— Introduction —

Bringing the State Back In: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Paradoxes of Norwegian State Capitalism in the International Energy and Extraction Industries

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Through a focus on the practices and politics of corporate social responsibility (CSR), this book examines comparatively how transnational companies (TNCs), the state, and the world economic order are linked in complex ways in energy industries. Our focus on energy and extraction corporate operations arises from their considerable environmental, social, and economic footprints (which CSR policies attempt to mitigate); further, 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 (neoliberal) techniques to bypass the state, depoliticize conflicts, and take on the role of moral guardians. In the 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—through which 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 disrupts assumptions about how state politics and corporate interests interact in the exercise of social responsibility.

At the same time, Norwegian energy and extraction 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.

Most of the contributions in this book explore ethnographically the performance of corporate responsibility by Norwegian energy and extraction 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 in which 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 and state ownership, between global diversification and notions about Norway as the "humanitarian superpower." The ethnographic chapters follow a collection of chapters that set the scene, providing background on the Norwegian context. The relation between the concept, CSR, and its common Norwegian translation, *samfunnsansvar* (societal responsibility), is discussed in chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a historical ethnography of a Norwegian company town where the state plays only a minor role, probing the analytical challenges of discussing CSR in the Norwegian context—a thread followed in later chapters of the book. This historical backdrop is enriched in chapter 4 through a review of how the Norwegian corporation Norsk Hydro has been a model for state ownership and CSR.

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 the corporations when they operate abroad, even when the corporations are wholly or partly state owned. There are good reasons to question this, particularly when we consider what it takes for a corporation to succeed internationally.

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 that 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 considers 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, it 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 largely on work produced by the Energethics project, this collection 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. Thus, depending on context, sector, time, and local particularities, CSR may mean different things and can be "best understood as a boundary object" (Smith 2021: 5; see also chapter 2). 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 (Kirsch and Benson 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 and extraction sectors 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, social, and governance" (ESG) risks. 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 coevolved with the emergence of an expanding field for business ethics constituted by international codes, conventions, and consultancy; this new institutional landscape has generated extensive machinery for reporting and auditing, as detailed in chapter 10. While CSR primarily developed within a neoliberal (Anglo-American) context, these new international frameworks 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

Table 0.1. Overview of corporations discussed in the case studies.

Corporation	*Main activity*	*Ownership*	*Size (market capitalization range 2010–2022) billion USD*	*Global presence*	*Employees*	*Chapter(s) addressed*
Equinor (until 2018 Statoil)	Oil and gas extraction	Listed, 67% state	40-120	30 countries	21 000	1, 6, 7, 8, 9
Statkraft	Hydro-power, wind, solar, electricity trade	100% state owned, corporatized	Total assets 1.5-3.5*	20 countries, mainly Europe, Brazil	4 800	10
Norsk Hydro	Aluminum, energy	34% State, 7% Government Pension Fund Norway, no other large shareholders	4-20	40 countries, main countries Norway and Brazil	31 000	4, 5
DNO ASA	Oil and gas extraction	No state ownership, RAK Petroleum 45%, of which DNO executive chairman Bijan Mossavar-Rahman controls around 40%. Overall little Norwegian ownership, but leadership and board to a large extent Norwegian.	0.25-2.5	Middle East (mainly Iraq), Norway, UK	1 000	11

Sources: https://companiesmarketcap.com/, https://ycharts.com/companies/DTNOF/market_cap, company websites. * Since the shares of Statkraft are not publicly traded, it is not possible to calculate market capitalization. These numbers represent total assets 2017–21, https://www.tradingview.com/symbols/BMFBOVESPA-STKF3/financials-balance-sheet/total-assets/. © Ståle Knudsen partnership with nonstate 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 reexamine 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; Rogers 2015). By offering comparative cases across fully state-owned companies (Statkraft), publicly listed companies with significant state shareholding (Equinor and Norsk Hydro), as well as corporations without state ownership (chapters 3 and 11), we raise a set of key questions: Can, in fact, both state-owned and partially state-owned energy and extraction companies 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? Do corporations without state ownership, but which are based in the corporate culture of Norway, practice CSR differently? Finally, the chapters in this book look beyond the actors and institutions producing CSR from above (both private and governmental), to examine how CSR can be claimed "from below" or become domesticated (Knudsen 2015).

