7 The ‘Nordic model’ in international development aid

Explanation, experience and export

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Introduction: aims, approach and argument

In 2015, Norway’s National Museum opened the exhibition ‘Forms of Freedom. African Independence and Nordic Models.’ The exhibition, which the previous year had been the Nordic countries’ joint contribution to the Vienna architectural biennale, investigated the work of Nordic architects in the East African countries Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya during the 1960s and 1970s. The exhibition stated that

It is well known that Nordic architects played key roles in establishing modern welfare states in their home countries. Their efforts to help modernize and build up the liberated colonies in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, on the other hand, have received far less attention.

The liberation of Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia in the 1960s coincided with the founding of development aid in the Nordic countries, where there was widespread belief that the social democratic model could be exported, translated, and used for nation building, modernization, and welfare in Africa....

The Nordic social democracies and the new African states established solid bonds built on a shared progressive outlook, good intentions, and an almost naïve belief in the potential to replant the Nordic model in an entirely different geographic, demographic, and cultural context.

(The National Museum – Architecture, 2015)

Much could be said about the national museum’s portrayal of Nordic aid and its aims; however, most importantly, the assumption of a conscious effort to export the Nordic societal model and way of life to East Africa is oversimplified (Engh, 2015). Lately, the portrayal of Nordic aid as consisting of a more or less straightforward export of a social democratic societal model to other countries has become more prevalent, in academic research as well as in popular literature and the media. This portrayal could be seen as reflecting one or more by now more or less established

'truths' or understandings of Nordic aid, closely tied to the dominant Nordic narratives and self-understandings (Andersson, 2009; Andersson and Hilson, 2009).

This chapter questions the use of the term 'Nordic model' in relation to Nordic international engagement and more particularly to Nordic development aid, asking how fruitful this concept is for studying Nordic aid policy or Nordic aid projects. It also contributes to conceptual clarification, showing the several ways in which the term 'Nordic model' is used within development discourse and development research, implying that the term may, indeed, have different functions at different times and within different contexts. The chapter starts with a brief historical background on Nordic development aid efforts, pointing out the similarities and differences in the countries' approaches to development issues, and the basis for the widely held belief that there is such a thing as a Nordic model for development aid. The main section discusses the different ways in which the concept Nordic model is used within development discourse and literature, showing how the concept fulfills three distinct functions: as a justification for development aid, as a form of aid practice and as an export article in aid. The chapter then returns to the initial question: how useful is the concept of the Nordic model in discussions of development aid?

The Nordic countries and development aid

In the early post-1945 period, development aid was viewed as a means by which a brave, new world of modernity, prosperity and equality could be conceived, coordinated and created. Since then, development aid has been transformed through gradually evolving approaches and slogans, some of which have come full circle. For the Nordic countries, development cooperation has been, and remains, a prioritized part of international politics and an arena for particular activism and engagement. As the modernizing mission of development aid gradually becomes history, the time is ripe for a historically informed assessment of the particular Nordic aid to the global south, or the Third World, in contemporaneous parlance (Engerman and Unger, 2009; Engh and Pharo, 2009; Paaskesen, 2011). Although in 1995, a much-cited article declared the Nordic Model dead as a foreign policy instrument, the continued use of the term Nordic model in relation to the Nordic states' foreign engagement indicates that the term is still relevant (Mouritzen, 1995).

Examining the Nordic countries' aid profiles, a number of overarching similarities appear in terms of timing of entry into the field, organizational setup and aid policy generally and thematically. Many of these similarities also manifest themselves in the countries' presence in the field, in actual development cooperation projects and programs. The Nordic states, and especially the Scandinavian ones, have traditionally been considered to be particularly generous development aid donors. The Nordics are also seen

as pursuing a distinct aid profile, placed within a tradition of humane internationalism, marked by a feeling of moral obligation to alleviate global poverty and combined with a realist conviction that poverty alleviation will serve the long-term interests of the Western countries (Stokke, 1989; Olesen et al., 2013). The Nordic donors are often understood as vanguards of development work for their inclusion of new areas (e.g., the inclusion of African countries in aid programs during the 1960s and Latin American countries during the 1970s), issues (e.g., human rights, environmental protection and good governance) and groups (e.g., the poorest of the poor, women and children). They are also believed to have cooperated closely with each other to achieve their development aid goals and to have paid close attention to the sensibilities, goals and sovereignty of the recipients (Selbervik, 2003; Vik, 2008). Since the 1950s, a core principle for Danish and Norwegian aid has been that aid should be provided on the recipients' own terms, without any political or economic ties or motives – a principle which has remained an ideal if not always a reality (Simensen, 2003; Friis Bach et al., 2008).

