

Nordvision in today's media landscape

Ingrid Corneliussen Austeng

Master Thesis in Media Studies



University of Oslo

Department of Media and Communication

June 1st, 2022

Abstract

This thesis looks closer at how the Nordic public service companies are working together through the Nordvision collaboration in a time of an increasingly competitive media landscape. The study's findings are measured up against a 5-factor theoretical framework to understand how the public service media companies are maintaining their relevance and competitiveness. The data are gathered using a mixed-method approach combining elite interviews of personnel working closely with Nordvision and document analysis of Nordvision yearly reports. An emphasis is put on the drama genre to limit the scope of the thesis.

The thesis shows that the Nordic public service companies become stronger by working together through Nordvision. This accomplishment is especially achieved by co-producing content and sharing it.

Acknowledgment

I have learned so much throughout this process of writing my master thesis. It has definitely been times of great joy and times of massive frustrations. So, thanks to the people keeping me afloat:

First and foremost, my supervisor Trine Syvertsen(S-21/S-22) for critical questions, feedback, and valuable discussions. Thank you for leading me in the right direction and being enthusiastic about the topic together with me.

Thank you also to my experts for making the time in your busy schedule to talk to me about Nordvision. It was a true pleasure and I walked away from every interview with a huge smile on my face having learned something new. This thesis would not have been the same without your perspectives.

Huge thanks to my family for encouraging me, listening to me speak endlessly about the thesis, and taking care of me. A special thanks to my father for proofreading everything, and my mom for snacking on my snacks.

I could have never done this if it were not for the people at Lesesal 415. You have truly been amazing. Thank you for the way too long coffee breaks, wonderful lunches and always checking in on each other. We made it together!

And thanks also to my other friends for being patient with me this year. I promise you will see more of me now.

Table of content

1	Introduction	1
2	The foundation of the study: Public service media, the uniqueness of the Nordic public service providers and Nordvision.....	8
2.1	Public service broadcaster to Public Service Media?	8
2.2	What is special about the Nordic public media companies?	11
2.2.1	Introduction to the core values of the Nordic public service companies	13
2.3	A closer look at Nordvision.....	14
3	Literature describing today’s media landscape	17
3.1	Competition by SVoD services	18
3.2	Need for acquired content.....	20
3.3	Patterns of co-production.....	23
3.4	Contemporary historical view of the Nordic Public service Drama.....	24
4	Theoretical Framework	27
4.1	The challenge of securing content rights.....	28
4.2	Co-producing to create quality Nordic content	29
4.3	An organization permeated with trust.	31
4.4	Culture proximity	32
4.5	Drama is an important genre	33
5	Methods.....	36
5.1.1	Method triangulation	37
5.2	Document analysis.....	37
5.2.1	The Document	38
5.2.2	Advantages and limitations to document analysis	39
5.2.3	The document sample.....	40
5.3	Interview.....	41
5.3.1	Ethical considerations	42
5.3.2	The interview guides	43
5.3.3	The interview setting.....	44
5.3.4	Language as a Challenge.....	45
5.3.5	The sample of the interviewed	46
5.4	A critic of the sample.....	48
5.5	Thematic analysis	49
5.6	Measures of research quality	51

5.6.1	Validity.....	51
5.6.2	Reliability.....	52
5.6.3	Generalisability	52
6	From Nordvision’s perspectives: the competitive media landscape, the organization, and the public service drama.....	53
6.1	The increasingly competitive media landscape	53
6.1.1	Increased challenges by global players	54
6.1.2	Increased competition for content rights.....	55
6.1.3	Challenges as a public service media company in particular.....	57
6.1.4	Experiences working with the competitor Netflix	59
6.2	The uniqueness of Nordvision.....	60
6.2.1	Nordvision as an organization.....	60
6.2.2	The mutual trust experienced.....	64
6.3	The Nordic public service drama.....	66
6.3.1	The Nordic Drama.....	67
6.3.2	The importance of success	69
6.3.3	The N12 collaboration.....	73
6.3.4	The Nordic countries experienced as one region	75
7	Discussion	76
7.1.1	The challenge of securing content rights.....	76
7.1.2	Co-producing quality Nordic content.....	78
7.1.3	An organization permeated with trust	81
7.1.4	Drama is an important genre.....	82
7.1.5	Culture proximity	84
8	Conclusion.....	86
9	Reference list.....	93
10	Appendix: interview guide	99
10.1	Norwegian version.....	99
10.2	English version	101

1 Introduction

The Nordic public service companies have been working together since the end of the 1950s through Nordvision. This consistency makes Nordvision one of the world's oldest living regional television collaborations (Bastiansen & Dahl, 2008, p. 511). Nevertheless, the partnership does not receive much attention from the media or academics in today's media landscape. This thesis will shine some light on this partnership in the Nordic countries.

The organization's primary goal is to strengthen the public service media in the Nordic region. In order to do so, the collaboration has three core activities: co-production, content exchange, and sharing of knowledge (2022, Nordvision).

Generally speaking, few non-commercial, advertising-free public service broadcasters are left in the world. The Nordic countries stand out with a high density of public service broadcasters in an otherwise world full of commercial ones. Hence, it is interesting to see how these public service media companies work together to better their positions and create competitive content.

There is evidence that a hub of co-productions exists in the Nordic countries. This co-production hub can be observed by looking at European co-production patterns. The Nordic public service companies decide to co-produce together time after time (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 88). The audience in the Nordic countries can therefore view Nordic public service dramas. This thesis argues that one of the main reasons for this co-production hub is, Nordvision and the collaboration between the public service media providers.

In October 2017, the Nordvision partners decided to create a strategic collaboration on Nordic public service drama, the N12 agreement. N12 is an initiative where the public service providers share a total of twelve Nordic dramas a year, with streaming rights for twelve months. This agreement ensures a portfolio of dramas on the demand services of the public service providers. The dramas are produced by or for the national public service providers and then exchanged with the other partners (Nordvision, 2022). N12 is still thriving, and in the last five years, 50 dramas have been exchanged due to it (Hartmann, 2022). The N12 dramas are co-production with the other partners and sometimes other production companies outside Nordvision.

Nordvision defines co-production or "samproduksjon" as "A program collaboration with more than one broadcaster/company, but where only one of those are mainproducer." The

main producer, one of the broadcasters, is responsible for the project's content and the economy. Nordvision differentiate between "samproduksjon" and "reell samproduksjon". In a "reell samproduksjon", a genuine co-production, the responsibility for the content and economy are shared between every of the participating broadcasting companies (Nordvision, 2022). A co-production agreement can exist with different levels of engagement. Drama co-productions are essentially cultural exchanges and encounters (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, pp. 79-81).

Cultural encounters happen in every stage of a life cycle of a TV series. With a collaboration like Nordvision, cultural encounters are present throughout the entire process between the different Nordic public service media providers. The encounters can roughly be sorted into happening at four different time stages. The cultural exchanges serve as the foundation of everything that comes out of Nordvision.

At the beginning of the life cycle of the television series, there is the production level, which is a very practical level. Here the cultural encounters are experienced by the individuals working in the production. The individuals experience different cultural backgrounds.

Then there is the institutional level. The institutional level concerns the organizational cultures of the participating partners. Differences in organizational cultures can also be felt when the difference between organizations, such as commercial vs. public service, clashes. With the differences, a cross-over occurs.

Thirdly, there is the content level of cultural encounters. An excellent example of this is the Swedish-Danish co-production, *Broen/Bron/The Bridge*. The producers incorporated the difference in culture into the storyline playing on the difference in actors, stereotypes, language, narrative, and plot.

Lastly, there is the audience level. The experience and conceptualization of a television drama are different depending on where it is viewed. A domestic drama is received differently than a drama from another European broadcaster even though it is a co-production of that broadcaster (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, pp. 80-81). A Swedish television drama co-produced with all the Nordic public service providers through Nordvision will most likely be experienced differently in Sweden than in the rest of the Nordic countries.

Cultural encounters and exchanges have always fascinated me alongside the Nordic community. So, when I discovered Nordvision and their work, choosing the topic for this

thesis was suddenly easy. The cultural encounters and exchange are such an integrated part of Nordvision that it is obvious in a way. In this thesis, the cultural exchange and encounters will serve as the base on which everything is built, even if not discussed.

It is often a challenge to explain what I am writing about, Nordvision. Nordvision is, weirdly enough, an unknown organization to average Joe. Late April 2022, a month before the deadline of this thesis, Aftenposten wrote an article on the drama industry in Norway. The article nicely explains the challenges it is facing, and the cons and benefits of the streaming services' new position, the side of NRK, Viaplay, and Netflix are heard (Aarnes, Wictorsen, Nordli, & Haugstulen, 2022). The import of Nordic drama to NRK was mentioned. Nordvision and the Nordic cooperation could have been a topic. However, it was not mentioned.

Nordvision has shown itself as a research gap. It seems like few if anyone has written anything on Nordvision for decades. However, some researchers mentioned Nordvision without many details in research papers focusing on something entirely else, most likely public service media. The eagerness of the interviewed experts could also be seen as an indication of this not being a topic they usually get contacted on.

Moreover, the related field of co-production studies of TV series is also an under-research field. Co-production revealed itself as a natural topic when talking about Nordvision because this is one of their core activities. The mapping of this field of study is discussed in more detail later.

When writing the book, *The Media Welfare State: Nordic Media in the Digital Era*, the authors had several intentions. One was to make the Nordic a cool and attractive research field (ref personal correspondence with supervisor and book author Trine Syvertsen). This hope implies that the Nordic media landscape, seen as a whole, deserves more attention. I hope this thesis can contribute to bringing some new perspectives into the Nordic interactions by the public service media companies. The authors have at least influenced one student to think that the Nordic media field is cool.

This thesis taps into many research gaps. Nordvision has shown itself as an organization that needs and deserves more attention. The work they do influences the viewers. However, the viewer does not know of its existence. It is an exciting topic when viewed in connection with the changing media landscape.

The research question for this thesis will focus on the relationship between the public service media in the Nordic countries and Nordvision in this time of change for the whole media landscape. It looks at the consequences of a more globalized streaming word in a local context that collaborates as a defense mechanism. The main research question of this master thesis is:

RQ: How are the Nordic public service media companies using Nordvision to stay competitive and relevant in today's media landscape?

The question will further be broken into three sub-parts to cover the different focus areas of the research question and the hypothesis of the thesis. The three sub-research questions serve as the guideline for the theoretical framework.

RQ1: Which qualities does the Nordvision have that make the collaboration unique and relevant?

RQ2: Which factors contribute to making the Nordic public service companies competitive through the Nordvision collaboration?

RQ3: Why is the Nordic drama considered so important for the Nordic public service companies and Nordvision?

This thesis works under some general assumptions and hypotheses.

H1: There exist some common denominators that make the Nordic public media still relevant to the public.

H2: The Nordic Public media are challenged by an increasingly more competitive media landscape, and the Nordvision collaboration is being used to meet and adapt to these changes.

H3: Local public service drama is important for the Nordic Public service companies.

The hypothesis will be confirmed or rejected throughout the thesis. The hypothesis works as the foundation to be able to ask the research questions. You need to be able to assume that local public service drama is essential to the public service in the Nordic countries to ask why they are regarded as necessary.

This thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of the importance of the Nordvision collaboration and how it positively affects the public service media of the Nordic. Doing so

will contribute new perspectives to the co-production studies of television, the Nordic public service media field, and the increasingly competitive globalized media landscape.

The data material used to answer the research question has been gathered with a mixed-method approach. The primary source of data was the yearly reports of Nordvision. Soon, there was a realization that this written document material would greatly be supplemented with qualitative in-depth interviews. Elite interviews were chosen to get a deeper understanding of the workings of Nordvision. I was pleasantly surprised when reaching out to the experts. Everyone seemed eager to talk to me, willing to give their time to speak about Nordvision with much passion. It was so much fun, and I left every interview with a huge smile.

The information extracted from the answers combined with the document material fulfills the requirement of the needed material to answer the research question. The mix-method approach was chosen to counteract the limitation of one approach. The data is analyzed and presented with the use of thematic analysis.

A theoretical framework to understand how the public service companies maintain their relevance and competitiveness was developed to make sense of the data. The framework consists of five factors, *the challenge of securing content rights*, *producing quality Nordic content*, *an organization permeated with trust*, *cultural proximity in the Nordic region*, and lastly, *drama is an important genre*.

The two factors, *the challenge of securing content rights* and *producing quality Nordic content*, is essential to answer RQ2 on what contributes to making the Nordic public service companies competitive through Nordvision. These factors are also used to confirm H2 *The Nordic Public media are challenged by an increasingly more competitive media landscape, and the Nordvision collaboration is being used to meet and adapt to these changes*. The factor, *the challenge of securing content rights*, explains the consequences of the increasingly competitive media landscape. The second factor *producing quality Nordic content* is a measure that the Nordic public service providers take to tackle the challenging media landscape.

The two factors: *an organization permeated with trust*, and *cultural proximity in the Nordic region*, are essential in answering RQ1 on what makes the Nordvision collaboration unique and relevant, and H1 *There exist some common denominators that make the Nordic public*

media still relevant to the public. They are both characteristics of the Nordic region and Nordvision and can be used to explain why the collaboration works.

Drama as an important genre is an essential factor in answering RQ3 on why Nordic drama is important for Nordvision and the public service companies. It also confirms H3 *Local public service drama is important for the Nordic Public service companies.* This factor is the only factor exclusively concerning drama. Drama works in the thesis as the case to examine the main research question of how the Nordic public service media companies more closely are using Nordvision to stay competitive and relevant in today's media landscape. The drama genre was selected to limit the scope of the assignment. All the factors work as the foundation for the discussion.

There is some limitation to the thesis. "Adult" drama was selected as the case of Nordvision to restricts the scope of the thesis. Drama as a focus area was chosen due to the N12 agreement and its impact. N12 has not previously been discussed in academia. Children and youth content are generally omitted. Although an essential part of the Nordvision collaboration, this was also to limit the scope and get a deeper understanding of one case. It is fair to assume that most of the findings are transferable.

Competitiveness is also not discussed in connection with audience rating, the scope of the series outside of the Nordic region, or financial strength and success. These kinds of factors were omitted due to the content of the data material. Nordvision studied using factors on this spectrum should be the topic of another thesis.

This thesis has eight chapters, each with its sub-parts and sections. Firstly, there is the introduction that is soon finished. Chapter two is the background chapter. It defines the key concepts that work as the foundation of this study, such as the shift from public service broadcaster to public service media, the uniqueness of the Nordic public service providers, and Nordvision. Chapter three explains the foundation of today's media situation. It looks closer at the SVoD services, the need for acquired content, patterns of co-production, and the Nordic golden age of the public service drama. Following this is the theoretical framework chapter. The framework has five sections related to competitiveness and relevance. The factors are the challenge of securing content rights, an organization permeated with trust, co-producing to create quality Nordic content, drama is an important genre, and lastly, cultural proximity. Chapter five is the methods chapter that describes the used methods of document

analysis, interviews, and the thematic analysis approach. The choices behind these approaches will be discussed and explained.

Chapter six, the analysis chapter, is named “From Nordvisions perspectives: the competitive media landscape, the organization, and the public service drama.” The three perspectives will work as separate overarching themes. They all have sub-sections where one of the thematic analysis themes is presented.

The following chapter is the discussion that looks closer at the findings in the analysis up against the theoretical framework. This chapter is divided according to the factors of the theoretical framework. The whole thesis ends with chapter eight, the conclusion. The reference list and attached files can be found at the very end. Each chapter will have its own introduction with an insight into what is to be discussed. This choice was made to give the reader a preliminary overview of the chapters.

2 The foundation of the study: Public service media, the uniqueness of the Nordic public service providers and Nordvision

This chapter introduces the foundation concepts of this thesis. The first part of the main research question asks the question of how the Nordic public service media companies are using Nordvision. From this statement, three cases can be deduced that need closer examination. These are the public service media term, the Nordic public service companies, and the Nordvision organization.

The first section “Public service broadcaster or Public service media” look closer at the concept of public service media and its origin the public service broadcaster. It examines the qualities of public service broadcast and media in more detail. The section also affirms the understanding of the public service media that is used in this thesis.

The second section is named “What is special about the Nordic public service companies?”. The section examines this question further. It is a brief introduction to the context of the Nordic countries, the history of the Nordic service broadcasters, the cultural proximity of the countries, and the qualities of the public service media. It is also done by looking closer at the core values of the public service companies of the Nordic countries.

The third and last section concerns Nordvision and is appropriately named “A closer look at Nordvision”. The section gives a short introduction to Nordvision as an organization. A focus is put both on the past and the present.

2.1 Public service broadcaster to Public Service Media?

Defining what a public service broadcaster is, is no easy task. There exist numerous different attempts of defining what a public service broadcaster (PSB) or public service media (PSM) is at different times of history. The term not static, it is highly elastic (Syvertsen, 1999, p. 5). Over the years the definition has changed and adapted to include new features as the technology evolves. As an effort to solve the terminology challenges of today’s media landscape a new term, Public Service Media, has surfaced. Still no single understanding of the term “public service” has crystalised in the 80 years of broadcasting history (Syvertsen, 1999, p. 5).

Hallvard Moe (2011, p. 54) points to the fact that Public service broadcasting “[...] was coined a long time ago in a specific political, technological and social context.” It was first used to describe a service just consisting of radio broadcasting in the interwar period.

The public broadcasting term has since been challenged first by including television and later teletext. Today you can argue that the term also includes online services such as news websites and on demand TV. As a consequence of this massive new inclusion of new technologies, it has been discussed if “public service media” is a better suited term instead of “public service broadcasting” (Spilker , Johannessen, & Morsund, 2020, p. 3).

One of their defining characteristics that often are mentioned in an effort to describe the public service broadcasters, and now also public service media are their social responsibilities. Hallvard Moe (2011, p. 61) compares the public broadcasting institution to city parks. The city parks have value for the city’s population, but the area is a lucrative possible building site for commercial real-estate developers. This analogy shows the different powers that are in play when dealing with something that is created for the public benefit. John Reith, the manager director of BBC, said in 1924 that the social responsibilities of BBC was “To inform, educate and entertain”. Although criticised, these three pillars have inspired, influenced and modelled many public broadcasters (Enli, Moe, Sundet, & Syvertsen, 2010, p. 29)

The program content in public broadcasting can be viewed as a public good to its audience. Often the content is not what the public want, but rather what its need, offering shows both to the masses and to the minorities. A public broadcaster may not be financial lucrative, but the value it brings to the people exceeds the financial burden (Enli, Moe, Sundet, & Syvertsen, 2010, p. 32).

This means the public broadcasters offers a diverse line-up of programs in order to fulfil their social responsibilities. They offer both factual and fictional content as well as being a news provider with daily news broadcast. In addition, the public service media also have a crucial role in time of crisis, as they function as part of the emergency preparedness. When a crisis happens, they have a responsibility to function as an information centre and convey crucial information by the government and other authorities. This also secures the public broadcaster’s position as an important reliable institution of the state (Enli, Moe, Sundet, & Syvertsen, 2010).

The shift from PSB to PSM is on paper a shift in letters. We have gone from broadcast to media to reflect the fact that public service media companies are no longer limited to only radio and television broadcasting. They operate under a more complex distribution system than before. In addition, public service media puts a greater emphasis on the citizens in

comparison with its predecessor. It is in greater extent concerned about the wants and needs of the nation it is serving. The minority as well as the majority should feel heard and represented. Ramsey (in Donders, 2019, p. 1014) “is convinced that being both “popular” and “good” will remain that key distinctive feature of PSM”. This also seems to be the greatest challenge they are facing as an old established institution.

Donders and Van den Bulck (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, pp. 302-303) proposes five core values of public service media. Firstly, and not surprisingly it is universality. You cannot in today’s media landscape limit the technology and platforms to just broadcasting technology such as linear television and radio. This is because you then break the rule of public service media being available and accessible to all the citizens. Secondly, you have the values of quality and distinctiveness. The quality of the public service media should be high and this in turn will distinguish them from the competitors. Thirdly, you have the value of creativity and innovation. The public service media companies should accommodate experiments and innovation both in service and in technology. This will lead to creative services. They also have benefits in the collaborations of the public service broadcastings unions on European level, giving them the possibility to work together stimulating change on a huge scale. Fourthly, the public service media should partake in identity construction and diversity. The public service media in a country is a natural focal point. It has an important part in unifying a nation, keeping a language in life, and bringing closeness to a culture. Both the majority and minority should feel represented and heard by the public service media. It also strengthens the local audio-visual production with again brings the culture together and possible puts issues on the agenda. Lastly, the fifth public service media value is accountability. Public service media should remain editorial independent. They answered both to the citizen and the legislators and should work as a kind of formal control being a spokesman both for the government in informing the citizens but also for the citizens in making it clear what they care about. This is only achieved by the public service media being transparent in their work (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, pp. 301-302).

Furthermore, the public service media cultivates a library rather than a schedule of content, like the public service broadcasters did. “The affordances of internet distribution offer opportunities to create and circulate media without the challenges imposed by a schedule and its associated scarcity” (Lotz, 2018, p. 47). This together with the online present, the news portals of the public service broadcasters challenge the fundamental affordances of the broadcasting term. There has been a gradual inclusion of new technology features into our

understanding of what now is named public service media. True internet distribution is just over a decade old. The first indicator of the public service media was BBC iPlayer launched in December 2007 after beta testing since 2005 (Lotz, 2018, p. 47).

Donders and Van den Bulck perception of public service media with the proposed five core values with Lotz added affordance of the curated library of content will be used to understand the present concept of the public service media in this thesis. Donders and Van den Bulck definition is based in the literature on public service broadcasting, the shift to public service media and in the mission statement of European public service media. However, they omit one of the core characteristics of what the new technology contributes, the generated online library. The play service and online streaming of the public service media, with the N12 collaboration as an example, have proven an important part of this thesis and must therefore be included in the operationalisation of the terminology used.

It is fair to expect that the term public service media/providers/companies will continue to grow and include new technology in the future. Due to this and the rapidly changing media landscape it is hard to say if we ever will get a common understanding of what public service media is or mean. I will use the term public service media or public service provider when talking about the institutions position in today's society and with the technological affordances of today. When talking about the public service broadcast in the past just consisting of radio and television, I will continue to use the term public service broadcasting. The term public service broadcast is also used when it is the preferred terminology used by whoever is referenced. Hopefully this distinction will give clarity and show respect to the field's history.

2.2 What is special about the Nordic public media companies?

Although small and individual, the public broadcasters of the Nordic are pretty similar. Generally speaking, they are all broadcasters with relatively small audiences and small linguistic territories. It serves just a little more than 3 % of the population of Europe, or twenty-five million in five different countries (Nissen, 2013, p. 9). More than that connects these countries, like their shared history and close political bonds. They are all welfare states, and that affects their media system (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014).

The Nordic public broadcasters all began with the radio, which got established as a government-owned public service, license fee broadcasters in the 1930s in their respective countries. The government used these monopoly structures to implement TV as public service

broadcasters in 1950/60. Two of the reasons for the monopoly structures in the Nordic countries are the challenging topography and the idea of all reaching public broadcasters.

The Nordic public media companies in question are the Danish DR, the Norwegian NRK, what have become the Swedish SVT, the Icelandic RUV, and the Finnish YLE. All except for SVT comprising television, radio, and online services such as news-providing websites and on-demand TV. SVT is not a radio broadcaster. SR, Sverige Radio, is the Swedish public service radio.

The Scandinavian languages, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, are understood in theory by the Scandinavians. However, the history of Nordvision collaborations shows some difficulties with this hypothesis, like the 60s Swedish attempt to show the Danish TV show *TV I Tivoli*. The overwhelming negative feedback centered around the difficulties of the Swedes' ability to understand the Danish languages (Björk, 1998). This incident can be read more about in Ulf Jonas Björk's article *The Rise and Decline of a Regional Program Exchange* from the fall of 1998.

