

Norwegian press at a crossroad: Free market or press subsidy?

Rune Ottosen
Jan Fredrik Hovden

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Norwegian press at a crossroad: Free market or press subsidy?

Rune Ottosen, Professor in Journalism at the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

Jan Fredrik Hovden, Professor of Media Studies at the Department of Information Science at the University of Bergen

Abstract

The article discusses the recent development in the Norwegian debate on media policy in light of the findings from a national survey among journalists and editors in November–December 2013. Addressing the attitudes on media regulation among journalists and editors in light of the recent development in the Norwegian market, the result shows massive and wide-spread support for the current press subsidy system among Norwegian journalistic professionals. There are only small differences in the attitudes if we compare journalists' workplace and medium. The editors, however, tends to be more uncertain in their support of the system than regular journalists.

Key words: press policy, press subsidy, role of journalists

Innhold

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to investigate attitudes towards media political issues like press subsidies and the future of public broadcasting among Norwegian editors and journalists. The discussion is done on the basis of empirical findings from a survey among journalists and editors in November–December 2013. The survey was a part of the project World of Journalism (WJS), an international research project initiated to make comparative research across borders on several issues related to the role of journalists and editors.

The data were collected shortly after the general election in September 2013, when the red-green alliance (The Labour Party, The Socialist Left Party and The Centre Party) – strong supporters of press subsidies - lost the election. Following the result of the election, a minority “blue-blue” government was formed by the Conservative party and the populist Progress Party (with parliamentary support from the centrist Liberal Party and Christian Democrats). The new government had agreed upon change in the press subsidy system as one of the issues in their mutual platform. However the text was quite vague stating that: "Review the organization of press support to ensure media diversity, small local newspapers and quality in media." (*Journalisten*, October 7. 2013). As a historical background it must also be mentioned that the Liberal Party and Christian Democrats joined the Conservative Party in a coalition from 1983 to 1989 and during that period accepted huge cuts in the press subsidies. But since then, there had been continued support the press subsidies in the Parliament (Skogerbø 1997). A Royal Commission on media support had been delivered to the red-green government in December 2010 NOU 2010:14), but a white paper had at this time not yet been delivered to the parliament.

The new, more right-wing, government quickly affirmed itself as being less supportive of the traditional press subsidies system than the old government. As a first move, their government declaration proposed to reduce the press subsidy budget with 26,6 million NOK (-9%). The result would be that the traditional Social democratic newspaper *Dagsavisen* and the Christian newspaper *Vårt Land* would have received cuts in their support between 6 and 8 million NOK each. The fact that the previous government had suggested to increase the press subsidy budget with 23 million NOK, combined with their proposed reduction of the planned license fee raise of NRK - the national PBS broadcaster - and their move towards a platform-agnostic model (until then, paper newspapers had been eligible for support, but not purely online newspapers) very likely contributed to the feeling of precariousness voiced by many.

After strong protests from the press, politicians from the red-green alliance now in opposition and press organizations, the government in February 2014 turned and said they would drop the suggested cuts (*Dagbladet*, February 14 2014). At the time of the survey, however, the atmosphere was very much one of uncertainty following from the change of government and the proposed cuts, and the results from the survey - which included questions to the journalists of their attitudes towards subsidies - must be read in the light of this historical situation.

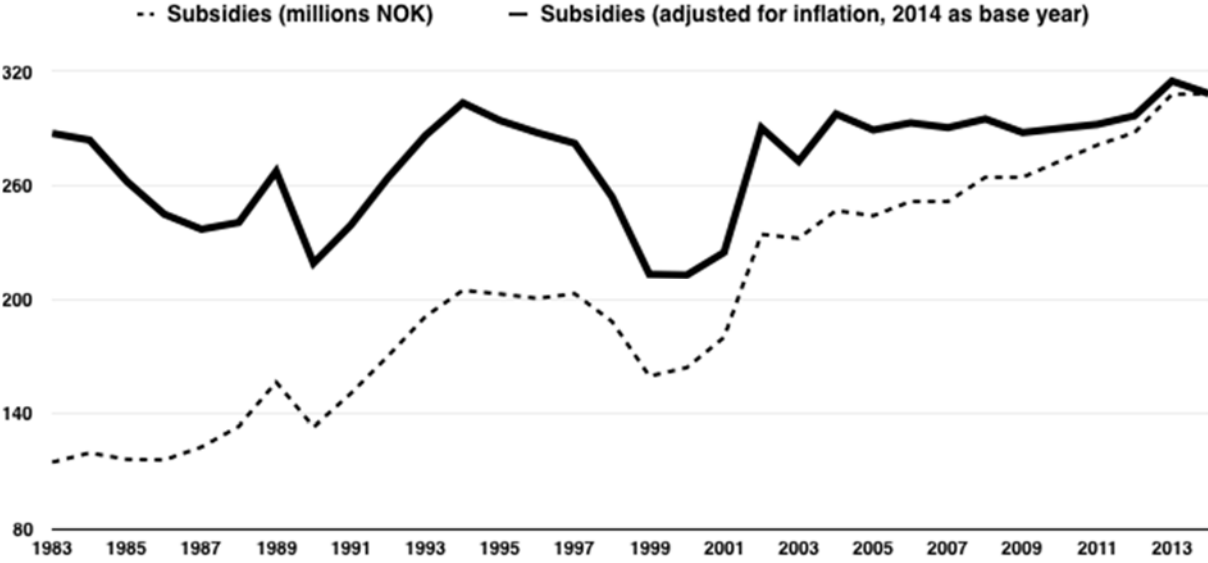
The results from the survey reveal a strong political confrontation between journalists and the neo-liberal policy in the blue-blue government. Since the other Nordic countries also have had press subsidy systems this issue has the potential for a follow up comparative study in the Nordic countries. Traditionally the left wing parties have been overrepresented in the Norwegian journalist community (Østbye, 2009). The survey asked about the Norwegian journalists' political preferences, and this will also be a backdrop for the analyses of their attitudes towards press subsidy.

