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I wish to express my thanks for the opportunity to address this panel. It is a great honor for our institution to host this Nordmedia conference. As the oldest journalism program in Norway, preparing for our 50th anniversary in 2015, Nordic cooperation has been a cornerstone in our activity from the very beginning.

There is a great deal of talk about internationalization these days, and today our department has a global and international profile. But in the early period of our educational history, “internationalization” in all practical terms meant Nordic cooperation. The first rector of our school, Jon Dørsjø, was a huge fan of the grand old man of Swedish journalism education, Lars Furhoff. I remember from my own days as a student in the journalism program from 1971-73 how Dørsjø referred to Furhoff’s methods for journalism training and his research (Furhoff 1986). I also remember how we visited the journalism school in Århus for inspiration. It made a lasting impression on us visiting Norwegians when one of the lecturers in the class we attended had a bottle of Tuborg beer on his table. The cultural differences were apparent, and we were fascinated about exploring these differences as they appeared in media culture and social life.

Another sign of an early Nordic spirit from my student days was the quota the program had of one student from Iceland each year, because Iceland didn’t have a journalism education of its own at the time. In my class, Sigrun Steffansdottir was the Icelandic representative; she later became a key figure in Iceland’s radio and television news as well as the Director of the Nordic Journalist Centre in Århus. There you have another successful Nordic arena. Throughout the years, hundreds of journalists from all of the Nordic countries have attended courses at the Nordic Journalist Centre, exchanging experiences and ideas in the true Nordic spirit. Unfortunately, the Nordic Council has threatened to stop the funding the Centre after 2013.

The early days of journalism education in Oslo were oriented toward practical work. When we needed input on research methods, we visited the Institute for Press research at University of Oslo (one of the predecessors of the Department of Media and Communication (IMK)), where Svennik Høyer gave us a basic introduction to using statistical methods in press research. Svennik is participating at this conference, and he was one of the key persons both in creating Nordicom as a body and as one of the organizers of the first Nordic conference we are celebrating today. It should, of course, also be mentioned that Kaarle Nordenstreng, on this panel, was one of the founding fathers of the conference. These veterans are still going strong and they and the other participants at Voksenåsen in 1973 deserve a big thanks for starting the wonderful journey of Nordic cooperation in media research.

The Nordic conferences have always been a great inspiration for me, ever since I began attending them regularly in the 1980s. Another great resource for Nordic inspiration has been the biannual meeting for Nordic teachers in the journalism programs.

The Significance of Nordicom

Nordicom is the glue of Nordic cooperation. Nordicom is both a knowledge center with an impressive database, and a collector of Nordic media statistics that are available for the research community and a broader public. To understand Nordicom and the Nordic cooperation, you also have to understand Nordicom as a link to the global media researcher community. Here, Ulla Carlsson has been a key person in her role as head of Nordicom. Ulla has been essential as a publisher, academic and a globalist in the true sense of the word. Among many of the activities she has been responsible for creating and coordinating is the “The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media”. When Ulla turned 60, a book was published to honor her and her achievements. I had the privilege, together with Stig A. Nohrstedt, of writing about her contributions to the research field of international news flow and the north-south gap, including the struggle within UNESCO for a new information order (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2012). Working on behalf of Nordicom, Ulla Carlsson has been active in other UNESCO efforts related to freedom of expression, both through conferences and publications.

Not only Ulla but the entire competent staff at Nordicom continuously produce quality publications. The *Nordicom Review* and *Nordicom Information* and book series are vital channels for scientific publications. The Nordic audience is obvious, but many are perhaps not aware of the fact that *Nordicom Review* has 2200 subscribers just for the printed version, and that is many more than many international journals have. The distribution is global, with 1500 subscribers outside the Nordic region (Nordicom 2013). I know from my own experience as a Nordicom author that when your article is published in a Nordicom publication, it will reach a global audience. Reading Nordicom’s publications gives a solid impression of the broad scope of scientific topics dealt with in a Nordic and global perspective. The topics include mediatization of political scandals, climate and the media, religion and the media, public service broadcasting, media and football fan culture, media innovation – just to give a few examples. And I am proud to see many of my colleagues here at Oslo and Akershus University College as both editors and contributors.

I have been challenged to use examples from my own work and Nordicom publications and to address critically the question of whether a Nordic perspective is really of value. My most obvious example is my cooperation with Stig A. Nohrstedt on the issue of war and the media. Through three books and a fourth that is forthcoming, we have compared the coverage in wars like the Gulf War, the war in former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya using cooperative research perspectives from the Nordic countries as well as other countries around the globe (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2001, 2004, 2005, 2014 (forthcoming)). The findings from these studies suggest a close correlation between the security policy orientations of the different Nordic countries and the war reporting in the mainstream media. To take one example: During the Gulf War in 1991, the media in the formally neutral Sweden had a more distanced and critical coverage of the US-led warfare than did the NATO-allied Norway. Since then, Sweden has tied close bonds to

the US and NATO in the so-called global war on terror, with troops in Afghanistan and support functions in the bombing of Libya in 2011. We see a tendency in which these changes are resulting in a more common framing in the Swedish and Norwegian media, although some national differences still remain (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2012).

I will also mention the Nordic surveys among journalism students, organized by Jan Fredrik Hovden at the University of Bergen through a project launched at the Nordic conference for journalism teachers in Hovdabrekka on Iceland in 2004. The original survey was among journalism students in Oslo and Volda, organized by Hovden, Gunn Bjørnsen and myself (Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen 2007). Later this was expanded to surveys of students in the major Nordic journalism programs in 2005, 2008 and 2012 – the 2012 survey also including Iceland, which did not take part in the first two series (Hovden et al. 2009). The surveys offer a huge amount of data that reveal common Nordic values among journalism students, but also significant national differences, documented in several articles in *Nordicom Information* and *Nordicom Review*. Some of the most recent data from the latest survey will be presented here at the conference in a paper by Jan Fredrik Hovden and myself (Hovden and Ottosen 2013).

I finally wish to draw attention to the Nordic cooperation on the issue of press history. In this field, we also find a rich history in Nordic cooperation. As president of the Norwegian Association of Press History, I had the pleasure of organizing a Nordic conference on the rise and fall of the party press in a Nordic comparative perspective, together with my Swedish counterpart Lars-Åke Engblom and the director of the Danish Press Museum, Ervin Nielsen, in Odense in November 2012. Again, we find an interesting pattern with a common basic development in the relation between the political parties and the press, but with many fascinating national variations. The summary of the conference is presented in an excellent essay in *Nordicom Information* by one of the authorities in Nordic media research: Lennart Weibull (Weibull 2013).

Nordic media research, with Nordicom as its common ground, has existed for 40 years. It is still thriving, and this great audience is a living example of it.

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