Four pillars of the Nordic public service media are identified “They are publicly owned and universally available, they have institutionalized freedom from editorial interference, they are obliged to provide diversity and quality media output, and their existence is based on broad political compromises and a high degree of legitimacy” (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014, p. 71). These four pillars also reflect the social norms and ideals of the Nordic Welfare states.

The Nordic public service media is by researchers characterized as a strong public broadcasting service. Extensive public engagement is one of the trademarks of the Nordic public service media. The public service media are typically well funded by the government, either by taxes or licenses paid by the people and government subsidies. These strong public broadcasters have a strong position in their audience (Enli, Moe, Sundet, & Syvertsen, 2010, pp. 53-54). The statistics also support this claim. More than 90 % of the respective population in the country touched base with their public service media in 2012. Most of the population uses 'their' public service media daily (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014, p. 73). In addition, the internet portals of the public service media in each country are among the top websites (Nissen, 2013, p. 12).

2.2.1 Introduction to the core values of the Nordic public service companies

By looking at the companies individually and their value proposition, an insight into their similarities is gained. A common feature is the position of the public service media as a protector of the democracy and builder of the culture and the nation.

DR's slogan is “Sammen om det vigtige” (Together about the important). The core assignment for the company is to support democracy and reach the entire population of Denmark. This also includes the minority groups. They should contribute to the Danish culture and strengthen the community of Denmark (DR, 2021; Dr, 2019).

In addition to focus on high-quality content for the public, children, and the young, NRK also focuses on quality content for minorities. One of these minorities is the Sami people of Norway. NRK has a dual responsibility to strengthen the Sami and Norwegian people's language, identity, and culture. This dual focus on Norwegian and Sami values sets NRK apart from the other Nordic public broadcasters. Furthermore, NRK has a Nordic paragraph as part of their NRK manifesto (plakat), which are the overall aims of the institution's public-serving broadcasting and institution statutes. The NRK-plakat declares that NRK should broadcast Nordic content and participate in the knowledge-building of Nordic societies, cultures, and languages (NRK, 2021; NRK, 2021).

YLE is the only public-serving broadcast in the Nordic that have a separate “regular” channel devoted to different languages. YLE has both Swedish, Finnish and Sami radio channels. It can be argued that this inclusion is reflected in the YLEs slogan, “For all of us, for each of us.” However, their multilanguage practices are not directly reflected in either Yle's purpose, “We increase our understanding of each other and the world and strengthen Finnish society and culture” or Yle's values, “We are reliable and responsible – we carry out our mission independently. We encourage creativity – we have courage to give room for new ideas. We value the individual – together, we can accomplish something better” (YLE, 2021; YLE, 2021).

The core values of SVT are, “Our vision is to contribute to a more inquisitive, informed Sweden. Our aim is to create content that engages, entertains, and enriches - in the service of the public” (SVT, 2021).

The core assignment of RUV is to inform, educate and entertain. They focus on reliable news services and the highest possible culture and entertainment content. They know their position

and provider of the Icelandic language, history, and heritage. RUV puts a particular focus on quality programs for children and young people (RUV, 2021).

2.3 A closer look at Nordvision

“Ever since its modest beginnings in 1959, Nordvision has been a cornerstone of collaboration among public service television companies throughout the Nordic region” (Hartmann, *Nordvision: the Power of Sharing. The TV and Media Partnership*, 2013, p. 107). I would dare to argue that this instrumental collaboration has been part of shaping the Nordic public service media as we know it today. Nordvision was founded upon the idea of a shared social and cultural community of the Nordic countries with the goal of strengthening the Nordic cultural identity, and at the same time provide quality public service programs.

Today an essential additional ideal is the principle of; “What we have, we share” (Hartmann, *Nordvision: the Power of Sharing. The TV and Media Partnership*, 2013, p. 107). The collaboration today stands on three important legs: co-production, program exchange, and sharing of knowledge and experience.

Nordvision is one of the world’s oldest regional TV collaborations (Bastiansen & Dahl, 2008, p. 511). The collaboration had its initial meeting in 1958 and its first official meeting the following year. Still, a radio collaboration already existed between the Nordic public broadcasters in advance.

The partners from the start were the Danish DR, the Norwegian NRK, the Swedish SVT, and the Finish YLE. The Icelandic RUV joined in 1966. In addition, the partnership has four associated partners KNR from Greenland, KVF from the Faroe Islands, and the Swedish UR and Sveriges Radio (SR). As of 2020, Ålands Radio and TV Ab also joined the partnership (Nordvision, 2021).

Nordvision had, from its early times, facilitated program exchange and co-production between the countries. In more than its 60 years of history, Nordvisions tasks have done its tasks in various ways. One of the earliest flagship parts of the collaboration was the exchange of the Theatre section. Over the years, this section has been instrumental in trying out different collaboration strategies. The drama exchange and co-production collaborations arise directly from the theatre section (Meland, 2001).

The N12 and young adult drama initiatives, which will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis, can be viewed in connection with the early “4 for 12” exchanges practice of the late

60s and until the 1990s. This praxis was that each member land would place four TV-theatre pieces available and then, in return, get twelve theatre pieces back, four from each country. The sixties are also the start of the co-production between the countries through the Nordvision collaboration. The series that marked the start was *Hemsöborna* by August Strindberg, which unexpectedly became more expensive. By asking the Nordvision members for financial support by one-third of the total cost, SR was able to produce the series. That first collaboration opened the door for a new set of co-production collaborations (Meland, 2001). These historic initiatives example serves as of brief introduction to a small portion of what the Nordvision today builds upon.

The Nordvision is still going strong. Nordvision can, from its annual 2020-21 report, report that, “2020 was the second-best year in the partnerships history with regards to the number of Nordic co-productions” (Nordvision, 2021, p. 3). The total number of program episodes co-produced and exchanged is 4675. That includes 12662 episodes or 514 hours of co-produced drama and Nordic productions and 183 episodes or 52 hours of co-produced youth and young adults’ dramas (Nordvision, 2021, p. 48). With the five partners, they operate a total of fourteen flow TV channels and have dedicated online streaming channels. In 2013 they also implemented their Nordif3 distribution system. This system can easily share content, programs, co-productions, archive files, news clips, and raw material between the Nordvision companies (Nordvision, 2021).

The Nordvision collaboration makes the public service media schedules different from their competitors. The partners share drama series, factual programs, news, children’s shows, and other programs (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014, p. 86). Especially TV fiction attracts many viewers. Drama production is costly, and the expectation from the viewer is high. The expensiveness and expectations from the viewers make drama exchange and collaboration an essential part of Nordvision. The audience share of dramas from neighboring countries, reported in 2013, is 35 %. The Nordvision partners even have designated timeslots for these dramas. Likewise, there is a potential for each drama to be shown to twenty-five million viewers (Hartmann, 2013).

The Nordvision is unique. The long history and the current success show the effect and the benefits of this collaboration. They do not just share what they got and collaborate on some projects. It is also a meeting place for media personnel from different countries and companies. In these meetings, they do not meet as competitors but as colleagues ready to learn from each other (Hartmann, 2013, p. 107). Henrik Hartmann, general secretary of the

Nordvision (2013, p. 116), concludes his contribution to, “Public Service Media from a Nordic Horizon” with the statement, “I am convinced that Public Service Media will not survive unless we can look beyond our borders and start collaborating more widely across national frontiers.”

3 Literature describing today's media landscape

The premise of this thesis is a more competitive media landscape. That is also reflected in the first part of hypothesis H2 which takes it for granted that *the Nordic public service media are challenged by an increasingly more competitive media landscape*. The main research question of the thesis only references today's media landscape, and what that involves needs to be examined closer. This chapter will therefore describe a reality of a more competitive media landscape, in four sections.

The first section is named "Competition by the SVoD services". This section starts with defining the term SVoDs or SVoD services which refers to Subscription video-on-demand services. It then goes on to talk about Netflix and its influence as a SVoD service and global video service. That includes a mapping of the Netflix term Netflix original and how that affects the media market in short term. Netflix is considered a major competitor for the public service media. Accordingly, it is essential to look closer on in which ways Netflix is competing with the public service companies to describe the reality of today's media landscape.

Section two, "Need for acquired content" gives an insight into the market of acquired content. It establishes a more competitive situation, and that the acquisition of content is a necessity. The section also looks closer at one of the major distributors for the European public service providers BBC. This section is relevant to the thesis to understand how the public service media are going about doing their job and to understand the reality they face from the international market.

The third section is rather small. It is named "Patterns of co-production" The section shows the evidence of the existence of a co-production hub in the Nordic countries. It takes part in mapping out the workings of Nordvision in academia without actually studying Nordvision. The section tells the reality of the unique situation that is happening in the Nordic countries.

The final section of this chapter is "Contemporary historical view of the Nordic public service drama". This section examines the Danish golden age of the public service drama and the proposed travel of a golden age to Norway. The section tells the story of the success the public service dramas have experienced in the later years. This phenomenon takes part in showing that the Nordic public service companies are relevant and competitive in today's media market. It is also central in giving the background to the findings in the analysis Chapter 6.3.2 "The importance of success".

3.1 Competition by SVoD services

SVoD refers to Subscription video-on-demand services like Netflix and HBO. Amanda D. Lotz (2018) points to a combination of features for the SVoD services that distinguish them:

1. They are non-linear. Users can personally select the content they want to watch from a curated library. The content is available at any time.
2. The revenue streams of their business model are purely based on subscription founding.
3. The SVoDs are based around a taste community. The SVoD recommends the content they think the user would like based on the data collected on this individual.
4. The companies have vertical integration strategies.

They operate both as a content producer and a distributor. It is deemed a disruptive phenomenon due to combining these features into a single business proposition (D'Arma, Raats, & Steemers, 2021, pp. 684-685).

Although different from the public service media, with a different market segment, content library, and approach, SVoD-services are regarded as one of the main competitors for the viewers' attention. Furthermore, by being a global international distributor, they become a competitor for the licensing deals. The big international SVoDs services have in recent years produced high-end, big-budget, original programs that the public service media cannot compete with. Public broadcasters are losing this battle for imported drama due to limited budgets and their limited territory-based reach. In addition, with the SVoDs services shift to become content producers, we see cost inflation for TV dramas (D'Arma, Raats, & Steemers, 2021, p. 685).

Today Netflix is best categorized as a global video service. Netflix has gone from being a post-rental-film service to now being a global streaming platform, a multi commissioner of original content, and a distributor of film and series on a large scale. Netflix is like the public service media now, depending on its content library. Netflix was, however, not established on that value proposition. Netflix was in the past a video mail service.

It is still clear that the service originated and is still run from the US. Netflix still reports the number of subscribers in 2 categories, "US" and "International." This dual division happens although they have 150 million customers worldwide. Customers with whom they have a

direct consumer-subscription relationship to (Lobato & Lotz, 2020, p. 132). Netflix is global in its reach. It is available in over 190 countries. The only countries they inform us that they are not reaching are China, Crimea, North Korea, and Syria (Netflix, 2021). Yet not enough is known about this establishment that disrupts the established norms of the international video distribution scene.

In 2018 it was reported that Netflix, in its first six years in the European market, had reached almost 40 million subscribers. Netflix is expected to reach another 15-20 million subscribers by 2024 (Afilipoaie, Iordanche, & Raats, 2021, p. 308). 2018 also states the year when Netflix released more original production than distributed purchased license content. 802 hours of original content debuted in 2019, 3 % up from 2018 (Afilipoaie, Iordanche, & Raats, 2021).

The reach for Netflix in Europe is enormous both in terms of subscribers reached and in own material exposed. Yet what Netflix is, depends on where you are in the world. Research consortiums on Netflix, such as the Global Internet Television Consortium started in 2016 at the initiative of Amanda D. Lotz and Ramon Lobato, ask these questions, “Is Netflix a global service with local versions, or a collection of national services tied together into a global platform?” (Lobato & Lotz, 2020, p. 135). These questions show the complexity of the streaming services’ effects on the national markets. These are research questions that need more attention in the years to come.

Lobato and Lotz also write (2020, p. 134), “Netflix becomes a useful lens for studying a wider set of cultural, commercial, and political responses to the entry of a foreign service into national media environments.” This notion is also why this research project/network is vital in light of understanding how this media innovation is affecting the public broadcasters of the Nordic.

Netflix’s way of labeling their exclusive content on their platform is named Netflix original. There are several ways for a product to fit into this exclusive content group. Afilipoaie, Iordache, and Raats (2021) have identified four different types of Netflix original types. The first one is the *Licensed original*. Licensed originals are the bought content just so Netflix can distribute it without prior investment in the product budget. This category also includes content marked as an original just outside its domestic market. A local broadcaster may have distributed the content in the domestic market, making it unfit to be labeled an original in the given market.

Secondly, you have the *Continuation deals*. These are shows like *Black mirror*, *Lovesick*, or *Money Heist*. These shows were either bought after a successful first season(s) or after the show's cancelation. Netflix either takes over the production entirely or contributes to the budget. Thirdly you have the *Co-producing or Co-financing* deals. In Europe, most of these co-production/co-financing deals Netflix makes are with public service broadcasters. The founding of the article shows a total of 80 % of the investigated shows. *Lillyhammer* is an example of this category. Lastly, you have the *full Netflix original*. The full Netflix originals are content made exclusively for Netflix by commissioning local independent production companies or using established Netflix production hubs. The benefits of this form of originals are the inherent worldwide rights from the get-go. In later years we see an increase in this type of the original.

The different originals are produced in and in collaboration with various European countries. Still, the research by Afilipoaie, Iordache, and Raats (2021, p. 315) shows that “77 % of total numbers of new titles were made in Europe’s Big Five markets,” 30 % of all new titles were made in Britain. This trend “reaffirms the consolidation of exiting power imbalances in the European market” (Afilipoaie, Iordanche, & Raats, 2021, p. 315). Interesting is it also the fact that 80 % of all co-production/co-financing deals are made with the collaboration of public broadcasters (Afilipoaie, Iordanche, & Raats, 2021, p. 319). Netflix has not yet taken the inherent possibility to make a pan-European production even the possibility.

Netflix original has developed in Europe for the last decade. The development of Netflix and other SVoD services has implications for the rest of the media market in Europe. The Netflix original affects and disrupts the already established market in Europe. It takes part in the increased competition for content rights that already exists.

3.2 Need for acquired content

First, let us look at the number of acquired content for the Nordic broadcasters in 2013. 56 % of the broadcasted hours at DR were acquisitions. For NRK, that number was 52,9 %. SVT has somewhat lower numbers with 50 %. YLE has the least amount of acquisition with 49,6 %. RUV was not part of this study (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 305). As we can observe, the need for acquired content is quite huge. The public service media companies of the Nordic need acquired content to fulfill their public service media mission and their schedule. It is not just one genre purchased, but several. BBC, with its public service mission, therefore, becomes a considerable distributor.

Today's more competitive media landscape has ripple effects on the content acquisition market and the relationships between sellers and buyers. Most notably is the shift to a completely digital media environment and the increased competition with the SVoD services. More and more, the producers want to remain in control of their content. It is nearly impossible to secure catch-up rights for series to show on the public service companies' services. The increased competition has also led to quicker acquisition purchases. Consequently, the media providers make more and more deals while the content still is in the production phase (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, pp. 310-311).

Acquisition buys are a necessity for the public broadcasters of Europe to fulfill their public service mission. They need to have a diverse portfolio, and with their increasingly tighter budgets, this is a tough job. Although a public service company, BBC does not transfer these values to its distribution service BBC worldwide, a distributor unlike the other with its public service media library. This public service focus makes for a dependable relationship between BBC worldwide and the European public service media organizations (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, pp. 311-312). Donders and Van den Bulck (2016, p.313) write a message to the market, "This provides good grounds for public broadcasters to explore ways of collaborating and help further their mutual interests in terms of content production and acquisition, instead of relinquishing the initiative to commercial sales and (separate) acquisition department. This seems the most valid long-term strategy to enable public broadcasters to continue to play their role in society."

One such example is the BBC discovery partnership in the factual TV genre in the European market. The partnership works as an extension of an already long-established Anglo-American TV collaboration history. It is a private-public partnership between BBC Worldwide and Discovery communication Inc. formed in 1998. In contrast to Nordvision, the partnership covers an already extensive linguistic territory with the many native speakers of the English language. Moreover, the programs are also highly popular by other European and global broadcasters. In 2004, one-third of the factual programs at Italian Ray Tree and SVT were of British origin. The partnership has strengthened the position of BBC (Mjøs, 2011, p. 186).

The enormous success of the partnership has also furthered the expectation of the spectacular factual program due to the big budgets of the BBC/Discovery partnership. Especially the natural history and science genre has been spectacularised. This high quality makes it hard for the public broadcasters to compete with their limited budgets in these subgenres (Mjøs, 2011).

The high demand for the high budget factual programs works in favor of this partnership. These are also materials highly valued by the public service companies to fulfill their public service mission.

The acquisition of BBC content is made mainly by three different sales strategies. Firstly, there are the output deals. These deals often go over 3-4 years and are typical for American distributors. Several hours, episodes, or content are specified, but the deal also often includes parts of the distributor's older 'library' content. Output deals are often deals the public service media avoids since they cannot compete with the commercial broadcasters. All the content may not fit the public service profile, and there is a lack of interest in spending money on content that the buyer would not use.

Secondly, there are the volume deals. Money is here the essential element; a set amount is agreed upon for how much the buyer will spend over a set period. This strategy creates a predictable income for the seller, and the buyer, in return, gets the first option of the material. The volume deals between BBC Worldwide and the public broadcasters are generally popular.

Lastly, there is a single product contract. The single product contract is the acquisition of one specific content/product. Pre-buy also works as a form of this content acquisition strategy. A pre-buy contract ensures bigger budgets for the producers, and at the same time, it works as a competitive strategy for the buyer (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, pp. 306-308). The BBC Worldwide is by the interviewed public service media professionals for the study by Donders, and Van den Bulck deemed a relevant distributor for the European public broadcasters. This occurrence is partly because of its diverse portfolio. Shows such as drama production, historical and nature documentaries as well as children's programs are for smaller broadcasters expensive to produce. Still, these programs obtain a central position in the program library for the public broadcasters. It also shows that this is not necessarily of interest to the commercial broadcasters. This fact also makes the public broadcasters of Europe a central buyer for BBC Worldwide (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016).

The slogan of BBC Worldwide is, "Entertaining the world, bring value to the BBC." Interestingly though, is that the BBC, in many instances, works as the poster boy for public service broadcasting and media. It is the ideal organization to look up to. Nevertheless, "BBC WW has no PMS reflex" (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 309). BBC and BBC Worldwide are to be understood as two separate organizations. BBC Worldwide is a

distributor on the same level as any other commercial, profit-oriented distributor. The public service value of universal access is, in other words, exclusively for the citizens of the UK (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 309). One of the key players in the European market is BBC they also are an essential provider of content to the public service media as a distributor.

3.3 Patterns of co-production

Keeping the focus on the European context, I will now look more closely at the research field of co-production studies related to drama production in Europe. Co-production is one of the critical activities of Nordvision and, therefore, truly relevant to this thesis. Still, this is a somewhat under-research area.

Some patterns of the TV-co-productions in the European market are observable. Many productions involve Germany. With that, it is safe to say they occupy a significant role. The researchers observe specific trends structured along two different lines in the co-production landscape. The first line revolves around the power dynamics of the different marked sizes of the European television market. Secondly, it is the line of cultural proximities. One of those lines is the Scandinavian countries with a distinctive co-production pattern and intertwined co-production strategy/collaboration (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 80).

There is a hub of co-production in the Nordic countries. It can be argued that the Nordvision collaboration explains this to many degrees. Data gathered and presented shows that the Nordic countries prefer collaborating with each other rather than with other European broadcasters (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 88). Bondebjerg et al. explain the reasoning behind the Scandinavian patterns as, “The presence of a clear cluster of Scandinavian co-production suggests a mix of cultural and linguistic proximity, combined with the special conditions in the Scandinavian countries, where public service channels have a strong market percent” (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 96).

Interestingly, public service channels are more likely to broadcast European co-productions than commercial ones. Bondebjerg et al. 2017 study found that in the studied 12 countries, the public service companies show 79 % of the first runs of European co-production (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 95).

3.4 Contemporary historical view of the Nordic Public service Drama

It is necessary to look at the period that precedes where we are today to situate my thesis, the research field, and today's media landscape. We need to see what brought us here. We can easier understand the success the Norwegian dramas are experiencing today by looking into the so-called Danish Golden age of drama.

The two first decades of the twenty-first century have been characterized as a "golden age" for Danish public service television drama. Although a golden age only exists in retrospect, the connection between the success of Danish television dramas and the term "golden age" was made by Pernille Nordstrøm already in 2004. Since then, the term has by the press and DR marketing department been used for marketing purposes to influence the research community (Agger, 2020, pp. 25-26).

In television history, several different golden ages of television can be pinpointed and linked to national contexts. The first golden age of American TV occurred in the 1950s. British television had a golden age from the mid-1960s to the 1970s. Robert J. Thompson argues for a second golden age for American TV from 1981 to 1996. A third golden age for American TV is by many argued to have started in the late 1990s or a "post television", "quality television", and "complex television" era, intricately linked to the newly gained position of HBO, Netflix, and other SVoD services (Agger, 2020, pp. 30-32). The Danish golden age is measured against the preceding period of the 1980s to the mid-1990s this period includes the fall of the DR monopoly in 1988. The period was a period of little international export, apart from export to the Nordic countries.

The Danish golden age of the mid-1990s to 2016 is analyzed using Lotman's general pattern of five phases of the process of cultural export and import (Agger, 2020, pp. 33-36). The first phase is characterized by the import of complex serials of the late 1980s and early 1990s, such as *The Singing Detective* by Dennis Potters and *Twin Peaks* by David Lynch. These strange series work as inspiration for the Danish TV industry and prompt innovation. The series also got debated in the press.

In the following second phase of adaptations, distinguished by imitation and translation, it can be observed how these series of the first phase influence the TV industry of Denmark. Most notably is Lars von Trier's beloved *Riget/The Kingdom*, a TV series revolved around Copenhagen's main hospital Rigshospitalet. The series mixes the genre and have a distinctive particular filming style inspired by *Twin Peaks*.

In the third phase, where the influence of the foreign text seems homely, the Danish series gains international recognition. *Rejseholdet/Unit One* became the first Danish drama to win an Emmy in 2002. The Nordic Noir series such as *Forbrydelsen/The Killing*, *Bron/Broen/The Bridge*, and the drama series *Borgen* start to travel and are well received. The first remake of a Danish series, *Riget King Hospital*, was remade by ABC in 2004. Many remakes of Danish series followed this.

In the fourth phase, the Danish series becomes so integrated with the foreign recipient culture that they become phase two products in that country. The concept of ‘Nordic Noir’ is being imitated and translated into new cultures. In addition, several Nordic Noir-series is being remade, such as the American version of *The Killing* and numerous local versions of *The Bridge*. Most famous is the English/French *The Tunnel*. We see the export of the concept of ‘Nordicness.’

In the final phase, the series is inspired by Nordic Noir, and the remakes are being exported back to the Nordic countries. Denmark is no longer the centrum for the transmission. Also, the staff working on these previous productions now gain the possibility to work internationally outside of Denmark because of the recent success of the Danish Golden Age of Television Drama (Agger, 2020, pp. 33-36).