The Norwegian Press subsidy system - a short background

From the 1880s a party press system developed in Norway. In towns and cities all over the country, each of the 3 – 4 major political parties had newspapers that supported them. This system was destroyed during World War II, but partially reconstructed from 1945 thanks to economic support from the parties. Between 1950 and 1969, approximately 40 newspaper titles went bankrupt, and the system of local party political newspapers came under threat. The production grant for newspapers was originally introduced in 1969, with the aim of maintaining a political plurality of local newspapers, similar to what had occurred in Sweden and Denmark during the 1960s. The main structure in the press subsidy system has been quite stable since the introduction in 1969 with these main points. In addition to the production grant (which is aiming at small, local newspaper and no. 2 newspapers), there are special grants for Sami newspapers and minority language publications¹.

When the Norwegian newspaper subsidies were introduced through the state budget in 1969, the amount was quite modest - with 4.7 million Norwegian kroner of which 3.7 million was given in form of direct support to the newspapers (Skogerbø, 1997). In 2012 the production grant for newspapers alone was 287,9 million NOK. The production grant for weekly and monthly niche papers was 16 million NOK. A total number of 138 newspapers received support in 2012: Small, 109 local newspapers, 24 number two” newspapers, 19 regular “number two” newspapers, and 5 nationwide ideological” newspapers (The Norwegian Media Authority 2012)². The level of the subsidies has varied somewhat through - the adjusted and unadjusted figures for the last twenty years are given in figure 1.

Figure 1: Newspapers subsidies (production grant) in Norway 1983-2014³. Million NOK.



The press and the press organisations were deeply involved in setting up the system from the very beginning. The close relation between the press organisations and the majority of the political community is an important explanation to why the system has had widespread support in Norway, a unity now threatened for the first times since the system was introduced. Even in the owners’ organisation MBL (former NAL) - which traditionally has been close to the Conservative Party - has been supportive of the press subsidy system.

In its recommendation, submitted in December 2010, the Media Grant Committee (Royal Commission) concluded that the current business models of the media industry were under pressure, and that subsidy measures were necessary to guarantee the population broad access to news and public debate of high quality⁴. As late as in November 2014 the press subsidy system was saved in the last minute by the coalition partners Liberal Party and Christian Democrats in negotiations about the state budget for 2015. All the press organizations, including editors, owners and journalists at the time publicly supported the existing press subsidy system.

Background: the media situation in Norway

Around 2010 three media conglomerates dominated the Norwegian newspaper market: Schibsted, Edda and A-pressen. *Schibsted* is Norway's biggest media company, and is also an international company in the sense that close to 50 percent of the shareholders are from outside Norway and the company has media activities (newspapers and online classified advertisements) in many countries. In 2008 the British company Mecom bought a group of Norwegian local newspapers. Mecom gave their Norwegian company an old Norse name, *Edda*. A controversial business model and moving resources and profit from successful Norwegian newspaper to the London based headquarter, caused harm and anger among the journalists (Ottosen, 2011). But Mecom remained an important newspaper owner in Norway for only five years, and in 2013 Edda was bought by the third important newspaper owner, *A-pressen* (now Amedia) with the LO (Norwegian trade unions) as the major owner.

Historically newspaper economy has been based on income from sales and advertisements. This way of thinking was challenged by Schibsted by establishing finn.no in as a separate company taking all the profits from online advertisements market. Five newspapers in the Schibsted sphere started a joint operation to secure the newspapers' interests in online classified advertisements in the 1990s, but from 2000 the ownership of this profitable operation was lifted out of the newspapers and placed directly under the parent company. The trade unions were furious and blamed the company for betraying traditional values in the Nordic publicistic tradition with balance between the level of profits and respect for the integrity of the news room (Oftestad & Kokkvold, 2012). The owners pointed to the realities of the market. Critics of the present government's proposed changes to the press support system has pointed out that their arguments - turning the press subsidies toward a digital direction - fits well into the present policy of Schibsted, which in the last years have moved huge resources from the print part of the company to the digital (see e.g. Allern, 2013). During the last years Norway have experienced a general economic crisis in the media market with huge losses in the circulation of traditional newspapers. Lower sales of newspapers and a dramatic fall in advertisement-market was followed by cost saving and cutbacks in staff and removal of journalist positions. In 2013 the contribution to the Schibsted Group from finn.no was slightly higher than the contribution from the five newspapers owned by the Group.

