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International Development Aid and Its Impact on a Donor Country: A Case Study of Norway

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This article argues that it is important to reconstruct and analyse how the international aid system that was established after the Second World War has impacted on the national histories of donor countries. The focus is on what has happened in Norway, using it as an example of how the relationship between national traditions and the international aid system can be studied. The article emphasises the need to develop concepts that can establish analytical distance to the normative and conceptual influence of the powerful rhetoric of the aid system. Based on very extensive empirical research of the Norwegian aid system over many years, the author presents a historical summary of his findings and a set of concepts developed in order to better grasp what has been happening; concepts like 'the southern political system', a national 'do-gooder's regime', a 'strategic communication regime', 'inside aiding', and 'elite circulation'.

Cet article soutient qu'il est important d'établir et d'analyser la façon dont le système d'aide au développement, établi à la suite de la seconde guerre mondiale, a influencé l'histoire nationale des pays donateurs. L'étude prend comme exemple le cas de la Norvège pour démontrer la manière dont on peut étudier la relation entre les traditions nationales et l'aide internationale. Il souligne le besoin de formuler les concepts qui peuvent établir la distance analytique vis-à-vis de l'influence normative et conceptuelle de la rhétorique dominante du système d'aide elle-même. S'appuyant sur une recherche empirique très étendue du système norvégien d'aide sur plusieurs années, l'auteur présente un résumé de ses résultats dans une perspective historique. Il développe aussi un ensemble de concepts afin de mieux comprendre ce processus; des concepts tels que « le système politique du Sud », un régime national « bienfaiteur », un « régime de communication stratégique », un système d'aide endogène (« inside aiding »), de rotation des membres de l'élite (« elite circulation ») etc.

All donor countries have been affected politically, institutionally and conceptually by taking part in the international aid system. In spite of this, very few studies

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have been carried out on the national impacts of this participation. Almost all research on development aid and development policies have been concerned with what has been happening in the developing countries or how specific institutions, such as ODI, the World Bank or individual NGOs have conceived and implemented their development policies.[1] This article will argue that the time is more than ripe for studies of how involvement in development aid has changed Great Britain, the US and other donor countries, as historical research has shown how British colonialism affected Victorian Britain and the Vietnam War impacted on American society.

I will present an analysis of what is here conceived as one national sub-system among many others of the international aid system; the Norwegian aid system and how it has affected Norwegian history. There are many reasons why Norway is an interesting case. During a period when the process of globalisation is forcing all nations of the world, including the Scandinavian countries, to redefine their position, the political leadership has linked Norway's national and international 'state branding' to its development and peace policies on the global scene.[2] Norway has been and is regarded as one of the most committed donor countries, and as a state that has, relatively speaking, attached few interests of 'realpolitik' to their activities. This field of politics has acted for several decades as an important reservoir for the production of national identity and has at the same time played a decisive role in the formation of relationships between different types of Norwegian social institutions. Contemporary Norwegian history cannot be understood without also understanding what is here called the 'Southern political system' and its product, the so-called Norwegian model. Finally, a number of studies of the Norwegian system have already been carried out, which this analysis may benefit from (e.g. Ørbeck, 1987; Stokke, 1989; Stokke, 1999; Tvedt, 1990; Tvedt, 1998; Tvedt, 2002a; Tvedt, 2003; Tamnes, 1997; Helland, 2001; Simensen, 2003). The argument is not that the Norwegian aid system is something entirely different from other national sub-systems of the international aid system. On the contrary, what has been happening in Norway has also to some extent been happening in other countries, but at the same time, the Norwegian sub-system, like other national sub-systems, has unique features that need to be understood in order to understand how the international aid system functions and affects the world.

Any attempt by a country's elite to further its military or political ambitions is bound to have consequences for conditions at home. This article will on the one hand present an empirical summary of the significance of this policy field for Norwegian society in general, and at the same time suggest some analytical and conceptual tools that may be useful for analysis of the growth and functions of the international aid system as a whole as well as its other national sub-systems. The empirical question is: what has the ambitious goal of turning Norway into a global development aid power and a high-profile peace broker meant for Norwegian perceptions of the world and its institutional architecture? By trying to answer this question the article will demonstrate the fruitfulness of an analytical approach that regards the national aid systems as particular sub-systems of a much broader but very influential international aid system.

A CHANGE IN ORGANISATIONAL LANDSCAPE

In a long historical perspective, the rapid growth in size and importance of this policy field in Norway in the course of some few decades is quite remarkable. At the beginning of the 1960s, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) did not exist and no more than a handful of people worked with non-European questions in a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that was almost exclusively oriented towards NATO, Europe and the polar regions. It would have been possible to count the number of Norwegian researchers studying non-European subjects on the fingers of one hand, and those few received no financial support from the Foreign Ministry (Andersen et al., 1987). Not until 1963 were 'private' organisations, as they were called then, allocated financial support from the national budget. In 1963, seven organisations received a total of NOK 2.7 million in state support (Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1995).

By 2005, the actors involved in development aid and emergency assistance comprised more than 200 organisations which received more than NOK 3 billion in support from MFA. Around half of all Norway's bilateral development aid was channelled through these organisations between 1990 and 2005. The organisations dealing with aid and emergencies abroad have come to cover a territory much wider than that of the classical emergency aid and missionary organisations such as Norwegian Church Aid, the Red Cross, Norwegian People's Aid, the Save the Children Fund and Refugee Aid, even though these organisations and the Norwegian Missionary Aid Committee (an umbrella organisation for 16 missionary organisations) have been allocated the largest sums. Between 1990 and 2005 the first three of the above-mentioned organisations each received some NOK 4 billion from the national budget, i.e. a total of 12 billion Norwegian kroner (NORAD, 2006). In order to grasp its national influence, it is important to realise that other very central Norwegian organisations, established to further their constituencies' interests in Norway, such as the Norwegian Athletics Federation, the Norwegian Federation of Women and Families, the Norwegian Confederation of Industry, the Norwegian Trade Union Congress and similar bodies have received several hundred million kroner in state support in the course of the past few decades to run projects that meet the objectives of the state in the development and peace sector.[3] Via organisations such as these, a large proportion of the population has been mobilised in the service of Norwegian development and foreign policy all over the world, led and financed primarily by the state itself. In addition, more than 1,000 researchers, most of them at the universities, have been engaged in research projects that have been defined as development aid projects and have been financed by the MFA. Hundreds of journalists have been involved, writing articles about Norwegian activities all over the world, directly and indirectly via the MFA All the political parties from the Socialist Left to the right-wing Progress Party receive support from the MFA to perform development aid projects in other countries, and to implement the objectives of the state.[4] The MFA and NORAD have almost 1,000 employees who deal with non-European regions of the world, and the southern politics bureaucrats manage an annual budget that

totals around NOK 15 billion, i.e. much more than three-quarters of the MFA's total budget.