A main similarity in the Nordic countries' experiences with aid lies in *timing* and *institutional set-up*. Although support for international organizations such as the UN is usually seen as a typical Nordic feature, recent research has found that this has not been unqualified: the Scandinavians reluctantly joined the League of Nations, and even UN membership had few enthusiastic supporters in the early days (Götz, 2016). From 1949 to 1950 onward, all the Scandinavian countries supported the UN's Expanded Program of Technical Assistance (EPTA). Whereas Sweden and Norway engaged in bilateral aid beginning in the early 1950s, with projects in South Asia and Africa, Denmark preferred to channel all its aid through the UN and EPTA until the 1960s (Brunbech, 2008). Sweden and Norway's early bilateral aid programs were in different ways and to different degrees run by ad hoc administrations which included voluntary sector representation and, in the case of Sweden, also business, export and trade interests. (Nilsson, 2004; Öhman, 2007). In the 1960s, Nordic aid became institutionalized. In 1962, Sweden and Norway both launched new aid administrations: the Board for International Aid (NIB, *Nämnden för internationell bistånd*) and Norwegian Development Aid (NU, *Norsk utviklingshjelp*). In 1965, NIB was replaced by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and in 1968, NU was replaced by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Denmark also enacted its first aid legislation in 1962, which was reviewed in 1971. The Danish Foreign Ministry administered all Danish aid through the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). In 1965, Finland also established an office for development aid within its Foreign Ministry, which in 1972 was reorganized into the Finnish International Development Assistance (FINNIDA). Iceland was a relative latecomer in this respect, with a 1971 Act on bilateral development assistance, and the 1981 act that established the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA). Thus, institutionalization of Nordic aid began

in the early 1960s and evolved through a wave of reorganization in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

A second similarity is found in the *political justifications* underpinning the Nordics' aid efforts, which appear strikingly parallel and enduring, combining elements of realpolitik, self-interest and idealism. Explanations for the Nordic states' commitment to providing development aid include these countries' strong social democratic norms, a desire to spread their welfare-state ideals and their own security needs and economic objectives (Bergman, 2007). In the case of Norway, the initial interest in development aid was mainly a result of changes in the international political environment. This commitment gained ground in the 1960s and 1970s as newer generations of voters and politicians with greater interest in North-South matters became dominant, and the consensus has since remained stable (Simonsen, 2003). In Denmark, public and political interest in development aid was slower to develop. During the 1960s, public attention to development matters increased considerably, but this did not translate into political action until the latter half of the decade; the years 1965–1967 mark a turn in Danish aid policy, with an emphasis on increased transfers (Brunbech and Olesen, 2013).

At some more or less critical junctures, development assistance was used with a view to gain political advantage with the countries' domestic audiences, the voters. For example, in the latter half of the 1960s, the Swedish Social Democratic Party debated the aid target of 1% of the GDP; the eventual inclusion of this target in the party platform was, in part, to attract younger generations of voters who often were more radical and internationalist (Ekengren and Götz, 2013). Similarly, when Norway in 1952 launched the Indo-Norwegian fisheries project, an important rationale was to distract or placate the considerable opposition to Norwegian NATO membership (Pharo, 1986).

A third main similarity in the Nordic countries' aid profile is *the function of aid in the countries' broader foreign policies* as a foreign policy tool with which to attain status and standing in the international system (Mouritzen, 1995; see also de Carvalho and Neumann, 2015). In particular, the Scandinavian countries' self-assumed roles as international leaders in the development field seem to have provided them with a spill-over effect regarding their general standing in international affairs. The wish to increase influence through joining forces was certainly a central motivation when the Nordics first launched joint development aid projects in the early 1960s (Engh and Pharo, 2009). Over the years, however, each of the Scandinavian countries increasingly came to pursue an international profile as either a 'humanitarian great power' (Sweden, Denmark) or a 'peace nation' (Norway) (Leira, 2013, 2015). Sweden's 'active foreign policy,' from 1962 to the late 1980s, was perhaps the most extreme version of this, distinguished by Olof Palme's tenure as Prime Minister. In this period, Sweden showed increased international engagement on a number of issues, such as decolonization,

the East-West divide and development and human rights, and it often criticized US foreign policy harshly. Significantly, this tendency to pursue status and standing through active international engagement was increasingly sought on an individual, national basis rather than a joint Nordic one. As the wish to wave one's own flag increased, joint Nordic efforts lost their appeal (Engh and Pharo, 2009: 126–127). Development aid's function in the Nordics' broader foreign policies as a foreign policy tool to increase their soft power or status in the international system became more pronounced toward the end of the 1900s and during the early 2000s.

