

# The Norwegian Constitution: Textualizing democracy

## 1 Introduction

The Norwegian Constitution ranks as one of the most frequently referenced texts in current Norwegian public debates, such as the 2010 debate on pylons in the Hardanger district and the Supreme Court's 2010 ruling on shipping companies' taxes. In the yearly nationwide celebrations of Constitution Day on May 17, the Constitution serves as a common point of reference for most Norwegian citizens, irrespective of their age, domicile, origin, or social standing. Throughout the year, the Constitution is invoked in numerous cases as the framework for understanding, improving, challenging, or defending contemporary Norwegian society. For example, the argument that a decision or an action violates or upholds the Constitution always seems to carry great weight in public debates. Disputes concerning the Constitution are also frequent: A Google search for the term 'grunnlovsstridig' (violation of the constitution) produced 60,000 results (29 September 2010). In this sense, the cultural imagery of the Norwegians casts national and democratic disputes as constant encounters between the idealized constitutional text and political controversies. Thus, national mythmaking is deeply involved in processes of *textualizing democracy*.

### 1.1 A foundational cultural intertext

Significantly, some of these ongoing textual processes manifest themselves concretely. Historically, citizens' interpretations of and actions based upon the Constitution have resulted in numerous derived texts as exemplified by laws and directives, and speeches on the occasion of May 17. International in its historical origin, the Constitution also interconnects across borders with foreign constitutions, international legal documents, political pamphlets, literary texts and other texts transmitting ideas of politics, rights, governance and social formations. Consequently, the Constitution is entwined in layers and networks of other texts that cut across and challenge our modern notions of genres and disciplines. The Norwegian Constitution is therefore fundamentally international and interdisciplinary—an example of a cultural intertext. In addition, the modern tradition of constitutional writing, out of which the Norwegian Constitution emerges, also represents a new understanding of the constitution concept per se. A constitution did not, as before, describe a particular actual state of the society, but rather it normatively prescribed a political vision and in consequence social transformations. A modern constitution as it was conceived around 1800 was precisely this—it did not merely *modify* the emerging political structure of a society; it *prescribed* a whole new society.

### 1.2 A trans-disciplinary approach

Our interdisciplinary research project seeks to develop empirical as well as theoretical perspectives on the textual culture surrounding the Norwegian Constitution. From our different disciplinary and hermeneutical outlooks, we will focus on investigating the textual processes involved in the creation of the Norwegian Constitution and its various transformations during the last two centuries. A significant part of this investigation will be to consider how the Constitution has evolved as a continuous dialogue with international events, as well as to consider questions relating to its reception.

i) Our *primary objective* is to improve trans-disciplinary methods for examining the Constitution in its many varieties, enactments and interpretations.

ii) As a result of this examination we hope, as our *secondary objective*, to highlight the textual qualities of the Constitution for both international scholars and the general Norwegian public.

Although we will research the Constitution as a text, our project nevertheless acknowledges the ontological limitations of such an outlook: to emphasize textual processes does not imply a refusal to consider realities outside the text. People struggle to achieve their basic requirements of life, they fight for power, and they are influenced by the constitutional status of their homeland and by the doings of the authorities. Yet, people *also* write texts, they negotiate how texts should be written, and they debate how texts should be interpreted, enacted, and changed (see Asdal et al. 2008).

These negotiations and debates are particularly frequent and intense when responding to culturally, legally, socially, and politically significant texts, such as the Norwegian Constitution. A focus on the textual qualities of the Constitution therefore helps us scrutinize both its complex prehistory and its history of enactments and interpretations.

Researchers from many disciplines have examined the Norwegian Constitution within their respective fields. We move beyond those mostly mono-disciplinary approaches to develop a methodology that we term *trans-disciplinary interpretation*. This new, significant methodology fuses knowledge generated in our respective realms of expertise and expands research of the Constitution into textual research of a document situated in time and transformed in accordance with international developments. We plan to disseminate our research in the following ways: as an academic book published by an international publisher, as academic articles, as a coffee table book for the Norwegian public, as an inspirational video and other instructional material for teachers, and as a database of pupils' May 17 speeches about the Constitution.

