THEME SECTION

Corporate social responsibility and the paradoxes of state capitalism

Bringing the state back in

Corporate social responsibility and the paradoxes of Norwegian state capitalism in the international energy sector

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Abstract: This theme section brings the state back into anthropological studies of corporate social responsibility through the lens of Norwegian energy corporations working abroad. These transnational corporations (TNCs) are expected by the government to act responsibly when "going global." Yet, we have observed that abroad, Norwegian corporations backed by state capital largely operate like any other TNCs. We argue that the driver for the adaptation to global capitalism is not coming from the embracing of neoliberal policies in Norway, but is rather inherent to the ways internationalization of the Norwegian economy is unfolding. To the extent that the Norwegian state has an impact on the corporations' international endeavors, it relates primarily to the imperative of managing Norway's reputation as a humanitarian superpower.

Keywords: globalization, governmentality, internationalization, neoliberalism, Nordic model, state ownership, transnational corporations

Focusing on the practices and politics of corporate social responsibility (CSR), this theme section examines comparatively how transnational companies (TNCs), the state, and the world economic order are linked in complex ways in energy industries. We study energy corporations because their operations have considerable environmental, social, and economic footprints (which CSR policies attempt to mitigate), and because states take a particular interest in energy due to its crucial role in society. While both proponents and critics of CSR have focused on the "business case" for CSR, anthropological debates have stressed how private corporations mobilize the language and practice of CSR and sustainability as (neo-liberal) techniques to bypass the state, depoliticize conflicts, and take on the role of moral guardians. In the

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Nordic countries, however, the states have taken the lead role in promoting CSR and sustainability, and expect Norwegian-based TNCs to act responsibly when "going global." The Nordic context—where large energy corporations have been closely associated with the national project, the welfare state, and have significant state ownership—challenges conventional thinking about public versus private sector agendas and disrupt assumptions about how state politics and corporate interests interact in the exercise of social responsibility.

At the same time, Norwegian energy TNCs are intrinsically incorporated into the logics and workings of global capitalism, along with the modes/norms of transnational corporate culture it generates. Norwegian energy corporations, which to a large extent are state-owned, started operating abroad around 1990. This was a consequence of the opening up of international markets as well as deregulation at home and a perceived need to internationalize Norwegian state capital. While working far from home, these energy corporations relate and adapt to local and national particularities in their places of operation. At the same time, the standards and procedures for CSR or sustainability (as it is now more commonly cast within the extractive and energy sectors) to which they relate are set and managed by international institutions.

The contributions in this theme section explore ethnographically the performance of corporate responsibility by Nordic energy companies. They reveal how the relationship between transnationalism, state power, and local politics plays out in different ways in diverse contexts. In this introduction, we contextualize these cases in a broader theoretical and historical discussion of the ways debates about social responsibility are shaped by the competing forces of global political economy, state ownership, and national interest. We explore the relationship between transnational corporate capitalism and the Nordic Model of welfare capitalism, between global diversification and notions about Norway as the "humanitarian superpower." We chart the importance of state ownership in the energy sector, with a particular focus on the development of the Norwegian oil and gas corporation Equinor and the hydropower corporation Statkraft and their respective relations with the state.

It is conventional wisdom and theoretical assumption that the Nordic model informs a better kind of global capitalism. Bringing ethnographic insights from a range of geographic contexts, this collection questions to what extent the Nordic model actually travels with corporations when they operate abroad, even when the corporations are wholly or partly state-owned. There are good reasons for this, particularly when we consider what it takes for a corporation to succeed internationally. Rather than a policy shift toward neoliberalism, internationalization has been the main driver for determining how Nordic corporations manage CSR. Just as the Norwegian state has worked to establish its status as a "humanitarian superpower" within the so-called global community, so Nordic energy companies sometimes deploy the "Nordic model" as a resource in their operations and interactions abroad. Such self-representations are mobilized as part of corporate narratives of sustainability and responsibility, which in themselves constitute key discursive assets in securing national contracts and social consent to land and resources overseas. But they are a double-edged sword, at the sharp end of which companies often find themselves when they are held to account for failing to meet the very standards they claim to export.

In the theoretical discussion that follows, we outline two significant moves beyond the current state of anthropological studies of CSR. First, we resituate the state (which has remained a missing piece of the puzzle when it comes to critical analyses of CSR) as central to our understanding of what CSR does both for companies themselves and its target publics (whether local communities, employees, "host" or "home" governments). We argue positioning the politics of the state as key to the unfolding policy landscape of CSR results in richer and more accurate analysis of both the intended and unintended outcomes of CSR practice. Second, we do not assume that the variegated practices of CSR can be fully understood as (purely) neoliberal governance techniques. This becomes evident when we account for how CSR is performed in the Nordic context. Our approach takes into account global political economy and historicizes the relationship between state, capital, and CSR. This expanded, and admittedly ambitious, framing enables us to ask: what can we learn about the relationship between state, capital, and corporate responsibility by studying state-owned Norwegian energy corporations operating abroad?

CSR and the state

The concept of CSR and the practices that come with it have distinctive roots in the business environment of the United States. CSR gained international popularity during the 1980s and 1990s, but, like other traveling models, adapted to local circumstances. Both proponents and critics of CSR have primarily considered CSR a business strategy. While proponents have focused on "proving" the business case for CSR, critical studies view CSR as part and parcel of the global neoliberal shift in policies. The putative association of CSR with neoliberalism is one of the key reasons why the role of the state in relation to CSR has largely remained unseen. The result has been an oversimplified story about CSR as a technique of neoliberal governance for bypassing or usurping the role of the state. Drawing on work emanating from the Energethics project, this collection of articles sets out to problematize this stock story and interrogate more closely the intersection of CSR, state politics, and global capitalism.

There is not scope in this introduction for a comprehensive review of the anthropology of CSR (see Dolan and Rajak 2016), but it is important to note that anthropological studies of CSR have argued that CSR should be seen as a broad, evolving, and flexible set of practices and languages through which businesses variously attempt to position themselves as ethical actors. Ethnographic work in this field has shown the diverse ways that corporations use the language and practice of ethics to contain and respond to the various challenges and conflicts generated by their activities. This literature has explored how CSR policies emerged out of corporate accommodation to critiques of their environmental and social impacts (and of the neoliberal economic reforms of the 1980s more generally) and evolved into a set of techniques through which companies claim to foster local sustainable development in direct interaction with relevant local communities (Benson and Kirsch 2010; Welker 2009).