Neoliberal Globalization and the State

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 it still underpins the way in which 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 normative privilege to one or the other side in the dichotomy. "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 reestablish confidence in the public sector (2018: xxiii). Referring especially to Polanyi (2001 [1944]), 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), state and business remain two very distinct spheres, and there is nothing between or beyond.

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), not 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 they trust/banks, labor unions, guilds—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.

Thus, within this dichotomous 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 as being at odds with the state. First, readings of foundational texts on neoliberalism tend to be simplistic, reproducing assumptions about the logic of neoliberal capital and governance in ways 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. Below we discuss these three issues in more detail.

A variety of approaches to neoliberalism inform ethnographic work on contemporary economy and society. While the foundational (though very different) texts of Harvey and Foucault continue to dominate the scene,[2] readings of both approaches tend to assume the existence of a global program of neoliberalism that overdetermines all social processes, so that, for example, every instance of CSR will solely be seen as a tool of capital. A closer reading of both Harvey and Foucault supports a more nuanced rendering of neoliberalism.

Although he claims that "the continuous circulation of capital … functions … as the engine of the totality" (Harvey 2017: 113), Harvey holds that different "moments" (of which he identifies seven, including "institutional frameworks") are autonomous and independent and argues that in Marx's work there is "no prime mover, but a mess of often contradictory movements across and between the different moments that have to be uncovered and worked out" (Harvey 2017: 114). This is certainly more dynamic and less deterministic and reductionist than structural-deterministic Marxist approaches that see neoliberalism as a global process steered by the interest of capital. While we acknowledge the crucial power of capitalist and class dynamics, we stress that, here as with all societies, the development of contemporary capitalist societies involves other forces and dynamics often overlooked as a result of the preoccupation with the workings of capital. Crucially, these multifaceted 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.

Yet despite Harvey's concession that "a dialectical relation between territorial [i.e., state] and capitalistic logics of power" (Harvey 2003: 183) exists, he does not really explore the logic and agency of government. Harvey and other Marxist-inspired approaches to neoliberalism 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).

When thinking about governance under neoliberal conditions, Foucauldian theories of governance have been particularly influential. While Foucault was interested in "the art of government" in his exploration of neoliberalism (Foucault 2008), studies inspired by his approach typically 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. Foucault outlined how North American and German neoliberalisms could be seen as two different, contextually dependent answers to the questions of how to "not govern too much" while balancing freedom and security. 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).

Thus, both Harvey and Foucault, in different and distinct ways, envision how capital, markets, states, and other social actors are configured relative to each other, resulting in distinctive socio-economic-political formations. Such "economic-institutional ensembles" can take many forms, even when organized for markets and fostering *homo* æconomicus (Foucault 2008: 147); the Nordic model may be considered one such "ensemble." Still, we consider that Harvey's approach tends toward assuming "global" dynamics ("capital … functions … as the engine of the totality"), whereas Foucault's approach gravitates toward totalities ("ensembles"). Both may give credence to simplistic analyses where CSR is seen to be derived directly from neoliberal capitalist and/or governance logics.

Drawing on Reidar Grønhaug's theory of social fields, Bråten elaborates in chapter 3 an approach that to lesser extent assumes particular global dynamics or social totalities. Identifying "social fields" (resembling "moments" in Harvey's approach) with different "scales" and characterized by certain logics or dynamics—"proper dynamics" in Grønhaug's terminology—he endeavors a historical-ethnographic analysis of the way social responsibility is configured and how it changes over time in a Norwegian community dominated by a privately owned shareholding company. This approach, which is implicitly adopted by most chapters in this collection, is more sensitive to empirical variation yet can support analytical rigor and comparison. Indeed, Bråten concludes that "CSR [is] inextricably [tied] to the proper dynamics of corporations. Despite its variegated surface forms, I take CSR to be ontologically rooted in (thus logically secondary to) the proper dynamic of capitalist production" (Bråten: 110). Taking this approach also keeps us from reifying, for example, the Nordic model and the Nordic context that affords one particular polity that has fostered corporations with special characteristics. Corporations have different trajectories in different polities, and neither state, corporations, nor capitalism can be taken for granted.

