The Nordic Model in a Global Context

Organizers and teachers: Professor Marie-Laure Salles-Djelic, Centre de Sociologie des organisations, Science-Po, and Professor Klaus Petersen, Danish Centre for Welfare Studies, University of Southern Denmark
Co-teachers: Professor Lars Mjøset, Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, and Professor Haldor Byrkjeflot, UiO: Nordic, University of Oslo, Norway

This course is sponsored by UiO: Nordic

Course dates: 23 - 27 July 2018

Main disciplines: Sociology, History, Political Science, Political Economy, Organizational Theory

Course Credits: 10 pts (ECTS)
Limitation: 25 participants

Course objectives / learning outcome

From Washington to Shanghai, the Nordic Welfare State is a renowned model of society. Sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, the international interest seems to be intact and growing. Nordic societies are generally seen as living proof of the possibility of stable democracies, the combination of economic success and social rights, the realization (at least partially) of social inclusion and gender equality, and the successful combat of poverty. This is pointed out by numerous international studies and rankings where the Nordic countries are almost always in the top-10. However, taking a closer look at the debates and nature of the actual use of the model reveals quite different understandings and uses of the Nordic model. It might refer to a variety of topics (from welfare over gender equality to efficient growth models), it can be positive (utopic) or
negative (dystopic), and it changes over time. But how and why has it attracted so much interest?

Drawing on recent research by both social scientists and historians, this summer course aims at critically assessing the Nordic model in the global context. In other words, we will discuss what is the Nordic model and how has it been circulated globally. Our point of departure is two-fold: First, we argue that the model must be studied in a global context. Secondly, we need to take the circulation (the diffusion and the ‘domestification’) of the model into account.

Consequently, the course will be organized in three parts:

- In the first part, we’ll focus on developing an analytical framework for the study of diffusion of ideas and societal models. This will allow us also to place the Nordic model into the broader framework of global political economy.
- Second, we’ll take a closer look at the Nordic model. How did it develop historically, and does it really exist (except as an idea)?
- Third, we’ll focus on the global circulation of the Nordic model. This will include both empirical case-studies and more theoretical perspectives on how the Nordic model was constructed and reconstructed in time and space.
Overview of topics and lectures:

**Part 1: The diffusion of ideas and model:**

Monday, July 23

- Lecture 1: Diffusion and the spread of ideas: Nordic perspective (Klaus Petersen)
- Lecture 2: Explaining Policy Similarities – Alternative Theorizations (Marie-Laure Salles-Djelic)

Tuesday, July 24

- Lecture 3: Asymmetries of the global circulation of models: The US model in postwar era (Klaus Petersen)
- Lecture 4: Asymmetries of power in transnational governance: Building transnational communities of project and influence (Marie-Laure Salles-Djelic)

**Part 2: The Nordic model:**

Wednesday, July 25

- Lecture 5: The historical development of the Nordic model (Klaus Petersen)
- Lecture 6: Synthetic definitions of a "Nordic model" in history and social science (Lars Mjøset)

**Part 3: Circulation(s) of the Nordic model:**

Thursday, July 26

- Lecture 7: Circulation of Nordic models (Haldor Byrkjeflot)
- Lecture 8: Nordic brands and images during the Cold War (Klaus Petersen)

Friday, July 27

- Lecture 9: Nordic cooperation and the Nordic arena for diffusion of ideas (Klaus Petersen)
- Lecture 10: The status of the Nordic model today – branded and rebranded (Klaus Petersen)
COURSE OUTLINE

Part 1: The diffusion of ideas and model:

Lecture 1: **Diffusion and the spread of ideas: Nordic perspective** (Klaus Petersen)
This lecture will set the scene for the course addressing the historical background for the making of the Nordic model as well as growing interest in the diffusion of societal models within social sciences and literature (including such themes as the role of ideas, transnational history and diffusion).

Literature:


Lecture 2: **Explaining Policy Similarities – Alternative Theorizations** (Marie-Laure Salles-Djelic)
This lecture will explore alternative ways of thinking about policy similarities to theories of diffusion. In particular, we will explore functionalist and modernization theories both in historical perspective and in their still quite powerful and performative contemporary impact. We will then turn to the historical emergence of an architecture of transnational governance as a powerful way in which to account for policy similarities across the world.

Literature:

Lecture 3: **Asymmetries of the global circulation of models: The US model in postwar era** (Klaus Petersen)

During the cold-war era the US model became the point of reference globally and especially in the European case. IR-scholars and historians alike have labelled this ‘Americanization’. However this process of Americanization was not straight-forward: It included resistance, skepticism, adaptation and competition with domestic models such as the Nordic model.

Literature:


Lecture 4: **Asymmetries of power in transnational governance: Building transnational communities of project and influence** (Marie-Laure Salles-Djelic)

Here we will turn to the significant (and often invisible) institutional work behind the construction of communities of ideas, project and influence that generate new forms of soft power at the transnational level. Those communities and the intense institutional work that comes with them are important mechanisms that contribute to pushing along a certain kind of transnational governance and particular policy models and solutions.