The discourse of CSR has been dynamic and adaptive. In recent years, in response to converging crises of the commodity downturn, climate change action, and depleting reserves, there has been a shift within the broader energy sector from the register of responsibility to an emphasis on sustainability and risk management in articulating a CSR agenda. At the same time this shift has arguably been in response to growing critique of corporate colonial paternalism enacted through CSR (see, e.g., Chong 2018; Rajak 2011; Welker 2014). To many critics and practitioners alike, CSR retained too much of the philanthropic tradition it was meant to replace, prompting the language to shift toward "sustainability" and "environmental and social governance" (ESG). A major claim by business and in management theory is that the handling of corporate responsibility should be embedded or mainstreamed within corporate management processes—within the very DNA of the company—from geological prospecting, to risk assessment, to financial forecasting.

The latest shift in the language of business responsibility from CSR to ESG has co-evolved with the emergence of an expanding field for business ethics constituted by international codes, conventions, and consultancy; and the extensive machinery for reporting and audit this new institutional landscape has generated. While CSR primarily developed within a neo-liberal (Anglo-American) context, the United States plays a less prominent role in these international frameworks, which are more influenced by other states and actors. Since these international institutions generally have no power over the corporations other than affecting their reputation, state law and regulations remain the primary mechanisms for sanctioning the work of TNCs.

However, a key insight from ethnographies of corporate ethics is that TNCs increasingly bypass the state—both at home and in their countries of operation—through local enclaving (Ferguson 2005) or partnership with non-state actors (Gardner 2012), thereby claiming "a kind of collective moral guardianship over people," especially where states are incapable of furthering the ideals of development, freedom, democracy, and the like (Rajak 2011: 55). Often, corporations have been seen to "take on the role of states" by funding and operating basic services, such as, schools, health facilities, and transport infrastructure, through CSR programs. Accordingly, studies of CSR tend to be characterized by the absence, rather than the presence, of the state.

We re-examine this position, asking whether state entities can take an active role in shaping the CSR of TNCs, be it in their country of origin or of operation. In the actualized practice of CSR, the boundary between the corporation and state may be difficult to pinpoint, and CSR may be interwoven with other interactions between the corporation, public authorities, and locals (see, e.g., Welker 2014, chap. 2). By offering comparative cases across state-owned companies such as Statkraft on the one hand (Knudsen, Müftüoğlu, et al. this issue), and on the other, publically listed companies with significant state shareholding such as Equinor (Lange this issue; Strønen this issue), we raise a set of key questions which the articles in this thematic section variously address. We ask whether in fact, both state-owned and partially state-owned energy companies can pursue and implement corporate ethics by governance techniques that do not rely on and promote market rule, commodification, and privatization as regulatory frameworks evolve from the focus on CSR to ESG. Finally, the articles in this thematic section look beyond the actors and institutions producing CSR from above (both private and governmental), to examine how CSR can be claimed "from below."

Neoliberal globalization and the state

The Norwegian case shows us the limits of conventional thinking about CSR as a neoliberal technology. What we are seeing here, we suggest, is not some ineluctable impulse of global capital driving Norwegian energy companies abroad according to a Harveyesque structuralist rendering of the logic of transnational capital to escape the confines of the state and vanquish national regulation (e.g., Harvey 2005). Rather, we argue, internationalization (in keeping with the state's own global ambitions) is itself the driver for a project of global diversification, which at the same time tends to mobilize a Norwegian national identity as a key asset in achieving global expansion.

In recent anthropological scholarship, there has been much focus on neoliberalism as a traveling and hegemonic model. The idea of neoliberalism and how it can be studied has, of course, been highly contested,[1] but still underpins the way we think about and study state, capital, corporations, and a whole range of other issues under the current global situation. At a policy level and in public debate, the notion of the free market as being at odds with the state has been hegemonic. Even analysts have tended to give one or the other side in the dichotomy normative privilege. "Neoliberal" is freely and flexibly used in a normative way by those skeptical of any kind of "marketization" or capitalism (Flew 2012).

A typical contemporary example of state versus market thinking is Mariana Mazzucato's influential book *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths* (2018). She presents her work as a challenge to "conventional wisdom" concerning the role of government in the economy and as an attempt to re-establish confidence in the public sector (2018: xxiii). Her argument about the important role that the state has played in creating some of the most important innovations is compelling. Referring especially to Karl Polanyi ([1944] 2001), she acknowledges the critical role of "states in *shaping* and *creating* markets" (Mazzucato 2018: 15), thus seemingly going beyond the public-private distinction. Yet, the "conventional wisdom" she refers to is clearly an Anglo-American neoliberal inspired view on the limited role the public (or the state) should have in the economy, and her strategy for attacking that convention is to give more weight to the state side of the dichotomy. Although she contends that her "book is an open call to change the way we talk about the State" (2018: 213), hers is still a limited vision of society. State and business remain two very distinct spheres, and there is nothing between or beyond.

Within this framework, it is difficult to engage in nuanced thinking about the Nordic model. There are several good reasons for questioning the narrative about the free market being at odds with the state. Readings of foundational texts on neoliberalism can be simplistic, reproducing assumptions about the logic of neoliberal capital that overlook the nuances and countervailing trajectories of specific context. Second, work on the history of managerialism as well as comparative studies of governance techniques challenge such conventional readings of neoliberalism by exposing alternative trajectories in governance that do not "fit" the "off-the-shelf" neoliberal model. And finally, contemporary shifts in the global political economy destabilize the stock story of state versus market.

A variety of approaches to neoliberalism inform ethnographic work on contemporary economy and society. Nevertheless, the foundational (though very different) texts of David Harvey and Michel Foucault continue to dominate the scene, and so it is with these that we begin.[2] Despite Harvey's concession that "a dialectical relation between territorial [i.e. state] and capitalistic logics of power" (Harvey 2003: 183) exists, capital rules the roost in his rendition of neoliberalism as the uniform driver of social and economic change. Focusing on the intertwining of capital and governance as "economic-institutional ensembles" (Foucault 2008) makes it possible to reflect in more subtle and sensible ways about state, capital, and markets than Harvey's and other Marxist-inspired approaches to neoliberalism, which tend to restrict the working of the state and governance to a function of "the dynamics of capital accumulation and the networks of class power" (Harvey 2005: 76; see also Ingham 2011). While we acknowledge the crucial power of capitalist and class dynamics, we take the view here that the development of society, including contemporary capitalist societies, involves other forces and dynamics. Crucially, these multi-faceted dynamics of governance (and the social struggles that determine them) are not reducible to the pursuit of profit and of the so-called logic of capital.

When thinking about governance under neoliberal conditions, Foucauldian theories of governance have been particularly influential. Neoliberal governance is typically thought to account for all forms of governance for market, deregulation, privatization, new public management (NPM), audit culture, and the like. Foucault's exploration of neoliberalism in his 1978–79 lectures at the *Collège de France* has inspired approaches to neoliberalism that stress how the reflexive practice of governance increasingly enacts "competitiveness, commercial rationale and risk calculation" (Hilgers 2011: 358) as the main logics in the art of government. "Neoliberal governance" is set to work in a grand narrative about a global program for the "marketization of everything" and inculcation of "neoliberal subjectivities."

