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Between brotherhood and partnership

– searching for a path for future Missionary and Development Partnership, based on an analysis of
missionary and development experts professional discourse in Interviews.

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1   Introduction

The following chapter will present the overall topics of the master thesis and main research question, give a description of the project and relevance of the topic in the context, present the master student, present structure and objectives of the thesis. And introduce the Norwegians Mission Society (NMS) its partnership approach and some historical aspects.

1.1   Project Description

Under the title: "Between brotherhood and partnership – searching for a path for future Missionary and Development Partnership, based on an analysis of missionary and development experts professional discourse in Interviews." This thesis seeks to explore the nature of partnership the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) has with its Partner-Churches in Africa.

We live in an ever-changing world! The image of Africa is changing and the effects of globalisation are affecting the relationship between partners in the global North and South. The local partners and societies are becoming increasingly independent from 'the west'. The Lutheran Churches are growing in Africa both as an effect of increased conversion rates but also as an effect of high birth rates in the developing countries. This happens at an era with high socio-economic growth in Africa. In fact, the global population of Christians will increase with 750million by 2050. Increasing mainly in the developing world.[1] Largely due to high fertility-rates approximately 38% of the worlds Christians will live in sub-Saharan countries by 2050, opposed to 24% today. A significant change in relation to the overall growth rate. Meanwhile in Western Europe and Scandinavia the total population of Christians will drop, from 553 million to 454 million in 2050. Europe will therefore be the only region in the world where the number of Christians will decrease.

NMS is a grassroots faith-based organisation operating out of Stavanger (Norway) with 15 partner-churches in Africa, Europe, and Asia[2]. The partner-churches are independent entities, working with NMS on a project-partnership model. NMS supports independent national churches in Africa. NMS works directly with national leadership on a strategic level and works to increase the partner's self-sustainability both regarding economy and leadership training. As such NMS provides both overall/strategic management and leadership-training for partner' leadership, a long with more traditional diaconal (social, education, and health) and development-aid projects. All the partners

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1 Pew Research Center, http://www.pewresearch.org/about/

2 This thesis will focus solely on the partner-churches in Africa.

have their own local incomes and most have other international partners supporting them as well. NMS is therefore not the sole provider for any of the Churches, but for most still an important partner due to historical reasons. In some partnerships, NMS is a smaller and less significant partner than in a historical perspective.

The main theme of this thesis therefore explores the nature of NMS' partnership and whether NMS' is promoting the type of partnership it wants with the partner-churches in Africa. It worries NMS that the partners are increasingly able to define their own reality and choose their own path forward. Not because they should not be independent but because the long history of partnership, means that NMS cares about the people in the Churches and the countries they work in. NMS are therefore interested in maintaining a good relationship with the partners, because it is the foundation for have good diaconal or development projects. In that way, this thesis will offer relevant answers to how NMS-staff think about the topic of "partnership", what is currently done in practise, and then how practise and discourse, might answer what NMS wants in the partnership and whether practise fits their objectives. That is important in the debate about how NMS might shape their partnership-model in the future, and whether the current framework fits reality and the challenge NMS faces in working in intercultural partnerships today. Therefore, this thesis will examine the role of mission and Christian brotherhood in relation to the doxa of the neoliberal global world. Indeed, how NMS as an organisation works as both part of the dominant contemporary doxa, and part of the residual culture as a counter to the dominant discourse in secular development practise.[3] The thesis will therefore explore relevant modes of globalisation, development-aid practice, and intercultural understanding all in relation to partnership with Africa. This will lead us to gain a new understanding of current relationship between Mission Society and partner-church, seen from the perspective of Norway.

1.2 Theme

NMS is in the very core of the organisation, engaged in the lives of people. It is an organisation that looks out into the world and finds people who needs help/support. Be it working with local pastors to improve the leadership skills, improving agricultural skills of farmers, running nurseries, schools for the poor or disabled, or outcasts of society. NMS does that from the perspective following their faith-driven obligation, to better the lives of the people they meet. NMS doesn't work alone - it has a partnership model that is based on, always working through a local 'partner-church'. Usually the

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3 SCHIRATO , PAGE 65

direct partner is a national partner-church like the 'Mekan Yesus Church' in Ethiopia, or the Malagasy Lutheran Church, both among some of the largest and fastest growing Lutheran Churches in the world. Thus, the theme of "partnership" has always been important to NMS and even today with multiple partners across the globe and thus good partnership and cooperation is needed for NMS to live out its purpose as a Mission Society.

But these years the organisation experience many shifts in partnership, as countries and partners are becoming more independent from Western financing, and indeed experience economic and socio-cultural developments. NMS's role towards the partners' is changing and NMS as a grassroots organisation is also exploring new approaches to cooperation, as the organisations becomes more self-governing and independent from Norwegian support. Thus, the findings and work in this thesis should be relevant to NMS on an organisational level, as an important addition to the discussion on how NMS can improve its approach to partnership, and build relevant and equal friendships with partner-churches in Africa.

1.3   Presentation of the master student

I am a development advisor and missionary working mainly with leadership and organisational development in Africa. I worked in Madagascar for the Norwegian Mission Society and the partner-church; the Malagasy Lutheran Church (MLC). I worked mainly in a NORAD funded development project. Over a period of three years, I worked in Madagascar with local church staff, professionals as well as volunteers. Working directly with school-projects and within that, I advised local leaders in the projects how to improve leadership and project management. I worked closely with NMS leadership as well as MLC leadership on more general aspects of project administration. After three years in Madagascar, I worked for NMS in the Global Department (NMS Global), the program office of NMS, and had responsibilities within overseeing development projects in Madagascar as well as working with project management in NMS Global. I have a background in development studies from Aalborg University (Denmark) and hold a bachelor degree in Language and International Relations.

1.4   Research question

The research question in this thesis is "How does the NMS Program staff, understand partnership between their organisation (NMS) and the partner-churches in Africa, and what are some of the challenges, working with partnership in relation to globalisation, intercultural understanding, and development?"

This question should therefore explore current social practise in the field and the professional discourse of program staff and how that matches, with what the NMS wants from the partnerships it has in Africa. To support the research three sub-questions:

-   What does NMS want with the partner-churches?
-   What are the main challenges NMS face working with the partner-churches?
-   What are the prospects for future partnership?

1.5   Objective and Structure

What we want is to know, what the professional staff in the NMS, who work with these topics every day, think about partnership. How they define it and work with the theme and in that way, how the staff think about partnership and friendship in relation to the challenges of globalisation, Intercultural understanding, and development. Their viewpoints on these topics should be present in a discussion about how NMS could change the way it works with partnership in Africa. The organisational leadership have the overall political influence to change the organisation, but on a day-to-day basis, and when it comes to shaping the policies within the given framework, that is mostly done by professional staff with decades of experience, working in and with the different partners. The thesis will not seek to understand formal practise or formalities but rather explore the theoretical background and analyse qualitative data, and through that analyse the given discourse shaped by the interviewees who all have both the perspective in Norway and from working in the field, directly with the partners.

