Abstract

The importance of international relations within science has been strengthened in recent years. International journals have become one of the most important arenas for academic dialogue even within the social and behavioural sciences. In addition, the state subsidies to the universities in the Nordic countries have been, or will probably soon be, partly based on scientific publication, especially articles in international referee journals. To what extent researchers from the Nordic countries are present on this arena seems to be an important question. The paper presents a mapping of articles written by Nordic researchers in the field of adult or lifelong education and learning, and published in international journals after 2000. The investigation covers a sample of English language journals in the field of adult education/learning and lifelong learning as well as journals of education generally. The sample includes articles on adult education and learning in general, comparative studies, workplace learning, open and distance learning, higher education, adult education history, lifelong learning policy, as well matters of learning and education in the voluntary sector.

A main purpose of the paper is to give an overview of the distribution of articles between the journals and between the Nordic countries, discuss some publication strategies related to our findings and provide information for the further efforts of international publishing. A second purpose is to examine how adult education in the Nordic countries is presented, if a Nordic profile or model can be extracted, and whether some articles present a specific Nordic characteristic of adult education practice and research.

This presentation is a joint collaborative work from a Nordic network for research on adult learning initiated by Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL).

Introduction

For decades adult education researchers have struggled with the challenge of defining a research territory of their own which could support the aspiration of achieving academic legitimacy as a scientific field. The disciplinary debate and the struggle of defining the field was especially intense in the 1980s. Plecas and Sork (1986) accused the researchers to be too much preoccupied with defining the field. This debate mirrored a long-lasting effort of developing a theoretical base, creating separate institutes of adult education research and establishing adult education journals. This institutionalization emerged at different moments in the Western world and in the Nordic countries.
Today adult education is not anymore the “poor cousin” as Paul Newman (1979) previously characterized the field. The research base has increased and adult education has entered, when considering educational, economical and social policy, the centre of stage. The condition of adult education and learning, which caused the disputes of defining a research field in the 1970s and 80s, has changed.\footnote{Henceforth, we will use \textit{adult education} as a common name for the whole field of adult, lifelong, continuing etc. education and learning.} Adult education is today “subsumed in lifelong learning”, Peter Jarvis (2001) says. But this development “undercuts the separateness claimed for adult learning” (Brookfield, 2000). The researchers seem to have reached a common agreement; adult education is an interdisciplinary field of research and practice (Rubenson, 1989; 1996; Bron, 2006). But being interdisciplinary also means that the border between adult education and other disciplines or research areas becomes blurred. As observed by Rubenson already in 1996; “[I]ssues on adult learning that traditionally have been left to adult education are now spreading across neighbouring disciplines” (Rubenson, 1996). Moreover adult education research has increasingly included themes, research areas and specialities that are shared with a number of neighbouring disciplines or fields. At the same time, Foley argues that the field of adult education is fragmenting, diversifying and expanding and that adult education “...has been largely displaced by specialist fields – vocational education, human resource development, community-based education and so on” (Foley, 2004).\footnote{The changing nature of the adult education field has been discussed in a previous paper at the Second Nordic Conference on Adult Learning, Linköping, April 17-19th, 2007. H. Engesbak, L. Finbak, T. A. Stubbe, C. Tønseth and S. Tøsse: \textit{Adult Education is dead – long live Adult Education! Adult education in transition}.}

The disciplinary debate was related to the struggle of academic legitimacy. This struggle was partly about having own channels for scientific publication. Thereby we expect that adult education researchers do their utmost in order to publish internationally in their “own” scientific journals and to strengthen the status of this young and still (?) “emerging field” of research. On the basis of the interdisciplinary nature of adult education research we should also expect that many researchers attempt to publish their research findings in journals not particularly concerned with adult education or lifelong learning. We also expect to find articles in all kinds of journals with high relevance for adult education and written by researchers from a variety of disciplinary fields.

All in all there are reasons to believe that changed disciplinary orientation, the general social development and dominant paradigms and trends will influence the landscape of publication. Moreover, institutional and personal publication strategies are changing as publications are increasingly linked to economic rewards. Part of the funding of universities and institutes in the Nordic countries has gradually become based on scientific production. This is supported by a system of accountability and judgements of quality. Norwegian universities have a system of ranking-journals and publishers. 20 % of the “best” journals are ranked on level 2, which gives the highest economic rewards. Journals with lower status are put on level 1 while a number of local and national journals or institutional publications gives no publication points and do not count as an indicator in the national funding system of higher institutions. The Norwegian system looks like this (Sivertsen, 2007):
Table 1. Weight indicator of publications according to type and level. Norway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication type</th>
<th>Publication points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific article in series (ISSN)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific article in books (ISBN)</td>
<td>0,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific books (ISBN)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another system is developed by the European Science Foundation that has ranked 470 journals within pedagogy. It can be found in the *European Reference Index for the Humanities* (ERIH). Journals in the category A are the high-ranking international publications which have a strong reputation among the researchers and are cited all over the world. In this category only 10-25 % of the total list should appear. Category B consists of international publications with good reputation among researchers in different countries. Category C consists of journals of local/regional significance in Europe. In the following investigation we refer to these two ranking systems. Rank 0 in the tables refers to the fact that this journal does not give any publication points in Norway or has not been considered for ranking.

**Research questions**

This mapping has a two-sided purpose. The main aim is to examine the publications from Nordic researchers in international (English language) journals. As explained below under method we have chosen a number of relevant journals from four different groups. We expect to find articles written by researchers from different disciplines and fields of research but will only include articles, which we consider to belong to the field of adult education or have some relevance for adult education research. It is of interest to map the distribution of articles between the journals and between the Nordic countries. We are especially interested in whether the research is mainly presented in the general adult education journals or in the subject oriented journals of adult education and lifelong learning. We are also interested in finding out to what degree Nordic adult education research is present in the general pedagogical journals and theme oriented journals with no specific focus on adult education. In which publications do Nordic researchers publish frequently and in which ones is Nordic research absent? What does this tell us about the contemporary publication strategies? Can this information be helpful for researchers in discovering new possibilities in the “journal market”?

Although we do not intend to explain the publication map we will address some questions – and suggest answers – related to the findings. For instance; in what degree is the amount and distribution of articles determined by the journals available, their profiles or publication philosophy? Are the publications largely related to general trends and paradigms? Do the number and distribution also reflect institutional and national differences? We do not, however, examine which institutions and research environment the articles have come from. Nor do we go deeply into the presentation of the journals or analyse their publication philosophy, editorial board and qualitative assurance system which might explain which articles are demanded and have succeed to be accepted. These matters are left out for further investigations.

Our second purpose is to examine how the Nordic countries are presented, if a Nordic profile or model can be extracted, and whether some articles present a distinctively Nordic stamp of adult education practice and research. To what degree do we find articles with a Nordic comparative perspective or within a general Nordic framework?
Finally we also reflect on our findings and the observed publication strategies, address some problems and challenges for adult education as an interdisciplinary field of research and practice and highlight some consequences of an academic culture which credits quality – and money- according to a ranking system of journals and publishers.

