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Author(s): Jaakkola, Maarit; Uotila, Panu

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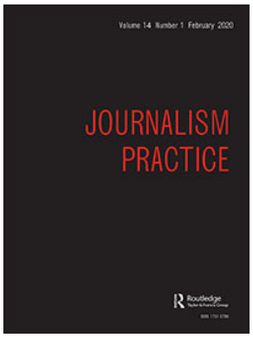

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The Literary Construction of Journalism Education: A Review of the Course Literature in the Nordic Academic Journalism Programmes

Maarit Jaakkola [a,b] and Panu Uotila[c]

[a]The Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research NORDICOM, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden; [b]Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences, Tampere University, Tampere, Finland; [c]Department of Language and Communication Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

ABSTRACT
This article investigates the course literature in the curricula of 12 major journalism schools at Northern European universities. This analysis of the course literature listed in documentation of bachelor programmes traces how journalism education institutions constitute their knowledge base on journalism. It is found that Nordic journalism students are required to read almost four books per study credit on average. Undergraduate academic journalism programmes are professionally oriented, and professional literature by non-scientific publishers occupies a major place in the course literature. A strong emphasis is placed on professional books written in the domestic language, with an average age of seven years. Though the Scandinavian languages show high degrees of similarities with each other, there is very little circulation of literature across the countries within the Nordic area. This analysis of the literature points to a relatively homogeneous educational culture with small differences and raises questions about the qualitative dimensions of instructional design.

KEYWORDS
Journalism education; bachelor's degree; curriculum; course syllabus; course literature; Nordic countries

Introduction

Academic education is to be research-based, which means that teaching should always be based on the most up-to-date body of research. Journalism education, traditionally obliged to juggle between academic and professional objectives, distinguishes itself in various uses of academic research. During their academic studies, journalism students are expected to be able to process, assimilate and master large amounts of theoretical, mostly written, material.

Even in the digital era, published literature that is carefully selected according to quality standards, pre-publication assessed, edited and re-edited, and–still most typically–printed, is the cornerstone of how academic research is mediated to university students. This means not only that literature selected for readings plays a normative role in constructing

CONTACT Maarit Jaakkola maarit.jaakkola@gu.se, maarit.jaakkola@tuni.fi https://www.gu.se/english/about_the_university/staff/?languageId=100001&userId=xjaama; http://www.uta.fi/cmt/en/contact/staff/maaritjaakkola/index.html

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the students' knowledge about journalism, but also that many of the biases found in academic journalism research concerning journalism, research and the world in general are passed on to the students through the academic literature. The most commonly debated biases include, for example, the structures of power in journalism seen, above all, in gender (Hardin, Dodd, and Lauffer 2006; Steiner 2017) and age (Josephi and Alonso 2018) structures, and in the middle-class overrepresentation among journalists (Djerf-Pierre 2007; Hovden, Nygren, and Zilliacus-Tikkanen 2016), as well as biases in the academic research itself, such as the American and European (Western) bias (Hanitzsch 2009).

What journalism is, what it should be, and how it should be taught has been an ongoing discussion at journalism education institutions, invigorated by various changes in both the media and the higher education landscape. In these future-oriented discussions about the elements, skills and forms of journalism, the necessity of change often overshadows the question of what contents contemporary journalism education de facto includes across countries. Related to this, discussions on journalism education have typically focused on the larger structures of higher education systems (Nowak, in press) and identities of journalism students (Hovden et al. 2009; Hovden, Nygren, and Zilliacus-Tikkanen 2016), not to mention setting goals for future journalism education (e.g., Adam 2001; Drok 2012; Mensing 2010), more than the contemporary and actual contents of learning.

Taking as its starting point these shortcomings in previous research, this article takes the curricula of journalism schools as its object of inquiry, asking what journalism students at academic institutions are currently required to read during their studies. The study of literature is intended to cast light on how journalism is conceptualised and framed by looking at the bodies of the course literature in a specific geo-cultural and educational area, here, the Nordic countries. Journalism education institutions inscribe their conceptions in the official documents of their course curricula and syllabi, which form the basis for how education unfolds in practice. Even if the implementation of the guidelines outlined in written documents varies according to individual teachers, community cultures and other, often contingent contextual factors, these documents are official statements that should reflect on a general level how the identity and object of action of an educational programme, both as a scholarly discipline and a professional area of practice, are defined and demarcated. By looking at the body of literature all graduates of journalism programmes are supposed to have read, we can draw some conclusions concerning the study programmes' body of knowledge.

We study the literature lists of the course curricula and syllabi at academic institutions offering bachelor's study programmes in journalism in Finland, Norway and Sweden. These countries–along with Denmark, exc luded from the analysis for reasons discussed in the methodology section–form a geopolitically and culturally interconnected area supported by common historical events and cultural exchange. The Nordic countries, with strong journalistic professionalism, state intervention, welfare-state ideology and high newspaper circulation and readership, adopt the same type of media system (Hallin and Mancini 2004) and journalism culture (Ahva et al. 2017; Hanitzsch 2007), supported by relatively similar systems of journalism education (Hovden, Nygren, and Zilliacus-Tikkanen 2016; see also Jaakkola 2018). It can thus be assumed that there is a high exchange between the countries and the journalism schools have similar profiles, proposing a stepping stone for further transnational comparisons.

