

Aid in continuity

Swedish foreign aid policies as myth

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Abstract

This thesis drives a twofold argument about the Swedish policies on foreign aid and development. First of all it is stated how there has been a continuity in this particular field of policy since its inception in the 1960s and the issue has in the closest become depoliticised in mainstream politics. With the intent of bringing this field of policy back in to the light of politics and ideology Roland Barthes concept of myth and Martin Hall's "mythology as methodology" is applied. The second argument is then that two intertwined processes, or breaks, have been crucial in the, for the policies, foundational understandings of development and aid and serve as civilizational myths. The first is Enlightenment's break with the Aristotelian notion of a circular teleology in favour of an infinitely linear progressive ditto, while the second is Adam Smith's break with mercantilism and the new understanding of the economy as a free market with absolute and mutual gains. To conclude are alternatives to the conventional understanding of development pointed towards.

Key words: Foreign aid, development, myth, Barthes, linearity, continuity

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1 Introduction

“The one per cent- aid was our lifebuoy to keep us from drowning in shame.”

- Rune Andréasson, 1983

For more than fifty years one of the most prominent guiding principles in Swedish foreign policy has been what is known as the goal of one percent, the idea that one percent of the Swedish GNI should be directed towards foreign aid. The quotation above from the cartoonist and creator of the children’s cartoon Bamse, was made after the social democratic government stated its intent to temporarily lower the goal to 0,93% due to the Swedish economy at the time. The quote is interesting in two aspects, in part it is telling of how fundamental this principle is in Swedish policy but at the same time it gives a hint of a more fundamental critique of its actual intent. Both aspects will be prominent in this thesis. The Swedish foreign aid policy is by the government said to stand on two legs, one being long term developmental aid and the other one the more short termed humanitarian aid (Regeringen, 2015). While both are interesting fields of research, the former one is what this study will revolve around along with an ambition to find the ideological foundation for why it in mainstream politics is more or less taken for granted.

In a way will this thesis attempt to make an argument that is twofold and based on a, if not critique, but questioning. The first part of the argument is that the Swedish policy on foreign aid has since its inception been fairly coherent and formulated in similar terms (most prominently through the mentioned slogan-like goal of one percent) and in this way has been naturalized on an ideological scale and reduced to a technocratic discussion on implementation and efficiency. From this point of departure will I, with the good help of Cynthia Weber (2010) and Martin Hall (2006), apply Roland Barthes concept of myth as a way of approaching the guiding documents of Swedish aid policy and make an attempt to reveal the ideological foundations upon which they stand. The second part of the argument is then that these policies have persisted and are seen as natural and legitimate due to them being based on civilization-defining myths. Drawing upon Gilbert Rist’s (2011) approach towards development as part of our modern religion and therefore a sort of collective certainty. My reasons for this study are in other words are not to evaluate if the policies can be considered good or not but rather, much like several scholar’s (e.g. Rist, 2011; Escobar; 2007; Isbister, 2006) concerned with development policies on the global scale has done, with the intent of exposing depoliticized ‘facts’ and what is considered common sense as political speech in order for them to be interrogated and brought back into the light of ideology. Partly is this a question of legitimacy but it could also be a way

to move forward and beyond in what may be new ways of approaching the field of development and foreign aid

1.1 Question

As noted there has been quite a lot written on development with a global perspective and with a critical stance, but I believe a similar approach to a Swedish context is an area where contribution is needed. Most written on the case of Sweden has been done so through the lens of efficiency. However is not my approach intended to point to the rights and wrongs of Swedish aid policy but rather to understand its origins and its uncontested position. And like stated earlier does not my interest lie with the policy process but rather with the more deeply rooted ideological assumptions, to reveal what is not stated but commonly understood. This thesis will therefore attempt to answer the question: Why have there been such continuity in the Swedish policies on foreign aid?

1.2 The field of development and its continuity

Along with Sweden's stance on issues such as neutrality in warfare and the, globally relatively, generous reception of immigrants and refugees the Swedish policies on aid and development, and most prominently through the goal of one percent has been a source of both notoriety and pride for Sweden in the global community (Wolgemuth, 2012, p. 5). The Swedish aid has often been at the very top of the list when comparing how much countries are giving in relation to their GNI, for example did in 2008 the Swedish government proudly proclaim (with reference to Center for Global Development (CGD) and Development Assistance Research Associates (DARA)) that Sweden was the world leader at giving foreign aid (Regeringen, 2008). The principle of one percent was first introduced as part of a 1962 proposition that for the first time created a major framework for policies on development in Sweden. This proposition has since been known as the "aid bible". Prior to the Second World War, aid and development policy had been a minor part of politics, both in Sweden and more globally, and to the extent it existed it was mostly intertwined with colonies and the countries that ruled them (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 4). Apart from Christian missionaries in Africa during the 19th century whom can be said to be the first expression of foreign aid was there in 1952 in Sweden formed a committee for "technical aid to lesser developed areas" sprung out of peoples movements (Odén, 2006, p. 52).

The 1962 proposition is one of four documents that have provided the major guidelines for the Swedish development policies, the other ones being propositions from 1968, 1978 and 2003. Each has been built upon the previous

ones and overall there has been little change between them (Wolgemuth, 2012, p. 6). The 1968 proposition did point more to the importance of economic independence and the 1978 proposition did put emphasis on the need for the policy area of aid and development not to be a separated sphere but rather present in all fields of policy. Naturally seen in the light of passing time were the biggest changes made in the 2003 proposition. This document, that still serves as the guiding one for development and aid policies, is an updated version for the new millennia that included more recently highlighted issues such as gender equality and environmental concerns (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003). Despite the passing of time and a changing world has the fundamentals though remained in the propositions, Sweden should still direct one per cent of its GNI towards foreign aid with the intent of promoting development and assisting in situations of conflict or crisis. To the extent that there has been changes in the aid policies through the years these have mostly been in the implementation side of the aid, in terms of efficiency, control and evaluation, and the number of receiving countries. But these have still been made within the frames of the development strategies and goals stipulated in the propositions (Howell & Lind, 2009, p. 1291).

To further show the continuity and the broad in the Swedish aid policies it should be noted that the four mentioned propositions have been initiated and passed by three governments led by the social democrats and one coalition government consisting of the at the time non-socialist block (center party, liberals, and conservatives). Also have these policies during the two other periods of conservative governments not been replaced or changed in their fundamentals but only in terms of implementation. The most notable of these changes was during the recent alliance government under which the number of recipients of aid was considerably slimmed along with more demands for evaluation and control (SR, 2007). The conservative party whom led these two governments have traditionally been against the one percent goal and instead in favour of the UN set minimum of 0,7 percent but did recently change their stance towards the stance shared with the rest of the parties in parliament (with the exception of the right wing Swedish democrats) (Svenska dagbladet, 2013). This has however not showed in actual policy as the foreign aid has been laying steadily around the stipulated one percent, even with the conservatives in government. This could of course perhaps be explained through the constitutions of the governments where certain parties have foreign aid as more of a profile issue than others, by the policy process or the contexts in which aid may not have been an issue of importance. Still were there for example voices raised from the conservative party when there was talk of neglecting the one percent goal in 1974 (Riksdagen, 1974). In a similar fashion as the conservatives protest, was the social democratic stray from the staked path mentioned in relation to the introductory quote met with critique from the liberal party whom wrote a motion that harshly criticized this, in their words, betrayal (Riksdagen, 1984). With this would I argue that there is a consensus in Swedish politics concerning the importance and the positive aspects of a foreign aid in the form that it now is and has been since this field of policy's first implementation. Wolgemuth (2012, p. 6) and Odén (2006, p. 9), whom both have studied the Swedish developmental policies over the last 50 years, also express these views.

More recently have the guiding proposition from 2003 stood untouched by both eight years of conservative rule and the newly elected social democratic government. Even the parties on their respective ends of the left/right-scale in the Swedish parliament thinks along fairly similar lines with the left party wanting to keep the goal and adding another directed towards environmental aid while the right-wing Sweden democrats actually wants to lower it, but only to the by the UN recommended level of 0,7% of GNI. A goal that recently only was fulfilled by five states: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands and Luxembourg (UN millennium project, 2005).

In summary would I argue that there has been a broad consensus of the view that, first of all, Sweden has an obligation towards poorer countries to assist them and to do this with intent of them developing and closing the gap of inequalities. Furthermore should this will to help be channelled through an act of giving or supporting roughly with one percent of our yearly income, a level that globally has been high and at times unmatched.

1.2.1 Sweden in the global context

Since its inception has the Swedish aid policy been closely intertwined with those policies of the international society, most prominently with the programs formulated by the UN but also through the World bank. The field of development and aid began to be formulated shortly after the second world war in what has been described as the “discovery of the poor” (Escobar, 2012, p. 21). The often used example is the American president Harry Truman’s speech in the UN in which the term “underdeveloped” for the first time was used and the developed world’s obligation to help these countries and peoples to become developed was expressed. Through this was the foundation for developmental programs and policies and their intent laid (Escobar, 2012, p. 3). The UN did first mention the goal of one per cent in 1960 and did so in more defined and commonly agreed terms in 1964 where this was said to be something to be strived for by the developed countries (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 20). This has as stated earlier been lowered since to 0,7 percent, a level achieved by only a few countries.

It is important to acknowledge the role the UN has played in the agenda setting but at the same time have the UN also had a more pragmatic role due to much of the aid having been distributed multilaterally through the UN in the form of programs and projects. In 1964, for example, did 52% of the Swedish aid go to the UN development program (UNDP) as well as some additional minor UN programs while 36,1% was devoted to the International development association (IDA) that is led by the World bank (Utrikesdepartementet, 1968, p. 9). Today is about half of the aid given through multilateral organizations and instead has the bilateral aid grown (Sida, 2009). However is the Swedish aid still formulated in some terms stipulated by the UN which include a commitment to the Millennium goals, the Busan Partnership of effective development co-operation, the Paris

declaration on aid effectiveness and the Accra agenda for action (Regeringen, 2015).