Gunnar Nygren has through his research pointed out that changes in the media market in direction of multimedia platforms has the base in traditional newspapers. This might also have

effect on the press subsidy system (Nygren, 2008). The digital development has also had impacted on the debate about the press subsidy system, which was created for a newspaper market with only printed press. The future journalist will be expected to have professional knowledge in all platforms (Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2008). A sign of this is a reduction in the total number of journalists for the first time since the Second World War. One of the issues under debate is if the press subsidy system, to help to secure jobs, also should include digital media. This was suggested already by the former red-green coalition in the spring of 2012 (NTB, March 29. 2012). But there has been uncertainty about the exact mode for the future of press subsidy since a government appointed committee in their white paper were unable to gather around one suggested model in December 2010.

Today's print newspaper newsrooms are the main producers of original news, while radio, television and the Internet largely recycles news originally produced in newsrooms that publish newspapers (Lund, Willig & Blach-Ørsten, 2009). The present newspaper structure contributes to a very large part of the diversity in the Norwegian media. To ensure the newspapers as news producers and debate forums in Norway (see last paragraph in the Norwegian Constitution clause 100), it is seen as important that the government maintains support for today's newspapers, at least until one see other media that can assume the important role that primary news producer has today.

An usual argument against press subsidies from neoliberalists is that political interference through economical support creates unfair condition for competition. But to test this argument we have to look closer at the specific features of the media market. A special feature of the media sector, unlike virtually all other types of goods and services, is that almost all of the media derives their revenues from two different markets: the audience market and the advertising market. The public pay subscriptions or single-copy price for newspapers and magazines, they pay license and increasingly - connection fee for tv channels, etc. (Doyle, 2013). The market itself does not create "fairness" since as the biggest actor within each segment gets an unreasonable great share of the income from advertisements. Because of this they can increase the prizes of advertisements and secure unreasonable high profits. The press subsidy system can be used to compensate the smaller actors. It can be argued that since media content is important for the public discourse and political processes, it is a sector too important to be left to the market forces to prioritize. Media is also what can be called immaterial products which demand huge amount of human efforts. The biggest investment is therefore linked to the first copy. To produce several copies is less expensive, and the biggest

media with the largest circulation benefit from this. The danger is that this mechanism can create monopoly for the strongest actors in a local market. The press subsidy system is argued to create a more balanced and fair market. It can also be argued that the traditional print newspapers need protection since it is well documented that best and most important original news stories are produced in the printed press and not in online digital media. The most important public debates are also started in the printed press (Lund, Willig & Blach-Ørsten, 2009). To secure the printed press through press subsidies is important for the public discourse and ultimately for the freedom of expression.

The data and methodology

The research presented here is a part of the global research project *The Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS), an academically driven project that was founded to regularly assess the state of journalism throughout the world. The Study's primary objective is to help journalism researchers, practitioners, media managers and policy makers better understand worldviews and changes that are taking place in the professional orientations of journalists, the conditions and limitations under which they operate, as well as the social functions of journalism in a changing world. More than 80 countries are included in the project.⁵

The two press unions in Norway, NJ (the Union of Journalists) and NR (the Union of Editors) organises a very high percentage of those working in traditional publications for journalism in Norway. NJ organised 9144 journalists by the end of 2013, but only 7000 held a journalistic job (Norwegian Federation of Journalists 2014) and NR approximately 750. Membership in NJ is regulated by formal criteria: they must have journalism as their main source of income or be students at a journalism school.

Two subsamples were made: For the NJ members, a representative sample of 2500 members was randomly selected by NJ secretaries. Of these, only 2426 had email addresses. For the NR members, 350 was randomly selected by the NR secretaries. For NJ the sample included approx. 25 % of the members, for NR approx. 50%.⁶ The survey was distributed as a two separate web surveys in November and December 2013.⁷ An invitation and link to the NJ survey was sent out via e-mail in mid-November, and reminders was sent out to non-respondents after one, two and four weeks. In addition, a postcard reminder was sent via bulk mail to non-respondents at the larger publications in mid-December. In case of the NR survey we were not given access to the members email-addresses. Instead, NR themselves sent out an email early December with the invitation and a link to the survey.

Of these 2776, 33% responded (adjusted rate)⁸. Because NJ membership lists includes retired journalists and journalism students, we have chosen to exclude these from our discussion, so that the relevant gross sample was 2301 journalists, where 791 answered (36% response rate, adjusted). The response rate was much lower (19%) for the editors than for the regular journalists (39%)⁹. For more details, see Hovden & Esperås (2014).