Diversifying Theories of Governance

The second reason for questioning the narrative about a global hegemonic neoliberalism relates to a tendency to read all contemporary 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 a significant limitation of Foucault's work on neoliberalism in 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) 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 that 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, Norsk Hydro, 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: 247–48).

Equally, we draw on insights from comparative ethnography on China (Nonini 2008; Kipnis 2008) and post-Soviet studies (Collier 2011; Lampland 1995, Rogers 2015), 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" (Nonini 2008: 147). Kipnis, taking issue especially with Rose's approach (e.g., 1999), convincingly conveys how the comprehensive audits system in Chinese schools has its own unique trajectory and (nonmarket) 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 Scott (1998). What are considered neoliberal governance techniques are often complex mergers of models with separate trajectories and purposes.

Shifts in Global Political Economy

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, there emerges a realization that there must be other ways of configuring capital, markets, and the state than those that are articulated in the standard narrative about neoliberalization modeled on pervasive Anglo-American ideas about the state and (private) capital. Keith Hart has 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 also 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, James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta argue that it is precisely through nonstate 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). Rather, the questions must be: Where can governance be found? 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 collection, 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 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, we hope in this collection to provide a counterbalance to the preoccupation with the workings of governance and capital in so-called archetypal neoliberal states or in the ways in which 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 neoliberal 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 its own unique histories and characters. We make the claim that it makes sense to think about the Nordic societies as unique and not representing only versions of the neoliberal model. The Nordic model, while adopting models from the outside, may also harbor governance techniques that can more (chapter 5) or less (chapter 11) successfully 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 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

We have argued 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. Chapter 4 further explores the Nordic model through the lens of Norsk Hydro, which in many respects has been a model for the Nordic model in Norway.

The Nordic model is a result of the particular trajectories of political and economic developments in the Nordic countries during the last one 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) labor 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 referring to 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*), gender equality, and egalitarianism to be constitutive and to guarantee the success of the model. There is widely shared trust in the state; the leading labor union, LO, 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 values and norms 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 and has had uneven penetration even within Norway, as demonstrated in Bråten's chapter. It is a moving target, but, also, potentially transferable. *The Economist*[3] suggests that other countries may learn from the "new Nordic model," which "begins with the individual rather than the state," with openness and a willingness to reform.

"Toward 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[4]—that are often considered of a neoliberal character (for Sweden, see Harvey 2005 and Fulcher 2015). 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 not related to capitalist dynamics but rather was found in dynamics largely internal to the Norwegian state, with concerns surfacing 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., 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 as well as a political and ideological shift toward policies reminiscent of the "Third Way" eventually resulted in significant corporatization and privatization of state agencies and assets. This also implied huge shifts in the relation between the state and major national entities involved in energy production and resource extraction.

Globally, the oil and gas sector is not capitalist—or at least not owned by private capital. While the "seven sisters" once controlled most of the sector, the tide turned in the 1960s and 1970s so that, now, "the role of state enterprises is stronger than ever" (Victor, Hults, and Thurber 2012: 3). Although "state control over oil waned" during the 1990s (Victor, Hults, and Thurber 2012: 7), national oil companies (NOC) control roughly two-thirds of global oil and gas reserves and production. Most of these are inextricably enmeshed with the state apparatus, largely operate within their home countries, and are not listed companies with tradable shares. Until the 1980s, such was the case for Equinor, which is considered one of the more successful among the national oil corporations, as well as for the state and municipal agencies responsible for hydropower production in Norway. Internationally Statkraft is, however, more of an anomaly, since it remains completely state owned in a sector—electricity production and distribution—that to a much larger extent has been privatized.

Although strong ties to the Norwegian state and society remain, Equinor and Statkraft became more independent as they started operating abroad, corporatized, and (partly) privatized. Equinor is therefore among the few NOCs that "are commercially minded entities little different from their private sector international oil company … counterparts" (Victor et al. 2012: 3). Thus, Equinor represents a kind of hybrid between an NOC and the Anglo-American oil companies.

Although internationalization spurred liberalization in the organization of the economy, 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 restructuration 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, Roness, and Rolland 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 Sæhter 2017), first to facilitate a management less restrained by state bureaucratic structures, then to be able to internationalize. Norsk Hydro, over which the state had (by choice) less influence, could more easily internationalize by adapting to an international business environment, thereby emerging as a model for other Norwegian corporations venturing abroad (see chapter 4).