The millennium goals are, as the name suggests, the overarching intent of UN developmental policy, formulated in 2000 and set to be achieved by the end of 2015. The visions stipulated are grand, but stated to be achievable and include among other things a 50% decrease of the amount of people living in absolute poverty, compared to the numbers in 1990, and major improvement in issues concerning health, education and discrimination (UN millennium project, 2005, p. xii). The other three agendas to which Sweden has committed are instead of goal oriented concerned with implementation and efficiency. For this study the division between multilateral and bilateral aid is not of importance more than to what extent it implicates autonomy in the formulation of policy. As stated above cannot Sweden be totally separated from the global doctrines of development but must rather be seen a part of them. Despite this does Sweden stand out as a case in the sense it takes pride in its position as a donor globally along with the continuity in the aid policies which many countries with time has come to change by lowering the portion of their GNI given.

1.3 Earlier research, critique and positioning

What I so far have described is, among other things, continuity. A field of policy that is fairly young have in the Swedish context since its emergence more or less looked the same and have not been debated in its fundamentals but rather through the lens of pragmatism, through implementation and efficiency towards a commonly stated and accepted goal (Odén, 2006, p. 15). Now, this may not in itself make for a puzzle, or even something interesting, but in the light of more critical theories and scholars as well as the ambiguous results do I believe there to be questions yet unresolved.

Through dependency theory, postcolonial theory and later, theory on postdevelopment, have voices been raised ever since the end colonialism and emergence of developmental aid, concerning both the intentions and results of development and aid policies. The dependency school grew big in the 1960s and 70s and draws upon Marxist theory in its analysis of the world's material distribution. The approach is in part historical and the main argument is that the poverty of the third world is not a fact despite the development of the west but rather because of it (Isbister, 2006, p. 41). In this sense would development schemes be seen as a way to legitimize a neocolonial exploitation that is a continuum of colonialism, although in a new form (Kapoor, 2002, p. 649). Postcolonialism, in its turn, drew upon dependency theory but did so within the linguistic turn. With a poststructuralist analysis done through linguistics, psychoanalysis and Hegelian dialectics the core argument of postcolonialism is how the third world is constituted through the process of othering (Kapoor, 2002, p. 650). In other words is it created through language and as the colonial powers'

and peoples' opposite. A major aspect that proves difficult within the field of aid and development is that of agency. Even though more recent policies have addressed the issue of owning the development process, the basis of giving aid is an unequal relationship where scholars such as Fanon would argue that nothing good can come from this process but true development cannot be received but only taken (Fanon, 1997, p. 195). The postdevelopmentalists share much of the analysis made by both dependency theorists and postcolonial scholars, that discursive practices enable a form of neo-colonialism that should be seen as a new expression of the old power relations rather than as a break from it (Escobar, 2011, p. 6). Something recurring in these scholars' texts is also how they express the need to place practices in context and even if the initial take-off point, or even the conclusion, is a critique, is the analysis not always aimed at evaluating the doctrines of development but understanding them and their history, both materially and ideologically (Escobar, 2011, p. 58; Rist, 2008, p. 20). For my study this gives me a point of departure in the interest for the ideological foundations rather than the pragmatic policy process. Postdevelopmental scholars also make efforts to move beyond the current paradigm of development to find alternatives, and rather than alternative developments they speak of alternatives to development (Escobar, 2011, p. 215; Rist, 2008, p. 130).

Apart from the scholarly critique there is a great ambiguity concerning the achievements and results of foreign aid policies. Most obviously in the fact that there still is widespread poverty, hunger, disease and a lack of welfare and well being. Escobar points to how many third world debtors have paid far more each year than they have received in new lending. His examples stem from the 1982 Latin American debt crisis and he points out how food availability for poor people in the third world during the same period have fallen by around 30 percent (Escobar, 2012, p. 212). The UN's own rapport, *Investing in development*, made more than halfway into the time frame for the millennium goals, shows that while there has been significant economic growth in east Asia, the number of people in Sub-Saharan whom lives in absolute poverty actually increased instead of halved (UN millennium project, 2005, p. 9). Chaudhry and Perelman (2013, p. 813) do also point to the contradictory results based on the "human development report" from the UN in 2011 where there indeed have been a growth in income overall in third world countries but at the same time have the income distribution become more unequal. Further on do they acknowledge an improvement in health and education but at the same time states how the environment has worsened in several aspects. Overall do they deliver a harsh critique towards the actions made in the area of poverty reduction and argues that while it may be an admirable project the current practices leaves the structures of power untouched (Chaudhry & Perelman, 2013, p. 820). The conclusion drawn is how developmental practices are in need of major reorganization.

One of the big debates in academia related to development and aid is the question of the relationship between aid and economic growth. A lot of research has been done on the topic but without a consensus or definitive conclusions. Mosley (2015, p. 106) refers to a study by Rajan and Subramaniam that shows no significant association between aid and economic growth. His own findings

suggests a linkage that is “modestly significant” and concludes that if aid is to be effective it has to be seriously rethought (Mosley, 2015, p. 114). Another study made by Boone shows no correlation between aid and decreasing poverty. An argument from the advocates of a correlation points to how received aid often is used for consumption and therefore does not show as a contributor of production value (Odén, 2006, p. 145). In any case it is a questionable relationship that gives reason to further study the field.

Finally will I track back from the numbers and to the realm of theory and ideas where I would like to position my study. The postdevelopmental critics have pointed out how policies are formulated in a top-down fashion, with a clear direction from west and the self-proclaimed developed world (Escobar, 2011, p. 5). Policies on development are therefore said to have taken a technocratic form that in some ways can be said to be separated from politics (Escobar, 2011, p. 143). Like stated earlier are my intentions not to evaluate how well the policies on development and aid work but instead to find its ideological foundation, to bring it back from the technocratic depoliticised sphere and into the light of politics. The mentioned Rist and Escobar have both taken a similar approach to development on the global scale but I would like to move to the national scale and the case of Sweden, much because this is a fairly untouched area. Odén (2006, p. 10) does include a good bit of the Swedish policies in his mapping of the history of ideas within foreign aid, but rather than pointing to the theories used, like Odén does, my intent is to try and understand why they gain legitimacy and often are seen as nothing but common sense.

2 Approach

2.1 Theory

I have already mentioned continuity as a central concept in this study and I would now like to elaborate on what that continuity represents in this particular case. Because in this case the continuity, would I argue, more than anything is an expression, or a symptom, of something that has become generally accepted or even naturalised. I have attempted to make the argument that there has been a great continuity in the Swedish foreign aid policies and that this is an expression of how some things are taken for granted and have the status of paradigmatic truth among policy makers. In other words do they not get questioned or are even possible to be questioned because they are part of what constitutes our perception of the world and our societal order. In order to move on towards my method and approach of treating the policies on aid as a political myth I will discuss a few of the different ways to understand the politically possible and to decipher and question it.

2.1.1 Establishing and understanding the uncontested

Philosopher Charles Taylor calls this way of making sense of the world “social imaginary”, and describes our specific western modern social imaginary that he argues to be fundamental for our perception of the world and society. The fundamentals for western modernity, he argues, are a market economy based on trade, a self-governing people of atomised individuals and the existence of a public sphere that is separated from the private (Taylor, 2007, p. 2). Taylor (2007, p. 21) argues that these values have their origins in a Lockean-Grotesque moral order where the most important concept is freedom and through this the idea of the individual being the principal political entity. This is a break from earlier orders where perhaps the family or community was seen as the principal unit and society was to a much greater extent built on personal relations. Along with this atomised view on the individual is the new order secular, not in the sense of a total rejection of religion but as a separation between holy and the profane, and with this a separation between the public and the private. The public sphere is sprung from an economic understanding of society as a market, full of temporary encounters and exchanges, where rationality is the basis for decision making, a

society disenchanted (Taylor, 207, p. 154). Taylor argues that it made it possible by a new way of understanding hierarchies and through this a possibility of equality. When the public sphere consists of individuals, all with the same rights, all inequalities must be legitimized. The king cannot longer rule by appointment by God but the sovereignty must be supported through the social contract. Of course, it has to be noted here how the definitions of individuals and the freedoms that came with it only changed slowly. As we know these free individuals in the public sphere most often were confined to white adult men of a certain economic status (Taylor, 2007, p. 22).

The last aspect of the social imaginary is according to Taylor the establishment of the said free market economy that goes in line with the free individuals and the public, secular sphere. This is a formation of an economy where all needs all, rather than the self-sufficient family. Individuals do now become professionals and trade for their needs (Taylor, 2007, p. 75). Taylor does here draw a connection between the protestant ethics and the general professionalization that in a somewhat Weberian sense created a rational order by which we live. Two values that are important for this that are prominent in protestant ethics are a sanctification of the ordinary life and a rejection of the Aristotelian teleology (Taylor, 2007, p. 74 & 80). This has an impact on production as it becomes connected with power, but also with progression and development. This new mode of narration is then seen organic and infinite, the rational ever progressing humanism (Taylor, 2007, p. 175). At the same time it is an expression of the new societal formation, one that is defined by the collective actions of atomised individuals.

While Taylor's social imaginary will be brought up again later in the analysis, what is important for this part of this thesis is how it deals with the formation of an order. Because these values are by Taylor argued to be so deeply embedded that they appear natural and unproblematic to us, rather than a set of norms is this moral order constitutional (Taylor, 2007, p. 10). Taylor states that it differs from theory in this sense, that it is uncontested. But at the same time is it important to remember how it has its roots in theory, just like the order before it, was it not given by god but formulated by humanity and slowly naturalized. The implications for this are huge due to it being a frame for the politically possible and that it makes practices and exercises of power legitimate (Taylor, 2007, p. 23). Even though Taylor's initial intent is said be of the descriptive kind does he also direct a level of critique. Partly does he points out that this one imaginary is not only created and situated in a certain place in time, but also in space and a neither universal nor eternal. Therefore is a blind acceptance of it as the only possible order not just naïve, but even harmful. The first step, is then, argues Taylor, what he himself does, to identify it in order for it to be interrogated (Taylor, 2007, p. 1).