This is a simplified articulation of Foucault's nuanced and historically situated understanding of neoliberalism. A closer reading of his lectures reveals that he did not think that there was only one way that "enterprise society" could be organized. He makes the important point that "we are not dealing with an essential Capitalism deriving from *the* logic of Capital, but rather with a singular capitalism formed by an economic-institutional ensemble" (Foucault 2008: 167). Echoing Polanyi (2001), Foucault thus argues for an understanding of capitalism that does not posit a simple continuum from free markets with little state interference to state-planned economy: the way in which capital, markets, states, and other social actors are configured relative to each other must be envisioned and studied along several axes so that each unique constellation of factors results in distinctive socio-economic-political formations. Such "economic-institutional ensembles" can take many forms, even when organized for markets and fostering *homo œconomicus* (Foucault 2008: 147); the Nordic model may be considered one such "ensemble."

Foucault was interested in "the art of government" and outlined how North American and German neo-liberalisms could be seen as two different, contextually dependent, answers to the questions of how to "not govern too much" while balancing freedom and security. The German ordoliberalists of the 1940s and 1950s considered that the best way to ensure that the role of the state was constrained so that it could not again become the instrument of authoritarian policies would be to let it come under the supervision of the market. Yet, Foucault argues that under ordoliberalism, market/competition and state/government were not seen as separate domains. While arguing for "making the market, competition, and so the enterprise, into what could be called the formative power of society" (Foucault 2008: 148), the ordoliberals considered that competition "is not a principle on which it would be possible to erect the whole of society" (Foucault 2008: 243). They also wanted an active social policy and "a *Vitalpolitik*, a politics of life" (Foucault 2008: 148) through which was organized a "political and moral framework" distinct from the rules of competition (Foucault 2008: 243).

Even though the *Varieties of Capitalism* approach (Ingham 2011: 215; Hall and Soskice 2001) differentiates between the ideal types of liberal market economies (LME) and coordinated market economies (CME), this does not mean that all possible capitalisms can be situated on a straight axis between these two poles. Systems that are not LME are not simply characterized by a strong state; a variety of other actors may take important roles—be it trust/banks, labor unions, guilds, and the like, and the level of state involvement may be of very different kinds. Norway, France, Russia, and China all have strong state involvement in the economy, but the organization of their societies and economies are certainly very different. Neither state, corporations, nor capitalism can be taken for granted. Corporations have particular trajectories in different polities. The Nordic context affords one particular polity and has fostered corporations with special characteristics. For instance, large private capital does not have a long history in Norway and has, to a large extent, been tightly associated with the national project.

Beyond Foucault: Diversifying theories of governance

The second reason for questioning the narrative about global hegemonic neoliberalism relates to a tendency to read all governance as neoliberal. Although we have argued above that Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism usefully enables approaches that do not assume an overarching global and hegemonic neoliberalism, we also acknowledge that a significant limitation of Foucault's work on neoliberalism is that he was primarily interested in the emergence of certain ideas about governance. He did not pursue in any detail how and to what extent the neoliberal rationalities were implemented; in an aside (Foucault 2008: 144) he simply states that the ordoliberals' preferred policy "could not be strictly applied in Germany" due to the ballast of earlier economic policies. Perhaps it is this character of his work that has made it so easy to read a global program of neoliberal governance into it. Detailed historical and ethnographic studies have, however, demonstrated that governance techniques we tend to consider neoliberal often have other origins and are designed for other purposes.

Just as New Public Management, audits, cost-benefit calculations, and the like are generally considered neoliberal governance techniques (Knafo et al. 2019), so we suggest that CSR as operationalized by Norwegian state energy corporations shows a similar genealogy to particularly Nordic styles of governance and managerialism. "Rather than enforce market-like mechanisms[,]" the ambition of professional management was to empower policy makers and top managers in large organizations through the "use [of] optimization as a tool for governance" (Knafo et al. 2019: 246, 247). The complex management models that emerged out of this, especially "stage gate process" (Lenfle and Loch 2009: 12), are today central to the work of public authorities and large corporations alike—including Equinor and Statkraft—and are mirrored in the processes of standardization and ethical performance management and reporting that are the bedrock of CSR. The authors explain why this managerial tradition later has come to be seen as neoliberal by the fact that "the rhetoric of neoliberal theory was later re-appropriated by those promoting managerial practices of governance and who presented their framework as a means to produce 'market-like logics'" (Knafo et al. 2019: 247–248).

Equally, we draw on insights from comparative ethnography on China (Kipnis 2008; Nonini 2008) and post-Soviet studies (Collier 2011; Lampland 1995), which have also made crucial strides in disrupting the grand narrative of neoliberalism. Donald Nonini criticizes anthropological assertions that China is becoming neoliberal, challenges claims that universalize neoliberalization, and "argues for a different and more complex anthropological understanding of how state formation, politics, cultural practices and economic transformations are related to one another" (2008: 147). Andrew Kipnis, taking issue especially with Niklas Rose's approach (e.g. 1999), convincingly conveys how the comprehensive audits system in Chinese schools has its own unique trajectory and (non-market) rationale and is not a result of diffusion of neoliberal rationality. Kipnis holds that in place of pursuing the alleged diffusion of a "regime of truth," we should, rather, explore the scientism that informs and legitimizes many different audit systems, the performance of which should be seen as "techniques for manipulating local social relations" (Kipnis 2008: 282). Thus, in place of explaining all new forms of governance that involve auditing, statistics, metrics, competition, and the like as neoliberal, we may be well advised to focus rather on management, bureaucratization, governance, standardization, rationalization, and scientism—that is, ways of "seeing like a governing agent" (Kipnis 2008: 282), to paraphrase James Scott (1998). What are considered neoliberal governance techniques are often complex mergers of models with separate trajectories and purposes.

The final reason for questioning the neoliberal account is the current shift in the global economic system. With the rise of China, new protectionist policies in the United States, and a turn to more authoritative governments, a realization emerges that there must be other ways of configuring capital, markets, and the state than those articulated in the standard narrative about neoliberalization modeled on pervasive Anglo-American ideas about the state and (private) capital. Keith Hart has recently suggested that the "neoliberal hegemony may be cracking." He argues that, "a swing back to state intervention is now more likely than any time in the last four decades," but asks, "what is the state now and where can it be found?" (Hart 2018: 546).

