This is the published version of a chapter published in *Communicating the North: Media Structures and Images in the Making of the Nordic Region.*

Chapter 1

A Communicative Perspective on the Formation of the North: Contexts, Channels and Concepts

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What makes a magazine in South Africa promote Scandinavian unity among its immigrant readers and why does a Swedish king endorse attempts to influence pan-Scandinavian opinion through a transnational media event in Sweden, Norway and Denmark? Can portraits of exotic 'Laplanders' in the British press, enthusiastic accounts of the welfare state in post-war travel literature, and descriptions of the liberated Nordic woman as a metaphor for a freer society in Franco's Spain really be bundled together under a joint label of 'Nordicness'? How is it that despite the variety of images of the Nordic region, we still find this recurring idea of a shared Nordic identity? These are some of the questions this volume seeks to answer.

Many studies deal with the role of the media in the development of nations. Far fewer look at regions. The impact of the media on the formation of transnational regions thus stands out as a neglected field of study. This book approaches the general theme of the mediation of regions through a study of the Nordic region. Covering the time period from the early nineteenth century to the present and encompassing case studies from Britain, Spain, Poland and South Africa, as well as from the Nordic countries, it investigates the images of the Nordic region that have been presented by the media inside and outside the Nordic countries, how such images have been shaped by mechanisms of mediation, and the channels through which they have been distributed. The following chapters address both specific cases, such as individual publications and images, and the structural and institutional settings for mediating the Nordic region.

The volume develops the idea of the Nordic region as a mediated region, analysing the process whereby mediation can shape and distribute images of a transnational region both within and outside its geographic area.[1] Connections

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[1] This study of the mediation of the Nordic region is influenced by the idea of *Norden* as an extended or 'distributed' region, which was originally proposed in Björn Hettne, Sverker Sörlin and Uffe Østergård, *Den globala nationalismen: nationalstatens historia och framtid* (Stockholm, 1998).

between media companies and their audiences, and the remediation of stereotypes between textual genres and other media forms, contribute to the creation of different concepts of a particular region, oscillating between fact and fiction. In this flux of ideas, informed observations about the traits peculiar to a region can be swamped by a flood of rhetoric that uses it as a model to inspire admiration on the left or incite alarm on the right.

The communication perspective contributes to an understanding of how concepts of a region can be distributed through the media, thus diverging from paths taken in the other volumes in this series, which investigate the distribution of the Nordic region through performance of heritage in the form of traditions, museums and festivals, or the attempted expansion of Nordic territory and scientific hegemony through polar exploration. Taking the role of the media into account reveals a region existing as a set of discursively maintained concepts or images of transnational units, represented in interrelated but independently operated media and connected to a narrative framework based on the notion that this region has a particular and observable character. Such concepts of regions have a dynamic and changing relationship to actual geopolitical boundaries. In some cases, the Nordic region, or *Norden*, has been defined as synonymous with Scandinavia – Denmark, Norway and Sweden. In others, it has included all five Nordic countries, adding Iceland and Finland to Scandinavia. In other definitions the autonomous territories of Svalbard, the Faroe Islands and Greenland have been included. From an outside perspective the terms 'Scandinavia' and 'Nordic region' are often used synonymously, something that from an intra-Nordic self-image has been unthinkable.[2] Scandinavia as a label and brand seems to be the easiest and most versatile form to address this region, even when including Finland and Iceland.

The contested spatial reach of the concept of *Norden* is well illustrated by the political changes that have made the competition for polar domains an issue in the North, as well as the continuing renegotiations of the relation between the Nordic countries and those around the Baltic Sea, which has recently been discussed from political, as well as cultural, perspectives.[3] Different concepts of the Nordic region, or the ascribed traits of shared character, have had fleeting and unstable relations to such discussions of territorial inclusion and exclusion.

Another crucial point when discussing Nordic issues is the extent to which such a compound transnational regional entity can replace the sum of five nation-states. That the nation still serves as the basic unit for cooperation or

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    [2]   Jason Lavery, *The History of Finland* (Westport, CT and London, 2006), p. 2.
    [3]   Mikko Lagerspetz, 'How Many Nordic Countries? Possibilities and Limits of Geopolitical Identity Construction', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 38/1 (March 2003): 49–61; Pärtel Piirimäe, 'Baltic Provinces or a Common Nordic Space? On the Formation of Estonian Mental Geographies', *Baltic Worlds*, 4 (2011): 34–39.

competition in the global arena can also be seen in Nordic cooperation where most fields of cooperative support are built around the idea of individuals representing their country, defined as one of the five Nordic nation-states. This idea of the Nordic region as the sum of the five states, the 'Olympic Games principle', as the historian and Nordic Studies scholar Henrik Stenius has put it, has recently been called into question.[4] In this volume a certain dominance of Sweden and Swedish themes can be observed, which can obviously be taken as a fault detracting from the intended all-Nordic approach. However, the Swedish examples and cases are not only national, but, in many empirical instances, seen as representative of particular Nordic traits, and images of Sweden, as the biggest of the five of the Nordic countries, have significantly influenced the Scandinavian brand. National interests and Nordic thinking are often closely tied together, for example, when marketing nations globally.[5] In yet other instances, such as during scholarly debates on the welfare systems of the countries in northern Europe, the interchangeable labels of such systems as either Nordic, Scandinavian, or pertaining to particular countries, display the existence of competition between the Nordic countries. The image of the Nordic welfare system was more heavily influenced by notions of Sweden than, for example, of Denmark or Norway.[6]

Is it possible, then, to study a transnational region as a single unit, rather than as the sum of its constituting countries? Or does that preclude a deeper understanding of the interplay between part and whole? The focus of this book is on neither. It departs from the basic observation that the Nordic region has historically existed as an empirically observable phenomenon, in the form of a set of widespread images and stereotypes, as well as embodied in institutions for Nordic cooperation. We approach these historical representations of the Nordic region from the perspectives of communication and representation, with the goal of achieving a deeper understanding of how such phenomena take communicative form and are shaped by conditions for mass communication.