Journalists' attitudes towards press subsidy

In the survey, the Norwegian journalists express strong support for the system of state subsidies, along with some uncertainty about the future, with mostly minor internal variations according to type of work and publication. In the following, we will look closer at their responses to three questions in particular: 1) Do they think that national media policy is becoming irrelevant in light of the global character of media changes? 2) Are they supportive of privatizing - partly or fully - the national public broadcaster NRK (which today is financed by a license fee)? And finally, 3) are they supportive of the existing level of press subsidies?¹⁰.

A state of flux?

Initially, we can note that when surveyed about current trends in journalism (Figure 2 and 3), most journalists emphasize the rapidly changing nature of journalistic work in Norway, in particular the importance of changing technology (e.g. the increasing need for technical skills and use of search engines in journalistic work), but also the changing relations with the audiences (e.g. increasing importance of user-generated content) and increasing economic pressures. In regard to the later, however, almost no-one say that pressures from owners or advertising are directly influential in their work, emphasizing instead internal and professional factors - like editorial policies and professional ethics - or more indirectly effective consequences of economic changes, namely time limits on journalistic work¹¹.

Figure 2: Influences on journalism in Norway which have been strengthened in the last five years (% "a lot" or "somewhat"). NJ and NR members, 2013.

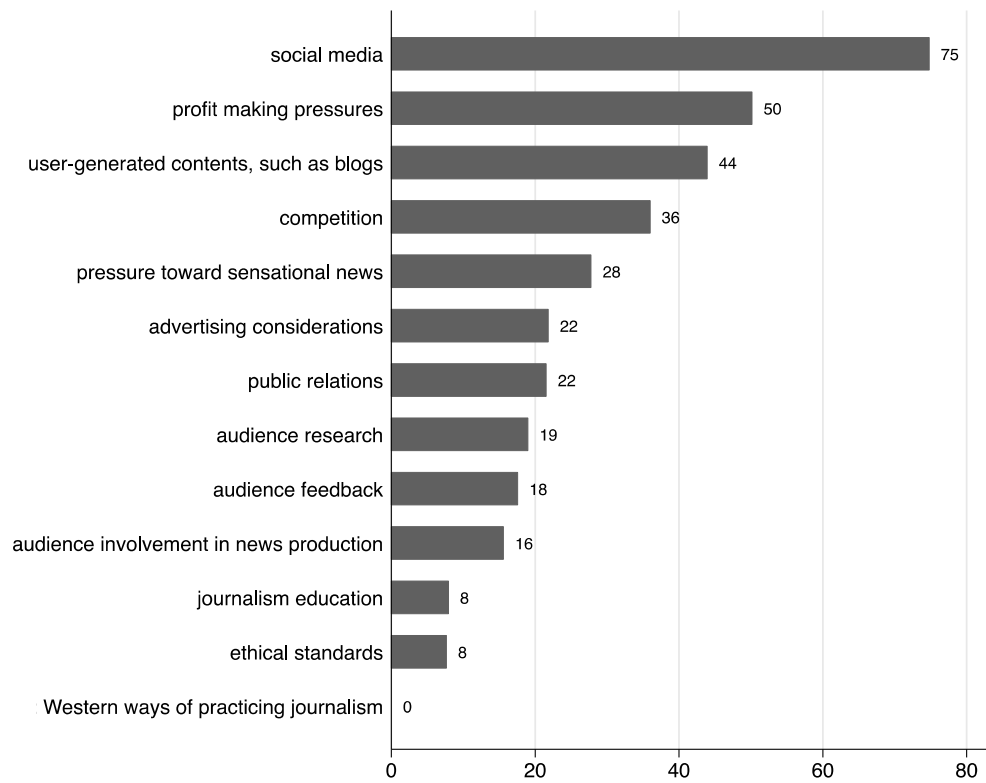
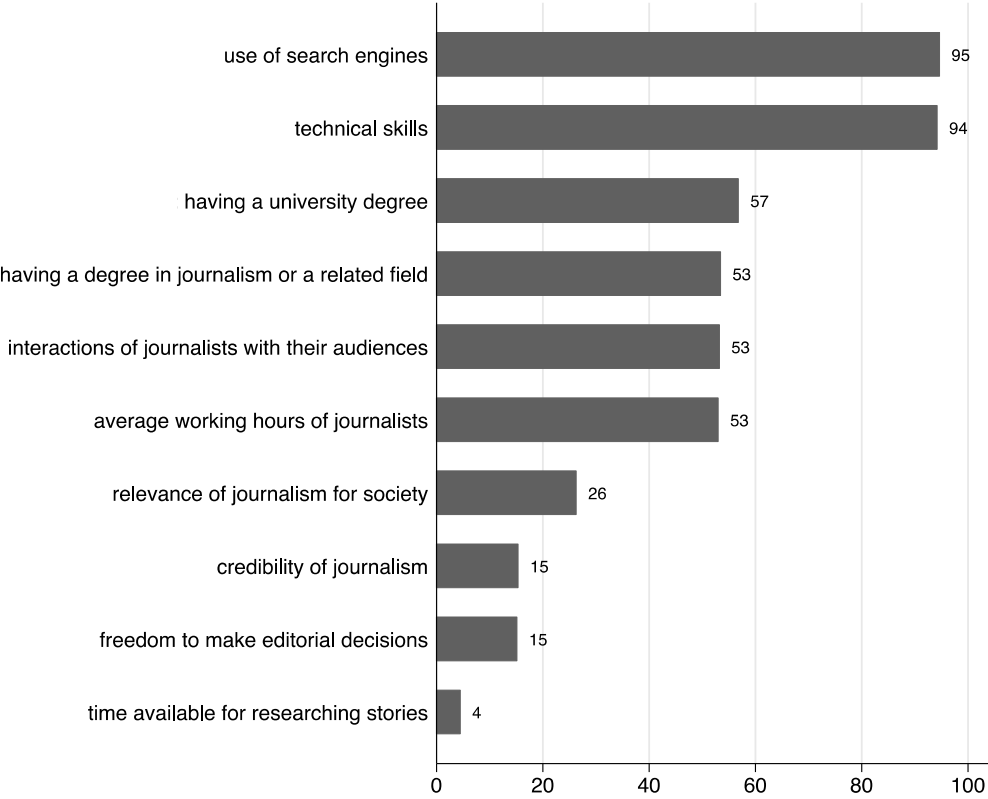