## **2 Textuality: interpretation as democratic participation**

Researching the Constitution as a text, our first premise is that as any text, the Norwegian Constitution is historically situated. Thus, its first version, the Eidsvoll Constitution of 17 May 1814, was written by means of the linguistic and other semiotic resources available to the founding fathers, the *Eidsvollmenn*, in the particular historical situation of early 19th century Norway. The inventory of letters, words, grammatical and rhetorical norms given by Danish as well as by Norwegian conditioned how they could write the Constitution. Their writing was also informed by their knowledge of other systems of governance, constitutions, texts, and concepts. Some conditions were determined predominantly by domestic contexts, such as the vast political and cultural debate on all possible themes stimulated by the abolishment of censorship in 1770. Other influences were imported from abroad, such as the very idea of writing a constitution and the central concepts of civil and political rights.

Our second premise is that, again as any other text does, the Constitution submits to the potentials and limits generally involved in interpretations. Unlike that of other texts, however, which have predominating esthetic functions (literature and occasionally other texts, for example commercials), the textuality of the Constitution is often overlooked. One cause of this ignorance about the Constitution is perhaps its status as a national myth: the Norwegian public seems less interested in the text, which is understood as a given and stable entity, and more interested in how the Constitution relates to phenomena outside the text. People tend to see the effects of the Constitution more clearly than they see the Constitution itself. Thereby, the Constitution conforms to the general paradox: Social life is permeated by texts at every level, yet precisely due to this omnipresence, the texts per se are overlooked. Interestingly, the textuality of the Norwegian Constitution ceases to be overlooked because the unique Norwegian practice of providing amendments in an archaic linguistic form serves to make visible its textuality (Hylland 1989, Vinje 2002). When we as researchers view the Constitution as a text, we are provoked to ask basic questions such as: Must a constitution have the form of a single, material text? The case of English constitutionalism seems to contradict this idea. Why are some changes considered to be amendments, while others are considered to be 'mere' text changes? May we detect a pattern in what have been considered formal changes and what have been considered informal changes and practices developed alongside the letter of the law? And—since constitutions are coded in both legal and political semantics—how do single articles reflect possible contradictions and differences?

Our third premise, partly contradicting the second one, is that due to its specific legal and political status, interpretations and enactments of a constitution affect social fields in ways that challenge its mere textual qualities. Because of its foundational character, a constitution functions as the basis of existing legislation and provides the framework of governance. This framework operates not only in the positive sense of opening up new possibilities to citizens, but also in the negative sense of marginalizing options and understandings not included in its text (Luhmann 1995: 317–319). The specific political and legal status of a constitution will in this sense form the context.

Variant readings exist that are all equally compatible with the text and none of which is privileged by the text against any of the other variants. In such cases, the choice of interpretation becomes a political act, resting on the interpreter's mobilizing of extra-textual information (Kis 2003: 143). Yet even in such cases, traditions, values and practices will support some readings as being more reasonable than others (Kalleberg 2010).

By approaching the Constitution analytically through such notions of textuality, we presume that, as any text, it may exist in three modes: as an artifact, as a social object, and as individual interpretations (Gammelgaard 2001: 43–45).

As an artifact, the Constitution has a material existence as a vehicle carrying linguistic and other signs. Thus, the Constitution appears as different things when handwritten on paper (as the original that the founding fathers signed at Eidsvoll), printed as a booklet, and accessible in digital form on the Internet. It also appears as different things when written in different languages (*bokmål*, *nynorsk* and others) and when written in the varying historical shapes of single languages. Further, the Constitution appears as yet another material object whenever amendments are made, whether these concern new articles (or the deletion of old articles), wordings, orthography, typeface, or typography. Finally, each different graphic design makes the Constitution appear to be a new artifact. Including such visual and material objects in our research will open up new possibilities for researching the material conditions for spreading ideas of democracy throughout Norway and throughout generations of Norwegian citizens.