Despite close co-operation among Nordic journalism educators and recently growing scholarly interest in Nordic journalism education, empirical comparative analyses remain scarce (Hovden et al. 2009, 2016). Most transnational approaches lack cross-country comparisons and treat different countries in their own descriptive chapters and analyses (see e.g., Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha 2003; Hovden, Nygren, and Zilliacus-Tikkanen 2016; Splichal and Sparks 1994; Terzis 2009). Adopting upon the guiding principle of comparativeness, this study on course literature continues other analyses of bachelor's curriculum course contents (Jaakkola 2019) and comparisons of journalistic classrooms and related pedagogy (Jaakkola 2018) in the Nordic countries. This separate analysis limited to course literature allows us to focus on choices that very clearly indicate the emphases in the understandings of what professional journalism is, which are heavily dependent on the literature available in countries.

Course Syllabi and the Politics of the Production of Education

The bachelor's degree, in its current state, is the result of a political process launched in 1999. In that year, 48 European countries implemented reforms to make their education systems more compatible with each other to increase international mobility and facilitate transnational employability. The bachelor's degree, an undergraduate degree of 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) that requires 3–4 years of full-time study, is defined by the EHEA's qualifications framework (Bologna Working Group 2005; EHEA 2009). In the Nordic countries, bachelor's programmes for journalism are three-year education courses that can be seen as the basic education to enter the journalism occupation (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2007, 2013). In contrast to master's programmes in journalism, bachelor's programmes are generalist programmes centred on journalism, so they are typically referred to with the general term *journalism*, and their graduates are expected to have gained some degree of mastery with all media unless restricted by the programme focus. Bachelor's programmes should cover most essentials for aspiring journalists, whereas master's programmes are often more specialised, so these two types of programmes are less comparable with each other. This study focuses on generalist bachelor's programmes. More specialised academic bachelor programmes (e.g., photojournalism and visual journalism programmes) are excluded from the analysis, although generalist programmes may offer individual courses also included in specialised programmes.

Universities and non-university institutions in higher education may award bachelor's degrees. According to the standards (Bologna Working Group 2005, 193), the bachelor's degree should provide students with "demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education", ensure they have the ability to "apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study". In the Nordic countries, standards are set by national laws on higher education and are governed by national educational agencies. According to UNESCO's (2007, 10) model curriculum for journalism education, "professional practice" should account for 47% of bachelor's programmes, "journalism studies" 10% and "arts and science" 43%. The majority of Nordic journalism school curricula appear to follow this model (Jaakkola 2018).

In general, a *curriculum* is a document identifying the core contents taught in a specific programme of an educational institution with the aim to direct and connect the work of teachers within an organisation (English 2000). Written curricula are formal agreements on what should be taught, how teaching should be carried out to achieve specific learning outcomes and how these outcomes should be evaluated. In addition to written and formal curriculum, hidden and taught (informal) curricula are either consciously or unconsciously adopted by local communities through socialisation into a workplace culture (English 2000). In general, it can be assumed that curricula are written to be allow flexibility for variation based on available resources and interests, which may give rise to hidden and informal curricula. Official, written curricula nevertheless are central, strategy-level documents that determine resource allocation.

To accomplish goals, curricula are complemented by course syllabi and lesson plans. A *syllabus* is a document that communicates information about an individual course to, above all, students. The goal of a syllabus is to establish a shared understanding between the lecturer and students and among potentially many lecturers about the content, methods and policies of a given course. Like the curriculum, the syllabus is a specific textual genre with distinctive normative rhetorical characteristics but is more closely connected to the substance area of teaching and operates at a more concrete level of teaching methodology and learning contents (Afros and Schryer 2009; Nunan 1998; Robinson 2012). Journalism scholars typically have had less interest in syllabus design but have studied curricula in relation to journalism education, particularly curriculum development, priorities in teaching content, interactions with the industry and media environment and motivations from technological development (see e.g., Adams 2008; Blom and Davenport 2012; Castañeda, Murphy, and Heather 2005; Hirst and Treadwell 2011). Syllabi have a higher formal status than *lesson plans*, which set the outline of an individual lecture or describe the set of lectures that form a course or a course entity. Unlike syllabi, lesson plans generally are not officially acknowledged at any organisational level or made formally accessible to the wider public.

Although the Nordic countries show high degrees of similarities in documentation for the structure and content of study programmes, differences exist, especially in the level of documentation for the course literature. In the countries studied, the course literature is included in either the curricula or the course syllabi. As summarised in Table 1, the literature is placed in the curricula in Finnish education programmes but the syllabi in Norwegian and Swedish programmes. The official status of course literature thus differs, making transnational comparisons difficult. The lower the official status of a document, the lower

Table 1. The position of the course literature in Finland, Norway and Sweden.

	Curriculum			Syllabus			Course literature
Country	*Term*	*Revision*	*Confirmation*	*Term*	*Revision*	*Confirmation*	
Finland (2), Finnish	Tutkinto-vaatimukset	Every 3rd year	Faculty	Opetusohjelma	Every year	Department	In curriculum
Finland (1), Swedish	Examensford-ringarna	Every 3rd year	Faculty	Undervisnings-program	Every year	Department	In curriculum
Norway (4)	Studieplan	Every 3rd year	Faculty	Emneplan	Every year	Department	In syllabus
Sweden (5)	Utbildnings-plan, kurs-plan	Every 3rd year	Faculty	Studieanvisning, studieguide	Every year	Department	In syllabus

are the levels of the organisational hierarchy of decision-making where decisions about changes to it can be made, and the more open to change the document is. The literature lists in the course syllabi thus more likely be revised than lists in the course curricula. Regardless of location, literature lists perform similar functions and are part of the relevant official recording of course content, which reasonably permits changing these lists. Needless to say, all journalism education institutions seek to update their course syllabi as they reflect how an institution follows its times and places itself in interaction with the industry.

In the Nordic context, syllabi typically are produced the instructor responsible for the specific courses and are approved by the department or study programme head or a specific organ with pedagogical responsibilities at an institution. Curricula are usually written by instructors lead by the programme or department head and approved by the faculty.

