0,3)	
A creative personality	1,1	0,4*	0,3**	0,7	1,6	1,1	0,9	1,0	0,8	1,0	0,14
z	(0,1)	(-2,4)	(-3,2)	(-1,0)	(1,6)	(1,6)	(-0,3)	(-0,2)	(-0,4)	(0,1)	
Efficiency and speed	0,3**	0,2**	0,1**	0,4*	2,0*	0,9	1,9*	1,3	3,2*	0,5*	0,14
z	(-2,7)	(-3,8)	(-4,0)	(-2,5)	(2,2)	(-1,5)	(2,3)	(1,0)	(2,2)	(-2,4)	
Knowledge of society	1,0	0,3	0,4	1,5	1,8	1,0	1,0	1,3	2,1	1,4	0,16
z	(0,1)	(-2,6)	(-2,5)	(1,1)	(2,0)	(-0,8)	(-0,1)	(0,8)	(1,1)	(1,2)	
The role of journalism in society are to be ("totally agree")											
Critic of injustice	1,1	0,8	0,3**	1,3	0,9	1,0	0,8	1,4	1,3	0,9	0,07
z	(0,3)	(-0,5)	(-2,7)	(0,8)	(-0,4)	(0,1)	(-0,8)	(1,4)	(0,5)	(-0,5)	
Investigate the powerful	4,2**	4,0**	1,2	2,2*	0,9	1,0	1,5	1,3	1,6	1,2	0,32
z	(3,2)	(3,3)	(0,4)	(2,2)	(-0,5)	(-0,5)	(1,6)	(1,1)	(0,9)	(0,6)	
A neutral reporter of happenings	1,5	0,7	0,4*	0,4**	4,4**	1,0	0,9	0,5*	1,8	0,9	0,14
z	(1,0)	(-0,7)	(-2,0)	(-2,8)	(4,4)	(-0,5)	(-0,2)	(-2,4)	(1,1)	(-0,3)	
Mirror common opinions in society	0,3*	0,4	0,0**	0,3**	2,4*	1,1	1,3	0,5	1,5	2,4*	0,34
z	(-2,3)	(-1,6)	(-3,4)	(-3,1)	(2,0)	(1,2)	(0,8)	(-1,8)	(0,6)	(2,3)	
Faciliate public debate	3,4**	2,0	0,5	2,0	2,4**	1,0	0,9	1,2	1,2	1,4	0,17
z	(2,6)	(1,7)	(-1,9)	(1,9)	(3,1)	(-0,3)	(-0,5)	(0,5)	(0,3)	(1,3)	
The following developments are a threat to a free and critical press in my country ("great danger")											
Foreign ownership	0,5	0,6	0,3	1,0	0,9	1,0	0,8	1,0	0,2	1,1	0,73
z	(-1,2)	(-1,1)	(-2,0)	(0,0)	(-0,3)	(1,0)	(-0,8)	(0,1)	(-1,3)	(0,4)	
Advertisement-based media	1,5	0,8	0,6	1,6	1,6	1,0	0,7	1,0	2,1	0,9	0,76
z	(0,8)	(-0,5)	(-1,0)	(1,1)	(1,2)	(-0,1)	(-1,1)	(-0,1)	(1,4)	(-0,4)	
Party ownership	0,9	0,9	1,3	1,6	1,8*	1,0	1,1	0,9	0,7	1,2	0,12
z	(-0,3)	(-0,2)	(0,7)	(1,3)	(2,1)	(0,3)	(0,3)	(-0,6)	(-0,8)	(0,7)	
State ownership	1,1	1,2	1,1	1,4	1,1	1,0	1,2	0,7	0,9	0,7	0,75
z	(0,2)	(0,3)	(0,1)	(0,8)	(0,3)	(0,6)	(0,5)	(-1,3)	(-0,2)	(-1,1)	