As a social object, the Constitution exists as an entity lodged in the collective consciousness. Most often, when people express statements such as, 'The constitution says,' or 'This violates the constitution,' they refer to the 'Constitution-social object.' They refer to the general, socially shared idea of the Constitution's meaning, rather than to any of its many material varieties. They refer to general ideas about democracy rather than to the letter of the Constitution. As a social object, the Constitution may be considered as a monument that is referred to in its entirety, rather than as a document that is read article by article. As social object, the Constitution most easily lends itself to comparisons with other central texts, whether legally binding documents or texts verbalizing ideologies and political and social aims comparable with those of the Constitution.

Through individual interpretations, the Constitution exists whenever anybody reads it and forms his or her idea of its meaning. Such individual interpretations are central to the ways in which citizens participate in democratic institutions. For example, citizens may lose confidence in institutions if institutional representatives act contrary to the popular understanding of the Constitution. As researchers, we may access those individual interpretations when people reveal them in the form of new texts, spanning such diverse pieces as rulings by Supreme Court judges, amendments by parliamentarians, instructions by civil servants, and May 17 speeches by pupils. By researching these interpretative responses, significant and specific modes of Norwegian democratic participation might be illuminated.

The three modes of existence change at different paces. The 'Constitution-artifact' changes hand in hand with every new vehicle and amendment. Also, the individual interpretations change quickly: New interpretations appear with every individual reading. On the other hand, the 'Constitution-social object' remains relatively stable. Indeed, this stability is the reason that in 2014, we will celebrate the bicentennial of the Constitution. The 'Constitution-social object' changes gradually according to the impacts from new 'Constitution-artifacts' and according to continuous individual interpretations—the 'Constitution-social object' may be regarded as the sum of all individual interpretations. For their part, the individual interpretations rest on the particular 'Constitution-artifacts' that citizens encounter. And their interpretations are heavily influenced by the understanding of the Constitution existing in the historically and socially situated interpretive communities that individual citizens belong to.

### **3 Methodology: trans-disciplinary interpretation**

The Constitution is central to researchers from many disciplines. Yet it matters to them in different ways, and when examining the Constitution, researchers have differing interests. Therefore, in this project, we will further improve a joint methodology that we have been developing during the last

two years. Only in this way may we be able to approach complex research questions, such as how language and content in the Norwegian Constitution interacted with political constellations to establish its noticeable robustness.

Quite simply and concretely, our methodology consists of participants presenting individual, disciplinary-bound analyzes of the Constitution to the research team. The presentations are accompanied by joint reading and thorough discussions. We have experienced that this kind of joint work is highly revealing, particularly when we focus on single articles of the Constitution and/or single ‘Constitution-artifacts.’ We are influenced by individual methodologies, but the hermeneutical approach forms a common center.

In this joint work, every discipline has something to offer; moreover, the shared empirical material provides a sharp focus. Our methodology may be described as *trans-disciplinary interpretation* (Whitson 1991: 240). We distinguish, however, this methodology from interdisciplinary manners of collaboration. The term *interdisciplinary* is commonly used to describe efforts that combine in a coherent way the theories, methods and perspectives of traditionally independent disciplines. The study of the Norwegian Constitution would conventionally be viewed as one that calls for interdisciplinary inquiry, understood as some kind of a division of labor. For instance, Articles 50–53 would be considered the expertise field of political scientists since these articles lay the foundations for participation in general elections and thus the creation of the political body, the *Storting* (Norwegian Parliament). Regarding freedom of expression, the disciplines of legal scholarship and jurisprudence could claim special expertise in defining this constitutionally protected freedom, as it is administered in ways that must comply with Article 100. And regarding the language of the Constitution, linguists would claim expertise in clarifying the knowledge about historical stages of Norwegian. Evidently, the sharing of such analytically distinct contributions will ordinarily be required for interdisciplinary work of any kind. Yet such sharing is not what we are referring to as ‘trans-disciplinary interpretation.’ Rather, by this term we understand an interpretive mode of inquiry in which participating disciplines provide more, and receive more, than knowledge generated in their respective realms of expertise. The historian provides knowledge of the past and receives knowledge of sign systems from linguists, of jurisprudence from lawyers, and of the role of gender from the gender researcher. The literary scholar provides knowledge of genres and style and receives knowledge of players’ societal conditions (economic independence, the tendency to exclude women) from the sociologist, knowledge of how texts affect those involved in education from the educational researcher, and knowledge of particular historical circumstances from the historian. This kind of collaboration may take place only when participants collaborate closely and accept to adjust their own disciplinary knowledge to knowledge produced in other disciplines. We have experienced that this trans-disciplinary interpretation leads to new questions being asked across disciplinary borders. For example, how many changes may a constitution undergo and still be considered the same text? Does the letter of the Constitution influence contemporary Norwegian educational system? Why do philological research questions matter to society?