Literature:

Part 2: The Nordic model:

Lecture 5: The historical development of the Nordic model (Klaus Petersen)
In this lecture we will take a closer look at the historical development of the Nordic model throughout the 20th Century. The goal is to offer a historical understanding of the main characteristics of the Nordic model.

Literature:


Lecture 6: Synthetic definitions of a "Nordic model" in history and social science (Professor Lars Mjøset)
This lecture will discuss efforts within historical and social scientific research to develop synthetic definitions of a “Nordic model”. Such definitions synthesize features from several issue areas (studied in local research frontiers), trying to give broader characterizations of features are distinct to the Nordic countries. The lecture will survey the strengths and weaknesses of three approaches: (1) a combination of variables oriented social science and historical archive-based work, (2) a combination of conceptual history and social theories of modernity, and (3) a combination of economic modelling and econometric exercises. Finally, it will discuss whether a program of strong comparisons can solve some of the dilemmas encountered by those three approaches.

Literature:

- Manuscript for forthcoming book chapter (will be circulated)
Part 3: Circulation(s) of the Nordic model:

Lecture 7: Circulation of Nordic models (Professor Haldor Byrkjeflot, University of Oslo)

Several examples of how different Nordic models and ideas were developed and circulated will be presented, such as the ombudsman, gender quotas, prostitution and New Nordic Cuisine. These examples will be used as background for a discussion of center – periphery relations in the spread of models and what kind of theoretical frameworks that have been used in the study of such historical processes.

Literature:

- Chapters from the forthcoming book ”Making and circulation of Nordic Models” (will be made available online).

Lecture 8: Nordic brands and images during the Cold War (Klaus Petersen)

During the Cold War the Nordic (or Scandinavian) model of society gained popularity as a ‘middle way’ between socialism and US-style capitalism. However, when we take a closer look the images of the Nordic model were quite contested: For some it was a socialist dystopia and for others it was a realistic utopia. The lecture will trace the competing images of the Nordic model in the Western world, including both Nordic branding exercises and the use of the model in other countries (such as the US).

Literature:

- Collections of reviews of Freedom and Welfare (1953) [will be handed out on day 1]

Recommended for further reading:

Lecture 9: Nordic cooperation and the Nordic arena for diffusion of ideas
(Klaus Petersen)
One of the most striking characteristic of policy-making in the Nordic region is the high intensity of cooperation. This lecture will discuss the character of Nordic cooperation in general and offer a case-study on how this cooperation within the field of social policy influenced the construction of the idea of a Nordic model of welfare.

Literature:


Lecture 10: The status of the Nordic model today – branded and rebranded
(Klaus Petersen)
The final lecture will discuss the status of the Nordic model today. We’ll engage with the renewed popularity of the model as a competitive growth model, as celebrated on the cover of the Economist in 2013 as ‘the next super-model’, as well as with the increased domestic struggle for the ownership of the model between Centre-left, Centre-right and new populist parties.

Literature:

Extra-curriculum activities:

1. We'll watch the movie (by the Nordic council) ‘Cool Nordic’
2. Individual tutoring on essays

The lecturers

Marie-Laure Salles-Djelic, PhD Harvard 1996, Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Stockholm, has also been since September 2016 University Professor at the Sciences Po Centre of Organisational Sociology. She was previously Professor at the ESSEC and Director of the Centre of Research on Capitalism, Globalisation and Governance. Marie-Laure Djelic’s research work focuses on the contemporary transformations of capitalism, the international dissemination of ideas and practices, the spreading of globalisation and the dynamics of regulation and governance in a globalised economic environment, the social responsibility of companies and their political role in this context. Her work is published in top international academic reviews and university presses.

Professor Klaus Petersen, Department of History, University of Southern Denmark is the director of Centre for Welfare State Research (www.sdu.dk/welfare). His research has focused on the historical development of welfare state with special emphasis on Denmark and on the Nordic model. He has published widely on topics such family policy, old age pension, parties and the politics of the welfare state, Nordic social political cooperation, methods in welfare state studies, social policy language (and concepts) and on immigration and the welfare state.

Haldor Byrkjeflot is Professor in Sociology at University of Oslo, academic director of one of the three major strategic priority areas at University of Oslo; UiO Nordic. Currently he is exploring issues relating to historical-comparative research, organization theory and the making and circulation of ideas across societies. His publications cover a broad specter of social scientific problems such as logics of employment systems, comparative healthcare reforms, public sector reforms as well as management systems and bureaucracy.

Lars Mjøset is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Oslo Summer School for Comparative Social Science Studies at the Social Science Faculty, University of Oslo, Norway. He is also a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science. Besides books in Norwegian, he published The Irish Economy in a Comparative Institutional Perspective, Dublin 1992. He edited several volumes Comparative Social Research: Vol. 16 (methodology), Vol. 20 (military conscription), Vol. 24 (varieties of capitalism), and most recently Vol. 28 (2011) on Nordic varieties of capitalism. Main areas of research: political economy, comparative historical sociology, environmental sociology, methodology and the history of social science. On the latter topics: “The contextualist approach to social science methodology”, in D. Byrne & C. Ragin, editors, Handbook of