Of course, any analysis of such a historical region, if it is based on an assumption that the region in question has existed and can be defined by a set of distinctive traits, runs the risk of implicitly participating in the reification of the said region, with the study itself adding to the instances of observations of its historical existence. However, instead of participating in the reproduction of any homogenous notion of the Nordic region, the studies in this book strive to critically question such notions and show how they have been shaped by

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4   Henrik Stenius and Heidi Haggrén, 'Det nordiska samarbetets vardagspraktiker – vad vet vi om dem förutom att de är viktiga?', in Larserik Häggman (ed.) *Finland i Norden – Finland 50 år i Nordiska rådet* (Helsinki, 2005), p. 81; Johan Strang, 'Enighet inget villkor för samarbete', *Pohjola – Norden*, 4 (2011): 21.

5   See Nikolas Glover, Chapter 10 of this volume.

6   Carl Marklund, in Chapter 12 of this volume, shows how such notions circulated in the social sciences and the media in the United States.

communicative conditions and political and cultural circumstances. In fact, we may even propose that this striving towards simplification and presentation of unifying traits is to some extent a function of the pressures towards narrativization and dramatization intrinsic to the media ever since the nineteenth century.

Mediation and Space

It is fitting here to begin with a brief discussion of definitions. A key concept in this book is that of 'mediation'. It has often been used as a catchphrase, sometimes connoting the decay of politics. Here, it is used in an analytical sense, referring to processes of representation. It thus signifies situations or processes in which media 'constitute the most important channels for information exchange and communication'.[7] In the field of politics, mediated politics then represents something different than politics which is experienced through interpersonal communication. However, in this book we are concerned with regions. Scholars of geography have been concerned with the mediation of landscapes. Karen M. Morin, among others, has emphasized that landscapes have *both* material and ideological aspects; they are 'literally produced through labour and other lived relationships' but also represented in various media forms, which 'themselves are representations of lived relationships'.[8] The idea of a region thus rests on experiences of place or landscape and its mediation. To the extent to which such a region is experienced mainly or exclusively through channels of mass communication, we may say it exists as a mediated region.

A more elaborate typology is presented by Nigel Thrift, who speaks of four different forms of space: empirical constructions of space, space as flows and connections, space as images and space as place. Such distinctions may seem subtle, but they have a distinct bearing on the discussion of how media has contributed to the formation of transnational regions. Empirical spaces represent man-made attempts to organize the world around us, such as infrastructure, maps, measurements, roads. Such empirical spaces organize the spaces of flow, meaning the circulation, migration and transport of goods and

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7   Quote from Jesper Strömbäck, 'Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics', *International Journal of Press/Politics* 13 (2008): 228–246 at 231. See also Winfried Schulz, 'Reconstructing Mediatization as an Analytical Concept, *European Journal of Communication* 19 (2004): 87–100. 'Mediatization' is most commonly used in relation to politics, we choose here to use the broader concept of 'mediation'. For a historical overview of concepts of 'media' and 'mediation', see John Guillory, 'Genesis of the Media Concept', *Critical Inquiry*, 36/2 (2010): 321–362.

8   Karen M. Morin, 'Landscape: Representing and Interpreting the World', in Nicholas J. Clifford et al. (eds), *Key Concepts in Geography*, 2nd edn (London, 2009), p. 287, emphasis added.

ideas. Then there is space as image, which connotes both graphic and textual imagery and the associations it evokes in people's minds. We shall return to the theme of space as image later in this introductory chapter. Finally there is the perspective of space as place. In geography theory, this is less obvious than it might seem, but in essence it refers to sensory experiences of being in person at a particular place.[9]

Using this typology as a framework for this book, we may then start out in an exploratory manner by saying that we are investigating the Nordic region as a mediated region, addressing the different aspects of (a) the region as empirical space, referring to the material structures and forms of the media; (b) the region as a space of flows, referring to the migration of stereotypes and ideas across borders through the media; and (c) the region as a space made up of images, referring to the content of such stereotypes. In a way, but in a less systematic manner, the fourth spatial dimension, the idea of the region as place, also comes into play, as individual experiences linked to particular geographic locations are absorbed by the media and made into building-blocks for the larger concepts of a mediated region.

Contexts: Media Systems and Political Pressures

We move on to the different circumstances that affect the formation of images of the Nordic region. For obvious reasons, political and cultural contexts have provided different settings for articulating ideas of a shared Nordic identity, and different environments around the world have activated different images of the Nordic region, adapted to local needs and priorities. Different periods, such as the periods of Romanticism and Scandinavianism of the nineteenth century, or that marked by expressions of 'Nordism' around 1900, have been especially pronounced high points for expressions of Nordic unity. The radically differing Nordic experiences during the Second World War, as well as the Cold War and post-1989 phases, have provided different kinds of contexts. Throughout these time periods, media outlets and publics within and outside the Nordic countries have frequently interacted with each other within a conceptual framework of Nordic particularity, thereby contributing to the mediated establishment of different concepts of the Nordic region.[10]

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9   Nigel Thrift, 'Space: The Fundamental Stuff of Geography', in Clifford et al., *Key Concepts in Geography*, pp. 86–93. See also Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds), *Thinking Space* (London, 2000).