### ***3.1 Articles relating to citizens’ participation in government***

The original contribution in this project is that it brings together experts from all the involved disciplines to work jointly on researching the Constitution. To focus our methodologies, a specific meeting point has to be found. We consider textuality to be this meeting point. All disciplines involved in the project share an element of interest in texts.

The Norwegian Constitution is a relatively short text. The Eidsvoll Constitution of 17 May 1814 contained less than 5000 words distributed over 110 articles. Though our project will consider the entire text, we will focus most closely on those articles that most clearly represent the Constitution as part of the historical projects of democracy and Enlightenment, and especially on those aspects which relate to citizens’ participation in government. Article 100 may be considered a meta-textual article. Anchoring freedom of expression to the Constitution, it allowed citizens to produce texts of any kind, including those criticizing the system of governance as detailed in the Constitution. As such, Article 100 reflected the rise of public spheres in Western Europe and the Americas around

1800. The then Article 85 may be seen in this light too since it stated that debates in the *Storting* should be conducted in open session. Articles 50–53 contain the provisions on citizens' right to vote, functioning as a first step towards universal suffrage and reflecting (male) suffrage used in France during the revolutionary period. Article 106 included the promotion of education, again reflecting ideals of the Enlightenment: It limited privileges based on birthright and paved the way for a system based on individual citizens' merits.

Put differently, the selected articles center on essential concepts of democracy and Enlightenment: suffrage, freedom of expression, and education. Instances of international projects, these articles lend themselves to cross-border comparisons. For example, we may ask how unique these articles were as compared to contemporary constitutions and related texts (see Michalsen 2007). Which textual patterns were imitated? Why is the first sentence in Article 100 followed by a formulation more wordy than those in contemporary foreign constitutions? The selected articles also provide an ideal material for detecting transformations over time, from the history of their genesis to recent amendments.

### **3.2 *International collaboration and perspectives on the Norwegian Constitution***

The working language of our project is English. We have experienced that in addition to facilitating collaboration with international partners, this choice of language secures due contextualization of Norwegian *realia*. The language choice provides a hermeneutical distance to the object of interpretation; it highlights how we as researchers are situated in time and space. To investigate how domestic and international impulses have interrelated throughout the two centuries of the Constitution's existence, there is a need of a research team with experts both on Norwegian affairs and on foreign cases and international phenomena. Our team includes experts of both kinds. Comparing the Norwegian Constitution with foreign constitutions requires philological skills. Therefore, our team is well equipped for working with constitutions in Germanic, Romanic, and Slavic languages.

To emphasize the textual focus, in our international academic book, all authors will quote relevant parts of the Constitution and reflect on how the concept of text functions in research conducted by their discipline.

In addition to the shared methodology, participants will employ methods of text analysis from their respective disciplines. Disciplinary methods are too numerous to be presented here. Suffice to mention that all participants have thorough experience in the study of the Norwegian Constitution and/or other situated texts. For example, Berge, Gammelgaard, Jordheim, and Tønnesson co-authored a book on theories applicable for research into the interface between texts and history (Asdal et al. 2008).

In essence, we believe that the Constitution is a text rich enough to give rise to new insights when investigated by a trans-disciplinary team. The Constitution contains a richness of possible interpretations. Yet particularly due to its specific position in legislation and governance, we believe that there are limits to interpretations. Therefore, if interpretations contradict knowledge generated in one of the involved disciplines, they will be exposed to in-depth criticism.