Regardless of status, both curricula and syllabi, however, encounter the same methodological difficulty: merely analysing the documents cannot determined whether the literature lists are followed, and courses are organised accordingly in practice. Local communities may develop cultures that differ significantly from the written documents. Pedagogical interventions in the classroom, which are often determined by individual educators, strongly influence how literature is recognised and used. Even if a lecturer follows the syllabus, there is no guarantee the students will too. Syllabi, therefore, are not indicators of the reality of journalism education but may reflect an ideal state of a course that leaves much discretion to teacher and grants much influence to situational factors.

Literature used in higher education is not adapted to pedagogical use the same way it is at lower levels of education. Students in higher education have, and are encouraged to seek, direct access to original works of research. The use of "unfiltered" academic research in the study programme is often regarded as a characteristic of theoretical and academic orientation of the programme, and a way to hone the students' academic skills. In addition, there are academic textbooks and readers summarising the research of certain fields of study which are more adapted to pedagogical purposes. Another side of course literature, even in academic institutions, is the professional literature. Professional literature refers to textbooks, above all, in news reporting, information search, journalistic methods and techniques, as well as professional identity. They are not only intended to mediate practical and even tacit knowledge about the occupation to students, but also pass on ideas about societies and basic concepts of democracies. This is why it has previously drawn much more scholarly interest than the course literature that comprises of academic works; journalism textbooks have aroused discussion because of their alleged impact through naturalising and maintaining biased social structures (e.g., Hardin, Dodd, and Lauffer 2006; Hardin and Preston 2001; Parks 2019, 2018; Starck and Wyffels 1990). As knowledge concerning digital reporting is rapidly becoming obsolete, textbooks are increasingly available online.

Both the academic and the professional forms of course literature have undergone a two-stage selection process. First, the publishers of research and textbooks have selected the content to be published. Second, journalism schools act as gatekeepers with regard to what is mediated to the students and future professionals. Producers of literature selected for course content are thus legitimised producers of knowledge, holding the power to provide important frameworks that will eventually be translated into social reality by the future professionals. This marks the critical role of course literature and why it matters.

Research Questions

Our point of departure for the analysis is the intent to answer the question of what Nordic journalism education institutions officially require their students to read in bachelor programmes. It is believed that one answer can be found in the mandatory literature in the journalism curriculum. Resulting from collegial and organisational negotiations, the literature can be expected to generally reflect institutions' consensus on what journalism is and who is legitimised to produce it. Despite the possibility for pedagogical interventions and other factors to influence the learning outcomes, as discussed, the course literature is students' and aspiring professionals' source of appropriate, up-to-date theoretical and practical knowledge about journalism.

The research question thus is proposed: *what literature do the major academic programmes in journalism include as mandatory reading in their bachelor curricula?* We are interested in three aspects that, based on previous literature on the Nordic journalism education, reflect central dimensions of the Nordic journalism education system: first, in the volume, origins, and circulation of the course literature; second, in the academic and professional orientations that can be seen in the choice of literature; and, third, in the Inter-Nordic exchange between the national institutions. With these three dimensions, we want to determine whether there are differences between countries, or some country-specific common characteristics. More in general, as the topic has not previously been studied, we want to explore the role of course literature in journalism courses and, particularly, determine how the theory/practice divide is reflected in this literature. Finally, as the Nordic region's education systems have relatively homogeneous characteristics, and due to their geographical and cultural proximity, a high degree of mutual interdependence and exchange is expected. In all, the bodies of literature are expected to pinpoint basic characteristics of the Nordic academic journalism education system, and add to our understanding of how the programmes are interconnected.

The literature is examined for its language, publisher, author's gender, country of publication, form of publication and year of publication. This information enables investigating the geo-cultural undercurrents of the study programmes and casting light on which instances and persons in society are regarded as legitimate knowledge producers. The main research is thus broken down into more specific questions: (1) From where does the course literature originate: from which countries and publishers in which form and written by whom? (2) In which language is the course literature published? Is there a Nordic exchange? (3) How old is the course literature currently used?

These questions–the origin, form, age and language of the literature–are all manifestations of the underlying structures of knowledge production in journalism education and are discussed separately in the empirical section. We initially wanted to explore the disciplines and subareas of journalism on which the literature draws, but we rejected this question because many publications in education have used multi- or interdisciplinary approaches and a range of different types, methods and approaches of journalism, making it impossible to reliably categorise them with content analysis. By analysing these basic structural dimensions, we still aim to determine what types of knowledge producers serve the education of future journalists and how the courses' theoretical bases are constructed.

Using the national level as the point of comparison may overlook differences among higher education institutions with very different profiles and degrees of academic qualifications and orientations. Nevertheless, national-level comparisons can be justified as the higher education systems in these countries establish educational ecosystems intended to cater to the demands of the local workforce. Comparing academic institutions and excluding professionally oriented educational institutions, such as universities of applied sciences and university colleges, from the analysis, therefore, can be expected (considering all the reservations discussed later) to give a general overview of the anatomy of the course literature in the official educational design.

Data and Method

For a systematic review of the course literature (see e.g., Bryman 2016), we employed basic techniques for content analysis of documents. The sample consisted of the curricula of academic bachelor's programmes in journalism (180 ECTS) in Finland, Norway and Sweden during the academic year, 2017–2018. The unit of analysis was one recorded item of the literature. Such a publication could be a book, article, report, online material (e.g., a database), compilation of materials published under the same title or an equivalent published entity. These were referred to as *titles*, and altogether, the data included 847 titles.