Norway's development and peace policy can therefore no longer be regarded as a marginal aspect of foreign policy or as a marginal area of Norwegian society during recent decades. Nevertheless, most research in Norway on the country's recent history has ignored the background for this new foreign policy and how the policy has affected Norway (see e.g. Eriksen and Pharo, 1997; Tamnes, 1997; Liland and Kjærland, 2003; Ruud and Kjærland, 2003). For 'donor' countries the empirical realities reveal the conceptual limitations of two traditions of interpretation. On the one hand, influential directions in international relations studies have tended to ignore the national foundations and consequences of foreign policies, and this is also the case for Norway. On the other hand, dominant trends in Norwegian research on contemporary history and social development have approached the development of modern society, its institutions, strategies and languages, within the context of an overwhelmingly national, genealogical perspective, unaffected as it were by the global ambitions of its foreign policy elite and aid activists and the fact that Norway participates in an international aid system. These same research traditions have dominated in other countries, perhaps even more so than in Norway, where at least a few studies of the national history and impact of the aid system have been undertaken (see literature list).

THE NEED FOR ANALYTICAL DISTANCE

If contemporary history or social science has a liberating element, it is this: to help identify that kind of thinking that has become so normal, so part of day-to-day activities that it is never questioned. A prerequisite for being able to describe and analyse a field of politics that has had such a unique moral and political legitimacy as the development aid system, is to develop a conceptual apparatus capable of evading the dominance of its language. It must be capable of historicising the way that it communicates about itself, and of locating the phenomenon as a process in a continually changing, but nevertheless quite concrete, historical and social context. At the same time, it must capture the particular historical and comparative characteristics of the field, tackle fundamental questions such as the relationships between social institutions, and be capable of identifying the rhetorical profile that dominant approaches neither perceive nor are concerned with (for a discussion of the usefulness of this critical self-reflexive exercise, see Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu and Wacqu, 1992). Some of the concepts I have found useful are presented below (for a more in-depth testing of these concepts, see Tvedt, 2003), and these concepts are fruitful also when analysing other national sub-systems.

INTERNATIONAL AID AND A HISTORICAL INNOVATION IN NORWAY

The whole policy field in Norway (as in other donor countries) has grown into a complex mixture of development aid, emergency assistance, and foreign policy initiatives. This system is much broader and more complex than a donor/receiver

relationship for the transfer of funds from rich to poor countries, although it is also this. It has in Norway and elsewhere developed as a state-directed amalgamation of two policy fields with originally competing value agendas: on the one hand, development aid, historically constructed on the value dichotomy of what creates 'good development'/does not create 'good development'; and, on the other, traditional foreign policy, based on considerations about what serves the interests of the state/does not further the interest of the state (see below).[5] This historical analysis, emphasising the role of the state, reflecting the importance UN bodies, OECD and other international state institutions have in influencing national development policies, does not imply that the system has been imposed on NGOs and the research community, since both NGOs and research institutions have for their own reasons sought state support to boost their activities. The term development aid system suggests a more complex phenomenon and has no normative (and negative) connotations, as does the term 'aid industry'. It carries with it, however, a similar attention to financial, administrative and conceptual structures with powerful impacts and enabling capabilities. This system has organised a form of state-led global philanthropy and has diversified national foreign policy instruments, in its course unintentionally loosening the traditional state monopoly over foreign policy.

What is here termed the 'southern political system' in Norway should be seen as a national sub-system of what elsewhere has been discussed and described as the 'international aid system' (for a discussion of the term 'international aid system', see also Tvedt, 2002b; Tvedt, 2006; Tvedt, 2007a; Tvedt, 2007b). The usefulness of the latter term is that it makes it possible to draw some new, but fundamental and clear-cut empirical distinctions that at the same time are of analytical value. It will enable studies of the general forces of globalisation and societal variables in international politics after the Second World War on the one hand, and this historical innovation – a normatively justified international system – on the other.[6] It allows us to recognise and analytically integrate the importance of the specific financial relationships (gift economy and the patterns of accountability) and the particular flows of power (the specific moral, cultural and conceptual capital of the aid agenda) and how these two different, but interconnected factors have contextualised both what the actors have done within the system but also how they have justified their actions – internally and vis-à-vis the rest of the world (for different analyses of the gift economy and the aid relationship, see Cheal, 1988; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). It distances itself from the growing body of literature in International Relations studies that talk of 'hard' power (such as military and coercive) and 'soft' power (values and ideas, technology, etc.), since this type of differentiation misses how the international aid system and its agenda influences both the 'hard' and the 'soft' power, at the same time as it is organised as a separate social system. Third, it will bring more coherence and stringency to research on development aid and the development of civil society, since the focus on the aid system and its boundaries distinguishes between those organisations in civil society that have been and are receiving money from donors, and those that are not. It will also be helpful in analysing the segmentation of states when it comes to

international relations, since it makes it possible to analyse the relationships between those segments of the state administration that have been and are part of this aid system, and those that are not. The term enables us not only to describe and understand how this system is influenced by forces outside its own boundaries, but also how those parts of the organisational landscape and civil society that do not receive donor funds have been influenced by this particular relationship between donor states and NGOs.[7] By regarding the system as a distinct part of a much wider process of globalisation and sets of relationships between societies, a deeper analytical and historical contextualisation becomes possible. It becomes possible to consider and analyse inherent contradictions between the system's transformative logic and justification, and its role as a reproducer of power relations. And, lastly, it will stimulate studies of national variations, or national sub-systems, of this international system.