### **3.3 *Subprojects: database of pupils' May 17 speeches and inspirational video***

Two subprojects require the use of particular methodology: the database of pupils' May 17 speeches and the inspirational video. We expect to receive about 1000 speeches in May 2013. When the speeches arrive, they will already include encoding (for example, regarding pupils' age, sex, and domicile), as we will use the QuestBack application to receive speeches. Assisted by an expert in the Text Laboratory at the University of Oslo, we will further encode the speeches, according to our needs, by means of the search and post-processing tool, Glossa. For example, we expect to encode the speeches for references to the Constitution, to historical events, and to international conventions (e.g., The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). A text corpus will then be selected for further analysis and interpretation by means of the program NVivo/Hyperresearch. The inspirational video will be made in cooperation with the InterMedia unit at the University of Oslo. We will address in detail ethical problems regarding filming pupils and

encoding speeches in the database when we apply for permissions to the Norwegian Social Sciences Database. Filming and encoding will take place only after the involved pupils and their guardians have consented to participate.

#### **4 Transformations in time**

The textual approach enables us to look upon the Constitution's different modes as sites for change that make visible the intersection of a myriad of past, present, and future activities, interests, and ideas. Transformations in time represent one shared scope for all participants. Therefore, we will ask in what ways do time and temporality—references to the past, the present and the future—enter into the Constitution? For example, what is the link between the linguistic present of the Eidsvoll Constitution and the actual political present of 1814? Does the present tense express the performative speech acts of legal language only (see Visconti 2009: 394–98)? Or are other things at stake? Does the present tense relate to the decisive and possibly fateful moment of the spring 1814, to the sense of urgency and immediacy, which were dominating the experiences of the representatives arriving at Eidsvoll from all over Norway? Or, how does the text of the Constitution venture to free itself from the historical contingencies of the (then) present and guide the nation safely into a stable and prosperous, almost utopian future? To take a closer look at a single article, Article 100 may be seen as heralding a new era where print culture gains a status of its own, distinct from the oral culture of the 18th century. Article 100 conceptualizes freedom of expression as the right of individuals to criticize society and the state from the outside. Does this imply that Article 100 meant a closure to the older concept of freedom of expression as a means for the people to communicate directly with the regent?

Furthermore, the diachronic aspect includes setting the Eidsvoll Constitution in the contemporaneous landscape of other texts circulating in the public sphere of early 18th century Denmark-Norway, including works of fiction, newspapers, journals and political pamphlets. Participants in the public sphere followed contemporary events closely. Nilsen (1997: 10) estimates that of all pamphlets printed by the seven printing works in Norway in 1814, nine of ten related directly to contemporary political events. As part of this wider debate, the Constitution contributed in challenging traditional authority by establishing a new type of textual authority.

Following the Constitution through time, the question of amendments becomes central. We will investigate the pace of amendments, and will investigate what differentiates them from amendment procedures of other constitutions and from changes taking place without leaving traces in the Constitution's text. We will also analyze amendment procedures in detail. For example, we will analyze how members of Parliament have looked upon linguistic revisions made to the Constitution.

The Norwegian constitution seems remarkably robust and we will consider the causes for this robustness. Rasch and Congleton (2006) found that a constitution is most likely to be stable when many players cooperate to create it. We will deepen this perspective by scrutinizing how players of the past and the present co-create the text. For example, when the *Storting* revises the language of the Constitution, the decisive debate is most likely to take place in the Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs. Its debate is followed by an often unanimous vote by the plenum. In this process, which players are heard? We will also ask whether stylistic qualities may contribute to robustness. Do laconic formulations enable multiple interpretations that in turn make text revisions unnecessary?