Denmark was excluded from the study as it has a somewhat different journalism education landscape than the other three Nordic countries. Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha (2003) made a distinction between academic and non-academic journalism education at universities. Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish journalism education belongs to the academic strain, whereas Danish journalism education shows more similarities with the Dutch and Italian tradition providing journalism education by institutions devoted exclusively to journalism. In fact, Denmark, the Netherlands and Italy are the only European countries to rely on this instructional setup almost exclusively (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha 2003). The Danish bachelor programmes, called *professionsbachelor*, are more extensive in their volume (240 ECTS), similar to Finnish studies at universities of applied sciences. In addition, unlike in Finland, Norway and Sweden, journalism education in Denmark does not directly lead to a bachelor's degree but must to be supplemented with study of additional academic content. Due to these structural differences, Danish schools were excluded from the analysis.

The institutions in the data ($N = 12$) are described in Table 2. These institutions are the major–i.e., the most established and prestigious–journalism schools at the universities in the Nordic region. To identify the most relevant journalism schools, we turned to the Nordic Cooperation Committee for Journalism Education (*nordiska samarbetskommittén för journalistutbildning*) whose members include academic journalism education institutions in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (see http://nordiskjournalistutbildning.org). Almost all the schools selected also belong to the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA), an organisation of 61 institutions in 24 countries (see http://www.ejta.eu/general-information). The institutions accepted as members of these networks can be said to consist of the major journalism education institutions at universities in their countries, support standards of professional and academic journalism training in their countries' official languages and educate a notable number of journalists, who have nationwide impact. Polytechnics (also called universities of applied sciences and university colleges) were excluded from the sample as their objective

Table 2. The Nordic journalism education institutions included in the study.

Institution	Admission of students in 2017	Number of courses in the Bachelor's curriculum	Number of course literature titles analysed
University of Tampere, FI *Faculty of Communication Sciences (COMS)*	59	17	60
University of Jyväskylä, FI *Department of Language and Communication Studies*	18	16	39
University of Helsinki, FI *Swedish School of Social Sciences (Soc&Kom)*	80[a]	20–21[b]	90
Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, NO[c]*Department of Journalism and Media Studies*	70	11	66
University of Bergen, NO *Department of Information Science and Media Studies*	22	6	13
Nord University, Bodø, NO *Faculty of Social Sciences*	35	11	53
Stavanger University, NO *Department of Media and Social Sciences*	25	12–17[d]	37
University of Gothenburg, SWE *Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG)*	120	11	58
Linnæus University, Kalmar, SWE *Department of Media and Journalism (MJ)*	100	20	82
Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, SWE *Department of Media and Communication Science (MKV)*	70	18	94
Stockholm University, SWE *Department of Media Studies (JMK)*	70	26	181
Södertörn University, Huddinge, SWE *School of Social Sciences*	96	10	74
Total	765	178–184	847

Status: September 2017.
[a]Students enter the Bachelor's program and choose at the beginning of the second academic year between journalism and other disciplines.
[b]The total number of courses is dependent on an individual student's choices.
[c]Changed its name in January 2018 to Oslo Metropolitan University.
[d]The studies include one term abroad or alternatively 5 courses in Norway.

is to meet immediate workforce demands. The reading of research and academic literature and the socialisation of new-generation academics is not a dominant learning goal in their curricula, which, instead, have as a clear priority educating professional practitioners with high employability. Polytechnics (*yrkeshögskolor*) in Sweden do not typically offer journalism education, but there are three polytechnics with distinct journalism programmes in Finland (not members of the Nordic network) and one in Norway (a member of the network). The journalism education institutions in Denmark, despite their academic affiliations, also represent this type of professional-oriented schools. The syllabi in the curricula analysed were used by approximately 2300 Nordic bachelor's journalism students.

The Nordic countries featured likely have quite small differences in their education programmes. The analysis of the course syllabi was conducted to capture these small differences, which may be helpful in casting more light on the Nordic journalism education landscape. To avoid a too-detailed analysis, which was not our goal, we kept the comparison at the country level instead of looking at differences among journalism schools.

The curricula and syllabi, including the course literature lists (which have a term of their own in Norwegian: *pensumlister* or *pensumlitteratur*) were downloaded from the Internet.

For courses without sufficient information available online, data were requested from faculty members via e-mail. Some literature lists still lacked publication information, so it was found by searching online for more publication information. Despite these measures, some information remained incomplete, leading to variations in the total number of records analysed.

The ways of delivering the literature lists varied among institutions. If several literature lists were available online, the most recent one was selected for analysis. If literature list permitted selecting among a number of publications, all the alternative books were included in the analysis as we could not know which books the students chose, and the analysis did not cover the taught curriculum. Otherwise, only mandatory literature was included in the analysis. The literature for both certain courses and entire terms were both included. If the same book was included in the lists for several courses, the book was recorded multiple times in the data to indicate its frequency. In some cases, chapters were selected for reading, but if more than one chapter from a book was selected for reading, the book was coded as the students would become relatively familiar with the entire book, whereas one-chapter readings were passed out as copies. Some courses had a tradition of using compilations of materials (*kompendium*) collected by the academic teaching staff. Sometimes, students were expected buy these at a local bookshop or received them directly from the lecturer during the course. The content of the compilations could not be analysed due to a lack of access but, if otherwise available, was included in the analysis. For some courses, no course literature was given. Sometimes, the literature was selected based on students' (research) interests or choice of topic during the course. Some course descriptions referred to (extra) literature that would be distributed during the course. Such literature not explicitly recorded in the official documents could not be captured in the analysis.

Regarding the year of publication, some literature lists mentioned "the latest edition" instead of a specific year. In such cases, the most recent edition was included in analysis, but it should be taken into account that some established textbooks have editions dating to the 1980s, and the roots of their knowledge production reach much further back in time. However, new and sometimes even revised editions present updated information, so it would have constituted bias in the age of the course literature if the original year of publishing was taken as the starting point of reprinted books.