Method
We have chosen a practical procedure for carrying out this study. The selection consists of articles published in 47 chosen journals from year 2000 and onwards. The interdisciplinary character of the field results in the fact that the investigation cannot be unequivocally and systematically conducted. Both the selection of journals and articles can be discussed. The selection of the journals as well as the categorization of them can be understood as a certain, maybe a Nordic, way of defining the field of adult education. Below you find a list of what we have done, step by step.

Selection of journals
- We have solely chosen journals published in English.
- We have identified and categorised the journals that we thought might include articles about adult or lifelong education/learning in four different categories:
  1. Journals with a focus on adult education and learning (we used different combinations of the keywords “adult*”, “lifelong”, “education”, “learning”, narrative*, biographic* and “life history/ies” in our search for relevant journals)
  2. Journals with a focus on specific adult and lifelong education/learning themes
     a. Workplace learning and vocational education and training
     b. Higher education
     c. Open and distance education
  3. Journals of education in general
  4. Journals directed towards specific subjects relevant for adult and lifelong learning and education
     a. History studies
     b. Policy studies
     c. Comparative studies
     d. Studies of voluntary organizations and the non-profit and voluntary sector
- We selected those journals that we regarded as the most significant and likely for finding articles written by Nordic authors.
- We have primarily chosen European and international journals and thereby excluded journals specified as being American, Australian, British, Canadian and so on. The Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research could have been added to our list. This journal does, however, mainly present Nordic research. An interesting question would be: How many of the articles in SJER concern adult education? This must however be part of a separate inquiry.

Selection of articles
- We have selected articles written by Nordic authors (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). By Nordic we primarily mean authors employed by or affiliated with universities or university colleges in the Nordic countries. In addition, we included researchers who have an interim affiliation with institutions outside the Nordic countries (for instance Kjell Rubenson, Yrjö Engeström and staff members at...
CEDEFOP or similar institutions). Articles written by several authors from different countries are included if one of the authors come from a Nordic country.

- In the journals that focus on adult education or are directed towards specific adult education themes we have selected all articles written by Nordic authors.
- In the journals of education in general or general education themes we have only included articles that cover any aspect of adult education.

Problems and sources of error

In the selection of journals

- The time has not allowed us to cover all journals. Therefore, there is a risk that we have missed some relevant articles in the field of adult education. One way to go, that we discussed but did not choose, had been to start from the lists of publications of known authors within the field. However, we were afraid of missing someone or some articles written by authors that normally do not write about adults.

In the selection of articles

- We might have missed authors that do not have Nordic family names or otherwise have escaped our attention.
- Another major source of error is that we might have missed articles with general titles that do not point to the field of adult education. At the same time some articles, very loosely related to adult education, might have been included.
- The fact that we are five researchers working with the investigation is a problem in itself. We have most likely different interpretations of adult education and the synonymous concepts in use and have therefore probably made different selections. Thus, the judgement of the content of the articles might be a bit arbitrary.

Results of mapping

In the following we present the results of the mapping of a number of journals from four different groups. The journals will be presented shortly and an overview is given of the national distribution of articles. Some journals with large numbers of articles will be discussed in detail and the research questions related to our first and primarily aim will be addressed. The second aim related to the Nordic perspective will be discussed in a separate section.
1. Journals with a focus on adults’ education, learning and development

From this group we have chosen 13 journals (See Appendix 1 for description):

Table 2. Articles from Nordic researchers in journals with a focus on adult education, learning and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults Learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education Quarterly</td>
<td>A, 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Lifelong Education</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Adult &amp; Continuing Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Adult Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong Learning in Europe (LLinE)</td>
<td>C, 1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Inquiry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Directions for Adult &amp; Continuing Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies in Continuing Education</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies in the Education of Adults</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Among the scientific journals of adult education and lifelong learning, LLinE has the largest number of articles from the Nordic countries, especially many from Finland. This is expected since LLinE is published in Finland and has Finnish editors. From the table above we can also see that Nordic researchers frequently publish in the International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE) - 2-3 articles yearly- while few articles appear in other low ranked journals published in Europe in the same period 2000-2007. This can only partly be explained by the fact that the IJLE publish 6 issues per year compared to 2 or 3 issues in the other journals. Noteworthy, no Nordic researcher have published in the high ranked American journal Adult Education Quarterly, only one in New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education and none in PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, both American. The result of our investigation suggests that Nordic researchers are mainly oriented towards European journals. Another explanation might be that the publication policy in IJLE is more internationally oriented. We could note that most of the articles published in Adult Education Quarterly were written by authors from North America.

The majority of articles in these journals are written by Finnish researchers. This is mainly due to the large number of articles from Finland in LLinE. But even if we exclude LLinE
Finland still has the largest number, 19 articles, compared to 13 from Sweden, 12 from Denmark and 3 from Norway. This reflects the fact that adult education in these latter countries is a more marginal field of educational research than in Finland and Sweden. Iceland is exceptional here as it is in the rest of our examination.

Since International Journal of Lifelong Education and LLinE are the far most “popular” journal for Nordic adult education researchers a more thorough analysis is given below of these two journals.

International Journal of Lifelong Education
We identified a total of 22 articles published by Finnish (9 articles), Danish (7 articles), Swedish (5 articles) and Norwegian (1 article) researchers. Also four articles written by researchers outside the Nordic countries but somehow relating to adult education in the Nordic countries (e.g. the Competence reform in Norway, residential high schools) were identified. The scope of almost all articles is national. The only article with a comparative interest dealt with widening participation into higher education and in this article Finland was among the six countries compared. One of the articles presenting an international Masters programme was written by an international group of researchers including two from Nordic countries. The majority of the articles can be defined as empirical and they were mainly based on interviews, biographies or narratives told or written by adult learners in a variety of informal or formal contexts. Even if adult education or lifelong learning policies are somehow referred to in at least half of the articles only four or five can be looked upon as articles with an explicit interest in or focus on policy.

The research presented in the articles by Nordic adult education researchers covers the field of adult education research in a quite comprehensive manner. It varies from study circles as means to enhance democracy to newcomers’ identity construction in the workplace, from the individual core experiences and meaning-making considering education in the perspective of life course to conceptual reflections on the metaphors of participation and acquisition as treated in connection with the concept and ideal of the learning organization. But even if adult education and learning are treated in a broad and multifarious manner it is possible to identify some more frequent themes. It is interesting to note that the themes Bron (2005, 27) identify as the ones that previously characterized adult education research in Europe, i.e. participation and non-participation as well as motivation to participate, still seem to be frequently researched and discussed by Nordic adult education researchers. But the way in which participation is understood and treated has been widened, both considering the concept as such and in relation to the contexts in which participation takes place. Even if the concept of participation is still expressly used it could in quite many cases be replaced for example by the concept of engagement. Also the traditional instrumental view on participation, in which it is looked upon from the perspective from adult education institutions, has been transformed. Participation or engagement is in many cases studied from the learners’ point of view, in relation to their experiences and life courses. This holds especially for groups identified as low skilled, poorly educated, unemployed, school dropouts or newcomers at workplaces. At the other end of the education continuum there is an interest in adults’ participating in higher education and also the meaning they attach to studying in Open Universities. In many articles participation and engagement is related either to workplace learning or to labour market. Adult education is thereby treated as a means of enhancing engagement by formal arrangements (e.g. the Competence Reform in Norway) or informal networks and partnerships (higher education in Finland).
The concept of lifelong learning is treated by some as an idealistic policy concept also in the perspective of individual life courses as having a potential of emancipation. The current lifelong learning policies are also dealt with in a quite critical manner, as neglecting the historical aspects (disregarding especially the humanistic and democratic meanings and contents of it) as well as the multiplicity of adult learners. In one of the articles adult education as an important aspect of lifelong learning is metaphorically described as a new form of educational religion. Besides Gustavsson’s (2002) conceptual article, aiming at redefining the concepts of lifelong learning, the concept of learning is dealt with in two articles, one by Illeris (2003) on a contemporary and comprehensive theory of learning, and the other by Miettinen’s (2000) on the concept of experiential learning and John Dewey's theory of reflective thought and action. Despite the long tradition of popular adult education in the Nordic countries the question of whether a Nordic model, profile or peculiarity in adult education could be identified was not addressed in any of the articles.