Finally, we will seek to analyze how generations of future Norwegian citizens will understand the Constitution. For this aim, we will direct attention to pupils' interpretations. We will investigate how teachers may work with the Constitution in a way that revitalizes the text for pupils—without losing the historical perspective. To do this, we will employ a specific method that activates pupils' interest in closely reading the Constitution (Tønnesson 2010). We will document interpretations by pupils in schools in two different socio-cultural environments in a video that may be used as a tool for educating teachers. The pupils' interpretations will also serve to document the 'Constitution-individual interpretations' when the Constitution is entering its third century. Moreover, we will systematically collect pupils' speeches delivered on Constitution Day 2013. We will collect them

by means of organizing a nationwide contest for the best speech on the Constitution. May 17 celebrations and pupils' speeches exemplify instances of the 'Constitution–social object' and pupils' knowledge and perspectives serve as a decisive force for how the constitution is interpreted across local communities. Teachers' professional knowledge, parents' general knowledge, and textbooks contribute to pupils' interpretations and could be even more decisive than pupils' understanding formed by their individual readings of the Constitution. Therefore, the speeches raise challenging questions about text interpretation and reception. Finally, yet importantly, the collection of interpretations of the Constitution, as they are produced in the public realm of schooling, will serve as an analytical counterpoint to the academic approaches carried out by the research team.

## **5 Cross-border transformations**

Transformations in time meet with international influences and therefore, cross-border transformations will form a second scope for our research. To study international influences seems obvious today when questions are constantly raised concerning how the Norwegian Constitution meets international and transnational laws, rights, and regulations. However, from its very beginning, the Constitution has been part of an international dialogue. Already in 1814, the Norwegian Government ordered translations of the Eidsvoll Constitution into French and English (*Constitution du royaume de Norwège, The Constitution of the Kingdom of Norway*). The November 4 Constitution was immediately translated into Swedish and published in Stockholm (Nilsen 1997: 168).

The Eidsvoll Constitution was an instance of the global movement of constitutionalism. This movement began in 1776 leading in the next fifty years to many hundreds of constitutions. Often imitating the most famous ones (such as the federal American of 1787, the three French of the 1790s, the Batavian of 1797, and the Spanish of 1808 and 1812), the emerging constitutions fused international constitutionalism and the national (or regional) conditions. As part of the constitutional movement, they were framed according to model constitutions conveying universal principles. However, legally, each constitution regulated only one specific state and territory.

From a comparative context, the Norwegian Constitution is unique: It represents a successful and long-lasting implementation of a constitution without revolutionary bloodshed. We will analyze its international position by comparing it with other constitutions. Among others, we will compare it with the federal American constitution (1787), the French constitutions of the 1790s, the Austrian draft constitution of 1848–1849, a Czech mock constitution of 1849, the cluster of Swedish fundamental laws, and the constitutions of the Belgian United States (1787), the Batavian Republic (1798), the Helvetic Republic (1798), Poland (1791), Spain (1812), Colombia (1821), Bolivia (1826), Denmark (1849), and Prussia (1850). When comparing, we will center on questions concerning textuality. How were global patterns (ideas, concepts, and genres) shaped by national linguistic means and textual patterns? What happened in the process of imitation? Were parts of the Eidsvoll Constitution simply copied from international models? And how may we compare those parts with similar parts copied by other constitutions from a common source? Did style affect the success or failure of the single constitutions? Do textual differences across constitutions reveal who wielded the pens? We will also trace the global emergence of particular concepts formulated in the Constitution, such as those of freedom of expression, suffrage, and, indeed, the very concept of *constitution*.

Influences from abroad extend to the international canon of philosophical, legal, literary, and political texts. To mention a single example, Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791) ranked as a bestseller in 19th century Europe (Foot and Kramnick 1987: 210). How did the Eidsvoll Constitution refer to this international corpus? What did these prior international texts allow for? But also: Which texts with possible constitutional relevance were ruled out when the *Eidsvollsmen* engaged in the process of writing the Constitution?

The international dialogue on rights and governance went both ways and we will investigate how the Norwegian constitution has been received abroad, particularly in the Nordic countries (Denmark got her constitution in 1849 and most Swedish fundamental laws came later than the Norwegian Constitution) and Britain.