Even though on many points different, Taylor and his social imaginary does in some ways resemble Foucault and his view of the possible or even knowable, discourse (or episteme). Without getting into a deeper discussion on Foucault's ideas of power and knowledge I think it is worthwhile to bring it up as a way of understanding and analysing the politically possible. Neumann (2003, p. 157)

makes an attempt at a broad definition for this way of approaching knowledge through discourse or episteme as follows, “a system which produces a set of statements and practices whom through institutional establishment can depict themselves as more or less normal”. In other words do these systems of knowledge constitute the perception of reality among its bearers and are to some extent decisive for different types of social relations. In this sense is discourse more a question of epistemology than ontology through its dealings with how knowledge is situated and framed. Neumann (2003, p. 158) describes it to be a hegemony which is uncontested and appears as natural, not much unlike Taylor’s imaginary. However are there differences, partly due to the imaginary which Taylor describes being situated in the certain context in space (Europe, North America) and time (from the 17th century and onwards) as opposed to discourses which can be found anywhere, but also due to differences in scale where Taylor’s imaginary is a grand concept on what defines our society that may contain a range of discourses. Finally there is the difference in that the discourse is not just theory but also a mode of analysis or a method. With the presumption that nothing is fundamental but rather representations, the task of discourse analysis is to examine action conditions, to study the relation between statement and practice (Neumann, 2003, p. 158). In other words, how our perception of reality affects or actions in the very same.

In order to further provide theoretical background and narrow down towards to my mode of analysis would I like to bring up another mode of analysis that is somewhat related to discourse and discourse analysis, narrative and analysis through it. The relation between these two approaches to text, have been discussed without a consensus being reached. These discussions touch upon both the scale of these notions but also their interrelation. Chatman argues that a narrative consists of a story and a discourse, Mottier and Robinson sees the narrative as one form of discourse while Barthes looks upon the narrative as totally separated from the discourse (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, p. 229). Beneviste makes the distinction between discourse and narrative through an argument that the narrative ironically enough does not have a narrator. Instead does the events in a narrative seem to tell themselves, while the discourse has a clearer power relation and therefore a sender of the message (White, 1980, p. 7). This of course said without implying the discourse to be arguing for an absolute power notion. As it has been hinted throughout the text, is this naturalization of reality is my starting point, and perhaps then an argument for swaying towards a narrative analysis rather than the more often used discourse analysis. Even the term narrative itself has been contested in how much the concept can be stretched and onto what it can be applied. Barthes would argue that narrative, much like discourse, can be seen almost everywhere and does not limit itself to text or symbols but instead can be read through practices and other manifestations. On the opposite side stands, for example, van Dijk who has made the argument for a stricter and more formalized interpretation of narrative as only a verbal act (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, p. 234). I would have to confess to the former in so far as I do not believe narratives can be confined to certain expressions, since different forms of expression may relate to same ideological foundation. Because what can be agreed upon

concerning narrative is that it is a way to make a complex world possible to comprehend, it creates order, sets a chronology, makes a story that we can understand. With this, do actions and practices only become understandable in a narrative framing. An argument put forward in favour of this type of analysis is that it helps us identify things that might slip past us in a more technical analysis, the things taken for granted and uncontested (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, p. 226). This of course has to do with narrative analysis having its roots in both structuralism and the postmodern field of analysis. Hayden White argues that using the narrative analysis is a good way of exposing ideological functions. Because, like stated earlier, do the narrative appear as natural, Barthes argues that it constitutes rather than show or represent (White, 1984, p. 13). With reference to Hegel, White makes the argument that production of history is done in the contemporary; that rather than history being found is it put together (White, 1984, p. 4). This is what White calls emplotment, a process in which the scientist (often in his examples a historian) does create a narrative or a story with the use of singular facts or events. In this process, some things are emphasized, others left out and all of it put in order (White, 1984, p. 18). Levi-Strauss called history a heuristic tool, which, just like in economics, can be used to establish order and make sense of the world as long as it is remembered to be just a tool and not a perfect truthful account of reality. In this sense he argued that the myth of western societies were equal to those of the “savages” that he studied (White, 1984, p. 11).

In order to move on towards my method I would like to once again point out that the reasons for this brief exposé of approaches was to point out the relevance in questioning the taken for granted and seemingly natural. It also positions my analysis partly somewhere in the vicinity of narrative analysis but most of all does it point to the level of abstraction for my study. While certainly important, do I not intend to examine the policy process but my aim is for the more deeply imbedded ideological assumptions, the building blocks for the theories that translate into policy.

2.2 Method

In order to answer my question on the continuity in Swedish foreign aid policies I would like to apply the concept of myth, or mythology as methodology. Myth is of course commonly used in the meaning of stories in which people believe that are not true, while the scientific approach is not completely different it requires a thorough explanation and definition (Hall, 2006, p. 178). In short is the myth in social sciences stories looked upon as true by a group of people, that serve as building blocks for identity, purpose and meaning. Flood (2002, p. 44) defines it as “an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a

set of past, present, or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group”.

2.2.1 Barthes' myth

The concept of myth has its origin in the French scholar Roland Barthes whom draws upon the field of semiology in order to formulate a way to analyse and criticize what he calls “mass culture” (Barthes, 2007, p. 7). The point of departure for Barthes, and those concerned with myth, is a suspicion towards the natural in a reality that is entirely historical, or to be more precise, suspicion towards what appears to be natural. Barthes argues that the myth is depoliticized speech, in this way is it a statement or a message (Barthes, 2007, p. 9). It is a system of communication that is not an object in itself but gives objects meaning (Barthes, 2007, p. 201). Speech in Barthes sense is not limited to language or text but includes signs and practices as well. In accordance with his roots in semiology, does Barthes in quite a technical sense draw up how the myth is created in a second semiological system, a sort of meta language in which one speaks of the first system (Barthes, 2007, p. 207). Both systems consist of three parts, and are created in a similar fashion. The first system is made up of a signifier and something signified that together creates a sign, a meaning. In the second system does the meaning become a form that together with a concept creates a signification, the form has the same position as the signifier does in the first system (Barthes, 2007, p. 209). The first system is denotative in the sense that it is literal and seen as objective. According to semiology it is how we create language. An object in itself is signified with a linguistic representation, such as a word (signifier) and together do they create the sign. The internal relationship between these two is arbitrary, there is for example no reason why the four-legged furry animal that some people have in their homes is referred to as “cat”. The second system is however connotative and created intentionally where the sign (meaning) becomes the signifier and filled with a concept (signified). One of Barthes' examples of this process that is often used is a cover of the magazine “Paris match” on which a young black soldier makes a salute. The young black man is then the signifier and signified through connotations of Frenchness and militarism to express the myth “that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under the flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors” (Barthes, 1991, p. 115) .

What this means in a more, at least for my purposes, applicable sense is that when the meaning becomes form and a part of a second system it is drained of its history and become impoverished. It has not changed but is rather hidden or suppressed and “the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, on which the form of the myth shall live” (Barthes, 2007, p. 210). The fact that the myth is drained or impoverished does also mean that it has a mobility or slipperiness that makes it

difficult to grasp, its expression can change while it is rooted in the same essentials. The myth deprives memory, not existence, it is a sort of alienation in which the historically rooted and political becomes natural and depoliticized (Barthes, 2007, p. 223). This is the principle of the myth.

The process of the myth is however very political in itself and it does always to some degree have an intention (Barthes, 2007, p. 219). Since the myth eradicates dialectic and doubts, the form of a statement or announcement works both in the way that it notifies and points out, makes us understand at the same time as it imposes itself on us. Through this does the process of the myth involve both a reception and a reproduction (Flood, 2002, p. 43). In order for it to function the myth is confined to a certain context in time and space where the fundamentals on which it is based are shared and recognized by the social group (Prügl, 2012, p. 23; Åhäll, 2012, p. 108). And these fundamentals do not just hold the status of truth but paradigmatic truth in the sense that they are so firmly rooted that they cannot be questioned with validity. It is through this recognition that the myth receives authority and is able to be seen as natural. At the same time as the myth is situated in a certain context it cannot be manufactured by anyone out of thin air but it is rather an expression of power to be able to make the myth appear to be true and natural (Weber, 2009, p. 7). Added to this does Burton (2013, p. 486) argue that the making of myths is a manner of maintaining a status quo, to strip the contemporary of the history leading up to its formation. Barthes constant enemy was the French bourgeoisie and the myths that upheld their position in society as natural, here I would like to think that the policies on aid and development are suitable to be analysed as myth.

2.2.2 Mythology as methodology

So, how and why use this for my study? If this has served as a basis for the concept of the myth I will be drawing on more contemporary readings and applications for my approach. These work through a post-modernised Barthes that is more suitable when applying the myth to political science rather than culture and literature studies. Martin Hall (2006, p. 178) does in his attempt to establish an approach towards mythology as methodology suggest that the centrepiece to this theory is to read political theories as if they were myths. He argues that this should open up for a wide array of critical stances where the important aspect, just like Cynthia Weber states, is not to evaluate whether the myths are true or not but rather show how they are not natural, but cultural and political creations made to appear natural (Hall, 2006, p. 181; Weber, 2009, p. 7). Weber argues that the goal of studying theories as myths is to bring them back into the realm of interpretation to be able to critically examine them. It is about repoliticizing these naturalized facts and through this, focus on how the cultural configurations of power and ideology works in the creation of the myth (Weber, 2009, p. 7). This is done by Weber in a, in my opinion, very neat way when she critically examines the

foundations of the most common IR theories through films. In a similar but in approach still different way does Hall show that both the story of realism, with its basis in constant fear of anarchy, and the books about Harry Potter are recognised, accepted and credible due to their base in the civilization-defining myth of Satan (Hall, 2006, p. 182). In this sense, does the myth becomes more of an approach than a step-by-step method.

To relate back to the discussion on narratives and discourse, does Åhäll (2012, p. 109), who applies the myth concept on two ideas of motherhood (the vacant womb and the deviant womb) in political violence, describes the myth as a meta-discourse, an umbrella under which different (and perhaps contending) discourses fits in while Flood (2002, p. 13) sees it as a form of ideological discourse. The core that I believe to be of importance is how the myth is to be read as something natural and with the status of paradigmatic truth, what Barthes said to “go without saying” (Weber, 2009, p. 4).