The 'southern political system' comprises both development aid and foreign policy directed towards improvement of the situation in the so-called 'south'. The term by itself emphasises the originality of this area of politics – the fact that it is a recent institutional and political creation. It also captures that we are speaking here of a top-down interweaving of two different fields of policy which historically derive from very different, and indeed contrasting, constituent value dichotomies (development aid was constituted around the paired values 'what creates/does not create development', while traditional foreign policy has always revolved around 'what serves/does not serve the interests of the state'). This particular interweaving of these two traditions has formed the distinctive features of this field of politics.[8] The concept may help to overturn unfruitful but influential frameworks of interpretation that have treated foreign policy and development policy as two different fields of policy, the fundamental distinction between which has been based on a rhetoric in which development policy has been guided by values and altruism, and foreign policy by realism and self-interest. The history of the southern political system shows that the relationships between altruism, realism and values are much more complex. For example, in Norway and elsewhere, leading politicians from left and right see aspects of development aid as enlightened self-interest. In Norway, one basic official justification for the 'peace policies' has been that it may function as a door-opener for Norway in both Brussels and Washington. In other words, what is described as Norwegian altruism is justified at the same time both as Norwegian foreign policy realism and as the alternative to that very realism. This might suggest that this field of policy and, no less, its legitimisation are more complex than the traditional dividing lines ascribed to them by research have managed to suggest.[9] The concept of the southern political system also makes it easier to understand the relationship between foreign and domestic policy, and enables us to analyse how players in these fields have been able to convert the legitimacy of the development aid field to that of foreign policy and vice versa, not to mention how successes or fiascos in the one field can be explained in terms of success or fiasco in the other. It is this policy field that cannot be studied either as traditional foreign policy or only as some form of institutionalised benevolent state altruism (although in Norway it is this to a very large extent).

This system is called the 'southern political system', in spite of the fact that the official usage of the word 'south' (as a kind of collective term for Africa, Asia (minus Japan), Latin America, Oceania and the Balkan countries which engaged in the Balkan Wars of the 1990s) cannot be justified in either historical, geographical or relational terms. The term's logical twin, the paired concept of 'North/South' is, if possible, even less defensible on an empirical basis.[10] Since what we are trying to do here is to identify and understand the conceptual and power politics consequences of the southern political system's self-reflecting communication, however, it is important to employ this term, since it emphasises, at one and the same time, the importance of linguistic structures for system formation and the relationship between this position based rhetoric about the world and alternative ways of viewing the world (that divide the world up in terms of continents (The Fédération Internationale de Football Association, FIFA, for example), civilisations, indices of poverty, or the dissemination of particular technologies). This elusive and highly simplifying and ideological character of the concept 'South' dominates the world debate on development issues, and needs therefore to be understood in order to enable analysis of what is going on within the system.

A Strategic Communication Regime

In all OECD countries governments and states have supported financially publicity and information activities about development aid and this new variety of foreign policy. In Norway the aid system has financed most of what has been produced of films, research and journalism on the non-European world the last couple of decades. Based on a relatively generous and steady flow of funds from the state for publicity, the leadership of the southern political system has set up what might be called a strategic communication regime.[11] A conservative estimate of the state's contribution (via NORAD and MFA) to the task of informing society about the project and the policy of the state would be about NOK 1 billion (see Tvedt, 2003: 209–213). In 2005, more than 100 journalists and publicity consultants were employed by the southern politics system to disseminate information about this work, and in several of the organisations involved these people were working in departments that were also raising funds.[12] In 2003, a more or less typical year, there were about three times as many such journalists as there are foreign correspondents in national newspapers (Tvedt, 2003: 221). For much of the period it has also been normal for 'ordinary' journalists to receive travel expenses from MFA or NORAD or from the organisations at the same time as they have been writing about the bodies that have been financing their trips to Africa, Asia and Latin America (Tvedt, 2003: 225). Hundreds of journalists have participated in mobilisation journalism in this field, and the managements of major media companies have consciously set the traditional values of journalism aside in order to be able to support a form of journalism that neither they nor their journalists have accepted in other areas of society. Ever since 1974, for example, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) has held its annual fund-raising events in collaboration with a NGO and with the financial support of the state, and the programme presenters have usually been among the most well-known journalists on foreign policy issues (for a complete

overview of all the journalists who have presented the NRK programmes in 1972–2002, see Tvedt, 2003: 226–8). Over and over again, and quite explicitly, contributing to the success of the action has been given priority over the traditional ethos of journalism. The concepts 'strategic' and 'regime', used with reference to this wide-ranging information and persuasion project are intended to underline the fact that its influence and legitimacy should not be interpreted either as something that has arisen by itself (a structuralist history without subjects), as functionally necessary, as oriented to describing reality or as a system whose task is to reduce the complexity of the external world (such as a Luhmannistic perspective might have assumed), but rather as a conscious strategy dedicated to information and persuasion, with the objective of obtaining support for a given policy and a particular view of the world.[13]

To study the history of this communication regime globally as well as nationally would be, I think, very rewarding for an understanding of the character and content and power of the development discourse in the world today.

A National 'Do-gooder Regime'

The concept of a national 'do-gooder regime' turns the spotlight on the historical peculiarities of this field of policy, and how it has been organised around and sought legitimacy from the founding dictum – it is morally correct for people who are well-off to give something of their wealth to people who have very little. The term does not indicate that the people involved in aid are morally better or doing better things than other people in society, or are morally worse or doing worse things than other people in the society. It has analytical aims: the exercise of power within the system and vis-à-vis the external world, and how it rhetorically has been influenced by and influenced the system's verbal self-presentation can best be interpreted within such a framework.