Analysis

With a focus on the official curriculum, we first scrutinise the volume and format of the literature in Finland, Norway and Sweden. We examine the publishers, publication form, language used, authors' gender, the publishers' country of origin and the age of the course literature. To place the findings within the Nordic context, we use available statistics and results from a previous article examining the course descriptions of the same institutions (Jaakkola 2019).

Volume and Orientation of Course Literature

Our first research question asks from where the course literature originates. Dimensions that can be captured by reading the literature lists include the publishers, authors,

countries of origin, and form of the literature. Table 3 summarises the number of titles (N = 839). A *title* refers to the record of a single entry in the data representing an item or a piece of literature (i.e., a book, book chapter, article and online resource). Table 3 shows that the Swedish study programmes include a large number of individual titles in total and per institution and course. However, the Swedish curricula tend to have quite low numbers of courses with longer duration, so when comparing titles per credit point (ECTS), the Norwegian programmes have the most course literature. However, it still should be taken into account that the Finnish and Swedish credit points imply 27 h of work, whereas Norway, 25–30 h are expected. On average, the Nordic journalism students in the programmes analysed are expected to read almost 4 books for each credit point.

In journalism education programmes, the division between academic and professional orientations is quite strong, and journalism education study programmes typically negotiate between academically and professionally defined qualifications and requirements (Hanitzsch 2007; Splichal and Sparks 1994; Terzis 2009). It is, therefore, a relevant question to what extent course syllabi adopt scientific, professional and popular publishing contents and formats.

As indicated in Table 4, the professional book appears to be the dominant form of reading in the journalism programmes. Professional books include, for example, handbooks on writing and journalistic practice. In publishing, they are more typically categorised as professional literature or non-fiction (*fack-* or *faglitteratur*) than popular-scientific books, and they serve the objective to assist professional practitioners in deepening their practical knowledge and professional development. Table 4 shows that with almost 40% of the literature classified as scientific books, the Finnish programmes seem to include more academic literature in their course curricula than the Swedish (12%) and Norwegian (3%) programmes. The Norwegian programmes, in turn, have more professional publications than the Finnish and Swedish programmes.

The academic character of the course literature can be corroborated by looking at the types of the publishers of course literature. Table 5 shows whether the course publications are issued by scientific, academic, professional or general publishers. In our categorisation, a scientific publisher means a publishing house with a clear research-based output

Table 3. Literature titles in the data.

	Titles in total		Titles per school	Titles per course	Titles per ECTS
Country	*N*	%	Av	Av	Av
Finland (3)	181	22	60	3.5	3.2
Norway (4)	163	19	41	4.0	6.2
Sweden (5)	495	59	99	5.8	2.1
*Total/Average**	*839*	*100*	*67**	*4.4**	*3.8**

Table 4. The format of literature (titles in total and on average per journalism school).

	Scientific book		Scientific article		Professional book		Professional article		Online material		Other		Total	
Country	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Finland (3)	69	38%	7	4%	93	51%	1	0%	11	6%	0	0%	181	100%
Norway (4)	5	3%	6	4%	130	80%	17	10%	3	2%	1	1%	162	100%
Sweden (5)	59	12%	23	5%	276	56%	6	1%	65	13%	65	13%	494	100%
Total	*207*	*25%*	*36*	*4%*	*499*	*60%*	*24*	*3%*	*79*	*9%*	*66*	*8%*	*837*	*100%*

Table 5. Types of publishers.

	Scientific publisher		University publisher		Professional publisher		General publisher		Other		Total	
Country	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Finland (3)	26	37%	13	18%	5	7%	23	32%	4	6%	71	100%
Norway (4)	10	29%	8	24%	4	12%	11	32%	1	3%	34	100%
Sweden (5)	23	23%	19	19%	12	12%	31	31%	15	15%	100	100%
Total	*59*	*29%*	*40*	*20%*	*21*	*10%*	*65*	*32%*	*20*	*10%*	*205*	*100%*

(e.g., original research results), whether rigorously scientific or more popular, written by academics. Examples of this type of publishing house include the international Routledge, Swedish/Nordic Nordicom, Norwegian Universitetsforlaget and Finnish Gaudeamus. In contrast, general publishers refer to book publishers with more pedagogical output that can primarily be seen as learning material relevant to students and interested general audiences. Examples include Norstedts in Sweden, Cappelen Damm in Norway and WSOY in Finland. University publishers consist of universities' own publishing houses and publication series, so-called internal scientific publishers distinct from external scientific publishers. Professional publishers put out books with a clear focus on journalism and communication and books with a professional orientation. Examples include the international Adobe Press, O'Reilly Media and Routledge-owned Focal Press; Prodicta in Sweden; Ajour in Denmark (books used in Norway, from 2018 onwards part of Samfundslitteratur); and Alma Talent in Finland. The other category includes publications from authorities, non-governmental organisations and similar agencies.

Table 5 shows that about a third of the course literature comes from general publishers in all countries. In Finland and Norway, more than half (55% and 53%, respective) of the literature was issued by scientific publishers, both external (publishers independent of the university) and internal (in-house university publishers). Finland has fewer professional publishers, while the Swedish syllabi include more material provided by individual authors, authorities and media organisations, such as public service broadcasters. Nevertheless, the Swedish syllabi's inclusion of more online material and material provided by organisations other than established publishing organisations may also be due to the practices of writing curricula. In other countries or at individual schools, online material may still be perceived to have a less valued position, and hyperlinks are not recorded in official syllabi but are instead shared in learning management systems and other online platforms available in the courses.