There are however some differences in the actual *modus operandi* when analysing the myth. Barthes did in his most prominent work, *Mythologies*, try to expose or reveal the underlying bourgeoisie ideologies in everyday cultural expressions such as fashion magazines, Tour de France, or haircuts in films. This approach has been adopted by several scholars of cultural studies as well as by the aforementioned Weber, although with a twist. She states that in order to reveal the myth’s underlying ideology one must first identify the myth, describe and define it and in a second step examine the myth function (Weber, 2009, p. 8). The myth function is Weber’s concept of the process that turns ideology into a naturalized fact. Weber’s way of doing this is through films where reality is compared to a fictional “other world” which helps identifying the myth function, the assumptions or truths that make us believe and recognize the story. The IR theories that she interrogates and the films circulate the same myths and through this does support and reproduce each other. Hall’s way of approaching the myth is slightly different and, would I argue, better suited for my purposes. Instead of playing on the relationship does Hall, like stated earlier, make the argument that both fictional stories and theories of social science are expressions of myths that are crucial sources for Western civilization (Hall, 2006, p. 179). This approach then leans more towards a genealogical approach in the sense that a backtracking through history should make us understand the constitution of today. Hall adopts the already mentioned White’s theory of emplotment to identify how stories and narratives are created, how interpretations become truth. Emplotment, again, is based on the idea that history is a created narrative and that historical events or facts are suitable for textual analysis. Through interpretations, establishing of timelines and a selection of facts or events is the story of history created (Hall, 2006, p. 180). In other words does Hall’s mythology as methodology consist of a textual analysis in which the researcher attempts to deconstruct a historical narrative. White’s concept of emplotment consists of four different stories that can be created, comedy, tragedy, satire and romance. I will not apply this theory of emplotment but rather track back to Barthes and his seven figures of myth that may be used as a heuristic tools or a form of ideal types. Barthes called them rhetoric forms and like White’s four different types of narratives “it is through

their rhetoric that bourgeois myths outline the general prospect of this *pseudo-physis* which defines the dream of the contemporary bourgeois world” (Barthes, 1991, p. 151). I will here on present them.

The first is *inoculation*, which is acknowledging a smaller evil as temporary or accidental for the protection of the greater structure (Barthes, 1991, p. 151). One obvious example is that of explaining police violence through a few “rotten eggs” as opposed to defining it as a certain consequence of such an institution. The second is closely related to the whole concept of myth and is labelled as the *privation of history*. This function deprives the contemporary from its historical roots and presents it as natural. The momentarily becomes eternal in the perception that things have always been just as they are now. Third, does Barthes bring up *identification*, which, perhaps contradictory, is the inability to imagine the Other. With obvious links to postcolonialism does this mean ignorance or a denying of the Other that leads to a reduction to sameness. Either is the Other read through oneself or seen as all Others. Barthes states this to be because “the Other is a scandal which threatens his existence” (Barthes, 1991, p. 152). The fourth figure is *tautology*, which just like the name suggests is a self-justification and occurs due to a loss of explanation. Something is explained or legitimized with reference to itself (Barthes, 1991, p. 153). Next, and fifth, is *neither-norism* that balances two alternatives simply to reject them in order to find a middle ground. In the process are the two stripped of content and reduced to analogies in order for the equilibrium to be upheld. In a similar fashion is the sixth conceived, which is a quantification of quality. Particulars that in essence may be separate are economized and measured on the same scale, things are in this sense made comparable. Barthes states how this figures lies latently in all previous figures (Barthes, 1991, p. 154). The final figure is the *statement of fact*, which much like *privation of history* is closely linked with the very principle of Barthes’ myth. He distinguishes them by defining this statement as language-object as opposed to the myth being meta-language. In other words do the statement of fact take an instrumental grasp of the world as object and paves way for action. It is “speech of a humanity which is making itself, not one which is”. The one that already is and therefore in its function does “bury the traces of this production under a self-evident appearance of eternity” is the meta-language and the actual myth (Barthes, 1991, p. 155).

To conclude do these figures provide some guidance and help in identifying the expressions of the myth in the textual analysis of development policies. The fundamentals for my study are, once again, how theories, and therefore policies can be read as anchored in myths and are accepted and legitimized through recognition and a common sense. This further supports the initial approach that however myths are actually true or not is not importance and even stronger cements the idea that there are not “real facts” to be found out there but rather is the intent one of exposing and re-politicizing that which has been naturalised. Parallels to my method could perhaps be drawn to what Vedung defines as functional idea analysis that instead of testing the internal logic or validity of a theory is aimed at understanding how an idea became dominant (Beckman, 2007, p. 13). Another parallel that can be brought up in relation to the myth is a sort of

ideological analysis that Beckman explains to aim at the underlying values and judgements of an ideology. This is done through textual analysis that can be made on both manifest and latent messages (Beckman, 2007, p. 56). In proximity to this Beckman brings up Tingsten's "idea critique" which, to my understanding differs quite a bit from what I am aiming at, but carries with it the idea that "judgements of reality play the leading part in ideologies" (Beckman, 2007, p. 65). With this nod towards the more mainstream approaches to text analysis I shall turn back to my approach and the myth.

There have been some different views on the possibilities of establishing the counter myth or the anti myth. Barthes himself stated how the anti myth was poverty stricken and clumsy (Boer, 2011, p. 222) and I would certainly agree with Weber's argument that the re-politization and interrogation is a good enough achievement in itself (Weber, 2009, p. 7). However does for example Boer (2011, p. 225) argue how the myth in its hiding of ideology also contains the seed of rebellion. Even though it is agreed among scholars of the myth that there is no essence to be found, this rebellion could be the hidden dialectics or political roots that allows for a new (or at least another) myth. The possibility of opposing the depoliticizing speech of the myth is then political speech. I would, with this in mind, at least point towards an alternative position, another possible narrative.

2.2.3 Material

Like stated earlier did Barthes argue that narratives can be found anywhere and with this applied his concept of myth on a wide array of cultural expressions. My approach, in terms of material, is however a bit more formal and as mentioned I follow the, for political science, more applicable guidelines of Hall and Weber that is to read political theories like myths. In order to capture the idea of the Swedish aid policies I will do a text analysis as defined earlier on the principal guiding documents in the area of development. These are the aforementioned four propositions that have provided guidelines since the first one was accepted in 1962. The remaining three came in 1968, 1978, and 2003 (Wolgemuth, 2012, p. 6). Much in line with my argument for the continuity that has been in the Swedish foreign aid policies have these documents first of all been conceived by governments consisting of different parties but have also stood unchanged during shifts in government. For these reasons I believe them to be representative of the core values that defines foreign aid policies. Even if these would suffice for an analysis I will make one addition to bring in the aspect of the international society in which Sweden is a part. The UN millennium project report from 2005, *Investing in development*, that evaluates the progress made at the time will also be used much due to the 2003 proposition stating a full commitment to the UN stipulated millennium goals.

3 Foreign aid policy

So far, the background to the Swedish aid policies and its situation within the global context has been described, much to give the premises for this thesis and to make an argument for its relevance. In other words is the continuity the argument for treating the aid policies as a myth while the first step of the analysis is to describe this myth. Although I will not, as stated earlier, completely adopt Weber's methodology will I follow her first step in trying to identify the myth and its content in order to start understanding it. This will be done by identifying the problems, goals, and actions taken in foreign policies.

3.1 Problems

Policy starts with a problem, an obstacle to overcome, a situation for which political intervention is needed for change to occur, or the equilibrium to be kept. In my case of foreign aid and development policies are there a few problems posed that should legitimize the policies implemented and I will now try to identify them.

The main problem that is addressed throughout all the propositions is that of poverty. This can be seen as the basis for developmental policies, it is evident in the first Swedish policy from 1962 (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5) as well as it was the beginning of global development policies as stated earlier in Truman's speech. Poverty is however not a simple coherent notion that bears with it only one meaning. The different aspects that are expressed in the propositions and what makes it a slippery term are mostly those of scale and relation. In part is poverty described as a problem for the individual, a poverty that is affecting people's day to day live in terms of not being able provide or gain access to food, health care or living accommodations. This is especially evident in the 2003 proposition where "improvement of the poor individual's living conditions" are brought forward as a key-point (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 86) Often is this individual poverty connected to the absolute measurements of poverty, a poverty in itself. One of the millennium goals for example consist of helping people out of the absolute poverty as it is defined in living on under one dollar a day (UN millennium project, 2005, p. xii). In a similar way does the 1962 proposition (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 7) state the will to abolish hunger while the 2003 proposition, like just mentioned, emphasizes the perspective of the individual. These are expressions of poverty made in an isolated fashion, they suggests poverty as something that simply exists among certain individuals and groups.

However is the problem of poverty not just stated as a problem for the individual but also states are expressed to be poor. This larger scale is however almost exclusively stated in relational terms. Through measurements of GDP can it be pointed out what states are developed and which are underdeveloped. The 1962 proposition states that the fundamental problem is “economic underdevelopment” (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5). The problems of the third world are then described in a lack of economic growth that leaves them economically dependable on external actors. Here does the term economic growth become intertwined with economic independence and through this political independence. Because the problem for countries in the third world is not just that of poverty but it is also stated to be the lack of good governance (UN millennium project, 2005, p. 15). Some countries whom are recipients of aid are explained to not be developing due to governance failures, at the same time do some countries whom are defined to have good governance experience failures to develop because they are too poor to help themselves (UN millennium project, p. 20). This particular theory of development is called poverty traps which is a sort of catch 22 where it is explained how development policies and aid stands before a paradox. Aid is said to have the greatest impact where it is not needed and does then work the worst where the needs are the biggest. For example is it in 2003 stated how many countries lack the competence to formulate good trade policies (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 38).

So how do these stated problems relate to the donors of aid? This economic inequality that I have described is stated to be morally unacceptable, a state of the world that is intrinsically negative and therefore legitimizes policies aimed for redistribution. In other words should the poor be helped out of solidarity and a common human morality, this is held as a strong point in 1962 as well as 2003 (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5; Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 7). Just like redistributive policies within the state is it a case of basic societal justice.

This is however not the only argument put forward as to why poverty and economic inequality is a problem, economic development is said to be a process in which all gains and therefore is economic inequality a problem for everyone (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 6; 1968, p. 5). This problem is in other words one of economic inefficiency. It is said to be economic gains in the long term for the giving countries if the developing countries achieve economic growth due to them opening up as new trading partners and markets (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 6). This is in the 2003 proposition called “the enlightened self-interest” (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 18). Rather than giving or contributing with aid it is often spoken about investing in development, just like the title of the UN report (UN millennium project, 2005) halfway into the effort to realise the millennium goals. In this way, are the foreign aid policies seen as not isolated but part of foreign policies in general that includes both trade as well as security. Economic growth is also argued to be contributing to stable societies where the risk of conflict or the establishment of extreme groups such as terrorists is lessened (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 79, UN millennium project, 2005, p. 7). Underdevelopment is here framed as a possible risk, partly for the countries concerned but most of all is this an argument for the donors of aid. The 2003

proposition states the eradication of poverty to be a condition for peace, stability and sustainable development (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 84).