This role or function of development aid engagement is also reflected in the countries' own dominant narratives about themselves and their self-understanding as well as in their own official explanations of their large interest in development aid: the contemporaneous perception of a lack of a recent colonial past and therefore no ulterior motives. In Sweden's case, a particular point was often made in relation to the country's neutrality in the Cold War that Swedish aid would reach out to developing countries with which the West struggled to connect. In Swedish political debate '... the picture of a reliable and generous provider of development assistance has become an integral part of Swedish identity in international relations' (Ekengren and Götz, 2013: 35). Interestingly, Glover shows how the Swedish Institute, responsible for Sweden's cultural relations with other countries and also for the first Swedish aid efforts, has moved from a restrained promotion of Sweden in the late 1940s to an assertive marketing of 'Brand Sweden' in the early 2000s, using 'progressiveness' as its key concept (Glover, 2009). Norway's self-perception also seems to have developed during the last decades of the 1900s, particularly in connection to Norway's high foreign aid profile and involvement in peace brokering. Indeed, this identity and self-understanding may have evolved on a regional level as well, with aid-giving becoming a 'Nordic trademark, an essential part of being Nordic' (Brunbech and Olesen, 2013).

The idea of a Nordic model in development aid: explanation, experience and export

The term 'Nordic model' is used in at least three different ways in the development aid literature: to explain the Nordic countries' commitment to development aid, to describe a particular Nordic development aid experience and to characterize something inspiring or exported through Nordic development aid. *The Nordic model as explanation* refers to a view which sees the Nordic domestic societal model as a cause for the particular Nordic support of development aid. *The Nordic model as experience* identifies a particular Nordic way of providing aid, a uniquely Nordic model of aid giving or practice. *The Nordic model as export* refers to an understanding of Nordic aid as more or less consciously working toward mirroring or even recreating the Nordic societal model, or selected parts of it, in the recipient countries

– either through specific individual aid projects or through prioritized issues and areas in aid. This third understanding of the Nordic model may also include a certain ideological affinity with the recipients of aid, which has marked Nordic aid through the greater parts of the post-war period. Based on the donors' interpretations of the recipients' views of what a 'good' society consisted of rather than on actual policy, this ideological affinity could be real or, more often, imagined (Simensen, 2003; Paaskesen, 2011).

The use of the concept Nordic model has been greater in social science research than in the humanities. This may reflect the scope of inquiry; most Nordic histories of development aid have so far been investigations at the national level, either of a country's aid policy over time or of individual aid projects, and relatively few studies examine aid at a Nordic or even Scandinavian level (Engh, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2013). Research coming out of the social sciences, on the other hand, has to a greater degree been based on government white papers and parliamentary debates. This may be a useful approach with regard to domestic and international perceptions, but it tells us less about what goes on in the field.

The Nordic model as explanation

It is as *explanation of* the Nordics' interest in and commitment to development aid that the concept Nordic model has made its greatest impact on research and literature. A host of authors from a range of academic disciplines have sought to justify the Nordic aid commitment with reference to the Nordic way of life, Nordic values and norms and Nordic economic and societal models. Lumsdaine's 1993 *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime 1949–1989* argued that the Nordics' 'humane internationalism' was the main driver behind the provision of aid, pointing out the possible connections between national welfare policy and enthusiasm for aid (Lumsdaine, 1993). Over the years, Nordic international engagement has inspired several researchers to brand the Nordic aid approach as 'humane internationalism' (Pratt, 1989; Lancaster, 2006). Noël and Thérien's linking of various countries' aid policies to Esping-Andersen's welfare state typology became particularly influential; they argued that 'Welfare principles institutionalized at the domestic level shape the participation of developed countries in the international aid regime' (Noël and Thérien, 1995). More recently, the international role of the Nordics has been understood as 'norm entrepreneurship,' both generally and, more particularly, in connection to their UN commitment (Ingebritsen, 2002; Björkdahl, 2007a). In addition, much attention has been given to the central role of Swedish and Nordic values: '... there is a close affinity between the values that shape Sweden's provisions for domestic welfare and its pursuit of redistributive justice at the international level' (Bergman, 2007: 88; see also Kuisma, 2007; Björkdahl, 2007b).

How well do these assumptions stand up when we look beyond official policy statements and take aid experience and history into consideration?

First, although there undoubtedly seems to be a correlation between a welfare state system in donor countries and a willingness to provide development aid, proving a causal relationship between the two remains a challenge. Second, looking at the history of development cooperation, it is possible to identify a whole range of reasons why the Nordic countries initiated development aid efforts, much in the same way that there are a number of reasons behind the increased volume of aid, or the involvement in a number of issues and geographical areas. For example, the first Norwegian development aid project, a fisheries project in Kerala in India, was launched as a 'positive' foreign policy to counteract the negative publicity surrounding Norway's NATO membership and rearmament efforts. Likewise, Sweden's active foreign policy was intended to serve as a counterweight to the country's neutrality in the Cold War.

