Exam MEVIT 4319 – Autumn 2020

Exam question

Some readings for this class describe the stability of Nordic media policy and practice in the face of novel trends and challenges related to globalization, changing media funding models, misinformation, populism, digital media, and lowering levels of political engagement. For example, the conclusion of Skogerbø et al. (forthcoming) argues for the resilience of Nordic political communication systems, while Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe (2018) argue for the continuity of the Nordic media welfare state.

Choose one of these two readings and evaluate its claims of stability and continuity in light of how other readings describe the types of novel trends and challenges mentioned above.

In particular, discuss the role played by political and cultural factors that have been discussed throughout class readings, and make an argument grounded in the class readings about whether these dynamics are distinct to Nordic countries.

Evaluation

Evaluation Guidelines

The exam assignment is formulated as an open question, encouraging students to identify appropriate references from the class syllabus. To help evaluate whether responses make broad and appropriate reference to the readings, specific concepts and arguments are listed below.

Stability Claims

- Dynamics of Nordic resilience (Nord, Skogerbø, Kristensen, & Ihlen, n.d.)
- Dynamics of continuity and adaptation in Nordic media policy and practice (Syvertsen et al., 2018)

In addition to the two claims of stability identified in the exam question, responses may also reference

- Knutsen's argument regarding the viability of Nordic models of politics (Knutsen, 2017)
- individual studies that describe changes to political communication practice and imply stability, including the Routledge Companion chapters on Twitter in Swedish elections, Facebook in Danish elections, and the article on Norwegian local political campaigns (Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2015).

Trends and Challenges

The class syllabus makes ample reference to numerous novel trends and challenges. A strong exam response would at least address the following (not listed in any particular order).

1. Globalization and media convergence
2. Changing media funding models
3. Populism
4. New media practices and re-ordering of political communication power (hybridity)
5. Flagging political participation and engagement
6. Misinformation and distrust

Key cultural and political factors

There are numerous cultural and political factors described in the syllabus, including:

- Aspects of the Nordic model of consensual policy making, including collaboration across different sectors and collaborative local governance (Knutsen chapters 2,4, 8, 9)
- High public trust, social cohesion and inherent peacefulness (Knutsen chpts 3 & 4, other readings)
- Nordic knowledge regimes and gender equity models (Knutsen chpts 10 and 5)
- Inclusion and diversity (Nord et al., n.d.; Skogerbø et al., 2019, also Knutsen chapter 5 on gender equality)
- Nordic media policy as described by Syvertsn (2018) and Ohlsen (2015), with particular emphasis on the role of public broadcasters and the the universality of services.
- Localism as a deep structure of Norwegian society (Skogerbø, 2020)

Evaluation criteria

Exam responses will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Rough % weight
Clearly responds to assignment	20
University-level writing and argumentation	20
Appropriate reference to syllabus	20
Demonstrates clear understanding of the theories, concepts, and arguments in the syllabus (cf: learning goals)	40

The learning goals for the course are:

1. develop an understanding of the key characteristics of Nordic political communication, and how the region relates to the international landscape in terms of political history and media history.
2. be able to critically discuss and analyse the characteristics of Nordic political communication in a hybrid media landscape and an international comparative context.
3. learn to analyse and critically examine the idea of a Nordic Model that stands out in relation to international overarching trends.

Evaluation of the final to criteria in this table should be made in accordance with the University's guidelines for evaluation scales,[1] such that:

A **failing (F) response** will not present a clear or defensible argument and will fail to reference appropriate literature from the syllabus,.

To qualify as a **sufficient (E) response**, papers must

- make an understandable argument that
- demonstrates understanding of the stability claim they choose to evaluate, and

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[1] See https://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/grades/

- reference at least some of the trends/challenges and cultural/political factors described above.

To qualify as a **satisfactory (D) or good (C) response**, papers must

- present a structured argument, with understandable citation practices, and
- *describe a relationship* between some of the trends/challenges and cultural/political factors described above.

To qualify as a **very good (B) response**, papers must

- present a well-organized argument, with clear citation practices
- compare and contrast different notions of stability and models of Nordic political communication, comparing their strengths and weaknesses as well as tensions between them;
- discuss the key cultural and political factors described above, and draw links between them, such as the social cleavages described in Knutsen chpt 2 and contemporary developments in political parallelism or populism; and
- use both theory and empirical evidence from the syllabus to argue for why Nordic countries are different than other countries (or why they are not)

To qualify as an **excellent (A) response**, papers must fulfill the criteria above, and in addition must:

- organize their paper with clear development of ideas and arguments through distinct paragraphs and sections, using consistent and appropriate citation formats;
- reference most of the trends/challenges and cultural/political factors described above, as well as others from the syllabus or from outside the syllabus;
- present analytical tools and conceptual frameworks from the syllabus that are not suggested by the question, such as
    - the characteristics of different types of models described in the introduction to Knudsen (2017),
    - Chadwick's notion of hybrid media systems (Routledge Companion Chpt 1)
    - Klinger and Svensson's understanding of media and network logics (Routledge Companion Chpt 2);
    - Conceptual distinctions between localized and personalized media campaigns (Karlsen & Skogerbø, 2015)
    - Media systems frameworks advanced by Hallin and Mancini (in Ohlsson, 2015)
    - The effect of hybrid media systems on local political communication (Lindén, Morlandstø, & Nygren, 2020)

Background

Teaching and seminars

The course has provided seven lectures with the following topics:

1. Introduction to Nordic political communication; lecture; presentations, group work, introduction of qualification assignment
2. The Nordic model(s)
3. Electoral systems, party systems, and election campaigns
4. The Media Welfare state
5. Local media, local government & minority media in the Nordic countries
6. Hybrid and changing Nordic media

7. Concluding session; Q&A

Lectures have been structured to deliver summaries of key readings, with an emphasis on identifying connections between concepts and theories in different parts of the syllabus.