## 6 Participants

All researchers involved in this project have worked since 2008 in the framework of the interdisciplinary project 'Foundational texts', at CULTRANS, the University of Oslo. Our work on the Constitution began in autumn 2009. All participants have already given papers on the Constitution to the rest of the research team. Discussions on these papers have sharpened our joint focus. Senior participants are professors Dag Michalsen and Inger-Johanne Sand (Law), professors Ragnvald Kalleberg and Bjørn-Erik Rasch (Social Sciences), associate professor Kirsten Sivesind (Education), professors Kjell Lars Berge, Karen Gammelgaard, Johan Tønnesson, associate professor Steinar Sæther, researcher Mona Ringvej (Humanities), and academic head of CULTRANS, Helge Jordheim. The project will engage three young researchers who have worked in the project on the Constitution since its launch: PhD Tone Brekke, cand. jur. Eirik Holmøyvik, and PhD Yordanka Madzharova Bruteig. With their different disciplinary backgrounds, they form an excellent core group that supplements the expertise of senior researchers (Brekke: Literary criticism/Gender Studies; Holmøyvik: Constitutional Law/History of Jurisprudence; and Madzharova Bruteig: Social sciences/Discourse analysis).

Three distinguished international scholars have agreed to collaborate on the project. Professor William Warner (University of California, Santa Barbara) has researched how revolutionary communications history became embedded in the First Amendment (1789) of the Federal American Constitution (Warner 2005). Professor Warner visited the University of Oslo in 2010 to debate his and Clifford Siskin's book on Enlightenment (2010). (The book contains a chapter by Helge Jordheim.) Professor Jacqueline Visconti (University of Genoa, Italy) is an expert on comparative analysis of legal texts and legal translation (e.g., Visconti (ed.) 2009). She has done valuable research also into historical semantics and pragmatics. Professor Ulrich Schmid (University of St. Gallen, Switzerland) is an expert on text theory and cultural semiotics (see e.g., Schmid 2010). As a guest researcher at the University of Oslo in spring 2010, Schmid participated in our team's workshops and gave a guest lecture on constitutions and literature. These three international collaborators will participate in two workshops where they will function as valuable commentators on papers presented by the project participants. Visconti and Schmid will also contribute chapters for the international academic book.

The Directorate for Education and Training will form a valuable partner in realizing the contest of pupils' speeches, as will those teachers working with us to improve teaching of the Constitution and the experts from the Text Laboratory and InterMedia. Finally, in selecting and editing illustrations for the coffee table book, a picture editor will assist us.

## 7 Communication

We plan to communicate our research to the academic public, to the Norwegian public at large, and to teachers in the Norwegian educational system.

a) For the international academic public, we aim to publish a joint *book*. We aim to have the book published in 2013 by an internationally recognized publisher.

At this stage, the Table of Contents looks as follows:

Editors: 'Introduction' (reviewing our interdisciplinary research and giving basic information about the Norwegian Constitution)

Michalsen: 'Do Constitutions Need Texts?'

Berge: 'Textual Culture in 18th Century Denmark-Norway: Preconditions for the Eidsvoll Constitution'

Ringvej: 'Freedom of Expression Transformed. Article 100 and the Past'

Kalleberg: 'Freedom of Expression as a Constitutive Element in the Norwegian Historical Project of Democratic Enlightenment'

Schmid: 'The Constellation of Constitutions: The Eidsvoll Constitution in the Cultural Context of Its Time'

Sand: 'The Multiple Codes of Constitutions'

Brekke: "'The Most Free Community": the Norwegian Constitution and the Revolution Controversies of the Romantic Period'

Jordheim: 'Timing the Constitution: Textual Reflections of Historic Events'  
Sæther: 'The Eidsvoll Constitution Compared to Constitutions of Early Independent Latin American Republics: Textual Patterns of Suffrage Articles'  
Holmøyvik: 'The Understanding of the Term "Constitution" in the Eidsvoll Constitution'  
Sivesind: 'Conceptualizations of Education in the Norwegian Constitution'  
Gammelgaard: 'The Power of the Constitution Genre'  
Rasch: 'Constitutional Amendments as Text Changes 1905–2009'  
Madzharova-Bruteig: 'Parliamentary Discourse on the Language of the Norwegian Constitution'  
Tønnesson: 'Revitalizing the Norwegian Constitution in Education: the Text on Trial'