The term 'regime' emphasises the existence of a relatively stable, comprehensive and complex system, making it possible to analytically reveal and examine the relationships between the origins of the system and the permanency of its legitimisation strategy, a possibility of decisive importance if we are to understand how conflicts of interest are mediated and interpreted. The 'do-gooder' term refers to, and permits the interpretation of, practice within a system which for decades has distributed and (by the society that encompasses it) has been allocated various types of 'do-gooder capital'. Perceptions of and rhetoric regarding goodness have regulated relationships within the system and its internal distribution of resources and benefits. The term can describe and enable us to understand a milieu which, in its own eyes (and in the eyes of many outside the system) has created a morally based society within an evil and cynical world. The term 'do-gooder regime' can be applied to this policy field in most donor countries.

The term 'national' here emphasises, however, the fact that, compared to similar policy fields in most other donor countries, this 'do-gooder regime' has a unique standing and legitimacy in Norway. The whole nation supports it, and has regarded it as institutionalising the right moral response of the whole country to the challenges of global development, peace and poverty.

The 'do-gooder' term can also be useful as a means of understanding how aims are discussed and achievements assessed, because both simultaneously form parts of its legitimisation process. For example: If this policy field is to enjoy legitimacy as a project that does the right thing, the policy of allocating a proportion of GNP to development in other countries requires that it should have 'positive' aims that can be supported by everyone. To gain or enjoy this status makes it therefore natural that one of the special characteristics of this system is that the development objectives have not been or are not testable or are systematically unclear or unrealistic. This description holds for the international aid system in general. A study of official Norwegian objectives from 1963 until the present day for both state development aid and that given via voluntary organisations reveals not only that these objectives have usually not been achieved, but also a consistent lack of realism. My survey of the goals formulated in all the White Papers and all the debates on development aid in the Storting during the past 40 years produced the same findings: while MPs have been perfectly capable of discussing budgets for roads and schools in Norway in a concrete and rational way, the debate on the country's aid politics has largely turned into a competition over willingness to donate and thereby exercise moral supremacy. This discursive practice has legitimised the systematic mixture of aims and means within this policy field, reinforced by the fact that the aims are to be implemented in places that lie far away from the donor community. The debates on policy goals in the Norwegian parliament can therefore be interpreted as a ritual that has served to confirm the national self-image of doing the good things. It has, by so doing, helped to position the national 'do-gooder' regime as an influential guardian of the country's morals in the age of globalisation and as a hegemonic interpreter of Norway's role in the world.

National Corporativism

Most national sub-systems of the international aid system are organised in a corporativist manner – in the sense that different social institutions, for example research institutions, NGOs arguing that they represent the civil society, business enterprises with a profile of corporate social responsibility, and the states, work closely together for the same aims under the leadership of the state. Institutional relationships and patterns of interaction tendentiously eliminate distinctions between different sub-systems in society that contribute to the pluralism of the community – e.g. organisations, research and the state.

The concept of 'national corporativism' encapsulates the idea that in Norway the southern political system has organised the nation's answer to what have come to be regarded as global challenges.[14] There has been, and continues to be, overwhelming cross-party support for the aims of this policy field. All the political parties have joined the system as MFA-funded actors in development aid. A large proportion of Norwegian voluntary organisations are active partners as well. The policy is described as the pride of the nation and as a special characteristic of the country in a wide range of circumstances. The concept reflects, and makes it possible to explain, the broadly based national consensus over extremely complex political problems in other countries and over major questions, such as that of what creates development,

which have characterised this field for several decades. The concept can also offer a point of entry to the analysis of how rapidly the content of this consensus can be changed; for example that entire strategies of development aid can replace one another without giving rise to any discussion worth mentioning. Fifteen years ago, 'no one' mentioned religion as a factor that affected the process of development, but in 2004 this had become a dominant topic of discussion. Fifteen years ago, 'everyone' said that development in developing countries would be impossible unless the main efforts were directed to the 'poorest among the poor'. Now, 'no one' argues in favour of this development strategy. Thirty years ago, 'global universal rights' were not seen as very relevant in discussions about development strategies. Now they are a dominant topic, and more and more donors have started to talk about 'right based development'.[15] Such rapid changes in political slogans in a field of politics that claims to stand above politics can serve to illustrate its corporative features, at the same time as the concept may enable us to analyse the mechanisms underlying the shaping of the policy within a special system context.

THE AID SYSTEM'S LEGITIMACY AND A PARTICULAR HISTORICAL COINCIDENCE

As in other countries or sub-systems within the aid system, this policy field in Norway has acted as a conveyor belt of ideas, policies, institutional set-ups and ideological fads and fashions, influencing not only the organisational landscapes in receiving countries but in the donor countries themselves. In Norway the significance of this field of policy and the way in which it exerts its influence, particularly the sources of its reservoirs of political, moral and cultural capital, is a product of a coincidence in time of two processes, one of world history and one of national history. After the Second World War, the world could be and, for the first time ever, was described in terms of western development concepts. Importantly, this was precisely during the period when these ideas of institutionalising the support to developing poor countries were taking shape. The establishment of the United Nations on the initiative of the USA was an expression of the institutionalisation of global power relationships, both in economic terms and with respect to the development language which would come to be dominant. The United States was the victor of the war and had a surplus of investment-ready capital. Right from the start, the country's political leadership aimed at using development aid as a means of stopping the spread of communism, and they did so with great success. Washington also consciously used development aid as a means of undermining what Vice-President Richard M. Nixon and others in the 1950s called the 'archaic imperialism' represented by the UK and France. London and Paris were quite unable to compete economically in offering the new elites in the poor countries of the world assistance after the Second World War.[16] Development aid made a significant contribution to the process of decolonisation. At the same time, the leaders of the states that belonged to the NATO alliance soon began to accept the moral obligations of the development aid project and to understand its potential political and economic benefits. For its part, the Soviet Union attempted to disseminate its own version of the western development model, in the form of development-teleological state Marxism.