Lectures have been immediately followed by seminars in which students delivered presentations as a qualifying activity. Each student delivered one presentation, commented on one presentation and facilitated a class discussion on one presentation in order to qualify for this exam. Students were asked to upload the notes and slides from their presentations to canvas for review by other students. Presentations addressed the following topics.

1. How are notions of nordic gender equality influenced by different types of gender data. Does this challenge any of your preconceptions about Nordic gender equality? Why or why not?
2. How do notions center and periphery inform our understanding of Nordic nation-building. How is this different than how notions of center and periphery are used in current Nordic political debates? Is it relevant?
3. "Chapter 2 describes the emergence of Radical Right parties in several countries. Does the emergence of these parties strengthen or weaken the notion of a Nordic model as described in the Knutsen book? Should the emergence of Radical Right parties be described as a deviation from the 5 party model?
4. The Routledge Companion chapters for this week's readings present 3 different examples of how social media is used in electoral campaigns. Based on these three examples, how does social media change election campaign processes?
5. Syvertsen et al. close by describing a "crisis discourse". How is this "discourse" reflected in chapter 2's discussion of Nordic media use. Are there examples in the Syvertsen book that undermine the notion of a "crisis discourse"?
6. Syvertsen et al. define the Nordic Media welfare state according to 4 pillars. How are these pillars different than the four aspects of Hallin and Mancini's model by which Ohlssen defines tests the existence of a common Nordic Media Market? How do you think these differences affect the concepts of a Nordic Media Welfare State and a Nordic Media Market?
7. Chapter 8 in Knutsen suggests three criteria for assessing local government systems. How have Nordic local governments performed according to each of these criteria? Based on Skogerbø (2020), do you think that local media have contributed to these dynamics in Norway? How?
8. Skogerbø et al (2019) describe an important role for public broadcasters in shaping indigeneous media in Norway and Sweden. How does this challenge or reinforce the nortions of the the Nordic Media Welfare State proposed by Syvertsen et al.?
9. Chpt 19 (the conclusion) in Skogerbø et al (forthcoming) suggests that societal resilience and "stable, trusted institutions" might be one reason why political communication systems have been resilient in the Nordics. Chapt 12 on the other hand suggests that the nordic consensual style of democracy might be particularly viulnerable to populism. Present these positions and discuss whether you think there is a tension between them?

10. Chapter 2 in the Routledge Companion describes the differences between mass and networked media logics according to production, distribution and use. Which aspects of this resonate most strongly with local media dynamics in Norway as described in Skogerbø et al (forthcoming), chpt 8 (Local political communication in a hybrid media system)?

11. Which of the Nordic case studies in the readings (Facebook in Denmark, Twitter in Sweden, Local campaigning in Norway, agenda setting in multiple countries, authenticity in Norway, indigenous media in Norway) best exemplify Chadwick's theory of hybrid media systems in Chpt 1 of the Routledge Companion?

12. Compare timelines for the three waves of populism (Skogerbø et al., forthcoming, chpt 12s), the stages of the media welfare state (Syvertsen et al., 2017), and the history of local media in Norway (Skogerbø, 2020). What commonalities do these have? Do you see ways in which they might be related?

13. Identify which readings argue that it makes sense to talk about some kind of nordic model, and which argue that it does not. Which of these do you find most convincing? Why?

14. subsequent on key questions. and Seminars have been structured to address the readings associated with each of these topics, emphasizing the theories and concepts that students find most challenging and engaging. Special attention has been given to the six concerns elaborated by Van Aelst et al (2017); the relationship between dynamics fragmentation, selection bias, knowledge gaps, and motivated reasoning; how trends and theories vary across different media systems; how to evaluate the relevance and validity of empirical findings; and the ways in which technological practices and advances challenge or support various theories.

Syllabus

Books

Bruns, Axel, og Christian Christensen, red. 2016. *The Routledge companion to social media and politics*. New York: Routledge.

Knutsen, Oddbjørn, red. 2017. *The Nordic models in political science : challenged, but still viable?* Bergen: Fagbokforl. «Chapter 8, 11-12, 19». I *Power, communication and politics in the Nordic countries*, , 100.

Trine Syvertsen (1958-) (forfatter). 2014. *The Media welfare state : Nordic media in the digital age*. red. Trine Syvertsen. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press.

Ohlsson, Jonas. 2015. 13 *The Nordic media market : Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

Online articles

Karlsen, Rune, og Eli Skogerbø. 2015. «Candidate campaigning in parliamentary systems: Individualized vs. localized campaigning». Party Politics 21(3): 428–39.

Larsson, Anders Olof, og Eli Skogerbø. 2018. «Out with the old, in with the new? Perceptions of social (and other) media by local and regional Norwegian politicians». New Media & Society 20(1): 219–36.

Sandberg, Linn A. C, og Patrik Öhberg. 2017. «The role of gender in online campaigning: Swedish candidates' motives and use of social media during the European election 2014». Journal of Information Technology & Politics: Social media campaigning in Europe: mapping the terrain 14(4): 314–33.

Skogerbø, Eli, Eva Josefsen, og Anna-Maria Fjellström. 2019. «Indigenous Political Journalism in the Norwegian and Swedish Public Service Broadcasters». Journalism Studies 20(7): 991–1008.

Skogerbø, Eli. 2020. «The History of Local Media in Norway». I The Historyof Local Media in Norway, red. Agnes Gulyas and David Baines. Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 1–10.