10   See the essays in Bo Stråth and Øystein Sørensen (eds), *The Cultural Construction of Norden* (Oslo, 1997); Jenny Björkman, Björn Fjæstad and Jonas Harvard (eds), *Ett nordiskt rum: historiska och framtida gemenskaper från Baltikum till Barents hav* (Göteborg, 2011)

In many cases, state policies and relations to foreign nations have created implicit or explicit boundaries determining which images and ideals could be expressed with regard to the Nordic region. A case in point is the Finnish press under the tsarist period, which was given considerable freedom as long as it didn't explicitly challenge the Russia's policies.[11] In other settings, the ideological outlook of the party press has determined perspectives: a striking example is the newspapers of the social democratic parties in the Nordic countries, which were often supportive of ideas of brotherhood across borders.[12] To understand the role of the media in the creation of a Nordic community, we must also take into account the uneven acceptance of shared perspectives among the different national publics. In some periods, such as those of crisis, the media facilitated the creation and distribution of transnational narratives favouring closer collaboration between neighbours. In other periods, press accounts seem to have undermined such narratives in favour of different stories of belonging. To counter adverse conditions, proponents of regional cooperation have consistently deployed conscious campaigns in the media to strengthen regional cohesion, targeted at both inhabitants and outsiders.[13]

The different forms of representation and media structures have provided alternative opportunities for expressing ideas of Nordic particularity in and through the media. An important point of departure for this volume is to regard media representations of a region as shared experiences, continuing Karen M. Morin's reasoning, stating that both the physical landscape and its representation take shape as lived relationships.

Whereas older theories about the role of the media in society postulated a distance between active producers and passive consumers, in the field of region formation the creation and maintenance of transnational identities, values and outlooks imply more than a rational negotiation between alternatives. People either want to belong to a region or they do not. In this sense, the media has not been merely a vehicle for disseminating neutral information. On the contrary, images of the Nordic region have been charged with strongly held convictions and ideals. Media audiences have been active in this process; rather than passively receiving such images, they have participated in their construction, both through interaction with media artefacts and through expressing attitudes

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[11]   Päiviö Tommila et al., *Suomen lehdistön historia*, vols 1–10 (Kuopio, 1988–92). On the censorship of telecommunications, see Einar Risberg, *Suomen lennätinlaitoksen historia 1855–1955* (Helsinki, 1959).

[12]   Stig Hadenius, Jan-Olof Seveborg and Lennart Weibull, *Partipress: Socialdemokratisk press och presspolitik 1910–1920* (Stockholm, 1970). On the party press in general, see Lars Nord, *Åsiktsmaskinerna* (Lund, 1993).

[13]   This dynamic is illustrated by Tora Byström in Chapter 5 of this volume.

and opinions that are based on media representations and later reported through the media.[14]

The media thus constitute an important part of the historical process whereby alternative forms of transnational cooperation compete for attention. The Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi has shown how, in the modern world, umbrella labels are placed on different constellations of nations or parts thereof and subsequently ascribed a particular content. Such concepts of both subnational and transnational regions then develop into frameworks for articulating particularity through official declarations, legal actions and economic activities, as well as cultural festivals and commercial campaigns within the field of branding.[15] A typical example is the Baltic region, which has recently been relaunched as a concept through political initiatives and actions which are then followed by measures such as media campaigns to increase the inhabitants' sense of 'Balticness'.[16]

Channels: Media, Nation and Region

Why has so little research been done on the mediation of regions? British media scholar James Curran has concluded that most works in media history look at only one medium and generally restrict their scope to one nation.[17] This is indeed true for the Nordic countries, where previous research in communication history has mainly focused on single media in a single country, producing national, often emancipatory, accounts of the road to enhanced freedom of the press and the liberation of the media market from state influence. Such implicitly normative stories present historical case studies that

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[14]   For accounts of media forms with a large degree of audience interaction, see Anders Ekström et al. (eds), *History of Participatory Media: Politics and Publics, 1750–2000* (New York, 2011).

[15]   See Anssi Paasi, 'Region and Place: Regional Identity in Question', *Progress in Human Geography*, 27/4 (2003): 475–485; and Paasi, 'Bounded Spaces in the Mobile World: Deconstructing "Regional Identity"', *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 93/2 (2002): 137–148.