It was in this historically unique situation, and at a time when the international development aid system had established these new state-to-state relationships on the global arena, that Norway debuted on the international scene. The Norwegian state and most of its development aid actors or allies met the non-European world for the first time, as its adviser and helper, and with an official (self-)understanding that it was taking part in a project characterised by power emptiness and a neutral position in relation to civilisational values. This accidental interface of world and national history was of decisive importance for the unusual legitimacy of this field of politics and its moral and conceptual position. It also helped to hide the way in which its rhetoric and institutional structure have hidden the power it has, exercised by the participants. Similar encounters between states within the international aid system can be studied fruitfully also when it comes to other donor countries, but it was probably less decisive and influential in most other countries.

It is important to emphasise that this field of politics has had a larger place in Norwegian public life than equivalent fields of politics in other donor countries. This is partly due to the fact that Norway had no other relationships with Africa, Asia and Latin America that could compete in public attention, official support and interpretative authority. Norway did not have a past as a colonial power, nor did it have any institutionalised tradition of knowledge or research on the non-European world before the age of development aid (see Egeland, 1988). Until recently, Norwegian industrial interests have been relatively marginal in these areas, with the exception of shipping and a few individual protagonists. Between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the age of development aid, Norway had sent out relatively more missionaries per head of population than any other country, but the missionary tradition and their interpretation of the 'field' could easily be adapted to the rhetoric of development aid, and in the course of the 1970s and 1980s the missions become an central and integral part of the southern political system. Development aid and 'peace' were put on the top of the foreign policy agenda. All in all, this has helped to give this system a virtual monopoly on Norway's relationships with Asia, Africa and Latin America, and on the interpretation of their development and of the global role of Norway.

A SUB-SYSTEM'S SPECIFIC FORM – THE NORWEGIAN MODEL

A description and analysis of the significance of the southern political project must give sufficient attention to what spokesmen for MFA and the Norwegian government has called 'the Norwegian Model' of peace and development aid policy. This has been profiled since the mid-1990s as Norway's international brand.[17] The policy declaration of the new Centre-Left government promised to strengthen the Norwegian Model even further.[18]

The Oslo channel's role in the Middle East negotiations was the typical example and mirror of this model. Success as a peace-broker state was, it was argued, due to a special kind of cooperation involving the national authorities, academics and humanitarian organisations, a cooperation which was claimed to be 'probably more developed in Norway than in any other country' (Corbin, 1994:7).[19] Using the term

'the Norwegian Model' does not here imply official support for the description and assessment of the model, or vice versa. It is intended rather to emphasise an analytical point: it is crucial to map and analyse the tensions that exist between rhetorical reification and analytical deconstruction, between internal self-reference and external descriptions (see also Tvedt, 2003: 57–8).

The Position of NGOs and the Question of Autonomy

It is well known that influential research on the position and activities of voluntary organisations in modern society was for a long time a history of failure: they had become more and more marginalised, and their levels of activity were sinking, etc.

The role of the voluntary organisations within this field has been more than anything else a history of growth from 1963 until the present day in all countries – but especially so in Norway. In 1963 there were seven organisations; there were 20 in 1975; 54 in 1981; 85 in 1986; and in 2005 more than 200 organisations were involved in the southern political system. In financial terms some of them have become small companies, with annual budgets of almost US$100 million, and with secretaries general earning more than US$100,000. In terms of level of activity they have become global actors (several organisations are providing aid in more than 50 countries. In Norway their fund-raising and communication departments employ tens of people. Their political importance has grown and relatively unknown secretaries general have played central political roles in important countries because they controlled funds received from the state. They have even shaped Norwegian foreign policy in certain cases, without MFA knowing about it. They have been allocated an ever more central role in Norwegian southern politics strategy, and in no other country do they receive as much as about 50 per cent of bilateral development aid every year. Thanks to their formal position, the leaders of these organisations have both been ascribed and have themselves assumed a virtually uncontested moral authority to represent (and judge) Norwegians' morals, particularly with regard to 'caring', demonstrating empathy and 'giving'.

It has become increasingly usual, and in line with the dominant international terminology, to refer to these organisations as part of civil society, as the standard-bearers of democracy and pluralism, as a bottom-up impulse to self-organisation, and as new, progressive social movements in a globalising world.[20] The increased activity of the organisations within this field of policy, however, would in most countries have been unthinkable without a radical increase in support from the state; i.e. from that institution which, in terms of the dominant rhetoric concerning civil society, is what the organisations are there to mobilise against. In Norway, the leaders have to an ever greater extent found themselves indirectly on the payroll of the state. They receive some NOK 3 billion a year in support of their activities; a support that accounts for a steadily increasing proportion of their total budgets. (In the 1960s, the state required that organisations should raise at least 50 per cent of their funds themselves. Today, in some cases, the requirement is only 10 per cent, but in practice their projects are more and more often fully financed by the state and in addition they receive support for administrative costs (Tvedt, 2003). If we use reporting routines as a criterion of relations, the 'stratification' of the organisations

will emerge quite clearly: in 2002, for example, the Norwegian Red Cross submitted 252 reports to MFA (Tvedt, 2003: 88).

If level of financial independence, administrative autonomy and accountability are considered, it is difficult to describe them as a group as 'representatives of civil society' or as the organised expression of social or popular movements, as they do themselves and as the rhetoric of the do-gooder regime presents them. Nor can they, as a group of course, be attributed grassroots oriented 'progressive' political-ideological criteria. Another characteristic is the gap between the extremely varied and complex organisational landscape with respect to the values that originally constituted the organisations that now are actors within the system, and the similarity in rhetoric, concepts and accountability methods as development practitioners. By entering the southern political system as recipients of the system's resources, all organisations have been obliged to adapt to the current policies and rhetoric of the leaders of the system. It is important to identify and understand the consequences, both for the way in which this field of policy functions and for the development of the organisations. As participants in this system, the organisations have had to share in and submit to a common southern political language. The ability to master this language has been of decisive importance in the internal tug-of-war for the system's resources and for who are bestowed the legitimacy to talk on behalf of the system as a whole vis-à-vis the external world. The special 'corporativism of distribution' that characterises the system's way of allocating resources expresses (and reinforces) the close relationships that exist between the leaders of the organisations and the state, the character of the circulation of the elite (see below); and the rhetorical unanimity regarding common aims and language.