All chapters will be reviewed by external experts. Once all draft papers have been presented and discussed, the editors will contact an internationally recognized publisher. We foresee that the project will also motivate participants to write *academic articles* targeted for publication in journals of their respective disciplines. Due to lengthy review procedures in single journals, we cannot guarantee that these articles will be published by 2014. Other forms of communication with international academia include project members' *participation in congresses*.

We plan to open access to the *database of pupils' May 17 speeches* about the Norwegian Constitution late in 2013. The database will serve as a valuable tool for future researchers. It will also provide a unique representation of pupils' interpretations of the Norwegian Constitution on its bicentennial.

b) For the Norwegian public at large, we aim to publish a *coffee table book* based on our research. The book will be written in Norwegian and published by a recognized Norwegian publisher in 2013. The book will be thoroughly illustrated to show, among other things, varieties of the Constitution (the 'Constitution-artifacts') and the most important foreign constitutions that the Norway's has interconnected with. The Norwegian public will also be informed about our research through *media coverage* of the contest for pupils' speeches, particularly regarding the festive election of the winner.

c) Teachers in the Norwegian educational system will benefit from the *video* meant to inspire teaching of the Constitution, complete with a *report* and *teaching material* (to be used in the Master program for Educational Leadership (University of Oslo) and disseminated via the Internet pages and contact net of the Association of Teachers in Norwegian Language and Literature).

## 8 Management

An interdisciplinary board will head the project. All board members have been involved in the project since its beginning and represent the involved faculties and centers: Dag Michalsen (Law), Kirsten Sivesind (Education), Tone Brekke (Gender research), Ragnvald Kalleberg (Social sciences), and Helge Jordheim (Humanities and CULTRANS). Continued cooperation with CULTRANS will keep the project team continuously updated on methods and theories of cultural transformations. CULTRANS will also add some administrative assistance.

Professor Karen Gammelgaard will head the project. Gammelgaard, Michalsen, and Sivesind will edit the international academic book. Jordheim, Kalleberg, Michalsen, and Sivesind will edit the Norwegian coffee table book. Tønnesson will be in charge of creating the inspirational video and Sivesind will be responsible for creating the database of pupils' speeches. Berge, Michalsen, Ringvej, and Sivesind will form the committee selecting the winner of the pupils' May 17 speeches contest.

## 9 Project plan

The attached plan covers the period from 1 August 2011 to 1 August, the period of activities for which we apply for funding. The project began in autumn 2009 when we issued the first call for our trans-disciplinary workshop. It took place in March 2010 and was extended with additional sessions throughout 2010. A workshop on 18th century Denmark-Norway will take place in December 2010 (responsible: Berge). All activities so far have been financed by CULTRANS. In spring 2011 we will write a letter of intent with the schools involved in the video project and apply to the

Norwegian Social Sciences Database (NSD) for permission to film pupils. We will also continue workshop sessions.

In autumn 2011 and in 2012 we will focus on writing and editing the international academic book in order to have chapters ready to copyedit in October 2012. We will discuss all chapters in two international workshops (October 2011 and May 2012) before sending chapters to external reviewers. In September 2011, we will write agreements with selected schools and InterMedia before beginning observation and video filming in classrooms. In spring 2012 we will begin writing chapters for the coffee table book and undertake a pilot project of the pupils' May 17 speeches subproject.

The contest for pupils' May 17 speeches will take place in 2013. Before publishing the contest call, we will apply to NSD for permission to collect data of participating pupils. We will begin encoding their speeches immediately after they arrive in May 2013 in order to open the Database of encoded speeches to researchers and the public in 2013. In October 2013 we will award the prize for best pupils' speech. 2013 will also see the publication of the international academic book, the Norwegian coffee table book, and the inspirational video.

## 10 References

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