Interestingly, the interpretation of the Nordic welfare state or Nordic model as an explanation for the Nordic states' development engagement appears to have become more common more or less in parallel with a main development in Nordic historiography. In the post-war period, research on Norden, Scandinavia and above all, Sweden, is marked by a persistent *Sonderweg* argument. This 'special path' or unique development argument sees welfare-state society and the Nordic or Scandinavian model of society as products of shared historical experiences, similar institutions and a number of assumed Nordic values (Stråth and Sørensen, 1997; Stråth, 2004). Furthermore, this historiographical canon leads to an understanding of the development of the welfare state and the Nordic model as teleological, as something intrinsic to Nordic political culture and being, rooted in ideas of rationality, reformism and modernism. In this perspective, the Nordic countries virtually *embody* modernity (Andersson, 2009). Importantly, as Musial has shown, the particular Nordic modernity is also seen as having a distinctive *moral* quality (Musial, 2000). During the 1950s and 1960s, the notion of a Nordic *Sonderweg* 'took on the proportions of a specific egalitarian social democratic community of destiny, in clear distinction to what was seen as a capitalistic (...), conservative, and Catholic continental Europe' (Stråth and Sørensen, 1997: 20). Indeed, the *Sonderweg* argument not only marks Nordic historiography but has also been adopted by an international audience, particularly an American one, through which the idea of a Nordic, Scandinavian, or Swedish, model has been equated with modernity and functioned as a utopia. Already during the interwar period, after Marquis Childs' 1936 observation of Sweden as a 'middle way,' Sweden and Scandinavia were inspiring American academics, politicians and bureaucrats (Childs, 1936). These countries were understood as constituting a modern, rational middle way – staking out an independent course between communism and capitalism (Marklund, 2009). Visions of Nordic modernity and models thus had a reflective function and were negotiated through an interdependent, mutually reinforcing process between foreign observations

of Norden and domestic self-assertions (Andersson, 2009; Andersson and Hilson, 2009).

Whereas Nordic modernity was an inspiration abroad, it also became an integral part of Nordic actors' self-image and understanding. Thus, the *Sonderweg* idea also forged an influential self-image of modernity and moral quality, deeply associated with the Nordic model, the welfare state and the idea of the Nordics as offering a middle way, an alternative developmental trajectory to the dominant directions in international society. Throughout the twentieth century, this has been central to the self-image and self-understanding of Swedish and Norwegian politics, and importantly, it has become a core component of the countries' development assistance politics. Nordic development aid has been based on the assumption that development aid is a policy area in which the Nordic countries could and *should* play a particular role, and on the idea that they are in some way 'different' from other donors. The new initiatives in development assistance emerging in the early post-war period, and their inherent quest for modernity, seemed a natural arena for Scandinavians and became a prioritized matter.

At times, the Scandinavian countries' lack of a recent colonial past was emphasized as a factor which made them particularly suited to providing aid, as this seemingly precluded any ulterior or selfish motivation. This perspective is reflected in both contemporary political documents and the academic literature. More frequently, the countries' own social and political development was seen as so particular as to warrant a special role. For example, Danish aid supporters of the 1950s saw the Nordic societal model, and especially the welfare state system, as something that should be extended internationally, with the help of development aid (Simensen, 2003; Friis Bach et al., 2008).

Indeed, the assumption of a 'special development' or *Sonderweg* for the Nordic states at home soon seemed replicated in an idea of a 'special role' for the Nordics abroad. Thus, the understanding of the development of the Nordic model as a teleological trajectory, which Andersson describes, seemed mirrored in a similar understanding of Nordic aid as the next natural step on the teleological trajectory – the extension or export of the welfare state system internationally, through aid. Further, this idea of a 'special role' abroad seems to have established itself at a time when the idea of the Nordic *Sonderweg* was so pervasive that it was taken for granted.

Interestingly, the *Sonderweg* argument, the focus on Nordic visions of modernity and the coconstitutive nature of domestic and international ideals are all mirrored in recent research on Scandinavian and Nordic development assistance in the social sciences, influenced by social constructivism and its emphasis on norms in international politics; it has not yet been much discussed among historians of development assistance, however.

In sum, the Nordic societal model appears at best as one of several different reasons behind a country's interest in providing development aid,

and several specific examples show that *realpolitik* rather than idealism was decisive when development aid projects were established, expanded or terminated. In addition, the emphasis on the Nordic model as an explanation of aid engagement may privilege altruistic, humanitarian motives for aid provision without adequate attention to *realpolitik*, security concerns and economic motives.