**Lifelong Learning in Europe (LLInE)**

Between 2000 and 2007, LLInE published 55 articles written by Nordic authors, researchers as well as adult educators. A majority of them, 39 articles, had Finnish authors. Eight articles were from Denmark, five from Norway, two from Sweden and one from Iceland. The articles represent a wide range of topics. Most frequent were articles about the learners and learning from the learners’ perspective (9). IT technology and its educational potential (9) was another frequent topic. Other frequent issues concerned policy discussions and the concept of lifelong learning (5), different aspects of teaching and knowledge management (4) and teaching from a gender perspective (1), work-place learning (4), different (key) competences and competence development by organisational learning (4). There were also articles that discussed questions about diversity, integration and empowerment (3), higher education (3), accreditation and evaluation (3), ethical questions (2) and special learning activities such as socio-cultural animation in learning (2). Single articles brought up topics on international (1) and European education (1), learning in the library (1), learning communities (1) and constructivism in education. None of the articles took a Nordic comparative perspective or discussed a Nordic model of education. It is not possible to discern any distinct national pattern in the choice of content.

**2. Journals with a focus on specific adult education/learning themes**

**a. Working life and vocational education and training**

Viewed in the light of the vocational turn in adult education and the overall emphasis on competence and human resource development we expected working life related research to be greatly reflected in the international publications. We chose to study eight journals more thoroughly (See Appendix 1 for description).
Table 3. Articles from Nordic researchers in journals of working life and vocational education and training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Journal of Vocational Training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development International</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Vocational Education and Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Education and Work</td>
<td>A, 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Vocational Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Workplace Learning</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion
As was expected a large number of articles written by Nordic researchers are found in these journals. From a Nordic perspective the most important journal for publishing is *Journal of Workplace Learning* (46 article) followed by the CEDEFOP publication *European Journal of Vocational Training* (17 articles) and the high ranked *Journal of Education and Work* (15 articles). The remaining five journals have relatively few contributions from the Nordic countries.

The reason for the large number of articles (46) in *Journal of Workplace Learning* is, we might suggest, related to the fact that this journal publishes eight issues per year. On the other hand *Education and training* (on the same rank and from the same publisher) publishes nine issues per year and all the same has only four articles from the Nordic countries. There are obviously some reasons for the publication strategies among Nordic researchers which need further investigations.

The distribution of articles between the countries is also shown. The largest part (34 articles) comes from Finland. Then follows Sweden (27 articles) and Norway (21 articles) while Denmark has, surprisingly, fewer articles (15).

*Journal of Workplace Learning*
A more thorough analysis of this journal shows that a fifth of the articles with Nordic authors are about management and leadership, implementation, organisational changes or organisational learning. Not all of these articles focus explicit on learning, which also might be expected from the publishers’ aim and publishing philosophy. In the Norwegian ranking system for scientific publications this journal is subjected as economic-administrative, and the subject of science is social and work psychology. In other words this is not a publication connected to the field of adult education and learning or education as such, rather to organisation and management literature. The journal reflects the aspiration of the Emerald
Group Publishing Limited, namely to be “the world’s leading publisher of management research.”

However, a long list of different forms of learning is covered in the journal. One can find articles about e-learning (4), gendered learning (2), network learning, inter-organisational and new forms of learning (5). Some articles focus on the relation between work and education, peer learning, learning in team or work groups as well as individual and collective learning. Also integrated learning (3) and modelling and designing learning are represented. Most of the articles are based on empirical case studies from different kinds of workplaces. But, in line with the journals web-information there are also articles about theory, models and conceptualisations such as life history, activity theory, learning theory and different models and conceptualisations of learning. A number of articles are concerned with informal learning and learning which is integrated in work practices.

Only one article stands out as clearly Nordic and comparative. This is an article based on a project dealing with structuring workplace learning in higher vocational education in Sweden and Finland (Lindell & Stenström, 2005). Noteworthy, this journal also published a Nordic issue with 6 articles from all the Nordic countries, except Iceland (Vol 16, 2004 Issue 7/8). These articles brought up a wide range of themes; knowledge-building community, models for learning in working life, work-integrated e-learning, connecting work and education, dilemmas in the development of e-learning and newcomers’ use of role models. As a Nordic “presentation” this gives an impression of diverse interest in the Nordic countries in the field of workplace learning. But no particularly Nordic model or profile is discussed. Researchers from Finland have been the most active in publishing in this journal with 20 articles, compared to Sweden (14), Denmark (6), Norway (5), and one article is in this respect clearly Nordic as a collaboration between Sweden and Finland.

Journal of Education and Work
In this high ranked journal there were 15 articles written by Nordic authors. Eight of these articles has Norwegian authors, five have authors from Finland, two from Sweden but none from Denmark or Iceland. One of the articles is a joint cooperation between Finnish and Norwegian authors dealing with how to promote learning and transfer between school and workplace. The relation between education and work in various forms is the main object in all articles. Articles from both Sweden and Finland also explicitly address educational policy and vocational education policy. Other topics are the transition from education to work, student changes during education and workplace learning. 2/3 of the articles are more or less related to higher education.

b. Higher education
We have examined four journals in the area of higher education (see Appendix 1):

3 http://www.emeraldinsight.com/info/about_emerald/overview/index.jsp
Emerald have more that 190 titles in the field of management, e.g. Education & Training and Journal of Workplace Learning
Table 4. Articles from Nordic researchers in journals of higher education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D  F  I  N  S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>A, 2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2  11  0  13  10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education in Europe</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1  9   0  7   4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Quarterly</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2  1   0  0   0  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Further and Higher Education:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0  1   0  0   1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td><strong>4  21  0  20  16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Journals in the field of higher education

Within the field of higher education there are a large number of journals. A search at the university library in Gothenburg for journals with “higher education” in the titles brought up 43 journals. We have investigated four of those. During the period between the year of 2000 and the beginning of 2008, Higher Education had 36, Higher Education in Europe 21, Higher Education Quarterly two and Journal of Further and Higher Education had two articles written by Nordic authors. If we compare the two most “popular” journals we have to bear in mind that Higher Education publishes 8-12 issues per year while Higher Education in Europe has 4 issues per year. In sum the number of articles from Finland and Norway exceeded the numbers from Sweden and Denmark. Iceland was not represented in any of the four journals.