That question is perhaps best answered by problematizing the classic state-society duality and "[treating] state and non-state governmentality within a common frame" (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 994). Indeed Ferguson and Gupta argue that it is precisely through non-state actors (including both local NGOs and international organizations) that state power is reconfigured, as states attempt to extend their authority across new scales creating networks of transnational governance and "stake their claim to superior generality and universality" (2002: 996). Thus, the question must rather be: where can governance be found? And, how do these models of governance travel? While Ferguson and Gupta do not consider TNCs at all in their exploration of transnational governance, we argue that TNCs are key sites (and purveyors) of governance on a national and global scale, a role authorized and validated by the discourse of CSR/corporate citizenship, and are thus key to understanding the relation between capital and governance. The case study on Statkraft in this issue, for instance, explores governance as it is enacted in the complex interface between the Norwegian state, the corporation, international institutions and standards, and the Turkish state.

Most studies of contemporary governance start from the premise that that neoliberal models travel from Global North to South (or global economic center to periphery), establishing themselves in new places in a form of (neoliberal) bureaucratic imperialism. Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore (2015) challenge this assumption, arguing that progressive governance policies, now often developed in the Global South, may become traveling models and spread rapidly to other jurisdictions. Sometimes these compete, sometimes they merge, with policies that will usually be considered neoliberal.

Following their lead, in this collection we hope to provide a counterbalance to the preoccupation with the workings of governance and capital in so-called archetypal neoliberal states or in the ways weak states are captured/sidelined by TNCs. Rather, we focus on corporations working out of Norway, a developed economy with a strong state ostensibly less impacted by the neo-liberal logic than most other Western states. Below we discuss the "actually existing" Nordic model as an assemblage of different governance techniques and actors, admittedly increasingly informed by neoliberal doctrines, but with their own unique histories and characters. We make the claim that it makes sense to think about Nordic societies as unique and not representing only versions of the neoliberal model. And, the Nordic model, while adopting models from the outside, may also harbor governance techniques that can travel elsewhere. Thus, we ask, do the Norwegian energy corporations we have studied take with them techniques of governance that can be identified as particular to the Norwegian context (such as strong union representation, the consensus model, or egalitarian ethos) when working abroad? For example, a key question that motivates Siri Lange's study of the Norwegian oil giant, Equinor, in this collection, is how (and to what extent) the company attempts to introduce the Nordic "consensus model" of union representation and employment relations in their greenfield operations in Tanzania.

The Nordic model

Above we have argued for the importance of problematizing the public-private distinction and historicizing the relationship between state, capital, and CSR. Accordingly, in the following sections, we first make the argument that it makes sense to talk about a Nordic model and explain why by outlining the emergence and characteristics of the model. Subsequent sections review reforms of the Norwegian state since the 1980s and the evolving policy for state-owned corporations, which we show to be driven by accelerating internationalization of Norwegian capital and interests.

The Nordic model is a result of the particular trajectories of political and economic developments in the Nordic countries during the last one hundred to two hundred years. We focus here on Norway where a progressive constitution from 1814, the relative lack of both nobility and powerful bourgeoisie, a decentralized petty bourgeoisie, and independent municipalities and co-ops have facilitated the emergence of a relatively egalitarian society. Yet, industrialization from the 1880s onward resulted in the same kinds of tensions and unrest as in other European countries between emerging capitalists and laborers. Many years of strife ended when the major labor union and the employers' organization agreed to the "Major Agreement" (*Hovedavtalen*) in 1935, which set the rules for how to manage relations between parties. With the state also involved, the basis was set for a tripartite cooperation that would be deepened after the war and find its most comprehensive solutions in the "income-political settlements" (*inntektspolitiske oppgjør*) during the 1970s when the deals included not only salaries but also comprehensive adjustments of the welfare system, pensions, employee representation on company boards, and so forth. This basic structure of the tripartite cooperation remains in place.

Similar developments took place in the other Nordic countries, which can be said to share the following characteristics: "(1) exceptionally egalitarian and democratic political traditions, (2) the welfare state and (3) labour market politics and regulations" (Ervasti et al. 2008: 3). Although the kind of state involved in the tripartite cooperation has sometimes been characterized as the "corporatist state," the Nordic corporatist state does not substitute for, but adds to democratic mechanisms. The "state" is not a strong central state (e.g., the French state), but rather is "remarkably decentralized, and the commitments of the welfare state seem to be exceptionally well embedded in institutions under local, popular control" (Vike 2012: 128).

The political left in Norway has increasingly appropriated the model—now talking about the "Norwegian societal model"—and, in addition to the structural and economic variables mentioned above, considers core values such as trust, cooperation, consensus, openness, community (*fellesskap*), and egalitarianism to be constitutive and to guarantee the success of the model. There is widely shared trust in the state; the leading union (LO-Norway; Landsorganisasjonen i Norge) emphasizes the value of the "communal-state" (*fellesskapsstaten*). While the Nordic/Norwegian model is thus associated with certain values and norms—a certain "culture"—we think it unwise to try to discern whether these are a result or cause of the social-regulatory dimensions of the model. It makes no sense to try to identify "essential" Nordic values, but if there is a single element that, were it removed from the model, would render it "non-Nordic," we would say it is the influence that the labor movement has on capital and the state. Beyond that, the Nordic model is contested and unstable. It is a moving target, but, also, potentially transferable. *The Economist* (2013) suggests that other countries may learn from "the new Nordic model," which "begins with the individual rather than the state," with openness and the willingness to reform.

"Towards a better organized state"

Since the 1980s and at times in the vanguard, the Nordic countries have enacted significant reforms—experimenting with and developing new ways of creating and governing markets[3]—that are often considered of a neoliberal character (for Sweden, see Harvey 2005). In Norway, reforms of the state were discussed and implemented to some extent before neoliberal ideas about the role of the state started to circulate and then accelerated after internationalization gained momentum. The initial driver was in dynamics largely internal to the Norwegian state, with concerns already in the 1960s related to "modernization" and "efficiency" in the state, and to the mixing of different roles within the same agencies (Herning 2009: 68). Policies such as internal independence/devolution (*fristilling*) within state governance, management by objectives (*målstyring*), and corporatization (see Herning 2009: 11–12) were seen as natural and realistic tools to modernize the state.

Beyond the internal dynamics, the seemingly ubiquitous presence of the state across all dimensions of life resulted in the growth of a popular countermovement, which brought the Conservative Party to power in the early 1980s, ousting the Labor Party, which had dominated politics since World War II. Significant reforms were implemented and were not overturned when the Labor Party came back into power.

The momentum for reform was channeled into the green paper "A Better Organized State" (Prop. 5 1989), arguably the single most important green paper ever in Norway. It contended that societal, demographic, and technological changes in Norway necessitated considerable reforms of the state in order to maintain its efficiency and legitimacy. Overall, the report emphasizes the importance and implications of internationalization (see, e.g., Prop. 5 1989: 40–41, 42), for example, arguing for the organization of state-owned corporations as stock-based firms since that is a form that is "well known and acknowledged nationally as well as internationally" (Prop. 5 1989: 155).