The Nordic model as experience

The Nordic model as experience refers to the use of the concept Nordic model when describing a particular Nordic way of providing aid, based on the assumption there is a particular Nordic model of aid giving or aid practice (Olesen et al., 2013). Examining the history of Nordic development aid, is it possible to identify a particular Nordic model for development aid practice, and if so, what are its main hallmarks? The internationally most noted (and often much hailed) similarity among the Nordic countries – their compliance with the aid norms and targets of organizations such as the UN and the OECD – is obviously accurate (Brunbech and Olesen, 2013; Eken-gren and Götz, 2013; Pharo, 2013). Other distinctive Nordic features include a high percentage of aid being given on ‘soft’ terms, and a relatively progressive approach with regard to various priority areas such as ‘poverty orientation,’ women, population control and family planning, environment, human rights, good governance and democracy, even if the Nordics were not at the forefront in the two latter areas.

At the same time, however, there are a number of deviations from the assumed larger Nordic aid model, as shown by the historiography on the Nordics’ aid practice. Although the Scandinavian countries’ aid administrations developed in a similar tempo and pattern, Finland and Iceland must be termed relative latecomers to aid. This raises the question whether a Nordic trajectory within aid really exists. Similarly, although the large amounts of aid may appear as a never-ending intra-Nordic competition to be the most generous, it is clear that the race to the top has been relatively long and, importantly, has not included all the Nordic countries. The influence of the UN and OECD targets of 1%/0.7% ODA on the Nordic countries’ policy and practice is difficult to overstate, described as a ‘...standard reference, or even fetish, when political parties wanted to display their aid goodwill’ (Brunbech and Olesen, 2013: 94). Influence has varied over time, however. While Swedish and Norwegian political support for the 1% target has largely been overwhelming and constant since the 1960s, aid volumes were initially low. During the 1960s, the Nordic countries were among the least generous donors within the OECD group and remained so until the early 1970s. The countries’ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) membership from the early- to mid-1960s onward created a certain incentive and pressure to increase aid flows (Pharo, 2013). In 1975, Sweden along with the Netherlands reached an aid expenditure of 0.7% of GNP; since then,

Swedish aid expenditure has usually exceeded 0.85% and has for a few years even surpassed the 1% target (Ekengren and Götz, 2013). Norway passed the 0.7% mark in 1976 and the 1% target in 1982. The Norwegian aid flow has remained above the 0.8% mark ever since, with the exception of one year (2000) (Pharo, 2013). Denmark, in contrast, was a relative latecomer, not reaching the 0.7% target until 1978 and the 1% mark in 1993 (Brunbech and Olesen, 2013). Finland and Iceland are the 'atypical' Nordics regarding aid volume. Finland reached a peak of 0.8% in 1991, but dropped to 0.3 in 1994, and since 2010 has stabilized around 0.5%.¹ Iceland was itself a recipient of aid until 1976.² Aid expenditure has risen very slowly, peaking at 0.47 in 2008 and then dropping sharply again due to the economic crisis.³ Thus, while it is possible to distinguish a Scandinavian trajectory, the assumption of a Nordic one is questionable.

What about the other distinctive features, such as similar aid approaches? From their inception, the Nordic countries' aid programs have had a relatively large multilateral component, and all the Nordics have been very supportive of the UN as a world organization, with Iceland even pointing to its UN membership as the main foundation for Iceland's development cooperation.⁴ Furthermore, the Nordic countries' aid administrations have been quick to adopt new and seemingly progressive issues in development. Indeed, Nordic aid has been highly coordinated, with a 'near total identity between the Nordic countries' development policy goals' (Olesen, 2008: 337). At the same time, variations exist. Sweden, for example, has seemingly sought an image of 'greater altruism, less concern about own interests, greater use of multilateral channels of distribution, more concern for the poorest countries of the world and less concern about the return flow to Sweden's own economy' (Ekengren and Götz, 2013: 29). In what became politically contested moves, Sweden and Norway, from 1969 and 1972 onward, respectively, supported a number of armed liberation movements in Africa, such as PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, MPLA in Angola, Frelimo in Mozambique, SWAPO in Namibia and ZANU and ZAPU in Zimbabwe (Ruud and Kjerland, 2003; Simensen, 2003; Ekengren, 2011; Ekengren and Götz, 2013).