In sum, the literary landscape of the educational material used seems to be more professionally oriented in Norway and Sweden. In particular, Norway has many practical handbooks available on a number of specific subtypes and methods of journalism. In Finland, journalism students have fewer such readings as the mandatory literature consists of more scholarly output. These results confirm previous comparative studies' (e.g., Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha 2003; Jaakkola 2018) findings that Finnish journalism education has a stronger academic orientation than its two Scandinavian counterparts. However, this academic orientation has to be understood in its context. The Finnish education system has two parallel tracks for entering journalism: one traditionally academic and one more professionally oriented, offered at three universities of applied sciences. This dual system with parallel programmes may push academic bachelor's programmes to stress academic skills and include more

academic literature in the curricula than in countries (e.g., Sweden) that do not have such a dual system that induces not only profiling and distinction but also rivalry.

Gender of Course Literature Authors

From reading the course literature lists, it is possible to trace how gender is represented in the journalism course literature. In this context, it possible only to carry out a simple body count of authors instead of a more nuanced, qualitative analysis of gendered patterns in structure and content. However, the gender division of the authors in the overall course literature can inform us about the gender structures of knowledge production in journalism studies in these countries. Research on gender and journalism has found gendered patterns in journalistic coverage and gender inequalities in newsrooms (see e.g., Steiner 2017). In general, the Nordic societies display high levels of gender equality, which have been associated with the welfare-state model. For example, on the United Nations Gender Inequality Index, Norway ranks first, Sweden seventh and Finland fifteenth (United Nations Development Programme 2018).

We recorded every author as either female or male if the author information was available. In anthologies, journal issues, essay collections and multi-authored publications, a gender was attributed to each author. Compendiums were recorded as "individual persons" with gender attribution based on the compiler, unless they were part of an academic series that had no identifiable editor and was published by a university.

As presented in Table 6, more than a third ($N = 797$, 33%) of the 2389 identifiable authors in all entries in the sample are female. Norway has a lower percentage of women authors than Finland and Sweden, which have approximately the same results (34%). When comparing to the number of individual entries (i.e., publication titles), the number of female authors per each publication title is 1.2 authors in Finland, 1.0 authors in Sweden and 0.4 authors in Norway.

The gender of the course literature authors seems to be inverse to the gender structure of journalism students. In recent decades, undergraduate journalism programmes have had more female than male students. In an early survey by Splichal and Sparks (1994), female students outnumbered male students in journalism programmes in 13 of the 22 countries studied. In 2017, 70% of all journalism students belonging to the Finnish professional union were female (Union of Journalists in Finland [UJF] 2018), 58% in Sweden and 61% in Norway. Journalism programmes thus had slightly higher female representation than the undergraduate student populations at the national level (Eurostat 2017). In the early 1990s–according to a survey conducted in 1993–Finland had a higher share of women journalists than the other Nordic countries, in which women accounted for roughly a third of journalists (Salokangas 2003, 17). In early 2017, 58% of Finnish journalists

Table 6. The gender of the authors in the course literature.

	Female authors			Male authors			All authors		
Country	*N*	%	*N* per title	*N*	%	*N* per title	*N*	%	*N* per title
Finland (3)	222	34%	1.2	440	66%	2.3	662	100%	1.5
Norway (4)	67	27%	0.4	180	73%	1.1	247	100%	1.5
Sweden (5)	508	34%	1.0	972	66%	1.8	1480	100%	2.7
Total	*797*	*100*	–	*1592*	*100*	–	*2,389*		–

were female (UJF 2018). That same year, the Swedish Union of Journalists lost 500 members, of whom more than half were female, but women still made up 53% of its members (Nesser 2018). In 2018, 44% of members of the Norwegian Union of Journalists were female.[1]

No comparable data from previous decades are available, so the development of the gender structure of the course literature cannot be traced. However, it can be assumed that the representation of female authors has increased over recent decades. A majority of the legitimised knowledge producers in journalism, though, seems to be male, which might partly reflect structures from earlier decades when female journalists, journalism students and authors were fewer. Many of the practical handbooks, for example, were written by experienced senior scholars or practitioners, who included mostly men. However, this explanation is only partial as most female authors wrote professional books constituting the majority of the course literature. Of the 797 female authors in the course literature, more than half (57%, $N = 450$) were authors of professional publications, which could reflect the gender structures in the occupation, in which women are well represented at the executive level of practitioners. The academic literature seems to be more male driven, with men making up 65% of all authors in all the countries ($N = 578$).

Language and National Origin of Course Literature

Despite some differences, the Scandinavian people generally understand each other's languages with little effort, and much of the Nordic region is bound by linguistic similarities. Common language politics even support a political will to preserve the Nordic language community and encourage the parallel or mixed use of languages (Nordic Council of Ministers 2007). In survey results, Norwegians tend to best understand the other Scandinavian languages, while Swedes understand Norwegian better than Danish. In general, understanding is higher for written than spoken language (Delsing and Lundin 2005).

However, the course literature indicates less Nordic exchange among these countries than expected given the Nordic political cooperation. Table 7 presents the publishers' countries of origin. Unsurprisingly, most course literature are domestic and have Anglo-American publishers. Finnish journalism education institutions have a higher share of literature written in English than their Norwegian and Swedish counterparts. Both Norwegian and Swedish course syllabi make very little use of literature published in neighbouring countries. The Swedish-language journalism education in Finland makes exceptions for linguistic reasons as Swedish-language literature suits its purposes well.

If we take a look at the languages in which the course literature is written–given that one publication is normally written in only one language–we can see, as depicted in

Table 7. Publishers' countries.