Agger (2020, p. 36) states in connection with the analysis of the Danish golden age, “The pattern described above presupposes a continuous shift between periods characterized by high activity, experiments and vibrant exchange and periods of declining innovative activity.” The analysis helps to describe how Danish television dramas started to travel. It highlights the importance of the success of the Nordic Noir genre of the 2000s and 2010, a genre that helped Danish television drama breakthrough internationally (Agger, 2020, p. 27). Nevertheless, it shows the demanding work of the industry and emphasizes the development of the Danish TV industry rather than highlighting just one product. The directions of the Danish television drama seem to have changed directions. This change points to the end of the golden age, although it is too early to tell because a golden age is determined retrospectively.

The Danish golden age has travelled and influenced Norwegian television dramas ‘so called’ golden age. The know-how of the Danish golden age has been crucial in this development. Resources and knowledge were shared, and the Danish industry has shown that it is possible also for small similar broadcasting systems. Important milestones of the Norwegian golden age are the success of the NRKs series *Mammon* which won an Emmy in 2017. *Mammon* got

a remake by polish HBO. The massive success of ground-breaking *Skam* is also a huge milestone. The success of *Skam* must also be viewed in connection with its many remakes (Agger, 2020, p. 37).

Hard work and happy coincidences are the reasons behind success over time or a golden age. Periods of neighbouring countries can retrospective be linked together to show how success is created. One the fundamental characteristic of the fiction industry is the need for constant innovation and adaptation to always stay relevant (Agger, 2020).

4 Theoretical Framework

This thesis aims to look into how the Nordic public service media companies use Nordvision to stay relevant and competitive. In order to do so, there is a need for a theoretical framework to measure this. The framework combines already established literature to create a framework that works in this context. It consists of five factors that will be used to understand how the public service media companies maintain their relevance and competitiveness.

These are:

- The challenge of securing rights
- Producing quality Nordic content
- An organization permeated with trust
- Cultural proximity in the Nordic region
- Drama is an important genre

The competitive capacity of the public service media in the Nordics is mainly linked to two factors. Firstly, it is *the challenge of securing rights*. This factor describes a foundational struggle experienced by the partners of Nordvision. The second factor especially linked to competitiveness is *producing world-class content*. This factor is a concrete measure taken to secure the position of the public service broadcaster of the Nordic countries in the media landscape.

An organization permeated with trust is a factor needed to understand the workings of Nordvision. The factor contributes to maintain the competitiveness and relevance of the public service companies. It works as the foundation for the success of Nordvision.

The two most central factors to maintain the relevance of the public service media providers in the Nordvision collaboration are the *cultural proximity in the Nordic region* and *drama as an important genre*. The cultural proximity of the Nordic region describes the idea that there exists something familiar in the Nordic countries that binds us together. This factor is also important in understanding why Nordvision and Nordic collaboration are essential. Drama as an important genre is used as a factor to look closer at the drama focus of Nordvision. The public service drama in the Nordic countries has some extra functions.

The five factors will now be discussed in more details in separate sections.

4.1 The challenge of securing content rights

Netflix and other new actors have affected the European media market. Furthermore, Netflix is leading the digital revolution in the audio-visual market. Its impact on the European TV market has happened in many concrete ways. The fragmentation of the financing has increased. The territorial pre-sale market has been redefined. The release window model has shifted. Moreover, the exclusivity of content for the broadcasters has been contested.

These changes make it particularly hard to produce TV fiction, especially in small TV markets. In smaller markets, domestic programming is still prevalent. Nevertheless, the high-quality foreign programs are still cheaper for broadcasters to buy. That is one of the reasons why co-producing/co-financing deals are so important for small market broadcasters (Afilipoaie, Iordanche, & Raats, 2021).

Vilde Schanke Sundet identifies the challenge of securing content rights as one of the significant challenges the public broadcasters face in what she has named the “world championship of streaming”. In the world of global steaming, it has proven more challenging to secure content rights. The competition has become much harder. Consequently, NRK has lost its position as an attractive market for the Norwegian audience to national branches of the global streaming networks with deep pockets. It is no longer enough to have content rights only for linear TV. The audience demands the content available on demand television as well. The content rights need to be long-term and flexible (Sundet, 2021, p. 44).

To cope with the situation NRK has shifted their strategies to focus more on program exchange and co-production arrangements (Sundet, 2021, p. 45). That is in line with the Nordvision partnership and their current focus. Another measure taken is negotiating with national interest organizations to secure rights to the Norwegian-produced content (Sundet, 2021, p. 45).

The increased competition over content rights has been pointed out by many researchers as a for the public service media and the industry is facing. However, the television program acquisition strategies regarding public service media have not been that much researched (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 300).

The need for acquired content is discussed earlier in the thesis. This issue also includes the challenges surrounding the dual role of BBC Worldwide as both a key provider and producer of public service content and a commercial distributor.

The challenge of securing content rights will be used as one of the factors to study competitiveness. It works as the initial challenge that prompts a need for a response to stay competitive.

4.2 Co-producing to create quality Nordic content

There is a hub of co-production in the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries prefer collaborating with each other rather than with other European broadcasters (Ch. 3.3; (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 88). This pattern of coproduction is centred along the line of cultural proximity in the Nordic countries. The co-production hub should be observed in connections with the Nordvision collaboration.

The audience in the Nordic countries measures the quality of Nordic productions against the Netflix content. The chapter “Competition by SVoD services” showed how Netflix “reaffirms the consolidation of existing power imbalances in the European market” (Afilipoaie, Iordanche, & Raats, 2021, p. 315). 77 % of all the new Netflix original titles were made with Europe’s big five markets. The British market stood for 30% of all off Netflix new original titles. 80 % of all Netflix’s co-production/co-financing deals are collaborations with public broadcasters (Afilipoaie, Iordanche, & Raats, 2021, p. 319). This statistic may be explained by public service providers BBC’s prominent position in the European media market. The statistic also shows that Netflix’s focus is not necessarily on the smaller European markets. It, therefore, exists a need for quality Nordic content produced by someone else.

Vilde Schanke Sundet presents the challenge of producing world-class content as one of the four challenges the public service media companies face with the shift to streaming. NRK and the other Nordic public broadcasters, with their modest budget national drama productions, are competing with the extremely high budget global steaming platform drama productions. Although it exists a significant financial gap between the two different providers, the viewers expect the same high quality. They also do not tolerate mediocre content as they may have had when linear TV was their only option (Sundet, 2021, pp. 39-41).

One way of tackling this challenge for NRK has been to heighten the focus on their “unique knowledge of the Norwegian culture” and the power of “culture proximity”. This dual focus has proved essential to stand out from the crowd (Sundet, 2021, p. 41). By focusing on the Norwegian context and Norwegian everyday problems, NRK achieved success both nationally and internationally with series such as *Lillyhammer* and *Skam*. They viewed the challenges they were facing not as problems but as opportunities to reevaluate and think new.

That has also given NRK new incentives to focus on the niche dramas, such as the young-adult's-drama and the bigger, broader dramas (Sundet, 2021).

Academics have also seen collaboration as a strategic response by the public service media, shifting from public service broadcast to public service media. Collaboration and co-production can increase the public service media's production budgets. Consequently, it can make them a stronger competitor to the SVoDs with their own unique market segment (D'Arma, Raats, & Steemers, 2021, pp. 693-694).

However, co-producing quality content for more markets is not always easy. Bondebjerg et al. co-production challenges framework identifies the challenge of creating *coherent quality content for several markets* as a factor (Bondebjerg, et al., Transnational European Television Drama, 2017). That is a concern often vocalized as the fear of creating things such as "Europuddings". Europudding is a bland co-creation that pleases nobody. It seems like the motivation of these productions is more in pleasing partners and satisfying financing schemes rather than the production team bleeding creatively for the project. Europuddings or Nordicpudding must be avoided. The mixing of cultures needs to feel natural in a way. The plot needs to make sense, and the viewer must understand why they are coming together. One of the bridge's biggest compliments was that it was "perceived as Danish in Denmark and Swedish in Sweden" (Scherfig in Bondebjerg et al. p. 118). A part of this challenge is also to make sure that the actor on screen works well together despite coming from different actors' traditions. This challenge also concerns the need for coherent marketing strategies to create a consistent identity for the series. Companies should not just co-produce a series and not care about joint marketing strategies. The marketing strategy should utilize the co-producing partners (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, pp. 115-122).

Co-production to create quality Nordic content will work as a factor in this framework to study competitiveness. This factor can be viewed as a specific challenge that is being solved through the partnership to be competitive. Quality content is viewed as a necessity to compete with SVoD services. It is seen as a requirement by the audience that is used to quality content at the SVoD services. There is a need to produce quality content in the Nordic countries made for the Nordic audience. Content that the viewers can connect to their situation and lifestyle in a language close to their own. However, the quality content needs to feel authentic and natural. It should not feel like co-productions are necessary.

4.3 An organization permeated with trust.

Trust in each other enables the co-production partners to rely on each other time after time. This factor works as the foundation for maintaining the Nordvision collaboration and, therefore, maintaining the relevance and competitiveness of the public service companies.

Bondebjerg et al. have identified three challenges related to creative work in a transnational television production context, one of these being trust. There needs to be a fundamental sense of trust between the transnational partners. This is essential for the partnerships to work. In some cases, trust in each other is enough to get the 'go' for the project. The trust in the partner is so essential that it can be the selling point of the whole project. These co-production projects are often large-scale projects with big budgets and high stakes. The risk of failure can be reduced by knowing and trusting the co-producer partner (Bondebjerg et al., 2017). The Nordvision collaboration with the Scandinavian cluster of co-productions demonstrates this in practice. The Nordic public service media companies are trusted and well-established partners and being so leads to more collaboration.

Every new co-production is a new lesson, you learn from every experience, and you encounter new challenges each time. Every time a project with new partners is started, there is a need in the beginning to try to get along and figure each other out. With old partners, the project builds on old trust, learned and tested communication strategies, and possibly an established coherent strategy for creating quality content for several markets, both in terms of the production and the marketing (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 123). Additionally, the process of co-productions is not easy. As stipulated in the introduction, co-productions are essentially cultural encounters. International co-productions are a complicated, delicate process with many moving parts from different cultural backgrounds. The economic benefits are often huge for the small nations, and it also inherently lies a potential for the series to branch out into bigger markets (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 102).

In Denmark, there exist discussions in the industry for using the connections in the Nordic as trusted partners to create strong transnational Nordic dramas. Hopefully, they will create dramas that can compete with the big US streaming services (Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 123). This notion is interesting regarding this thesis, and the hypothesis of the joint effort in drama production can be seen as a strategy to compete with the streaming services.

Trust in the partnership and partners will be used as a factor to study competitiveness and relevance as it works as the foundation for successful co-productions. It needs to exist in order to get them in the proper position to be able to compete and stay relevant.

4.4 Culture proximity

There is an idea of a Nordic media landscape. It is closely tied to the idea of the Nordic media welfare states. The public service media providers in the Nordic countries are also characterized as strong public broadcasters with extensive public engagement (Ch. 2.2). The idea of a Nordic shared cultural and social community with the goal of strengthening the Nordic cultural identity is the foundation of Nordvision (Hartmann, Nordvision:the Power of Sharing. The TV and Media Partnership, 2013, p. 108). This factor is essential to say something about the relevance of the public service companies in the Nordic region.

From the outside world, the Nordic countries are regarded as culturally homogeneous. The countries are small linguistic territories (Nissen, 2013). The Scandinavian languages, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, are understood by the citizens in theory. Other factors that connect the Nordic countries are their shared history and similar political system (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014). All the Nordic countries have a stable political system, and there exists a relatively broad consensus on the most fundamental political issues. They are public service media in welfare states, meaning the populations have access to free education, health, and social services in return for high taxation. Furthermore, all the Nordic countries are wealthy. That can be shown by looking at, for example, the GNP per capita. They are also regarded as technologically advanced societies (Nissen, 2013, p. 11). Moreover, the public service media of the Nordic is, like most of the public service media in northern Europe, generally well-funded. That is to be seen in connection with their central position in their society (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014, p. 71).

Academics also use the cultural proximity in the Nordic countries to explain the Nordic co-production hub. The Nordic co-productions have taken advantage of the similarities and shared history. “The presence of a clear cluster of Scandinavian co-production suggests a mix of cultural and linguistic proximity, combined with the special conditions in the Scandinavian countries, where public service channels have a strong market present” (Ch. 3.3; Bondebjerg et al., 2017, p. 96).

4.5 Drama is an important genre

Drama is considered an important genre for public service media for many different reasons. The public service companies in Europe are essential providers of drama in their national context. Because of this, drama as an important genre will be used as a factor to study the relevance of the public service media.

Drama is an arena for the public service media companies to partake in identity construction and diversity. The tasks of identity construction and diversity are described as one of the key features of public service media (Ch. 2.1). All the population should feel represented by the public service media, including the majority and the minority. The public service media fulfills an important role in unifying a nation and bringing closeness to a culture. It is also an important place where the nation's language is being used for everyone to be heard. The public service providers can also use drama to put topics on the agenda (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, pp. 302-303).

Dramatist Dennis Potter believes "the great playwrights of the past would surely have sought to use this medium to address their fellow citizens" as the TV is shown in every home in between other TV genres and with "the texture of the modern world all around it" (Self, 1984, p. 1). Raymond Williams believed Britain had become "a dramatized society". These descriptions are made before the time of cable television in Britain (Self, 1984, p. xi). The impact of TV dramas can be enormous. Davis Self is playing with this thought by relating it to the time it would take the Royal Shakespeare Company to match the audience size of a Sunday evening showing of a Shakespeare play. With an audience of 4 million, the theatre company would have to play all its theatre for four years to reach the same audience size (Self, 1984, p. xi). The reach of the drama is crucial for it to reach its potential and entertain and enlighten the audience.

Additionally, dramas work as an arena for the audience to fulfill the need for shared experiences. It creates moments for the audience to share experiences with friends and family. Drama as a way to create shared experiences is something the public service media providers are very aware of. NRK is facing this by having a dual focus, focusing on the big broad drama series and the niche dramas (Sundet, 2020, pp. 38-39).

Double storytelling is a narrator technique that has a dual focus on an immediate plot and reflects an important and critical societal condition, often a more general political or philosophical plot. In the Nordic countries, the double story, also seen as a public service

layer, is viewed as an important part of the drama. The double story is even a part of the DR Dogmas. The drama series using double stories sometimes end up proactively reflecting on society. The goal is to show our society in an eye-opening way (Hansen & Waade, p 165-166).

The use of the double story is evident in the Nordic noir genre that originated in the Nordic countries. The linking of the protagonist's private life and the social-political, economic, and cultural is one of the trademarks of the Nordic Noir genre (Dodds & Hochseref, 2020). Nordic Noirs are crime dramas that combine complex characters and gender issues, with a particular use of Nordic settings and social criticism. It portrays a certain melancholy, often set in the grey month of November in the Nordic countries (Waade, 2017, p. 384).

The goals of Danish and Norwegian television dramas are to fuel debates and offer causes of reflection on the topic of the dramas. The dramas are not meant to be just entertaining. This notion is tied to the public service role of the public broadcasters. Fictional and factual content is believed to play an essential role in stimulating awareness of present issues (Dodds & Hochseref, 2020). Although Dodds and Hochseref are discussing Danish and Norwegian Nordic Noir portraying the vigilante veteran handling geopolitical challenges, it is reasonable to assume that their assumptions are transferable to Nordic dramas in more general terms.

The view of the drama shaping debates and working as agenda settings is also supported by James Curran's quote in Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2009, p. 370),

According to Curran, entertainment texts – and television drama in particular – play an important role in maintaining and regulating public norms, facilitating public debate on social norms and values, enchanting understanding of social realities and ideologies, and forming social identities that influence political allegiances.

Cases and dilemmas from the television series 24 with the main character Jack Bauer were used in the US election by politicians to discuss politics (Tenenboim-Weinblatt). Multiple academics also point to media and pop culture's ability to change how we view disability by positively and fairly portraying such people (Ria Cheyne, Rhonda S Black, and Laura Pretes in Wilder 2017).

Television dramas have the potential to reach a large audience and gather friends and family to watch them together. With the use of the double story and the mission of the public service providers, the drama genre becomes an agenda-setter that has the potential to educate the

audience and affect what the audience is talking about. At the same time, dramas become a point of reference for the viewers and potentially the nation.

5 Methods

“Methodology gives advise on how the scientist can collect, treat and analyze data” (Hellevik, 1991, p. 14). Ottar Hellevik is not shy in pointing out how difficult and complex this process is. He emphasizes the complexity by using Vilhelm Aubert's (1991, p. 14) definition of a method, “A method is a way of doing things, a means to solve problems and reach new knowledge. Whatever means that serves that purpose belongs as part of the arsenal of methods.” These reflections on methods are now over 30 years old, older than me. However, the process is still as complicated.

A qualitative social science approach is deemed most applicable to answer the research question proposed in this thesis. As a media scholar, Brennan (2017, p. 4) defines qualitative research as, “Qualitative research is interdisciplinary, interpretive, political and theoretical in nature. Using language to understand concepts based on people's experiences, it attempts to create a sense of the larger realm of human relationships.” What Brennan suggests is what this thesis set out to do. The research question does not ask for numerical data, which is one of the critical features of quantitative studies (Babbie, 2017, p. 28).

A thematic document analysis of annual reports combined with in-depth elite interviews of Nordvision representatives was chosen for this project to best answer the research question. Researchers argue that document analysis is beneficial when the research revolves around a qualitative case study because of its inherited quality of producing rich descriptions (Bowen, 2009). Nordvision is such a case. The library of annual reports and other important documents are easily accessible to the public through their web pages. The document analysis serves as the base, and the interviews of Nordvision experts will give additional insight into the nuances that the documents do not cover.

This chapter consists of five main parts. Before any of this starts a section on method triangulation is presented in connection with the methodological approach of this thesis. The first main part is the “Document analysis”. In this part what is a document is presented along with the advantages and limitation to the method and the document sample. Part two is named “Interviews”. Here the ethical considerations the study have faced, the interview guide, the setting of the interview, the language challenges and the interview sample is presented. Part three is a short part that discussed the critique of the sample. Part four presents the used analysis method. Lastly there is a section on the measures of research quality. Here the validity, reliability and generalizability of the study is presented.

5.1.1 Method triangulation

The combination of two or more methods or different data in one study is in social studies called method triangulation. Method triangulation can bring different and same points of view together by combining the different methods and data concerning just the same research question. It is beneficial when studying complex and diverse social conditions or phenomena (Grønmo, 2004, p. 67). Bowen (2009, p. 28) goes as far as stating, “The qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence; that is, to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods.” He defends this view by arguing that this is to reduce the biases that may occur as one of the most profound benefits of the method of triangulation. Brennan points out the increased benefit of an extremely thorough and careful analysis and a comprehensive understanding of the researched social experiment (2017, p. 5). Grønmo, on the other hand, points to three different benefits, “1. Gives the possibility for theoretical diversity, 2. Strengthens the confidence of the method and the analytical findings, 3. It makes the foundation for the professional updating” (Grønmo, 2004, pp. 68-69). He concludes that there are many arguments for why it is beneficial to combine methods and data in social research.

The same research design is also used in media studies by renowned academics such as Karen Donders in her 2019 study presented in the article “Public Service media beyond the digital hype: distribution strategies in a platform era.” (Donders, 2019). She chooses triangulation to cross-check her findings. This argumentation aligns with Grønmo's second benefit of method triangulation, the benefit of strengthening the confidence in the findings and methods.

5.2 Document analysis

In short terms, document analysis can be defined as, “Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). This definition is an overly broad definition that does not tell how to do document analysis or that there exist many approaches. There is no easy explanation of document analysis or its procedures. Different procedures and traditions focus on different things and extract different meanings from the documents. When choosing a procedure, there is a need to focus on what kind of question you are answering and what kind of data you wish to extract (Brennen, 2017, p. 1; Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 302).

5.2.1 The Document

There are many different definitions of what a document is. Syvertsen (quoted in Karppinen & Moe, 2012, p. 181) defines documents as “written or audio-visual remains not produced or generated by the author.” This inclusive definition will serve as the basis for understanding a document in this thesis. The definition can be broken into two main parts. Firstly, Syvertsen includes formats such as video and audio in the document debate with her definition. Radio, podcasts, films, TV-material, and SoMe audio-visual content are essential sources in the media research and hence viewed as documents. Being taught in this field, audio-visual documents viewed as document seems like the most natural thing, but it is not like that for everyone. Some researchers limit their view of documents to only including written documents or written documents with visual components such as photographs and diagrams (McCulloch, 2004, pp. 1-3; Bowen, 2009, pp. 27-28).

Video lectures are used in the method chapter to understand thematic analysis better. The recorded lectures are academic sources. The use of these videos as documents supports the view of an inclusive view of documents.

The second part of Syvertsen's definition (Karppinen & Moe, 2012), “not produced or generated by the author,” refers to the fact that the data or documents used are found and not produced for the study. This thesis uses found data for the document analysis part. However, the interviews part of this thesis produces data for this in-mind study.

McCulloch elaborates on the same idea as Syvertsen. However, he widens it. The documents he is concerned with are “[...] produced for other purposes and often with different priorities from those of the researcher.” (McCulloch, 2004, p. 2). This notion is also in line with Bowen's (Bowen, 2009, p. 27) document definition, “Documents contain text (worlds) and images that have been recorded without the researcher's intervention.”

One way of distinguishing between documents is to divide them into private documents such as diary entries, fiction, and letters, and public records such as policy reports, committee papers, newspapers, and magazines (McCulloch, 2004, pp. 1-3). The documents used in this thesis all fall under the public record label.

5.2.2 Advantages and limitations to document analysis

There exist many advantages to doing document analysis. The data can be accessed at any moment by the researcher. It can also contain information that would be difficult to extract in interviews. In addition, documents work as the voice of the author. Modern document research also depends on help from electronic tools, which makes the task much more manageable (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 299).

One of the most advertised benefits is that document research is regarded as unobtrusive and non-reactive. The objects studied are not affected by the research process and, therefore, alter their behavior. Altering behavior sometimes affects studies that use interviews or observation as their methods (Bowen, 2009, p. 31, Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 299).

Further playing on this idea, documents are regarded as stable because they are non-reactive. They are not likely to change. There is also no requirement to get permission from the author to obtain documents found in the public domain, and they are even easier accessible nowadays with the internet. This easy access also comes with its challenges. The documents used in this research are published free on the internet for everybody to access. That could affect the content because not every aspect is likely to be published openly due to several reasons.

By thoroughly declaring the documents in use, the methodological approach of the study, and the protocols for extracting the data, document analysis becomes one of the social science methods that come close to the scientific method. It has a high degree of verifiability. That is because it deals with static documents and not dynamic objects such as humans or meanings. However, the interpretation part is subjective, in that the researcher is trying to make sense and put meaning to the data. Natural sciences such as physics are doing the same thing. However, they use universal mathematics and natural laws to explain the world and not their interpretation. The natural scientist excludes subjectiveness.

A given method has both advantages and disadvantages. The limitation of a method must always be discussed and problematized. Sometimes someone deems a trait to be a benefit that some others argue to be one of the method's limitations. Bowen (2009, p. 31) highlights efficiency as one of the method's advantages. Document research is a cost-effective form of research in that the data used is already gathered by somebody else. It can be argued that it is an efficient method. Instead of doing data collection, the researcher only makes the data

selection. (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). On the other hand, Fitzgerald (2012, p. 299) points out that document analysis could be time-consuming. As shown, this is not an exact science.

When dealing with documents, it is crucial to keep in mind that documents document something worth preserving outside of the document for some unknown reason (Briet, 1951, p. 10; Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020, p. 15). Documents always have a relationship with the past as they are written in the past and often also describe something in the past. The pastness of a document must always be considered. Documents must be examined with the author's context and time and place in history in mind. In many regards, the author shows his or her view of the events through the document. (McCulloch, 2004, p. 5; Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 297).

Documents may be subjective.