[16]   Such measures are prescribed in Commission of the European Communities, *European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*: *Action Plan* (Brussels, 2009), http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/action2009.pdf. On the relation between Nordic and Baltic frames of identification, see Marko Lehti and David J. Smith (eds), *Post-Cold War Identity Politics: Northern and Baltic Experiences* (London, 2003). On Nordic perceptions of the Baltic, see Kristina Rigert (ed.), *News of the Other: Tracing Identity in Scandinavian Constructions of the Eastern Baltic Sea Region* (Gothenburg, 2004)

[17]   James Curran, *Media and Power* (London, 2002), pp. 3–4.

highlight national actors, structures and institutions. These histories validate
the view that most media history is mono-medial – that is, it looks at either
the press, the book market, film, telephony or broadcasting, but rarely at the
interplay between media forms. A typical example is the national histories of
'the Press' existing in Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden.[18] Even works
claiming to present a Nordic perspective often end up studying the countries
one by one, at most making comparisons, but seldom looking at links and
connections between particular countries and the media outside them.[19]
Only recently has research in media history, inspired by accounts of the social
history of the media, begun to empirically analyse historical media as part
of larger media systems with interrelated media forms embedded in societal
structures.[20]

Perhaps it is the long-standing tendency to view the media – especially the
press – as part and parcel of different political systems that has prolonged the
domination of national perspectives in media history studies. The media in
society have been studied within an intellectual tradition wherein their key
function was to serve as an ally of democracy, as a platform for the development
of public opinion.[21]

Within the field of nationalism research, the role of the media has long been
an accepted point of inquiry, characterized by important texts such as the Cold
War-era study by Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*
(1953), classic studies of nationalism and social movements from the 1980s and
more recent attempts to include a broader range of media forms in the analysis
of nationalism.[22] Some scholars go far as to rank the relation between media and

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[18]   Most prominently in Norway, Sweden and Finland. See Kjell Lars Berge, Nils E.
Øy and Idar André Flo, *Norsk presses historie: 1–4 (1660–2010)* (Oslo, 2010); Karl Erik
Gustafsson and Per Rydén (eds), *Den svenska pressens historia*, vols 1–5, (Stockholm,
2000–03) and Tommila et al., *Suomen lehdistön historia*.

[19]   For example, Jesper Strömbäck, Mark Ørsten and Toril Aalberg (eds), *Communicating
Politics: Political Communication in the Nordic Countries* (Gothenburg, 2008).

[20]   Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the
Internet* (Cambridge, 2002); Jonas Harvard and Patrik Lundell (eds), *1800-talets mediesystem*
(Stockholm, 2010).

[21]   Cristiano Bee and Emanuela Bozzini (eds), *Mapping the European Public Sphere:
Institutions, Media and Civil Society* (Farnham, 2010), p. 16.

[22]   Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the
Foundations of Nationality* (New York, 1953); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of
National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic
Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge, 1985); Stefan Berger, Linas
Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock (eds), *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History,
Media, and the Arts* (New York, 2008).

nationalism amongst the most prominent issues within research in media and communication.[23]

Insofar as European integration on the political level has attracted the interest of media researchers, focus has been placed on the political function of the media in Europe. Such analyses studying media from a European perspective have chosen to highlight the relation between the media and the developing framework of European institutions, seeking to establish how and through which mechanisms the national could be transcended in the field of media and politics through the establishment of a European public sphere, mirroring the national public spheres of the states participating in the Union.[24] The emergence of such research has been aided by EU funding.[25]

In between nation and continent, we find the level of the transnational region. Seen from a long-term historical perspective, the relative lack of transnational political institutions on a regional level has meant that the coordination of values and outlooks across state borders has depended largely on market-oriented factors, since no political institution has supported the development of regional media as a platform for opinion formation.[26] At the same time the ambiguous relation between commerce-driven structures and national or transnational political pressures has meant that mechanisms of mediation have affected the process of region formation in different and not always predictable ways.

The complex relationship between nations and regions is particularly interesting in the field of media, where ever since the nineteenth century we have witnessed a growing intensity of flows across borders. It should be noted that the interconnected nature of European media is not a product of the globalization wave beginning in the late nineteenth century but began in the early modern period, when the 'latest intelligence' from abroad was circulated in primitive broadsheets and handwritten journals.[27] As recent research in the history of

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[23] Sabina Mihelj, 'Media and Nationalism', in George Ritzer (ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology. Vol. VI: LE-M* (Oxford, 2007).

[24] Alec Charles (ed.), *Media in the Enlarged Europe: Politics, Policy and Industry* (Bristol, 2009); Inka Salovaara-Moring (ed.), *Manufacturing Europe: Spaces of Democracy, Diversity and Communication* (Gothenburg, 2009).

[25] Miklós Sükösd and Karol Jakubowicz (eds), *Media, Nationalism, and European Identities* (Budapest, 2010).

[26] The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers have made some attempts at cultural branding of the Nordic region through the media, but the weak political mandate and subordination of these bodies to national parliaments and governments have prevented them from representing a strong framework for supporting transnational Nordic media.

[27] Brendan Maurice Dooley (ed.), *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, 2010); Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper: An International History* (London, 1979).

technology shows, the rapid development of infrastructure during the nineteenth century, and the coordination of transport and communication routes between countries, not only provided opportunities for new forms of collaboration, not least in economic ventures, but also created motives for increased cultural interaction.[28] More communication would lead to better understanding, it was thought.[29] However, it has been suggested that the possibility of closer and more frequent communication also serves to make cultural differences and sometimes incompatible points of view more visible.[30]

The vast networks of news dissemination and the transnational circulation of stories should indeed make us question the idea that any media form such as the press is ultimately related to any one nation and its political system. Scholars speak of particular models such as the 'imperial press system' and discuss how a 'transatlantic print culture' took shape to illustrate how communication crossed state borders.[31] Previously existing flows became embedded in large commercial structures, and the volume of material moving between publics increased dramatically. The unspeakable slaughter of the First World War became an important European media event, as papers using photographs and bold headlines addressed the emotions of newspaper readers across Europe. Circulation of the major papers grew rapidly.[32] Over time, the media market became more and more homogeneous across borders, as business and new media genres' practices became models for competing companies.