Despite this great emphasis on poverty, little is said of how this state of the world came to be, the origins of this “humanities biggest moral, political and economic challenge” (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 84) remains in the shadows. The European colonial past is hardly mentioned, especially in the more recent documents. In the 1962 proposition it is acknowledged that “under-development” has historical and sociological roots but it is only elaborated on in so far as it is argued that Western values and developmental patterns cannot simply be applied on developing countries (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5). Even more so is Sweden’s history of not being directly involved in colonialism argued to provide credibility as a donor of aid (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 7). The 1978 proposition explains the increasing global inequalities since the second world war as a long historical process that started with the European industrialisation in which Europe leaped ahead economically. In comparison it is stated that “only a minor amount of developing countries – as independent or colonies - did before the second world war reach an economic growth that significantly exceeded the population growth” (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 68). While this of course is not factually false, it should, at the least, be pointed out how this is a one-sided account of the world.

3.2 Goals

If the problems are stating what is wrong, the goals are quite the opposite. They stipulate the good and desirable, sometimes in more utopian terms sometimes more pragmatically. One could attempt to make a case of how these goals not always correspond with the stated problems but this is as stated not the aim of my study. To the extent this is done it is with the intent of pointing to ideological assumptions that affects the train of thought.

The guiding proposition from 1962 states that the foreign aid has the purpose of helping the poor peoples to develop economically and socially, and through this enabling them to help themselves (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 3). The goals in 1978 are similar in their strive for economic and social development but do put more emphasis on equation of these aspects in the development process. In other words, not just growth but also a more equal distribution (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 11). Connected to this is the expression of a striving for economic and political independence. The goal of a more equal distribution of resources is stated to be important due to the fact that economic growth does not necessarily lead to a more just distribution of means. However is it, quite contradictory, stated how such equal distribution only can be made possible through an increased production (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 80). Linked to this is also the stated goal of peace, said to be dependent on a more equal distribution of means (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 79). In other words

does the goal of economic growth appear to be put first and foremost. The concept of economic growth is indeed a slippery one that provides problems both in terms of assessing and measuring it but also in its function in development. While the economic development is stated as a mean rather than a goal in itself in the 1978 proposition (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 81) it, as stated earlier, provided the core argument for why the industrialised Europe should be regarded as further developed than the rest of the world. In the 1962 proposition are the goals stated to be to mitigate need, expand trade, provide knowledge and capital (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 3). In a sense could it then be argued that economic growth becomes something desirable in itself and therefore a goal.

While the goals of the earlier propositions have been formulated in what can be considered vague, or perhaps soft, terms does the goals of the proposition from 2003 have another dimension due to them being linked to the UN millennium goals that are set in actual numbers. Among these goals are efforts that aim to halve the amount of people living in absolute poverty (on under one dollar a day), a number that was 1,2 billion at the point in 1990 that stands as index (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 7). Furthermore is universal primary education, and so done with total gender equality, one the goals. Other goals consists of a decrease in child mortality by two thirds, in maternal death by three fourths and a halt and reverse in the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, among them malaria (UN millennium project, 2005, p. xii). Finally there are two more loosely formulated goals, one ensuring a commitment to environmental sustainability and the other promising to develop a global partnership for development (UN millennium project, 2005, p. xiii). Again can there be said to be a discrepancy in how the problems relate to the goals, or more precisely in what constitutes something to be achieved and what are the means to get there. The goals are also said to concern all countries, which would legitimize the global partnership more indefinitely, but since most industrialized countries already have achieved most goals (the global environmental concern being the exception) it really becomes a matter of developing the lesser developed countries towards the levels of the developed countries. Therefore does the partnership differ in its constitution from the other goals; it is a part of the development process rather than an actual goal. It should be noted that the goals in no way are set to be utopian but are seen as bold but achievable (UN millennium project, 2005, p. xiv).

Apart from the possible questions about what goals actually answers to the problems posed is there another issue that concerns the agenda setting in both the processes of identifying problems and setting goals. Throughout the propositions is the complexity of the relationship between donor and recipient explicitly acknowledged through statements of how western values and patterns of development cannot simply be applied to developing countries and that these countries own development policies are the undisputed point of departure (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5; 1978, p. 90; 2003, p. 88). Despite this do the goals include the already mentioned partnership and are said to preferably be built upon a common value framework. The 2003 proposition points out that the aid is in some ways conditioned and puts demands on the receiving countries in aspects such as policies aimed towards poverty reduction, processes towards democracy

and equality, and a strive for a realisation of the human rights (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 89). Even though these values may be argued for as universal the power relation becomes apparent. Especially in the light of the fact that the long term goal is stated to be independence.

3.3 Action

The final aspect of my walkthrough of the guiding documents deals with the actions taken to achieve said goals and solve the problems identified, it is how Sweden positions itself as a donor of aid. I would like to begin by continuing on the already mentioned, and somewhat, problematic idea of a partnership. Because even though it was stated in the 1962 proposition how patterns of development are not easily transferrable, the very same proposition mentions little of the role of the recipients of aid. Aid was at this point mainly distributed multilaterally through the UN and the argument for this was made with consideration to the power relation bilateral aid consists of (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 18). Multilateral aid and its implementation would then be conceived more democratically within the UN than through two parties in which one may be dependent on the other's good will. There is also an explicit caution towards engaging in social and political actions in the proposition and therefore are the efforts channelled within the frame of economy (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 7). However is this not to be mixed up with a solely monetary donation but actually is a technical aid in the form of knowledge transfers through experts argued to be preferable (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p 13).

In the 1968 proposition is a bigger emphasis put on a unity in the policies through both arguments of the efficiency benefits when all parties are heading in the same direction but also through the mutual potential gains (Utrikesdepartementet, 1968, p. 5). This view on development as a global process in which all take part in the partnership has since been even more strongly cemented. However have the aid come to be more distributed bilaterally as opposed to the earlier multilateral aid (SIDA, 2009). *Investing in development* states how the matter no longer is deciding on what action to take, the political solution exists and that the framework for development has been established, what is left is just to realize it. This framework is the millennium goals and the global partnership (UN millennium project, 2005, p. 1). Apart from this giving implications for the actual practices of development is it another indicator as to how naturalised the view on development has been. In relation to the millennium goals is foreign aid mentioned as one of the most important aspects, and more precisely is it an exhortation for countries to meet the UN recommended level of 0,7 percent of GDP (UN millennium project, 2005, p. xvi). Like mentioned in the introductory part of this thesis have this approach to development and aid been one of the strongest points in the Swedish policies. However does this only provide the frame for in which different policies are formed. Throughout the propositions has

a connection been made between aid and policies on trade. In the 1962 proposition is an expansion of trade stated as one of the main goals along with a mitigation of the needs and knowledge transfers (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 3). The economic growth that is often used as an indicator of development is to come from export oriented trade in a free market. Protectionism and other forms of restrictions on trade are said to be harmful and economically inefficient (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 67), while economic growth is possible through an integration in the international economic system (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 11). Despite this is it recognized how even the free market needs restrictions and rules that should be fair and open.

In 1978 did this trade oriented integration in some ways take the form of bound aid, some of the aid given by Sweden was restricted to a selection of Swedish products and services (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 110). Something the receiving countries were critical of and a practice that in the light of the free market can be argued to be inefficient. This goes along with the overall idea that aid is something to be invested in, which implicates a future gain for the donor. In the 2003 proposition is a higher degree of migration argued for as something to help make connections and matches in the market from which all should gain. The positive aspects for the recipients of aid are argued to be access to a global market and cheaper goods (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 16). Again is this put in contrast to the stagnating effects of protectionism. The view on partnership and global unity in the development process does not only mean a commitment to economic growth through production and trade but also implications on the view on economic growth. In the 1962 proposition there is no conflict between the growth of the developed countries and those developing, rather the opposite as it is stated how the global economic situation affects all (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 11). Therefore is an economic expansion positive for all, since it creates the resources to stimulate even the least developed countries. Similar ideas are expressed in 2003 where it is brought forward how the richest countries made the commitment to increase efficiency and volume in the developmental work to enable other investments and trade (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 14). The role of private actors and companies as distributors of knowledge and economic growth is recognized as growingly important (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 91). Related to the issue of economic growth and that of partnership is the topic of debt. Since some of the globally given aid has been in the form of loans and investments on which the richer countries have expected a return or payback many of the third world countries are heavily indebted. Some of these debts have been deprecated through the HIPC-initiative but the 2003 proposition argues how this only is effective if it is done as a part of a development strategy (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 44). Therefore do these depreciations come with clear demands on domestic policy to avoid the countries to again find themselves in the same situation.

Finally would I like to bring up one last element of the actions taken and suggested that has been present in all documents. This is how the biggest role is played by the third world countries themselves, that their development can only come from their own strivings and efforts (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5;

2003, p. 16). Therefore should the aid given be incorporated within the recipients' own domestic politics. An example of this is the 1978 initiative towards something called "country programming". Despite its top down connotation this is argued for through the intent of establishing a unity in the direction of development but with the departure point in a unquestioned respect for every countries sovereignty and their own development policies (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 96). The 2003 proposition states how there often are unrealistic expectations on the effects possible by external initiatives, such as aid. Instead is the responsibility argued to lie with each government. In relation to this is the connection between economic growth and good governance brought forward. How economic growth is a necessity but does not automatically lead to a more equal distribution. The role of government is instead emphasized as crucial for equality to be possible (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 16). While these views are expressed there can also be argued to be some discrepancies in all these guiding documents. Because just like mentioned in relation to, for example debts, is the aid not given without conditions. The 2003 propositions suggests Sweden not only to be better at listening but also setting demands (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 7). Just like in 1962 is it in 2003 the intent that aid should lead to independence, something not yet achieved. In the 1978 proposition (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 74) is a suspicion directed towards the internal policies of developing countries and one of the most important aspects of the 2003 proposition is a stronger emphasis on results and evaluation in order to assess whether the aid has been used properly or not (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 74; 2003, p. 92). Two popular explanation to the difficulties to grow economically have already been mentioned, governance failures and poverty traps. In some ways these two views on development can be seen as contradictory but they still become subjects to the same treatment, policies aimed towards a global economic integration, export oriented trade and bureaucratic institutions.