The combined impact of pressure from within the state and a political and ideological shift toward policies reminiscent of the "Third Way," eventually resulted in significant corporatization and privatization of state agencies and assets. Yet, the total thrust of the reforms never was as dramatic and deep as in the "iconic" neoliberal experiments. The actors who initiated and fought for reform and restructuring of stage agencies were not necessarily ideologically motivated by a neoliberal program, and "agencification and corporatization have a much longer history [in Norway] than the NPM reform movement" (Lægreid et al. 2013: 670). Managers of state agencies and state enterprises also lobbied actively for corporatization (e.g., Statkraft, see Nilsen and Thue 2006) and privatization (e.g., Equinor, see Sæther 2017), first to facilitate a management less restrained by state bureaucratic structures, then to be able to internationalize.

Thus, the corporatization of Statkraft (1992) and partial privatization of Equinor (2001) were not results of a neoliberal policy for "marketization," but, rather, answers to historically specific challenges. "Internationalization" was one such particular historic specific challenge experienced by the management in these corporations from the late 1980s onward. And, despite these reforms, it still makes sense to talk about a particular Nordic/Norwegian "economic-institutional ensemble," where the basic architectures of the tripartite model and of the welfare state are in place, to the extent that in the North Sea oil economies "Norwegian trade unions remain important actors (beyond the wildest dreams of their UK counterparts)" (Cumbers 2012: 238).

State ownership: Professional and (in)active

Although state ownership of oil and gas corporations is now more the rule than the exception globally, the anthropological literature has not explored the way states manage their ownership nor what consequences that may have for corporate responsibility. In the next section, we consider the Norwegian state's "expectations" concerning the corporate responsibility of state-owned corporations. Before we do so, this section of the article provides a brief outline to the nuts and bolts of state ownership and the Norwegian government's claim that they pursue transparent, pragmatic, "professional," and "active" ownership policy in the context of internationalization.

First, it is important to note that even compared with the other Nordic countries,[4] state capitalism has been particularly important in Norway. The Norwegian state and municipalities have been heavily involved in transport, postal services, energy and telecommunications, and industry, especially after World War I (Lie 2016). When oil extraction started during the early 1970s, the state controlled most dimensions of the sector. The successful incorporation of the oil industry into the Nordic model probably contributed to the relative success of the oil economy, avoiding Dutch disease and the resource curse. State ownership—or, more precisely, public ownership—is now much higher in Norway than in any other Western European and OECD country. Public institutions in Norway own approximately a third of all equity in

Norway,[5] and the Norwegian state owns 35 percent of the shares on the Oslo Stock Exchange. Five out of the six most valuable corporations on the Oslo Stock Exchange are controlled by the Norwegian state (Lie et al. 2014: 86).

State ownership in Norway has largely developed pragmatically during the last few decades (Lie 2016; Lie et al. 2014). The current state ownership policy is a political compromise: large and relatively "active" state ownership (favored by the left) versus managed with discipline, commercial "professionalism," and little involvement from the state (favored by the right) (Lie 2016: 924). "Professionalism" denotes "business-like management" as well as non-involvement by the state. This is partly related to the legacy of the so-called Kings Bay case,[6] which toppled the government in 1963 (Lie et al. 2014) and instituted an unwritten rule in Norwegian state governance that representatives from the government (politicians as well as civil servants) must not have central roles in state-owned businesses. Thus, the fact of state ownership is widely accepted, while how the state exerts its ownership has been a bone of contention. There has been disagreement particularly over how much the state should interfere (be "active") in the operation of its corporations.

Since the early 2000s, the state's ownership of corporations has become "objectified," with a consolidated focus and apparatus for making ownership visible and governable through a suite of instruments and rules: a Department of Ownership was established within the Ministry of Trade and Industry; guidelines for the overall ownership policy have been outlined in dedicated white papers; occasional reports set out governmental "ownership policies"; an annual ownership report summarizes results for all companies (75 in 2017) in which the state has full or partial ownership.[7]

The main aims for the government's ownership, as articulated in the white papers, are to execute its role in a "professional" manner, pursue commercial goals, and contribute to long-term economic growth and industrial development. For the largest "commercial" state-owned corporations, this has primarily meant producing revenue for the shareholder-state. Yet, from the first white paper addressing state ownership, there has been a consistent focus on the importance of globalization and internationalization, actualizing debate about ethics in new ways (Meld. St. 61 1996–1997). Experience has shown that active ownership quickly comes up against a perceived need to abide by the rules of international capitalism. Some of the international activities of Equinor, such as tar sands extraction in Canada, have been controversial abroad and at home. Yet, the government has declined to instruct or in any other way put pressure on Equinor (Lie et al. 2014: 87; Sæther 2017: 304). Demonstrating to the world (that is, the global finance markets) that the Norwegian state pursued "professional" non-interfering ownership was considered crucial. Thus, the new, consolidated and professional way to govern ethics of the state-owned corporations is for the state to articulate through white papers and ownership reports clear "expectations" or rules for responsible corporate conduct.

CSR as a state matter for global engagement

"Corrupt countries line up for Statoil" claimed an article in the major Norwegian daily *Aftenposten* in 2006 (Lynum and Haraldsen 2006). Equinor (previously Statoil), Telenor, Statkraft, Norsk Hydro—all among the largest Norwegian corporations and all with state ownership—have each been involved in scandals in their overseas operations. This has been a serious issue for the reputation of the corporations and of the Norwegian state, and members of parliament have been concerned that Norway's reputation abroad may be harmed (Ihlen 2011: 14–16). The scandals have been addressed in several white papers on state ownership. Norsk Hydro's failed attempt to establish a bauxite producing facility in Orissa, India, during the 1990s due to local resistance and global media exposure was discussed in the governmental White Paper on CSR (Meld. St. 10 2008–2009: 43) as an example of why Norwegian corporations need more comprehensive CSR strategies to address "complex challenges" and higher expectations in the "international civil society community." A 2004 green paper considers that "the state's legitimacy may be reduced, for example as lawmaker or in cases that relate to foreign policy, if the state through its role as owner does not pursue high standards in this field" (Prop. 53 2003–2004: 16). As the Norwegian state increasingly operates as an international capitalist, can it maintain the high ethical standards embedded in the Nordic model and align that with the international image of Norway as a humanitarian superpower?

We argue that it is this context—the problems that Norwegian, often state-owned, corporations have faced in acting responsibly abroad—that has molded thinking about CSR in Norway. The formalization of CSR was a government initiative with the establishment of KOMPAKT in 1998, which was "a consultative body consisting of the traditional corporatist partners as well as NGOs and academia, with the explicit goal of providing a forum for discussion" (Gjølberg 2010: 212). Importantly, this consultative body was from the start embedded within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is tasked "[t]o strengthen the Government's basis for developing policy and for decision-making in the area of CSR, with particular emphasis on international issues" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019).