The four journals brought up a large number of topics. Questions concerning policies and the role of universities (5), university organisation in different senses (11), quality aspects or evaluation of higher education (4) and internationalisation or regionalisation of education on university level (7) were frequently discussed. Three articles discussed the market-orientation in higher education. Seven articles dealt with gender issues and three presented studies from the students’ perspectives. Questions of methodology in education like PBL (3), ICT (3) and scaffolding (1) were brought up as well as curriculum development (1) and learning in general (2) or in specific subjects (2). Another theme was the relation between university studies and work or labour market (7). One article discussed research methods in studies concerning higher education and another raised the question of whether the academic freedom has survived or not.

c. Open and distance education/learning

In the area of open and distance education and learning we have investigated five journals (see Appendix 1 for description):
Table 5. Articles from Nordic researchers in journals of open and distance education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Review of Research in Open &amp; Distance Learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 0 0 4 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 0 0 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly Review of Distance Education (2002-)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic journal of e-learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 3 0 0 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Education</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 1 0 0 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 0 5 3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion
We have examined five journals in the field of open and distance learning and education. One of those did not have any article at all written by a Nordic author. The other four had a few articles each spread over the Scandinavian countries. Three of the articles dealt with higher education, for example a master program in Denmark, three other took a teacher perspective on distance education. Three articles concerned problem-based or case-based learning (PBL), two discussed the virtual learning environment and one dealt with mobile distance learning. There was also an article about the Norwegian institute NKI fjernundervisning.

3. Journals of education in general
From this group we have examined five journals (see Appendix 1 for description). We have only included articles which have an adult education, lifelong learning, higher education or general policy of education perspective.

Table 6. Articles from Nordic researchers in journals of general education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Education</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0 2 0 6 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Educational Research Journal (2002-)</td>
<td>A, 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6 3 0 5 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Journal of Education</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2 7 0 5 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Educational Research</td>
<td>A, 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0 5 0 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>17 0 18 17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Only 2 articles are related to AE, additionally 7 are relevant for AE. Total 14 articles from Nordic researchers.
5 10 articles are related to AE, additionally 12 are relevant for AE. Total 36 articles from Nordic authors.
6 7 articles are related to AE, additionally 14 are relevant for AE. Total 28 articles from Nordic authors.
7 Almost none of the eight articles are particularly related to AE, but are of relevance for AE. Total 17 articles from Nordic authors.
Discussion
These journals present articles from a variety of themes, perspectives and disciplinary orientations. Although few journals are scrutinized, our investigations show that adult education researchers do publish a lot of articles in journals within the scope of general education. Indeed, the two European journals have an equal number of articles relevant to adult education research as *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*. Many researchers from general education institutions publish articles, which might be categorized as adult education or at least are relevant for adult education research. This confirms the interdisciplinary nature of adult education research as well as a research practice of disciplinary overlap.

The reasons for the different numbers of articles from the Nordic countries might be explained in terms of different editorial publication strategy, the referee and quality assurance system, and of course the publication drives of individual researchers. What we also observe in these journals is that the number from Nordic countries as well as the themes is influenced by Nordic members of their editorial board or Nordic guest editors. Noteworthy, is that *Prospect*, which has no Nordic member of the editorial board, and besides is mainly concerned with developing countries, is not a publishing channel for Nordic researchers.

4. Journals of education directed towards specific themes
The final group of journals we have included in our mapping is journals of education that are oriented towards specific themes but do not exclusively focus on adults’ education and learning. Four themes of relevant interest for adult education are identified, namely history, policy studies, comparative studies and studies on voluntary organizations, nonprofit and voluntary sector (see Appendix 1 for description).

a. History studies
Three history journals are examined, namely *History of education* (rank A, 2), *History of education quarterly* (rank, B, 1) and *Journal of Educational Administration and History* (rank B, 1). These journals had no articles from Nordic researchers.

b. Policy studies
Three policy journals are also examined and gave as a result 14 adult education relevant articles from the Nordic countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Policy</td>
<td>A, 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal for critical education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0 3 0 0 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policy studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Education Policy</td>
<td>A; 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 2 1 1 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1 5 1 1 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2 articles are related to AE, additionally 8 are relevant for AE policy. Total 12 articles from Nordic researchers.*
Discussion

Viewed in the light of the interest for historical perspectives of adult education research in the Nordic countries and the fact that the history of education is a well-developed sub field within education it is remarkably that none have published in the central historical journals of education. We notice, however, that we have looked into journals after 2000, and the absence of historical articles may probably be the result of the decline of historical research; history is indeed not the research trend nowadays.

Also publications within policy studies are rare. Only 14 articles from the Nordic countries, mainly from Finland and Sweden, are identified as being of more or less relevance for adult education. But this is (of course) not the whole story; some articles related to adult education or lifelong learning policy are also found in a number of other journals.

c. Comparative studies

From this group we have examined four journals.

Table 8. Articles from Nordic researchers in journals of comparative studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>B, 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative education</td>
<td>A, 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative education review</td>
<td>A, 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Issues in Comparative education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Comparative studies seem to be an underdeveloped area of Nordic adult education research. Only 11 articles are identified as concerning adult education in these four journals from a total number of 20 articles from Nordic researchers. Two of the articles are discussing a Nordic model of lifelong learning and adult education tradition. We will come back to these later. A third is comparing the Nordic countries but is mainly concerned with ordinary school education (Jonasson, 2003).

These journals do not, however, tell us all about comparative research in the Nordic countries since a comparative perspective is found in a number of other articles in different kind of journals.

d. Journals focusing on voluntary organizations and the nonprofit and voluntary sector

Popular adult education with its historical origin in popular movements and voluntary associations has been a forerunner to adult education and still plays an important role in the Nordic countries. But do we find articles that present research on the voluntary sector? Few journals, however, have the voluntary sector or the civil society as a subject area. Two of the most relevant are examined here.
Table 9. Articles from Nordic researchers in journals focusing on voluntary organizations, nonprofit and voluntary sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Numb</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntas:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

None of the eight articles found in these two journals are related particularly to adult education and learning. All the articles found here are written by researcher from social research institutes, schools of economics or other non-adult education institutions. Although much adult education research in the Nordic countries are devoted to the voluntary sector and the civil society no one has published in these two journals.

How can this result be understood? Do popular adult education researchers not publish internationally at all or, if they do, do they publish in other journals. Another explanation might be that this research is not found qualitatively worthy to be accepted in scientific journals and that this research area has other types of publishing channels (not ranked popular science journals). Or do popular adult education researchers believe that this field of research is something local and therefore not interesting for the rest of the world?

Nordic perspectives

Only a few articles in the journals we have examined have a comparative Nordic perspective or discuss a Nordic identity and a Nordic model of adult education. As these articles have different focus and orientation we present each article separately. In addition to the journals we have examined we also present two articles from a special issue of Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research.