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 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 in which states manage their ownership or identified what consequences that may have for corporate responsibility. Before we do so, this section provides a brief outline of the nuts and bolts of state ownership and the Norwegian government's claim that they pursue a 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,[5] 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 one-third of all equity in Norway,[6] 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, Mykelbust, and Norvik 2014: 86).

State ownership in Norway has largely developed pragmatically during the last few decades (Lie et al. 2014; Lie 2016). The current state ownership policy is a political compromise: large and relatively "active" state ownership (favored by the left) versus state ownership managed with discipline, commercial "professionalism," and little involvement from the state (favored by the right) (Lie 2016: 924). "Professionalism" denotes "businesslike management" as well as noninvolvement by the state. This is partly related to the legacy of the so-called Kings Bay case,[7] 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, *that* state ownership is significant 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 (see chapter 4, this volume).

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 (seventy-five in 2017) in which the state has full or partial ownership.[8]

For the largest "commercial" state-owned corporations, adhering to the state's ownership policy 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 [1996–97]). 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. Equinor again became the focus of intense media and public attention when it was revealed that it had an accumulated loss amounting to 20 billion euros from their investments in the United States.[9] Another example is the scandal that erupted in 2018 relating to Hydro's handling of a toxic water spill from their facilities in Brazil. While the case has been brought to the Norwegian parliament, Stortinget, the government has declined to instruct or in any other way put pressure on Equinor (Sæther 2017: 304; Lie et al. 2014: 87) or Hydro (chapter 4). Demonstrating to the world (aka the global finance markets) that the Norwegian state pursued "professional" noninterfering 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 State Matter for Global Engagement

"Corrupt countries line up for Statoil" claimed an article in the major Norwegian daily *Aftenposten* in 2006.[10] 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 [2008–9]: 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 2003–4: 16). As the Norwegian state increasingly operates as an international capitalist, can it maintain the high ethical standards embedded in the Nordic model while aligning that with the international image of Norway as a humanitarian superpower?

Maraire and Hugøy, reviewing in chapter 2 the development of the language of CSR in policy papers, 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 has from the start been embedded within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is tasked "to strengthen the Government's basis for developing policy and for decision-making in the area of CSR, with particular emphasis on international issues."[11]

Globalization and internationalization induced both Norwegian and Russian energy and extraction businesses to engage with CSR, but in very different ways and with dissimilar results. Whereas CSR became a tool for managing messy realities for Norwegian corporations when operating abroad (but not at home) and at an increasing remove from the Norwegian state, CSR was mobilized in the Perm region of Russia during the 2000s in efforts to coordinate state-corporation relations, resulting in "an interpenetration of corporation and state that was far more thorough and extensive than we find elsewhere" (Rogers 2015: 176). Thus, "in the Volga federal district … this was the primary way in which 'the state' reemerged [*sic*] in the 2000s" (2015: 158). This illustrates the point that CSR is a highly flexible governance technique that can be mobilized in a wide range of different political economies, or economic-institutional ensembles, based on different motivations, and having divergent results even though internationalization is the primary driver.

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 (see chapter 2). 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, Freeman, and Hockerts 2015).

However, it has also been argued that the "Nordic state-market-society model" is at odds with the American "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 in which 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 corporations with state ownership to take a leading role in work on CSR (Meld.

St. 132 [2006–7]: 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 [2008–9]: 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 a statement 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).

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 that 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 ILO's core conventions, and applying Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) reporting standards (Meld. St. 27 [2013–14]: 81). A "Nordic concern" about CSR is, perhaps paradoxically, 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. While chapter 10 discusses in some detail how Statkraft relates to international standards, it is outside the scope of this introduction to review these frameworks, except for 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 UN Global Compact and the reporting framework GRI, and standards that provide tools for actual guidance in the field—the most widely used being the WB International Financial Corporation's Performance Standards. 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 both the resource, 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 potentials, 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 and the like has typically unfolded as classical CSR and a concern with local content. Hydropower, on the other hand, grew from local disconnected projects, gradually becoming networked into national electricity 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 more readily became internationalized. This in turn stimulated the evolution and use of international standards, such as the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards in the hydropower sector, as discussed in chapter 10.