Two interrelated claims have been made about CSR in the Nordic countries, the first represented by the idea, expressed by, for example, managers at Statkraft, that "we are CSR, we do not need CSR in Norway," since much of what CSR policies try to achieve is "already in place" in the Nordic countries. The second claim is that the Nordic model makes Norwegian corporations well prepared for competition in an international arena (Ihlen 2011: 48). This seems to be confirmed by the high score and many prizes Nordic corporations receive for their CSR work (Strand et al. 2015). However, it has also been argued that the "Nordic state-market-society model" is at odds with the US "business case" model of CSR, which implicitly grants discretionary powers to businesses, acknowledges unions only as "stakeholders," and "can appear illegitimate in the context of the 'Nordic normative legacy'" (Gjølberg 2010: 210). Unions in Norway—as in the rest of the Nordic countries and in much of Europe—tend to take a critical stance toward CSR. They are particularly concerned about the way CSR sidesteps or ignores the institutionalization of workers' rights in laws and regulations, making voluntary important societal concerns that should be required and regulated (Trygstad and Lismoen 2008). So, was the Nordic model the foundation when the government came to develop CSR policies for state-owned corporations?

Successive governments since 2001 have expected that corporations with state ownership take a leading role in work on CSR (Meld. St. 13 2006–2007: 64). The white paper on "CSR in a Global Economy" elaborated some of the rationale: "To an increasing extent, Norwegian companies are engaging in commercial activities in, and trade with, countries that are affected by political instability, widespread poverty or corruption" (Meld. St. 10 2008–2009: 7). For the last ten years, there has been increased focus on CSR in the dialogue between the state and its companies and in ownership reports. The move toward the business case for CSR is well illustrated by Monica Mæland, Conservative Minister for Trade and Industry, who stated that "to be good corporations and give high returns in the long run, they need to handle their social responsibility (*samfunnsansvar*) in a good way" (*Aftenposten*, 16 April 2016).

What we see in the development of CSR in Norway is that it aligns with international trends: with time evolving from "philanthropy" through "risk management" to "value creation"—illustrated by a figure lifted from the UN's Global Compact (Meld. St. 10 2008–2009). Furthermore, the coupling of CSR with "sustainability," as well as the expectation that Sustainable

Development Goals (SDG) will be addressed in reporting, shows that the language and models for CSR closely follow international trends.

Thus, the Norwegian state does not expect corporations to adhere to some specific Nordic or Norwegian model for CSR, but, rather, requires corporations in which the state has significant ownership and which have overseas operations to be serious about CSR by signing on to the Global Compact, following the OECD responsible business conduct recommendations for multinational corporations, taking up the International Labor Organization's core conventions and applying Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards (Meld. St. 27 2013–2014: 81). A "Nordic concern" about CSR is addressed by expecting corporations to adhere to "universal" standards and mechanisms.

A number of various international conventions and institutions are in place to guide businesses and other organizations to behave as responsibly as possible. It is outside the scope of this article to review these frameworks, except to mention of a few general characteristics and trends. First, adherence to most of the standards and principles is voluntary. Even though sustainability reporting is increasingly becoming compulsory, it is not supported by any sanctions other than "naming and blaming." Second, there is a distinction between standards that one may sign on to and submit annual CSR reports to, such as the UN Global Compact and the GRI framework, and standards that provide tools for actual guidance in the field—the most widely used being the WB International Financial Corporation's Performance Standards (see Knudsen, Müftüoğlu, et al. this issue). Third, a new industry has burgeoned to serve and feed the appetite for "sustainability reporting" over the last five to ten years, leading to proficiency in sustainability reporting as a particular skill and making for a larger role for audit firms in consulting and advising on sustainability issues.

At the same time, international standards clearly play different roles in different industries and different contexts. While oil (and gas) extraction has been an international business for 150 years, with the resources, capital, and know-how being highly mobile, oil TNCs seem paradoxically to be less restricted by international standards and frameworks than hydropower corporations that, until a few decades ago, were primarily confined to national markets. Hydropower, oil, and gas provide different material-technical properties, with dissimilar scaling properties, resulting in divergent energy producing activities that involve a variety of constellations of capital-state-international relations.

Oil and gas, together with other extractive industries, have typically been controlled by shareholder and state funding, and the primary response to local resistance and environmental activism has typically unfolded as classical CSR and a concern with local content. Hydropower, on the other hand, grew from disconnected local projects, gradually becoming networked into national systems often controlled by the state. Development of hydropower was embedded within national developmental policies. With electrification considered crucial for development, large dam projects came to be iconic elements in the development drive of emerging economies from the 1960s onward. Since such development initiatives were often supported by the World Bank or regional development banks (such as the Asian Development Bank) rather than private capital, resistance and controversies became more readily internationalized. This, in turn, stimulated the evolution and use of international standards, such as the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standards in the hydropower sector (see Knudsen, Müftüoğlu, et al., this issue).

With intensifying global concern for climate change, the reputational challenge has shifted significantly in favor of hydropower and its important role in the green transition. When Norwegian hydropower engaged in its first projects beyond Europe in the 1990s, they were typically "large dam" projects that came with challenges such as large scale human resettlement. These projects also typically took place within a developmental aid framework, stimulated partly by Norway's drive to become a humanitarian superpower.

A humanitarian superpower pursuing global business

When large Norwegian corporations operate abroad, they do so in a context in which Norway plays an important role in the domains of peace, aid, humanitarian efforts, and climate change diplomacy. Do Norwegian business and Norwegian humanitarian diplomacy impact each other? Is the way in which Statkraft and Equinor handle CSR influenced by Norway's other engagements globally? We argue that while this context is intangible, it does have some real implications. Business and aid/peace/foreign diplomacy are sometimes connected, but not everywhere: the connection is crucial for Equinor's involvement in Tanzania, while the Norwegian embassy in Ankara only learned through news media that Equinor had decided to invest in Turkey in 2016. With Norwegian business expanding abroad during the last couple of decades, potential for convergence, cooperation, or tension has increased.

Norwegian foreign direct investment had a slow start in the 1960s and did not become significant until 1985 (Hveem 2009: 384).[8] During the 1990s, the total accumulated Norwegian direct investment abroad increased by 500 percent (Stråtveit 2015: 24) with Norway becoming a net exporter of capital investments in 1995 (Hveem 2009: 384). From 2000 to 2012, Norwegian foreign direct investment tripled, to reach 135 billion euros in 2012 (Stråtveit 2015: 26) and 175 billion euros in 2017 (SSB 2019). These numbers exclude the so-called Oil Fund (Government Pension Fund Global), which is a pure investment fund of now around a trillion euros. The larger share of Norwegian direct investments abroad is undertaken by corporations that have significant state ownership, such as Statoil, Statkraft, Norsk Hydro, Telenor, and Yara (Lie et al. 2014: 111).