Korsgaard does not specifically address the question of a Nordic model but discuss folkeoplysning and folkbildning as a special Nordic tradition. It was Grundtvig who established the link beween the German term Bildung and Enlightenment on the one hand and folk on the other. According to Korsgaard, folk is-used in three different ways: as a social category, as a political category (demos) and as a cultural category (ethnos). In the Nordic tradition of folkeoplysning he finds that “the Swedish folkbildning has laid a special emphasis on the social and democratic perspective while the Danish and the Norwegian folkeop(p)lysning tradition – for certain periods – has placed a major emphasis on the nation-cultural perspective”. The question posed by Korsgaard in the article is whether the Nordic folkeoplysning can have a role to play in the development of a cosmopolitan democracy and a European citizenship. The challenge will be to create an identity to a European demos and in this process folkeoplysning can serve as a midwife, Korsgaard believes. On the basis of a maintenance of folk as demos “it will require serious steps to incorporate – in the Nordic folkeoplysning – the European dimension, while regarding the development of a European demos as an important goal”.

15

In this article Albert C. Tuijnman discusses a “Nordic model” of adult education based on the results from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) between 1994 and 1998. The IALS survey showed that the “Nordic countries form a homogeneous group in terms of the level and distribution of literacy skills in the adult population aged 16-65”. The four Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – had the highest levels of literacy proficiency on the IALS document literacy scale compared to other advances OECD countries. They also “had consistently less inequality – measured by the spread between those at the 25th percentile and those at the 75th percentile”.

The Nordic countries have also the highest level of participation in adult education and training. However, “the volume of training for the employed population is not that different from the other countries. This may partly reflect the high prevalence in the Nordic countries of liberal adult education, … as well as the comparatively high incidence of active labour market policies or the unemployed population”. Indeed, “there are a number of countries where the total volume of training is higher than the Nordic average. … This means that, in these countries, proportionally fewer people participate in adult education, but those who do take part in programmes that tend to be of longer duration”.

Tuijnman accords with other researchers that “there is a strong commitment, widely shared among Nordic citizens, of creating conditions of equal opportunities and outcomes in many spheres of life”. Three goals seem to be shared; the first refers to participation in wider society, the second to adult education and training as a means to improve the match between educational qualifications and skills and broad participation in the labour market, and the third to create an inclusive learning society for all. These dimensions appear through three sets of indicators; high gender equality, high level of public investment in educational services and research, and large numbers of educational activities of the popular movements.

The distinguishing characteristics of the Nordic countries are related to a tradition of public welfare of which “two factors that are amenable to policy seem to be very important: The level of public support and emphasis on equal access”. Tuijnman do, however, find “no single, overarching ‘Nordic model’ as such because, despite their apparent similarities, the countries show significant variations on a range of indicators. Yet there clearly are distinctive Nordic patterns of adult education and training”:

- A comparatively high participation for populations sub-groups who score relatively low on measures such as educational attainment, literacy proficiency, employment rate and earning from work. This ‘at-risk’ population, measured by the Level 1 literacy threshold, was about 13 % in the Nordic countries compared with 30 % for other countries. Tuijnman concludes: “The consistently high degree of participation in adult education of the population with a low level of assessed reading skills is in fact a distinguishing feature of the Nordic region”.
- The good overall score of the Nordic countries can be due to a number of factors related to the educational and training system. Importantly is also that “the expectations and demands on all citizens concerning participation and literacy skills might be higher than in many other countries. These expectations relate to the desire to increase total factor productivity and reduce social disparities and economic inequality by improving the competitiveness of the labour force through the indispensable skills
This has become part of the state policy all over the world, but especially in the Nordic countries a high level of targeted public support for adult education for disadvantaged groups is one of the defining characteristics of Nordic approaches to adult education.

Tuijnman draws the conclusion that “what could be said to exist, rather than a well-defined ‘model’, is a Nordic ‘standard’ or ‘approach’ defined in terms of participation rates, structures of provision, volume and orientation, and the supply driven role of the public sector in targeting funding, provision and operations”.


In this article from 2006 Kjell Rubenson presents analysis of the same IALS survey and emphasis similar distinguishable characteristics of Nordic adult education as found by Tuijnman; high participation, also among those with a short formal education, relatively low inequality, and a more equal age distribution among participants then in other countries.

Moreover the International Literacy Survey (OECD, 2000) found a strong relationship between economic inequality, on the one hand, and literacy and adult education participation on the other hand. This relationship “suggest that inequalities in basic capabilities, as defined by literacy, are part of national structures and can be understood in terms of various forms of welfare-state regimes.” In this perspective the defining characteristics of an assumed Nordic model of lifelong learning can, according to Rubenson, be explained in the context of the Nordic welfare state regime. These characteristics, as observed by Rubenson, are the following:

1. An old and strong tradition of popular adult education and general adult education that from the 1960s evolved as a distinct and central public policy area with a strong presence of the state and a close involvement of the social partners. This development has made adult education a highly visible phenomenon in the Nordic societies.

2. A distinct labour market regime emphasising full employment which has called upon the provision of education and training to act swiftly against imbalances in the labour market. As a result the education and training offered the unemployed have been quite extensive and not of the minimalist nature found in many other countries.

3. A development of industrial relations with a unique combination of centralisation and decentralisation has been very conducive to the promotion of adult education and training. Firstly, a highly developed corporatist structure has fostered a tradition of collaborations between the state and the labour market organisations. Secondly, a high union density rates as well as large membership in employer association have allowed for central involvement in adult education and training at all levels of the organisations. This has helped adult education to become pat of a worker’s individual and collective identity. Moreover, “the corporatist institution provides a structure whereby adult education and training can become part of negotiations on changes in production processes and work organisations, introduction of new technology and economic democracy”.

4. The high and relatively more equal participation rates in Nordic countries can partly be explained by the fact that these countries, in contrast to most other countries, have a publicly supported sector of popular adult education. This large popular sector may especially explain the fact that participation in adult education and training among those 55 and older is comparatively high in the Nordic countries.
5. Finally, Rubenson point to the importance of public funding. In general public funding have had limited effects on the recruitment of disadvantaged groups and the less well educated since it is mainly based on the principles of demand and equal treatment. The successful recruitment in Nordic countries of these groups, Rubenson claim, is more a result of earmarked funding to the target groups. In this way the funding regimes seems to have “crucial effect on the participation of those least likely to enrol in adult education and training”. Indeed, as concluded by Tuijnman and Hellström (2001:9), “public support for disadvantaged groups is the main, defining characteristics of Nordic approaches to adult education”.

**Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, vol. 50, no. 3, 2006**

In a jubilee issue 2006, the Scandinavian Journal presents several articles from a number of leading researchers who have been asked to approach the Nordic system of education from different points of view and illuminate the question: Is there a Nordic model in education? Although the adult education system is not particularly addressed, two of the articles are of particular interest also from our point of view.

**Ari Antikainen: In Search of the Nordic Model in Education**

In this article Antikainen argues that education as a social institution has two facets, general/global and particular/local. Their relationship is dialectic. The local facet, or what is discussed as a Nordic model, is shaped by three major goals; equity, participation and welfare. The means to achieve these is the comprehensive school system common to all and funded from the public purse, and Antikainen says:

“...The national comprehensive school system based on the goals of equity and participation and lifelong learning form the most important foundation of the Nordic model of education”.