Country	Finland		Norway		Sweden	
Publisher's country	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Denmark	2	1	2	1	2	0
Finland	68	38	0	0	0	0
Norway	0	0	143	88	4	1
Sweden	41	23	0	0	412	83
GB/USA	70	39	18	11	72	15
Other	0	0	0	0	5	1
Total	*181*	*100*	*163*	*100*	*495*	*100*

Table 8. Languages of literature.

	Domestic		Scandinavian		English		Total	
Country	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Finland (3)	58	28%	51	32%	72	40%	181	100%
Finland, Finnish (2)	55	60%	0	0%	37	40%	92	100%
Finland, Swedish (1)	3[a]	3%	51	57%	35	39%	89	100%
Norway (4)	141	87%	2	1%	20	12%	163	100%
Sweden (5)	406	82%	6	1%	83	17%	495	100%

[a]Finnish.

Table 8, that the majority of the course literature used in Nordic journalism education is written in domestic languages, or the official and national languages of educational programmes' national contexts. Sweden's national language is Swedish, while in Norway, there exist two variants of the official written language of Norwegian, *nynorsk* and *bokmål*. Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, and the journalism programmes in these two languages are delivered separately, so we distinguish Swedish and Finnish journalism education from each other.

Both the origin and the language of the literature confirm that there is very little circulation of literature for learning purposes among not only the Nordic (Finland, Norway, Sweden) but also the Scandinavian (Norway, Sweden) countries. Students attending journalism programmes have to master the national language of the country in which education is mostly delivered. Even if students in these countries presumably are able to understand the other Scandinavian languages, non-domestic literature typically was chosen. This strong preference for domestic literature reflects that the production and reception of journalistic content is, to a large extent, based on local conditions and communities' dominant languages. Local professional cultures are supported by the national law and ethics, as evidenced by questions such as copyright issues that differ even within the Nordic region (Jørgensen 2014). Indeed, to take a concrete example of these differences, publication of digital images of art in journalistic work is allowed by the Finnish Copyright Act but prohibited under Swedish law.[2]

Even if students are socialised into their immediate geo-cultural environment, the cultural exchange in journalism can be lively given the relative flexibility of the journalistic occupation, allowing professionals to act as correspondents and freelancers in other countries. It can also be assumed that in journalism education, students learn about neighbouring countries through student exchanges and bi- and multilateral courses arranged within the context of Nordic cooperation. However, statistics on the student exchange programme Nordplus Higher Education indicate that Nordic student mobility has steadily decreased over the recent decades (Melin, Terrell, and Henningsson 2015, 51), and students increasingly go farther away than neighbouring countries (European Commission 2016). However, short visits to neighbouring countries have increased since the introduction of the so-called express mobility in 2016, permitting exchanges with a minimum duration of one week (Melin, Terrell, and Henningsson 2015, 51).

Age of the Course Literature

The relatively rapid changes in the media industry have placed the re-definition of journalism and journalistic theories on the research agenda of journalism studies and in the

Table 9. Average age (AA) of the course literature (in years).

Country	AA in total	AA of scientific titles	AA of professional titles	AA of domestic literature	AA of international literature
Finland	8.3 (*N* = 176)	7.9 (*N* = 75)	8.6 (*N* = 94)	8.1 (*N* = 55)	8.4 (*N* = 71)
Norway	6.8 (*N* = 163)	6.3 (*N* = 11)	6.8 (*N* = 148)	6.7 (*N* = 141)	7.4 (*N* = 20)
Sweden	6.3 (*N* = 446)	8.8 (*N* = 82)	6.3 (*N* = 281)	5.8 (*N* = 358)	7.9 (*N* = 82)
Average	*6.8 (N = 785)*	*8.2 (N = 168)*	*7.2 (N = 523)*	*6.9 (N = 554)*	*8.0 (N = 173)*

journalism curricula. The publication year was available for every title, so we were interested in how journalism education has been able to keep its literature up to date or, in other words, how old the course literature used in each country was. Journalism education, especially the traditional form transmitting industry information and practices from experienced professionals to newcomers in in an unquestioned, static form, has been strongly critiqued and contrasted with the entrepreneurial model seeing journalism as more processual and open-ended (Drok 2012; Mensing and Ryfe 2013).

Table 9 shows that the literature used in the Nordic journalism programmes is nearly 7 years old on average (*N* = 785). In all the countries, domestic literature (understood literature published in the national and study-programme language as opposed to English-language or international literature) seems to be more quickly adopted in the curricula than international literature. In Finland, the average age of literature was probably higher as the curricula with the literature lists are revised only every three years. It is also possible that in the smaller language area of Finnish, the circulation of literature in a more limited market is slower as new titles in niche markets cannot be published frequently, if at all. It seems that despite frequent revision of the literature lists, few changes have been made. There seems to be a relatively stable core body of literature.

Discussion

The anatomy of the course literature in bachelor journalism programme curricula, to a high extent, is prone to change, and it might be dangerous to draw definitive conclusions that the next curriculum revision round might make invalid. However, as many titles included are classics read by many generations of students, some stability can be seen. The analysis of the age of the literature also indicates that the literature is renewed rather slowly.

Beyond the recorded literature, teachers in many schools frequently ask students to become acquainted with journalistic pieces, such as news articles, radio and television programmes and online and multimedia work. Sometimes, these materials are mentioned in the course descriptions, but they are likely to be delivered without being mentioned in the curriculum. It is worth noticing that readings in the journalism study programmes may include a wide range of such grey literature, which is more replaceable and subject to changes due to teaching staff and their preferences.

