

Norway's Development Dilemma

Global Power Structures in Western Aid Unveiled Through the
WPR (What's the Problem Represented to be?) Approach

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Abstract

Foreign aid and development cooperation have long been a topic of discussion concerning the global division of power, colonial history, and the inability to generate sustainable development. Norway and its aid agency, Norad, are not exempt from this criticism, despite Norway's image as a humanitarian "idealpolitik" nation with a generous aid budget. How donor countries, such as Norway, view their position in the international arena and how they frame development problems is telling of how power operates within aid discourses and whose interests are ultimately prioritized. This research examines how donor countries like Norway frame development problems through a critical analysis of Norad's most recent annual report using postcolonialism and world-systems theory. Adopting critical theories and the WPR approach demonstrates that Norad's perceived problem reflects global power structures. The findings show how Norway is not willing to make changes that would challenge its international position of being a powerful country and follows a development plan according to the West-knows-best narrative. How this is demonstrated in the report highlights the misplaced focus of Norwegian development aid and how the aid has been unable to accomplish its intended objectives since the start of foreign aid and cooperation institutions.

Key words: problem representation, framing, WPR approach, donor accountability, aid efficiency

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1 Introduction

Norway has long been at the forefront of development cooperation and aid and is committed to allocating vast resources to developing other countries with less strong economies (Tjønneland 2022, p. 373). Analyzing how Norway is allocating development aid reveals how Norway views its role in the world and how it regards other countries. In Norway, there is a national identity of being a giver internationally and prioritizing humanitarian values and straying away from power politics or self-interested foreign policy agendas (Hveem 2015, p. 5). However, international power relations and commitments to partner countries with other interests make this difficult. In addition, the North/South divide and roles of donor countries and receiving countries are tied to a history of colonialism, imperialism, and unequal exchange (Sanz Sabido 2019; Fentahun 2023; Veronese, Prati, & Castiglioni 2011). This demonstrates how global relations today are tied to a history of colonialism and the active enforcement of global inequality. A 2021 report from Statistics Norway (SSB) found that nine out of ten Norwegians support development cooperation, which is an all-time high since this was first studied in 1972 (Lagerstrøm & Seferi 2021, p. 9). In contrast, the report found that less than 30% of the Norwegian population believes that the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) is spending effectively, and four out of ten stated that Norwegian aid produces results (Lagerstrøm & Seferi 2021, pp. 24-35). In Norway, negativity around development policies has sparked a media debate on Norway being the only country to reach the OECD goal of spending 1% of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance in 2023 (OECD 2024; Solvang 2024). A record budget for development cooperation of 58.6 billion NOK (1.09% of GNI) was then set (Regjeringen 2023). Critiques of Norwegian development cooperation question whether Norad and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry are spending tax money ineffectively and using aid as a political tool (Solvang 2024). This debate raises questions of whether Norwegian development spending is misplaced and ineffective and why the general population observes this.

1.1 Aim and Research Question

This research analyzes the challenges Norwegian development cooperation faces in achieving its goals and why it is believed to be ineffective. This is achieved through analyzing Norad's most recent annual report from a critical perspective. This research will follow the model of Carol Bacchi's "What's the Problem Represented to be?" (WPR) approach to ask why development cooperation is regarded the way it is, rather than why it is done the way it is (Bacchi 2009; Bacchi 1999). The

research will entail preliminary research consisting of semi-structured interviews conducted with professionals in the field of Norwegian development cooperation. The critical development theories of postcolonialism and world-systems theory will serve as a theoretical background for the global perception this research presents, as well as provide a lens to analyze power dynamics, historical implications, and structural inequalities. Postcolonial theory critiques how Norad's problem representations may reproduce the narratives that the West knows best and the rest should follow, while world-systems theory interrogates whether aid reinforces core-periphery dependencies. This research does not aim to dismiss Norwegian aid but to interrogate its problem representations through a critical, evidence-based lens. Promoting openness and acknowledging disagreements can be used to evaluate development cooperation processes and analyze which direction development cooperation has moved in. This research will separate crisis and conflict aid from poverty reduction and growth-promoting development cooperation, focusing on the latter. Existing literature on the shift in Norwegian development paradigms has not focused on narratives through problematization. This research aims to fill this gap.

Research Question: How does Norad's 2023 Annual Report represent development "problems" through its recommended measures?

1.2 Significance

This analysis aims to contribute to the discourse around the efficiency of Western aid and its systematic global inequality. Observing how Norad regards itself, its progress, and its plans provides insight into what obstacles are hindering sufficient aid distribution and how organizational narratives may reinforce existing global power structures. Becker (2020) underlines the importance of being critical and honest about development cooperation results, as it promotes better solutions. In addition, the research aims to challenge perspectives on what makes development happen and how the Norwegian government has chosen to go about this, focusing on donor accountability. The purpose is grounded in the belief that international and national development organizations are distant from the lived realities of people in developing countries and are not applying critical evaluations to development plans (Fentahun 2023; Winters 2010, pp. 218-219). National governments, such as the Trump administration, are currently neglecting aid and international cooperation (Regilme 2023). These perspectives are being spread towards many countries with rising global conflict and the rise of the far right. These movements and their critiques of development aid and cooperation risk reducing efforts and projects where they are needed the most. Assessing and evaluating Norad's processes presents a different narrative: that development cooperation can achieve its intended goals when it understands the value of lived realities, South perspectives, and global political agendas. Assessing the historical implications of development aid and cooperation and how it has changed highlights the colonial legacies of development as well as the changes in development paradigms.

2 Background

2.1 Norad

Norad has the primary objective of achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Climate and Environment (KLD) (Norad 2025) (Norad 2015). Norad is responsible for distributing national funds to development initiatives and evaluating these processes to research and advise future action and adjustments. Norad is organized through departments divided into topics of climate, environment and natural resources, energy, gender equality and governance, health, education and research, and civil society (Norad 2025). The organization is under the Norwegian government and must therefore act according to the development politics of the government in office. To ensure this, Norad follows a master instruction (hovedinstruks) made by the MFA and KLD (MFA & KLD 2024, pp. 2-4). Despite these two government departments being in charge, Norad is responsible for the execution of development plans and projects, knowledge building and sharing, and budget distribution. This is split into five different main tasks:

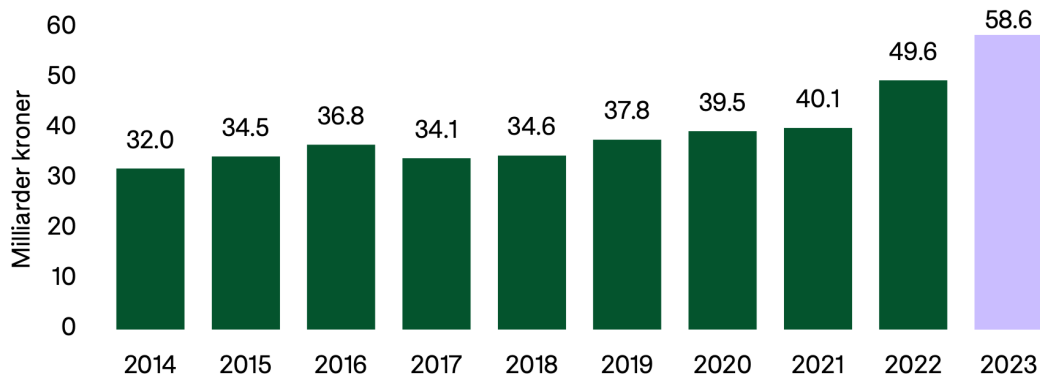
1. Aid advisory services
2. Quality assurance and monitoring
3. Grant programmes
4. Communication
5. Evaluation

This research will focus on the results demonstrated through task two, quality assurance and monitoring, task four, communication, and task five, evaluation. Quality assurance and monitoring review the design and implementation of projects and how transparency, efficiency, and relevance are ensured. Communication is central to shaping the public narrative around Norwegian development efforts and concerns the framing of projects and measures. Evaluation demonstrates the external accountability role Norad holds for itself to challenge its processes and plans. Norad is, despite these mechanisms, not only responsible for the administration of aid but also how it is framed, justified, and represented. Norad has a central role in Norway's public image as a donor country, making it directly tied to the skepticism around development cooperation.