The welfare system, the prime attribute of the Nordic model, of which education is a part, is however become weakened. It has been seriously suggested that some of the countries, especially Finland, is no longer a welfare state due to the adjustment to neo-liberalistic doctrines of New Public Management, steering and budgeting by results, evaluation of schools, privatization, commercialization etc. The Nordic countries have been forced to react to the international of global competition, but Antikainen point to the fact that they have coped surprisingly well. They have developed a dualist economy, characterized by openness and dependence on the world markets in some sectors, while some other nationally highly-valued sectors are protected. Antikainen refers to out-siders’ observation that some Nordic countries have managed to create National innovation systems characterized by the development of a successful information society, well-educated people and a peculiar national identity. As Castells have argued, informational societies are also network societies, and according to Antikainen, the Nordic success can be attributed to the fact that schools, colleges and universities in the Nordic countries have established partnerships with each others and with actors such as companies, employers and unions, citizens’ associations and so on, both locally and globally.

As a conclusion, Antikainen, found some values and aims, as part of a conscious ideology, that have guided the development of education. “They are democracy, equality, progressiveness, and pragmatism. Social democracy, both as a political movement and broader ideology, has had a crucial impact. … However, the Nordic education model can only
be referred to as an ideal type”. Although many similarities the Nordic countries also differs in many respects. “Instead of one model, there are models or just patterns”, Antikainen says.

Alfred Telhaug, Odd Asbjørn Mediås and Petter Aasen: The Nordic Model in Education: Education as part of the political system in the last 50 years

The authors describe, analyse and discuss the development of the Nordic school model in three phases, the period 1945-70, which are the golden years of social democracy, 1970-1980/85 and the period from the middle of the 1980s. In the first period a Nordic ideal and model for the rest of the western countries developed. It is characterized by a social democratic compromise, a strong state and a marked central “input” management. The period from 1970 and into the 1980s is an intermediate phase in which the radical left influenced both public thinking and theoretical thinking. In the 1980s the ideology changed and is describes as neo-liberal and neo-conservative. These trends are not peculiar Nordic and the authors observe that “during the last decade, the Nordic education model has lost ground as an ideal for the western world”. In spite of this development they nevertheless argue “it is still possible to identify a particularly Nordic political philosophy entrenched in the Nordic model of society”. This model has emerged as a composite of the Anglo-Saxon model characterized by a small public sector, a liberal attitude towards market and competition and low emphasis on social welfare, and the Continental model, characterized by a larger public sector. The authors refer to findings from the European Policy Centre study The Nordic Model: a recipe for European Success? (2005) that point to the outstanding performance of the Nordic countries in comparison to other European countries. Certain circumstances are regarded as particularly important for this result; a profitable balance between the state, the market and the civil society, ability to combine economic efficiency and flexibility with social inclusion and protection, formation of social capital and high investment in education.

Concluding remarks

The field of research

If the articles published in the chosen journals reflect the current state of adult education research, as we assume, adult education has, after the strive in the 1970´s and 1980´s to establish a field with its own theoretical base and conceptual framework, become a field with an strong interdisciplinary character. This is not discussed in the journals. We did not find a single article in which the character of adult education as a field of research, or the concepts characteristic to it, is reflected on in a comprehensive manner. The conceptual move from adult education to lifelong learning is reflected in the articles covered at least in three manners, firstly as an interest in various aspects on and forms of learning from the learners´ perspective and with a regard to certain circumstances that define this perspective (e.g. gender, generation, life course, occupation). Secondly there is a great variation considering the contexts in which adult learning in different forms are studied. This variation is connected to the third overall notion, a shift of focus from teaching and use of certain teachings methods (e-learning as an exception) within adult education organizations to an overall interest in competence and organizational development as well as knowledge management (broadly defined) in various kinds of organizations and networks. One tentative conclusion is that the strengthened interdisciplinary character of adult education research is at least partially skewed. It is about the relationship between adult learning and work, either from a policy perspective or from an organizational point of view. In the second case adult education as a field of research becomes influenced by and connected to human resource development, management studies and organizational theory.
Without being able to prove it unambiguously, we maintain that Nordic researchers tightly or loosely connected to the field of adult education are quite strongly present on the international arena of dialogue, i.e. that they publish their research quite intensively in the international journals. The differences between the Nordic countries can probably be explained by the differences between the position and role of adult education research within the universities. Finland has, since the middle of 1990’s in total ten professors in adult education in seven universities. Due to the drastic changes on labour market and working life caused by the deep recession in the beginning of 1990’s adult education research was strongly directed towards research within working life organizations. And Finland in not an exception, also researchers from Sweden and Norway have in the beginning of the third millennium strongly emphasised research on working life as well as vocational education and training. This emphasis is mirrored both in the number of articles published in the journals within this specific field and also in the most common research themes in the general journals within adult education.

The Nordic perspective
The Nordic perspective, model or configuration of the field, that we were interested in identifying, seems not to be present or relevant to the Nordic researchers within adult education. For example the various forms of learning within working life organizations is not related to or discussed in terms of national contexts, rather in terms of certain kind of work processes or organizational characteristics. In an era of globalisation one might assume that comparative studies, in which the strengths and weaknesses of certain traditions become apparent, would be of interest. But this seem not be the case, at least within the Nordic countries. The strong and at least earlier internationally acknowledged tradition of popular adult education is absent. The situation is exactly the same when it comes to historical research. As adult education researchers we still seem to be interested in adults learning but not in learning from the past.

The former trademark of the Nordic welfare states, that is a strong civil society with a large voluntary sector, in which the organizations within popular adult education are included, seems not to be of interest to Nordic adult education research. This is somehow paradoxical since the origin of adult education research is within this sphere. It is also interesting to note that in those few articles in which the Nordic model is presented and analysed, the focus is on the historically formed ideological base of adult education (strive for democracy and equality) resulting a) in a strong infrastructure within adult education and training built up with public support, b) high levels of participation and educational attainment resulting c) in high levels of competencies and skills (e.g. within literacy). The current emphasis on the multifarious forms of adult learning in various working life contexts seem to be detached from the traditions as well as the overall national and social contexts but quite strongly attached to global educational policies.

Strategies of publication
The contemporary stress on international publishing or what seems to be a reinforcement of the publish or perish culture, may have some unfortunate consequences for adult education as an interdisciplinary field of research and practice. Is it a problem that university based research on adult education is judged in comparison to scholarly activities in the social sciences in general and not in terms of its relevance to adult education as a field of practice (Hake, 1992). The emergence of a ranking system of journals and publishers, that has been introduced in Norway, adds questions whether quality always mean practical relevance. The Norwegian indicators, when used for allocation of money, will probably downplay the
importance of popular science and publication of results to practitioners. This is now a matter of discussion. If the critical arguments are not heard the political and social debate and the matter of common concern may suffer because the narrow-focused and the “exclusive” journals and publishers are more rewarding then the ones that are directed towards a wider audience. Two examples; an article or book published by Cambridge University Press is more rewarding then being published by Peter Lang. An article published in the general English journals of lifelong learning gives one publication point in Norway while an article in for instance *Annals of Dyslexia* gives three points.