The findings indicate that journalism seems to be tightly bound by local conditions, including the local language, professional practices and structural frameworks of professionalism, law and ethics. The literature in the course syllabi displays no ambitions to create border-transcending understandings of journalism in the Nordic area; in contrast,

the international English-speaking scene receives heavier emphasis. It is evident that to some extent, the choice of literature reflects teachers' personal interests and, therefore, strong local emphases on journalism education. The choice of literature indeed seems to be highly influenced by geographical proximity. For instance, books by local academic staff are typically preferred in the individual lists, so the profiles of the teaching stuff often strongly influence the choice of literature and contribute to a national emphasis. The literature was also produced within locally offered education as lectures may have constituted the foundations of published articles and books.

The repetition of some titles contributes to cumulative learning but indicates that they are included several times. In each country, some local classic textbooks can be identified as core learning material used in a number of courses. These books are often written by senior scholars and regularly revised and reprinted. They are used as entrance examination literature and often have a methodological nature, describing a particular journalistic practice.[3] These books are important to providing common concepts and vocabulary for journalist students who may later work together.

The literature from global Anglo-American markets basically originated from three sources. First, the largest group was international classics in journalism and communication theory, original research with great impact, or handbooks summarising strains of research and practice. Second, the English books and articles comprised scholarly literature written by researchers from the home institution of or the same country as the international research audiences. Third, the English material comprised the newest international professional literature that dealt with, above all, digital journalism in data (-driven) and robot journalism. It thus seems that while the basics of the course literature were provided by domestic works, the complementary readings were found in the international output instead of literature from neighbouring countries.

Ideas for Future Research

This study was specifically focused on and adapted to the Nordic region. However, comparisons of course literature, and course content in more general terms, could be expanded to include more diverse countries and regions. As many of the previous studies related to the curricula have focused more on curriculum development and system differences, the comparative approaches to curriculum content are an aspect to advance within studies on journalism education.

The academic literature in the curricula may enable fruitful comparisons of educational programmes at different levels. They, for example, indicate the degree of study programmes' theoretical or academic orientations, as shown in our analysis, to trace differences between countries or regions. In this respect, indices such as the amount of reading per ECTS enable comparability among the study programmes within a discipline, and even across study programmes in different disciplines with similar professional profiles. The balance between national or regional and international literature is an issue that may more widely reflect the positioning of study programmes towards international markets.

As highlighted throughout the analysis, close readings of syllabi and curricula provide information about an official set of standards but not necessarily the state of education and so should be placed in their broader context. The characteristics and uses of the literature should be studied in greater detail with a more qualitative approach. For

example, an ethnographic study or focus group interviews on the pedagogical use of the literature would add to our knowledge about the mediation of literature to the students (cf. Hardin, Dodd, and Lauffer 2006; Besser, Stone, and Nan 1998).

Conclusion

The choices of course literature in a journalism study programme, or learning materials in higher education in general, are seldom considered in discussions of the sociology of education, and this study intended to initially fill this gap. This article examined certain quantifiable dimensions of the literature lists of the course curricula and syllabi in the leading Nordic bachelor's journalism programmes: the literature's age, volume and circulation, its academic and professional orientations, and the Nordic exchange in it.

It was found that the course literature is revised at different paces at different institutions and in different countries, with the average interval in the Nordic journalism education institutions being quite long at seven years. The professional book is the dominant form of reading in the journalism programmes, amounting to 60% of the literature titles on average. The programmes draw on an established body of domestic literature, combining it with literature written in English for international audiences, but do not make use of literature from neighbouring countries.

With regard to the rapid changes in revising curricula, changes in literature should be monitored with longitudinal analyses to track patterns and changes over time. Along with the gradual "eventisation" of learning, the role of written material may also be dissolving. Instead of the closed-form books and articles, learning material will increasingly migrate and split up into online platforms, including open-ended visual and audiovisual, processual and gamificated material (for example, online courses [e.g., MOOCs] and open educational resources [OERs], see e.g., D'Antoni 2009), which has to be taken into account when examining the entire body of resources and learning materials on which the educational programmes draw.

Notes

1. The facts about Norway in this paragraph were communicated in email dated 3 October 2018 from Inger Helene Frivik, with the secretariat of the Norwegian Union of Journalists (*Norsk Journalistlag*). The facts about Sweden in this paragraph were communicated in email dated 4 October 2018 from Inger Johansson, with the secretariat of the Swedish Union of Journalists (*Svenska Journalistförbundet*).
2. Finnish Copyright Act (2015, English translation), https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1961/en19610404_20150608.pdf. Swedish Act on Copyright in Literary and Artistic Works (2013, English translation), www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/se/se124en.pdf (Accessed 21 September 2018).
3. In Sweden, these works were *Reporter* (2009) and *Intervjuteknik* (*Interview Technique*, 2007) by Björn Häger, as well as *Grävande journalistik* (*Investigative Journalism*, 2010) by Nils Hanson and *Källkritik* (*Source Criticism*, 2013) by Thorsten Thurén. In Norway, books in this category were *Journalistikk og kildekritisk analyse* (*Journalism and Source Criticism*, 2013) by Sigurd Allern and *Journalistikk–en innføring* (*Journalism–an Introduction*, 2013) by Brynjulf Handgaard and colleagues, as well as *Bare et bilde?* (*Only a Picture?*, 2013) by Agnethe Weisser and *Reportasjen* (*The Reportage*, 2002) by Jo Bech-Karlsen. In Finland, journalism-related textbooks used at both Finnish-speaking institutions were *Hyvä journalismi* (*Good Journalism*, 2013) by Maarit

Jaakkola, *Journalistin etiikka* (*The Journalist's Ethics*, 2013) by Jorma Mäntylä and *Sosiaalisen median lyhyt historia* (*The Short History of Social Media*, 2013) by Jaakko Suominen and colleagues.

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ORCID

Maarit Jaakkola http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9979-6157

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