On other issues where the Nordics have been understood as progressive, such as matters relating to international economy and distribution, and the 1974 New International Economic Order (NIEO) initiative, the Nordic countries have combined relatively developing country friendly policy statements with a political practice which has not entirely matched their statements. As the developing countries demanded greater access to the world economy, Norway was in principle in favor of uniform rules in world trade while at the same time maintaining that the Norwegian economy needed protection through various exceptions and preferential treatment of its major industries (Kvale Svenbalrud, 2012; Pharo, 2013). A parallel can be seen in the Nordic support of human rights, democracy and good governance. Despite their ideals, the Nordics have traditionally displayed extensive willingness to accept degrees of dictatorial rule by recipient governments,

especially those that maintained a seemingly progressive outlook, at least on a rhetorical level.

What drove the quick adaptation of new and progressive approaches in development aid of the Nordic countries? Was this a result of such approaches genuinely enjoying support in the Nordic publics, or were Nordic politicians and aid bureaucrats quick to adapt to new agendas in development in order to appear ‘best in class’ and to gain standing in international society?⁵ Kvale Svenbalrud indicates that, in discussions at the UN, Norway sometimes showed as much if not more concern for its international standing than for addressing the UN matter at hand. For example, in 1976, Norway’s UN delegation was simply instructed to ‘go further in meeting the demands of the developing countries than what the other industrialized countries are willing to’ (Kvale Svenbalrud, 2012: 168).

A variation on the idea of a Nordic model of aid as experience is related to *the organisation of the aid sector*: the term Nordic model⁶ is also used to describe the set-up of the aid sector domestically, marked by a great degree of involvement by NGOs and academic environments. (Tvedt, 2003; Østerud, 2006; Olesen, 2008). As shown above, NGOs have been involved in Scandinavian development aid from its very beginning in the 1950s; however, since the early 1980s, the NGO involvement has grown exponentially (Liland and Kjerland, 2003; Ruud and Kjerland, 2003). NGOs are involved in official development aid as knowledge providers, aid practitioners and, simultaneously, aid recipients. In addition, they function as an aid lobby and constituency, encouraging the sector’s expansion. This has been a tendency in all the Nordic countries: powerful aid constituencies were gradually formed, ensuring a continued and expanded aid effort. Pharo shows how, in Norway, a very ‘strong, vocal and articulate triangle of interests supported development aid’, i.e., a cluster of the private sector, the NGOs and a large number of academics. These groups also had in common that they had become increasingly involved in aid practice and were vested in its continuation and expansion (Pharo, 2013). A similar effect has been found in Denmark. There, a coalition of political parties, NGOs, private businesses and academics favoring aid expansion was forged as a result of the percentage-wise allocation of aid according to type and interest, which ensured that everyone got a share of the aid funds (Brunbech and Olesen, 2013).

The Nordic model as export

The Nordic model as export refers to a view of Nordic aid as more or less consciously working toward mirroring or even recreating the Nordic societal model in the recipient countries, either through specific individual aid projects or through prioritized areas for aid. The most direct connection has been made by Susan Holmberg, who describes Swedish development aid policy as explicitly motivated by a wish to export domestic ideals. Holmberg describes aid as a continuation of the *Folkhem* [People’s home] ideology

but pursued in the international domain (Holmberg, 1989). This argument is echoed in more recent research in political science and history, which suggests that the Nordic model has been understood as a 'superior way of organizing social, political and economic life' (Kuisma, 2007) and provides examples of Nordic cooperation in international organizations such as UNESCO where a main aim was to export Nordic values (Haggrén, 2009).

As far as actual Nordic aid cooperation is concerned, its history is quite brief. The Nordic Council in 1954 and 1958 discussed the possible potential for aid cooperation. None resulted. In 1961, the Council set up a ministerial committee for aid coordination. The respective ministers responsible for development aid, Jens Otto Krag (Denmark), Aase Bjerkholt (Norway), Ulla Lindström (Sweden) and Heikki Hosia (Finland), participated. Soon a Nordic advisory council for development aid was established at the sub-ministerial level to consider various possibilities for joint Nordic aid projects. Several reasons for the establishment of joint Nordic aid cooperation may be identified. There was a politically motivated desire for increased Nordic cooperation, an interest in pooling resources and knowledge as both were fairly scarce, and an interest in gaining experience in the field.

The joint Nordic development aid cooperation may serve to illustrate a tendency typical for Nordic aid in the years 1960–1985. An ideological identification with recipient countries that stood for a societal model which, to Nordic eyes, appeared similar to the Nordic one, created lasting development cooperation through a number of projects. The East African countries Kenya and Tanzania held particular appeal for Nordic social democrats, who appreciated their forms of 'African socialism,' as expressed through Kenya's 1965 *Common Man's Charter* and Tanzania's 1967 *Arusha Declaration*. The fact that most of the African countries with which the Nordics cooperated had become single party states with varying degrees of dictatorship by the mid-1970s seems to have created little concern in the Nordic aid administrations, among politicians or the general public. Tanzania became a particularly prioritized country, and during the 1970s and the 1980s, the Nordic countries supplied between 25% and 40% of that country's total aid flow (Simensen, 2003).