1.5.1 Description of chapters:

In chapter 1, I will introduce the overall themes in the thesis, as well as presenting some of the central concepts used in chapters. The project description will outline the main ideas and the 'theme section' will broaden out the main ideas as well as present their relevance in NMS, and the purpose

of the work. The presentation will present the writer / master student's background and experience with the field of study. The methodical approach and structure chapter will provide a narrative overview of the function of each chapter, and sub-chapter. Finally of chapter 1, the Introduction to NMS and sub-chapters will introduce the organisation and how it works within the partner-churches, and give some historical perspectives of NMS and some of the underlying historical approach to the African continent and what NMS' role is today.

In chapter 2, I will present the methodical approach to the field of study, describe the research design, and give a summary of the Fieldwork in NMS, and present my approach to ethics and my consideration both when it comes to the fieldwork, and the thesis in general.

In chapter 3, I will present the theoretical background and framework, in three main parts. Firstly, giving an account for the current development discourse, how professionals working within that field creates an inherent understanding about the global. Within that chapter also give an account of Christian development-aid, theories on transforming development-aid. Secondly, I will explore some of the most relevant aspects of globalisation, which influence both the means and abilities of the NMS' Partner-churches, as well as how some of the central modes of globalisation influence the global reality, in which NMS works. Finally, in Chapter 3, I will present the most relevant aspects of how NMS can interpret meaning in an intercultural partnership.

In chapter 4, I will present my analysis of the data collected in the fieldwork, and present some reflections on the analysis and some of the fault-lines with working so closely to my professional field. Also, this chapter will describe some of my understandings of the field, reflections over the meaning of the work done in the thesis. Finally, this chapter presents the findings in the data produced by audio recordings from the interviews, and my field notes. The findings are presented in two main sections "Discourse and semantic meaning" and "Social practise". These are then organised in three subsections, describing the findings in sections which corresponds with the theoretical framework.

In chapter 5, I will discuss the findings and what they mean in relation to practise in the field, to the people who work with the topics in NMS.

In chapter 6, I will conclude and return to answer the research question and comprise the findings.

1.6 Introduction to the Norwegian Mission Society

The Norwegian Mission Society has many partnership across the globe. Partnerships are important since NMS always works through a local partner when it does projects. Since NMS has a long history as a Christian grassroots organisation there are many feelings and notions about what NMS is or should be. The notion that is often referred to; is the notion of Christian Brotherhood i.e. that Christians as one community, should see each other as partner of the same body of Christ. As such, there is a sense of all people in the body of Christ being equal. This notion of equality, is often places strain on the approach to partnership. And indeed, when it comes to partnership between organisations from the West and partners in the Global south. NMS partners are often defined as 'Partner-Churches'. These Churches or rather national church organisations are very different from country to country. Both when it comes to size and historical cooperation with NMS. Some were founded by the Norwegian Mission and some are newer partners with some cooperation with NMS. The message that is broadcasted is that NMS is working for; "a living Church across the globe"[4] It is the current mission statement and it underlines the wish of NMS to support national church organisations in the partner countries. That it done through e.g. leadership development projects, pastoral training, social or health project. As such, NMS has a many forms of partnerships depending on the type of projects which they cooperate on. Thus, NMS works both as a traditional mission society with traditional projects (School, health, church), and as a modern development-aid organisation with bio-gas projects, leadership development programs or awareness raising preventing female circumcision.

When referring to partnerships in this thesis the reference will be to the African Progress Report which defines it; "… as voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both state and non-state, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a special task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits." – African Progress Report 2011[5]

In this thesis, there are also reference to two other concepts which surrounds two organisations working together, namely 'friendship' and 'brotherhood'. The two concepts are more difficult to define as such, in the case of friendship, the interviewees see it as something "beyond the formal partnership", and 'brotherhood' as a special Christian partnership. As a note, we might underline that there are both inter-organisational partnerships, maintained by the inter-personal friendship of specific people in organisations. Finally, "cooperation" which will be used inter-changeable with

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4 WWW.NMS.NO

5 AFRICAN PROGRESS REPORT 2011, WEBRESSOURCE

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partnership. Cooperation being perhaps a more loosely defined concept than partnership. Most 'partner-churches' has relations with NMS defined and regulated by a formal written agreement, which puts all current partnership above the notion of cooperation.

1.6.1 Relevant historical perspectives

The Norwegian mission society was founded in Stavanger in 1842. Before that went 20years of early initiatives, which eventually lead to something sustainable based in the grassroots of 'friends of mission' in and around Stavanger. In '42 the time was right and with substantial support in society and Church life in Norway in general, a Christian grassroots movement was formed. The early most outspoken objective was to "…spread the gospel across the national boarders to those who still sad in darkness…"[6] The main objective of the missionaries who went out at that point, was to reach people with the Gospel, and within that; salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. An important aspect of the approach and worldview / human view, was the movement's contradiction towards the, at that time, general view of the 'African' as backwards and a lower level of humanity. At this point in time the scientific communities promoted the view of Africans that they were lower levels of humanity. They built this both on scientific evidence from measurements of Africans and ethnographic studies of the 'African race' and on the poly-ethnical-creation-theory, which teach that God created humans on different occasions and thus Africans could with 'good reason' be categorised as lower forms of humans, I.e. Lower than the 'European race'. On this point the Mission movement stands out, namely on the point that the gospel teaches that God created all humans in his image, and that that the gospel is valid for every human on earth. Thus, every human is made in the image of God; we are all equal in the eyes of God and as such equal to our fellow man. A very basic but fundamental belief in "equality of man" and which was present that the very beginning and which lives 175years later.

In addition, the Christian ethics of the mission society gave a clear view of the oppression, brutality, and exploitation of the African people made by other European groups. In that way, the mission was a clear counterculture, to colonialism, and the exploitation of Europe on the African continent and those two viewpoints sets the 'mission movement' on an early path towards meeting the African people in a different light than other Europeans had done before. The Missionaries who came out of these teachings had an open view on the people they met, and were eager to learn the manners and

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6 JØRGENSEN, PP. 27.

customs of the people they met. Surely, they were not completely un-pose by how other people saw the African continent and many have noted the 'backward' ways of life, in mid-19th century Africa but they have on many occasion also noted positives ways. And what Norwegians, could learn from the Africans, in Scandinavia. They knew, that what they brought to the 'dark' continent was largely Christian ways of life, and that that, was not necessarily the same as Western ways of life. Put very nicely by Ole Stavem "Faith is neither putting on pants nor for that matter to dress like the white man."[7] (Missionary in South Africa, ca. 1845-1906)

This fundamental viewpoint continues today and with the introduction of development-aid aspects there are similarities between secular development objectives and mission objectives. They are nevertheless not based on the same ideology but come out of two different schools of thought. The overruling thought through the last forty-fifty years of mission in Africa, has been to improve the lives of fellow man. Building always School, Hospital, and Xhurches wherever the mission came. It might also be the most visible signs of the immense contribution that Norwegian missionaries have left across Africa. Bringing better health, education, and the Gospel to people of all cultures and social classes. Perhaps especially caring for the very weakest in society; outcasts, handicapped, poor and marginalised. Over the last fifty-sixty years the Mission has moved more toward development projects and programs building practical skills in agriculture, farming, and animal husbandry as well as social, school, health development project with similar style and method as the more secular development organisations and NGOs. And based in many ways on common organisational routines for good financial management, leadership, and transparency. NMS is today an important a respected organisation which often cooperates with NORAD (Norwegian State Development Agency) on development projects.