4 The myth

I will argue that there are two main concepts that are crucial for the way that foreign aid policy is formulated and seen as legitimate, the Eurocentric conception of linear development and the conception that development mainly is an economic process, both in its goals and practices. Both these concepts are intertwined, particularly prominent within liberal thought and would I argue fundamental for our western modern understanding of the world. At the same time are neither of these eternal values but products of a break with a former order that used to help us define society and ourselves. The breaks, which I in more detailed will define, are that from Aristotelian teleology to a secular infinite ditto and that from a mercantilist zero-sum understanding of economy to that of absolute production growth.

4.1 Linear development

Development suggests movement; it is getting from one point to another. However are these points not arbitrary but development does rather stipulate a relationship between them, in this sense is development progress. It is moving from one state to a better one. This can also be said to be the most fundamental reason for giving aid, as a way to help a country or people to progress (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 3). It is expressed throughout the propositions in different values, it is done in terms of economy, democracy, independence and knowledge (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 11; 2003, p. 7). While this may be the common way of understanding the concept of development today, this has not always been the case. Both Rist (2008, p. 43) and Isbister (2006, p. 36) point to how there with the enlightenment was a break in our conception of teleology and therefore development. The earlier Aristotelian teleology and order was characterized by its circularity, history was understood as repetition, as constant rises and falls, as growth and decay (Rist, 2008, p. 31). As Isbister (2006, p. 33) argues does such a conception of teleology not promote development in the sense that we understand it, but instead does the circularity lead to the desirable being to imitate one's ancestors. This can be argued to show on several levels. In a way does the circular notion of history give implications for another conception of society in which family or other minor collectives are much more important political entities, in another can the renaissance's longing for the greatness of the antique be understood (Rist, 2008, p. 35). What then happens with the break from this understanding is that history is understood without an end or perfection but

instead as infinity. Rist (2008, p. 40) argues that with this lies the “idea of a natural history of humanity”, which is development that “corresponds to a ‘natural’ principle with its own source of dynamism”. The implications for this are many. In part does it suggest history as cumulative and directional, that humanity progresses from savage to civilized but also that every stage is better, improved (Rist, 2008, p. 39). When history is viewed upon in this way does a certain uniformity or sameness emerge. If the history of humanity is both cumulative and directional it implicates development as one single path, as one history with a starting point sometime long ago upon which processes of knowledge production, growing material welfare and a constant civilizing of humanity is added (Isbister, 2006, p. 36).

It also places the process of development with the individual in a way that, Isbister (2006, p. 35) argues, is closely connected with productivity and working. The already introduced Taylor (2007, p. 73) connects the protestant values and work ethics in what he describes to be our modern imaginary, to this notion of production. This has the implication on development, that it is then understood as an achievement by devotion and a progression made through strivings. The individualism takes its expression in both an assumption that the individual (or on a larger scale, the individual state) is responsible for its own development but also that the development of one such individual does not stand in conflict with that of another. Quite the opposite does this individual growth create mutual gains that enables an easier or quicker development of others (Isbister, 2006, p. 40). I use the term responsible to point out and emphasize how development within this “natural history of humanity” is not really considered an option but a necessity, it becomes the only way in which history moves forward, through progression forward and improvement in infinity (Rist, 2008, p. 39). Kant did in this way consider the development from a state of nature to a social contract a categorical imperative (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 229). Much in line with the previously expressed ideas of individualism did he also argue that society is propelled by individuals’ unsocial sociability, a self-interest that, while maybe not admirable in itself, is necessary for society and its development. This is especially evident in his rejection of what he referred to as the “pastoral state”, a stagnant society without movement or progression (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 230). Worth noticing already here (and to be more thoroughly explored in the next chapter) is the resemblance between Kant’s unsocial sociability and Smith’s basic assumption of an economic natural order being formed through each member’s self-love.

If history is seen as movement along one single path this would implicate the possibility of measuring development, to see who has gotten the furthest. By defining someone as less developed than oneself does this then legitimize oneself as a helper, as an authority with more knowledge in the process of development.

The aid is aimed at creating economic and political independence (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 89), an independence that is, without being explicitly stated, understood to be evident in the countries that gives aid. Interestingly enough does this also point to a contradiction in the understanding of development, because the infinity of development is seen as for a moment being put on hold. The most obvious expression of this would be the terminology of

“developed” and “underdeveloped”, since being developed suggests finality and perfection while the underdeveloped are still in motion. However does not this, like I will discuss later on, implicate a settling down or stagnation in terms of reaching a finality among the self-proclaimed developed countries but rather is it an expression of a stadial look upon development But what it does is to establish a dichotomy between countries in need of aid and those able to give it, between independent and dependent. Especially poverty is described in this fashion, through comparison between the normal and the deviant (Escobar, 2011, p. 41). This is the earlier discussed relative understanding of the economy in which poverty is then seen as something pathological, much like a disease, which gives implications for “treatments” that are technical rather than political. The problems do then become understood as internal and individual rather than structural (Escobar, 2011, p. 110). This is in part expressed in the explanation models of “poverty traps” or “governance failures” (UN development project, 2005, p. 15ff) but also in the will to “exterminate poverty”. What this is, is then both a process of *othering* (Åhäll, 2012, p. 112), a defining of the different as deviant, as an incomplete version of the self and an expression of the individualism in the conception of development. Just as it is stated in the 1978 proposition (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 68) that Europe developed rapidly with the process of industrialisation and that the rest simply could, or would, not keep up.

Rist (2008, p. 43) argues that by establishing a dichotomous conception of the state of development did the western countries not only create an image of the other countries future but also a “de-facto solidarity” by expressing this linearity normatively. The solidarity and the moral obligation are expressed to be among the strongest reasons for at all establishing aid policies throughout all propositions (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5; 1978, p. 79; 2003, p. 7). The argument is that since Sweden is more developed and better off, and has got the ability to help by sharing our wealth should this be done. With this argument is the receiving countries deprived of their history and reduced to an incomplete version of the contributor (Rist, 2008, p. 43). I would like to point out how solidarity not automatically renders a paternalistic expression of power, quite contrary is it many instances admirable. However is it in the propositions a mix-up of relative and absolute notions that leads to a legitimization through indisputable values, something Rist (2008, p. 233) argues to be common in the development discourse. Policies formulated in a relative notion of development (us, the developed must help them, the underdeveloped) are legitimized through absolute issue of starvation and disease. A genuine solidarity does then unconsciously incorporate a linear conception of development.

I would argue that these ideas are expressed through two of Barthes figures of myth that help maintaining the status quo. The creation of the world as dichotomous could be understood as *identification*, the inability to identify the Other (Barthes, 1991, p. 152). Just like Barthes defines this does the Other only become understood through the self and this understanding is then only a relational. This process is one of simplification that is evident in the guiding documents. In this sense is it partly a reduction of the Other’s subjectivity to someone to “do development” upon but also a reduction in so far as a grand and

diverse group become seen as one, as “underdeveloped”. The other figure I would argue to be present here is *inoculation*, the admitting of smaller evils or failures and the understanding of these as partial or individual in order to keep the larger structure (Barthes, 1991, p, 151). Governance failures and poverty traps do suggest, both in the explanations and in the semantics, the faults to be with the individual and almost accidental. This could be put in contrast to a postcolonial reading, or one through dependency theory, that would explain these “failures” through the history of colonialism or the exploitive nature of the global economic system. Again, is my concern not to point to the right explanation but rather find the ideological foundations upon which legitimacy is built and the propositions are not preoccupied with questions of guilt nor structural explanations.

This way of looking upon history and development can, at the least, be said to be Eurocentric in the way European values are used to define progress and the state of the world (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 214). However does this not necessarily define political action within this order. Hall and Hobson (2010, p. 216) makes the argument there are two distinguishable different approaches within this Eurocentric liberalism, one paternalistic and one anti-paternalistic. In both is the, so far described, linear look upon history foundational but it gives different implications for intervention. The paternalistic approach, which is exemplified through (among others) scholars Cobden and Mill, does not only advocate political intervention but deems it necessary. The argument is then that all countries and peoples may progress (and then only progress along the same path as Europe) however not from own aspirations but with European assistance (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 217). These views did legitimize the paternalistic practices of imperialism and colonialism, for example through the notions of “white man’s burden” and “terra nullius”. White man’s burden would then be the idea that with development and civilization comes the responsibility to educate and progress the underdeveloped savages and barbarians (Isbister, 2006, p. 98), while terra nullius is the concept that an empty or inefficiently used piece of land may be ceased and cultivated efficiently (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 215). The other approach, in which Kant and Smith are two of the most prominent scholars, do reject these imperialistic practises both on basis of morality and with the argument of them being more harmful than productive since all people eventually will evolve towards the “spirit of commerce” (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 226ff). However do this anti-paternalistic stance extend even further to a rejection of all forms of paternalism. Even though one of Hall’s and Hobson’s (2010, p. 242) conclusions is how the paternalistic wing is more prominent today through practices that resemble those of foreign aid (such as the spreading of democracy, humanitarian intervention and extensions of the liberal market) would I argue that the Smith’s and Kant’s thoughts are those most prominent in the guiding documents of Swedish aid policy. Perhaps does this come down to the definition of the term “paternalistic” and whether development policies and foreign aid can be defined as such.

Both Smith and Kant are proponents of trade as means of material growth and progress through self-interest and competition. It is even stated by Kant how it has an “informal civilizing impact” that “helps push all societies towards capitalism

and republicanism, which in turn constitute crucial preconditions for a future perpetual peace” (cited in Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 227). The perpetual peace that is a major point in Kant’s thought is the cosmopolitan society in which all are living in infinite possibilities of prosperity under the social contract. The peace is though threatened as long as one nation or state have not reached or joined this last stage of development (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 2319. To pick up a thread earlier left to hang is it here important to distinguish how this stadial look upon development does not contradict a history of human progress in infinity. For Kant does the perpetual peace only provide the means to prosper in infinity (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 233), similarly can both Rostow’s theory on the stages of development (where the society of mass-consumption is the final order) (Isbister, 2006, p. 38) or Fukuyama’s end of history (as he argued that liberalism had prevailed ideologically after the fall of the Soviet union) (Weber, 2010, p. 108) be understood within this liberal stadial paradigm. Despite the anti-paternalistic approach did Kant in light of the aspects of security consider it legitimate to urge others to join the cosmopolitical partnership of the perpetual peace (Hall & Hobson, 2010, p. 231). Along these lines did Kant propose drawing up treaties in favour of using violence and paternalism and this does then (if not already) become a matter connected to power and how it is defined. In other words could such practices as those proposed by Kant be argued to be expressions of coercive power. For example does McFarlane (2006, p. 44) with reference to Blunt and McEwan argue that western knowledge production cannot be separated from western power. Without this leading to me claiming Kant to be paternalistic (on the contrary do I appreciate the distinction pointed out by Hall and Hobson) would I argue that Kant’s ideas may be present in policies argued to be formulated in a paternalistic fashion.