Norway may be unique in Europe when it comes to the role of state capital in foreign investments. If we turn to Asia however, we find some interesting similarities between the ways Norwegian and Chinese state capital is set to work abroad. Both took off during the 1990s, both seek profit, and both Norwegian (as shown by our research) and Chinese (Lee 2017) state-owned corporations are sensitive to local circumstances. However, given the very different positions in the global economy as well as diverging state trajectories and geopolitical alignments, dissimilarities surpass similarities. (Surplus) Chinese state capital is generally set to work as state loans, which come with the condition that Chinese entrepreneurs are contracted for the project that the loan funds. (Surplus) Norwegian state capital, on the other hand, is first and foremost set to work in the "Oil Fund," which is not used strategically for political gains, and secondly through state ownership in corporations active abroad. While Norwegian state capital primarily seeks revenues and is sometimes conjoined with the Norwegian state's humanitarian ambitions, Chinese state capital is deployed to pursue political interests and access to resources (e.g., minerals). Thus, Norwegian state-owned TNCs are in many respects more similar to privately owned (shareholding) TNCs than to Chinese state-owned TNCs. As Ching Kwan Lee cogently notes, "[o]wnership categories . . . are poor guides to corporate objectives" (2017: 4).

Corporate management within state agencies was the main driver for the internationalization of Norwegian state capital (Nilsen and Thue 2006; Sæther 2017). Limited investment opportunities in Norway prompted corporations to look abroad. The authorities did not look unfavorably on this development (Lie et al. 2014: 111). Since 1990, state capital surplus was primarily invested abroad (to prevent "Dutch disease") through the "Oil Fund." In 1996, Labour Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland determined that internationalization would also make it more difficult for the state to secure tax income. He considered that this could be offset by securing the state—as shareholder—income through investment in Norwegian corporate investments abroad (Sejersted 1999: 98n179). This was reiterated in the 2000/2001 New Year speech of Labour premier Stoltenberg implicitly urging Statkraft to explore projects abroad: "the time for construction of new large hydropower plants in Norway is over" (Government of Norway 2001).

In the case of both Statkraft and Statoil, the perceived need to move abroad was a decisive factor in stimulating corporatization (or "corporate normalization"), which started in Statoil in 1988 (Thurber and Istad 2012). Statoil learned international operations by partnering closely with British Petroleum during the 1990s. In 2001, under a Labour government, Statoil was partly privatized and became a listed company. In 2008, it merged with the oil and gas section of Norsk Hydro to better compete internationally. Statkraft and Statoil gradually built stronger corporate identities, their own ways of doing things, and unique logos. The most recent shift in corporate identity came in May 2018 when Statoil took the new name Equinor. The name change also makes state ownership less obvious. In the case of Statkraft, international expansion was not only motivated by limitations on further investments in Norway, but also by structural changes in the European power supply system (Knudsen, Müftüoğlu, et al., this issue).

How is Norwegian (state) capitalism abroad related to Norway's other international engagements? In 2016, the volume of Norwegian aid was 37 billion NOK (Norad 2019), only 2 percent of (accumulated) Norwegian direct investment abroad. Still, Norway donated 1.11 percent of its Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (OECD 2017: 141)—a higher percentage of GNI than any other country. Norway has played a central role in a number of peace negotiations (see, e.g., Stokke 2012) and its charge of the Nobel Peace Prize certainly contributes to Norway's association with peace internationally and locally. Overall, by "doing good," the "humanitarian superpower" Norway is trying to take an international role that far exceeds the relative size of its population, particularly now with the government's campaign for a place on the UN Security Council. Norwegian governments have consistently supported global governance, especially through the UN. In its efforts for aid, peace, and humanitarian assistance, the state has often been involved with Norwegian NGOs and academicians.

While these efforts may seem altruistic, some of Norway's donation to the international community can be seen as an instrument for legitimizing continued oil production back home (Norway has had a policy of making the CO2 cuts abroad). Norway is the world's biggest supporter of REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) (Svarstad and Benjaminsen 2018). Brazil has been the largest recipient of Norwegian aid for many years through the Norwegian contribution to rainforest preservation. Sometimes, when the stakes are high, economic interests are clearly prioritized over the image of a peace-loving nation that cares about the world. After the Nobel Prize Committee in 2010 awarded the Peace Prize to the Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, China's sanctions so drastically reduced exports from Norway to China (Kolstad, 2020) that the Norwegian government refused to meet with the Dalai Lama when he visited Norway in 2014.

Underlying much of Norway's international engagement is the assumption, we argue, that "Norwegian values" should be the template for, or are consistent with, the ideal form of universal human rights This is one version of the pervasive idea in Norway that "we do it better" (e.g., our extraction of oil and gas is cleaner) (see Sæther 2017). Thus, in the promotion of the Norwegian "way" internationally, the sociological understanding of the Nordic model—with tripartite negotiations, welfare state, and so forth—is glossed over and the model is reborn as resting on certain values (trust, consensus, gender balance, and egalitarianism) that should ideally be universal. The ownership policy's support for global standards and reporting framework is consistent with this, as is the development policy. Successive Norwegian governments have striven to have the Nordic model "replicated" at a global level, but given the minimal influence that, for example, the UN Global Compact really has on corporations (Orock 2013; Scholz and Vitols 2019: 239; Welker 2009: 145, 2014: 15), this amounts to little relative to the power wielded by TNCs.

In the first phase of Norwegian development cooperation, Norway's aid policies were not much intertwined with the interests that Norway's foreign policy pursued and were based on long term bilateral commitments to a few selected countries. From the early 1990s, this began to change. Norwegian aid gradually became a central part of Norwegian foreign policy, and funds were increasingly directed toward countries in conflict and to global funds (Sørbø 2020). The Norwegian vision of "development" has been inspired by Amartya Sen and the idea that individual economic and political freedom, along with respect for human rights, is the "core criteria" for development (Dale 2018). "This vision of development, which Norway has subscribed to for a long time, has in common with the 'Nordic model' that cooperation will result in a better society. [But,] [t]he kind of conflicts of interests that were part of Norway's path to a welfare society are not part of this model" (Dale 2018: 5). The Norwegian state's approach to international relations has developed so "that the meaning of interest has broadened to include the concept of value and idealism" (Stokke 2012: 227). Norway has engaged in a specific kind of "value diplomacy" (Stokke 2012). It is the assumed Norwegian qua universal values that Norway seeks to export, not the Nordic tripartite organizational model. A cynical reading would be that Norwegian humanitarian diplomacy has not so much to do with the Nordic model but more with Norway's desired standing, impact, and reputation internationally.

