

Nordic Branding

Research Application to UiO:Nordic

Summary Version, 20 June 2016

Background: ‘Nordicity’ has been described as a ‘brand’ that was shaped, exported and imported during the Cold War eras (and sometimes even earlier). In recent years, the Nordic region has actively used the consulting industry in various branding efforts. This phenomenon raises the question as to whether the rise of the Nordic models was partly strategic, a branding of stable and specific models that have purchase in the marketplace of ideas.

Preliminary Workshop: In February 2015, the Nordic Branding workshop application was one of only three granted support by UiO:Nordic. The [workshop](#) was held in May 2016 with participants from across the University of Oslo and Nordic region. A decision was made to proceed with a full application.

Research Questions: The research group examine the branding of Nordic models in a world of competing models. It firstly analyses the *construction* of brands and asks ‘Why’, ‘when’, ‘where’ and ‘how’ have Nordic models emerged as brands? Secondly, it focuses on *politics* of brands asking: how and where are brands used; do brands compete and collide; is there a ‘dark side’ to branding; and when does slippage with the real product arise?

Projects: The programme will consist of various cross-cutting projects and three substantive pillars. The *cross-cutting* projects concern the reception of Nordic models, the rise of the branding industry, the use of aesthetics and trademarking and competing/negative models. The three substantive pillars examine specific Nordic models that have gained traction over time: *social welfare* (labour/tax, penal, development), *gender equality* (suffrage, family policy, sexual violence) and *rights and democracy* (consensus democracy, ombudsmen, prostitution).

Disciplines and Method: The approach is multi-disciplinary with the use of archival, qualitative, quantitative and doctrinal methods. It involves four criminologists, seven lawyers, twelve historians and eleven social scientists from the University of Oslo and eight other universities across the Nordic region and United Kingdom.

Coordination: The programme would be coordinated by the Department of Public and International Law (IOR) together with the Department of Psychology (PSI), Institute for Archaeology, Conservation & History (IAKH); Centre for Environment and Development (SUM); and Centre for Gender Research (STK). Other departments include Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law (IKRS) and Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (SMR).

The coordinators are Malcolm Langford (IOR), Inger Skjelsbæk (PSI); Véronique Pouillard (IAKH), Sidsel Roalkvam (SUM) and Anne-Jorunn Berg (STK).

Dissemination: At least one journal article on each sub-project together with three books. A research proposal to various research councils in the Nordic region would be submitted in 2018.