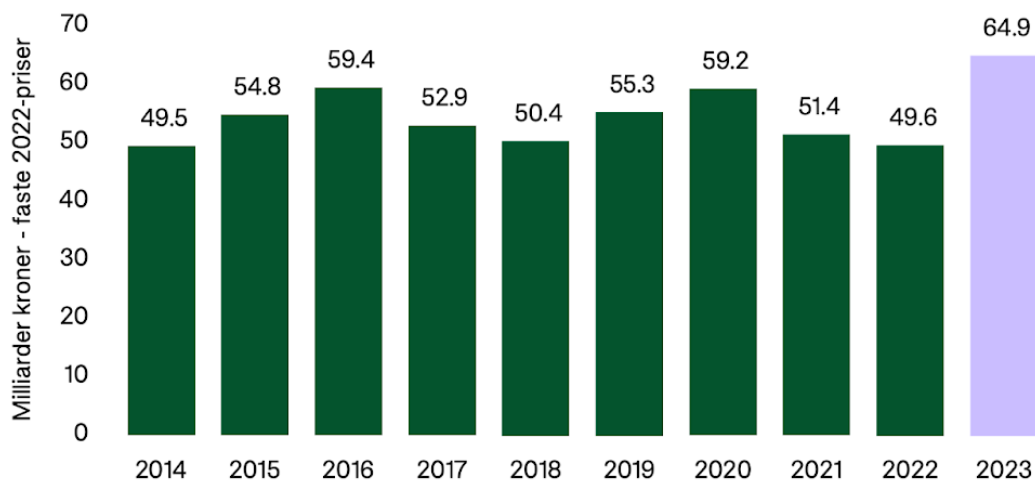
2.2 Why the Backlash?

Since 2006, there has been a circa 50% decrease in belief in the results of development aid (Lagerstrøm & Seferi 2021). Though political differences can explain some variations in beliefs, development scholars see this as a result of a paradigm shift in Norwegian development cooperation from 1990 to 2021 (Becker 2020; Tjønneland 2022; Hegertun 2021). Indermit Gill, Chief Economist of the World Bank Group and Senior Vice President for Development Economics, labeled 1990 to 2015 as the golden age of development cooperation in a 2023 podcast interview (Banik 2023). As global politics and economic relations have changed, so have the perspectives on international cooperation and policies. The COVID-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine, and global political and economic instability shape perspectives on international development cooperation in a different direction than the optimism of the 1990s and early 2000s. Critiques of Norway's development aid point to the 1% of GNI goal being a hindrance to efficiency and allowing for unnecessary projects and processes to continue (Hegertun 2021). The budget size requires more administration and financial management, and with more being spent, there is more room for misallocation of resources. However, allocating a higher budget than other countries contribute to Norway's public perception and sends a message to other countries. This explains how public perceptions within Norway's borders are not prioritized when the state has "bigger fish to fry". Mismanagement of public funds is a recurring topic in the Norwegian media, highlighted in the recently published best-selling book translated to "The Country That Became Too Rich" by socioeconomist Martin Bech Holte (Holte 2025). The book discusses how Norway is negatively affected by how rich it has become, and that people and the government rely too heavily on the Norwegian Government Pension Fund. However, many believe that there should be more results with the size of this budget (Solvang 2024; Banik 2023). The two graphs below (**Figure 1a and Figure 1b**), by Norad, demonstrate the budget growth without and with inflation from 2014 to 2023, showcasing the budget growth that has increased despite the rise in dissatisfaction.

2.2.1 Figure 1a: Development aid budget in billion NOK in current prices (Norad 2023, p. 8)



2.2.2 Figure 1b: Development aid budget in billion NOK in current prices (Norad 2023, p. 8)



The sector distribution below (**Figure 2**) demonstrates how the Norwegian development cooperation and aid budget is distributed, published by Norad. The biggest sector is “multilateral core support,” featured in yellow, representing 18% of the budget. This describes what goes into other organizations and international agreements. By partaking in international organizations, Norway does not have to administer the funds. The third largest sector, excluding emergency aid, is unspecified expenses in Norway. This represents 12% of the budget, which is approximately equivalent to the combined share allocated to education, economic growth, and health and social services, demonstrating the disproportionate prioritization of administrative expenses over direct development aid, causing the backlash.

2.2.3 Figure 2: Sector distribution of budget (Norad 2023, p. 24)



3 Literature Review

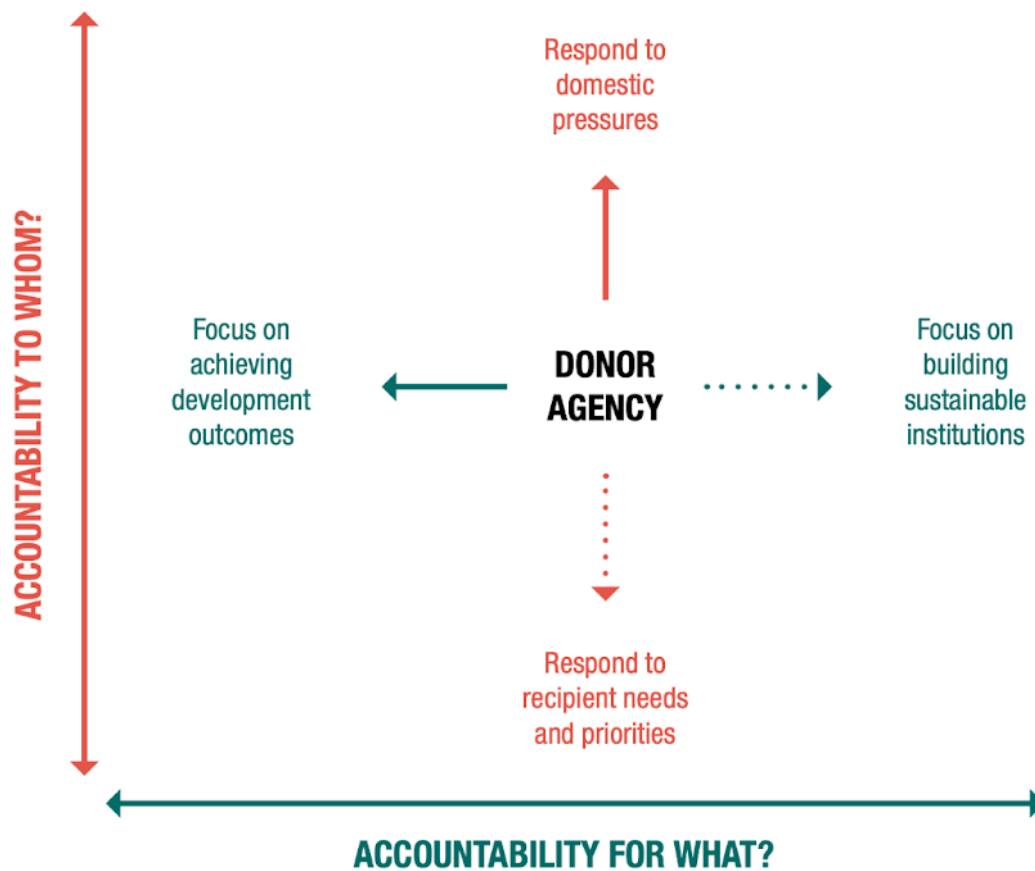
3.1 The Paradigm Shift in Norwegian Development Cooperation