With dwindling numbers of missionaries over the last thirty years and changes in perception in how NMS should work toward independent partners in Africa, the organisation mostly send advisors or trainers abroad to assist a partner in project development or training local staff. In that way, the work done on the ground by Norwegian missionaries, have changed immensely from the first arrived in Natal (Africa) in the 1840ties to 2017 – 175 years later. Most partner organisations has long history with NMS some stretching back more than a few decades. Some partner-churches were founded by Missionaries and later become independent national Churches. There are therefore still strong ties between local people, missionaries and between the partners.

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7 I JØRGENSEN PP. 26

2   Method

The following chapter will give a description of my over methodical approach as well how the idea was generated and on what basis the theoretical framework was collected. The chapter also covers some of the limits of the thesis concerning interviewing Norwegian staff and how I worked with a one-dimensional approach, when most partnership often have more than one side. Finally, the chapter describes some of my academic choices and how my work can offer new understanding of the field.

2.1   Methodical approach

The thesis seeks to explore the main research question through a theoretically driven empirical survey[8]. With a hermeneutical approach to an interpretive methodology, this thesis uses the knowledge, and first-hand experience of the researcher within the research itself, and gives this work the opportunity to engage the subject-matter in a critically reflexive manner. With a critically reflexive approach, the fieldwork takes an unexplored angle within the program office of the Norwegian Mission Society and gives new light and understanding about the topic of intercultural partnership, between Norwegian and African organisations. And indeed, between the people in those organisations, how NMS staff understand partnership, the 'text' they produce and how we can interpret it. Thus, the methodical approach is based on Alvesson & Skøldberg' reflexive methodology which works through a hermeneutic manner, toward a discourse analysis of the data gathered in the interviews. Through the text, the thesis seeks to make sense of the world of the intercultural partnerships through an analysis of the social practise and semantic discourse.[9]

The initial ideas for this thesis were formed out of an earlier course at VID in fieldwork, where I did interviews with staff members in NMS Global. The findings in that course indicated that there was something to explore within the field of partnership in NMS. Between the 'formal partnership' with the partner-churches, and with the 'friendship' which many in the NMS seek today. The idea was after that formulated loosely when I worked with my fieldwork, and used in searching for theoretical framework. Subsequently, it seemed most relevant to focus on the areas of development, globalisation, intercultural understanding and how the topics are relevant to partnership. The analysis model was chosen because I wanted to learn first-hand from the staff of NMS who works with these topics every day. And how they understand and work with partnership. A reflexive

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8 ALVESSON, MATS & SKÖLDBERG, –REFLEXIVE METHODOLOGY

9 ALVESSON, MATS & SKÖLDBERG, –REFLEXIVE METHODOLOGY

interview style seemed to be the best approach suiting that purpose, as it could be relatively flexible and as well as producing relevant data.

2.2   Research design

The purpose of this thesis is, not to do a study of intercultural competence or method of Intercultural communication used, but a study in the socio-cultural field of intercultural partnerships. A study of how mission societies and specifically their program staff work with the topics of partnership and intercultural understanding.

The interesting part and indeed the challenge, in this thesis is the focus on the perspective of Norway. The focus was chosen because there they research question can be answered from that perspective because the interviewees are experienced missionaries and development experts who know their field, knows the partners, and a critical and reflective towards topic of partnership. These days it is naturally important to remember the voice of the developing world, but the idea in this thesis, is that there should be opportunities in all organisational cultures, to reflect and re-think fundamental aspects of partnership-approach. With the current structures and partnership-model of the Norwegian Mission Society, it seems like a good time for NMS to take some time to reflect. Thus, to conduct this research exclusively with NMS staff' serves the purpose of exploring NMS and its external role towards the partners in Africa. What pitfalls there might be, how NMS as an organisation can be aware of its own role, and how NMS can better understand its role in the partnership.

The theoretical resources were chosen on several parameters; firstly, including resources, which have been, used in the MIKA program, and therefore have a certain familiarity. Thus, creating a good and familiar foundation to build the theoretical background on. Secondly, choosing resources that are in some way rooted in the academic environment around the Mission Societies. And in that way not only highly relevant but also familiar to the people who will read the thesis. Hopefully increasing the odds of the thesis being read and used it as a reflection on how to improve the current partnership model. Thus, creating a basis of resources that are acknowledge broadly in that segment of Scandinavian academia and in that way creating validity and hopefully some new aspects to that specific area. Also, thereby creating a theoretical framework that is rooted within the special history of Scandinavian relations in the 3rd world. Thirdly, choosing an international valid academic basis for the theories on Intercultural understanding and globalisation and that way adding an overall

validity to the thesis. Finally, including reflections and criticism toward the issues of globalisation and partnership from the perspective of the developing world and in that way creating, supported argumentation that reflects the global south today.

Within this field of study, somewhere between the academic study of how mission societies work and cooperate with different cultures, and the study of development in practise and theory, we find a narrow field where development and mission meet. Between the secular development theory of state-driven development aid, and the non-secular faith-driven aid-work.

The central aspect being that these two different fields of study have been widely described by academia but as it is, academia are often both years behind actual practise in the field and often not described within a single thesis. This is not a comparative study of which one is the best but rather a momentary view on how the two spheres co-exist and is viewed from the side of the mission organisation. Therefore, it is relevant that this thesis explores what the dilemmas are, what the challenges are, ask NMS-staff how they see the challenges and then interpret their views, and link that with relevant academic theory. Thereby adding to the knowledge in field of study

Academia is and will ALWAYS be behind, and source material on African studies is often euro-centric, although properly on the forefront of the issues; Scandinavian academia is still behind on including research from the global south, because so relatively few sources are peer-reviewed, from African universities, or just surfacing in the academic outlets. Academia could see the global Church communities and mission societies as an entry for access to the 'African perspective'. As such, there are many aspects of the influence and 'added value' of partnerships between faith-based organisations left to be explored by academia.

2.3 Fieldwork

In this chapter I will present what I did in the fieldwork leading up to the master thesis. I will present an overall summary of what was done and give a description of my ethical reflections as toward data-collection, how to handle potential harmful themes, handling the interviewees and their anonymity.

2.3.1 Summary

The method used for the fieldwork was a series of qualitative interviews with employees in the program department of the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS). Specifically, four senior advisors who working directly in contact with the partners in Africa. They all have long experience working

with NMS, and have extensive experience from working in the field, in Africa for extended periods of time. Some have experience working directly as advisors / missionaries in the partner-organisations of NMS.

The fieldwork consisted of two interviews with each participant, along with a preparation in advance, and a short (5min) introduction meeting before each of the first interviews. This structure left extra time for interviewees to ask questions. The format, with two interviews was meant to give the participants time to reflect on the topic of partnership and for me an opportunity, to adjust the questions and follow up on topics from the first interview. The interviews were all approx. 40-50mins long, with an introduction of the participant in the beginning of the first interview. In the beginning of each interview I underlined the volunteer nature of the interviews and in that way, comply with the guidelines given by NSD. The interview style overall, comply with Hammersley / Atkinson's' approach to qualitative interviews as well as Repstad's guidelines for question structures[10], by having overall themes for each interview with sub-questions which may be skipped or answered in other lines of the conversation.