Characteristic of the media market in this long period has been the duality and, in some cases, the tension between the media economy made up of both national papers and transnational news agencies on the one hand and, on the other hand, the way in which national newspapers served as collection bins for numerous other media forms, taken from national as well as foreign media.

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[28]   Alexander Badenoch and Andreas Fickers (eds), *Materializing Europe: Transnational Infrastructures and the Project of Europe* (Basingstoke, 2010). Train travel also increased the connection between publics across Europe; see Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: Trains and Travel in the 19th Century* (Oxford, 1980).

[29]   Armand Mattelart, *Networking the World, 1794–2000* (Minneapolis, MN, 2000).

[30]   Menahem Blondheim, '"Slender Bridges" of Misunderstanding: The Social Legacy of Transatlantic Cable Communications', in Norbert Finzschand and Ursula Lehmkuhl (eds), *Atlantic Communications: The Media in American and German History from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 153–154.

[31]   Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System 1876–1922* (Oxford, 2003); Ann L. Ardis and Patrick Collier (eds), *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880–1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms* (New York, 2008).

[32]   Britain is a typical example. See John M. McEwen, 'The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17/3 (1982): 459–486; and Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London, 1990).

Essays and articles were translated, illustrations reprinted, fragments reused and telegrams bought and sold.[33]

In this environment, the production and reception of regional stereotypes depended on many variables. One of the most important was doubtless the growing professionalization of media production and the tendency to take a more commercial view of what was newsworthy. The types of images of Scandinavia or the Nordic region that were distributed depended in part on how editors and writers perceived the market. Were exoticism and neutrality interesting? To whom and through which channels could these images be interesting, either as positive models to embrace or as negative ones to distance oneself from? Who controlled content also changed over time. The all-powerful press editors of the early nineteenth century in some cases saw it as their obligation to publish all the material that arrived at the editor's office, but over time they developed a professional identity and narrowed the definition of what constituted newsworthy material.[34] Their influence was challenged by the incorporation of papers into large news conglomerates and the emergence of news agencies buying and selling news as goods.[35]

How did the Nordic media develop in these circumstances? Rather than placing emphasis on the media cultures and political systems of particular nations, there have been attempts to delineate the dominant paths of development on a wider scale. A recent model receiving widespread attention is the study by Hallin and Mancini on media systems. Their book, *Comparing Media Systems*, groups European countries and the United States into two different models, rooted in historical development. Within this scheme, the Scandinavian system stands out as a curious example, said to be based on a dominance of textual media which grew out of the early and widespread literacy and was characterized by the existence of a party press and a relatively high degree of state interference in the public sphere.[36] Of course, this idea of a Scandinavian, democratic–corporativist media system has not led to the establishment of any lasting Nordic media forms simultaneously addressing the whole region. Despite the existence of a common 'Scandinavian' linguistic heritage, it has proved notoriously difficult to establish a commercially viable Nordic or Scandinavian newspaper, and broadcast companies

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[33]   Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History* (New York, 2001).

[34]   Patrik Lundell, *Pressen i provinsen: från medborgerliga samtal till modern opinionsbildning 1750–1850* (Lund, 2002); Svennik Høyer and Horst Pöttker (eds), *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850–2000* (Gothenburg, 2005).

[35]   Terhi Rantanen, *When News was New* (Chichester, 2009).

[36]   Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (New York, 2004). A transnational but less synthetic approach is offered by Jane Chapman, *Comparative Media History: An Introduction: 1789 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2005). See also Chapter 2 by Lars Nord in this volume.

have supplied different programmes to the different nations. Redistribution of Nordic material or television productions between the Nordic countries has also been lacking. Politicians have sometimes noted this factor and perceived it as a shortcoming, asking why Nordic television shows are so seldom screened in the Nordic countries.[37] A recent initiative to remedy this shortcoming is to start a Nordic branch of the cultural TV-channel Arte, tentatively named Nordic Arte, in an attempt to secure dissemination of more specialized programmes and thereby increase cultural exchange between the Nordic countries.[38]

Concepts: The Nordic Region as a Literary Image

In order to investigate the Nordic region as a mediated entity beyond geography, we need to establish what it means for a region to take shape as an image. An existing body of research has applied perspectives from literary studies, analysing the Nordic region as a literary place, suggesting the existence, in various media forms, of a descriptive narration or discourse on the region, oscillating between fact and fiction. This perspective has been especially notable in research on travel literature, a genre in which sensory observations of place have been transformed into a textual narrative, enabling the reader to both re-create the voyage through interaction with the account and share the perspective and experience of the writer. Research on these types of text often presumes a distinction between the 'real' and the literary place, between the physical experience and its representation. However, this double virtuality of fact and fiction is characterized by biased emphases and conscious omissions.[39] Images of concrete places and their relation to mediated notions of regions are often rooted in long-standing stereotypes and perceptions that have become accepted as general knowledge. Travel accounts present poignant examples of the fluid relation between spatial concepts, such as a region, and their counterparts in individual and collective experiences, as well as their manifestation in media forms. They also present a very concrete example of how different media are interrelated, as travel accounts were often first published in printed news media, only to be printed later in book form, often in anthologies put together by book editors.

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[37]   Ole Norrback, *Varför syns inte nordisk TV i nordbornas TV-apparater? Rapport om nordiskt TV-samarbete* (Copenhagen, 2004). Spontaneous cross-border viewing of broadcasts from neighbouring nations can be said to have provided some degree of transnational integration missing on the institutional level.