We have argued that globalization and the perceived need to internationalize Norwegian state capital—not adoption of neoliberal ideology and policies—have been the main drivers for the way Norwegian corporations handle CSR abroad. Yet, this approach has been shaped by Norway's position/role in the global economy, which is characterized by surplus capital based on a prudently managed and technologically advanced natural resource-based economy, and having an interest in maintaining an open economy.

There is not much "Nordic" left when Norwegian state capital is set to work abroad beyond the state's expectation that these corporations will adhere to the highest international standards. Being Nordic or Norwegian may, in certain instances, be a resource for the corporations, but it is deployed strategically and only as convenient. There is considerable variation across the case studies, with Statkraft's work in Turkey informed by international standards, and the Nordic tripartite model tenuously replicated in Tanzania—albeit without the perhaps most important actor: the Tanzanian state. In Brazil, the Brazilian state dictates how Equinor should administer CSR.

The corporations are heterogeneous, where the people who are positioned differently geographically as well as organizationally have different perspectives and interests. To a large extent, the finance officers in Equinor's London office find the Norwegian identity to be a burden, while those working in Norway and within the Norwegian sector tend to embrace the link between corporate and national identity. The state's expectation that the state-owned corporations will be "ambassadors" for Norway abroad is only very vaguely expressed, and, in practice, the state has accepted that Norwegian state capitalism abroad plays to the tune of international capitalism, not to the Nordic model. Adapting to globalization, representatives of the state have transferred power to corporate management and boards, which, in most cases, are left to manage their corporations as any other TNC, latching on to the latest fad of corporate responsibility, be it "sustainability," "environmental and social governance," or SDGs.

However, the strategy of the corporations and the extent to which the corporations and the foreign policy of the state is aligned varies according to place. While the pursuit for profit is overall the major objective, this is sometimes moderated by the concern for Norway's reputation as a humanitarian superpower. This also induces the Norwegian state to support multilateralism in the form of international standards and agreements. Yet, as the case studies in this thematic section show, neither the Nordic model, the Norwegian state's "expectations" toward the corporations, nor the international framework explain the way the Norwegian corporations handle corporate ethics abroad. The "universalism" of Norway's humanitarian internationalism is, however, selective in that the tradition of selecting some developing countries as main "partners" for Norwegian development collaboration means that the interaction and flow of people between Norway and some countries in the Global South (especially Tanzania) has been particularly significant since the 1970s.

It goes without saying that bilateral relations cultivated and maintained by the Norwegian state with other states vary considerably, as the contributions in this collection demonstrate. The terms of engagement between the Norwegian state and Tanzania, for example, differ greatly from those with Brazil. Relations between these host states and Norway's largest oil producer differ accordingly. As Lange shows, the long history of donor-recipient relations between Norway and Tanzania are a key factor in the relationship between Equinor and the Tanzanian government as it plays out today. Juxtaposed to this, in Strønen's contribution we find the same company pursuing divergent practices of CSR to very different effects in Brazil where the legacies of neo-colonial aid relations are absent. At the same time these evolving relationships are shaped as much by differences in policies pursued by host states toward Nordic corporations and their varying approaches to the question of corporate ethics. The variegated local unfolding of particular projects shows that even under neoliberal international capitalism—the tune to which the Norwegian state and corporations play—local actors maintain significant agency in shaping and domesticating the way corporations enact CSR.

Overview of the section

The contributions in this special section explore the questions raised in this introduction through empirical case studies that reveal continuity and variety in the practices of CSR by Norwegian energy companies in a range of geographic, social, and corporate contexts (from a prospective mega offshore project in Tanzania and ongoing offshore oil extraction in Brazil to hydroelectric power generation in Turkey).

In Tanzania, Equinor has for several years been on the brink of making its largest overseas investment ever. While the final investment decision is expected but not yet realized, the corporation has, as Siri Lange explains, maneuvered itself as well as possible relative to authorities, local communities, and workers in a context of Tanzania being one of the most important recipients of Norwegian aid throughout many decades. Equinor made the unique decision to actively encourage and support the formation of a local union branch among its Tanzanian employees and "with the involvement of the Norwegian union" has involved them in a logic of training and encouragement reminiscent of the social interaction structured by the political economy of aid.

Moving to another of Equinor's major foreign operations, the case from Brazil tells a very different story from the one in Tanzania. Iselin Strønen shows how, in order to get their license to operate very profitable offshore operations in Brazil, Equinor has had to comply with Brazilian state requirements to fund and operate CSR projects. This case study explores in detail one such project in which poor fisherwomen are being trained and empowered to pursue alternative livelihoods and interact with political and public institutions, and traces the involvement of Brazilian state institutions and consultancy-NGOs and their ideologies. That this project received the internal reward for the best CSR project in Equinor in 2016 is a paradox given Equinor's high ambitions and the Norwegian state's expectations concerning CSR as well as the fact that this was one of very few Equinor

CSR projects that was not voluntary and that they did not design themselves.

In the case study of Statkraft in Turkey, Ståle Knudsen and his co-authors consider, through a multi-sited approach, how the corporation manages one of its hydropower projects in Turkey by employing various standards. Tasked by its owner—the Norwegian state—to primarily pursue profit and guided only by very general expectations concerning CSR, Statkraft has selected to apply the performance standards of the International Finance Corporation, while they report (as required by the state) according to GRI standards. However, use of these standards is flexible and pragmatic, and in the process, "stories" become as important for reporting as standards, while the heterogeneous and disjointed CSR field in Statkraft is tenuously held together by the enigmatic figure of the stakeholder.

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Notes

1. See, e.g., debate in *Social Anthropology* 20 (1)–21 (1).
2. There are also other approaches: see Hilgers (2011) for an overview; see Waquant (2012) for an approach informed by Bourdieu.
3. One important example: with new energy legislation in 1991 the electricity sector in Norway was the first to deregulate in Europe (Agnell and Brekke 2011; Herning 2009; Nilsen and Thue 2006).

4. Sweden had from an early date much more private capital and "remained thoroughly capitalist, exhibiting one of the highest levels of concentrated and family capital ownership in the world" (Ingham 2011: 188), with around fifteen families controlling 70 percent of the Stockholm Stock Exchange (Lie 2016: 924).
5. Same level as in Russia and China. France and Italy: 10 percent; Germany: 2 percent; UK: insignificant (Meld. St. 27 2013–2014: 31, 36, 37). These numbers exclude the so-called Oil Funds: Government Pension Fund Norway and Government Pension Fund Global (the latter valued at 1 billion euros in February 2019).
6. For the Kings Bay affair, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kings_Bay_Affair.
7. For an overview (in Norwegian) of these documents, see: "Statlig eierskap: Publikasjoner." *Regjerinen.no*, 23 January. https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/naringsliv/statlig-eierskap/andre-relevante-dokumenter/id737457/?expand=factbox2602523.
8. This depiction ignores the Norwegian shipping sector, which has long been internationally active, but has not made significant investments abroad.

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