The interview with each participant featured information on how their answers will be handled and how the data will be stored and used in this thesis. As well as, how and when sensitive data will be deleted.[11] Finally, all participants were informed on the release of the thesis and their opportunities to propose alterations, if their feel misquoted.

The interviews produced eight data files which are stored on my personal laptop in a secured 'image file' which is only accessible with password, encrypted with a strong password with 256bit encryption. After each of the rounds, the data was roughly transcribed into 16-17 pages with main ideas. It was from that information that the interview reported was written. The interview report was well received by the consular and has been used as inspiration to write this summary.

2.3.2 Reflection on ethics

The topic of partnership is not a controversial theme to discuss in the Norwegian Mission Society. It is something that has always been a relevant topic, and which is often discussed in NMS Global but it can be a sensitive topic as there are sometimes challenges with the different partner-churches. Thus, gathered information and findings should adhere to certain level of scrutiny and should not be too 'partner-specific'. Partners should not feel targeted, especially since there are relatively few

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10 REPSTAD, PP. 62

11 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 210

organisations, and in that way people could quickly feel exposed. Therefore, this thesis should be mostly about how the staff in Norway see the different aspects of intercultural partnership, and less about how the different organisations act. In that way, the findings will be relevant for everyone and should be equally interesting for partner-organisations abroad. NMS as an organisation, should also feel rightly represented and therefore this thesis is not so much seen from the perspective of NMS leadership but as a snapshot of the current view on partnership, NMS has with the partners in Africa, and hopefully be a relevant study on how partnerships can work in the future. What to avoid and where the world is, on relevant topics as globalisation and development. The organisation of NMS has also given their consent to that, by allowing me to conduct my master thesis work about the organisation. They have consented to the fieldwork topics, and conducting the interviews.[12] The organisational leadership has not been part of the selection process. Hopefully these actions and the approach to the topic on Africa from the view of the office in Norway, should prevent a harm to partner-relations or personal harm to individuals in partner organisations.[13]

Any researcher, should also contemplate their role in relation to the interviewees, and consider what kind of relation they have, and how that might affect the data collected. The interviewees are all people the interviewer knows on a collegial level, and which I have discussed various partner related topics with. It is therefore especially important that they have all given direct consent.[14] I believe that, what serves to my advantage is that the selected staff, are not colleagues I worked directly with daily, but persons I had more general meetings and discussions with. The people I have worked with frequently are not part of the selected interviewees, and that should eliminate some of the overall problems with discussing the topic of partnership. In that way, the selected interviewees have not been exposed to my views on partnership. Nor, have I discussed partnership and Intercultural understanding with any of them.

As well as the organisations, the interviewees selected should also be treated with a high level of ethics. Their knowledge, ideas and answers should not be misused or misrepresented. In that way, it is important that their answers treated with respect and represented in a pure form that represent their initial response and that their data is not used out of context, to suit the purpose of the thesis, personal gain or to push a specific agenda[15]. NMS being a relatively small organisation there is also an issue of the anonymity of each respondent. Even if they have not given their names, titles or any

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12 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 212

13 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 213

14 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 211

15 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 209

others than I know which codes match which recording file, there is always a possibility for other people, who knows NMS Global, that they might figure out who gave which answer. Therefore, I find it important, that the analysis should not be about how four different people have answered the questions but more how their shared view is on partnership. By applying these actions to the field work and the analysis it is the objective that this thesis, will not only benefit me and my objectives but that the information supplied by the interviewees and by interpretation of their knowledge, serve an objective of knowledge and learning. Hopefully this thesis can serve as a tool for the Norwegian Mission Society to contemplate the topic of intercultural partnership and a possible way forward. This thesis cannot serve that purpose if it is not mindful of the topic of ethics. [16]

Therefore, the pursuit of knowledge and pure interpretation of data should be the objective of this thesis. The fieldwork conducted was done in an ethical manner, which left able room for interviewees to give their views on the topics discussed. There was room for personal reflections outside the question-line and there was an overall focus on asking open-end questions. The interviewees participated with informed consent. Were given time to consider their participation. Were given both written and oral introduction before the interviews started. They had time to reflect and give additional information between the two sessions. The interviewer did not press personal views on the interviewees nor introduced complex concepts into the conversation.[17] None of the interviewees were pressured to give knowledge they might have felt was too personal or sensitive. In that way, the collegial relations between interviewer and interviewee served to the advantage of the data-production as we are on very equal terms in our 'partnership' and all of us agreed, on a basic level, on the importance of the topics and the importance of exploring the topics of partnership in NMS and where the organisation is today, and how these themes may be handled in the future. The general consent to the importance of the research topic and the equal level of personal relations, combined with informed consent and opportunities to add comments to the interview topics should also relieve stress or anxiety produced by being researched. The interviewees should therefore not feel that everything relied on them, but that it is the combination of the theoretical background, the combined responses from eight interviews and almost six hours of data, and an hopefully somewhat objective critical analysis which provides the final answers to the problem posed in the thesis.[18] If that objective can be reach through the work, the thesis should provide a glimpse of the current nature of how NMS works with its partners and how the staff in

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16 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 217

17 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 228

18 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 214

NMS Global perceives this work, without producing a neither unethical nor harmful product in the end.

3 Background / Theoretical framework:

In this chapter, the thesis explores the main theoretical framework. The framework was chosen the background of initial fieldwork were topics like globalisation, partnership, development practise, and intercultural understanding were some important topics referenced by the interviewees. Also, the themes fit the MIKA Master program and I have worked with all of them in relation of other courses in the program. The theoretical framework will describe these relevant themes and present them relation to partnership and the current practise of the Norwegian Mission Society.

3.1 Development Discourse

The section will cover themes exploring the nature of partnership between the Global North / Global south, presenting both secular development and Christian development approach, and the agenda those to schools of thought produce. After that I will present some theoretical background transforming development-aid as well as the theoretical framework concerning the dream of partnership which exist in many faith based development organisations.

3.1.1 Secular development-aid

The question of development in relation to a partnership between organizations in the global north / global south is how meaning is created through discourse and how development is perceived by the 'global north' and 'global south'. "Development" and "Development Aid" inherently state that the current situation must change for the better, positive change, or that something is progressing into 'something more'. Meaning that a country, which receives development aid, needs, to change toward something positive or in fact becomes a "developed country. The discourse surrounding development shifts over time. It changes with changes in policy, approach, and with changes in the context both in the developing world and the developed.