Several ideas along his lines are evident in the propositions on developmental policies. First of all is it throughout the propositions emphasised how the foreign aid is not a one-way process of giving but rather have the form of a cooperation, especially in the 2003 proposition is this apparent where (with reference to the eight millennium goal) the establishing of a global partnership is this brought forward as important for the development process (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 7). In part can this be understood as an argument of efficiency, that the partnership implicates a uniformity in the strivings for development through a social contract. However would I argue this to primarily derive from a Eurocentric linear liberal conception of development, that the direction of development is not even a question but what is said to be important is to head there as efficiently as possible. Apart from the uniformity in direction, can Kant’s view upon peace be argued to appear in the thoughts promoting the global partnership in the propositions. Like mentioned earlier is poverty and “underdevelopment” stated to be sources of instability, conflict and extremist groups (UN millennium project, 2005, p. 7). Apart from this being another indication of how the policies on aid display values evident within liberalism does this security concern once again show how the self-interest is present in the formulation of policy.

4.2 Economy

I have mentioned before how the poor third world came to be seen as a group after the second world war. And as discussed in the previous chapter was this new look upon the world as consisting of poorer and richer countries what translated into developed and underdeveloped. What earlier had been seen by west as a wide array of non-European countries and colonies was both “discovered” as poor and created in contrast to the industrialised west as the third world, or the underdeveloped (Escobar, 2011, p. 21). In other words is this the earlier mentioned process of *othering*, to discursively create the Other through yourself. This was the starting point and is still what poses the most fundamental function of foreign aid, richer countries directing economic funds towards poorer countries. In this sense is the economy fundamental for understanding developmental policy. In the 1962 proposition, it is stated that the problem, which development policies should address is economic underdevelopment and in the 2003 proposition is the global economic inequality the main reason for the developmental policies and the foreign aid (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 5; 2003, p. 7). The aid, then, has the intent of “helping the poor peoples to develop economically and socially and thereby helping themselves” (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 3). As I have described is economic growth seen as foundational for development to occur and for processes of greater economic equality and peace to be possible. The foreign aid has the intent to build an economic base for independence and in the 2003 proposition is it stated how sustainable economic growth is needed in all societies (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 11; Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 11).

However is the connection between economic growth and a conception of progress not automatic or necessary but is instead, would I argue, a consequence of the linear understanding of development. Escobar (2011, p. 24) argues that if the problem is defined as a lack, it leads to the cure being formulated in terms of growth. The connection appears as natural if more is understood as better, if history is seen as cumulative and directional along a single path. It is then not only a possibility but a necessity (Rist, 2008, p. 16). Just like I in the previous chapter argued for how this stadial look upon development creates a dichotomy that gives mandate to “develop someone”, does this provide the argument for giving aid.

Bogdan (2014, p. 3) points out how an important break in our perception of the economy happened in the 18th century with Adam Smith and his antagonism towards the mercantile school. What earlier had been the dominating idea, that of the mercantile system, consists of a conception that the economic system as a zero-sum game. Along with an idea of a strong state lies emphasis on a positive trade balance, achieved by a heavily subsidized export and trade barriers that restrict import. The logic behind this is an idea of wealth being defined by specie, mainly silver and gold, and therefore a will to accumulate through export (O’Connor, 2004, p. 31). Smith’s does on the other hand state that through the free market, trade and a division of labour are absolute gains possible (O’Connor, 2004, p. 18). Even though Smith engaged in critique of the mercantilist system something important to remember about his theory is how it is not only presented

as a rationalisation or a proposition towards efficiency but rather spoken of as the natural order of things (Dobb, 1978, p. 39). The often-cited “invisible hand” of Smith is in its fundamentals an order that is a function of the human nature. Smith’s argument is that man, and therefore society, is propelled forward by the self-interest or even self-love present in every individual (Dobb, 1978, p. 38). This is obviously very much the same understanding of development and progress as the one that Kant expresses, that the unsocial sociability that leads to competition propels society forward. In the civil society does this natural driving force lead to the formation of a market, a naturally conceived order, which is defined by its circulation of goods by demand (Rist, 2008, p. 18). Taylor (2007, p. 76) argues how this new economy defined by exchange and interaction, as opposed to older more self-sufficient local systems or the mercantile state-lead and production oriented mode of production, had implications for society in general. It contributed to the formation of a public sphere and through this a new understanding of the individual as atomised, impersonal and independent. In a way is this a move towards democracy and equality as “organized society is no longer equivalent to the polity” (Taylor, 2007, p. 76). Through the self-interest must all rely on all for society to function, Smith described this as “all men working for each other in the belief of working for themselves”. The division of labour leads to a greater efficiency due to everyone being able to specialize in one’s respective trade and through this is economic growth possible. Also does this division of labour in the market even more affirm the individual understanding of development in the sense that that there is no contradiction between different actors economic growth but rather does this specialization lead to mutual gains (Pålsson Syll, 2011, p. 48). This way of perceiving trade was later adopted by David Ricardo in his theory of comparative advantages, in which specialization among countries with the intent of trade leads to absolute gains for both parties that would not have been possible with a production directed towards self-sufficiency and autarky, such as proposed by the mercantile school (O’Connor, 2004, p. 34).

Many of the aspects of a Smithean conception of economy are present in the propositions that provide the guidelines for foreign aid policy and especially on the implementation side of the policies. Just like with the development processes in general do the propositions in the economic aspects express a Eurocentricity that takes both paternalistic and anti-paternalistic expressions. The major point that runs through both the earliest and latest proposition is the need for integration in the global economic system, only then can economic and political independence be achieved (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 11). The idea does to a large degree resemble the partnership most advocated for in the 2003 proposition. In the 1962 proposition is increased trade expressed as a goal with reference to it being a good opportunity for underdeveloped countries to grow economically through export (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 4). In a similar fashion is it in 1978 stated that the common interest must be the uniting force in the global economic system (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 67). Added to this is how common rules must be established to avoid conflicts and protectionism. The, perhaps seemingly contradictory, approach that independence only may be

achieved through integration into the economic system is present in Smith (and Ricardo) with the idea of mutual gains through a division of labour. By the same mechanism by which the social contract (and Kant's perpetual peace) is constructed, that of freedom within the treaty, is it argued that free trade can provide the economic growth necessary for political independence (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 44). So what the arguments for trade and an export-oriented production among the recipients of aid really is, is Smith's notion of a functioning natural order through the self-interest of all.

Taylor does grant this individual market the status as one of the cornerstones in our modern imaginary. He also connects it to the protestant values that are prominent in Weber's account of the emergence of capitalism, however is Taylor more cautious of the causal mechanisms in this process. What he does give credit to is though the voluntary aspects of individualism in protestant ethics, this in is part related to his notion of sovereignty in the imaginary as a conscious acceptance of the social contract, but does also have implications on the development for the individual (Taylor, 2007, p. 62). Because even if production and the gains of economic growth is made possible through the market and interaction with other actors does the protestant notion of individuality lead to seeing actors as islands, ultimately responsible for their own situation. Like I pointed out in the previous chapter does this provide a legitimacy for the two simultaneous approaches of solidarity and "the enlightened self-interest" in the sense that the contributor's of aid own economic growth in no way is seen to be in conflict with that of the recipients (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 83, Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 85). Perhaps is this best expressed in the 1978 proposition where it is stated how the aid should be regarded as an industrial cooperation rather than a one-sided process of giving (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 60). One part of the implementation of these policies was the bound commodity aid, something that meant a selection of Swedish commodities for the recipients to choose from. It is acknowledged in the proposition how the receiving countries were against this concept but the gains were said to be the jobs created in the domestic Swedish production sector. Related to this did the already mentioned processes of land programming have an important part in the 1978 proposition, an approach that despite its name was said to have its indisputable starting point in the receiving countries sovereignty and development policies (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 96). Odén (2006, p. 153) states how this actually was not the case but rather did the contributor have the final saying in the process of land programming. This points to some possible contradictions or problems in the individualistic conception of development in relation to equality and once again is the concept of paternalism relevant. This is both due to the material distribution still being unequal and the discursive formation, that Rist (2008, p. 74) argues to be a dichotomy that cannot be read as two binaries but instead as complete and incomplete. These inequalities generate an unequal process of agenda setting and implementation, that for example is showing in the richer countries being able to make demands in relation to their solidarity. An example of this is the debts of the third world that still do exist. In the beginning of the 2000s was some efforts directed towards alleviations of this economic hindrance

through the HIPC-initiative (heavily indebted poor countries) but the power relations became apparent. In the 2003 proposition it is explained how a debt reduction only is effective if it is done within a development plan and the idea of a responsibility to develop in accordance with the liberal linear view becomes obvious. In similar fashion is some of the aid conditioned towards policies in the direction of poverty reduction, democratization and a commitment to the human rights (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 89).

I would here like to argue that another figure of myth becomes apparent in the documents, one that could be argued to be present in several expressions but perhaps most prominently in the notion of poverty and in relation to the debts of the third world. The figure is *privation of history*, which lies close with the myth's depoliticizing aspects and is a denying of the historical foundation upon which the contemporary stands (Barthes, 1991, p. 152). The contemporary order is looked upon as eternal and without conflict. Like I have stated is the processes of colonialism and exploitation leading up to the west being materially superior hardly mentioned in the propositions but rather is the self-made industrialized Europe pointed to (Utrikesdepartementet, 1978, p. 68). Without such an explanation is then the question of guilt not relevant and the solidarity that is the reason for giving foreign aid provided with a more loose concept of humanity.