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 Norwegian corporations handle CSR in their operations abroad influenced by Norway's other engagements globally? 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).[12] 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 186 billion euros in 2019.[13] These numbers exclude the so-called "Oil Fund" (Government Pension Fund Global), which is a pure investment fund of now (November 2022) around 1.25 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 in which 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 Lee cogently notes, "ownership categories … are poor guides to corporate objectives" (Lee 2017: 4).

Corporate management within state agencies was the main driver for the internationalization of Norwegian state capital (Sæther 2017; Nilsen and Thue 2006). Limited investment opportunities in Norway prompted the 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, Labor 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 Labor premier Stoltenberg implicitly urging Statkraft to explore projects abroad: "The time for construction of new large hydropower plants in Norway is over."[14]

While Hydro was fully corporatized when it started operating abroad in the 1970s, for both Statkraft and Statoil the perceived need to move abroad was a decisive factor in stimulating corporatization (or "corporate normalization"). This started in Statoil in 1988 (Thurber and Istad 2012), which, under a Labor government, became a partly privatized and listed company in 2001. Statoil first learned international operations by partnering closely with BP during the 1990s and merged with the oil and gas section of Norsk Hydro in 2008 to better compete internationally. The most recent shift in corporate identity came in May 2018 when Statoil took its new name, Equinor. The name change also makes state ownership less obvious. In the case of Statkraft, international expansion was motivated not only by limitations on further investments in Norway but also by structural changes in the European power supply system.

How is Norwegian (state) capitalism abroad related to Norway's other international engagements? In 2020, the volume of Norwegian aid was 39.5 billion NOK (NORAD[15]), 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[16]—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 no doubt 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 that it has a seat 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 in Norway. Government policy has, for instance, sought to fulfil climate policy obligations by supporting initiatives to make reductions in CO_2 emissions abroad. Thus, Norway is the world's biggest supporter of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation).[17] 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 2019) that the Norwegian government refused to meet with the Dalai Lama when he visited Norway in 2014.

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 violence and scale of strikes as well as the government's willingness to deploy police and military force to repress them in the early 1930s (Bals 2021) is underplayed. Furthermore, it has recently come to light that, in 1919, all political parties in Stortinget and the employers' confederation supported extensive concessions to the labor unions—such as the eight-hour workday—since they feared an imminent communist revolution (Rasmussen and Knutsen 2021).

Thus, the Nordic model emerged through conflict and contestation between labor and capital. While capital was forced to be "responsible," high moral standards and mutual responsibility between employers and employees have come to be considered key characteristics of the Nordic model. While CSR marks our starting point for a discussion about state, capital, and responsibility, we consider it fruitful to cast a wider net because the corporations themselves increasingly shy away from the concept and because Norwegian corporate responsibilities are often considered to be profoundly embedded in the Nordic model as well as in notions of *samfunnsansvar* (chapter 2). A narrow focus on CSR limits our ability to explore how corporations manage the dilemma between profits and ethics. Therefore, some case studies do not so much discuss examples of CSR as focus on "thick" relations of responsibility (chapter 9) or on ways in which corporations seek to make the Nordic model travel (chapters 5 and 8).

Accordingly, the ethnographic chapters in part II start with cases that demonstrate relatively successful CSR activities or transfer of the Nordic model. Subsequent case studies range from corporations that operate more or less as any other large transnational business to an example of a particularly cynical company. Along this trajectory, corporations are discussed in sequence: Norsk Hydro (chapters 4 and 5), Equinor (chapters 6–9), Statkraft (chapter 10), and DNO (chapter 11). Although it contains some ethnographic and other material, part I should not be considered as containing case studies from Norway. Its role is to prepare the reader for the case studies of part II by providing relevant analytical, historical, and Norwegian context.

Overview of the Chapters

Chapter 1, on methods, argues that a multimethod and reflexive approach can help social scientists reflect on frictions in corporate encounters, and more importantly, that attention to these frictions is in fact a gateway to new insights about the field. The chapter thus questions dominant assumptions within anthropology of what constitutes "access" and discusses how multiple approaches to "access," which consider the positionality of the researcher and fluidity of research fields along with attention to power dynamics, can shape the sort of knowledge that is produced when studying transnational energy companies.