[38]   *Udvalgsforslag om Arte Norden*, Nordisk Råd, A 1519/kultur (2012).

[39]   Roland Le Huenen, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un récit de voyage?', in Marie-Christine Gomez-Geraud (ed.), *Les modèles du récit de voyage* (Nanterre, 1990), p. 14; and Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs, 'Introduction', in Hooper and Youngs (eds), *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 2.

In a sense, all media representations constitute a form of travel literature. Even a presumably innocent genre, such as the letter, signifies a movement in space. A medium is then by nature a vehicle of travel. When the press writes about important events, people or odd occurrences and links these to notions of the Nordic region, newspapers not only serve as organs for transporting ideas, but also create a structure that binds the experience of the reader to this literary place called the Nordic region, or *Norden*.

Media representations of place thus constitute a qualitatively and quantitatively rich source for understanding how regions are created and mediated as part fiction and part fact. This hybrid quality of cultural images and stereotypes also implies that they are never neutral, but always linked to political debates and struggles; indeed, it is often in periods of crisis that these cultural bonds are called upon most strongly. The study of national or regional stereotypes is sometimes referred to as 'imagology',[40] which stands for the discursive character of studying national and regional stereotype production and reproduction. Imagology is not sociology and, according to Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, it aims to 'understand a discourse rather than a society'.[41]

If we start out with a spatial, geopolitical definition of the Nordic region as the five countries Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, we also need to look at the meanings it has been assigned if we are to understand the concept of this region. What does the concept of the Nordic region stand for? How are changes in those meanings related to changes in the geopolitical references of the concept? In this process, the mechanisms of mediation and representation have played an important part. Media companies operate under certain conditions. Media genres have certain limitations and media structures have a determined outreach. The interplay between these aspects has partly determined what the Nordic region has been seen to represent, where and in what periods and by whom.

In order to understand the processes whereby media structures shaped different images of the Nordic region in a global perspective, we also need to look at how it has been perceived from the outside. Seen from the outside, the image of the Nordic region, like every image of a region, has a long history filled with varying meanings and contents.[42] Certain strong image clusters,

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[40]   Joep Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and Method', in Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds), *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters* (Amsterdam and New York, 2007), p. 17.

[41]   Beller and Leerssen, *Imagology*, p. xiii.

[42]   Among the more comprehensive studies recently published in English, the following can be mentioned: Arnold H. Barton, *Northern Arcadia: Foreign Travellers in Scandinavia, 1765–1815* (Carbondale, IL, 1998); Peter Davies, *A Perambulating Paradox: British Travel Literature and the Image of Sweden c. 1770–1865* (Lund, 2000); Peter Fjågesund and Ruth Symes, *The Northern Utopia: British Perceptions on Norway in the Nineteenth Century*

or durable stereotype discourses, have survived and been activated in many different contexts. The representative traits of the Nordic region abroad have commonly been a vast and sparsely populated natural environment, a strong state organization and a social structure with a distinctive stress on equality. The image of the simple and, to some extent, unrefined northern peoples appears both as a positive Romantic image and as a negative core-European image stressing the low cultural level of this region.[43] Another strong image is of the modern societies in the Nordic region as peaceful and well organized. Generally, these image traditions have gone through brief periods in which one or another has dominated, periods in which they have become clearly established as xeno-stereotypes.[44] In this volume, we refer to these enduring images as 'imagological discourses', although we otherwise prefer the use of 'image' to 'discourse' when referring to concrete examples in the research material and to less established discursive patterns seen in the source material. The main reason for this is the abundant, and sometimes unclear, use of the term 'discourse' in many scholarly fields. The meaning Michel Foucault gave *discours* points to larger thought and knowledge systems, uniting large groups around a common idea and 'truth'. In this sense, a Foucauldian cultural studies approach would support a distinction between imagological discourses and images.

We also want to highlight the fact that different image traditions can be activated and deactivated to meet the demands of rhetorical strategies. For instance, the image of an unrefined Nordic culture can potentially be reactivated in populist political discourse at a European level. In such cases, the image of the progressive and modern Nordic welfare state is implicitly attacked by pointing to the region's supposed lack of valuable cultural heritage and unassuming lifestyle.

Images of regions are produced both within the areas themselves (auto-stereotypes) and on the outside (xeno-stereotypes). Today, regions are often promoted by active image production by governmental or other official bodies, often called branding.[45] Despite the different structural pressures, the

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(Amsterdam and New York, 2003); Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (ed.), *Northbound: Travels, Encounters and Constructions 1700–1830* (Århus, 2007).

[43] Max Engman, 'Norden in European History', in Gerald Stourzh (ed.), *Annäherungen an eine europäische Geschichtsschreibung* (Vienna, 2002); Peter Stadius, 'Visiting Nordic Modernity around 1900: Spanish Images', in Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang (eds), *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy* (Helsinki, 2010), p. 195.

[44] Mikael af Malmborg and Bo Stråth, 'Introduction: The National Meanings of Europe', in af Malmborg and Stråth (eds), *The Meaning of Europe* (Oxford and New York, 2002), p. 23; Kazimierz Musiał, *Roots of the Scandinavian Model: Images of Progress in the Era of Modernization* (Baden-Baden, 2002), pp. 20–22.