What this rejection of history and individualism also mean, in line with Smith's argument of specialization, is that economic growth in one country is not seen as problematic for another (as would be the case in dependency theory). Rather on the contrary is in the 1962 proposition stated how a recession in the global economy would harm all and therefore should productivity be kept up (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 11). This does much resemble the at the time popular theories of "trickle-down" effects, that economic growth in the richest countries will spread to the countries that are lesser off (Binns et. al., 2008, p. 99). Such theories have since been heavily criticized and in the 2003 proposition it is actually expressed how at times there will have to be a trade-off between rising out own standard of living or contributing to others (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 86). This is of course part of the basic argument for giving foreign aid at all, a total commitment to one's own efficient development and economic growth would probably lead to a rejection of giving in favour of trade. With this said are still the trickle-down argument present in the very same proposition when it is said how technological transfers can enable the poorest countries to skip some steps of development (Utrikesdepartementet, 2003, p. 90). Once again is it possible to distinguish the linearity in development as well as the Eurocentric vantage point, even more interestingly does this suggest both a stadial approach to development as well as a mobility. The stadial approach is apparent in Smith (and Kant) and is like a argued in the previous section not contradictory to an infinite conception of development but does rather express the final frame in which development can infinitely progress.

I have briefly mentioned Walt Rostow and his stadial look on development but think that he is very relevant in relation to the idea of a leap in development. His *Anti-communist manifesto* sketches out the five stages of development from a stagnant, constantly under-developed stage of traditional society to the final age of

mass-consumption (Isbister, 2006, p. 37) This could be said to be a liberal take on Marx's conception of history and development that indeed also is linear, Eurocentric and pointing to infinity. However is the third stage the most interesting since it signifies the biggest change, that of the take-off phase. Much like the idea of the third world countries jumping ahead or catching up does this indicate a phase where the leap from traditional to modern is taken (Rist, 2008, p. 94). In a European context would this be the industrial revolution that started in Great Britain and spread through Europe and what it suggests is development to be both geared by and measured through economy and production. The idea of a developmental or economic take-off is also expressed by economist Gunnar Myrdal, who in his time argued how the poor countries just needed a "big push" to get a production going that would enable progression and independence (Odén, 2006, p. 50). These ideas of a push or a catalyst to get the process of development going are evident in the 1962 proposition as it is argued how the stagnating trend in the third world countries must be broken so that the living standards can be improved (Utrikesdepartementet, 1962, p. 7).

Finally am I going to point out another figure of myth that, I would say to be, present throughout the conceptions of development and especially in the aspects of economy and economic progress. The figure is *quantification of quality* and the most fundamental aspect of it is to treat or express what is different in kind as different in scale (Barthes, 1991, p. 154). This is how the conception of the linear development and the simplification of measuring it through economic progress provides the foundation for speaking of countries in terms of developed and underdeveloped. It is a process of economisation in which everything can be measured and valued.

5 Final discussion

5.1 Alternatives

After attempting to both display and explain the Swedish foreign aid policies as political myth and how certain aspects of how they are understood and approached are uncontested, would I like to point to some different understandings and approaches. The reasons for this are partly to even more show how the way development is understood today is not the only one but also to nod in the direction of possible different ways forward after interrogating the common understanding of development. It is worthwhile to once again point to how these are possible alternatives and just like with the analysis of the policies that are today is not the intent to make judgement on right or wrong.

McFarlane (2006, p. 44) argues how western knowledge is inseparable from western power and in order to move forward is it necessary to understand how subaltern knowledge is produced. In the processes and networks of development is this often forgotten and the top-down doctrines take the form of certainties that are not contested and development does then become technical as opposed to political (McFarlane, 2006, p. 36). This is very much in line with the thought of postcolonialist scholar Gayatri Spivak, that is aimed at understanding subaltern knowledge. She argues that her role as researcher is to develop writing styles that allows the subaltern to speak uninterrupted instead of being interpreted or spoken for (McFarlane, 2006, p. 45). The reasons for this are to engage in “cultural and psychological warfare” from within the master discourse with the intent of dissolving it (Kapoor, 2002, p. 652). Fellow postcolonialist Homi Bhabha argues along similar lines through his notion of hybridity as an opposition towards the dichotomy that today dominates the understanding of development (Kapoor, 2002, p. 651). What it is about is the right to signify, an agency in the performative aspects of knowledge. Through this does Bhabha speak of “time-lags”, a way to re-construct other kinds of narratives and denying modernity’s linearity and teleology (Kapoor, 2002, p. 655). The idea with this approach to development is then not to contest the truth claims of the master discourse but rather expose it and situate it, not very unlike my own modest aspirations of this thesis.

One of the actual attempts to this kind of other or alternative development does Escobar (2011, p. 95) suggest to find in different expressions of resistance to

the master discourse, to write the history of the subaltern, explained by its own logic. What this would render in is then “local models in hybridization with the global”, an opening for different modes of production (Escobar, 2011, p. 99). In other words is this approach to development committed to a sort of plurality, Rist (2008, p. 135) describes it as a multitude of centres. However does this break with the old conception of development not come without its problems, especially since the material distribution in the world is as skewed as it is today. The problems then of embracing a notion of hybridity and heterogeneity would be that it could leave the structures of power untouched. Mohanty (2003, p. 968) describes a similar in process in relation to gender issues where a discursive dissolving of the gender dichotomy before actually reaching gender equality would only help legitimizing the order. It would then be a process much like how the individual notion of development does remove the historical processes that lead up to the situation of inequality today. However should these concerns be limited to a critical evaluating to the effects and not a rejection argues Rist (2008, p. 138) while pointing to the reigning doctrines of development are themselves at least as flawed and problematic. He draws, in a constructive attempt, up the possibilities for a concept of self-reliance as an opposition to global development, not as an abstract model but, much like Escobar (2011, p. 95) proposed, as a historical process of struggle (Rist, 2008, p. 134). Self-reliance is a commitment to using democratically controlled local factors of production and establishing a material sufficiency. At the same time is it not a resorting to autarky but instead a more locally anchored production process. It is a counter-move against development practices such as directing the majority of production and manufacturing of, often, raw materials that have no societal demand except for trade (Isbister, 2006, p. 44). One of the major points with such an approach is how development cannot be imposed from above but rather is a process of struggle and emancipation (Rist, 2008, p. 134).

These ideas are perhaps taken the furthest by postcolonialist Franz Fanon and his Hegelian approach to colonialism. Through this this dichotomy of Master and Slave does he argue that any form of aid or solidarity from the west (Master) towards the colonised (Slave) are counter-productive and only a new expression of the same power relationship (Fanon, 1997, p. 195). The relation can only be dissolved with the Slave’s uprising and emancipation through violence (Fanon, 1997, p. 177). In the foreword to Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* does Sartre point to how not just the active coloniser but everyone who gains from the colonial process passively bears guilt (Sartre, 2007, p. 48). Fanon’s approach may seem extreme in its applicability but points to the interesting point of how a paternalistic stance may be a short-term gain (such as with the humanitarian aid) but can in the long run be argued to, as Escobar argues, “assume a teleology that endlessly reproduces the separation between the reformers and the reformed”. Both Spivak and Bhabha are sceptical to Fanon’s direct and confrontational stance and instead argue how such an “directly counter-hegemonic discourse is more liable to cancellation or even reappropriation by the dominant” (Kapoor, 2002, p. 652). Instead do they advocate modes of critique and negotiation in order to unsettle the hegemony from within.

Finally, and connected to the counter-hegemonic modes of resistance that Spivak and Bhabha criticizes (although not in Fanon's sense), would I like to highlight another problem that may arise when discussing dominant knowledge systems. Baber (2010, p. 752) brings up the example of a rejection of western knowledge in favour of establishing an Indian knowledge system that lead to the rejection of the western practice of medicine that is vaccine and through this several deaths from small-pox. He (Baber, 2010, p. 749) refers to such practices as unreflexive nativism that are made only as counter-moves and even though Edward Said and his theory on orientalism in many instances have been pointed to as responsible is he himself critical of such practices. These practices are the consequences of no interrogation but only a rejection. My arguments are supposed to be a contribution for a repolitization of a stagnant approach to a field of policy, a way to challenge the taken for granted and test the legitimacy. While that of course may lead to a rejection there is also a possibility of an affirmation, no matter what is the important aspect to bring awareness.

5.2 Conclusion

Colin McFarlane does in his attempt to bridge the gap between postcolonial theories and the practices of development cite Woost's statement that "[w]e are still riding a top-down vehicle of development whose wheels are greased with a vocabulary of bottom-up discourse" (McFarlane, 2006, p. 43). A cynical understanding of the quote would be how the development practices are just a scam for exploitive purposes, however does Escobar (2011, p. 148), in relation to a World bank project in Colombia, argue how this would be a simplistic understanding. Instead could the quotation be read as an expression for the duality in the developmental policies. An expression of how it is possible to combine a notion of solidarity with an explicit self-interest.

What I have argued for throughout this thesis are two things, first of all have I tried to point out how the Swedish policies on foreign aid have been formulated in more or less the same way, that there has been continuity. However have this point already been made by Odén (2006, p. 15) and Wolgemuth (2012, p. 6) and it is merely conditional for my second, major point. I have tried to go one step further in not just identifying the, often depoliticised and technical, theories and practices but revealing their ideological core. This being that the continuity in the policies can be explained as an expression of two myths that are fundamental for our understanding of society. These are, the understanding of development as an infinite linear teleology and the conception of a market based economy of absolute gains. Separately could these theories head in different directions, linearity is for example and as mentioned present in Marxism while a total commitment to the free market also could lead to rejection of any state-led policies or a comparison as it is done through linearity. However, together do these two conception create both the ability to measure development and progress (through an economised linearity) that support ideas of aid and authority for

intervention for development. But also an individualism that justifies the self-interest and the pursuit of one owns development in accordance with the treaty, partnership or market.

I have used some of Barthes figures of myth to exemplify how these myths are expressed. However one of Barthes figures that have yet to be mentioned is the *tautology*, perhaps the most straightforward expression of a myth by its self-referring logic and therefor inherit certainty (Barthes, 1991, p. 153). I would argue that the *tautology* is most prominently expressed in the position of the contributors of aid, in my case Sweden, and through this the creation of the receiver. This is due to the whole linear, individual understanding of development being a western creation in its own image, and through this understanding is authority established. In other words have the western concept of development granted west a position as superior by default in relation to those understood as underdeveloped. This position is also what gives the reasons for developmental policies and foreign aid and what makes them legitimate. So maybe does no this individualism legitimize aid out of shame, as proposed in the initial quote (because this would implicate guilt) but a rejection of the one percent have and might again cause such a reactions. Finally do I hope that it shows how even the most natural or taken for granted idea or conception (unconscious or not) has implications for actual practices.

6 References

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