Despite past literature on Norwegian development cooperation not focusing on problem representation, there has been vast literature and research done on how Norway ended up with the development paradigm it follows today and how international institutions and agreements have become more central (Tjønneland 2022; Foss 2021; Saltnes 2024; Thompson 2019). Norway has shifted from primarily doing bilateral development cooperation to supporting global development action with the rise of new thematic priorities and multilateral cooperation becoming central to strategic positioning abroad (Tjønneland 2022, p. 373). Professor in European Studies Peter Hall has developed an analytic framework for shifts in “policy paradigms”, understood as a collection of beliefs concerning “policy goals, the nature of a policy problem, and the instruments to address it” (Hall 1993). The framework distinguishes between first, second, and third-order changes, which Tjønneland (2022) adapts to explain the evolving profile of Norwegian development cooperation as a combination of domestic driving forces. Wood (2015) expands on the explanatory factors of paradigm shifts with the notion of learning processes and political pressures through “puzzling” and “powering”. This framework captures the dynamics of how ideas gain popularity and uses politicization and depoliticization to analyze the dynamics of policy paradigms. In Norway, the paradigm shift has changed development cooperation in volume, instruments for action, objectives, and management of resources. Poverty reduction has remained the overarching development objective of the Parliament, expressed in policy documents throughout the paradigm shift (Norad 2000; Norad 2015; Norad 2024). Moving towards an international approach risk leading to a more centralized power, which questions why Norway, with its position as a peacekeeping ideal-politics country, would rather follow the approach of countries such as the USA. Eriksson Baaz (2005) analyzes how identities are constructed in development discourse and how countries position themselves in the global system. Norway has actively been involved in peace processes and was an early aid donor, which is part of Norway establishing its role and values in the global system. Previous research found that policymakers focus on the positives they achieve to uphold support for the work they do and promote financial support for the cause (Foss 2021; Saltnes 2024; Hill 2003).

3.2 Donor Accountability

The foreign aid dependency can be compared to Buchanan's "Samaritan's dilemma" (Buchanan 1975). This dilemma describes the unwanted consequences of charitable actions, such as aid posing as a short-term solution, which removes the incentive to create long-term, independent solutions. Paolo de Renzio (2016) analyzes how aid dependency is created and how the debate around aid effectiveness is not new, as it can be dated back to the beginning of modern development cooperation with Lord Peter Bauer's 1973 essay, "The Case Against Foreign Aid" (Renzio 2016, p. 4; Bauer 1973). This essay argues that "aid strengthens governments that often end up stifling private economic activity and disrespecting the rights of minorities" (Renzio 2016, p. 4). Over the past 20 years, the number of countries depending on foreign aid has been significantly reduced; however, Renzio found that in 36 countries, foreign aid amounts to more than 10% of the national income using net Official Development Assistance (Renzio 2016, p. 4). This makes foreign aid an important topic but imposes questions about how donor countries have contributed to aid dependency. Renowned American economist William Easterly (2006) argues that aid-financed projects and programs are based on models focusing on donor interests and draw from Western growth experiences, which undermines local needs and historical implications. Easterly describes this as a "planner's approach", meaning a one-size-fits-all global solution, which is contrasted by the "searcher's capacity", which entails responding to what is found in the specific area. In addition, Deaton (2013) finds that aid often undermines governance and institution building, making aid projects scattered and uncoordinated (p. 305). An example of this is the misplaced aid funding for HIV/AIDS between 1992 and 2005, stemming from Western public opinions of what developing countries need (Renzio 2016, pp. 7-8). During this time, the budget grew to about \$8 billion per year, creating the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in 2002 (KFF and UNAIDS, 2014). This budget exceeded the national health budgets of entire countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia, which had relatively few issues with HIV/AIDS (Shiffman, 2008; Biesma et al., 2009). This demonstrates the tensions between stakeholders and the importance of prioritizing situational knowledge over budget size. The figure below (**Figure 3**) demonstrates the accountability dilemma in foreign aid and what forces pull donors in different directions. It can be questioned whether building sustainable institutions is not possible for a foreign nation to intervene because this has to come from forces within the country. In the 2023 research paper, Fentahun discusses how "Africa has achieved neither sustainable economic development nor consolidated democracy" despite the large sums spent on aid and development packages (p. 12). Fentahun explains this through how the aid has been given systematically with conditionalities "designed to instill liberal values in an illiberal continent" (Fentahun 2023, pp. 1-2). This explains how responding to domestic pressures is often valued more than responding to recipient needs, as well as how development aid is a politicized and intersectional issue.

3.2.1 Figure 3: Accountability dilemma of foreign aid (Renzio 2016, p. 7)



Winters (2010) demonstrates how the relationships between stakeholders in development cooperation and aid are complex, and accountability can exist at different levels. Winters analyzes how empirical evidence suggests that accountability leads to better distribution of aid and better results from development projects (p. 220). He identifies five benefits of development aid accountability:

1. It crafts correct incentives for agents to fulfill their responsibilities.
2. It provides assurance to principals that their agents will fulfill their responsibilities, allowing for planning and decision-making in this context.
3. It aids the study of whether policies work or not.
4. It generally facilitates transparency with regard to agents' actions.
5. It helps principals provide correct rewards to agents.

4 Theoretical Framework

This thesis focuses on a Global South perspective on power and inequality through world-systems theory and postcolonialism. Though both theories are critical of Western liberal modernity, they differ in theoretical traditions and historical contexts (Kapoor 2002, p. 661). However, this thesis argues that the theories can complement each other by adopting the postcolonial post-structuralist epistemology while retaining the world-systems theory's understanding of the socioeconomic global system and capitalism's role in underdevelopment. Both theories have faced criticism for prioritizing identifying causes rather than suggesting solutions to overcome underdevelopment (Kapoor 2002; Maddison 2012). However, the theories meet the purpose of this research, as it focuses on why development cooperation is done the way it is, rather than how to do it.

4.1 Epistemology

Post-structuralism is an approach to narrative theory. Post-structuralism questions the “objective reality” and proposes that reality is constructed by discourse, society, and the culture individuals experience (Pedraza 2025). Philosopher, literary critic, and scholar Roland Barthes employs post-structuralism in his 1970 book *S/Z* by adopting structures to give stories multiple meanings and results. He theorizes that the author holds power in impacting the reader and producing beliefs. This epistemology is the background for Michel Foucault's discourse analysis, which the WPR approach applied in this research derives from, which understands discourse as social and as constructing beliefs and narratives (Miller 1990, p. 124). Post-structuralism entails the study of lived realities, historical experiences such as those of slavery, resistance, migration, minorities, and suppression, and how knowledge of these topics is produced (Pedaza 2025).

4.2 Postcolonialism

“Postcolonial” is a term used to describe the time after colonial rule in a country and to refer to the literature, theories, and politics addressing the consequences of colonialism (Bayly 2016). Postcolonial theory is, in simple terms, the understanding that colonialism and the heritage of colonialism are affecting global relations and countries' development today, and that power relations and underdevelopment today, stem from colonialism (Sanz Sabido 2019). There is no scholar given credit

as the founding figure of postcolonialism because postcolonialism grew out of anti-colonial resistance and criticism in the 20th century (Bayly 2016). However, it has been understood and applied differently by different scholars. In this research, this perspective is important to address how history is consequential to this day for how development cooperation is done and how the way countries choose to go about development has greater implications. This is because the global powers have not changed significantly post-colonial independence, and the former colonial structures are being reinforced through international mechanisms such as the control of natural resources, agricultural and industrial production, and through affecting post-colonial education and political systems and through producing the cultural view of the post-colonial world and how this is represented in the media (Veronese, Prati, & Castiglioni 2011).

Palestinian-American literary historian Edward Wadie Said's book "Orientalism" described how the Western world constructs a portrayal of the Eastern world (1978). The book established the word Orientalism as a critical term used to describe the inaccurate cultural representations of the Orient/Middle East, deriving from imperialism, which, through post-structuralism, has the power to affect people's beliefs and understanding of culture and history. Political philosophy, linguistics, feminism, sociology, critical theory, and cultural studies produced the postcolonial criticism of society and raised the voices of non-Western perspectives (Bayly 2016; Chiba & Heinrich 2019).