[45] Melissa Aronczyk, 'New and Improved Nations: Branding National Identity', in Craig Calhoun and Richard Sennett (eds), *Practising Culture* (London and New York, 2007), pp. 107–113.

two forms of stereotypes do not develop entirely independently of each other, even if they are often set apart as separate categories in academic study. Rather, they influence each other, which suggests that in the study of images and their formative processes we need to look more closely at the phenomenon of cultural transfer. How do influences in art, philosophy, literature and intellectual patterns in general move from one region to another, from country to country or between language spheres? Current academic research suggests that cultural transfer is not merely a question of intellectual trends moving from a centre to the periphery, sometimes described by the French term *rayonnement*. Instead of picturing intellectual novelties as solar rays from one node, researchers are increasingly identifying multi-polarity and reciprocity in the exchange of intellectual influences.[46] As Michel Espagne has pointed out, so-called small nations and small populations have often played an important role in European cultural tradition as mediators of new ideas from one large cultural sphere to another.[47]

Diverse images of the Nordic region have thus emerged through the interplay between various articulations of self-image at home and attempts abroad to understand the Nordic region as the Other. The connections between these different image traditions have most often been made through the media. Nordic audiences have learned about how they were perceived from the outside through contact with writings and stories entering their own media from abroad. In a reverse process, the outside world has learned how the Nordic region has defined itself. In this back-and-forth movement, the reception of images distributed through media channels has depended on their relative integration with the culture where they ended up.

On a very general level, image transfers are thus part of cultural transfer processes. With the vocabulary of different spaces established at the beginning of this chapter, we may say that the empirical spaces of media structures, through the spaces of flows, distribute particular spaces as images of the Nordic region to media audiences inside and outside the Nordic countries. Or, using the vocabulary of cultural transfer, when the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's work took Europe by storm in the late nineteenth century, it was not just a question of a Scandinavian export of culture soon to be incorporated in the Western cultural canon. Ibsen's plays also had an impact on how the Nordic societies were imagined. A case in point is the image of the Nordic woman,

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[46]   Michel Espagne, *Les transfers culturels franco-allemands* (Paris, 1999), especially chs 1 and 2.; Stefan Nygård, *Filosofins renässans eller modern mystik: Bergsondebatten i Finland* (Helsinki, 2008), pp. 13–23; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: *historie croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory*, 45 (2006): 30–50; Jürgen Kocka, 'Comparison and Beyond', *History and Theory*, 42 (2003): 39–44.

[47]   Michel Espagne; 'Introduction', in *Le prisme du Nord. Pays du Nord, France, Allemagne,1750–1920* (Tusson, 2006), p. 5.

who for many became equivalent to the character of Nora in *A Doll's House* (*Et dukkehjem*, 1879).[48] This is but one example supporting the use of image transfer as a concept in order to explain the formation of the Nordic region from a media perspective. We believe that such strong images sometimes bring about paradigmatic change to certain images, or at least substantially enhance them.

The Materiality of Image Communication

This book argues that in order to study and explain the processes whereby imagological meanings are produced and transferred, we need to look not just at intellectual content, but at the material structures and conditions as well. The idea of nationalism would not have come into being without the Romantic philosophers, nor would it have had the enormous impact it had without steamships, railways, telegraphs and printing presses. The same applies to images, which, as ideas and perceptions, need to be documented and thus materialized in the form of 'goods' that can be passed on through the channels of communication.

When the Czechoslovakian author Karel Čapek in 1936 wanted to alert his countrymen about the dangers of fascism and communism in Europe, he chose as his strategy to publish his travel impressions from the Nordic countries in the newspaper *Lidové noviny*. Čapek's image of an almost utopian Nordic region where no hardships were known reached his countrymen first through the printed press, the dominant media of the time, and he had made the trip according to the possibilities and boundaries of travelling set up by his own time. Čapek adhered to an established media structure, which had made it possible for large audiences to follow explorers to the polar regions and deep into the jungles of Africa. Such serial travel journalism was born in 1871 when the owner of the *New York Herald* paid for Henry Morton Stanley to go to Africa and find the missing David Livingstone, in return for a sensational story.[49] Journalists as travellers were both merchants of authentic observations and stereotypes.

This shows that the materiality of travel – well-beaten tracks, timetables and canonized sights – also plays a part in how a region is perceived and communicated. The chapters in this volume are systematic surveys of the production of texts and, through that, of the production and reproduction of images. We meet a journalist-author-traveller-intellectual who wants to present a region for his or her countrymen. The production of such texts was conditioned by market logic and technical structures, as well as by cultural contexts, supporting more or less fertile grounds for particular images of the Nordic region. The reading

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48   See Elena Lindholm Narváez, Chapter 9 in this volume.
49   See Peter Stadius, Chapter 11 in this volume.

public hungered after stories from new and exciting corners of the world, and nineteenth-century publishers fed that appetite through papers, magazines and books.

Fairs and exhibitions were another important forum for encountering exotic and foreign worlds before the age of radio and television. The majestic world fairs had this function, but smaller fairs and travelling shows that exhibited freak shows, animals and sometimes members of exotic tribes represented the same form of communicating distant regions and their marvels. In both cases, the text and the exhibition, the world was brought to a stationary and local setting, to each individual mindscape. The content of these communications could vary immensely, as well illustrated in this volume.[50]

Communicating the North

In this volume, the content and materiality surrounding image-producing practices and their communication is presented in a number of separate studies. They all contribute to a broad perspective on how a region is produced and mediated over time. Paradigmatic changes in how the Nordic region has been perceived and which substance has been central when actively marketing the region abroad are presented. The chapters in their totality present a wide range of contexts tied to the production, construction and transfer of images of the Nordic region.