NOTES ON THE LOGISTIC REGRESSION TABLE

The odds ratios in the table give the odds of event A to be true if event B is true (when controlling for all the variables in the model). A practical example: The singular odds (not included in the table) of a Finnish student to have a newspaper as his/hers primary career goal is 1,5 (25 yes, 17 no), for a Swedish student the same odds are 0,6 (19 yes, 34 no). This gives an odds ratio (which is a measure their relative difference) of $1,5/0,6=2,5$, meaning that a Finnish student is almost three times more likely than a Swede to want to work in a newspaper. We cannot, however, be sure if this difference is mainly related to national differences, or if it is related to differences in the distribution of other properties (it may for example be that this wish is mainly an effect of age, and the Finnish students are on average somewhat younger than the Swedes). To reduce (but far from abolish) the problem of spurious effects – that is, that we postulate as a national difference what in reality is related mainly to another variable – we have introduced into the model some control variables (predictors): age, gender, previous experience (higher education, paid experience as a journalist) and social background (having a father or mother with journalistic experience, having a father with higher education). By controlling for their influence through multiple logistic regression, we find that the Finnish students odds of choosing a newspaper is now 2,7 and the Swedes 1,2, giving a odds ratio of 2,3 – a slight reduction, but still a marked difference. In addition, we can see that gender and having previous journalistic experience are important factors for this choice (females are less interested in newspapers, and students are twice as likely to want to work in a newspaper if they have some previous paid experience than those with no such experience).

The included Hosmer and Lemeshow's Goodness of Fit Test tests the null hypothesis that the data were generated by the model. If $\geq 0,05$, the test suggests that the model's estimates fit the data at an acceptable level – the larger, the better. All regressions presented here satisfy this basic criterion (even if the pseudo R^2 -statistic indicates that the underlying model is often not very good).

The z-values are the individual logistic regression coefficients, and can be interpreted by a roughly similar logic as standardized beta-coefficients in linear regression, as suggesting the relative strength and direction of a predictor on the predicted variable. The Wald statistic is used to test each coefficient for significance against the null hypothesis that the effect of this predictor is zero. Odds ratios where $p > |z|$ are below 0.05 are marked with one asterisk, two asterisks if below 0.01.

(a) In this case, the odds for the categories marked with an (a) was dropped by the analysis because $\text{cat}=0$ predicts failure perfectly. In this case, no Danish students or students with a father/mother journalist wished to work in a magazine, making the odds infinite and incalculable.

The results of the regressions support several conclusions.

The first is that the differences in student's aspirations and opinions on journalism are in many cases related to their particular social background and experience.

Having *previous work experience in journalism* is related to much higher interest in working for a newspaper than a magazine, and go – not unexpectedly – together with many signs of identifying with the profession and its day-to-day demands: they are more often interested in working with consumer topics, sport and entertainment, they value speed and efficiency higher as important qualities in journalists, and they identify more with the role of journalists as adversaries and critics of the powerful in society. Except for a stronger interest in sport, the *age* of the respondents contribute little to the students' preferences.

Having previously completed *higher education* is associated with an even stronger ideals of the journalist as a critic of injustice and the powerful (and low regard for the ideal of neutral reporting), and a preference of society/political news over entertainment and sport (but interestingly, they have higher chances of being interested in working with consumer topics and in magazines). They also value creative ideals higher, and feel more commitment to participate in public debate.

Having a father or mother with journalistic experience means that one is has a much higher chance of wanting to work in a newspaper, identify stronger with the ideals of critical investigator, but are less skeptical to advertisement-based publications and value efficiency and speed higher. Having *a father with higher education* in contrast, are significantly associated with a stronger interest in participate in public debate, the obligation to give place to the varied opinions in society and less regard for the demands for efficiency and speed in journalism.

Being *female* are not only related to very different interests in journalistic topics than for males (as discussed in 5.2) and less interest in working for a newspaper. They also signal stronger creative ideals, but have less taste for investigating journalism and are strongly in favor of neutrality (but feel "a sense of justice" is important). They are also committed to public debate both as participants and facilitators. They are also less critical of state ownership.

No doubt, in this list of associations we see clearly the importance of traditional sociological explanations of behavior for understanding journalistic preferences and ambitions. For example, the choice of preferred topics are strongly gendered and appear as the sexual division of labor (Durkheim 1997) sublimated into journalistic preferences. In a similar way, the link between having an educated father – here interpreted as a very general indicator for inherited social capital in Bourdieus sense, that is, for an elevated position in the class system (Bourdieu 1984)- and the aspiration to participate in public debate is altogether not very surprising²⁰.

The second conclusion, however, is that when we control for the students backgrounds and previous experience, the differences between the various countries are still very large, and often much greater than the previous variables. Even if we must beware of confusing statistical strength with analytical importance, the analysis appear to support the importance of “nation type”-effects, that is, the importance for the different national traditions for explaining the differences found.