Critics of postcolonialism from the political left and non-Western perspectives, such as Aijaz Ahmad, criticize postcolonialism for being mostly written in English and not being translated to and produced by languages native to postcolonial states (1995). However, the most prominent critics are from the Western right-wing and conservatives, proposing that this school of thought produces an anti-Western narrative (Zhang 2024). Because much postcolonial literature has been produced by people fighting for independence in colonies, there are partisan perspectives included in this literature, which has been aimed at fighting the West (Boehmer 2005). Though this literature holds historical importance for the construction of postcolonialism, the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis aims to criticize a mechanism of Western society by raising awareness because these mechanisms are important and should be inclusive. Criticizing the society does not come from an anti-Western agenda but rather a will for wanting the best for all societies, including Western.

4.3 World-Systems Theory

World-systems theory is an approach to understanding world history and social change, explaining the rise and fall of states, income inequality, and the imperialist history that has created these systems (Chase-Dunn & Grell-Brisk 2019). The prominent figure for the theory, American sociologist and economic historian Immanuel Wallerstein, refers to the subject as world-system analysis, which analyzes modern society and describes the "structures of knowledge upon which it

is based, its mechanisms, and its future” (2004). When first developed in the 1970s, the theory came as an alternative approach to the then-popular Modernization theory, which proposed a mechanism through which “underdeveloped” countries could develop and grow (Chase-Dunn & Grell-Brisk 2019). Economic differences between rich and poor or the “core” and “periphery” countries have been reduced, while inequality within countries is growing (World Inequality Lab 2022). World-systems theory accounts for this change by emphasizing how the global economy is an interconnected system of core, semi-periphery, and periphery zones and that the capitalist economy exploits workers even in the core. World-systems theory has a complex understanding of interconnected global systems and acknowledges that the world is not made up of two distinct groups. The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) since the early 1980s are examples of aid policies that rely on neoliberal economics, which reproduces inequality through exploitative trade relationships (UN ESCWA 2020; Fentahun 2023).

5 Methodology

The research entails two research phases. First, is the preliminary research to establish a foundation of knowledge of how Norad and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry operate and their views on development cooperation. The preliminary research will consist of semi-structured interviews with representatives of the Foreign Ministry of Norway. The interview data is meant to complement the reports by focusing on narratives as told and how representatives of the government respond to the debate and the problematization of Norway's development cooperation paradigm. The preliminary research findings will be used to support the claims of the main analysis and the discussion.

5.1 Research Design

The second research phase will be the main research and analysis of the 2023 Annual Report. The main analysis adopts the Carol Bacchi "What's the Problem Represented to be?" approach, a tool to critically interrogate public policy papers by asking six questions to determine the assumptions behind a policy. The WPR approach is a type of discourse analysis drawing perspectives from social constructionism, the sociology of social problems, and feminism. Similarly to postcolonialism, WPR is based on post-structuralist philosophy, emphasizing knowledge as a social construct and that discourse and language give meaning (Riemann 2023). It differs from a critical discourse analysis because it does not analyze linguistic details, but it analyzes what is not written explicitly, such as the fundamental assumptions behind a claim. The chosen research method demonstrates how the recommended measures are framed and what the implications of this is. In the case of this research, the annual report comments on Norad's past measures, projects, plans, and development efforts, as well as suggesting new measures. The measures are not legal policies; however, Bacchi's method applies to governmental and organizational documents as long as there are problems and solutions presented in the document (Bacchi 2009; Bletsas & Beasley 2012, p. 23). Adopting this analysis means understanding what the organization believes must be done to achieve development and how the organization regards its challenges. The application of the WPR six questions has been critiqued because it implies reading between the lines, meaning the outcome might not be directly linked to what is written, making the analysis based on a personal understanding of the document (Riemann 2023). The six questions used in this analysis are used to separate the explicit from the underlying themes and presumptions to demonstrate how conclusions were drawn.

The six questions are:

1. What's the "problem" represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the "problem"?
3. How has this representation of the "problem" come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"?
6. How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?

To understand what the report is not addressing/what Bacchi calls what is left unproblematic, the Annual Development Report from 2000 will be used as a comparison before the paradigm shift to represent the time of optimism in development cooperation. This will highlight what has changed and demonstrate what challenges have not been solved. This can contribute to the debate on narrative changes and problem representation by questioning if the reports are saying the same thing differently and, if so, why. Bletsas and Beasley's book on the WPR approach affirms that "the focus is not on intentional issue manipulation or strategic framing. Instead, the aim is to understand policy better than policymakers by probing the unexamined assumptions and deep-seated conceptual logics within implicit problem representation" (Bletsas & Beasley 2012, p. 22). This means questioning what is assumed to be the truth and logic by the policymakers and analyzing it from a different perspective the policymakers might not have considered.

The report will be analyzed through a simple coding scheme to translate what is written between the lines. Adapting the coding scheme allows for keeping extracts from the text and the meaning behind them to answer the individual questions in one place. This contributes to the legitimacy of the research because the reader can see what was written directly next to the researcher's interpretation. The coding scheme ensures transparency in how interpretations are made, making it easier to trace how specific representations of the "problem" are constructed within the report. This simplicity also allows the analysis to remain focused on uncovering implicit assumptions and silences.

5.1.1 Table 1: Coding scheme

Questions:	Text	Code
1) What's the "problem" represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?		
2) What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the "problem"?		
3) How has this representation of the "problem" come about?		
4) What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently?		
5) What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"?		
6) How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended?		

5.2 Document Selection

The reason for using the Annual Report is that it is overarching of all topics, so there will not be any bias based on what one topic might lack, as well focus on the overall structure and aim of the organization. Norad produces reports on the overall results and progress of Norwegian development cooperation, including the work of other bodies concerned with development, such as the Norwegian Investment Fund (Norfund) and the Parliament (Regjeringen). The official annual reports are concise and descriptive of how Norad and its partners operate and what changes are recommended for the future. Each development topic is structured by background, findings, and recommendations and is composed of evaluations from comprehensive sector reports from the past year. The development sectors addressed in the report are called "Reports from the Department for Evaluation". All Norad reports are available through their website search engine.

5.3 Primary Source: Norad Annual Report 2023

Title: Annual Report 2022 - 2024: The way forward

Original title: Annual Report 2023: The way forward

Year and month of publication: May 2024

ISBN: 978-82-8369-206-8

Authoring body: Norad Department for Evaluation

Stated purpose: “... the Department for Evaluation has a particular responsibility to document the extent to which Norwegian development aid is effective, relevant, and achieving the intended results. The purpose of the evaluations is to help learn from experience and to hold the actors in development policy to account. ... An important part of the Department’s work is to contribute to transparency and disseminate knowledge to the general public in order to promote learning and accountability.” (Norad 2024, p. 8)

Report length: 71 pages

Report format: Structured by sections:

- Preface
- About the Department for Evaluation
- Lessons learned
- Reports from the Department for Evaluation
- Collaboration with partners
- Follow-up of evaluations
- Overview of earlier evaluation and studies

5.3.1 Table 2: Reports from the Department for Evaluation

Title/topic:	Description:	Pages:
Norway’s work on including persons with disabilities in development cooperation	“The purpose of this evaluation was to contribute information that can be used to strengthen Norway’s work to include people with disabilities in development aid. The evaluation consists of three reports.”	pp. 18-19
Norwegian support for the Nansen Cooperation in the fisheries sector, 2006-2022	“This evaluation looked at the tripartite cooperation between the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Institute of Marine Research and Norad, with a primary focus on development aid through the research vessel Dr. Fridtjof Nansen (DFN).”	pp. 20-23
The UN Development System’s socioeconomic response to Covid-19	“Following the establishment of the Covid-19 Fund, Norad’s Department for Evaluation initiated an evaluation of the work of the Fund in cooperation with the Office of the UN Secretary-General.”	pp. 24-25
Norway’s involvement in the Sahel	“The evaluation contains two reports. The first report looks at the organisation and management of Norwegian development aid to the Sahel, while the second report assesses the results of the Norwegian support for food security in Mali.”	pp. 26-29