In the discourse, there is a talk about 'modern' and 'traditional' societies. The traditional society being the state where we see the developing countries, not 'modern' but 'traditional'. They are, sort to say where the West has been. Where 'we' came from. A form of society we left behind for something better. Although we might not be able to categorise the traditional societies as

'agricultural societies', what we might say is that they build on the idea that the tribal or family is the basis for social relations. Whereas the modern societies are based on the personal interests, bureaucracy, rational strategies, national identities, which in turn weakens the influence of religion, and family.[19]

There are many theories about development, when it comes to both economic and social systems. In the context of NMS, economic development is often more linked with nations whereas social development – development of societies is most often the focus of the activities. Europe is often seen as the focal point of development, as it has often been Europeans or descendants of Europeans who have defined the world through discourse, economic and socio-cultural power. To many the 'rise of Europe' and western values and ideas seem natural or indeed inevitable. The power West has is the result of cultural superiority. The development of 'the other' therefore becomes roads toward the 'European experience' of development from agricultural, industrial, information society, and beyond. 'The rest' therefore, has only one destination; to "go through the same steps", to become 'modern', and thereby achieve what the West has achieved. This is not just theory but cultural attitudes[20] propagating these viewpoints. The road of progress inadvertently leads toward modernisation replicating the experience (political systems, cultural values, economic structures) where there is only one approved model of society; open liberal democracies. These viewpoints are important when we should assess the balance of power between partners from two different experiences. NMS coming from a 'modern homogeneously western liberal democracy' and to the experience of the partners' in the rest of the world, un-developed, backward, conservative / traditional, new democracies. Being for the most part 'developing nations' or 'low income countries' / '3rd world countries' which used to be the general term. Neither very flattering nor chosen by the countries they seek describe.

It seems that there is an overall un-spoken consensus that the developing world want what the modern / developed world has. There is little room for alternative thoughts and to some extend it also seem impossible to think in lines, which does not match with open liberal democracies as national democracies is also the basis, of how we trade and interact on a global level. The UN, World Bank, G7, G20… all these inter-national spheres of cooperation relies heavily on having functional democracies. Inter-national systems are important to NMS Projects with the partners in the south because some projects are funded by the Norwegian government. Thus, NMS should

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19 YTREHUS, PP. 63

20 PEET & HARWICH, PP. 131

adhere to the rules and regulations within the global system for development. NMS is part of a 'machine' driven by theories of development. Not problematic in general but because the foundation of 'development' within the global system comes from the West's assumption that non-western societies are un-developed! "Your inescapable destiny is to follow our example."[21] Modernisation theory belongs to the post-ww2 era and is that way a product of the world-order, as we know it today, the institutional frameworks which we are a part of today. It is in that way the socio-cultural equivalently to neo-liberalism. The characteristic of conventional development theories is thus, highly ethnocentric and with a Western starting point. Especially Rostow's concept of development-focus on the process of modernisation, drawing a line between feudal Europe, imperial China, Mayan Central America, Tribal Africa and marks these as equivalent points in history, where only Europe developed beyond this point. Other societies are bound to develop along the same paths towards the same end-state i.e. mass consumption, neoliberalism, modernism. Rostow characterises the societies who are not 'modern' as 'traditional' / 'backward'[22] Rostow ignores the historical facts, that the existed a world beyond feudal Europe, and that there were indeed some societies which were more developed. Reducing 'the rest' to backward feudal societies. The stages toward development / modernisation becomes socio-economic stages of what the Europe has gone through since Feudalism.

The development-aid system is based on Western systems, the Bretton Woods institutions, this influence national development agencies, who needs to cooperate with UN, the World Bank and the IMF who defines the framework for development work. It is hard, if not impossible, for an NGO to be recognised and receive funding without adopting the same frameworks, become modern in its approach to Africa and therefore, all NGOs working with the issue of development are affected by the framework propagated by the Bretton Woods system. A system based on neo-liberalism, on free-market economies, ethnocentrism, and a complete disregard for non-European cultures. Indeed, built on a system where there is an underlying premise that 'the rest' are backward cultures, who have little to offer, and needs to modernise their society and cultures through the steps of development. Toward and 'end-stage' which fit the Bretton Woods system. In that sense, the Western world is itself is also stuck in a post-World-War 2 era, which perhaps also explain the stagnation of Western societies.

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21 PEET & HARWICH, PP. 132

22 PEET & HARWICH, PP 132

3.1.2 Christian development-aid

The Norwegian Mission Society has worked with people from the developing world since the mid-19th century. The first missionaries went to South Africa in 1843 and Mission Station followed in Madagascar, Cameroon, and Tanzania. From an early point, NMS focused on providing basic services in the field like Health and Education. The work spread to more countries and Africa and eventually Asia and South America. Following the de-colonisation era, the local Churches, which until the 1950 had been part the European mission societies, became independent Churches. Now NMS has partners in Africa, Asia, South America, and Europe. There is partnership with many types of organisations across the globe. Subsequently "partnership" in the context of this thesis will refer to the Churches with which NMS has projects and therefore more formalised cooperation. Having a project with NMS support includes having a writing common agreement on how to share responsibilities, use of finances, staff etc. Also, called 'partnership agreement'. NMS Partnership has, over the last 10-20 years become more formalised with standardised agreements with all project partners, in a binding framework.

NMS's global mission outreach is fundamentally based on the organisation's Christian ideology of mercy, and a sense of brotherhood with the poor and marginalised.[23] Christians in mission societies / organisations are often see their service as a personal calling from God, and a way to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ. With reference the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan who helps the one that no one would help, because the love Christian should show of any other human they meet. Showing love and caring is not something you can choose to do but something you as a Christian is obligated to do.[24]

Again, leaving the ability to define academic / theological framework to the global north. As interestingly put by Hwa Yung: "…Christians in the South, because by and large we are still domesticated by the North's theological and ecclesiastical agendas."[25] By definition, the discourse the South is still 'SOUTH' – poor, undeveloped, in need of help… and basically needs to global north financial support to educate their public. In any case educate the public to a point that would be accepted by the global North. Hence, the global North holds the power of definition on right and wrong in both theological and academia on the topics of Mission, Diaconal, and theology. Thus, over the last four or five decades, the globe North has done a lot to educate the global south, but by

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23 STRAND, PP. 19

24 STRAND, PP. 21

25 HWA YUNG, PP. 132

doing that "domesticated" (- Hwa Jung) the locals. Domesticated in a way that we might as well describe as third wave colonization. The global south might have been educated but it has been done to a degree where people have become billboards for Western ideas and ideals. Good or bad…? Hard to say, but at least Hwa see that it leads to few leaders with the right combination of spiritual formation, academic foundation, and leadership abilities to emerge from the global south.[26]

Without venturing into a theological discussion, we just should contemplate the vast difference between the Churches in the North and South. Indeed, difference in religious realities. From the North where religion is a personal / private concept, that might only be shared within a Christian setting in society and cultures where religion although discussed is not widely shared. Where the mystic, demonic, divine, supernatural aspect of life have almost all disappeared. To an African reality where the supernatural and divine are a part of everyday life. Where prayer and divine intervention is a natural part of people's lives; for Christians and non-Christians. Thus, the cultural modernity (positive or negative) has driven Western Christianity to the point of religious non-divinity. The mystery has been hunted down and Christianity is not even a point of belief in a supernatural deity but a cultural belief in 'some of the values'. In that way mission societies are at the forefront of knowledge of the 'next wave of Christianity' where they meet people and receive volunteers and people from the partner-churches who are firm believers in the supernatural, exorcism, faith-healing and other traits of Christianity, that have all but dispread in folk-churches in Scandinavia. In a shared context, where we as Christian brothers and sisters are in that way completely living in different worlds; how can we really find common ground, coming from a world empty from the supernatural to enter a world of spirits and demons.