Sometimes documents also do not provide sufficient details for the research project's required details. One reason for this may be that the documents are produced for other purposes, as disclosed in the definition of the documents used for document analysis. However, the documents cannot only be blamed. One other limitation of document research may be the researcher's biased selection of documents (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 299; Bowen, 2009, pp. 31-32). Document research is a method influenced by the academic field the researcher is situating herself (McCulloch, 2004, p. 5).

Method triangulation is a way of making up for the limitations of the chosen method.

Researchers often triangulate document analysis with interview data (Fitzgerald, 2012).

5.2.3 The document sample

The sample of the documents analyzed is the annual reports of Nordvision dating back from the 2013/2014 report. 2013 was chosen as the starting point as this marks the year when Nordvision implemented Nordif3. This shift has implications for the collaboration as it makes transferring high-quality content between the countries easier (Ch. 2.3).

All the documents are available on the Nordvision webpage: <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>. The 13/14 and 14/15 reports present an English and Scandinavian version side by side. The 15/16, 16/17, 17/18, 18/19, 19/20, and 20/21 yearly reports for 2022 are available in separate Scandinavian and English versions.

The reports follow a templet consist of an introduction article typically by the general secretary, and the chair of secretary, often a section looking back at the figures for the previous year, after that follows the central part of the report the year's collaboration projects.

All the documents are a mixture of text, photos, and graphs. Nordvision published the latest annual report as an interactive website in line with the genre of a scrolly telling article.

As of 2021, the pdf files of the documents are by Nordvision replaced with a website. The 2020/2021 report was downloadable at the start of this thesis. The annual report of 2022 consists of linked news articles featured as part of the Nordvision webpage. All documents were printed out and worked upon as physical paper formats, except the 2022 article collection downloaded to an iPad and worked on from there.

5.3 Interview

“Interview research is a craft that, if well carried out, can become an art” (Brinkmann & Kvale, *InterViews*, 2015, p. 19). A rule of thumb in deciding if doing qualitative interviews is a suitable method is when you are dealing with a “how-type” of a research question. “How type” of research projects often concerns aspects of human experience or our conversational reality (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 127). This thesis falls under the latter, a conversational reality. This thesis aims to figure out the “how's” Nordvision and the new media landscape. The information and perspectives I am looking for are best guarded by the professionals working closely with this collaboration. Therefore, elite interviews were a natural choice. There would be different informants if the research question concerned the audience's perceived need for Nordic drama.

This study will concern semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are characterized by a predetermined set of questions and themes in an interview guide that the interviewer will follow. The order of the questions may change, and the method allows for asking questions outside of the original plan. It is a flexible approach with a structured core (Brennen, 2017, pp. 28-29; Brinkmann & Kvale, *Doing Interviews*, 2019). A semi-structured interview is a much-used approach when dealing with elite informants. This also influenced the choice of method.

Elite interviews can be viewed as a subgenre of research interviews. The most significant difference is that elite interviews have experts or leaders as their interviewees. The interviewees are often people in powerful positions (Brinkmann & Kvale, *InterViews Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, 2015, p. 4). However, the interviews used the same structure and theory. Nevertheless, some extra considerations and challenges need to be addressed due to the difference in subjects.

The purpose of the interview was to get a deeper understanding of Nordvision, its meaning in the Nordic, and the increased focus on drama productions. The interviews were to shed light on reflections, and opinions by professionals that the documents could not answer. This thesis does not set out to debate the existence of Nordvision hence elites within Nordvision, personnel in leading position at the public service companies where interviewed. The goal was to get their experience with Nordvision and of the collaboration.

5.3.1 Ethical considerations

Some ethical considerations need to be addressed when doing an interview study. Most of the most pressing ones are covered by an approved NSD application. Their templates clearly explain the scope and goals of the study and the plan of how the research materials will be used and stored. It also ensures informed consent. Many unwanted situations can be avoided by imagining being in the opposite situation (Brennen, 2017, p. 32).

The interviews were not offered anonymity in this study. With little effort, their identities could be traced back to them due to the small size of Nordvision and the public service broadcasters of the Nordic countries. The quotes will have more depth by being stated to those to whom it belongs. The people interviewed are also somewhat public persons as they have editor responsibility for their departments. The consent was collected by email. The question of consent was again a topic in the interviews. I pointed out that it was possible to withdraw at any time if they would like. This ethical challenge was solved by offering quote checks before the thesis was published and being vocal about the lack of anonymity in the study. No one expected to remain anonym.

I have tried to be as transparent as possible in this study with my process in the hope that it could be re-enacted by someone else if desired. Natural science was my first meeting with research, which builds on the idea that other scientists should verify experiments. However, they are dealing with procedures ruled by natural laws. In this study, I am dealing with an organization's effects on the media landscape and the effects the media landscape and society have on an organization. There is no lawfulness about that. Consequently, I have followed an interpretative or critical approach.

An interpretative or critical approach assumes that researcher will bring their background and personal perspectives into the research. That means that it is no guarantee that another researcher will arrive at the same conclusions. Objectivity is a goal that is difficult to obtain, although it is the ultimate goal (Nygaard, 2017, pp. 138-139). I am dealing with a local

setting, the Nordic. At the same time, I am a local, brought up in Norway, one of the key countries. I do not think there is a guarantee that a person outside of the Nordic would interpret the material in the same way I do. I also do not know if I am unwillingly bringing a Norwegian bias into this. Maybe a Dane or a Finnish would look at the case differently. I will keep this in mind as I approach the methodology with a critical approach working hard to stay transparent and objective.

It is also possible that my Norwegian background has affected the interviews as the Norwegian context was often used as a reference point by the experts. This bias must be kept in mind when reading this thesis.

5.3.2 The interview guides

The overall goal of the interviews was to answer these three thematic questions:

- What qualities does Nordvision has that make the collaboration unique?
- What kind of challenges is Nordvision facing to continue to stay relevant?
- Why is the Nordic drama that important?

The questions reflect the sub research questions of the thesis (Ch. 1).

The interview guide was divided into two main themes and a short warm-up bit. The questions asked needed to show that I was well prepared and already had some prior knowledge of Nordvision. This was to gain some respect in order to create some symmetry in the relationship. It can be argued that an unbalance in power exists when doing an elite interview (Thomas, 1995; Hirsch, 1995, pp. 76-77). There also exists an unbalance in the fact that I am a master's student writing my thesis, and they are heads of their departments in their respective TV company.

Due to a short interview time, the interviews had a frank, direct start. I made sure to thank the participants for taking the time to participate, conveyed the necessary information, and gave them a chance to ask questions before we started the interview.

The warm-up questions worked as an icebreaker, to get the conversation started. This part focused on the expert's work and connection to Nordvision. The central part of the interviews focused on Nordvision's qualities and work. The goal here was to get to know more of the company's view of Nordvision, how they work together and how it is, and what part of the collaboration they considered most valuable at this moment in time. The interviewees were also asked to reflect on successes and challenges with the collaboration. This part included

Covid's implications of the collaboration as a topic. However, the frustration of Covid-19 was almost always exclusively brought up naturally before it came time to ask this question. Covid as a topic was included in the interviews to get it out of the way and not have it pervade the whole conversation.

Part two of the conversation concerned drama as a focus area of Nordvision. The conversation here revolved around the position of the Nordic drama in the Nordic countries, the N12 list, and the importance of success.

All the interviews ended with me opening the conversation by asking if there were something they would like to add or clarify. This opening led to some new, exciting perspectives being brought up. Sometimes my RQ was brought up, and I got their perspective on the question I am asking in this thesis. The interviewees were also asked or, in most cases, offered that I could reach out by email if I needed some clarifications or additional perspectives.

The complete interview guides can be found in the appendix.

5.3.2.1 Pilot interviews

Before the first real interview with general secretary of Nordvision, Henrik Hartman was conducted, I conducted a couple of pilot interviews. The interview subjects were my mother and one of my sisters. Although they had minimal or non-knowledge of Nordvision, this was an excellent way of evaluating the wording of the questions and how to operate with someone with sparse answers. The interview guide was again altered after the interview with Henrik Harman. That was to be better suited to talk to the partners of Nordvision. This interview guide was also tested as a pilot interview with another sister before the real interviews were conducted.

5.3.3 The interview setting

Scandinavian was the primary language of the interviews. I talked in Norwegian. The expert talked in either Swedish, Danish, or Norwegian. One interview was conducted in English due to the language barrier between the Norwegian and the Icelandic languages.

The last couple of years with covid-19 have taught us the value of video conversation apps. Tools such as Zoom and Teams are no longer exclusively used by some members of the public but have become a necessary tool in everyday life. Covid has led to much of the burden of using video conversation has disappeared because it now is an integrated part of daily life.

Online interviews were chosen with this in mind and the wish to interview professionals outside of Oslo.

I would argue that the threshold for asking for an online meeting has diminished. It is convenient, and time-efficient in that people do not have to move, and the equipment needed us in daily use. The online meeting software also has reasonable built-in solutions for recording the meetings in a way everybody is aware of it. However, as also pointed out by some of the informants, the online meetings are, in a way, restrictive in building relations.

I had initially asked for a 30-minute interview with each. Some interviews ended up lasting a bit longer. The interviewees were made aware of the time limit coming up, and they agreed upon or suggested they had no rush and were willing to answer a few more questions. All interviews ended within 50 minutes.

Elite interviews can offer some extra challenges. Some executives do not simply want to answer the researcher's question. Instead, they are repeating a preprepared script. It can be hard to stop people midst speaking, so the researcher must remain in control. That is also one of the reasons why semi-structured interviews are recommended when doing elite interviews. Especially corporate elites often have PR training and are used to give interviews. However, that is often public speaking or press-related interviews, not interviews with academics (Thomas, 1995; Hirsch, 1995, pp. 76-77).

5.3.4 Language as a Challenge

Language is a mess, and it is beautiful. I have, in this thesis, been dealing with the Scandinavian language at its finest. I have had interviews in Scandinavian with me talking Norwegian to a couple of Swedes, a Dane, a Norwegian, and English to an Icelandic. After that, I have felt the struggle of trying to transcribe it, us talking in different languages but understanding each other.

I chose to keep the conversations in Scandinavian after debating it with my supervisor. We concluded that I would be talking to people who are used to conversing in Scandinavian. I could be offending them by making them talk in English about an organization such as Nordvision that works together for the Nordic collaboration. I also do not have difficulty understanding Swedish or Danish, other than the Danish number system. So, it seemed like the natural choice to talk together in our native language.

When it came to transcribing, there were some tries and errors before settling on the right way. I firstly tried transcribing the Danish interview with the help of the Word transcribing toolset to Norwegian. That was not that helpful and resulted in me carefully editing and listening to every sentence. I then norwegianised some of the Danish languages, words like måske, became kanskje (maybe). This choice was made to ease my work later. I soon realized that this was not a sustainable or the right way to do things. I then changed the language to Danish in the word transcribing tool and used that as the starting point for the transcribing. That was a smart move. Even though I understand Danish well, the nuances became more apparent. Words that I earlier was not able to understand suddenly got a meaning. I continued using this technique in the transcribing works to come.

Difficult words or comments were marked with parenthesis and often with a question mark of suggestions. The transcripts are a beautiful mixture of languages to be translated to English for use as quotes in this thesis. This mix of languages also reflects the work of Nordvision and their websites which are a wonderful mixture of Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and, of course, English.

Since this is not a study focusing on linguistics or language but a study dealing with experts' meanings and opinions, some alterations have been made. Small thinking words or rephrasing have to a high degree, been left out as well as acknowledging words by the interviewer. Language and cultural confusion have been marked in parenthesis as discussed above.

5.3.5 The sample of the interviewed

The interviewed participants in order of the time of the interviews:

Henrik Hartmann, General secretary of Nordvision,

Arne Helsingen, Head of media at NRK, board member of the Nordvision fond

Tomas Nilsson, retired channel chef / programdirektør, SVT

Henriette Marienlund, Head of Fiction & Development, DR

Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson, Head of TV - Program Director at RÚV

Anna Croneman Head, of Drama, SVT

The interviewed experts were sampled using Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method often used when the intended target group is hard to reach. It

involves identifying one person in this population or with intimate knowledge of the population that can referee the researcher to other potential persons of interest. Hence, the sample is created by people adding on as the study goes along (Foster, Diamond, & Jefferies, 2012, p. 128; Babbie, 2017).

Thomas (1995) and Hirsch (1995) also describe this as a challenge, especially when dealing with elite interviews. Elites may be challenging to reach. Hence there is a significant advantage in being introduced or recommended by someone they already know. The researcher needs to use their network to the best of their ability. Nevertheless, the researcher must be clear that they have a compelling reason for reaching out and why they want to interview, especially this person. It is also an idea to ask the interviewee if they have someone else in mind that it would be valuable to interview at the end of the interview. This time can also be used to ask if they have some documents or extra data that can supplement the research project (Thomas, 1995; Hirsch, 1995).

The target group of the study was: Someone with a great insight into the Nordvision collaboration, which takes part in the collaboration (or has done so until recently), preferably with some strategic TV organizational insight and that can give particular insight on the drama as a focus area.

The first target person that had to be included in the study, if possible, was Henrik Hartman, the general secretary of Nordvision. Henrik gladly said yes, and the snowball started to roll. He suggested that I talk to Arne Helsingen of NRK, who also accepted the interview request. Also, he was asked at the end of the interview for more relevant persons for me to interview. He suggested Tomas Nilsson, although he was retired, is a person that has had a strong heart for the Nordic collaboration and Nordvision for the past 20 years. Arne Helsingen also suggested that I reach out to NRKs head of Drama, Ivar Køhn, for further suggestions. I stated that I was looking for informants from Denmark and Iceland. Ivar Køhn suggested Henriette Marienlund, head of Fiction and Development at DR, and Head of TV – Program Direction Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson at RUV. They also gladly accepted. Ivar Køhn also suggested that I talk to the head of Drama in SVT, Anna Croneman, whom he thought would give me more valuable insight into the SVT and different perspectives than Tomas Nilsson. She also luckily said yes.

The perspectives have been different, and I feel like I have landed on a diverse sample of interviewees. I have really met the driving forces of the Nordvision collaboration and the real enthusiast of this partnership.

The public service media in Finland is somewhat of a complex case. YLEs organization is divided into two parts, Swedish YLE and Finnish YLE, which operate under different missions. Hence their relationship with Nordvision is different. Because of that and the scope and time restriction of this assignment, no personnel from Finland were interviewed.

RUV and YLE are the linguistic outliers of the partnership. Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, the Scandinavian languages, is to a high degree understood in between speakers of these countries. Suomi is the only Uralic language in the partnership and, together with Icelandic, is not understood by the other partners.

The five big membership countries also represent three varied sizes of media markets. Iceland is the smallest, with a population of 366 425 inhabitants. Finland, Norway, and Denmark represent the middle media markets with populations ranging from over 5,3 million to 5,8 million inhabitants. Sweden is the biggest media market, with a population of 10,35 million (World Bank, 2022).

The assessment made assumes that the findings of the thesis would represent Finland and YLE. However, YLEs view of and work with Nordvision should be considered a topic of a master thesis in the future by someone else.

5.4 A critic of the sample

The sample can, to some extent, be viewed as one-sided. That is because all the materials are gathered from Nordvision. The document-material researched are the yearly reports published, and the interviews are done with people working closely with Nordvision recommended by people working closely with Nordvision.

Nordvision publishes the documents on the internet. Due to that fact, some information can be omitted. Reasons for that can be to guard 'trade secrets' for competitors or to place themselves in the best light possible. The documents are written and published by Nordvision hence there are no voices of skepticism, critics, or from outside perspectives represented.

The snowball method has provided a set of interview objects that can be categorized as best friends of Nordvision. They are recommended by other "best friends" of Nordvision. Critical personnel are omitted or do not exist. It is people in power positions in the partnerships.

However, the materials and methods were chosen because this is how to get information on the subject matter. Another document material on Nordvision is hard to come by. Nordvision, in general, is proven to be a research gap. The snowball method was also the most suitable way to get on the inside the organization. That is because it is an excellent way of being pointed to the people with the right competence without knowing the organization.

Furthermore, the limitation of the data material to provide critical voices must be viewed as a limitation of the study that I will keep in mind throughout the thesis.

5.5 Thematic analysis

The approach for analyzing all the data gathered was thematic analysis. This approach was deemed most appropriate to answer the research question. I have decided to use a simplified version of the Braun & Clarke reflexive approach to thematic analysis combined with the original. Thematic analysis is an approach that teaches the core skills of qualitative analysis that can be transferred into new forms of qualitative analysis later. It is a tremendous first qualitative method approach for new researchers (Braun & Clarke, Using thematic analysis in psychology, 2006, p. 78).

I have used a combination of written academic papers, their dedicated website <https://www.thematicanalysis.net/> and their published lectures, and the simplified method approach published in “Hvordan bruke teori” as my source materials (Johannessen, Rafoss, & Rasmussen, 2018). Using such a diverse set of different academic sources follows the principles of understanding a document as a media scholar, as discussed earlier.

Clark and Braun define thematic analysis as, “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

One of the major benefits of the thematic analysis approach is its flexible theoretical nature. The approach is not tied to a particular theoretical framework like many other qualitative approaches. It is a “build a bear” aspect of the whole process. It is not a fully prepared bear; the researcher needs to make choices to the process so that it can be fully adapted to their preference. However, they need to argue for their choices. All these choices are not either-or but exist on a spectrum where the researcher leans more towards one approach (Braun V., 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Clarke B., 2019).

I will, in this analysis, lean a bit more toward a deductive approach, the “top-down way”. This approach is more of a theory-driven approach where the analytical interest of the researcher drives the analysis. Often this approach provides a more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data that the researcher is more interested in. The already set research question influenced the coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach was chosen due to the nature of the progression of the thesis. From the start, the approach has been theory-driven, with that being an early focus. Strategies for conducting the analysis were made later. Therefore, the theory has influenced the direction of the interview and hence the questions asked.

The simplified 4 step process used is presented in “Hvordan bruke teori” (Johannessen, Rafoss, & Rasmussen, 2018, pp. 282-312):

1. Preparing

This step meant familiarising myself with the material. That included reading some of the reports before the interviews as preparation, transcribing the interviews, and making them ready to be sent to quotation checks.

2. Coding

The data was initially coded after these themes: Nordic successes, relevance, competition, Nordic drama, international attention, risk, and material not coded. The pre-selected was, however, later revitalized into new themes.

3. Categorization

Adaptions were made after the data material was initially collected. The finalized categories are presented in the analysis chapter. One category adapted after the initial coding was the theme of trust. Data on this theme was found using word searches in the material.

4. Reporting

The next chapter presents the findings. The layout of the analysis chapter is sorted after the themes.

The coding consisted of a mixture of physically coding with a pen on printed paper copies and coding on an iPad with an Apple pencil. The initial physical method was chosen because of two factors. I think better on paper, and it is easier to doodle around. It is also a way of not being distracted by the possibilities of the internet (Johannessen, Rafoss, & Rasmussen, 2018,

p. 294). The interviews were coded digitally to ensure they did not get lost due to privacy reasons.

5.6 Measures of research quality

For every study done there should be a discussion of how well the method used measures what you intend to study. This will here be done with the use of the concept's validity, reliability and generalisability.

5.6.1 Validity

Validity depends on whether we are studying our intended concept and not something else. To best explain validity, two questions are often used, "Are you measuring what you want to measure?" and "Are your data and your analysis trustworthy?" That also connects to how well the researcher measures what they set out to measure in their research question. One crucial step to ensure validity in a study is to make sure the terminology, the RQ, and the theory used is operationalized (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog, Larsen, & Moe, 2013, pp. 25-28; Neuendorf, 2016).

The research question of this thesis sets out to measure competitiveness and relevance. The framework created to study this is rooted in already established academic literature. The factors are thoroughly explained and operationalized (Ch. 4). The concept and terminology used in the thesis such as public service media, Nordvision, Nordic media landscape, co-production, SVoDs and so on are operationalized and explained in beginning chapters (Ch. 2, Ch. 3). This is to ensure the validity of the thesis and to give the readers the needed background to understand.

The data material is deemed trustworthy, but coloured. The document material was not produced with research in mind. In the yearly reports they speak positively of their achievements. The elites were willing in the interviews to discuss Nordvision both from negatively and positively sides. There is no reason to believe they are not trustfully; the elites are likely positively contributing and believing the collaboration. So, their answers may be coloured by that. True critics were not interviewed in this study.

Another aspect where validity was considered was the pilot interviews (Ch. 5.3.2.1) They were also used to check if the questions in the interviews guide pointed the interviewees to the intended topic.

5.6.2 Reliability

Reliability measures how dependable the quality of the data gathering, coding, and analysis is. There exist many possible error sources in this process (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog, Larsen, & Moe, 2013, pp. 27-28).

One particularly challenge of reliability in this study is related to the process of coding the data. Reliability in this context measures how close another person would code the same data in the same way the researcher has done. Often it is linked to replicability. Could another researcher replicate the result? Moreover, are the data findings dependable? Dependable data is the goal of every scientific study (Babbie, 2017, pp. 149-152; Neuendorf, 2016). To ensure reliability in this area, the methodological approaches, the paradigms used to analyze the data, and the themes used, are disclosed as transparent as possible and argued for.

Another possible source of error is in the collection of data and in the process of transcribing. The language challenges are already discussed earlier, but that is one of the most significant possible sources of error in this study.

Method triangulation with checking the data up against each other is also used to ensure the highest reliability possible.

5.6.3 Generalisability

Many studies have the goal of generalizing the findings of their sample to the whole population. Can this phenomenon or case study say something about another phenomenon or case? (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog, Larsen, & Moe, 2013, p. 28).

The goal of this study is not to have a high degree of generalisability. That is because the case of Nordvision is unique. The case of Nordvision is set in a distinct media welfare landscape that is not common in other places in the world. However, I do expect that the findings will be valid for the whole of the Nordic countries, and it would be possible to draw parallels to other media initiatives.

6 From Nordvision's perspectives: the competitive media landscape, the organization, and the public service drama

The analysis chapter is divided into three parts. Each part presents an overarching theme for this thesis. The parts are divided into and presented as themes according to the thematic method approach used in this thesis.

Part one is called: "The increasingly competitive media landscape". This part presents the material on the challenges the public service providers are facing. The part has four sections of various sizes named, "The increased challenge by the global players", "The increased competition for content rights", "Challenges as a public service media company in particular", and "Experiences working with the competitor Netflix".

Part two is named "The uniqueness of Nordvision" and has two sections named, "Nordvision as an organization" and "The mutual trust experienced". This section tells looks closer at Nordvision, its conditions, and its qualities.

The last part is named "The Nordic public service drama". It focuses on the drama endeavours of the Nordvision collaboration and the Nordic drama in more general terms. The three themes of this section are "The Nordic drama", "The importance of success" and "The N12 collaboration". An additional comment is then presented, the perception of the Nordic countries experienced as one region. This theme did not find its natural place in any of the overarching themes. However, it is important in understanding the Nordic collaboration.

6.1 The increasingly competitive media landscape

This part is the first of the three parts in the analysis chapter of this thesis. This part confirms the first part of hypothesis H2 presented in the introduction: *The Nordic public media are challenged by an increasingly competitive media landscape. The Nordvision collaboration is being used to meet and adapt to these changes.* The hypothesis is the foundation of the main research question, which assumes there is a more competitive media landscape. The second part of the hypothesis is just partly confirmed in this part. More arguments supporting the second part of the hypothesis are made throughout the analysis chapter.

The increasingly competitive media landscape part has four main sections, all supporting the claim of an increasingly competitive media landscape. The first theme discussed is the "Increased challenges by global players". The section "Increased competition for content rights" follows. "Challenges as a public service media company in particular", is the third

section. The fourth and final section is about the “Experiences working with the competitor Netflix”.