Title/topic:	Description:	Pages:
Review of evaluations of food security interventions	“The purpose of both reports is to make available information from previous evaluations that can help to make the implementation of the government’s food security strategy more knowledge-based.”	pp. 30-31
The Climate and Forest Initiative’s support for civil society	“The purpose of the evaluation is to contribute knowledge and learning that can help to strengthen the administration of this support.”	pp. 32-35
The interaction between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace efforts in Norwegian development aid	“The purpose of the evaluation is to provide input concerning how Norway can strengthen its overall efforts. Intended users of the evaluation include decision-makers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and those involved in grant administration and partner dialogues in the three countries.”	pp. 36-39
Literature study on corruption risk in Ukraine	“The purpose of this literature review is to assist in effective decision-making and risk management for donors in relation to official development aid to Ukraine.”	pp. 40-41
Reflection memo on conflict sensitivity	“To shed light on conflict sensitivity in Norwegian development aid, the Department for Evaluation has published a reflection note on the topic.”	pp. 42-43

5.4 Interview Outline

The purpose of the interviews is to address the contemporary perspectives on Norway’s approach to development aid and cooperation from government representatives actively involved in foreign policy. In-person semi-structured interviews were chosen because it allows the participant to lead the interview in the direction of their competence while maintaining a structured approach and coherence between the different interviews. In addition, the interviews will avoid leading questions and rather propose open-ended questions. The final interview timespan is decided by the participant but is set to take between 30 minutes to one hour. Three representatives agreed to participate in this research. This is a limited sample size for a comparative analysis but reaches the aim of gathering in-depth, individual perspectives. Furthermore, conducting in-person interviews is essential to facilitate an open dialogue, whereas email or video conferencing would not have the same effect. The selected interviewees have diverse professional backgrounds

within international political work and diverse personal backgrounds, adding nuance to the research. The interviews are anonymous and intend to represent the interviewees as individuals rather than political figures. The reason for this is that they are familiar with the MFA processes and operations and have experienced what works well and where they see room for improvement. Representatives of the Norwegian government must be cautious of how they are represented and not damage the Norwegian government's reputation, and their responses must align with MFA perspectives. The purpose of the interviews is to know what perspectives and challenges are not presented in official documents. In addition, the interviewees are informed sources and have vast experience in international affairs, helping shape perspectives for the discussion and to establish what the presumptions behind Norwegian development cooperation methods are. By asking critical questions, the MFA can justify why certain choices were made and how they react to the paradigm shift and criticism, making the researcher less biased. The purpose of the interviews is to listen and learn, which is why the interviews are not a part of the main research and will not be analyzed through a coding scheme.

5.5 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

The interviewees are informed of consent, anonymity, publication, purpose, and aim of the study ahead of the interviews taking place. Interviewees have consented to the research and publication orally in the interview transcripts both before and after the interviews. The participants will remain anonymous by name and specific occupation to ensure honesty, safety, and data security. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without consequences and without needing to provide a reason. Due to the politicized nature of the topic, the participants were selected because of their engagement in improving Norwegian development cooperation and willingness to partake in this research. The interviews are conducted in a workplace setting to ensure comfort in a familiar setting. They will be conducted in Norwegian because this is the participant's first language and working language. The interview audio files and transcripts will be stored on a private, password-protected device, only accessible to the researcher. Participants were informed of the academic purpose of the interviews and that the discussion would include critical perspectives.

The WPR approach relies on interpretation and reading between the lines, questioning the researchers' objectivity. This makes the preliminary research vital to establish a holistic understanding of the organization and limit the room for misinterpretation. The annual report does not reflect the entirety of Norad and the Norwegian government's policies and implementation practices. Despite limitations, the research methodology provides a useful lens for interrogating policy discourse.

6 Analysis

6.1 Bacchi's Six Questions

6.1.1 What's the "problem" represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?

The key problem represented in the report is that the organization is working inefficiently and is not coordinating and cooperating with other actors successfully, leading to a lack of results, which is blamed on a lack of knowledge and measurement. The table "Problems Represented" demonstrates the problems represented and how this comes about in the report, including examples extracted from the report (Appendix 9.3). The main categories of problems represented in this report are organizational inefficiency, fragmented coordination between actors, knowledge and research gaps, result and measuring gaps, global conflict and unsafe conditions, non-inclusive patterns, unclear and undefined goals and objectives. The coding scheme used for this analysis is included in the appendix with extended examples of the problems represented and how the conclusions were drawn (Appendix 9.4).

Organizational inefficiency is not written explicitly but is demonstrated throughout the report and by comparing the report to past reports and their similarities as well as summarizing the other problems represented. Communication and coordination issues are represented through several recommendations such as the explicit need for meetings and communication (Norad 2024, p. 25, p. 28). Knowledge gaps, is explicitly that they require more knowledge, implicitly telling that they are uninformed on topics they should have been informed on, presenting that development can happen through more knowledge. The results and measuring gaps demonstrate that they have not been able to either see or show progress. The challenge of global conflict and unsafe conditions is a result of rising conflict in a shifting global landscape; however, it is inevitable in foreign aid. For this analysis, it represents the problem that development cooperation has not been able to stop conflicts from happening and that long-term development is hindered by conflict. Norad recognized non-inclusive patterns and presents recommendations such as "Norad should facilitate a common data-sharing policy that contributes to inclusive research (i.e. where partner countries are not only the subject of research but also participate throughout the research process) (Norad 2024, p. 23). Unclear and

undefined goals and objectives is repeated throughout the report including under the report on inclusion, fishery, and climate change (Norad 2024, p. 19, p. 23, p. 34). This demonstrates how they have worked towards objectives they do not know how to solve and that the plans they are presented with are not extensive to what they should entail.

6.1.2 What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the “problem”?

The underlying presumption throughout the measure suggestions is that the organization has not accomplished what they have intended to achieve with past efforts. The report frequently recommends further measuring, reporting, and knowledge-building to improve achievements. The problems lead to the assumption that the organization is not working efficiently and that this can be solved through reorganizing and strengthening the structure and competence of the organization. The report is inherently supportive of the work the organization has done, despite showing little evidence of its accomplishments and criticizing its structure, efficiency, and ability to serve its intended purpose (Appendix 9.4). The report assumes that by continuing to do what they have done, in a different manner, they will be able to see greater results. The report relies on building knowledge and reading internal reports to do development cooperation efficiently and blames knowledge gaps for the lack of progress. Producing knowledge and organizational structural changes creates direct, measurable results for the organization rather than progress in the lived realities of people in developing countries. It can therefore seem more profitable for the organization to focus on the organization’s structure and research reports because it gives a false sense of results. Research is vital for the effectiveness and longevity of development cooperation, and organizations ensure that development goals are optimal and organized. However, after working towards these goals for decades, it should be questioned whether the problems are structural.

6.1.3 How has this representation of the “problem” come about?

The suggested measure “Procedures to ensure better coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad and the embassy should be further developed, e.g.: - Schedule regular meetings...” discloses that communication is lacking and that there has been either faulty or inadequate information sharing between the involved parties (Norad 2024, p. 28). In addition, it discloses that the main communication happens between the Norwegian actors, not the local ones, and that they are working to expand the bureaucratic structure. This further indicates that administrative organization is what is required to solve external problems and that the expansion of bureaucratic structures is not regarded as a problem. This also

supports the notion that the actors would be better equipped to reach their development goals if they had information that the other actors already have.

Norad is an organization under the Norwegian government, meaning it is their job to make the government's development plan happen and follow the government's program. This limits Norad's opportunity to be critical and make changes to the projects. They are tied to limited opportunities for change because it is not under their legal authority to challenge partners, create new frameworks, and open/close projects. This adds a layer to the bureaucratic structure of the organization, as well as questions the efficiency of the system when the ones executing the projects are not the ones allocating the projects. The problem framing is, therefore, limited to what they can do with what they have. Norad, as a governmental organization, has limited access to proposing political and sensitive recommendations. This is evident in the reports' correctness, and at times, unclarity. Not everything can be shared with the public, and the organization cannot stray away from its governmental role. This is not only shaped by the Norwegian government but also by international norms and organizations such as the UN and OECD.

6.1.4 What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently?

The recurring problems reveal challenges within the organization's structure and objectives, which are not reflected in the report. The report shifts attention inward, toward improving internal systems, rather than outward, toward the structural or political roots of global development challenges. Because of the political implications of being a government body representing a national perspective, the report does not address its hierarchical structure and donor-centric framing of problems.