The experience from the south can be a revitalizing movement for re-discovering the mystery of Christian religion and indeed redefining what faith can be. That there might be a place for the supernatural in western modernity! A place for the non-secular and a place where the religion is allowed as a valid personal choice in life. That baptizing your child or choosing a religious upbringing for your children is not considered child abuse, but valid life choices in the western context. Westerners might have a genuine fear of repeating historical challenges with religiously fuelled conflicts, and religious warfare it might lead to. People in the West who see the negative effects of e.g. globalization on the global south, might have a genuine fear of repeating colonial mistakes, and speaks out against the 'white man's burden' or 'Western guilt complex' and what 'we' / the West, have done to the rest of the world. The mistakes that has been made both by

26 HWA YUNG, PP. 133

religious, colonial, multinational, and nation-states and all of them combined, can hardly be seen as the same. But they can all, also be seen, not a single process but as the perfect storm for religious conviction that convert the heathens, expanding the power of nations, and building international shareholder's wealth. All of which can be combatted not at once but step-by-step. In that way, modernity is at a point where the wrongdoings of religions, and nation-states are widely limited by international law.

3.1.3 Transforming development-aid

For many of the partner countries and organisations; much has been reached within development over the last decades - There are pitfalls on the horizon. Across the partner countries democracies are under development, people are being educated, and people are in general getting richer. Nevertheless, we also see the relatively new democracies of some of the NMS partner countries in Africa coming under pressure. South Africa, Ethiopia, and Madagascar all face current problems with huge youth unemployment, ethnic inequalities, and a increasing gaps between rich and poor. The next 40 years of development in central and southern Africa, will serve as defining for the future of stability and peace, not only in Africa but in Europe and the middle east. The economic boom enjoyed by some regions in Africa, may quickly be exchanged with conflict if the gap between rich and poor / young and old / employed and unemployed are not mended. In some countries e.g. Madagascar, the time for swift action is now. A growing young population locked in economic and political instability is hardly the foundation for a developing nation. Within that there are also tensions and mistrust between the old colonial powers and the developing countries. Some colonial (old and new) still use Africa as their personal resource area and any wealth gained is shared on very few hands, either in the government or rich business moguls. In both cases increasing distrust in local populations is the objectives of foreign governments.

Taking reality into account, the World doesn't have the luxury of creating new development-mistakes and implementing neo-colonial attitudes in Africa. Rather, the global north, must explore new roads toward an approach to assisting the global south toward modernity. Because in that way the end goal is the same, there is a shared objective that people in the global south get an education, access to health care, and other services. The objective must however be to assist in developing a

pluralistic future rather than a universalism of western standards.[27] There might however be a movement toward a new discourse in development academia, with an increased awareness of issues of current development strategies. Awareness raising and capacity building has been a strategy for decades but these might also be viewed as problematic if they consist of western objectives, leadership, mentor-ship, and method. In that way, the discourse although clearly problematic, persist, that the south is / must / de facto in some way be deprived of knowledge, and ability to define. Within that is, an underlying mistrust or disregard of local knowledge. [28] In that way, the African thought must be set free, and even liberated from the luring eyes of the West. In that way, support the creation for a possibility for African discourse, knowledge, and social justice, which are not formed by western lines of thinking. In that way, we might remember that "knowledge is power, and those who create, disseminate knowledge will always have more power: therein lies the asymmetry in development partnership."[29] In that way, it is not only a matter of setting free abilities, to choose own modernity in a pluralistic future but taking a step back and making space for action and ownership. The global north MUST allow and accept the global South's ability to develop and produce knowledge, and within that making room by questioning how the western framework is blocking development and knowledge production in the global south.

3.1.4 Development-aid and the dream of partnership

Over the last decades, the presence of Norwegian staff in the partner-countries have decreased significantly. From having multitudes of staff working directly in projects in development and evangelisation. Local staff most often handles much of the direct work and Norwegian staff either work alongside them or are advisors with specialities in the specific field. But are seldom project leaders or decision-makers. The NMS staff' abroad is there often in a position of being expats or overseers of the projects. The increased local leadership and responsibility over the projects has made it increasingly important for NMS and back-donors to enforce transparent management in the whole supply line, from back-donors like NORAD to the local beneficiaries. This push for good management structures, financial overview, and overall transparency and control over project-process 'from start to finish', has led to a professionalization of the Norwegian staff, there is a higher need for staff with very specific abilities and knowledge. Expats rather than laymen, work as controllers or experts; a bi-product of increased local responsibility. This is also a local tendency.

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27 BAIJNATH & JAMES, PP. 38

28 BAIJNATH & JAMES,PP. 38

29 BAIJNATH & JAMES,PP. 39

Few organisations have able personal to assist with larger project or advisor in topic specific projects.[30] Therefore, local professionals are needed to fill positions/functions once handled by volunteers. One may argue that this is something that may lift projects in the NMS partner-church, out of the context as the organisational-leadership often lack specialised knowledge. Project directors / staff are hired based on their skill-set but come from the 'the outside' of the Church structures, and often handle relatively large budgets compared to Church leadership. Thereby hindering local leadership in conducting meaningful oversight and thereby loosing ownership and weakening long-term impact.

Although much responsibility for development work has been transferred to the local partners, it has also increased the need for financial and management oversight locally. Demanding a need for local professionalization of the Churches and partner organisations. More links in the development supply-chain means more complex project and decreases overall transparency. Not necessarily in financial matters, but indeed in matters of management, responsibility, and oversight. It takes a lot of resources, especially locally. Therefore, transferring responsibility and decision-making does not necessarily lead to increased participation of a target group, local communities, or increased ownership. Instead it leads to increased centralisation especially in partners with limited organisational infrastructure.[31]

The whole discourse within development used by the back-donors should be somewhat translated to the receiving beneficiaries and the design of short-term effects in complex problems, is far from the desired long-term effects - The long-term desired results become somewhat irrelevant side effect. In cases where the might be a conflict between the 'need of beneficiaries' or partner organisation and Norwegian partner, local advisors may become prone to prioritising the binding framework of the back-donor, rather than the needs of the local partner, and thereby undermining local ownership. The partner in the global south does not report to the target group or grassroots but they follow the path of the resources in the supply-chain. In that way, the current FBO-development framework is fundamentally flawed, as it does not build accountability downward in the grassroots but only upwards. Faith based development organisations in Norway are not accountable to the local partner, but only upwards in the chain-link. The objective is never to serve the partner but to be accountable. The Norwegian partner and south-partner can therefore never become equal as the accountability and reporting follows the money. The line of accountability goes from: beneficiary,

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30 YTREHUS, PP. 82

31 YTREHUS, PP. 83

project/program, local partner, NMS / NMS Norway, DIGNI, NORAD. Back-donors demands on management, reports and evaluation directly affect the objectives of development projects, namely by demands for short-term, achievable goals that can produce numbers and documentation. Indirectly by design of development framework, which binds time, resources, and competences with management and monitoring.

In this section, we have covered the main theories on what defines development-aid today, what overall dynamics in the global world order defines the framework for secular development, how the Christian objective in development issues is different from the secular development agenda. Furthermore, we have explored have Christians who meet the south-partner experience people who still hold a firm belief the mystery of religion. We have looked at how colonialism, political instability, and failed development strategies still affect the relation between north and south and looked at why organisations in the West/Norway need to find partnership models which includes the partner. Finally, we looked at how the current partner-model works and how it might hinder the dream of partnership.