6.1.1 Increased challenges by global players

A recurring theme in all the document material is the conversation on the global challenges Nordvision and the public service media in the Nordic countries face. There also exist examples of this in the interview conversations. This theme comes across in two main aspects. Firstly, there is a focus on acknowledging the global challenges and competition the partnership is facing. Secondly, the partnership is talked about as a necessity because of the inherent competitive market. The material clearly shows that the public service media are faced with a more competitive media landscape.

The 2014 report states, “The global challenges are big, but the Nordic responses will rise to it.” 2 years later, the conversation concerns the impressive figures co-production has achieved despite the challenges public service faces. These challenges have been financially, politically, and from global players (Nordvision, 2015; Nordvision, 2017). Also, Øyvind Lund, Chairman of Nordvision and media director at NRK, talks about the challenges Nordic media faces. He states, “At a time when global players continue to tighten their grip on consumers, we are able to deliver relevant and attractive content, created in a Nordic context. This is important for the Nordic languages and culture.” He further talks about how it is a tough battle to remain relevant and remain the majority choice and win people’s time and attention. In order to do so, the expectation for quality content increases. He believes that the way to strengthen the position when dealing with major international players is the integration of content and technology from the beginning. The public service media should also pay attention and focus on their core business. Although the challenging situation, he has a positive outlook. Øyvind Lund is of the opinion that the Nordic public broadcasters play a vital role in the times of fake news and enhanced press skepticism by “creating a common arena for strong credibility and trust” (Nordvision, 2019, pp. 8-9). When asked who their biggest competitors are at the moment, Anna Croneman answered Netflix (Croneman, 2022).

The talks about global challenges are often met with the need for collaboration. Statements such as “Globalisation calls for even greater cooperation” (Nordvision, 2018) and “Faced with competition from major international players, the Nordic public service providers coordinate their program acquisitions” are used (Nordvision, 2019). The 2017/18 report states as a response to the increasingly globalized and competitive media landscape that “Nordic media

collaboration is no longer an option but a necessity” (Nordvision, 2018). This message is repeated in the report a year later. The partnership is described as more necessary than ever. When joining forces, the public service providers can provide and produce better and less expensive content. Challenging times are coupled with the need for strong partnerships, particularly for the public service media. These partnerships are vital (Nordvision, 2019). The sections conclude by claiming that all the partners are made winners of the Nordvision cooperation. Further saying that the partners unaided would not be able to meet the competitive and technological challenges. The public service providers strengthen their national position by coordinating information, strategies, and solutions (Nordvision, 2019).

6.1.2 Increased competition for content rights

The increased competition for rights is a theme in the realm of Nordvision. On more occasions, the N12 agreement is presented as the solution to the struggle to obtain rights. However, the discussion of rights dates back longer than the N12 agreement. Moreover, the rights topic concerns more aspects. This rights theme, therefore, is presented with the use of two dimensions. The first dimension talks about rights-related topics in general terms. It shows how the acquisition of rights is a problem for the public service broadcasters of the Nordic region. The second dimension is the measures taken by the partners of Nordvision to deal with the increased competition for rights. N12 is here an important part. Lastly, in this first section, rights and public service responsibilities from the view of RUV become a topic. The second section concerns pitching organized by Nordvision in order to secure content rights. This dimension concerns the views of the people working with acquisitions in the different media companies.

6.1.2.1 *The challenges concerning the content acquisition*

Several people contribute to discussing the brutal battle for rights in today’s media landscape. In the 2014 report, that is postulated as a challenge that the Nordvision partners face. The discussion takes place in several of the program groups. At this time, it is a hope for a common creative solution for the difficulties they are facing. The discussion is surrounding what kind of rights to go after and the communication with the rights organization. However, this is a complicated issue to solve because of the existing rights pattern (Nordvision, 2014).

In 2015 a new chairperson was appointed, Marita af Björkesten, director at Swedish YLE. She points to the issue of rights as one of the concrete challenges the partnership is facing. She connects this to content on digital platforms (Nordvision, 2016). Arne Helsing is, in his

interview, talking about a past where they could buy English and German titles. That is no longer possible as the giants go in to vacuum the market (Helsingen, 2022). Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson is telling the same story today. “It is really difficult to acquire and find quality content at the moment. Everyone can probably say the same, that it is really difficult to find because the competition is so high” (Guðmundsson, 2022).

The topic of N12 and Nordvision’s contribution to helping the rights situation is most present in the interview setting. Henrik Hartmann argues that N12 has been a solution here in the Nordic countries for the rights issues. The N12 agreement offers each other’s material rights for 12 months (Hartmann, 2022). Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson highlights this as one of the benefits of the N12 agreement. They are sure that they have twelve high-quality, varied Nordic dramas every year (Guðmundsson, 2022). Arne Helsingen puts focus on another aspect. He argues that it becomes more and more critical to cooperate by making each other’s content available to handle the big giants that use much money to buy the rights in this competitive situation (Helsingen, 2022).

Lastly, in this first section, it is also essential to acknowledge that content acquisition is linked for the public service companies to the public service mission. That is evident by looking at RUVs handling the competitive rights situation in today’s media landscape. RUV, with Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson in the driving seat, decided to stop buying US content roughly ten years ago. This choice was made partly because of the difficulties justifying spending taxpayers’ money on this. Instead, the focus was on Nordic and European documentaries and dramas to provide the audience with content they cannot find other places. They hope to become a trendsetter, providing the public with interesting new content. That is an assignment for a good, responsible public broadcaster, according to Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson (Guðmundsson, 2022).

6.1.2.2 The pitch events

One measure to securing content rights for the public service media companies by Nordvision has been the coordinated drama pitch events for Nordic companies. The event is not exclusive to the public service companies, and there exists no prerequisite to selling to all the Nordic companies. However, this event allows closer collaboration and communication between the acquisition executives.

Due to corona restrictions, all the pitch events have been carried out digitally during the last two years. In that time, an enormous number of series have been pitched. Including all genres,

the total number is close to 450 series. Henrik Hartmanns believes that this is not done anywhere else in the world and sums it up, not hiding his enthusiasm, “It is completely wild!” (Henrik, 2022).

The acquisition heads and executives have a lot of hopes for this pitch event. Steen Salomonsen, Head of Acquisition for Fiction at DR, talks about a need to coordinate more for the Nordic acquisition executive to deal with the more international market and the players that also want to acquire Nordic drama. Trine Fossan, acquisition executive for International and Nordic Fiction at NRK, hopes that they will be able to secure better content rights by working together across the Nordic public broadcaster. Maria Bjerre-Nielsen, acquisitions executive with DR, also talks about some common interests between the Nordvision partners. She says they have more or less phased out American TV series and now more systematically try to secure Nordic and European series. She also highlights the company’s focus on wishing to promote Nordic language and culture. She believes this sets them apart from the commercial services they compete with. According to Bjerre-Nielsen, this new pitch event gives the companies the dual possibility of negotiating as one territory and acting faster. Steen Salomonsen hopes that through stronger Nordic collaboration, he will learn more about what the different public service companies consider quality public service drama. That is to achieve more fruitful and inclusive cooperation (Nordvision, 2020, pp. 14-15).

There is also put an emphasis on how this measurement allows the public service companies to enter the process at an earlier stage. Maria Bjerre-Nielsen state that in the industry there is a “growing need to enter the process at an earlier stage – often on a pre buy stage.” That is also something Trine Fossan talks about. The pitch event opens up the possibility at an early stage to pre-buy drama. This pre-buy includes dramas that would otherwise be out of reach (Nordvision, 2020, pp. 14-15).

6.1.3 Challenges as a public service media company in particular

It is no secret that public service media today, in general terms, are challenged in many different areas. The challenges are present in both the interviews and the document material analyzed. Generally speaking, this overarching theme is broken down into three dimensions:

1. Limited budgets have become a topic. The limited budgets get linked to quality content.
2. The threatened position of public service media. The threatened position is evident in more of the public service media’s operating range.

3. The public service media companies struggle to maintain talent.

Lena Glasser highlighted the challenge of having the same old budget yet having to perform on several platforms when she stepped up as the new spokesperson for Nordvision in 2014. She was worried about the audience's ability to find public service content when the total media offering is extensive. The considerable media offering has led to the viewers adopting an expectation and appetite for quality content, which the public service companies have to adapt to, according to her (Nordvision, 2014). The inability to compete with the high budgets used to produce American drama series or the budgets of SVoDs are also concerns expressed in the interviews with Henrik Hartmann, Henriette Marienlund, and Tomas Nilsson.

The position of the public service companies is expressed in several of the interviews. Different experts link this challenge to different branches of the public service media companies offer. Anna Croneman and Henriette Marienlund are both talking about a complicated competition situation. Croneman speaks briefly on how these challenges are facing the Swedish market first because the streaming services first were introduced here. However, she points out that now, Norway and Denmark are facing insane competition (Croneman, 2022). Henriette Marienlund is tying the public service challenges up against drama. She is talking about the growth of the big streaming services and the increased number of streaming services in the market. She is also speaking on how the commercial channels, like TV2 and Viaplay, are now focusing on local drama. A position previously unique for the public service providers (Marienlund, 2022)

A completely different branch is emphasized by Henrik Hartmann. He highlights the threatened position in the children offering. He states, “The public service is under tremendous pressure, the prominent role the public service had before, we do not have that anymore” (Hartmann, 2022). This statement echoes Marienlunds notion that the lessened position of public service as a provider of local drama. Hartmann, however, focuses on the fact that the SVoD services like Netflix, Disney plus, Viaplay, and the Nordic TV2 systems are now investing in kids' content. Kids' content is an area where the Nordic Public service companies have had a prominent position. At the same time, the public service media companies are experiencing competition from social media and YouTube. The public service media companies are facing whether they should invest time and effort in bringing the kids and youth back from TikTok. However, Hartmann also points to measures taken by Nordvision to deal with this. To deal with these challenges and maintain their position, the

Nordvision companies have agreed to collaborate on children's content named Barn14/B14. This agreement follows the form of and is inspired by N12 (Hartmann, 2022).

The lack of or the difficulty in maintaining talent in the public service companies is a concern voiced by both Marienlund and Croneman. Screenwriters, producers, instructors, and directors choose to work for, for example, Netflix instead of the public service companies. They can break through to the whole world at once in the commercial world, and the salaries are much higher. Anna Croneman has voiced this concern on more occasions. It is stated that according to Croneman “The greatest challenge right now in the drama category is that major international streaming services provide a “good” one-stop shop for producers, screenwriters, directors, actors, and new talent” (Nordvision, 2022, p. 21). The greenlight process at the public service companies takes a much longer time. The fastness of the streaming services is regarded as attractive, according to Croneman in the interviews. However, they are giving away most of their rights in the process (Nordvision, 2022, pp. 19-21). Marienlund chooses to look at the challenge from a positive site. She is hopeful for the future, believing that the public service will find its way. Public service providers can offer conditions that streaming services cannot offer. The stories told in public service dramas are perhaps somewhat different compared to at the SVoDs, she claims (Marienlund, 2022).

6.1.4 Experiences working with the competitor Netflix

Working with the competitors crystalized as a relatively minor theme. However, it is an essential theme as it deals with raw experiences. This section looks at the experiences public service companies have had with an outside partner outside of Nordvision. This theme only shows in the interviews.

The theme deals with three incidences. Firstly, an experience in the past looking at Netflix as a one-way collaboration. Secondly, an observation of Netflix’s collaboration with public service partners and the inherent lack of credibility the public service company experience. Lastly, the theme looks at a present experience of the collaboration as a one-of-a-kind deal.

Arne Helsingen states, “With Netflix, is it only one way.” When working with Netflix, they do not receive titles in return. It is a one-way deal where the public service company is just selling its rights. The Netflix collaboration contrasts NRK working with, for example, Sweden. When working with SVT, NRK expects to get Swedish titles in return when sharing Norwegian productions and vice versa (Helsingen, 2022). NRK collaborated with Netflix

back in 2012 with Lillyhammer. It was a co-production/co-financing deal and marked Netflix's first investment in the European market (Afilipoaie, Iordache, Raats, 2021, p. 313).

In the interviews with Tomas Nilsson and Henrik Hartmann, loss of credibility crystallizes as an incident dealing with the theme of working with the competitors. They point out how the public service series are losing their credibility as public service series when put on Netflix. Henrik Hartman is using BBC and Netflix collaboration on *Peaky Blinders* and *The Bodyguard* as examples. These series are preserved by the public as Netflix series, although the BBC was the instigator and the premiere channel.

Lastly, Netflix collaboration is in the present experienced as a one-of-a-kind deal. DR is at the moment working together with Netflix to produce the fourth season of DR's success series *Borgen*. Henriette Marienlund states that this deal is an exception when asked about this. The deal was a one-of-a-kind deal they could not say no to. She believes that this might happen from time to time in today's media landscape, but not as a principle. She states, "We want to give our good series to N12, because we believe in the construction," which she has also promised the other Nordvision partners (Marienlund, 2022).

6.2 The uniqueness of Nordvision

This second part of the analysis chapter describes the unique features of Nordvision. This part is closely linked to the second sub-research question of this thesis: *Which qualities does Nordvision have that make the collaboration unique and relevant.* The section does not discuss what makes the collaboration relevant, but it points to and highlights the qualities of the collaboration.

The part is organized into two sections. The first section looks at Nordvision as an organization. It looks at what is being said about Nordvision, its characterizations, its core activities, and Nordvision's achievements. The second section looks closer at the mutual trust experienced between the partners in two different ways.

6.2.1 Nordvision as an organization

A lot has been said about what Nordvision is, what it means to the partners, and its achievements. This section summarises that and it is divided into four dimensions. The first dimension describes the Characterisation of Nordvision and the pride in the partnership. This is followed by a dimension on the person-dependent collaborations. Dimension three, concerns the three core activities of Nordvision and it presents the answers to the question to rank the

importance and success of Nordvision's three core tasks. The last dimension looks closer at Nordvision's achievements. It also includes the international attention the organization attracts.

6.2.1.1 Characteristics of Nordvision and the pride in the partnership

Nordvision uses more or less standardized sets of sentences to describe themselves and their work in the annual reports. A phrase like "strengthen and promote public service media/providers in the Nordic region" is often used to describe the main task of Nordvision. There is, however, some variance to the phrase, but the core message remains the same (Nordvision, 2016; Nordvision, 2017; Nordvision, 2017/2020¹). A few ways are listed as the way they do this. These are co-producing, program and content exchange, collaboration with formats/co-develop formats, and knowledge sharing (Nordvision, 2016; Nordvision, 2017; Nordvision, 2017/2020). Since the 2017/2018 report, an emphasis has been placed on the that much of this happens through the expert network in the programming and professional groups (Nordvision, 2017/2020). There is also repetition in the Nordvision data material of the use of more than 4500 episodes of co-production/TV-programs generated annually (Nordvision, 2016; Nordvision, 2017).

During the interviews, one question asked was, "What characterises the Nordvision collaboration in comparison with other TV and movie collaborations?" The answers give much more depth than the standardized sentences presented above. Both Henrik Hartmann and Anna Croneman emphasize the trust between the partners. The trust between the partners is discussed in more detail in the mutual trust section of this chapter (Hartmann, 2022, Croneman, 2022). Henriette Marienlund is talking about the value of having good Nordic colleagues with the same fundamental view to reach out to. She also talks about the special mandate the partners have as public service providers. Always having to answer questions such as "Why are we making this?" and "What do we want to achieve with this?" (Marienlund, 2022). Commonalities are discussed by Arne Helsingen that points to common strategical challenges, the fact that the Nordic countries have much in common, as well as sharing a technological community (Helsingen, 2022). Henrik Hartmann is also talking about a shared cultural community in the Nordics. The Nordic region is often referred to as one territory by the outside world (Hartmann, 2022).

¹ The Nordvision in brief page in 2017/2018, 2018/2019, and 2019/2020 reports are the same and will therefore be referred to as 2017/2020.

Both Helsingen and Hartmann point out the importance of collaboration as a conclusion to the question. Helsingen believes collaboration is the strongest fellowship NRK has. He describes it as a predictable, long-term, and very good collaboration. Hartmann states that the collaboration has gone from nice to have to need to have (Hartmann, 2022; Helsingen, 2022).

Following the yearly reports, it is also evident that a kind of pride exists in the collaboration and a belief that this is good for everyone. Marit af Björkesten, as new chairperson, states, “In recent years, we have come to recognize more clearly that the value of what we own grows when we share it” (Nordvision, 2016). The use of the motto “we share what we own” has also been put together with a similar statement years later, “And we like to claim that the Nordvision cooperation has made winners of all its partners” (Nordvision, 2020 reports). The partnership has also been described as beneficial in several instances. There is talk about how the partnership in the past decade has become more and more beneficial to its partners (Nordvision, 2020). Furthermore, there is talk about how the partners still feel and see the mutual benefits despite it being a 60-year-old-cooperation (Nordvision, 2019).

6.2.1.2 A person-depended-collaboration

It is important to recognize that Nordvision is a collaboration built on driving forces. That is made clear in the interviews with Arne Helsingen and Henrik Hartmann. Henrik is telling about a situation where a prominent member of Denmark Radio was fired. With that, DR was put back to the starting point, needing to answer questions such as, “What is that Nordic?” and “Why do we have this collaboration?” The same situation happens in the expert groups when someone is replaced for various reasons (Hartmann, 2022).

Arne Helsingen states, “Such a collaboration will always be quite person-dependent.” He also deems the exchange of people a challenge for the organization because it makes predictability hard. The people involved need to bring interest and mandate wanting to strengthen a field (Helsingen, 2022). Henrik Hartmann shares that view when describing the partnership. He explains that there needs to be a desire there for the person to collaborate through Nordvision. It is, however, sometimes hard to find the right person to work with because of the organizational differences of the public service providers (Hartmann, 2022).

6.2.1.3 The three core activities of Nordvision

Nordvision has three core activities. The core activities are co-production, program exchange, and sharing of knowledge. The experts in the interviews were asked about this in two

phrasings. They were asked as of today if any of these is deemed extra important. Thereafter, they were asked to rank what they deemed they were most successful at.

Arne Helsingen and Anna Croneman quickly point out that all activities are important. The place where the most value is, according to Henriette Marienlund, the N12 and B14 agreements. Strategies that are made together to handle a situation they all are experiencing. For Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson is clear that he needs partners. A small broadcaster needs partners to produce big, high, budget projects such as drama. Henrik Hartmann clearly states that “2021 becomes the first year when co-production and co-financing are bigger than our free exchange” (Helsingen 2022; Croneman, 2022; Marienlund, 2022; Guðmundsson, 2022; Hartmann, 2022).

When asked to rank the core activities, Arne Helsingen and Tomas Nilsson are of the opposite opinion. Helsingen believes that the co-production and program exchange are the foundation for sharing knowledge (Helsingen, 2022). That stands in opposition to Nilsson, who believes that everything depends on the sharing of knowledge. However, Nilsson believes that the free exchange has been the most important of cultural-political meaning. Most important economically have in the reason years been the drama exchange. Later in the interviews, he states that co-production together is essential. The network building and the co-productions are co-dependent on each other. He thinks that if one of those fails, the whole Nordvision will fail. The importance of the free exchange has been affected by the switch from linear to streaming TV (Nilsson, 2022).

6.2.1.4 Nordvisions achievements

Reading the Nordvision reports, it seems like Nordvision is hitting record year after record year. Since 2013 the number of co-productions has doubled. That is in a time when the partnerships have undergone a digital transformation. Less flow TV is produced, and more TV production work is outsourced to external production companies (Nordvision, 2018). The all-time record for the number of episodes was in 2017, with 5,102 episodes. Today the trend among the partners is fewer, larger content ventures adapted to the digital platforms, and fewer volumes of free exchange. The change must be viewed in the context of fewer flow channels by the providers. This record is therefore expected to stand for a long time. Despite this, the N12 collaboration and cooperation in the youth and young adult category ensure that the strategic partnerships hold a strong position (Nordvision, 2020). In the last five years, the program exchange number has dropped from 2,468 episodes to around 1,600 episodes a year.

Nevertheless, Henrik Hartmann states, “On a strategic level, 2021 was perhaps the most important year in the history of the cooperation” (Nordvision, 2022).

The collaboration on children’s content and youth and young adults’ content are essential for Nordvision. In 2021 the content for children, young adults, and drama productions will dominate the co-productions. The importance of children’s TV can be viewed in statements such as “Nordic collaboration on children’s TV is unparalleled in the world when it comes to volume, quality content sharing, formats, and knowledge exchange. Together, we stand a better chance of being heard” (Nordvision, 2021). Sanne Overmark from SVT states “NRK skam proved to all the Nordic countries that we are able to attract a target audience that we had actually given up on trying to reach with our content production” (Nordvision, 2021, p. 10). However, despite how important and interesting youth and children content is, the scope of this thesis would be too big if that also were included. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge this big important part of Nordvision’s work and success.

The achievements of Nordvision are not only felt within the Nordic region. The partnership does attract international attention from time to time. Foreign TV stations from Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and Germany were 2013 interested in getting to know what makes the Scandinavian cooperation work (Nordvision, 2014). The interest was again high with the launch of the N12 cooperation from both southern and eastern Europe. Interest has also come from other parts of the world like Asia, Africa, and South America. They all want to know how everything is done (Hartmann, 2022).

6.2.2 The mutual trust experienced

Mutual trust between the partners is observed in two different subthemes and it is a present factor in both the interviews and the document material. Firstly, there is an autonomous genuine trust to each other, often seen in projects and expert groups. Secondly the mutual trust is used to explain why collaborations such as the N12 is made. It is the mutual trust that is one of the reasons why this agreement can exist in the first place. The material on mutual trust have been gathered also with the use of word search on the word “Trust” in the yearly reports. The use of the word trust is only present from 2015/2016 report and beyond.

In the 2015/16 report, two instances of trust playing a role in projects initiated by the expert groups. This year SVT and DR coproduced two debates: one on the refugee crisis and on program one feminism. The trust in each other and understanding of work methods were carried and viewed as a benefit from one project to the next (Nordvision, 2016, p. 39).

The second instance is based in the 2015 research collaboration on a set of radio documentaries on the Syrian war. Claus Vittus, DR (Nordvision, 2016, p. 43), states, “The cooperation is based on full mutual trust, so that we can work under the editorial guidelines and programme formats that we each have” This is an example of trust in each other and each other’s material even when there is no collaboration on the final product as there was produced national (Norwegian, Swedish, Danish) versions of this radio program.

The benefit of trust within the expert groups is also expressed in the 2019/2020 report by Mads Ellesøe in his work on a Climate documentary, *Kampagnen mod klimaet*. This project received co-production funding from NRK and YLE. The research and script were shared with NRK Brennpunkt (NRKs documentary program) and NRK helped on research of the Norwegian oil industry. “Trust shown across the partnership” and “positive experiences with the Nordic cooperation” was expressed (Nordvision, 2020).

Trust in the expert groups was again highlighted in the 2021 report in the cultural collaboration on the Nordic electronic music scene. Fredrik Norberg, SVT, states that to “dare to trust each other,” as one of the key premiss for the success of a collaboration. He also points to flexibility in model, declared roles/decisionmakers and end results, good communication, and passion as key elements (Nordvision, 2022).

It is observed that trust is a common feature used in several of the different expert groups to describe the Nordic collaboration through Nordvision. The need for trust is therefore independent of any specific project forms.

When Anna Croneman was asked in the interview, “What characterises Nordvision in comparison to other TV and movie collaborations?” she pointed to the high degree of trust. The partners are listening to each other also when choosing titles to be exchanged. She points to this being something unique for the Nordic context (Cronman, 2022).