Comparing the 2023 Annual Report to the Annual Report of 2000 demonstrates how the perspectives have changed since the early 2000s. The focus in 2000 is on directly mentioning where the problems are, what the projects are, which groups are facing issues, how Norway is working with other governments, and what problems this may cause in terms of transparency and corruption. The report from 2000 prioritized external affairs rather than the organization's structure, such as the one from 2023. Despite this, there are many similarities between the two reports and recurring areas of improvement, demonstrated by the 2023 mention of recommendation "regulars" (Norad 2024, p. 12). The report does not include why the same changes are proposed every year and why they are unable to accomplish this. On a larger scale, the repetitive challenges they face should be an indicator that this form of development aid might not be effective and that the top-down approach is unsuccessful. This is demonstrated through the organization's focus on developing its systems. One interviewee explained how development organizations, particularly at the international and national level, can become self-sustaining machines rather than a means to coordinate and distribute development

aid (Interviewee 3). As the organizations grow larger, they employ more people, open more sections, write longer reports, etc., which consumes a large portion of the budget and distances the real issues and objectives the organization is working towards from them.

6.1.5 What effects are produced by this representation of the “problem”?

The report’s problem representation can have consequences for Norad’s ability to reach development goals. The report becomes superficial by not addressing structural limitations and only addressing problems at the surface level. The problem representation reveals the structural and political factors limiting the organization’s opportunity to improve its results; however, structural changes are not reflected in the recommended measures. The real-world consequences of this are that Norway’s development aid and cooperation will continue to be handled inefficiently, and resources will be allocated to supporting an inefficient organization. Framing the problems as corrections the organization can solve with its current structure protects it from facing consequences such as downsizing and being reorganized. It is therefore beneficial for Norad not to criticize the efficiency and function of this type of development organization. In addition, it protects the Norwegian government and promotes chances for more employment and receiving funds. The professionalism of the report and the perceived accessibility of solutions frame Norad as a neutral and capable agent who needs more structure and data. This creates confidence in the organization, limiting the space for structural critiques and marginalizing alternative voices, which justifies the status quo.

6.1.6 How/where has this representation of the “problem” been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?

Institutional mechanisms rooted in governmental and international development frameworks are the background for how the problems in the report have been created, spread, and supported. As Norad is an official agency under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the report reflects the norms, expectations, and political boundaries set by both national government priorities and international development actors such as the UN, OECD, and World Bank. Because of this, the report cannot apply critical perspectives to the critique of its development efforts. The problems the report presents are supported by referencing the organization’s reports and data, as well as adopting standardized frameworks by international actors, such as the UN. The repetitive nature of the recommended measures reinforces a narrow, internal framing of the problem, normalizing organizational self-focus over time and discouraging deeper structural or political critiques that might challenge or replace this dominant representation. The report uses official

and professional language, which demonstrates that the intended audience is donors, government agents, and international institutions, rather than the general population or receiving parties. The language and framing relate to the top-down hierarchical structure of national and international government bodies. This does not mean that receiving countries or the general population are unable to understand the contents of the document; however, this aim would call for a direct-action plan rather than ambiguous points. The report is produced by the Department for Evaluation; a separate department of Norad, to ensure the validity and objectivity of the evaluation, however, the problem representation does not challenge the structure of the organization nor the framework behind the report.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Global Power Structures

The first question behind the problem representation of the report is the intention behind the framing and why certain points are included, not included, or repeated. World-systems theory describes global relations as being interconnected and countries' actions and relationships as being dependent on each other. The world economic system is a hindrance for all countries to develop equally through mechanisms such as the division of labor and control of resources (Fentahun 2023, pp. 7-8). The Norwegian aid paradigm demonstrates a will to use money and efforts on development projects; however, there is no will to give up power or take action that would lead to global redistribution, which would entail Norway potentially having less. The colonial legacy and core-periphery structure of development aid are not directly enforced by the Norwegian government's development plan through Norad; they are products of the global structure, making it difficult to counteract. Development politics does not only entail development-specific policies; it includes economic policy and overall foreign policy. E.g., Norway has allocated vast aid resources to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, but the Norwegian Government Pension Fund has invested 220 billion NOK in Israeli organizations contributing to the illegal occupation of Palestine (Hovland 2024). This perspective highlights how aid and development cooperation are conditional because they are applied when they do not affect the West negatively. The problem representation in the report contributes to the perspective that Norad is aware of the problems it faces and knows how to solve these problems; however, without considering structural inequality perpetrated by global economic divisions, these problems are surface level. In addition, the recent shift to relying on multilateral institutions gives more power to the international community, which is powered by countries such as the

US, which limits Norway's opportunity to stand on its humanitarian principles. Because of promises to follow and contribute to the development plans established by the UN, OECD, and World Bank, applying critical approaches is not an option, and the implications for going against the international community would have consequences for Norway. In the changing global political landscape, aligning with allied influential nations and maintaining relationships has become increasingly important to ensure national security and diplomatic protection.

In the report, the aim of development cooperation is presented as including developing countries in the capitalist economy, rather than dismantling the unjust system. Capitalism as an economic system is meant to promote equal competition, however, nations' unequal starting positions gives the Global North an advantage stemming from its historical wealth and institutional power (Boehmer 2005). To address these issues, the report could focus on how many post-colonial nations are dependent on economic output from low-income, high-risk industries, which the West, including Norway, benefits from. A holistic approach would entail how Norway can dismantle the dependency of these industries from both sides. However, interviewee 2 explains that the perspective that developing countries are systematically deprived of development is unproductive because it does not offer a constructive plan. Norad's report must consider what it can do and how it can help people the most, making discussions of global power structures a national political issue. However, acknowledging this issue would entail reconsidering processes within the organization and reviewing the organization's structure including the top-down approach.

The framing of knowledge gaps undermines local knowledge and agency because it implies that Norad requires more knowledge of what causes growth and how the sector, e.g., works from a Norwegian perspective when the knowledge exists in the recipient country. This aligns with the historical colonial logic that the Global North acts as a helper and knower, which is never explicitly said, but understood through the framing of knowledge. This is mirrored by the "knowledge gaps," "capacity building," and "coordination," and the perspective that Norway is responsible for figuring out the solution. This creates more work for Norad in addition to undermining local knowledge. This builds on a technocratic worldview rooted in colonialism, by seeking bureaucratic flaws as the reason behind underdevelopment. Fentahun (2023) expands on how imposing the Western model of society is both superficial and symbolic which undermines political and civil liberties.

6.2.2 Contrasting Perspectives

The problems Norwegian development cooperation and international work faces was described differently by the interview participants and the report and each interview gave a distinct and nuanced perspective on the challenges. The first challenge acknowledged by multiple interviewees, which Norad's report did not address, is how much the operation entails (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2). Considering the challenge of providing development assistance, Norad should be

credited for reviewing its efficiency and progress and addressing these issues. Interviewee 1 described how it is a challenge to spend the budget they must spend and that the political top allocates money to projects without concern about how the money should be spent. This is a similar effect to the HIV/AIDS misplaced budget from 1992 and 2005 (Renzio 2016, pp. 7-8). The politicians have self-interests in allocating the budgets and policies, however, so do other actors such as the UN and recipient countries (Interviewee 1). E.g. recipient countries have an interest in centering the donor because this can give them larger sums, while the donor attempts to center the recipient (Interviewee 2). This is something the participants encountered, which made it more difficult to place funds effectively. The reason behind shifting to multilateral institutions from bilateral aid is that individual countries do not have the capacity required. This has inadvertently led to development organizations drifting further away from the original cause as they must allocate attention to the administration and bureaucracy sustaining the organization (Interviewee 3). In addition, the increasing budget and limited management contribute to aid dependency. Interviewee 3 presents the case of Denmark, which approaches this issue by focusing on self-interests, making development a trade deal rather than dependency-promoting aid. However, because of corruption and unreliable institutions, Norwegian companies are less interested in investing in e.g. Africa (Interviewee 2).