The Norwegian preferred regime of publication awards has different consequences for different disciplines. If applied to all the Nordic countries it will also have different consequences for the contemporary practice of scientific publication in the countries. A larger part of the total scientific production in Sweden is, for instance, now found in the local, regional, institutional or national publishing channels. This is not the case in Norway (Sivertsen, 2007). These channels are not being awarded in Norway. If Sweden should follow the same priorities the reports, books and other publications produced by universities and higher education institutions will be regarded as less important and valuable both from the perspective of researchers and from the state dependant institutions.

**References**


Appendix 1

1. Journals with a focus on adults’ education, learning and development

*Adult Learning*: Present itself as “the best journal for policy and practice in adult learning”. It publishes short articles (1-3 pages) and the majority (?) is not written by researchers or presents research. 10-11 issues per year. Publisher: NIACE.

*Adult Education Quarterly*: Is the journal of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. “The journal strives to be inclusive in scope, addressing topics and issues of significance to scholars and practitioners concerned with diverse aspects of adult and continuing education”. Four issues per year. Publisher: Sage Publications.

*Convergence*: Is the journal of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), a non-governmental voluntary organization formed in 1973. It is a worldwide journal addressing “issues, practices and developments in the broad field of adult and nonformal education”. Four issues per year. Publisher: IACE.

*International Journal of Lifelong Education*: “Provides a forum for debate on the principles and practice of lifelong, adult, continuing, recurrent and initial education and learning, whether in formal, institutional or informal settings. Common themes include social purpose in lifelong education, and sociological, policy and political studies of lifelong education. The journal recognises that research into lifelong learning needs to focus on the relationships between schooling, later learning, active citizenship and personal fulfilment, as well as the relationship between schooling, employability and economic development. 6 issues per year. Publisher: Taylor & Francis.

*Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*: “A forum for rigorous theoretical and practical work in the broad fields of lifelong learning and adult, community and continuing education. The journal focuses on international and national issues and is aimed at researchers, professionals and practitioners in all sectors. It publishes both research articles and reflections on policy and practice, and offers opportunities for all concerned with post-compulsory education to make contributions to debate”. Two issues per year. Published by NIACE and is supported by Scottish Adult Learning Partnership, Universities Association for Lifelong Learning, the Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education, the Scottish Further Education Unit and the European Universities Continuing Education Network.

*Journal of Adult Development*: “Covers all aspects of development in adults across the lifespan using a broad range of developmental perspectives”. Four issues per year. Publisher: Springer, Netherlands.

*Lifelong Learning in Europe (LLinE)*: Lline is published by the KVS foundation in cooperation with the Finnish Adult Education Research Society. It has board members from different countries in Europe, and “welcomes adult educators from all sectors of the field, and from all cultures as readers and contributors, under the belief that we benefit from diverse viewpoints.” The journal presents “research showcasing leading discoveries in such areas as adult learning, active citizenship, societal demands for adult educators, workplace development and learning organisations.” This is done in peer-reviewed articles, project presentations and policy-creating comments. Four issues per year (http://sivistys.net/lline_journal/).
Narrative Inquiry: Is the continuation of the Journal of Narrative and Life History. It is devoted to providing a forum for theoretical, empirical, and methodological work on narrative. Articles appearing in Narrative Inquiry draw upon a variety of approaches and methodologies in the study of narrative as a way to give contour to experience, tradition, and values to next generations. Particular emphasis is placed on theoretical approaches to narrative and the analysis of narratives in human interaction, including those practiced by researchers in psychology, linguistics and related disciplines. Two issues per year. Publisher: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education: The journal “explores issues of common interest to instructors, administrators, counsellors, and policymakers in a broad range of adult and continuing education settings, such as colleges and universities, extension programs, businesses, libraries, and museums”. Four issues per year. Publisher: Jossey-Bass Inc Publishers.

PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning: ”Is a refereed journal published annually by the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE), a professional association for adult educators and those interested in adult education in Pennsylvania. PAACE serves more than 1000 members across the Commonwealth in all areas of adult education. …The PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning reflects this diversity with articles representing adult, community, continuing, and distance education”.

Studies in Continuing Education: “A scholarly journal concerned with all aspects of continuing, professional and lifelong learning. It aims to be of special interest to those involved in continuing professional education, adults learning, staff development, training and development, human resource development. Three issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

Studies in the Education of Adults: “An international refereed academic journal, publishing theoretical, empirical and historical studies from all sectors of post-initial education and training. It aims to provide a forum for the debate and development of key concepts”. Two issues per year. The journal is published by NIACE in association with the Standing Conference on University Research and Teaching in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA), the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL) and the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA).

2. Journals with a focus on specific adult education/learning themes

a. Working life and vocational education and training

Education and training: “Examines the links between career professionals in schools, colleges and universities and training professionals in industry”. The journal focuses on the relationship between education and training, addresses vocational learning and highlights the changing nature of the partnership between the worlds of work and education. Articles based on experience and case material, rather than philosophical speculation, and which develop practical implications are of particular interest. Nine issues per year. Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing.

European Journal of Vocational Training: Published by CEDEFOP in five languages. The journal presents research, practices, policies and innovation on vocational training in Europe at all levels of skills training. Tree issues per year.
Human Resource Development International: Its subject is Personal and HRD. The journal “promotes all aspects of practice and research that explore issues of individual, group and organisational learning and performance.” Five issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

International Journal of Vocational Education and Training: “The official publication of IVETA. It is published biannually and sent to members”. “IVETA is an organization and network of vocational educators, vocational skills training organizations, business and industrial firms, and other individuals and groups interested or involved in vocational education and training worldwide. IVETA is dedicated to the advancement and improvement of high-quality vocational education and training wherever it exists and wherever it is needed”.

Journal of Education and Work: Is “an international forum for academic research and policy analysis which focuses on the interplay of the education and economic systems. The journal examines how knowledge, skills, values and attitudes both about and for work and employment are developed within the education system. … explores the various forms of industrial training and accreditation in the economic system, … (and) has a particular interest in comparative studies of skill formation and especially the transition from education to employment, how this process is structured and managed, and its effects on the young people, schools, colleges, universities and employers. … (It) publishes interdisciplinary papers… (and) case studies from practitioners which present innovation grounded in relevant literature and debate.” Five issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

Journal of Vocational Education & Training: before 1996 known as The Vocational Aspect of Education: “Is a fully-refereed international journal that publishes scholarly articles addressing the development of practice and theory in work-related education, wherever that education occurs.” four issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

Journal of Workplace Learning: Advertised to be cover questions about counselling, learning and management. Key journal audiences are; academic and corporate libraries, general managers, industrial psychologists, management academics, personal managers and training and development consultants. Eight issues per year. Publish by the Emerald Group Publishing.