Henrik Hartmann points to an unspecified report from the Nordic Council of Minister when explaining the trust that exist between the partners in Nordvision. This report states that the Nordic region is the place in the world with the highest degree of trust across borders. He argues that this trust is brought into the collaboration. He then explains it using a scenario where one of the partners give something to one of the other partners in good faith knowing that surely, they will get something interesting in return in a month or two (Hartmann, 2022).

The same view of trust is also put into words in the preface of the 2017 report signed by Henrik Hartmann and Marit af Björkesten, Director Managing Editor of Swedish YLE, and Chair of Nordvision at the time. The success of 2017 is explained as “such an impressive result can only be achieved because producers and commissioners in the Nordic public service companies have a great amount of mutual trust.” Then the Nordic Council of Ministers report is again mentioned (Nordvision, 2017).

Also, in the 2018 reports preface you can read about the mutual trust that defines this collaboration. The many successful initiatives are summed up and explained with “a common denominator of trustful and rewarding cooperation” (Nordvision, 2018, p. 5).

Trust is also used as a frequent state of reason for the N12 collaboration, both in the interviews and in the documents. Thor Gjermund Eriksen, Director General of NRK, stated in connection with the N12 released that “A close, long-term partnership such as this is built on trust. We have a rich history of working together and a truly fundamental trust in each other’s ability to produce world-class drama” (Nordvision, 2018, p. 21). Trust within the N12 collaboration is also coupled with quality drama by Ivar Køhn, head of Drama at NRK (Nordvision, 2022).

Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson, Anna Croneman and Henriette Marienlund connects the mutual trust to the fact that the N12 collaboration is based on the trust that the other partners put their best series into the offering. That is, they offer the series they think the other countries also will enjoy (Croneman, 2022; Guðmundsson, 2022; Marienlund, 2022).

Anna Croneman then goes on to pointing on another aspect of trust in the N12 collaboration. This is a collaboration where the trust in the partners free them from the need to control the content or the writers or the director. This stands in opposition to other of trials N12 lookalike projects in Europe, where the kind of trust do not exist according to Anna Croneman (Croneman, 2022).

6.3 The Nordic public service drama

This is the third and final analysis part. This part will shine a light on the drama part of the Nordvision collaboration. The material gathered and presented is important to answer sub-research question three RQ3: *Why is the Nordic drama considered so important for the Nordic public service companies and Nordvision?*

This part is organized into three main sections and one additional comment that does not fit in with in the main parts. Section one is named “The Nordic drama” and looks into the importance of Nordic drama, and the uniqueness of the Nordic context. Section two looks closer at “The importance of success”. An emphasis is in this section put on the NRK series *Exit* and the success of Danish and Norwegian public service drama. The third and last main section concerns “The N12 collaboration” and its meaning to the partners. Lastly, there is a small comment on the perception of the Nordic region as one territory.

6.3.1 The Nordic Drama

This thesis works under the assumption that local Nordic drama is essential for public service companies. The material gathered for this section is gathered with that hypothesis in mind. The section looks at The Nordic drama in four different ways or dimensions. Firstly, drama is important, this will be regarded as the first dimension. Secondly, the Nordic drama gets connected to quality and the local context. The local context also appears in the next part, but slightly different. The third dimension looks at the common Nordic traits. The fourth dimension looks at a way that sets the public service dramas apart from other dramas, the double story.

It is made clear that drama is something important for Nordvision. Øyvind Lund, Chair of Nordvision and Media Director at NRK, and Henrik Hartmann, Secretary-General of Nordvision, write, “Drama is important content indeed. This particularly applies to our streaming services which are crucial in allowing us to keep fulfilling our role. Our strategic partnership has been strengthened in Nordic Drama, whether it is aimed at adults, youth and younger adults or children” (Nordvision, 2020, p. 5). In the reports, it is possible to gather some clues as to what the people involved in Nordvision value as important for the Nordic Drama. Ivar Køhn, head of drama NRK, states, “I think that the success of Nordic drama is the result of a clear ambition to create quality built on originality, to be entertaining whilst also being aware of the public service duty to create added value for the audience” (Nordvision, 2017).

The importance of drama also becomes a topic in the interviews. Tomas Nilsson means the drama is an essential part of the Nordic public service offering to prevent becoming a market failure product. Henrik Hartman also connects the need for a local drama offering to stay attractive to the viewers. The SVoDs are using this strategy. NRK is using dramas to attract viewers to their streaming services, according to Hartmann. Norwegian dramas are

particularly important in Norway. This dimension shows that the Nordic drama is important, which is expressed by several people in the collaboration.

Furthermore, the view of Nordic public service drama is one of several occasions linked together with the local content and quality. Most clearly, this is evident in statements such as describing the contemporary Nordic Drama, “Quality Nordic drama, clearly rooted in a local context and with high ambitions for public service, is now among the most distinctive features of Nordic public service media” (Nordvision, 2020, p. 20-21). This statement resonates with the paraphrasing of Ivar Køhns’ view on the Nordic drama, “According to Køhn, Nordic drama is known for good storytelling, exciting characters, and original environments that are based on the local area” (Nordvision, 2017).

It is evident that there exists a belief of something common Nordic traits. Reflection of Nordic culture, reality, and identity is mentioned as a common trait for the N12 series of 2020 (Nordvision, 2020). Public service content considerations are also being brought up by Henriette Marienlund when asked why the Nordic Drama is so important. She wants the Nordic people to get to know each other and the language a bit better. The welfare state gets brought up as a common dominator, and she talks about something common between the countries. The second factor she points out is why Nordic dramas are important, is the stability the N12 agreement offers with at least 12 Nordic dramas, an offering not found in the competitors (Marienlund, 2022).

Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson also points to something common in the Nordics when discussing Nordic Drama’s importance. However, he states, “Nordic drama is just as important as UK or German drama,” yet it is about the context of the discussion. In the Nordic, the Nordic Drama has a special position. He states that we share a collective history, social values, geography, and cultural things, which makes the story more relatable for the Nordic audience watching Nordic dramas. That prompts a feeling of responsibility for RUV to offer Nordic Drama. That said, RUV is also interested in good dramas from other parts of the world (Guðmundsson, 2022).

One way that makes the Nordic public service drama unique is the use of the double story. Piv Bernth, previous head of drama DR, describes it in this way “the double story that a public service broadcaster should communicate.” He believes that DR must have in-house financing for more than 50 % of the series to not compromise this (Nordvision, 2015). Another example of this shown earlier in the analysis is in the Characteristics of Nordvision and the pride in the

partnership section. Marienlund stresses the unique mandate the partners have as public service providers. Constantly having to answer questions such as “Why are we making this?” and “What do we want to achieve with this?” (Marienlund, 2022).

6.3.2 The importance of success

Success can be measured in a tremendous number of different ways. I will not attempt to define success but rather lay out how Nordvision talks about it. I have used four different ways to examine the implications of success in Nordvision.

1. How do the interviewees look at success?
2. Success coupled with the local Nordic context will be discussed.
3. The success of *Exit* in relation to the improvement of Norwegian drama and the Danish golden age of television drama.
4. Success and the position in the Nordvision collaboration.

There is evidence in the interviews that there are different ways to defend a success. The different contributions show how the public service companies use successes to further drama series production. Anna Croneman highlights the need for international success in order to be able to finance the SVT series. Her budgets are the same as they were in 2006. With this budget, she is expected to deliver seven drama series per year. Accordingly, the success series can take part in financing the other series (Croneman, 2022). Henriette Marienlund also agrees that successes are important at regular intervals. She, however, defends that with more of a public service defense. She believes drama is important. Dramas should work as a conversation starter and unify the population. Success is in that important as a way of being seen. If no one watches what they make, that will become a problem because it costs a lot to produce drama series (Marienlund, 2022).

Success is also in the material couplet with the observation that the local Nordic context is different. Although Nordic dramas have been doing great for over a decade, there is a consensus that the story needs to continue to be rooted in the local. The drama series should be made for the local audience. SVT drama director Christian Wikander states, “I don’t think that we should be consciously looking for international success, but for local success with a good, unique story” (Nordvision, 2014). That statement resonates with Piv Bernth, then Head of drama DRs, statement, “Nordic TV drama is extremely popular abroad. But we have to be really careful not to be led blindly into the big wide world. We basically have to create a drama for our national territories” (Nordvision, 2015). Ivar Køhn, head of Drama NRK,

seconds that. He says, “First and foremost we think about Norwegian content for a Norwegian public. It does no harm to test things out against internal series and get external feedback, but we’re never concerned about what suits the Swedish, German or Danish viewers”

(Nordvision, 2022). This view is also shared by Arne Helsingen in the interview, where he states, “We make things for Norway” when asked about the importance of international successes. Helsingen emphasizes the importance of local stories that have become a strength also mimicked by the international streaming services (Helsingen, 2022). Success is with this by these wise men coupled with the local context. Their recipe for success is linked to creating content with only their local audience in mind.

The golden age of Danish television drama is discussed in chapter 3.4. It is suggested that a golden age may travel, and perhaps Norway is experiencing that at the moment. NRK has experienced success in recent years with series such as *Skam*. However, there is a newcomer. NRK’s *Exit* has experienced great success in all the Nordic countries. *Exit* is a drama series about four wealthy, immoral, and politically incorrect millionaires working in Oslo’s finance world and living life as toddler parents. The series involves drugs, violence, sex, and insider trading (Nordvision, 2022, NRK, 2022). The following discusses *Exit*’s success in connection with Norwegian and Danish drama successes.

Exit is fiction, but it is a fiction “based on interviews with real-life wealthy highflyers, who on condition of anonymity relayed stories on their extreme lifestyle” (Nordvision, 2022). It is a series produced for streaming. An exciting aspect of that is the lack of complaints the series have received because of its elaborate storyline. By choosing streaming and relying on the people to find and choose the material by themselves, the series did not get complaints. It is speculated that it would have gotten complaints if it was scheduled on linear tv in primetime (Nordvision, 2022).

The series has experienced much success. It got named a “segment smasher”. This title should be seen in connection with *Exit* being “the biggest streaming success in the N12 partnership history” (Nordvision, 2021). That is a big achievement. It has been a lack of a “segment smasher” in the collaboration for the past 4 or 5 years. A segment smasher is described as something that hits all of the Nordic countries simultaneously. *Broen/Bron/The Bridge* was such a show (Hartmann, 2022).

However, *Broen* was a TV show for free TV and not a streaming show. It could be argued that this makes *Exit*’s success even more impressive. In Norway, the completion rate of the

series after watching the first episode is as high as 97,6 %. These numbers are considered extremely high. Nevertheless, the series has been an enormous success in other Nordic countries. In Iceland, it has the best streaming numbers of any N12 series. It also was the number one streamed series of 2021. In Denmark, season 2 is even more successful than season 1. *Exit* was preferred streamed in every country (Nordvision, 2022).

Henrik Hartmann talks about *Exit* and Nordic drama in his interview. He emphasizes that there is NRK that has decided that *Exit* should be a part of the N12, not the receiving countries. This choice is linked to trust between the partners and trust in NRK as a provider. Hartmann also states that “NRK can make super relevant drama content that the Danes, Swedes, Finns also find relevant or interesting” (Hartmann, 2022).

Arne Helsingen when asked about how well Norwegian dramas are doing in the other countries speculates that the success of Nordic drama can be viewed as a consequence of the success of *Skam*, which did very well internationally as well. There is more of an appetite for Nordic drama the more successes they experience. He states, “We are probably perceived as strong drama producers as what DR and SVT were in their time. We have in a way stepped up a level” (Helsingen, 2022). This notion is echoed in the 2021 report, stating, “In recent years, NRK has been leading the Nordic countries when it comes to TV drama with, for instance, *Skam* and more recently *Atlantic Crossing*” (Nordvision, 2022). Ivar Køhn, head of Drama with NRK, points to the stand NRK have taken to focus on drama in the later years, which has prompted a doubling of the budget as a contributing factor to *Exits*’ success (Nordvision, 2022).

Henriette Marienlund also speaks about the success of the Norwegian drama. She talks about a Norwegian drama that has levelled up. She gives *Skam* much credit as being an eyeopener for the Danish audience. That is in line with Arne Helsingen’s view. However, she points out that some Danish viewers still find Nordic drama somewhat dull. This belief of dullness is a set of prejudice that has not caught up to today’s standards. She balances it by pointing out that not everything made in the Nordic is good (Marienlund, 2022).

When talking about Danish drama, Marienlund says, “I think Danish drama has had a golden age, a few years ago, when we had *Forbrydelsen* [*the killing*], *Borgen*, of course, *Bron* [*the bridge*] and so on” (Marienlund, 2022). Those titles become extremely popular and successful. *Forbrydelsen* ran from 2007 – 2012, *Bron* from 2011 – 2018. *Borgen* initially ran from 2010 – to 2013 before returning for a fourth season in 2022 as a collaboration between

Netflix and DR (Wikipedia, 2022; Wikipedia, 2022; Wikipedia, 2022). Marienlund stipulates in the extension of the previous success that “In that way, Denmark was probably also a bit of a pioneer in the drama side. Then I might think in the name of honesty, that our offer has been somewhat more pressured and less strong in a period of time. I think we will be back now” (Marienlund, 2022).

The success of the Nordic drama has been experienced in several countries. It is stipulated in the 2021 report that “Nordic drama finds itself in the midst of a new golden age, with NRK’s *Exit* as the crown jewel in cross-Nordic cooperation” (Nordvision, 2022). This is supported by statements made after NRK received its first Emmy award for best foreign drama such as, “In fact, this is the fifth time in 15 years that a Nordic public service provider has been awarded an Emmy for best international drama. That is equivalent to a Nordic Emmy every three years” (Nordvision, 2017). A golden age is only determined retrospectively, so maybe in a few years, we will be talking about a Nordic golden age of the television drama rather than national golden ages. It will be interesting to observe this.

Success is one thing when talked about in a national context. However, this thesis deals with the relationships between the Nordic public service media providers. Therefore, it was natural in the interviews to ask if success affects the position of a partner in the collaboration. The answers are somewhat different. Tomas Nilsson answers no. He states the reasons “there exists no jealousy in the system. There exists no sort of no logic that would say that there would be good for us in Sweden that Denmark’s Radio do not succeed with their tv series.” He believes that successes have more to do with staking out new trends (Nilsson, 2022). Henriette Marienlund is of the opposite opinion; she believes the position is affected. She states, “Because it is clear that if everything that comes from Denmark, is not a success or is somewhat boring or does not really matter on the streaming service, then we are also undermining the N12 a bit”. There is a wish there to be a positive contributor to the partnership. She wants DR also to deliver dramas that do well in the other countries. Hopefully, their next big N12 series *Carmen Curlers*, will do so (Marienlund, 2022). These are interesting observations only available in an interview setting. It is clear from both statements that the Nordvision collaborators wish the best for each other and want to contribute to this collaboration.

6.3.3 The N12 collaboration

This section of the analysis will only rely on documents after 2017. October 2017 marks the starting point for the N12 agreement after a meeting between the director generals of the Nordvision partners. Four nuances will be stressed. Firstly, a paragraph on the achievements of the agreement. The motivation for N12 follows. The third nuance is the characteristics of the drama series and the effect the N12 agreement has on these. Lastly, a lonely observation gets brought up. The N12 agreement, according to Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson, allows the public service companies to take a greater risk.

The N12 agreement is only five years old, but in that time, it has impacted the Nordic public service industry. In five years, the Nordic 12 agreement has delivered almost fifty drama series created by five collaborating partners. Henrik Hartmann talks with great enthusiasm about it all. He uses unique to describe what they are capable of. Pointing out that this is something they are alone about in the world, five partners are working together to deliver such a high volume of drama series. N12 is a collaboration that has streaming first in mind. N12 was intended as a sort of play catalog that ensured the partners with a volume of at least 12 Nordic drama series a year (Hartmann, 2022).

A lot has been said about the motivation behind the N12 collaboration. N12 is described as “an agreement for increased Nordic drama cooperation, which will strengthen the offering of Nordic drama on the Public service stations.” The establishment of N12 is also used to argue to help improve the competitive position for Nordic drama both with streaming and flow-tv in mind. The Nordic public service providers are up against American fiction that is “more accessible than ever.” The hope is that this agreement will help the Nordic public service companies become significantly stronger by improving the volume and quality of Nordic drama.

The 2017/2018 report states, “It will result in a planned increase in the number of Nordic co-productions, a shared vision for drama content, and a more coordinated collaboration to make swift decisions on new content with co-production potential.” Two years later, it is stated that the volume has increased, long term rights have been achieved, and the Nordic drama offering across borders have been strengthened (Nordvision, 2020). The increased-volume -part of these two statements stands in contrast to what Anna Croneman says in the interview when confronted with a statement of drama production being a focus area of Nordvision. Anna Croneman informs that drama became a focus area with the establishment of N12. The volume of the drama series has not been altered, at least not at SVT. The changes lie within

the sharing of content against a set price (Croneman, 2022). In the Nordvision reports, however, drama seems to be a focus area. The N12 strategy is supposedly a part of an increased focus on the Nordic drama at several of the Nordic public service companies (Nordvision, 2020, pp. 14-15).

Tomas Nilsson believes that you will get a different answer in the different Nordic countries if you ask these questions, “Why did it happen? Is it successful or not? Is it significant or not?” He connects the high cost per hour of financing high profiled drama with the increased difficulty of financing this nationally with the creation of N12. It is a way of preventing the volume of Nordic co-productions from decreasing and finding a way of securing external financing, not at the SVoD services. A collaboration with Netflix will weaken the public perception of the productions belonging to the given public service company. He concludes by stating, “N12 was a way of making a cultural-political decision that we want that it to be developed, we want Nordic drama series to be shown in the Nordic countries” (Nilsson, 2022).

Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson points to a reaction to the changing landscape of the emerging SVoD when talking about the establishment of N12. He connects the whole thing to the fact that the series in question are produced using taxpayer money to be aired as free content in the home country. He is questioning if it would be fair to put these series behind subscription walls at the SVoD services platforms. With the N12 collaboration, the best, high esteemed drama series can continue to travel and be aired as free-to-air content. In return, it is asked that the participants participate as co-producers with the reassurance that they will get 12-months rights (Guðmundsson, 2022).

Some focus when talking about N12 has also been on the series reflecting something Nordic. In the 2019/20 report, all the upcoming N12 series were presented with the phrase “they all reflect Nordic culture, reality and identity.” Marit af Björkesten, Director, Managing Editor of Swedish YLE, and Chair of Nordvision, stated that a natural fit for the public service mission is the focus on dramas that somehow reflect Nordic culture, reality, and identity. She believed that would set the public service broadcaster in the Nordic apart from the competitors (Nordvision, 2018, pp. 20-21). Maria Rørbye Rønn, Director General of DR, points out that the Nordic competition drama is facing the best international fiction, nonetheless. She believes the N12 agreement will prompt an even stronger public service drama offering and strengthen the position further internationally. She says, “This will give rise to drama series

which will one day become part of our shared cultural heritage in the Nordic region” (Nordvision, 2018, pp. 20-21).

The last nuance discussed is how the N12 agreements enable the companies to take more risks. One of the experts brought up this interesting benefit of the N12 agreement. Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson firmly states, “It has enabled us to take more risks, as I do believe that our public broadcaster should do.” The N12 collaboration, according to him, gives the broadcasters the possibility to focus on creating good series without worrying about genre or topic. It is now possible to take a risk on comedy, for instance. A genre many believe do not travel that well. He highlights the possibility of taking huge risks (Guðmundsson, 2022).

6.3.4 The Nordic countries experienced as one region

The Nordic countries as one region is a minor theme in this analysis. It does not have a natural place in any of the parts. However, it is a short comment that is important to shine a light on the research question. Three points have crystallized in this section. The three points are present in both the interviews and the document material. Firstly, the Nordic region is experienced as one territory by the rest of the world. This notion becomes a topic in the interviews with Anna Croneman and Henrik Hartmann.

Secondly, there exists a belief in something typical Nordic. Anna Croneman is under the belief that there exists a Nordic identity that is not found elsewhere in the world. It is built around how we live our lives, the judgments we make, how progressive we are, how afraid we are of change, and that we are stable. The Nordic countries are sharing a lot. That makes it essential to tell the stories about the Nordic identity (Anna Croneman, 2022). Also, Lena Glasser talks about the commonalities in the Nordics as she steps up as the new spokesperson for Nordvision in 2014. She believes the countries are very similar in many perspectives. However, she points out that the companies in Nordvision have met challenges at separate times in different ways.

Thirdly, there is a wish for Nordic content in these times. “We are small countries in a large world and small companies fighting in a sea of media players. But it’s interesting that right now you can see a trend that the viewers and users want Nordic content second to national content, and only after that do they want the international content” (Lena Glasser, 2013/2014). She believes this should be viewed as a possibility to renew the focus of the Nordic initiative together. She thinks that the partners will be able to help both themselves and each other in doing so.

7 Discussion

The data material of this thesis has been presented in the previous chapter in three parts organized after the themes that crystalized through the thematic analysis. However, it is made clear throughout this thesis that the research question will be examined with the use of the five-factor theoretical framework on relevance and competitiveness. Therefore, the discussion chapter sets out to explore how the Nordic public service is using Nordvision to stay competitive and relevant with the use of the sub-research questions. The discussion consists of five sections according to the theoretical framework.

The two first factors discussed are *the challenge of securing content rights* and *co-producing Nordic content*. These two factors are the core of studying the competitiveness of Nordvision. They are central to answer sub *RQ₂: Which factors contributes to making the Nordic public service companies competitive through the Nordvision collaboration?*

The factor *an organization permeated with trust* works as the third section. Trust in the framework is used in to study competitiveness and relevance. This factor is together with the factor *cultural proximity in the Nordic region* vital in answering sub *RQ₁: Which qualities does the Nordvision have that makes the collaboration unique and relevant?*

Cultural proximity in the Nordic region together with *drama is an important genre* is the two main explanatory factors in the theoretical framework to understand how the public service companies maintain their relevance. They are the fourth and fifth sections of this chapter. The factor *drama is an important genre* is the factor used to look closer at sub *RQ₃: Why is the Nordic drama considered so important for the Nordic public service companies and Nordvision?*

The discussion chapter will draw on the thematic analysis chapter and combine the findings with the theoretical framework. All of the factors used to understand how the public service companies maintain their relevance and competitiveness are intertwined and dependent on each other. This should be kept in mind.

7.1.1 The challenge of securing content rights

The challenge of securing content rights appears both as a factor in the theoretic framework and as an own theme in the thematic analysis (Ch 4.1; Ch 6.1). This challenge supports the notion of a more competitive media landscape. With that, hypothesis H2: *The Nordic Public*

media are challenged by an increasingly more competitive media landscape, and the Nordvision collaboration is being used to meet and adapt to these changes. is verified.

The increasingly competitive media landscape is presented in the theory chapter and supported by the data material (Ch 4.1; Ch 6.1). One of the examples of that is the difficulty of securing content rights. The analysis shows that the conversation concerning the challenge of securing content rights spans the whole period of this study. In 2013, existing pattern routes are one of the topics. In 2015 the issue of content rights got discussed in connection with the broadcaster's move to digital platforms (Ch. 6.1.2) The experienced challenge of securing content rights aligns with what the theoretical framework suggests. There is a need by the public service providers for long-term and flexible content rights.

Both Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson and Arne Helsingen testify to an increasingly competitive media market. Their experiences with the topic come across with the use of examples. Helsingen talks about how the SVoDs vacuum the market for titles, making it hard for the public service media companies to acquire content. This trend can be seen as a development in the market. Netflix started expanding into Europe in 2012. In the fall, Netflix launched in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Today, by Anna Croneman, Netflix is named the biggest competitor SVT faces.

With the change in the market, RUV made a conscious decision not to buy US content ten years ago. They defend this with public service reasons, conscious spending of taxpayers' money, and strengthening the Nordic and European content offering. The focus on Nordic and European content is also a strategy to set them apart from the competitor.