Figure 3: Aspects of journalistic work in Norway that have increased (% "a lot" or "somewhat"). NJ and NR members, 2013.



National media policy - still relevant?

As we discussed in the introduction, “the Norwegian model” in media policy is an active state in a condition to regulate ownership and provide press subsidy. When asking of the continuing relevance of such state policies in face of the global character of change (Table 1), the major finding is mix of defiance and uncertainty. The fact than only two percent very much agree to the statement (fifteen percent agree "somewhat") suggest that a pure neoliberal point of view has little support among Norwegian journalists. More than half are defiant and support its continuing relevance, one in three are uncertain. The last is perhaps the most surprising. Since the battle to protect the press subsidy system was raging in the period when the survey was conducted, one should perhaps think that the awareness of the importance of strong state policies should be clearer than these results indicate.¹² We should also note the ambiguity of such answers: Both people who are disillusioned by the increasingly stronger market, and people on the right who are against an active media policy might agree to the statement.

Table 1. "In light of the global character of the media change, the national media policy of the State is no longer relevant." NJ and NR members, 2013.

	F	M	<1960	60-79	80-	TV	Radio	News-paper	Magazine	NJ	NR	Total
N=	246	238	125	278	374	126	65	461	84	732	59	791
Very much agree	0 %	3 %	2 %	1 %	2 %	2 %	2 %	1 %	4 %	2 %	2 %	2 %
Somewhat agree	9 %	20 %	19 %	16 %	10 %	11 %	6 %	17 %	14 %	14 %	17 %	15 %
Somewhat disagree	26 %	29 %	34 %	30 %	22 %	25 %	33 %	29 %	30 %	27 %	45 %	28 %
Very much disagree	24 %	23 %	25 %	25 %	21 %	26 %	23 %	22 %	20 %	25 %	9 %	23 %
Don't know	41 %	24 %	20 %	28 %	46 %	36 %	37 %	32 %	31 %	33 %	28 %	32 %

A part of this picture is that journalists in Norway are known to be more leftist politically than the average public (Hagen, 2016). Of particular interest for us is that the Progress Party - which is the party most against the whole press subsidy system - has traditionally had very little support among media professionals. This was confirmed in our survey. Less than one percent said they would vote for the Progress Party in the coming election. The Conservative Party, which entered government with the former party and was a election winner with 27 percent of the votes, only received support from 8 percent of the journalists. The Labour Party was approximately represented with 30%, but the Socialist Left, in contrast, were clearly overrepresented (31% in the survey, 4% in the national election). Also the newcomer in the Parliament, The Green party, scored 5 per cent, two percent above the election result. If we look at the support parties for the government - the Christian Party and The Liberal party - which probably was the main reason that the government changed the plan to cut in the press subsidies, these had taken together stronger support among the journalists in the survey (11% and 5%) than in the election (6% and 5%). In effect, those parties which are supportive to the existing press subsidy system have far stronger support among journalists than those against.

Continuing strong support for PBS

As noted, the license fee for the public broadcaster (NRK) is one of the cornerstones in the Norwegian press subsidy system. The most striking impression when we look at Table 2 is the continuing strong support for this arrangement: more than 70 percent very much disagree with the statement that NRK should be fully or partly privatised. At the same time, editors are clearly less likely to disagree than regular journalists. 65 % of the editors answer "Don't

know” (8% of NJs members do) and only two percent of editors ”very much disagree” - compared to 72 % of the regular journalists.

Table 2. "NRK [the State PBS] should be fully or partly privatized." NJ and NR members, 2013.