Two joint Nordic aid projects stand out as having possibly been inspired by ideas of the Nordic societal model. First is the Nordic Tanganyika Centre (the Kibaha Centre), which was established in 1961. Based in Kibaha, Tanganyika, the project center included a number of features such as schools, an agricultural center and a health center. A central aim was to create a model to inspire, influence and encourage replication. Nordic thinking was particularly influential regarding working methods and operations: the agricultural center produced typically Nordic agricultural products and introduced Nordic teaching on agricultural methods. The school worked to adapt Nordic ideas on teaching to African needs for education. The health center represented distinctly Nordic approaches, emphasizing preventive medicine, family planning and reproductive health. Thus, the project was

strongly influenced by the experts' cultural backgrounds and experiences (Røed, 2004; Engh and Pharo, 2009). This aspect mirrored the central role of experts in the Nordic states during a time of unprecedented faith in social engineering and the potential for scientifically based planning (Broberg and Roll-Hansen, 1996; Stråth, 2004). Influential ideas were thus pragmatically adapted to both the local recipient society and Nordic ideas of what successful development cooperation would constitute.

An interesting question is whether ideas from the Kibaha Centre may have influenced Tanzanian development policy more generally. There certainly seems to be a striking correlation between the 1967 *Arusha Declaration* and general values and ideas underpinning Nordic welfare state ideology. Kibaha may, indeed, have been one of the channels. The project received extensive attention from Tanzania's president, Julius Nyerere, who followed the developments in Kibaha carefully and who also had close connections to Scandinavian political elites (Engh and Pharo, 2009). In addition, the Nordic experts at Kibaha gained access to Tanzania's top political circles and had considerable influence.

A second project that could be said to represent an attempt to export the Nordic through aid is the joint Nordic cooperative project in Tanzania in the period 1968–1988. The project worked to establish a free and independent cooperative movement in Tanzania; the inspiration was the donor countries' own traditions and experiences with cooperative movements from the end of the nineteenth century which they believed could be modified and exported to benefit Tanzania's development. Tanzanian realities soon proved dramatically different from the Nordic ones, however, with Julius Nyerere's political visions constituting a major obstacle. Nyerere's infamous *ujamaa* policy, and particularly its intensification from the mid-1970s onward, entailed forced collectivization of arable land and the moving of the rural population into *ujamaa* villages. This policy, in the final instance, also brought about the dissolution of Tanzania's cooperative movement. In response to developments in Tanzania, Nordic aid administrators decided simply to convert the cooperative project into a rural village project; doing so directly supported the *ujamaa* policy (Paaskesen, 2010, 2011). As the 2015 exhibition 'Forms of Freedom' documented, Nordic architects created the plans for several of the *ujamaa* villages (Engh, 2015). During the 1980s, the project was reconverted to a cooperative project. However, the period of forced collectivization and removal to *ujamaa* villages had made cooperative efforts obsolete, and the project proved fruitless. The project eventually ended as a result of the donor countries' discontent with the joint Nordic aid work, and its inherent bureaucratic difficulties (Paaskesen, 2011).

Conclusions

To return to this chapter's initial question: is the concept 'Nordic model' a fruitful one for the study of Nordic aid policies or individual aid projects?

Does it provide any additional explanatory power or analytical insight? The evidence is somewhat mixed and uncertain, particularly as the concept takes on different meanings in different settings. As discussed above, both political and popular debate as well as academic literature on Nordic development aid employ the concept of Nordic model in three different ways: as explanation, as experience and as export. The history of Nordic development aid shows that, regarding the Nordic model as *explanation*, the Nordic societal model appears at best as one of several different reasons behind a country's interest for providing development aid. Several specific examples show that *realpolitik* rather than idealism has been decisive. At the same time, however, Nordic aid administrators and politicians have repeatedly referred to ideational factors in order to explain the Nordic enthusiasm for aid, something which a large body of research confirms. As argued above, the belief in a Nordic *Sonderweg* may, indeed, have helped create a similar interpretation of and self-image regarding Nordic development aid, that is, an assumption that aid is a policy area in which the Nordics could and *should* play a particular role, as the countries themselves represent a 'different' or 'alternative' developmental trajectory. Thus, although there are case studies showing that *realpolitik* was decisive in aid decisions, this does not mean that idealistic motivations were not also operative.