Vilde Schanke Sundet points to two measures taken to secure content rights. Firstly, more focus on program exchange and co-production, and secondly, negotiation with national interest organizations (Ch. 4.1). The data material shows that Nordvision is taking these measures. These measures can be seen as contributions in order to make the Nordic public service companies through the Nordvision collaboration in line with RQ2.

Nordvision is an arena for program exchange and co-production for the public service providers. This is discussed in the analysis chapter (Ch. 6). An increased focus on the matter can also be observed by studying the results of Nordvision. Especially the N12 initiative and b14 are important examples. Fifty dramas have been co-produced with this agreement. Consequently, the Nordic drama offering has been strengthened in every of the public service players. The Nordvision personnel has pointed out N12 as a solution to the challenge of

securing content rights. The agreement secures 12 months of streaming right to at least 12 series a year for the Nordvision partners.

Negotiation with national interest organizations is not discussed in the data materials in much degree. However, the pitch event works as an example of this practice. Nordvision invites the public service company and other players to pitch and listen. Nordvision is placing itself as a liaison for the Nordic media, creating an arena for Nordic content despite the differences. Moreover, the number of pitches in every genre is remarkable. In the last two years, 450 series got pitched. The pitch events also allow the public service companies to get involved earlier and access some content they otherwise would not get access to (Ch. 6.1.2.2).

Vilde Schanke Sundet is used as a base for the theoretical framework on the challenge of securing content rights. Her research is based on studies done on NRK with NRK as the informant. Nevertheless, it is plausible to believe that this is transferable to explain the situation in the other public service companies. They are exposed to much of the same competition and jointly search for solutions.

The factor of securing content rights verifies hypothesis H2. An increasingly competitive media landscape challenges the Nordic Public media, and the Nordvision collaboration is used to meet and adapt to these changes. Nordvision is using strategic collaborations such as N12 and pitching events to secure content rights to contribute to making the Nordic public service companies competitive (RQ2).

7.1.2 Co-producing quality Nordic content

Co-producing quality Nordic content can be viewed as a measure to compete with the commercial channels and SVoD services. This matter has not revealed itself as a separate concrete theme in the analysis. It can be observed indirectly in several of the themes. The factor is closely connected to the N12 section as N12 consists of co-productions of Nordic public service drama (Ch. 6.3).

In the last five years of the Nordvision collaboration, 50 dramas have been co-produced and exchanged through the N12 agreement. This achievement is numerical evidence that a hub of co-productions exists in the Nordic countries. The public service providers choose to collaborate with each other. That is not to say that they do not co-produce with other partners. Nevertheless, much is being said positively about the Nordic collaboration. That is

exemplified by Arne Helsingen's testification of Nordvision being the strongest fellowship NRK has.

The reasoning behind the N12 agreement depends on whom you ask to get the answers. Several different reasons can defend it. In my view, N12 works as an answer for the more competitive media landscape. Nevertheless, it enables the partners to produce quality content and increase the budgets for the drama productions. Therefore, the agreement can be seen as an answer to the challenge of producing world-class content.

The agreement also offers stability for the public service companies as it provides a steady volume of drama productions in a variety of genres. The agreement has a foundation of trust, and the providers honor that and believe strongly in the agreement. It also enables the Nordic public service companies to take more risks and gives them the possibility to create good series they believe in. N12 is a streaming-first agreement that aims to strengthen the offer of Nordic public service drama. It has done so. *Exit* has broken records on streaming in all the countries. Successes like this open the door for other Nordic dram series. It is also proof that there is value in this collaboration.

The success of the Nordic public service companies is coupled with the focus of the local context. As shown in the analysis, (Ch. 6.3) the data material shows the belief that the recipe for success is linked to creating content with only the local audience in mind. The belief in the localness must be seen in connection with the theoretical framework that suggests that the NRK's success is achieved by focusing on the knowledge of the Norwegian culture. The focus on the local is a feature seen in the public service content the streaming services have mimicked.

The specific challenges experienced by the partners in the co-production process were not discussed in detail in the data material. The specific challenges of co-producing are in the theoretical framework expressed as the challenge of creating coherent quality content for several markets (Ch. 4.2). There can exist several reasons for this not becoming a topic. Cultural proximity is experienced in the Nordic countries. Cultural proximity will be discussed in more detail soon. S As mentioned above, it exists a focus on creating content just with their local/national audience in mind. Most likely, it is not become a topic in the interviews because of the overarching focus of this thesis. Such a topic was therefore not prioritized. It has not crystalized as a theme in the document material. An explanation for this

can be that such a challenge does not fit the annual report format. I see this as an interesting topic that could be examined further by someone else.

Today, DRs *Borgen* season 4 can be watched as a co-production on Netflix. Both Tomas Nilsson and Henrik Hartmann talk in the interviews about how putting public service dramas on Netflix alters the perception of it belonging to the public service company. Arne Helsingén talks about a one-way collaboration, giving away their rights in return for nothing. The one-way collaboration opposes the Nordvision agreement, where there lies an expectation of getting something in return. What kind of experience DR will have with Netflix remains to be answered (Ch. 6.1.4).

The N12 agreement ensures that Nordic drama is available for the viewers. It opposes Netflix's perhaps unintended effort to strengthen the big five markets. Nevertheless, the power imbalance in the European market is again being reaffirmed due to Netflix's investments. 30 % of Netflix original titles are made in Britain, and 77 % are made in Europe's Big Five markets. Nevertheless, 80 % of co-production/co-financing deals are made with public service companies (Ch.4.2). This number also includes the Nordic public service media companies. Nordvision and the N12 agreement, on the other side, *Exit* on the side, not affecting Netflix's endeavors. The consumer gets both, as the companies focus on different things. Both Netflix and the Nordic public service providers fill their market segment.

The viewers continue to compare the drama coming out of the big global SvoD services to the public service content. The viewers expect quality content. This expectation most strongly comes across in the analysis in chapter 6.1.1 "Increased challenges by global players".

Øyvind Lund, Chairman of Nordvision and media director at NRK, talks about the heightened expectation of quality content linked to the global competition. Quality Nordic drama is a distinct feature of the Nordic public service media. Moreover, throughout the analysis, quality drama or quality content is mentioned as the desired content the public service companies strive for. It is both mentioned in connection with what they produce or want to acquire.

The N12 agreement must be seen as a measure and a contribution to making the Nordic public service companies competitive with the help of Nordvision (RQ2). It provides the public service companies with a variety of 12 quality Nordic drama series a year. By working together, they are able to provide the viewer with the quality of series they demand.

7.1.3 An organization permeated with trust

The theoretical framework shows that trust works as a critical feature to successfully co-produce content (Ch. 4.3). The analysis shows how this is a key feature for maintaining and developing the Nordvision cooperation. The data material on trust was of such a substance that it became a separate theme. Mutual trust in the analysis material is presented under two subthemes: the autonomous genuine trust to each other and mutual trust as used to explain why collaborations such as the N12 are made (Ch. 6.2.2).

Autonomous genuine trust is expressed to a considerable degree in both data materials. This kind of trust is the foundation of making several productions work, exemplified by the Swedish Danish debate program on feminism and the refugee crisis, the radio documentary on the Syrian war, the climate documentary, and the culture program on Nordic electronic music. The contributions reach from the 2015/16 season until today. It transcends any specific genre. To conclude, trust is present and plays an essential role in all the expert groups.

The example with the two Swedish-Danish debates also shows in practice how the trust grows when people work closely together. Growing trust is in line with what the theoretical framework is proposing. The people involved in the debate project do not need to build up an understanding and figure out how to communicate in the best possible way the second time. The personnel carries the knowledge from one project to another.

The statements supporting the vocalization of trust playing a role in the collaboration do not come from heads of departments or directors. They come from the people involved in the projects. That shows how trust is embedded in the collaboration in the different nations' public service organizations. There is a belief and trust in the Nordic partnership, showing that they appreciate it.

However, the heads of departments also put trust among the important reasons why this partnership works, as shown in the interviews and the reports. Henrik Hartmann, in the spearhead, argues for trust between the Nordic countries is an important feature of the Nordic region. He states that this trust is then being brought back into the collaboration. Anna Croneman also sees trust between the partners as something unique for the Nordic context.

Secondly, trust can be observed as an explanation for the N12 collaboration. This notion is stated both in the document material and in the interview. People in directors or head positions make the statements. Trust is being viewed as the foundation for this agreement's success. The partners are putting their trust in the hands of each of the other partners. They are

offering their series, expecting that they will, in return, receive the best the other partners have to offer. The N12 agreement is based on years of trust.

The theory proposes that there needs to be a fundamental sense of trust between transnational partners (Ch 4.3). A fundamental sense of trust between the transnational partners is shown through the analysis of the Nordvision collaboration (Ch 6.2.2). Trust is the foundation of the partnership, and it enables the partners to co-produce, share knowledge, and exchange content. Trust is there as the foundation for making Nordvision be able to perform its three-core task.

There exists a hub of co-production in the Nordic countries. The position of public service and cultural and linguistic proximities are suggested as reasons behind the co-production hub (Ch 3.3). I would, however, argue that trust should also be considered one of the making factors of the co-production hub. The trust within the organization both the autonomous genuine trust and trust as an explanation should be viewed as one of the qualities that make the Nordvision collaboration unique and consequently relevant (RQ1).

The trust that exists between the partners of Nordvision due to the partnership is unheard of. It has a history back to the 1950s, and it is still in play. The belief in trust transcends borders and hierarchy. By knowing and trusting the co-production partners, the risk of failure can be reduced (Ch. 4.3). Nordvision is an example of this, but it also enables the partners to take on new ventures and take risks like the N12 agreement.

7.1.4 Drama is an important genre.

Drama as an important genre is an essential part of the conversation in Nordvision. It does not crystalize as an exclusive theme in the analysis. It comes, however, across in the whole of The Nordic public service drama part (Ch. 6.3). Hypotheses H3 of the thesis states: *Local public service drama is important for the Nordic Public service companies* (Ch.1). This hypothesis gets confirmed by the analysis sub-chapter Nordic drama (Ch. 6.3.1) and by Øyvind Lund and Henrik Hartmann's statement, "Drama is important content indeed" (2019/2020 report page 5).

Drama is important to its local context. Nordic drama is essential in Nordic countries because it is rooted in a local context. The important connection between local and dramas is pointed out in the analysis (Ch.6.3). It is made a point out of staying away from the world's temptation. The public service stations, first and foremost, make drama for themselves! The

drama genre faces new challenges and competition, as Henriette Marienlund is making us aware of. The competitors' focus on local dramas is altering the unique drama position that the public service providers earlier had. The budgets for the public service companies are small, as noted by Marienlund, Croneman, and Guðmundsson. The increased drama budgets make it challenging to produce dramas.

Tomas Nilsson, in the interviews, goes as far as stating that the dramas are essential to avoid the trap of market failure by the public service providers. Drama is being used as a way of drawing in the audience. The N12 agreement is thus being used as a way of achieving this. It is argued that the agreement will strengthen the competitive position of Nordic drama and strengthen the drama offering on the public service stations. The improvement is in both the volume and the quality.

The position of the public service media companies is closely linked to their role as a provider of Nordic drama, as this thesis shows. The public service providers have exchanged fifty dramas in the last five years through the N12 agreement. 50 Nordic public service dramas have been made available free to air to over 27 million viewers in other worlds. The potential reach for these dramas is enormous. It is also evident in the data material that these dramas have an extra dimension as public service material. This notion comes across, for example, in the interview with Marienlund. She talks about a special mandate as a public service provider. As a public service company, there is a need to ask questions about the reasoning behind why certain content is being made and what is being conveyed. The double story and belief in a public service duty to create added value for the audience are mentioned in the reports concerning creating public service dramas. In the interviews, there is talk about how talent is offered to tell stories through the public service drama that is not possible by the streaming services. There is a belief that the stories presented in the dramas created by or for the public service companies can impact the viewers.

The responsibility to provide Nordic drama by the public service providers is evident in statements in the analysis, such as “Quality Nordic drama, clearly rooted in a local context and with high ambitions for public service, is now among the most distinctive features of Nordic public service media” (2016/2017 p. 20-21). The extra responsibility also comes across in the interviews, for example, with Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson, who talks about how RUV feels a responsibility to offer Nordic drama. This distinguishes them from the SVoDs that have a huge volume of American fiction. The N12 agreement is also used in connection

with the role of the public service companies. As it is believed that it will help them become stronger by providing a volume of quality drama.

Both Marienlund and Croneman are concerned about the challenge of keeping the talent that is needed to make good dramas in public service. That is because of the spare budgets and the process of producing more time-consuming and complicated dramas. However, one of the selling points is that the public service companies tell stories not told in other places. The unique stories of the public service drama are also discussed in other parts of the analysis. Drama as an arena for storytelling and shared experiences presented in the framework is in line with the solution to this concern. Using drama as a conversation starter and unifying the nation is talked about by Marienlund in connection with the importance of success.

The suggested golden ages of Nordic public service drama must also be seen as drama is an important genre for the audience. The focus on the drama genre by NRK and increased budgets have resulted in huge successes such as *Exit*, which has taken the Nordic countries by storm. A Norwegian golden age has followed the golden age of Denmark (Ch.3.4; Ch.6.3.2). The definition and linking of these two or one overarching Nordic golden age should be examined closer by someone else. However, it is a testimony to the excitement and importance of the drama genre and the message being told in the local public service dramas.

To summarize, the Nordic drama is important for the Nordic public service companies and Nordvision because it tells the story of its local context, the drama genre draws in the audience, making it a popular genre for the audience. The public service dramas have a potentially huge reach and the public service companies are using this possibility to put themes on the agenda, educate the audience and make them reflect with the use of the double story. The importance of the public service drama can be reflected in the fact that public service drama is viewed as a feature of the public service media. Additionally, the Nordic public service dramas have experienced massive success in the later years. There is talk of a Nordic golden age of public service drama, this testifies to the impact of the public service dramas (RQ3).

7.1.5 Culture proximity

The idea of something common Nordic is evident throughout the whole analysis. This factor is critical in describing the actual relevance of Nordvision in the Nordic context. The Nordic is by many viewed as one territory from the outside world.

Nordvision was founded on an idea of a shared cultural and social community in the Nordic countries. The goal was and still is to strengthen the Nordic cultural identity (Ch.1; Ch. 2.3). Already with this, a crucial organization in the Nordic says that there exists something that bonds the Nordic countries together. Nordvision is a conveyer of this message. Presently, 60 years later, phrases like “strengthen and promote public service media/providers in the Nordic region” are in use. The statement shows that Nordvision is still working on and believing in the idea of something common in the Nordic countries that bound us together.

Shared history, similar values, languages, and political systems are similarities discussed in the theoretical framework and the analysis. These similarities are used in the data material to defend and explain Nordvision and the importance of the Nordic drama. Guðmundsson is pointing to the cultural proximity to explain why Nordic drama is relatable for the Icelandic viewer. It is plausible to believe that this is the case for the whole region. Furthermore, it can be seen as a reason for why the N12 agreement is in place and the focus on drama by Nordvision. The documents even state that the N12 dramas reflect Nordic culture, reality, and identity (Ch. 6.3).

Another feature of the Nordic countries is how technologically advanced they are. Arne Helsingen talks about this in his interview. He highlights how this is an advantage to the collaboration. It creates a shared technological community. All the other EBU (European broadcasting union) members do not share the technological level (Helsingen 2022).

Among the Nordic public service companies there is a belief in something that binds the Nordic countries together. There exists a Nordic identity that comes across in the dramas the Nordvision partners are providing. It is evident that something exists that is worth sharing and continues to build as something common. It can be argued that it is also a conscious decision to decide that we are more alike than different. Putting the differences asides also builds up trust and circles back to building a stronger community.

The cultural proximity experienced is one of the qualities that make Nordvision unique. The cultural proximity is used to build the partnership and content. The cultural proximity is experienced by the audience as Guðmundsson points out. The content co-produced and shared through Nordvision, therefore, makes Nordvision relevant (RQ1).

8 Conclusion

I have, in this thesis, investigated how the Nordic public service media companies have been using Nordvision to stay competitive and relevant in today's media landscape. The research question has been shed light on from different perspectives throughout the text.

This has been done in eight chapters. The first chapter was the introduction, where the research question, the background and motivation for the study, and the research gaps were presented. A short introduction to the thesis was also given. The second chapter looked closer at some of the foundational concepts of the “Public service broadcaster to public service media”, “What is special about the Nordic public service companies”, and then “A closer look at Nordvision”. Those three themes were chosen because they serve as the thesis's building blocks, and it is essential to get a grasp of these to understand the landscape of this thesis.

Chapter three takes a broader approach and looks at today's media landscape. That was done to establish an understanding of today's increasingly competitive media landscape. The situation of the golden age of the Nordic public service drama was also discussed as well as the competition they face from the SVoD services.

In chapter four, the theoretical framework made for this thesis was presented. It consists of five explanation factors used to understand how the public service media companies maintain their relevance and competitiveness. The two factors *the challenge of securing content rights*, and *producing quality Nordic content* were mainly used to explain how the public service providers maintain their competitiveness. The factor *an organization permeated with trust* was used to explain the foundation of Nordvision and therefore was used as an explanatory factor for both relevance and competitiveness. The two factors *cultural proximity in the Nordic region* and lastly, *drama is an important genre* were mainly connected to explain the relevance of Nordvision, the Nordic public service providers, and the content they provide.

The method chapter gave an in-depth explanation of the mixed-method approach of document analysis and in-depth elite interviews used in this thesis and the reasoning behind it. The challenges and limitations concerning the methods and the procedures were discussed. The most pressing limitations discussed were the use of data material originating from Nordvision or personnel involved with Nordvision recruited using the Snowball method. The voices of critics have therefore been excluded. This may have resulted in an inevitable positive predetermined data material. The mixture of language was also discussed as a possible source

of error and the bias you bring with you as a person doing social research. The used analysis method used to analyze and categorize the material was also presented. This was the “Thematic analysis”.

The analysis chapter 6 presented the data material in 3 parts, each with its own sections. The first part was “The increasingly competitive media landscape”. This overarching theme was central in confirming *H2: The Nordic Public media are challenged by an increasingly more competitive media landscape, and the Nordvision collaboration is being used to meet and adapt to these changes together*. The increasingly competitive situation was evident in all sections: “Increased challenges by global players”, “Increased competition for content rights”, “Challenges as a public service company in particular” and “Experiences working with the competitor Netflix”. The hypothesis was also supported by chapter 3, which discussed the competitive media landscape from an academic view. Some measures taken by Nordvision were also discussed, such as the pitch events and the N12 agreement. However, more arguments supporting this second part of the hypothesis were made throughout the entire analysis.

Part two of the analysis was the uniqueness of Nordvision. This part focused on describing the unique features of Nordvision in order to answer sub-research question *RQ1: Which qualities does the Nordvision have that make the collaboration unique and relevant?* This was done in two sections. First, there was the section Nordvision as an organization, which looked closer at Nordvision. The second section concerned the mutual trust experienced. This section looked closer at trust as an explanatory factor and genius trust experienced by the participants. The trust section of the analysis was essential for the explanatory factor an organization permeated with trust from the theoretical framework.

The third and last part of the analysis chapter was the Nordic public service drama. This part was vital in confirming *H3: Local public service drama is important for the Nordic Public service companies*. Consequently, the material presented was essential to answer *RQ3: Why is the Nordic drama considered so important for the Nordic public service companies and Nordvision?* The material was presented in three sections “The Nordic drama”, “The importance of success”, and “The N12 collaboration”. They all focused on different aspects of the Nordic public service drama, its importance, and the measures taken to continue producing it.

One additional theme presented was the Nordic experienced as one region. This theme did not find its place in any of the three overarching themes. It is, however, essential in understanding the Nordic region, which is the place of operation of these public service companies.

In chapter seven, “Discussion”, the analysis findings were tied to and measured up against the theoretical framework to answer the research question. All the sub-research questions got answered.

RQ1: Which qualities do Nordvision have that make the collaboration unique and relevant?

The thesis theory and data material point to two essential features that are both experienced. These are cultural proximity and trust. The cultural proximity is experienced by the personnel in the partnership, it is viewed as a feature of the Nordic countries outside of the region and it is experienced in the content that is made available to the audience. The cultural proximity makes the content made in one Nordic country feel relevant for the remaining Nordic audiences. The second feature is the trust felt within the organization, both the autonomous genuine trust and trust used as an explanation for projects. Trust works as the foundation of the organization. It is the building block that makes the partnership relevant and able to work.

RQ2: Which factors contributes to making the Nordic public service companies competitive through the Nordvision collaboration?

The Nordic public service companies are facing an increasingly competitive media landscape. It is a challenge to secure content. This tendency has been shown both in the theory and in the data material. To face these challenges, the partners of Nordvision are working more closely together. Strategic collaborations such as N12 and the pitching events have been established to make the companies able to meet the competition by the global SVoD services.

By working together, they have with the N12 agreement been able to co-produce and exchange 12 quality drama series a year. The trust within the partnership and each other enables the partners to exchange the dramas they believe in. This gives the audience a more varied portfolio and the public service companies can take more risks. N12 is an example of a measure taken in order to become more competitive collectively.

RQ3: Why is the Nordic drama considered so important for the Nordic public service companies and Nordvision?

One testification of the impact of the public service drama is the talk of a Nordic golden age of the public service drama and the massive success the Nordic public service drama has

experienced in later years. It is an important genre for the public service providers as the dramas tell the story of the local content. Quality Nordic drama rooted in the local context is seen as a distinct feature of the Nordic public service media. The public service drama often uses the double story to tell their story, putting themes on the agenda, making the audience reflect on topics and situation and educating them. The potential reach of these dramas is huge with the possibility to reach out to the entire Nordic population as free-to-watch content. Drama is also seen as a popular genre for the audience, it is used to draw the audience into the public service play services.

The five factors demonstrate how the public service companies use Nordvision to maintain their relevance and competitiveness. The factors are used to answer the main research question of the thesis

RQ: How are the Nordic public media companies using Nordvision to stay competitive and relevant in today's media landscape?

The increasingly competitive media landscape has fostered a reality where there is high competition to secure content rights. Consequently, the public service companies of the Nordic were forced to think new. The new proceedings have resulted in agreements such as the N12, the collaboration on young adult and youth content, and the B14 agreement focusing on children's content.

The N12 agreement has enabled the Nordic public service media companies to secure financing for their dramas and a stable income for quality Nordic drama. The Nordvision partners have used co-production to secure content rights from each other and put this into strategic agreements. The agreement enables the partners to take more risks. The partners send away the content they think is in the best interest of the other countries. The other partners do not choose the desired content.

N12 is possible because of the trust that exists between the partners. The trust is evident and experienced both by the personnel working on the ground in specific expert groups or on projects and by the heads and directors. The trust enables Nordvision to collaborate on projects, exchange freely, and exchange knowledge. The trust makes it possible for the companies to grow and learn from each other. One consequence that can be observed from this is the travel of success. Denmark has in the past experienced a golden age for public service drama. Today much success lies with NRK. Norway has learned from Denmark and is now harvesting that knowledge. However, NRK is sharing this success with the Nordvision

partners. This move also makes the success greater. *Exit* has not only been a Norwegian success but a Nordic success.

Nordvision enables the Nordic public service media companies to stay competitive in an increasingly competitive media landscape. The companies are stronger together. The content gets a more extensive impact area. However, the competitive aspects of the public service media companies are tightly woven together with the role and mandate of the public service companies in the Nordic countries.

Relevance is a complex word. Oxford Dictionary of English defines it as “closely connected or appropriate to the matter in hand.” In this study, relevance has been measured on account of drama as an important genre, the cultural proximity experienced, and trust. It is hard to prove that something is relevant. However, relevance in this thesis is hugely connected to the Nordic context and Nordvision situation.