7 Conclusion

This research paper adopts the WPR approach and the critical development theories of postcolonialism and world-systems theory to critically analyze how Norway is doing development cooperation in practice and why it is done the way it is. Prior research has established how Norway has shifted the development paradigm it has followed since the 1990s and early 2000s and has become more reliant on other nations and international actors. This has made Norway less independent and explains some of Norad's limitations. The inefficiency of Norway's development aid programs is criticized in the public media, prompting Norad to set new goals and project plans. This is presented in their most recent annual report, which, despite being entitled "The way forward," is repetitive of past reports and does not address what they have been criticized for. The research finds two common features of the problems represented in the report. The first one is insufficient communication and cooperation within the organization, the second is a lack of knowledge and research on how to implement development aid effectively. The report is focused on internal issues and lacks an understanding of and a focus on the hierarchical structures creating global inequality. The policies and changes the report suggests are grounded in the belief that Norad can contribute more to development by continuing to grow and allocate resources to the organization's knowledge and evaluation sections. The report acknowledges some of its shortcomings, by mentioning that there is no one-size-fits-all way to development and that partners, sponsors, and political agents are a factor. However, the policy suggestions do not reflect a will to address these shortcomings. The aim of the policy suggestions is unclear because the language used in the report is often indirect and imprecise. This leads to questions of how intentional the report is and if the organization has become a bureaucratic machine made to sustain itself rather than implement development aid. Bacchi's six questions unveil these shortcomings, while giving credit where it is due, e.g., in the report's accurate global status description and acknowledgment of its insufficiency during the pandemic. The report is focused on measurable policies and measures rather than efficient and direct aid.

The way Norad presents its recommended measures demonstrates how Norway attempts to be inclusive and adopt critical perspectives but cannot do so because knowledge and efforts are displaced. The knowledge gap they identify includes doing more Western research on development paradigms, rather than applying knowledge from peoples lived realities.

This research unfolds how development organizations think inwards instead of outwards. This is partially because global power dynamics limit opportunities for external changes. Critical perspectives and South perspectives are increasingly important because of rising polarization and the negativity around inclusivity post-

golden age of development. Norad's evaluation process is extensive and presents important measures, despite its shortcomings. This is a result of structural limitations, both at the multilateral institutional level and in the Norwegian development paradigm from the political top to execution. The report is overall aimed at maintaining Norway's image internationally and meeting donor expectations, however, the report does not reflect Norad as a whole and the challenges they face. Marginalized perspective should be emphasized on every level, and the problems represented are a result of the structure and limitations of Norway's development cooperation administration.

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9 Appendix

9.1 Interview Questions

1. How do you perceive Norwegian development aid today? What are your initial thoughts?
2. Have you observed a shift in development policy during your time in the field?
3. There has been a shift from bilateral aid to supporting multilateral institutions. Do you have any thoughts about this?
4. Do you see an end to foreign aid and development cooperation?
5. Does foreign aid and development cooperation lead to long-term growth?
 - a. Do you see evidence that Norwegian development cooperation has led to long-term growth?
6. In your work with development institutions, have you encountered barriers?
 - a. If so, are the obstacles to achieving development structural or political?
 - b. Do you encounter more resistance internally or externally? Nationally or internationally?
7. Is it right for the West to influence developing countries through our political frameworks?
8. Do you think Norwegian development policy is effective?
 - a. Would you describe it as progressive or proactive?

9.2 Problems Represented

Problem represented:	Key Findings from the Report	How This Representation Comes About	Where This Representation Comes About
Organizational inefficiency	Norwegian development aid fails to achieve its intended results in key sectors. The organization has	Many recommended measures concern the internal affairs of the organization and Norad's organizational structure, rather than project proposals and	"Over time, it has become apparent that there are several "regulars" in our evaluation findings" (p. 12)

		project plan improvements.	
Fragmented coordination between actors	Norad, the Foreign Ministry, the Norwegian government, embassies, and other involved organizations are not communicating clearly and have had different understandings, leading to insufficient development cooperation.	Increasing meetings and communication and ensuring agreed terms and objectives between Norad and its partners are recommended under several topics. Initiatives started by, e.g., the UN have not been implemented properly because of coordination and comprehension issues.	<p>“Procedures to ensure better coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad and the embassy should be further developed, e.g.: - Schedule regular meetings with external stakeholders for the exchange of information and coordination of efforts.” (p. 28)</p> <p>“Strengthen the UN organisation’s incentives for joint programming and accountability for collective outcomes, as well as the decisiveness in supporting the SecretaryGeneral’s local representation and the country teams.” (p. 25)</p>
Knowledge and research gaps	Norad is unable to do development cooperation and deliver aid efficiently because of knowledge gaps. The organization is not aware of what is required to achieve its goals in many areas.	Norad is recommended by the evaluation group to increase their knowledge in several areas, as well as conduct research and develop a deeper understanding of issues and how projects should be executed.	<p>“we know little about the factors that contribute to food security in the long term” (p. 14)</p> <p>“Norad’s Section for Forests has taken important steps to improve the application of knowledge” (p. 14)</p>
Result and measuring gaps	The intended results of development projects have not been demonstrated within the set timeframe. Many projects are not	Project coordinators have been asked to report back more frequently and find more accurate ways of measuring results, because the	“Prioritisation of follow-up and reporting of the outcome of the EAF-Nansen programme’s strategy to address gender

	reporting back what they have achieved, and the organization is unaware of what efforts should be changed or invested more in.	organization is failing to meet/demonstrate the achievements of projects.	equality considerations.” (p. 23) “Improve how the development aid administration and partners document and learn from dilemmas and document risk assessments” (p. 38)
Global conflict and unsafe conditions	The changing global landscape is a key factor in the report, making new challenges occur in terms of achieving development. Because of rising conflicts, threats to working personnel, and the risk of intervening in conflicts, the organization's opportunities become limited.	Plans to work around corruption and conflict and ensure safety measures are recommended in special regard to Ukraine and the Sahel. Specific plans to combine humanitarian aid, development, and peace efforts are enforced.	“we now see a world characterised by global crises linked to war, conflict and climate change affecting the poorest” (p. 4)
Non-inclusive patterns	The report acknowledges the lack of inclusion in some areas, such as disabilities in education. The report describes cases of not including partners in reporting and decision-making.	A section is dedicated to disability inclusion, and other sections regarding marginalized groups and partners in developing countries are planning to include these groups further in planning, assessments, and reporting.	“On the road to a more inclusive education system, it is necessary to identify local solutions within existing budget frameworks that create the best available education for each child” (p. 19) “we have not been good enough at including recipient countries in the evaluation process.” (p. 5)
Unclear and undefined goals and objectives	Many objectives of projects and plans are not clearly defined, and the organization has not	The report includes recommendations to define and clarify objectives as well as to adopt knowledge of	“The strategy ‘Equality for all’ should be translated into clearly defined objectives for

	<p>followed a distinct plan to achieve its goals. Time is being wasted on creating definitions and plans that should have been decided, meaning the organization is struggling to produce cohesive project plans.</p>	<p>what the objectives set by partner organizations mean and how this can be achieved.</p>	<p>the various sectors.” (p. 19)</p> <p>“The Nansen Cooperation lacks a clear theory of change that describes how, why and under what conditions the various components of the cooperation will contribute to the realisation of the goals of poverty reduction and better food security.” (p. 21)</p>
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9.3 Coding Scheme

Bacchi’s 6 questions:	Text	Code
<p>1) What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?</p>	<p>“we now see a world characterised by global crises linked to war, conflict and climate change affecting the poorest” (p. 4)</p> <p>“The pandemic revealed an increasing need for faster access to knowledge than traditional evaluations can offer. In crises, decisions must be made quickly, and then short evaluation processes may be needed to ensure that the knowledge can be applied rapidly” (p. 4)</p> <p>“we have not been good enough at including recipient countries in the evaluation process.” (p. 5)</p>	<p>The world has changed, and there are now more conflicts and challenges to address, making development harder to achieve.</p> <p>They acknowledge that their processes have been too slow once an urgent world issue (The pandemic) tested them. This can also be related to the paradigm shift/ becoming less optimistic.</p> <p>They acknowledge that they have not included recipient countries. Will this be demonstrated in the policy suggestions?</p>