In chapter 2, Oda Eiken Maraire and Isabelle Hugøy explore expectations and conceptualizations of the originally Anglo-American concept "corporate social responsibility" in Norway through an analysis of newspaper articles and state documents. By outlining how CSR and its common Norwegian translation, *samfunnsansvar* (societal responsibility), travel, translate and develop differently in policy and public discourse, they argue that, in policy discourse, *samfunnsansvar* has moved away from its cultural resonance and increasingly adapted to an international discourse of CSR. Considering that the cultural resonance inherent in *samfunnsansvar* persists in public discourse, this creates a dynamic space between *samfunnsansvar* and CSR that gives corporations and state institutions in Norway the opportunity for strategic and rhetorical maneuvering.

The Norwegian context and the analytical challenges of studying CSR in a Nordic context is further explored in chapter 3, in which Eldar Bråten discusses community-oriented social responsibility as it was practiced by one publicly listed, nonstate hydroelectric power company in Norway until the 1970s. The case demonstrates that private capital may forge "responsible" social contracts, even in the context of a deep welfare state, and that it did so prior to the "branding" of responsibility as CSR. Adopting a morphogenetic approach, Bråten traces the dynamics through which local forms of CSR emerged while also addressing the analytical entailments of viewing CSR practices and discourses as emergent forms rather than coherent entities. Analyzing the complexities and contingencies of the company's local involvements, Bråten concludes that CSR should be understood as a derivative phenomenon—logically, temporally, and in terms of social constitution.

The importance of the example set by or granted to the Norwegian corporation, Norsk Hydro, for the development of state policies and corporate strategies related to responsibilities of Norwegian capital abroad is explained by Ståle Knudsen in chapter 4. The story of Norsk Hydro, here elaborated particularly around the handling of its involvement in a recent scandal in Brazil, is indicative of general developments in the relation between corporations, industrial capital, the state, and the Nordic model in Norway. Zooming in on Norsk Hydro will thus guide the reader toward an understanding of many of the main dynamics, dilemmas, challenges, and tensions involved when taking Norwegian (state) capital and/or the Nordic model abroad.

The first of the ethnographic case studies tells the story of a particularly strong and explicit mobilization of the Nordic model in globalized corporate practice. In chapter 5, Emil Røyrvik investigates how Norsk Hydro's core ideas and practices associated with the Nordic model play out in their operations in the authoritarian state of China, focusing on issues related to democratic ideals and socially responsible operations in the workplace. He goes on to argue that the extant literature on the international "export" of the Nordic model fails to sufficiently consider the social practices of travel and translations on the ground that is documented in the chapter. The study finds core ideas and elements of the Norwegian model—in particular, the Nordic tradition of implicit CSR—to be functioning dynamically as a living reality Hydro's China venture and beyond.

In the first of four chapters on Equinor, Iselin Strønen shows in chapter 6 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. Paradoxically, this project received the internal reward for the best CSR project in Equinor in 2016 despite being one of very few Equinor CSR projects that was not voluntary and that they did not design themselves.

Moving to another of Equinor's major foreign operations, the case from Tanzania tells a very different story than that from Brazil. 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 maneuvered itself as well as possible relative to authorities, local communities, and workers in a context of Tanzania as one of the most important recipients of Norwegian aid throughout many decades. Siri Lange and Victoria Wyndham show in chapter 7 that company ownership by a state that profiles itself as a champion in gender equality does not in itself lead to gender-sensitive social investments. The main "beneficiaries" of Equinor's social investments in Tanzania are men, but this fact is disguised by using gender-neutral language in CSR reporting. They argue that the national regulations of host countries and perceptions of risk as well as the need to gain "a social license to operate" from host communities mean that the gendered dimensions of CSR in the petroleum sector differ in important ways from other sectors. In the chapter that follows, Siri Lange tells the unique story of Equinor's decision to actively encourage and support the formation of a local union branch among its Tanzanian employees. With support from of the Norwegian union, Equinor has involved the Tanzanian union branch in a logic of training and encouragement reminiscent of the social interaction structured by the political economy of aid and "capacity building."