The Position of the Researchers and the Idea of Autonomy

In 1998, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* identified a general trend in the social sciences:

> At the present time, there is a significant and undoubtedly growing feeling among social scientists, especially younger ones, that the relationship [between science, the state and industry] has become altogether too close. The social sciences, it is said, must maintain their distance, their freedom, from bureaucratised government and industry. Otherwise they will lose their inherent powers of honest and dispassionate criticism of the ineffective or evil in society. They [such feelings] cannot be taken lightly, as is apparent from the serious consideration that is being given on a steadily rising scale to the whole problem of the relationship between social science and social policy. (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 1998)

As this citation suggests, the relationship between research, the state and industry is rapidly changing all over Europe. The international aid system has in all OECD countries fundamentally influenced the institutional set-up of the research institutions within the field, what the researchers have researched on or what has been defined as relevant, the quality criteria, and the dominant concepts that have been employed to understand world development. In this field most 'externally

financed' research has been subordinated to the definition of the communicative situation of research as defined by political institutions or non-research interests.

A similar development is quite apparent in Norway. Since the end of the 1980s, Norwegian development research and research on the non-European world has been increasingly financed by the Foreign Office, and with clear demands for user relevance. This is the case in universities and colleges, it is the case for research financed by the Research Council of Norway,[21] and it is the case not least for the independent research institutes that have been established in the course of the past ten years, whose activities are more or less fully financed by the MFA or NORAD.[22] Researchers have also been involved to an ever greater extent as political operators on behalf of the state, whether in connection with MFA-led peace processes in the Sudan or NORAD projects in Pakistan. In certain cases, researchers have acted as whitewashing channels and engaged in manoeuvres intended to divert attention from the MFA's funding of political movements which the political leadership, for various reasons, has felt unable to support openly.

However, it is too simplistic to explain the history of research in this field in terms of general political power relationships in Norway and of the structure of research funding. Much more general historical processes are involved, that are also important to understand in other OECD countries. Research related to the international development aid system gained international status in the years following the Second World War, as an obvious version of the view of research as a form of social engineering. Researchers were central suppliers of premises when the relationships and objectives of the development aid era were being formulated. The task of research was considered to be to place itself at the service of development aid. In Norway, this field of research arose within the context of a sociology of science that was dominated by such thinking. Requirements of research relevance were reinforced by the anti-positivism movement of the 1960s and 1970s and the ideological trends that emphasised the need to do research 'on behalf of the oppressed or downtrodden', 'for the people', and so on, which dominated the universities during the years in which this field of research was being established.[23]

A reconstruction of the history of this field of research and its influence will need to 'follow the money' – who paid for what in which circumstances. This field of research is one in which researchers, in accordance with international standards, have enjoyed incomes that are higher than normal Norwegian researchers' salaries. The close connections between development research and evaluation of development aid are another important feature, with consequences for perspectives and concepts and quality criteria. This is a field where the same person is often researcher and consultant or expert and evaluator of development aid projects at different points in time (see Brekke et al., 1992). Such frequent changes of role have led to the researcher continually stepping, as evaluator, into the dominant donor/receiver relationship and the concept-forming world of this epoch. Such a researcher will be unable to evade established concepts and conceptual models for communicative, business reasons – the 'user' or those who paid for the study must be able to act on the basis of the recommendations of reports. But this economic perspective is too narrow. Academics have not simply subordinated themselves to

donor funds and their policy needs; they have actively sought its arena. For researchers, the Norwegian Model also represents access to important resources and political influence (both perceived and real). This field of policy revolves around major contemporary issues, at the same time as the grand goals of combating poverty, promoting peace, human rights, etc. appear to be more unproblematic when it comes to research autonomy than business profitability or immigration laws.

For various reasons, therefore, research as politics carried out by other means, in different variants, has gained an undisputed epistemological, conceptual and institutional dominance. In the course of time this has in general helped to undermine the special value dichotomies of the research system: what is true/untrue (this conceptual pairing does not imply adhesion to the idea that truth is possible in the strict sense, but that the research system – unlike the political system, for example, has retained this concept as one of its central communicative markers) and what is fruitful/unfruitful have been replaced by criteria of relevance: what is relevant/irrelevant to the creation of the right development process or development aid.

ELITE CIRCULATION AS POWER MANAGEMENT AND POWER SHARING

One important point of entry to the understanding of the Norwegian Model's concrete *modus operandi* is the character of the circulation of the elite.[24] Traditionally the 'partnership of the elite' has been highlighted in analyses of the kind of economic corporativism dominant in Norway in the 1960s, and it has generally been described as a rather lasting, rigid relationship between leaders of organisations with different agendas in the marketplace (i.e. the close ties between trade union leaders and business executives). Within the southern political system, what takes place is rather the opposite: the circulation of the elite, in this case, implies that persons circulate from one institution to another and back again (from a voluntary organisation or a research institution to politics and public bureaucracy and back again), and are thus to be found on all sides of the table, not simultaneously, but almost at the same time. It is a way of exercising power related to the ability to exploit the range of top positions within a fixed institutional partnership (circulation of this sort takes place at all levels among the different institutions within the system). Researchers, self-acclaimed representatives of civil society organisations, bureaucrats in the state offices and politicians all move from position to position within the system, articulating different institutional interests at each and every stop in the cycle.

The past few decades have seen the creation of a pattern that is well known and can easily be documented: state secretaries have become leaders of organisations and vice versa, and researchers have left research on southern politics to become state secretaries, only to return immediately afterwards to their research posts. Elite circulation is not of course unique to Norway or something that is only happening in this policy field. People also move in and out of political offices in other countries (Bernard Kouchner in France, for example, funded *Medicin sans frontiers*, and ended up as the Foreign Minister of France, but only if he goes back to a voluntary organisation or the Foreign Ministry as a bureaucrat after he has served as Foreign

Minister can we talk about a circulation), and it is therefore important to understand better the national patterns of elite circulation and also the patterns of elite circulation within the international aid system in order to grasp how these systems are functioning and the policies formulated. The point with Norway is that this elite circulation has taken place at a higher rate of turnover and to a greater extent than in other countries and in other policy areas in Norway.[25] There can be no doubt that this has created a paradoxical situation: a policy field where the dominant actors claim to be more transparent than in other fields and whose main task is said to be fighting against corruption and promoting good governance, is organised in a way where the circulation of people between types of institutions within the same system creates the foundation for what I prefer to call "inside aiding" to underline the similarities with "inside trading", corruption and bad decisions.