The Learning Organization: “Aims to bring new ideas, debate issues, introduce innovative methods and offer practical case studies to practitioners, consultants, researchers and students worldwide”. Six issues per year. Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing.

b. Higher education

Higher Education: Covers “educational developments throughout the world in universities, polytechnics, colleges, and vocational and education institutions”, both in the public and private sectors. Furthermore, it takes the perspective of “teachers as well as students, and of planners as well as administrators”. This is done in “authoritative overview articles, comparative studies and analyses of particular problems or issues”. The journal has an international editorial board with coordinating members from Australia, USA and Germany and an advisory board with members from a wide range of countries, included some of the Nordic countries. 8-12 issues per year. Publisher: Springer, Netherlands.

Higher Education in Europe: “It is a scholarly publication dealing with major problems and trends in contemporary higher education. It presents information, interpretations, and criticism
in regard to current developments in the field. While focussing primarily on Europe and North America within the context of the other activities of the Centre, it regularly features contributions from other regions of the world as well.” The head of the editorial board is located in Romania. Most of the board members come from countries in Europe but USA, Russia, China and Canada are also represented. Four issues per year. Publisher: Taylor & Francis Group on behalf of UNESCO-CEPES.

*Higher Education Quarterly:* Publishes articles concerned with policy, strategic management and ideas in higher education. A substantial part of its contents is concerned with reporting research findings in ways that bring out their relevance to senior managers and policy makers at institutional and national levels, and to academics who are not necessarily specialists in the academic study of higher education. Higher Education Quarterly also publishes papers that are not based on empirical research but give thoughtful academic analyses of significant policy, management or academic issues. Publisher: Blackwell, in association with the Society for Research into Higher Education.

*Journal of Further and Higher Education:* Is an international, peer-reviewed journal which publishes articles and book reviews representing the whole field of post-16 education and training. Topic areas include management and administration, teacher education and training, curriculum, staff and institutional development, and teaching and learning strategies and processes. The journal encourages debate on contemporary pedagogic issues and professional concerns within the UK and abroad. The journal is committed to promoting excellence in these fields by providing a forum for the debate and evaluation of a wide range of pedagogic issues and professional concerns. Four issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

c. Open and distance education

*Distance Education:* The official journal of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia Inc (ODLAA). Three issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

*The International review of Research in Open and Distance Learning:* The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning (www.irrodl.org) is a refereed, open access e-journal that aims to disseminate research, theory, and best practice in open and distance learning worldwide. IRRODL is available free of charge to anyone with access to the Internet. New issues are accessible when six articles are accepted for publication. Publisher: Athabasca University – Canada’s Open University.

*Open Learning:* Reports on the latest development in distance & continuing education. Three issues per year. Publisher: Routledge on behalf of the Open University.

*Quarterly Review of Distance Education:* An Official Journal of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology Publishes articles, research briefs, review, & editorial dealing with the theories, research & practises of distance education. Four issues per year. Publisher: Information Age Publishing (IAP).

We may also mention *The Electronic Journal of e-Learning* which is an online journal that aims to publish articles and papers that contribute to the development of both the theory and practice in the field of e-Learning. The journal is connected to ECEL: The European Conference on e-Learning and is published by the Academic Conferences Limited Curtis Farm, England. The first issue came out in 2003. So far eight issues are published. Most of the members in the editorial boards are from the UK.
3. Journals of education in general

*European Education*: “Presents the latest issues and studies in the field of education in and across the member states of the Council of Europe… articles on education policy, theory and practice” included “adult education, school-to-work transitions, special education”. Four issues per year. Publisher: M. E. Sharpe Inc.


*European Journal of Education*: Published in association with the European Institute of Education and Social policy, Paris. Subject: Research, Development and Policy. The aim is to examine, compare and assess education policies, trends, reforms and programmes of European countries in an international perspective, to disseminate policy debates and research results to a wide audience of academics, researchers, practitioners and students of education sciences and to contribute to the policy debate at the national and European level. Four issues per year. Publisher: Blackwell.

*International Journal of Educational Research*: (formerly known as *Evaluation in Education*): The journal welcome issues and individual papers on any contemporary educational topic of international interest…. (and) educational research involving any discipline and methodology. Eight issues per year. Publisher: Elsevier.

*Prospect*: UNESCO’s journal on education. “Subject: Humanities, Social Sciences and Law Education, Education (general) and Comparative Education”. Four issues per year. Publisher: Springer, Netherlands.

4. Journals of education directed towards specific themes

a) History journals


*History of education quarterly*: Continues *History of Education Journal*. Topics span the history of education, both formal and nonformal, including the history of childhood, youth, and the family. The subjects are not limited to any time period and are universal in scope. Published in cooperation with the College of Education, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. Publisher: History of Education Society.

*Journal of Educational Administration and History*: “An international journal committed to the publication of high quality peer reviewed articles based on conceptual and empirical research. Its remit is broad, and it is based on a field that is pluralistic with a range of projects, people and research designs. The central purpose is to communicate rigorous research that undertakes historical analyses of educational administration, leadership, management and policy. The journal's readership is international and includes policymakers, researchers, and practitioners in the field of education”. Three issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.
b) Policy journals:

Educational Policy: “Provides an interdisciplinary forum for improving education in primary and secondary schools, as well as in higher education and non school settings”. Six issues per year. Publisher: Sage journals.

Journal for critical education policy studies: E-journal published by the Institute for Education Policy studies (IEPS), an independent Radical Left/Socialist/Marxist institute … (and) seeks to develop Marxist analysis of policy, theory, ideology and policy development”. Two issues per year.

Journal of Education Policy: “Aims to discuss, analyse and debate policymaking, policy implementation and policy impact at all levels of and on all facets of education.” Six issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

c) Journals of Comparative Studies

Compare: Official journal of the British Association for International and Comparative Education. It publishes research related to “educational development and change,…(and) welcome papers which reflect on practice from early childhood to the end of adult life, review processes of comparative and international inquiry and report on empirical studies”. Five issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

Comparative Education: Subject: International and comparative education. CE “engages with challenging theoretical and methodological issues … considers the implications of comparative studies for the formation an implementation of policies … (and) welcomes contribution from associated disciplines in the field of government, management, sociology”. Four issues per year. Publisher: Routledge.

Comparative Education Review: Investigates education throughout the world and the social, economic and political forces that shape it. Four issues per year. Publisher: The University of Chicago Press.

Current Issues in Comparative Education: “An international online, open access journal inviting diverse opinions of academics, practitioners and students”. Two (?) issues per year. Publisher: Teacher College, Columbia University.

We may also mention Research in Comparative and International Education. This journal started as an on-line journal in 2006. It is a peer-reviewed international journal “concerned with research and its methods … in the field of comparative and internationals education, broadly defined…. Largely descriptive or solely policy-based papers are unlikely to be accepted”.

Notice: Comparative perspectives are also found in a number of other journals. Some journals explicitly welcome articles from a comparative perspective.

d) Journals focusing on Voluntary organizations, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly: Journal of the Association on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action. It provides a forum for researcher and is dedicated to enhancing our knowledge through the cumulative efforts of many different disciplines. Four issues per year. Publisher: Sage Journals.
*Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations:* Official journal of the International Society for Third-Sector Research. It “aims to be the central forum for worldwide research in the area between the state, market, and household sector … (and) to present leading-edge academic arguments around civil society issues in a style accessible to practitioners and policymakers”. Four issues per year. Publisher: Springer, Netherlands.