The unique position and role of the public service companies are created by the government, the audience, and their history in the Nordic countries. They exist in relation to their nations and the bigger Nordic context. They are providers of Nordic culture and values to us as the audience. The Nordic countries are viewed as one region from the outside, and in the Nordic countries, there is a strong belief in something common Nordic that bonds us together.

Public service drama tells the story of this Nordic context. They tell the stories rooted in the public service companies’ values. They are prestige projects for the companies hoping that they will gather the nation, entertain them, and make them think. Furthermore, the public service providers share the public service dramas across the borders in a set system.

Drama is important, according to Tomas Nilsson, to avoid market failure for the public service companies in the Nordic. The drama category is strengthened in volume, predictability, and quality by using the Nordvision partnership and the N12 agreement. Therefore, relevance and the ability to stay competitive are closely related and should be viewed in connection.

The qualities that make Nordvision relevant and unique are the same as what makes it competitive. It is the trust in each other as partners, the ability to co-produce (and exchange content and knowledge) in order to make public service content for their audiences, a focus on the drama genre to tell the story of the Nordic countries, and cultural proximity that exist here.

Several of the factors are intertwined. The cultural proximity is affecting the trust. Because it is easier to trust someone who shares a history and has a similar society, political system, and culture, this again affects the will to co-produce content. Several of the factors discussed are coupled and intertwined. They affect each other and should be viewed in connection with each other. The factors playing a role here are unique, and the whole package makes it work. The belief in all of this and the commitment to the audience makes Nordvision and public service content relevant.

This thesis aimed to shine a light on Nordvision and get a deeper understanding of the importance of the organization and how it adds value to the Nordic public service media companies. That has been achieved by answering the research question.

New perspectives have been presented. This study has brought factors together in a new way to study a localized case that doubled as a research gap. The hope was that this process would contribute to new perspectives of co-production studies of television, the Nordic public service media field, and the increasingly competitive globalized media landscape.

There are a lot of different aspects of the Nordvision collaboration that deserves more attention in academia. It is a research gap on a collaboration that affects the audiences of the Nordic countries in their every day without them knowing it. So, the question is, how come this get to be such an under-researched field for decades? Five suggested further topics of research could be

- Nordvision and the children's and youth collaboration.
- The exchange of knowledge and content in the factual networks, looking closer at the similarities and angles of the documentary series of public service media.
- Finland and its relations to Nordvision as a Nordic public service provider with a dual responsibility of the Swedish and Finnish speaking audience groups.
- The characteristics of the public service drama series exchanged through the N12 agreement.
- The technological collaboration on the services.

The answer to the main research question: *How are the Nordic public media companies using Nordvision to stay competitive and relevant in today's media landscape?* can be summarized as follows:

The public service companies are using the local drama to tell important stories that concern the Nordic context. The dramas become relatable to the entire region's audience as cultural proximity between the countries is experienced. The content feels relevant to the audience, and the public service companies maintain their relevance. The cultural proximity also works its way into the Nordvision collaboration. Cultural proximity affects the trust within the organization as it is easier to trust people where it is experienced. However, trust is something built over time. In Nordvision trust works as the foundation that enables the collaboration to work. By working together and trusting each other the partners produce and share quality Nordic content. They have formed strategic collaborations such as N12 which works as a measure to face the challenge of securing content rights. Through working together and especially by co-producing content with the use of Nordvision the Nordic public service companies become stronger. The partnership gives them the possibility to maintain their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive media landscape.

9 Reference list

- Afilipoaie, A., Iordanche, C., & Raats, T. (2021, October). The “Netflix Original” and what it means for the production of European television content. *CCritical Studies in Television*, 3(16), pp. 304-325.
- Agger, G. (2020). The Golden Age of Danish Public Service Drama Series. In A. M. Waade, E. N. Redvall, & P. M. Jensen (Eds.), *Dansig Televisiom Drama - Global Lessons from a Small Nation* (pp. 25-43). Copenhagen: Palgrave macmillian.
- Asdal, K., & Reinertsen, H. (2020). *Hvordan gjøre dokumentanalyse -En praksisorientert metode*. Oslo: Cappelen Dam Akademiske.
- Babbie, E. (2017). *The Basic of Social Reseach* (7 ed.). Orange: Cengage.
- Bastiansen, H., & Dahl, H. F. (2008). *Norsk Mediehistorie* (2 ed.). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Björk, U. J. (1998, fall). Nordvision on Swedish Television: The Rise and Decline of a Regional Program Exchange. *Scandinavian Studies*, 3(70), pp. 325-336.
- Bondebjerg, I., Redvall, E. N., Helles, R., Lai, S. S., Søndergaard, H., & Astrupgaard, C. (2017). Creative Work in a Transnational Context: Cultural Encounters Behind the Scenes. In *Transnational European Television Drama* (pp. 99-152). Copenhagen: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bondebjerg, I., Redvall, E. N., Helles, R., Lai, S. S., Søndergaard, H., & Astrupgaard, C. (2017). Networks and Patterns of European TV Drama Co-production. In *Transnational European Television Drama - Production, Genre and Audience* (pp. 79-98). Copenhagen: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bondebjerg, I., Redvall, E. N., Helles, R., Lai, S. S., Søndergaard, H., & Astrupgaard, C. (2017). *Transnational European Television Drama*. Copenhagen: Palgrave Macmillian.
- Bowen, G. (2009, August). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Reseach Method. *Qualitative Reseach Journal*, 2(9), pp. 27-40.
- Braun, V. (Producer), & Clarke, V. (Director). (2021). *Thematic Analysis Braun et al PART 2 YOUTUBE VIDEO* [Motion Picture]. YouTube. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VqcGKvcWm8>
- Braun, V., & Clarcke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Reseach a practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Reseach in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77-100. Retrieved February 2022
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019, Jun). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Reseach in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), pp. 589-597.
- Brennen, B. S. (2017). *Qualitative Reseach methods for Media Studies* (2 ed.). Marquette: Routledge.

- Briet, S. (1951). *What Is Documentation?* (R. E. Day, L. Martinet, & H. G. Angehelescu, Trans.) Paris.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews* (3 ed.). Aalborg, Aarhus, Denmark: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (3 ed.). Aalborg: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2019). *Doing Interviews*. SAGE.
- Clarke, B. (Director). (2019). *Thematic analysis - an introduction* [Motion Picture]. Youtube, Thematicanalysis.net. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://www.thematicanalysis.net/talks-about-ta/>
- Croneman, A. (2022, March). Interview with Anna Croneman. (I. Austeng, Interviewer)
- D'Arma, A., Raats, T., & Steemers, J. (2021). Public service media in the age of SVoDs: A comparative study of PSM strategic responses in Flanders, Italy and the UK. *Media, Culture & Society*, 43(4), pp. 682-700. Retrieved November 2021
- Dodds, K., & Hochseref, T. (2020). The Geopolitics of Nordic Noir. *Nordicom review*(41), pp. 43-61.
- Donders, K. (2019). Public service media beyond the digital hype: distribution strategies in a platform era. *Media, Culture & Society*, 7(41), pp. 1011-1028.
- Donders, K., & Van den Bulck, H. (2016). Decline and fall of public service media values in the international content acquisition market: An analysis of small public broadcasters acquiring BBC Worldwide content. *European Journal of Communication*, 3(31), pp. 299-316.
- Dr. (2019). *Sammen om det vigtige*. Copenhagen : Dr.
- DR. (2021, August). *Om DR*. Retrieved from DR.dk: <https://www.dr.dk/om-dr>
- Enli, G., Moe, H., Sundet, V. S., & Syvertsen, T. (2010). *TV - en innføring*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Fitzgerald, T. (2012). Documents and documentary analysis. In A. R. Briggs, M. Coleman, & M. Morrison (Eds.), *Research methods on educational leadership & management* (3 ed., pp. 296-309). Leicester: Sage.
- Foster, L., Diamond, I., & Jefferies, J. (2012). *Beginning statistics an introduction for social scientists*. London: Sage.
- Grønmo, S. (2004). *Samfunnsvitenskaplige metoder* (2 ed.). Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Guðmundsson, S. (2022, February). Interview with Skarphéðinn Guðmundsson. (I. Austeng, Interviewer)
- Hartmann, H. (2013). Nordvision:the Power of Sharing. The TV and Media Partnership. In U. Carlsson (Ed.), *Public Service Media from a Nordic Horizon* (pp. 107-116).
- Hartmann, H. (2022, February). Interview with Henrik Hartmann. (I. Austeng, Interviewer)

- Hellevik, O. (1991). *Forskningsmetode u sosiologi og statsvitenskap* (5 ed.). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Helsingen, A. (2022, February). Interview with Arne Helsingen. (I. Austeng, Interviewer)
- Hirsch, P. M. (1995). Tales From the Field Learning From Reseachers' Accounts. In R. Hertz , & J. B. Imber (Eds.), *Studying elites using qualitative methods* (pp. 72-79). Sage.
- Hujanen, T., Weibull, L., & Harrie, E. (2013). The Challenges of Public Service Broadcasting in the Nordic Countries. Content and Audience. In U. Carlsson (Ed.), *Public Service Media from a Nordic Horizon* (pp. 17-50). Nordicom.
- Iwashita, C. (2008). Roles of Film and Television Drama in International Tourism: The Case of Japanese Tourist to the UK. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, pp. 139-151.
- Johannessen, L. E., Rafoss, T. W., & Rasmussen, E. B. (2018). *Hvordan bruke teori?* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Karppinen, K., & Moe, H. (2012). Ch. 10: What we talk about when we talk about document analysis. In N. Just, & M. Puppis (Eds.), *Trends in Communication Policy Reseach. New Theories, Methods and Subjects* (pp. 179-193). Zürich: Intellect.
- Lobato, R., & Lotz, A. D. (2020). Imagining Global Video: The Challenge of Netflix. *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, 3(59), pp. 132-136.
- Lotz, A. D. (2018). Inventing service Media. In F. Des, & G. Vana (Eds.), *A Future for Public Service Television* (pp. 44-51). London: Goldsmiths press.
- Lund, A. B., & Lowe, G. F. (2013). Current Challenges to Public Service Broadcasting in the Nordic Contries. In U. Carlsson (Ed.), *Public Service Media from a Nordic Horixon* (pp. 51-74). Nordicom.
- Marienlund, H. (2022, February). Interview with Henriette Marienlund. (I. Austeng, Interviewer)
- McCulloch, G. (2004). *Documentary Research - In Education, History and the Social Sciences*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Meland, Ø. (2001). Fra bytte til butikk. *Norsk medietidsskrift*, 1(8).
- Mjøøs, O. J. (2011). Marriage of convenience? Public service broadcasters cross national partnership in factual television. *The International Communication Gazette*, 3(73), pp. 181-197. Retrieved October 2021
- Netflix. (2021, October 19). *Where is Netflix available?* Retrieved from N help center: <https://help.netflix.com/en/node/14164>
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2016). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Sage.
- Nilsson, T. (2022, February). Interview with Tomas Nilsson. (I. Austeng, Interviewer)
- Nissen, C. S. (2013). What's so Special about Nordic Public Service Media? In U. Carlsson (Ed.), *Public Service Media from a Nordic Horizon* (pp. 9-16). Nordicom.

- Nordvision. (2014). *Nordvision annual report 2013 2014*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>
- Nordvision. (2015). *Nordvision 2014 2015*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>
- Nordvision. (2016). *Annual report 2015-16*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from Nordvision.org : <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>
- Nordvision. (2017). *Annual Report 2016-2017*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>
- Nordvision. (2018). *Annual Report 2017-2018*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>
- Nordvision. (2019). *Annual Report 2018-2019*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>
- Nordvision. (2020). *Annual Report 2019-2020*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/aarsrapporter/>
- Nordvision. (2021, October 16). *Nordif3: Kontakter*. Retrieved from Nordvision: <https://www.nordvision.org/index.php?id=493>
- Nordvision. (2021). *Nordvision annual report 2020-21*. Copenhagen: Nordvision.
- Nordvision. (2022, May). *About Nordvision*. Retrieved from Nordvision.org: <https://www.nordvision.org/om-nordvision/about-nordvision/>
- Nordvision. (2022). *Annual Report 2021*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/aarsrapport-2021/>
- Nordvision. (2022, January 27). *FAQ*. Retrieved from Nordvision: <https://www.nordvision.org/faq/#ordliste>
- Nordvision. (2022). *N12 3rd edition 2021-2023*. Copenhagen: Nordvision. Retrieved from <https://www.nordvision.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/nv-n12-2021-2023-v1-1.pdf>
- NRK. (2021, August). *A Gigantic Small Broadcaster*. Retrieved from Om NRK: <https://www.nrk.no/about/a-gigantic-small-broadcaster-1.3698462>
- NRK. (2021, August). *Vedtekter og NRK-plakaten*. Retrieved from NRK hjelp og informasjon: <https://info.nrk.no/vedtekter/#plakaten>
- NRK. (2022, May). *Exit*. Retrieved from NRK TV: <https://tv.nrk.no/serie/exit>
- Nygaard, L. P. (2017). *Writing Your Master's Thesis*. London: Sage.
- Redvall, E. N. (2018). International Co-production of Nordic Television Drama. The Case of Ride Upon the Storm. In J. Hammett-Jamart, P. Mitric, & E. N. Redvall (Eds.), *European Film and Television Co-production - Policy and Practice* (pp. 137-152). Copenhagen: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Redvall, E. N. (2018). Reaching Young Audiences Through Research: Using the NABC Method to create the Norwegian Web Teenage Drama SKAM/Shame. In D. Thornley (Ed.), *True Eveny Adaptation Scripting Real Lives* (pp. 143-164). Palgrave Macmillan.
- RUV. (2021, August). *About RUV*. Retrieved from RUV.is: <https://www.ruv.is/ruv-okkar-allra/about-ruv>
- Raates, T., & Jensen, P. M. (2020). The Role of Public Service Media in Sustaining TV Drama in Small Markets. *Television & New Media*, pp. 1-21.
- Self, D. (1984). *Television Drama: An Introduction*. London: MacMillan.
- Spilker, H. S., Johannessen, M. K., & Morsund, E. (2020). Samfunnsopdraget i forvitring. *Norsk Medietidsskrift*, 4(27). Retrieved 2021 August
- Sundet, V. S. (2021). *Television Drama in the Age of Streaming*. Oslo: Palgrave macmilian.
- SVT. (2021, August). *About SVT*. Retrieved from SVT om oss: <https://omoss.svt.se/about-svt.html>
- Syvertsen, T. (1999, January). The many uses of the "Public Service" Concept. *Nordicom Review*, 1, pp. 5-12.
- Syvertsen, T. (2008). Allmennkringkasting i krise - not! *Norsk medietidsskrift*, 15(3), pp. 211-236.
- Syvertsen, T., Enli, G., Mjøs, O. J., & Moe, H. (2014). Public Service Broadcasting. In T. Syvertsen, G. Enli, O. J. Mjøs, & H. Moe, *The Media Welfare State* (pp. 71-95). Oslo: Univerity of Michigan Press: Digialculturebooks.
- Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. (2009). "Where Is Jack Bauer When You Need Him?" The Use of Television Drama in Mediated Political Discourse. *Political Communication*, 4(26), pp. 367-387.
- Thomas, R. J. (1995). Interviewing Important People in Big Companies. In R. Hertz, & J. B. Imber (Eds.), *Studying elites using qualitative methods* (pp. 3-18). Sage.
- Vanhaeght, A.-S., & Donders, K. (2016). Moving beyond the Borders of Top-Down Droadcasting: An Analysis of Younger Users' Participation in Public Service Media. *TekevSION & New media*, 4(17), pp. 291-307.
- Wikipedia. (2022, April). *Borgen (TV series)*. Retrieved from Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borgen_\(TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borgen_(TV_series))
- Wikipedia. (2022, April). *The Bridge (2011 TV series)*. Retrieved from Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bridge_\(2011_TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bridge_(2011_TV_series))
- Wikipedia. (2022, April). *The Killing (Danish TV series)*. Retrieved from Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Killing_\(Danish_TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Killing_(Danish_TV_series))
- Wilder, C. (2017). Television Dramas, Disability, and Religius Knowledge: Considering Call the Midwife and Grey's Anatomy as Religiously Significant Texts. *Religions*.

- World Bank. (2022, March). *Population 2020*. Retrieved from World Bank :
<https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/POP.pdf>
- Waade, A. m. (2017). Melancholy in Nordic Noir: Characters, landscape, light and music. *Critical Studies in Television*, 12, pp. 380-394.
- YLE. (2021, August). *This is Yle*. Retrieved from about yle: <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/about-yle/this-is-yle>
- YLE. (2021, August). *What is Yle's public service?* Retrieved from About Yle:
<https://yle.fi/aihe/s/about-yle/public-service>
- Østbye, H., Helland, K., Knapkog, K., Larsen, L. O., & Moe, H. (2013). *Metodebok for mediefag* (Vol. 4). Bergen: Fagforlaget.
- Aarnes, H., Wictorsen, M. L., Nordli, Ø., & Haugstulen, K. B. (2022, April 27). – Vi snakker om en total forvandling av TV-dramabransjen i Skandinavia. *A-magasinet*. Retrieved from <https://www.aftenposten.no/amagasinet/i/oWaGVK/vi-snakker-om-en-total-forvandling-av-tv-dramabransjen-i-skandinavia?fbclid=IwAR3AjBSqw1uEmZ5UkdI0NAOFrAIunVJcvU5Dbsq6ZwY1ZN1MyIdS2rQqnFU>

10 Appendix: interview guide

10.1 Norwegian version

Information that needs to be conveyed (3 minutter)

- Du kan trekke deg fra denne studien på hvilket tidspunkt du måtte ønske
- Hensikten med intervjuet er å få en dypere forståelse av Nordvisjons betydning i Norden, hvordan dere arbeider og dramsatsningen deres
- Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp som også forespeilet i samtykkeskjemaet
- Har du noen spørsmål før vi starter?
-

Oppvarmingsspørsmål (2 minutter) 05

1. Kan du fortelle meg litt om hva du gjør i NRK?
2. Hva er din forbindelse til Nordvisjon?

Del 1 – Nordvisjons samarbeidets arbeid og kvaliteter (10 minutter) 15

1. Kan du fortelle litt om XXXs samarbeid med Nordvisjon?
 - a. Nordvisjon sier at de har tre kjerneoppgaver, co-produksjon, programuteksling og deling av kunnskap. Er det noe av dette som vektles som ekstra viktig om dagen fra deres side og i så fall hva?
 - i. Kan du rangere hva dere lykkes best på?
2. Hva kjennetegner Nordvisjon i forhold til andre TV-og-filmsamarbeid?
 - a. Hva er det som fungerer bra med samarbeidet?
 - b. Hva fungerer mindre bra?
 - c. Hvorfor fungerer det? Hva gjør at Nordvisjon samarbeidet fungerer?
3. Hvilke utfordringer står dere ovenfor som et psm partnerskap i de neste årene?
 - a. I hvilken grad bidrar Nordvisjon til å motvirke disse utfordringene?
 - b. Kan du peke på noen milepæler eller hendelser som tydeliggjør dette?
 - c. TV er spådd død fantastisk mange ganger? Hva tenker du om det?
 - d. Hvem anser dere som deres største konkurrenter?
 - e. Hvorfor det?
 - f. Hvor ser du for deg Nordvisjon og XXX i fremtid?
 - g. Plattform migrasjon?
4. Hva betyr Nordvisjon samarbeidet for XXX?

5. Hva med Covid- situasjonen hvordan har det påvirket og endret samarbeidet?

Del 2 – Drama satsningen (10 minutter)

1. Dramaproduksjon virker som at lenge har vært et satsningsområde for Nordvisjonssamarbeidet. Hvorfor er det viktig for dere?
 - a. Det er ingen tvil om at det Nordiske dramet har en sterk posisjon i Norden. Hvorfor det?
 - b. Kan du fortelle litt mer om hva N12 drama satsningen betyr for XXX?
 - c. Det er mye nye tiltak og konkrete felles planer de senere årene både med N12 drama satsningen, satsning på ungdom og barn. Hva er viktigheten av det?
 - d. Dette er et samarbeid over 5 landegrenser og med fem ulike språk? Hvordan fungerer dette?
2. Hva avgjør hvilken plass dere gir materialet dere får fra Nordvisjon i deres kanaler?
 - a. Hvordan oppfattes Nordiske dramaer i LAND? Og Hos XXX?
 - b. Hvilke mottakelser får de LAND dramaene i Norden da?
3. Hvordan påvirket suksess posisjonen til en partner i samarbeidet?
 - a. Hvor viktig er det med internasjonale suksesser for dere?

Avslutning (5 minutter)

- Har du noe du ønsker å tilføye, er det noe du føler at du trenger å avklare eller legge til?
- Er det mulig at jeg kan ta kontakt per Mail, om det skulle være noe jeg trenger å avklare?
- Er det noen andre du kan tenke deg at jeg burde snakke med?
- Jeg vil sende deg en sammenfattet transkripsjon versjon for sitat sjekk om kun kort tid!
- Tusen takk for at du satt av tid til meg og ville la deg intervju!

10.2 English version

Information that needs to be conveyed (3 minute)

- You can withdraw at any point you would like.
- The purpose of the interview is to get a deeper understanding of Nordvision and its meaning in the Nordic as well as the increased focus on drama productions.
- The interview will be recorded as stipulated in the consent form.
- Do you have any questions before we start?

Warm up questions (2 minutes) 05

3. Can you tell me a little about what you do in xxx?
4. What is your connection to Nordvision?

Del 1 – Nordvisions work and qualities (10 minutes) 15

6. Could you please tell me about the collaboration between xxx and Nordvision?
 - a. Nordvision states that they have 3 core activities, coproduction, program exchange and sharing of knowledge. As of today is any of these deemed extra important from XXXs perspective. If so, which and why?
 - i. Can you rank what you are most successful at?
7. What characterises Nordvision in comparison to other TV and movie collaborations?
 - a. What work well in the collaboration?
 - b. What work less well?
 - c. Why does it work? What makes the Nordvision collaboration work?
8. What challenges are Nordvision facing as a psm partnership in the years to come?
 - a. To which degree does Nordvision contribute to counteract these challenges?
 - b. Can you point to some milestones or events that illustrates this?
 - c. Television is predicted dead a lot of times. What do you think about that?
 - d. Who are you considering as your biggest competitors?
 - e. Why?
 - f. Where do you see Nordvision and XXX in the future?
 - g. Platform migration?
9. What does the Nordvision collaboration mean to xxx?
10. What about the covid situation, how has it affected and changed the collaboration?

Del 2 – Drama as focus area (10 minutes)

4. Drama production has for a long time been a focus area for Nordvision? Why is this important to Nordvision and xxx?
 - a. There is no doubt that the Nordic drama has a strong position in the Nordic countries. How come?
 - b. Could you tell a bit more about what the N12 drama list means for xxx?
 - c. There are a lot of new initiatives and concrete common plans in recent years both with N12, but also B14 the children drama exchange and youth drama collaborations. What is the importance of these?
 - d. Nordvision/This is a collaboration across 5 borders, with 5 different languages. How does this work?
5. What decides which space you are giving the materials you get from Nordvision in your channels?
 - a. How are the Nordic drama conceived in (country)? And at xxx?
 - b. Which receptions do the (country) dramas get in the Nordic countries?
6. How do successes affect the position of a country in the collaboration?
 - a. How important are international successes for the collaboration?

Ending (5 minutes)

- Is there anything you would like to add, or anything you would like to clarify?
- Could I contact you on mail if there would be anything I need to clarify?
- Is there anyone else that you think I should talk to?
- I am going to send you a shortened transcribed version of the quotes for you to check shortly.
- Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to me!