Another peculiarity of this field that can serve to emphasise its corporative features and the character of the circulation of the elite is the short distance that we find between politics and the higher reaches of the civil service. In the course of the past three decades, a total of 24 ministers, state secretaries and personal (political) advisers have gone to the MFA after they stopped working for various governments. With few exceptions, these persons had worked for the MFA before they became full-time politicians at government level. While not a single former minister or state secretary is to be found among the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Finance or in most other departments in Norway, many such persons are with the MFA. When the first centre-right government under the leadership of Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik left office, three state secretaries and one minister had regular jobs in the MFA to return to. When the government of the Labour Party and Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg resigned, one state secretary became ambassador to Israel, one became the MFA's top representative in Eritrea (a temporary position established for him) and a third went straight to the state's development agency, NORAD, as a senior adviser.

When many people commute between high politics and bureaucracy in this way, we have every reason to question the neutrality and traditional ethos, described by Max Weber as being the very mark of this historical invention, of this particular form of bureaucracy. We may ask whether the Norwegian model has created a bureaucracy of a new type, self-reflexively justified by being necessary in the fight against global poverty, but it may also be regarded as a move to strengthen the chances of Norwegian actors to compete for positions within the new international elite formed by the international aid system.

A reason for the Norwegian Model's corporative and comparative success is that the goals and mission of the southern political system are regarded as a national endeavour. The persons involved are distributing a total pot of money – the ever-increasing development aid budget – which is continually described as a measure of the nation's ability to 'care', i.e. as a thermometer of the country's moral status. This is a field of politics in which the state and the ministry exercise a great deal of influence on the rest of the actors within the system, through their superior resources and their responsibility for policy at the highest level. At the same time, however, the central administration and the politicians have become ever more dependent on

the organisations and the research community, and in some important policy cases the latter have had the upper hand vis-à-vis the state and its representatives. The state has gradually invaded the organisations and the research institutes, while the leaders of the organisations and the researchers have broken the state's monopoly of foreign policy, all the time producing a sense of 'systemness' within the system. Unlike the rest of modern society, which is continually hiving off new sub-systems, the development of the southern political system is moving in a contrary direction: the sub-systems merge into a new national project which, in turn, is a sub-system of the international development aid system.

THE 'INTERNATIONAL AID SYSTEM' AND THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF A DONOR COUNTRY

In no other OECD nation have so many organisations, relative to population numbers, been drawn into the state's projects and been given such a large proportion of the state's GNP as in Norway (see e.g. OECD, 1988; DANIDA/CASA, 1989; Farrington et al., 1993; Kuhnle and Selle, 1992). To a much greater extent than in other OECD countries, funding for research projects on Africa, Asia and Latin America is dependent on finance from the MFA (see Helland, 2001). The road between the leadership of the organisations and the state's political leadership has become shorter and busier in Norway than in other OECD countries. Furthermore, for a number of historical reasons, the southern politics system has enjoyed a relatively powerful position in Norway. It is thus possible to speak of a special Norwegian model for the organisation of this field, or a clearly distinguishable national sub-system of the international development aid system. The system has mobilised large parts of the population to take part in development aid activities, but at the same time it has created not more, but less organisational and political pluralism when it comes to analyses of development problems in the world. It has legitimised more intellectual arrogance when it comes to understanding the world and not less, and the new form of elite circulation and elite formation have already impacted on the way Norway has internationalised itself or redefined its identity in a globalising world.

This Norwegian model can be analysed as being a product of two different processes; as a form of nationalisation of an international phenomenon (all the OECD nations have equivalent fields of policy, and many of the schemes that different countries have evolved have developed within the context of the international development aid system), and as a form of internationalisation of national traditions and schemes. The policy of involving organisations in development aid, for example, was an American initiative, in which Washington asked other OECD governments to promote this idea at the beginning of the 1960s (see Smith, 1990). At the same time, the relationship between the state and the organisations in this field of policy has been influenced by Norwegian political traditions, which are characterised by a close relationship between state and non-governmental organisations (see Kuhnle and Selle, 1992), and it is within this field of tension between national conditions and the influence of the international

development aid system that the concrete development of the Norwegian Model can best be understood.[26]

Similar studies of national sub-systems of the international aid system will prove to be useful not only to deepen our understanding of national post-Second World War histories, but also of the international aid system as such and how this entirely new way of organising relations between states and societies has affected national histories and modern world history.