Regarding the Nordic model as a form of aid experience or aid practice, it is clear that the Nordic countries share a number of features and have for some time. However, there are also quite considerable variations among the Nordics. The similarities seem to be strongest among the Scandinavian countries, whereas Finland and Iceland show variations on the general pattern; for instance, both are relative latecomers to aid.

As for the idea of the Nordic model as something that is exported through Nordic aid, the picture is somewhat mixed. Whereas replicating the Nordic socioeconomic system in developing countries has not been an overtly stated policy, individual Nordic aid projects such as the Kibaha Centre and the cooperative project have undoubtedly been inspired by the Nordic societies and their values, ideas and solutions. Still, the examples from Tanzania show that local political conditions, rather than donor ideas, had decisive impact on these projects' development. The results, particularly in the case of the cooperative project, differed significantly from the Nordic model of society and its solutions.

The Norwegian National Museum in 2015 concluded that the Nordic countries assumed that 'the social democratic model could be exported, translated and used for nation building, modernization and welfare in Africa' (The National Museum – Architecture, 2015). But the history of Nordic development aid shows that the idea of exporting the Nordic model through aid is not merely too simplistic, but that it also stands in direct contradiction to a lasting principle of Nordic aid – that aid should be given unconditionally and on the recipients' own terms. Whereas this principle has not always been an easy one to follow, it has remained a core idea since the beginning of Nordic aid.

The primary sources provide limited support for the interpretation that a conscious, explicit wish to transfer the Nordic model of society to the recipient countries was a driver of development aid. Individual participants in a number of development cooperation processes may have felt that the aid openly or implicitly contained such a dimension, but there is an absence of evidence that this was an explicit Nordic policy. Archival sources on various aspects of Norwegian and Nordic aid history rarely reveal expressions of any particularly uniform idea about what the Nordic development model would amount to. At best, this view of aid was an unspoken, underlying assumption. In addition, it may not in fact be possible to trace any uniform understanding of the Nordic model through the many arenas and levels that constitute the aid cooperation process: the political level, different levels within the aid administrations, the interplay between the home and field offices of the aid administration and the actual recipients of aid, whether at government or user level.

Of the three ways that of conceiving what is meant by the Nordic model, it is the Nordic model as export that the historiography on aid offers the strongest support for, but only in terms of fairly delimited fields, such as health, population, agriculture, education and the cooperative movement. In these cases, it is far from obvious whether it was the Nordic model as a whole that was an inspiration, or whether it was, rather, specific selected features, such as welfare state-inspired schemes, public health care or gender equality. Nordic aid has often focused on areas and issues where aid administrators believed the Nordic countries could make a difference based on their own domestic experiences and knowledge, and these are precisely the delimited areas mentioned: cooperatives, fisheries, health and population.

The joint Nordic aid effort was of relatively short duration, and may partly be considered a consequence of the fact that aid was a recent policy field and resources needed to be pooled. As the national aid bureaucracies were built up and became more professional, individual countries' desire for own national aid projects and programs grew. This must be linked to the fact that aid was frequently designed to serve several purposes and publics, and that displaying a national rather than a regional, profile gradually became more highly prioritized by donors. This was precisely the reason that joint Nordic projects ran aground – the individual donors desired to display their own flags. Closely related to this was, of course, the ever more frequent, recurring need to show taxpayers the purposes for which their government's money was spent, and to promote the international profile of small donor states.

On the basis of historical works on development aid so far, it seems that a more systematic employment of the approaches of transnational history would have helped to see more clearly the fact that Nordic aid takes place within a wider framework than the nation-state and the region. Aid, after all, crosses borders. Thus, it should be no surprise that the phenomenon of development aid can be understood, and perhaps better grasped if

viewed outside the national and regional frameworks, and placed within the partially overlapping ones.

Notes

- 1 See the OECD website: <https://data.oecd.org/oda/net-oda.htm> [accessed March 4, 2016]
- 2 OECD Special Review of Iceland 2013, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/Iceland%20Special%20Review.pdf> [accessed March 4, 2016]
- 3 See the OECD website: <https://data.oecd.org/oda/net-oda.htm> [accessed March 4, 2016]
- 4 Iceland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Icelandic Development Cooperation': <http://www.mfa.is/foreign-policy/development-cooperation/icelandic-development-cooperation/> [accessed March 4, 2016]
- 5 For Norway's status-seeking foreign policy behaviour, see Leira, 'The formative years: Norway as an obsessive status-seeker' and Benjamin de Carvalho and Jon Harald Sande Lie, 'A Great Power Performance: Norway, Status and the Policy of Involvement', in de Carvalho and Neumann (eds.), *Small State Status Seeking. Norway's Quest for International Standing*, pp. 56–73.
- 6 Alternatively, «Nordic» can also be substituted by the name of an individual country, e.g. the Danish model.

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