	F	M	<1960	60-79	80-	TV	Radio	News-paper	Magazine	NJ	NR	Total
N=	246	238	125	278	374	126	65	461	84	732	59	791
Very much agree	2 %	7 %	5 %	6 %	4 %	4 %	0 %	6 %	6 %	4 %	17 %	5 %
Somewhat agree	3 %	6 %	5 %	4 %	5 %	2 %	0 %	6 %	4 %	5 %	4 %	5 %
Somewhat disagree	13 %	10 %	5 %	14 %	12 %	7 %	10 %	14 %	9 %	11 %	12 %	11 %
Very much disagree	72 %	72 %	66 %	66 %	67 %	81 %	85 %	59 %	64 %	72 %	2 %	66 %
Don't know	11 %	5 %	19 %	9 %	13 %	5 %	6 %	15 %	17 %	8 %	65 %	13 %

Historically, editors have been more likely to agree with the owners than with the journalists in issues related to work conditions and press policy (Ottosen, 1996). A similar tendency can be read from the statements quoted in the public consultation to The Media Grant Committee’s report (The Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2013). The Association of Norwegian Editors (NR) stated that the Norwegian system for media grants has been a success, saying that:

Norway is currently a world leader as regards the number of newspapers in relation to its population and per capita newspaper reading. (...) There are probably several reasons for this: historical, topographical, political and financial. We are nevertheless in no doubt that the combination of VAT exemption and production grants for newspapers, in addition to certain other instruments (...) have been and are significant contributions to maintaining and developing an abundance and diversity of newspapers that is quite unique in a global context (ibid.).

The Norwegian Union of Journalists (NJ) in their statement also defended the subsidy system, but was more political radical in that their statement, arguing that the combination of direct and indirect grants has contributed to the development of media diversity and media consumption that one hardly finds any comparison to in other countries. They pointed out that the media create "social value far beyond what is evident from the stock exchange and company accounts and that it is in this context that we must understand the need for media

grants". The NJ is of the opinion that the production grant should be increased and expanded, and that it must be restructured in the form of a platform-neutral, direct grant to stimulate journalistic content regardless of publishing platform." (ibid.). Perhaps we find the explanation in the variation in the attitudes towards the policy for NRK in some differences in media policy in general, where NJ and the journalists tend to be more radical?

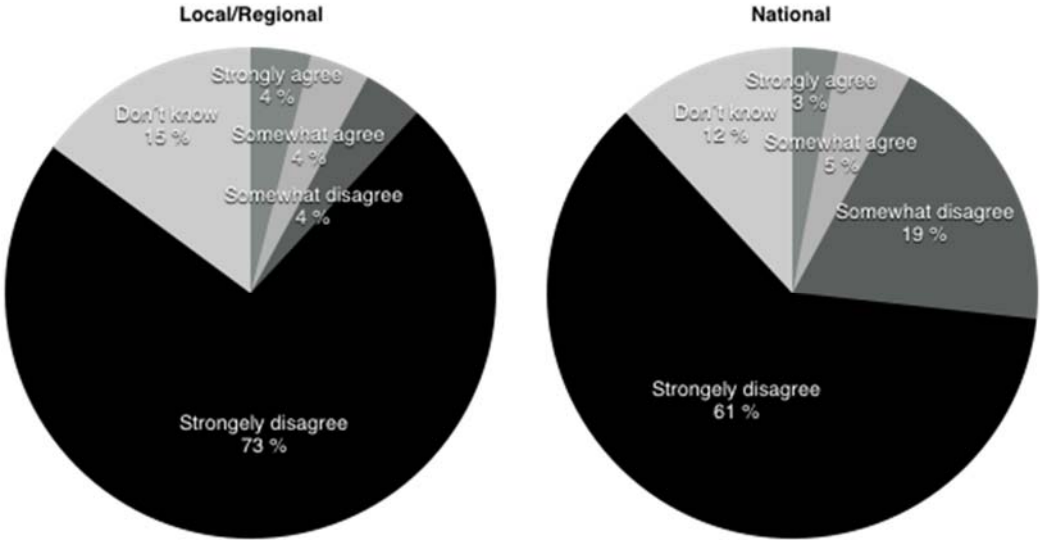
The level of State press subsidies - strong support, but some variation

The support for the press subsidies system appear massive. Only 3 % very much agree that such subsidies should be removed or greatly reduced, and even if we include the somewhat weaker "somewhat agree" only 8 % show any form of support to the idea, and two in three journalists "very much disagree". But similar to the case of NRK, a surprisingly high percentage of the editors (64 %) say they are uncertain (only 6 % of journalists say the same).

Table 3. "State subsidises to the press should be removed or at least heavily reduced." NJ and NR members, 2013.