Initially, the media system of the Nordic countries is presented by Lars Nord (Chapter 2), who questions earlier attempts to define a specific and unique Nordic media culture and environment. He suggests that media structures in the Nordic countries tend to differ from each other more than they constitute an exclusively uniform Nordic media system. The Nordic countries have even been quite open and self-conscious about the outside models adapted, from the typically German and continental printed press traditions to the clearly British influence on national broadcasting companies. The global connection is further developed in Chapter 3 by Jonas Harvard in his survey of telegraph networks and their impact on the European, and thus also the Nordic, news market. He shows how the emergence of news agencies and established structures of disseminating news items created a structure in newspapers that reached far beyond the Nordic dimension. The typical dateline format of the telegram, naming a city and a date, connected the reader to a time-space which was not held together by a shared Nordic focus, but rather provided coordinates linking together a imagined global net of communication lines. On the other hand, through the interconnected nature of the media, readers across the Nordic region received

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[50]   See Linda Andersson Burnett, Chapter 8 in this volume.

more or less identical versions of what happened in the outside world. This chapter has a strong focus on the nineteenth century, which is also the case with Chapter 4, which covers the media strategies of the Scandinavianist movement. Together with Magdalena Hillström, Harvard shows how a pan-Scandinavian movement that was aiming for a unified Scandinavian kingdom used the printed press for mobilizing support and favourable opinion for this grand political project. In particular, the chapter analyses the media representations of the 1856 student manifestations as an orchestrated transnational media event. It also points out how later research on the Scandinavianist movement has failed to take into account the dynamic of different media strategies tailored over time to meet changing conditions and reach new audiences.

Explicit media strategies for promoting Nordic unity in a later epoch are presented by Tora Byström in her chapter on the magazine *Nordens Frihet* [*Norden's Freedom*] that was published during the Second World War. Byström (Chapter 5) shows how the different conditions each Nordic country was experiencing during the war constantly hindered attempts to promote Nordic unity. The attempt to construct a united Nordic community which would be as strongly felt in the hearts of all Nordic citizens as it was by the enthusiasts behind the magazine, proved difficult. What had started as support for Finland in its struggle against the Soviet Red Army soon became a more complicated issue. Relations with Nazi Germany were, in many ways, a dividing factor, causing tension between the different Nordic countries during the war, a telling example of how the Nordic region as a mediated concept is positioned with respect to bordering regions. Peter Stadius in Chapter 11 shows how different political agendas in Europe and America were decisive for how the Nordic societies were mediated during the 1930s. The contrasts with both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany fuelled a process whereby the Nordic region was defined from the outside in a way that enhanced certain elements observed in reality, while it suppressed other Nordic realities such as the class struggle. These elements are also present in Kazimierz Musiał's and Maja Chacińska's essay (Chapter 13) on how the Nordic community has been constructed in British and Polish media. Their timeframe is longer, continuing all the way to the novel interpretations of Nordic images that appeared in the post-Cold War era. Another strong and original *longue durée* stereotype is presented by Elena Lindholm Narváez (Chapter 9). In her essay on the blonde Scandinavian bikini girl as a stereotype in Spain and the Latin world in general, archaic and chauvinist images are shown paradoxically to be entangled in an intricate fashion with progressive images of Scandinavia and the Nordic region. Far beyond simple eroticism, the liberated Nordic woman signified a societal system diametrically opposed to that of the authoritarian regime in Spain.

A different spatial perspective on how Nordic common identity has been articulated is offered in Chapter 6 on South Africa's pan-Nordic community.

Erlend Eidsvik's study of the expatriate magazine *Fram* brings a global perspective and gives a fruitful extra-European context seldom addressed in this type of research. The forms of preserving and actively practising Nordic identity-building in South Africa during the interwar years presented in his chapter offer an important point of comparison. The Nordicness practised by Nordic immigrants was quite different from later official state promotion from Nordic countries themselves. Nikolas Glover's essay on Sweden's official Information Collegium, 1962–73 (Chapter 10), shows how a Nordic country would position and promote itself with a varying set of images. Sweden was marketed in the United States with emphasis on entrepreneurship while simultaneously being presented as a model for socialism in many newly independent African countries. This line of inquiry is followed up by Carl Marklund (Chapter 12), who looks into the different notions of a Nordic welfare model that circulated in the United States, and its different national connotations. He shows how active promotion of the 'Third Way' and of scientific prowess contributed to Sweden's dominance as a prime example of the Scandinavian system.

The context of 'being on the receiving end' is strikingly present in the chapters dealing with image constructs of Scandinavia in nineteenth-century Britain. Linda Andersson Burnett (Chapter 8) presents a striking illustration of how a Sami family toured Britain as part of a public display of exoticism in the 1820s. Older Romantic stereotypes of Nordic people were actively reproduced in these types of exhibits stressing exoticism. Later, the British images would to some extent change character, as Andrew Newby (Chapter 7) shows. In his essay on the British press coverage of Scandinavia (often including Finland) during the nineteenth century, the interplay between British and Scandinavian Nordic identity is strongly present. The Nordic or Northern image and identity became mutually reinforcing for both regions, as the Nordic Romantic cultural context proved a flexible tool.

As a whole, the chapters provide a broad range of insights, drawing on examples from a wide set of contexts and historical settings, into how the mechanisms of mediatization have contributed to different understandings of the Nordic region.

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