NOTES

1. This research profile reflects the funding patterns of development oriented research. Donor states, UN organisations and NGOs have for decades been funding research and countless consultancy studies and evaluations aiming at assessing the impact of their work in Africa, Asia and Latin America, while no research council in any OECD country has so far initiated research programmes asking the questions that are discussed in this article.
2. This policy was summarised and advocated in the report commissioned by MFA and written by Leonard and Small (2003).
3. See Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1995) and Tvedt (1998) for more data on this organisational development.
4. In 2002, the Norwegian Centre for the Support of Democracy was set up with the aim of giving the political parties in the Storting their own role in the development aid process. All the parties represented in the Storting are represented on the Council (see Norwegian Centre for Democracy Support, 2006).
5. This way of conceptualising this history as a relationship between value dichotomies is inspired by the work of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, but it departs from his all-inclusive system-model (see for example Luhmann, 1982; 1995). It also reflects the fact that in Norway the Foreign Ministry has typically funded a multi-volume series on Foreign Policy and another multi-volume series on aid (some of the volumes are referred to in the literature list, see Erikser and Pharo, 1997, Liland and Kjærland, 2003, Ruud and Kjærland, 2003 and Simensen, 2003).
6. The new policy field was based on an ethical and normative argument that is very difficult to contest on moral grounds: 'It is morally right that people who have a lot should give some of what they have to those who have far too little.'
7. The system concept focuses on new patterns of relationships among units that have developed within it – relationships that reflect to various degrees constraints imposed by the system's history and structure. Influenced by Durkheim and his idea that whenever certain elements combine and thereby produce, by the mere fact of their combination, new phenomena, this upsurge of development NGOs, the establishment of a NGO research and consultancy community, donor offices in state ministries, etc., mean that they reside not in their original elements, but in the totality formed by their union, or as part of this new totality (Emil Durkheim, quoted in Ruggie, 1998). The structure of this system is composed of relational elements such as state/NGO relationships, donor/recipient relationships, gift economies, and the production of legitimacy vis-à-vis the rest of the world.
8. In 2004 a government decision radically restructured the Foreign Ministry from a ministry set up primarily to further Norwegian state interest into what is now largely a management apparatus for Norwegian development aid and southern policies, in terms of resources, personnel and priorities, at the same time as the role and tasks of NORAD were reduced.
9. Tvedt (2003) offers a definition of foreign policy that encapsulates that the Norwegian case challenges widely-held theoretical positions regarding the relationship between state interests and foreign policy, domestic and foreign policy, the rationality of policies, the secrecy of foreign policy, etc. (See Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1959; Waltz, 1979; Kegley, 1995; Keohane and Nye, 1977; Keohane, 1986; Donnelly, 2000 for a definition of foreign policy motivations that do not help to explain the Norwegian case.)
10. For a detailed analysis of the 'south'/'north' concepts see Tvedt, (2003: Part 3).
11. The term 'regime' here has no resemblance to the way the term is used in international relations studies denoting different types of states. The term is meant to help in analysing what has developed

into a rather complex, stable and growing information arena, but at the same time focusing on the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion, and the interests and alignments among different actors. The regime term may help us understand how the whole information business within this field became established and hegemonic, and encourage studies of how its position developed over time in various countries in different but also very similar ways.

12. Norwegian Church Aid is one of many potential examples: its journalists work in what is called the 'Communications and Fund-raising Department'. Their journalism is explicitly intended to serve as a means of collecting funds. This department of Norwegian Church Aid had a staff of 45 in 2005 (see Norwegian Church Aid, 2007).
13. Tvedt (2002a) analyses the history of intellectual representations of the world in Norway after the Second World War and how they have been affected by the strong position enjoyed by development aid activities.
14. See Cawson (1982) for a summary of the role of the concept within political theory. The term as used here is meant to explain radically different issues than those on which the research tradition has focused (the economy or the relationship between the sate and actors in the market). It should not be regarded as a normative concept, in the way it is often used in contemporary literature (see Gledhill, 2004).
15. See Tvedt (1990) for an analysis and summary of official development aid policy and human rights policy.
16. See Tvedt (2004) for a detailed empirical analysis of the struggle between British and American politicians and industrial leaders for political and economic influence in the Valley of the Nile during the first years of development aid.
17. See *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 May 2000 (under the heading 'Norway as peacemaker'): 'The purest form of the Norwegian model is the foreign ministry *working in symbiosis* with one or more academic or nongovernmental humanitarian organizations' (emphasis added). The newspaper interviewed and quoted Jan Egeland, who had worked as a researcher, a NGO-activist, a state secretary, and a journalist within the system, and who also played a role in the 'back-channel' through which the Oslo accord was negotiated.
18. *The Soria Moria Declaration on International Policy*, October 2005: The government will 'strengthen the co-operation with NGO's, research environments and other parties that are engaged in peace work and conflict settlement'.
19. See also 'The Norwegian Model', a foreword to the Norwegian edition of Corbin's book, by Jan Egeland, Mona Juul and Terje Røed Larsen, p.7.
20. An example from the influential Civil Society Yearbook: 'Despite extreme heterogeneity and fragmentation, much of the activity in the sphere of global civil society consists of what Richard Falk (1990: 130) has termed "globalisation from below"; a project whose normative potential is to conceptualise widely shared world order values; minimizing violence, maximising economic well-being, realising social and political justice, and upholding environmental quality' (Anheier et al., 2001: 17).
21. The funding allocated by the Research Council of Norway to development research in the course of the past ten years has come from MFA, with clearly stated requirements regarding practical usefulness and relevance to Norwegian foreign and development policy. While other ministries also offer funding for non-applied research programmes, this has not been so in the case of MFA (see Tvedt, 2003: 131–9, for a detailed survey of this financial history).
22. Between 1995 and 2003, FAFO, the Norwegian research institute that among other things was very involved in the Oslo Peace process, received more than NOK250 million from MFA and NORAD in the form of direct support for its projects, and almost nothing from other sources. The Cesar Research Foundation received almost NOK90 million from MFA in the course of five years, while it was actually carrying out political diplomacy in the Middle East (see Helland, 2001; Tvedt, 2003).
23. Influential researchers have argued that it as an explicit requirement that development research should place itself at the service of policy (see e.g. Chambers, 1983; Maxwell, 1984; Edwards, 1989).
24. This concept is employed in a quite different way and serves quite different analytical ends than Pareto's concept from the beginning of the 20th century. He employed it to characterise the eternal exchange between system-conservative and innovative elites. 'Elite circulation' here refers to a concept that describes the existence of a fairly small elite which circulates among an extremely limited number of central institutions in society, and thus tends rather to limit the exchange between a system-conservative and an innovative elite (see Pareto, 1986). An important research task for the future would be to describe and analyse how a similar type of elite is formed and established within the international aid system, and how this relates to and develops in connection and conflict with the elites within the national sub-systems.

25. See Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1995) for a comparative study of NGO–state relations in different donor countries.
26. This implies that as well as studying national histories, we also need to study international trends and ideological currents that have affected the international development aid system. This suggests that such research should include, for example, Korten (1990; 2000); Fowler (1988) and the OECD (1983) on the significance of the organisations, and Keane (2003), who summarises some dominant perceptions of civil society that also have impacted the international NGOs and the research community.

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