	<p>“Over time, it has become apparent that there are several “regulars” in our evaluation findings” (p. 12)</p> <p>“Norad’s Section for Forests has taken important steps to improve the application of knowledge” (p. 14)</p> <p>“we know little about the factors that contribute to food security in the long term” (p. 14)</p> <p>“On the road to a more inclusive education system, it is necessary to identify local solutions within existing budget frameworks that create the best available education for each child” (p. 19)</p> <p>“The strategy ‘Equality for all’ should be translated into clearly defined objectives for the various sectors.” (p. 19)</p> <p>“The Nansen Cooperation lacks a clear theory of change that describes how, why and under what conditions the various components of the cooperation will contribute to the realisation of the goals of poverty reduction and better food security.” (p. 21)</p> <p>“In a dialogue with the parties concerned, Norad should clarify both the Nansen Cooperation’s theory of change and what the cooperation strategy is for achieving the practical implementation of the ecosystem approach and the goals of poverty reduction and better food security in partner countries.” (p. 23)</p> <p>“Norad should facilitate a common data-sharing policy that contributes to inclusive research (i.e. where</p>	<p>They have many problems that they have not been able to solve, despite it appearing in many policy proposals throughout many years.</p> <p>The report represents the problem as a lack of knowledge; however, how many years of knowledge and reports does it take to do development effectively?</p> <p>Problem: The organization does not know how to tackle food security, leading to the need for more research on what causes food security. The question is whether food security is a measurable issue with a specific scientific solution.</p> <p>Problem: Education is not inclusive enough, and the budget is limited.</p> <p>Problem: The strategy is not clear enough; however, it is necessary to allocate resources to defining a strategy, but it is unclear what it means.</p> <p>Problem: A lack of theoretically based knowledge. Does this mean that they have made a section and fund that they are unclear of the motives behind that lead to the results? - Leads to thinking there is too much organization and too little result.</p>
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	<p>partner countries are not only the subject of research, but also participate throughout the research process), which is relevant to policy-making, not least in order to contribute to an informed/knowledge-based public debate concerning fisheries, marine and resource management issues in partner countries and regions.” (p. 23)</p> <p>“Strengthening the institutionalisation of competence-building in partner countries to avoid the impact of efforts being limited to involvement and debate among project participants.” (p. 23)</p> <p>“Prioritisation of follow-up and reporting of the outcome of the EAF-Nansen programme’s strategy to address gender equality considerations.” (p. 23)</p> <p>“Strengthen the UN organisation’s incentives for joint programming and accountability for collective outcomes, as well as the decisiveness in supporting the SecretaryGeneral’s local representation and the country teams.” (p. 25)</p> <p>“Develop collaborative models to improve the interaction between the UN Development System and international financial institutions to ensure holistic policy-making, planning and implementation of multilateral efforts at the country level.” (p. 25)</p> <p>“Procedures to ensure better coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad and the embassy should be further developed, e.g.: - Schedule regular</p>	<p>Problem: not enough knowledge, not inclusive enough. The solution is to include partner countries, but the question is whether this is based on sharing knowledge with partner countries or learning from them. The latter is more inclusive because it does not center the West. Question: Is producing a debate a real solution?</p> <p>Problem: Knowledge/ competence is not institutionalized - measurable, but not direct effort.</p> <p>Problem: does not consider gender equality.</p> <p>Problem: Inefficiencies in the UN system = taking matters into their own hands.</p> <p>Problem: Policy-making is currently not holistic, and there are potential problems with communication between international actors. With the vast amount.</p> <p>Problem: poor coordination between the different sections. Many organizations have coordination and communication problems, making them set up more meetings. Is this effective, or does it take up more time, which could have been used differently?</p> <p>Problem: Defining what development aid is and that</p>
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	<p>meetings with external stakeholders for the exchange of information and coordination of efforts.” (p. 28)</p> <p>“A guide should be developed that can contribute to a common understanding both within the development aid administration and among partners concerning how cross-cutting considerations should be operationalised and implemented within Norwegian development aid.” (p. 28)</p> <p>“Furthermore, partners should be required to submit a report on how this is done in practice.” (p. 28)</p> <p>“Strengthen monitoring systems in order to aggregate results data from supported projects.” (p. 34)</p> <p>“Establish routines for better coordination, complementarity and cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad and the embassies.” (p. 38)</p> <p>“Improve how the development aid administration and partners document and learn from dilemmas and document risk assessments” (p. 38)</p>	<p>there is a common understanding of how it is administered. They have done this since 1968, it should have been established by now.</p> <p>Problem: They do not have sufficient information about how partners are organized and how they perform their tasks. Since they believe this, the results are likely insufficient, meaning they want a report to improve results. However, development is a long-term process, and making more reports is likely to take away time and effort from doing the development tasks. Are they expecting results to quickly, and results that can be demonstrated in a report?</p>
<p>2) What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the ‘problem’?</p>	<p>“Good decisions concerning development aid also require an understanding of risk, partly to prevent the development aid from exacerbating the situation. The evaluation of Norway’s involvement in the Sahel shows that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should better facilitate systematic work on conflict sensitivity, both within the development aid administration and among partners.” (p. 14)</p> <p>“evaluations have shown that this may be an illusion, because</p>	<p>Acknowledging that development aid can be a sensitive issue in many places, and that there are reasons they chose not to be direct about politicised issues, and that there are limitations to what they can do.</p> <p>They need more knowledge because they acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all manual for development. This is likely a reference to that they have accomplished a lot in “the golden age of</p>

	<p>measures work differently in different contexts, and different contexts need different measures. Political, historical, cultural, economic, social and other factors make up the context of development aid measures.” (p. 15)</p> <p>“The review of the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of climate adaptation in food security measures found that climate adaptation measures that were based on local knowledge and considered the needs of the target group were easier to implement.” (p. 15)</p> <p>“Although conflict sensitivity, localisation and rights-based approaches are well-established principles in Norwegian development aid, they are operationalised in different ways and to a limited extent.” (p. 37)</p> <p>“The literature study on corruption risk in Ukraine points out that effective measures against corruption in conflict contexts require a solid understanding of local power structures” (p. 15)</p>	<p>development”, but it has stagnated, and what was once applied as a method and believed in is no longer effective.</p>
<p>3) How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?</p>		
<p>4) What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?</p>	<p>“Within development aid, major decisions are made concerning the choice of measures, partners and spending. How decisions should be made to ensure that the development aid is effective is always a matter for debate,” (p. 14.)</p> <p>”Prioritisation of follow-up and reporting of the outcome of the</p>	<p>They acknowledge that there are discussions and debates of who they choose to partner with and how money is spent; however, which conflicts this entails are kept private, and the political implications of this are not mentioned.</p>

	<p>EAF-Nansen programme’s strategy to address gender equality considerations.” (p. 23)</p>	<p>In the mention of gender equality, there is no more mention of how this will be done, in what ways the programme is currently not addressing gender equality, and what consequences this has. This makes it seem more like an afterthought. Focusing more on gender is something mentioned in Annual Reports repeatedly since 2000. Ergo, it is not being addressed sufficiently or in the most effective ways.</p> <p>It is an underlying theme throughout the report that there are structural problems within the organization, causing a lack of results, and that more knowledge is needed in many areas. However, there is no mention that this might imply a bigger problem with the foundation of the organization's work. Rather, more evaluations and reports are requested to solve issues.</p> <p>The fact that the organization has political motives, such as supporting the neoliberal world order, international hierarchies, and damaging relationships with countries such as Israel or the U.S., countries with opposing agendas in terms of development.</p> <p>Are structural changes within this organization and building more bureaucracy the answer to achieving development worldwide? There is no evidence of nor mention of</p>
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		how these internal changes are making development happen.
5) What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?		
6) How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended?		Defining solutions. The solutions are from a Western-centric view of what society should look like, with little thought of that the ideal Norwegian Society might not be the same everywhere.