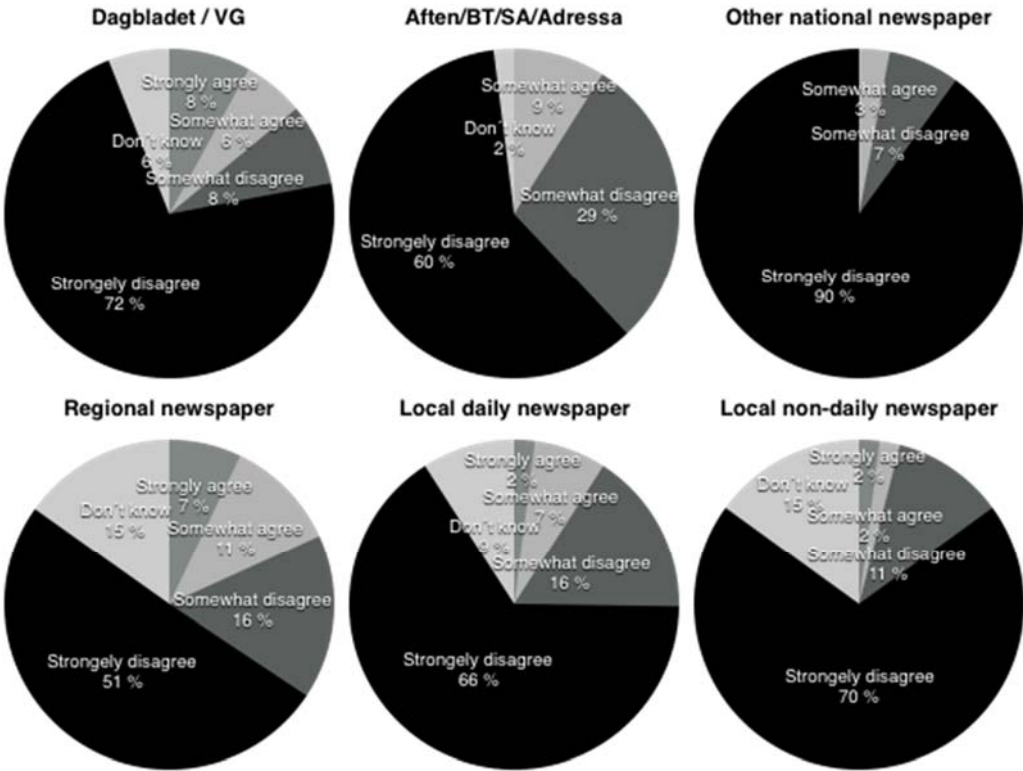
	F	M	<1960	60-79	80-	TV	Radio	News-paper	Magazine	NJ	NR	Total
N=	246	238	125	278	374	126	65	461	84	732	59	791
Very much agree	2 %	3 %	5 %	3 %	2 %	0 %	2 %	3 %	3 %	2 %	9 %	3 %
Somewhat agree	3 %	8 %	8 %	5 %	4 %	3 %	2 %	6 %	6 %	5 %	9 %	5 %
Somewhat disagree	18 %	14 %	15 %	17 %	15 %	15 %	12 %	17 %	17 %	15 %	19 %	16 %
Very much disagree	73 %	70 %	58 %	65 %	72 %	70 %	79 %	63 %	61 %	71 %	0 %	66 %
Don't know	5 %	5 %	14 %	11 %	8 %	11 %	6 %	11 %	13 %	6 %	64 %	11 %

Figure 2: "State subsidises to the press should be removed or at least heavily reduced.".
Local vs. regional media. NJ and NR members, 2013.



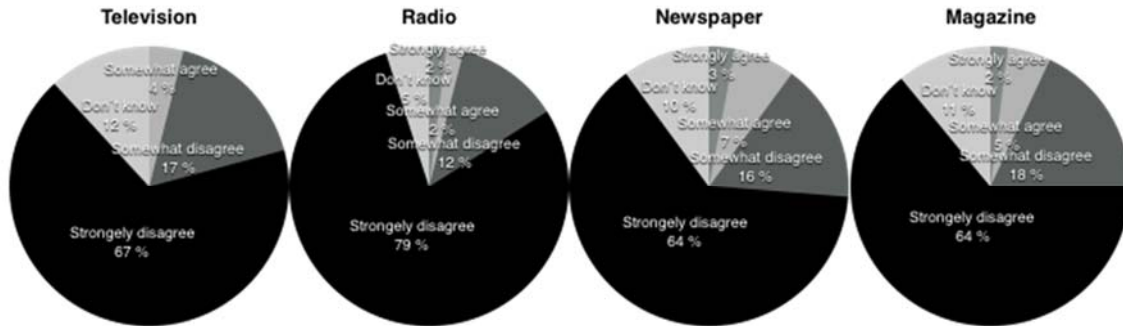
The way the press subsidy system is constructed, local newspapers (if number two in circulation) are more likely to receive press subsidies than the national or regional newspapers. For this reason it's perhaps not a big surprise that fewer respondents in the national newspapers strongly disagree with the argument that state subsidies in the press should be removed or at least heavily reduced.