The next chapter will present some relevant aspect of how globalisation is affection the relation between the global north and south. The section will present how a compressed global world plays a role in development and how the global modernity is currently being shaped by modes of globalisation like standardisation of cultural practise, and how that affects partnerships. This we link the overall global aspect with development practise.

3.2 Globalization and effects on partnership

This section present a theoretical framework for understanding globalisation, how it affects our world today, and how it affects the partnership between the global north and global south. Furthermore, we will look at how globalisation changes the world and how globalisation can be both a positive and negative factor. Finally, this section will explore some of the modes of globalisation which both brings people closer to each other and what drives us apart.

3.2.1 A compressed world

Our shared globe is the same size as it has always been, but humanities gains in technology continue to expand our abilities to communicate faster and faster over distance and space. The fact that people can send their messages from A-B is hardly news, and humans have been doing so over vast distances the last two thousand years. Communication transcends national borders and our messages have been traveling across the globe for centuries. Even before the term 'globalization' was coined the world was becoming 'global' and events in the margin started to affect global policy. Especially when events concerned the old global powers. As the communication network grew and e.g. telegraph cables where laid out across the ocean, news from far and near became instant.[32] Today, we witness a new global age of inter-connectivity where connectivity is not only for the West and the super-rich, but also indeed for the masses. In the same way, as national news became available with newspapers in Europe, a hundred years ago; now, global news is becoming available for everyone across the globe. If anything, regarding globalization is different in 2016 than twenty years ago, it is that. – 'We' meaning anyone with a phone can be part of the global communication sphere and receive and share messages instantaneously. You don't need a computer, you don't need a special phone or operator, and your connection to the world is, almost, a universal standard. In that way, a single action of one person, has the potential to reach the global 'news feed'. With communication across spaces, comes the ability to share our world with whomever wants to listen. Your unique interest in LEGOs or knitting is not limited by your physical presence. You can share your interest - your identity, unlimited by time and space.

Beyond communication, increased global trade and increased number of open-market economies has linked the world together to a new global high. Economic collapse or difficulties in one market is never an isolated or detached event, but as any event, has a potential to 'go global'. Economic,

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32 ERIKSEN, PP. 3

political and cultural events all hold the potential for global implications. The reflection we then should consider is our increase exposure to global events. The concept of globalization must therefore be seen in duality. On one hand the world is compressing culturally, economically, and politically – <u>AND</u> technology and mainstream media is, at the same time intensifying our individual consciousness about world.[33]

Globalization in all its forms is brining humans closer and closer together an inter-connected global sphere. The connectivity and the relational movements are not new, and have happened throughout time. But the scale and the personal global connectivity are beyond any other point in history. Closeness is not without friction as events done by 'the other' affect us in ways beyond our control. Globalization as a positive change mechanism in that way becomes its own worst enemy as connectivity as it exposes problems in our shared world. Groups / cultures who choose not to conform to the rules, become a problem for the entire international community. No one and everyone are to blame, and everything takes global leadership to change. In that way, the problems of the whole world become more than just a distant problem in exotic locations, exemplified by the implications of global warming or migration.

Eriksen, describes some of these concepts of globalisation, and in this context, we might explore some of the relevant aspects of globalisation. We already discussed the irrelevance of distance, conceptualised by Eriksen as disembedding. The notion that, distance between people, and events is becoming irrelevant, and indeed relative. Anything, everything, and everyone are accessible at any time, and any location. Things, ideas and people are 'lifted out' of their original context and placed elsewhere. The disembedding of things might seem as something that has been going on for centuries, but Giddens underlines that disembedding happens when where it becomes irrelevant where something is made and exist in physical form[34]. You might order something in the US, made in China and shipped from storage in Spain. But until the point where you receive it, its physical placement is relevant. Thus, we might see the mission of Christianity has been disembedded from its contexts. Historically, lifted out of the Christian societies in the global North, but today lifted out of mission countries into a global mission, shared by both the global south and north. Global mission, thus, becoming abstract. In the way, that we don't only see the global north spreading the gospel or contributing to the global south. Indeed, we see the global south contributing to old mission partners. Although still in the process, there is a clear movement of the concepts of

33 ERIKSEN, PP. 5

34 ERIKSEN, PP. 20

Christian Mission, out of its 'original' context. In that way communication and the literate society is an important aspect of the global religion. As literacy made it possible to take religion, out of the original contexts and shared it with Christian brothers and sisters across the globe. Although never physically meeting, Christians feel a moral need to help and support Christians across the globe. In that way, we can see the abstract religion of Christianity, with its written tradition, written rules/laws, and written history. Whereas, the contexts that missionaries encountered were based on oral tradition, signs in nature, wishes of forefathers, non-literate transition/memory, and personal relationship. In that way, a concrete religion based and deeply connected in the local context.

In the context of this thesis, NMS may see increased difficulties of Christian brothers and sisters, indeed because our worlds are being compressed and our political, economic, and cultural spheres exist in a compressed inter-connected global reality, where we are indeed closer to each other. Our identities might to some extend become increasingly inter-twined as we gain an ability to share and experience the same things. As human with a shared religion our ability to share a 'global Christian culture' is increasing. And the struggles of our Christians brothers and sisters in the middle east is not just a concern of Christians in Europe, but indeed a concern for Christian from Adelaide to Antigua. Duality in globalization to partnerships, we see that organization in the global North and South become both closer and more interconnected as well as, increasing the awareness of each other.

3.2.2 Global modernity and standardisation of cultural practise

To some extend shared global modernity might be the overall goal for societies. Most ordinary people are looking for similar things: happiness, a future for their children and wellbeing. Roughly said. That said it might be the only common denominators for cultural values. When it comes to a shared global modernity, standardization is a relevant mechanism. The fact that we are closing into a world with more and more shared standards (international standards). The global world shared time-system, measurements, currency systems, and shared international languages. Also, systems of education are almost universal, in every school class similar topics like mathematics, geography, and history will be studied and once you graduate your exam will grant you access to university across the globe. State and political systems are also becoming increasingly standardized. With similar branches of government, presidents, ministers, are working on a nation-state level. In that way the world stills work on the basses of the international laws established at the Peace of

Westphalia in 1648 - Through sovereign nation-states.[35] The only change being the shifting supra-national decision-making bodies, latest the United Nations.