Turning the gaze back toward Norway and Equinor's operations in the Norwegian Arctic, Ragnhild Freng Dale in chapter 9 examines how the content and performance of CSR takes a different form in the company's home region than in its operations abroad. Through the event of a ten-year anniversary of the Snøhvit project, she draws out the mutual dependency between the company and the host community of Hammerfest. Less exposed but critical to this relationship is the role of the state and industry regulations, which became visible in the tensions between Equinor's strategic plans for a new Barents Sea oil field and the Finnmark region's expectations of local content.

In the case study of Statkraft in Turkey, in chapter 10, Ståle Knudsen and his coauthors consider, through a multisited 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 IFC, 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.

Among the case studies, chapter 11 stands out in its description of a Norwegian transnational oil company that shows particular disregard for the Norwegian state's "expectations." Synnøve Bendixsen discusses the operations of the privately held company, DNO (Det Norske Oljeselskap, the Norwegian Oil Company), in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and in Yemen. These two cases, as in other areas where DNO operates outside of Norway, are characterized by weak states, high degrees of conflict, nonfunctioning democratic institutions, and high levels of inequality. Bendixsen argues that, in focusing on shareholder value, DNO takes an instrumental approach to CSR. Yet, the lack of adherence to Norwegian authorities' expectations—including not complying with the recommendations of the Norwegian OECD contact point for responsible business concerning a case where DNO was criticized for its treatment of employees in Yemen—has brought few penalties and sanctions, for example in terms of access to new licenses on the Norwegian shelf.

Despite the critiques raised against DNO by various institutions, news coverage of the cases from Iraq and Yemen reported in chapter

11 has been very patchy and of low impact. This illustrates a larger point, namely that the internationalization of Norwegian business, in particular the petroleum sector, has made reporting more challenging for news media that lack the resources and knowledge that corporations can muster (Baumberger and Slaatta 2011; Sæther 2017: 238–82). News media tend to use one source to report the activities of Equinor and other corporations abroad: the corporations themselves. As anthropologists, we have resources that journalists usually do not possess: relevant foreign language skills (such as Turkish, Swahili, Portuguese), country knowledge, networks, and time. Thus, we should be better placed to ply deeper into the intricate relations between corporations, states, and communities. On the other hand, anthropologists are not at liberty to use all the methods of journalism. Studying energy and extraction corporations operating abroad anthropologically comes with particular challenges. That is the topic of the next chapter.

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Notes

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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. "Northern Lights," *The Economist*, 2 February 2013.
4. One important example: with a new energy legislation in 1991, the electricity sector in Norway was the first to deregulate in Europe (Nilsen and Thue 2006; Herning 2009; Angell and Brekke 2011).
5. 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).
6. Same level as in Russia and China. France and Italy 10 percent, Germany 2 percent, UK insignificant (Meld. St. 27 [2013–14]: 31, 36, 37). These numbers exclude the so-called Oil Funds: Government Pension Fund Norway and Government Pension Fund Global (the last valuing 1.25 trillion euro in November 2022).
7. For the Kings Bay affair, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kings_Bay_Affair.
8. For an overview (in Norwegian) of these documents, see: https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/naringsliv/statlig-eierskap/andre-relevante-dokumenter/id737457/?expand=factbox2602523.
9. "De hemmelige Equinor-rapportene," *DN Magasinet*, 6 May 2020.
10. "Korrupte land i kø for Statoil," *Aftenposten*, 21 December 2006, accessed 25 November 2015.
11. https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/business-cooperation-abroad/innsikt/kompakt_en/id633619/, accessed 9 April 2019.
12. This depiction ignores the Norwegian shipping sector, which has long been internationally active but has not made significant investments abroad.
13. https://www.ssb.no/en/utenriksokonomi/fordringer-og-gjeld-overfor-utlandet/statistikk/direkteinvesteringer, accessed 15 October 2021.
14. https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Stoltenberg-I/smk/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2001/statsministerens_nyttarstale_2001/id264461/, accessed 8 April 2020.
15. https://www.norad.no/aktuelt/nyheter/2021/slik-var-norsk-bistand-i-2020/, accessed 15 October 2021.

16. https://www.regjeringen.no/en/historical-archive/solbergs-government/Ministries/ud/news1/2021/recordhigh_assistance/id2844317/, accessed 15 October 2021.
17. Svarstad and Benjaminsen, 30 December 2018, https://www.dagsavisen.no/nye meninger/equinors-klimamaskerade-1.1254458.

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