**Figure 3: "State subsidises to the press should be removed or at least heavily reduced."
By type of newspaper. NJ and NR members, 2013.**



The variation in the answers by type of newspaper journalists work in are not that large (Figure 3). But it should be noted that in the category of regional and national newspapers where Schibsted is in control of large part of the stocks (VG, one of the two major tabloids, and two of the major regional newspapers - Aftenposten and BT), a larger part of the respondents answer "somewhat agree" than "strongly agree" that state subsidies in the press should be removed or at least heavily reduced. Schibsted has argued that a larger part of the press subsidies should be used to develop new digital platforms rather than the printed newspapers. If we compare the answers from those working in newspapers, magazines and radio/television (Figure 4) the general trend in the pattern of answers is remarkably stable. Perhaps it's not that surprising that those working in radio is the group that is most likely to strongly disagree to the statement. Most likely most of them work in the public broadcaster NRK which heavily rely on the present media policy.

Figure 4: "State subsidises to the press should be removed or at least heavily reduced."
By medium. NJ and NR members, 2013.



Conclusion

The result of this survey demonstrates massive support for the press subsidy system among Norwegian journalists and editors. The regular journalists tend to be somewhat more opposed to reduction or removal of press subsidies supportive than the editors, who express great uncertainty. There are only small differences in the attitudes if we compare place of work and medium.

The support for the press subsidy system seems to be strong among all age groups, but strongest among the youngest journalists. Those who have permanent positions seem to be more willing to change the press subsidy system than those with temporary jobs. Men and those who support the right-wing parties appear more willing to remove or reduce press subsidies than the female respondents and those who belong to the political left.

Even so, there is a tendency that those who work in media companies that benefit from press subsidy are most supportive. Radio- and television journalists in NRK are uniformly opposed to changes not only in the PBS financing model (2 % agree), but also in the press support system (3% agree). The most logical explanation for this is that they see the support for a public license for broadcasting as a part of the press subsidy system. In contrast, 15 % of journalists in the commercial broadcasting companies agree (but still, 66% are very much opposed) to privatization of NRK, and 9% agree to a reduction in press support subsidies. A similar picture appears in regard to those newspapers according to perceived benefits of the present arrangement. But as noted, support is also very strong also among journalists in those publications which are in a position to gain by a change.

There is little evidence that suggest that this massive support was the product of the particular political and economic situation in the autumn of 2013. If we look at earlier studies of journalists, we can find similar (if indirect) expressions of support among journalists for the need for financially securing journalistic media from both the tyranny of the market and the owners economic (or political) interests. In 2005 (Hovden, 2008), 42% of Norwegian journalists "strongly agreed" that cross-ownership of media was a threat to free and critical press (24% that foreign ownership offered a similar threat, 31% thought the same of state ownership, 42% of party ownership of media). In light of the strong reigning rhetoric of the unstoppable forces of technological and economic globalisation, it is notable that the Norwegian journalists of 2013 were *less* likely to agree to the irrelevance of a national media policy than they were in 2005¹³.

All this strongly suggest a deep-rooted, wide support of an active, intervening state media policy among Norwegian journalists, also in the age of Internet and global media.

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¹ There is also a distribution aid (Troms and Finnmark). For a full overview over Norwegian state support to media, see Skogerbø 1997.

² More important in economic terms is that all newspapers on paper are exempted from Value Added Tax (VAT). This exemption has a value of between 1 and 2 billion NOK. Electronic newspapers pay full VAT – 25 %. In the State budget for 2015 the government proposed low rate VAT for both paper and electronic newspapers. The government did however not get the support from the Christian Democrats and The Liberal Party, and the press subsidy system was saved.

³ Source: MedieNorge.

⁴ For an interesting comparison of the debate on press subsidies in 1967 and 2010, see Sørgård (2015).

⁵ For more details, see <http://www.worldsofjournalism.org>. The authors of this paper are, together with Helge Østbye, the Norwegian representatives in the project.

⁶ Because the response rate for NR was much lower than for NJ, we have decided to not weigh the data accordingly to the percentage of the respective populations in the analysis, and will treat it as a single sample to better represent the total population of Norwegian journalists.

⁷ A handful (<1%) of responses was given in the first weeks of 2014.

⁸ Excluding those with non-working email addresses, reported deaths and major illnesses.

⁹ The lower response among NR members is very likely to a large degree a consequence of the methodological restrictions imposed on us from the union secretariat, who insisted on themselves distributing the link to the survey. This made it impossible to administer selective reminders to non-respondents, and NR was very reluctant to give further reminders, both factors which are well known to contribute strongly to low response rates (c.f. Dillman 2007).

¹⁰ Note that these three questions was not part of the core WJS questionnaire, but specific to the Norwegian version of the questionnaire, who also added many other questions. For details, see Hovden and Esperås (2014).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² One can also note the gender differences, which appear puzzling as since women in such political issues tend to be more progressive than men (Aardal 2005). The differences, however, mostly vanish when both extreme and moderate agreement are combined.

¹³ In 2005, 3% of NJ and NR members agreed "completely", 33% "somewhat", 47% disagreed "somewhat" and 13% disagreed "completely". Note that the 2005-questions did not include a "don't know" option (Hovden, 2008).