As we can see from the table, the differences we have identified earlier between the countries in generally reappear in the table, supporting our focus on explaining these in light of national differences.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the end, then, our comparison of the answers of the new Nordic students of journalism in fall 2005 seems to support one’s perspective of preference; there are marked national differences on most variables, but within a general pattern of similarity. Overall, the Norwegian and Finnish students appear to be closest in their preferences, whereas the Danish students differ most from the Nordic norm.

One path for further research could be to study if and how differences of national journalistic traditions and modern media structures can explain these differences. For this purpose, comparison with other, similar projects would no doubt be illuminating.

At this stage, however, we have more questions than answers.

²⁰ Confer Bourdieu (2000:165-167).

FINLAND

The Civic College (Yhteiskunnallinen korkeakoulu) in Helsinki started teaching journalism in 1925 with scarce personal resources and limited practical facilities. The studies consisted of traditional academic courses about society; economics, politics and history, and very basic knowledge about newspapers and book printing. A professorship was founded in 1947, the first professor was Eino Suova. In 1960 the school moved to Tampere and became the University of Tampere. For decades the university offered both a more academic curricula and a more practically oriented journalism education. Today they are combined to one academic programme, offering a bachelor and a master programme.

The Swedish journalism education in Finland started in 1963 in Helsinki. The first full-year course started in 1966 and gradually the programme was prolonged to 2 and later 3,5 years. Today the Swedish School of Social Science is part of the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Helsinki, and offers exams on bachelor and master level.

A third major programme for journalism was founded in Jyväskylä 1986, within the Faculty of Humanities, whereas the earlier programmes were part of the Faculties of Political Science²¹.

SWEDEN

The first initiative for a journalism education was taken by Valdemar Langlet in 1907, but it took several decades before it could be realized due to firm opposition within the press. Editors argued that journalism could not be taught. Private schools were founded in 1939 and 1947, and the University of Gothenburg offered one term of academic courses for future journalists in 1938, and again from 1946 on a continuous basis.

In the fifties several courses for journalists were arranged in Stockholm. From 1959 the Journalist Institute offered one-year courses. A state-founded two-year journalism education was started in Stockholm and Gothenburg in 1962. In 1977 the Journalism Schools were integrated with the universities in the two cities.

Later new programmes have started in Kalmar, Lund, Sundsvall, Södertörn and Umeå.

DENMARK

A journalism course of 3 months was started in 1946 at the University of Aarhus, supported by the press organizations in Denmark. The Danish School of Journalism, DJH, was founded in 1962. Denmark differs from the other countries in many ways, the contacts with the field have been close, and the recruitment to the occupation has been more controlled than in the other countries. Since the 70's the programme has consisted of four years, including an internship period of 1,5 years. The affiliation with the university level has come later than in the rest of Scandinavia. For a very long period the only education for journalists was the one in Aarhus, but in 1998 new programmes started in Roskilde University Centre, and the Syddansk Universitet in Odense. They mix practical modules with academic studies.²²

²¹ For further reading, see Salokangas (2003).

²² See also Holm (ibid.).

NORWAY

Norwegian journalist education started as a private institution founded by the press associations in 1951. The first state owned journalism education was founded in 1965 as one year programme under the name of Norwegian School of journalism (now Oslo University College). It became a two year programme from 1971. The second J-school was established in the small coastal town Volda in 1971 after a lot of discussion about both the content and the placement of the school (ALME, VESTAD AND SANDE 1997). Journalism is one of the most popular study programs in Norway.

In 1987, the coastal towns of Bodø and Stavanger followed suit. From the autumn of 2006 University in Bergen started its own journalism program. Today there are five government J-schools in Norway, including one for the indigenous Sami people, recruiting Finnish and Swedish students as well. All the state owned institutions have the recent years established three year bachelor programs according to the Bologna model. In the latest years several private journalism programs have also been established, among them the Christian institution Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication in Kristiansand and BI- Norwegian School of Management. Oslo University College offers a two years master program in journalism in corporation with Institute for Media and Communication at Oslo University.

ICELAND

Started a one-year programme in the XXs. Before that students from Iceland took part in the education in other Nordic countries. Today University of Iceland offers a two-year masters program in journalism and a bachelor in media studies.

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