Every UN resolution, however, demands nation-states to ratify. In that way, the UN systems is a sign of standardization of global politics and the way international diplomacy is conducted. In that way, the nation-state is becoming increasingly important, as a factor of power, in the developing-world as a vehicle for change. Although not without difficulties, NGOs and Western governments look to the state-system to act for their citizens. Western states, does however, often misunderstand the potential of nation-states in the global south. Few of the relatively new states in Africa have similar nationalistic building blocks, compared with the global north. And several developing states are torn by political systems, ruled through parties representing cultural / ethnic groups. In that way, a global system that builds on nation-states should take weaknesses of state building into account. Nation building takes time. People or groups who fall outside of set norms of citizenship can quickly be ostracized by the ruling collective identity. The nations states will often demand them to adhere to ruling parties' norms and values. Citizens who often don't feel a personal obligation to the governing parties, relative to what is common in the global north.[36]

3.2.3 Disembedded Partnership

As partnerships between organisations emerge from years of cooperation, taking the unique nature of mission societies into account, we might see the partnership between NMS and its long-time partners, as something more than cooperation and formal partnership. Whether or not that is the case could be one of the fundamental questions of this thesis but at this point we might just explore the part of the relationship that arguably exist between the organisations (NMS / partner) or indeed between the people in the organisations who meet. We might define it as a kind of 'meta-friendship' as it exists between non-human entities (organisations) that cannot really be "friends" without people being friends. But people in the organisations may also change, and in that way not really depend on people. In that way, friendship is disembedded too; the relationship is lifted out' of a tangible physical concrete local context. As thus, we can see partnership in NMS as a product of globalisation, as it does not exist in one place, but is part of a global system and shared across the world. In that way, we might see everyone involved in the global mission of NMS as part of a shared system. We might therefore see this global movement of mission also as a function of

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35 ERIKSEN, PP. 58

36 ERIKSEN, PP. 59

standardisation as NMS implement similar strategies for projects in the different region. Although adapted to local realities, overall choices and frameworks are similar for every project / programme across the globe. In that way, the NMS framework for having projects and working across the globe invoke the same processes as other inter-national / supra-national entities in a nation-state contexts. Thus, it synchronises and standardises people / projects into a global network making them little wheels in shared system built on the same theoretical framework, which conscious or un-consciously makes project work and transferring knowledge easier and more homogenous. The 'global NMS system' can therefore be compared to a similar UN-system, lifted out of the original Norwegian context, into a reality where it is to some extend a shared entity. In that way, we might see the "shared NMS community" has having shared resource of the partners' combined with a shared common 'language' (standardised manner of communication), memory, morality, and knowledge. [37] In that way, the shared partnership either directly between NMS and a partner, or between every organisation in the shared NMS system, could arguably be compared to nation-states in supra-national partnership. Thus, the friendship / relationship between organisations exists externally and independent from people. In the same way as nations might see each other as "friends". The friendship between organisations have as such been moved from missionaries cooperating / being friends with the locals, which were very concrete partnerships, with oral transmitted communication, personal friendships, in a local context, in the traditional form of mission; To an intangible, abstract, virtual context between organisations and individuals, with a shared system of communication (written documentation, oral forums, email), production (projects / programs), and exchange (ideas, methods, strategies).[38] And, similar to other metaphoric kinships like nationalism or religion, the quasi-religious fellowship within the partnership forms a commonality between people and us – a shared culture.

Thus, the same functions of nation building might apply to building partnership between organisations. Inter-linking people through shared culture, memory, and objective can use it for building stronger partnerships and cooperation. A kinship lifted out of a local context! A kinship fuelled by a similar cause for sharing the gospel for Jesus Christ, as well as improving the life conditions for the extremely poor in the partner countries. A shared objective between organisations within the global NMS system. In that way, the location of a suffering brother or sisters within the system becomes irrelevant. People in the system will place the value in the people suffering in the Middle East through NMS. The prayers and aid, might not just flow from Africa to Norway to the

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37 ERIKSEN, pp. 31

38 ERIKSEN, pp. 19

Middle East but might as well flow directly between the organisations and people within the system. Especially as global friendship grows. The ability to share experience across the globe is naturally hugely increased with the technical possibilities in communication e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. In that way, the only limitation of a full flowing global NMS friendship is the limitations of technologies in some partner organisations. Government to access global networks, other limited by poor infrastructure etc., limits some. But the possibilities are there and visible to the people from the different organisations that are either part of leadership or staff. Most of them have the same access as Norwegian volunteers and staff. Thus, the global platforms for communications which are a common denominator and perhaps the very 'face of globalisation', enables people in the shared mission of NMS to share human emotion, share their human-experience, their struggles, hopes and dreams in shared global forum, and thereby forming shared cultural signs through the experience. Again, forming an abstract partnership / friendship rather than a concrete traditional friendship. We do however, run the risk of universalising a Norwegian framework of partnership in which the imbalance of knowledge is still predominantly with the traditional power-holder. In the same way, as Western modernity (i.e. Modernity) is close to being a universal standard.[39] Not because there are no other options but because this is the dominant system which holds the only apparent solution to the problem. As there are more than one (I.e. the Western) way of making society work, there is also more than one way of making organisations work, and thus more ways of making supra-organisational co-operations work.

3.2.4 Hybridity and creolisation of unity

In a world where people are increasingly exposed to a myriad of ways of living life, one might think that there is no other option for global modernity than universalization of Western liberal democracies models. It is the formula propagated by the supra-national institutions: the IMF, World Bank, United Nations, G8/G20 etc. They all build their work on a nation-state system, which represents people in the given geographical area. Some however, would argue that there a visible counter actions / re-actions to that specific globalisation mechanism. There are counter actions of e.g. isolationism and the outer-most marginalised groups might see their only option to resist the functions of globalisations where they find them. Either by resisting a nation-state that does not represent them, working around the supra-national institutions, or rejecting all the cultural signs they connect with globalisation.[40] Weather it is North Korea countering the international

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39 ERIKSEN, pp. 31

40 ERIKSEN pp. 94

community by non-cooperation or it is the Islamic State combatting modes of modernity and creating a 'state' that represent their values –rejecting everything modern and returning to the most archaic interpretation of Islam. In a similar manner, the partner-churches in Africa may move to isolate themselves from the international community of Christians (e.g. LWF) when they see the global modernity have a too progressive approach to sensitive topics; like female pastors, communion, or homosexuality. Capitalism in its form today, creates both winners and losers, and thereby creates both wealth and more poverty. But the distribution is uneven, and the losers are rarely the ones who get put their footprint on global discourse. This is true for both poor people across the world and nation states whom for whatever reasons the losers within the system. They do not get the opportunity to broadcast their reality. If globalisation is the 'local' becoming the 'global' (gloca-lisation) the local of the poorest and marginalised groups never becomes part of the global story. Outsiders rarely shape literature, art, and discourse in a system.

In this section, we have looked at how the age of truly global-interconnectivity is an important factor in a current partnership between organisations. We have seen how the global reality is becoming available to more and more people across the globe and how their reality is also being 'lifted out' of time and space is closer to us in the West. How the struggles of Christians across the world is accessible at any time. We have seen how time and space has become irrelevant as an effect of globalisation but that we also see cultures who draw themselves back from a global secular world with rules and values they are not interested in. This will link the globalisation trends with current development practise from the first section, which then connects with the next section on understanding partnership in relation to the meeting between cultures. Where we will explore how 'truth' is created in a partnership and how humans in general interact in the cultural-meeting with other cultures. We will explore how we can come to better understand each other and how power in the intercultural meeting effects the relations we have with other people.

3.3   Intercultural understanding and partnership

This section in the chapter will present my theoretical framework of intercultural understanding, how it can help improve our understanding of 'the other', and how an intercultural partnership can be improved through better understanding and awareness of cultural signs and the role NMS staff play in the meeting with the intercultural-partner. The section will form a basis for understanding power in the intercultural partnership and how we subsequently might come to better understand how 'we' as westerners understand – or don't understand other cultures.

3.3.1 The power of revelation

Defining and finding 'truth' and 'thoughts' in relation to culture and inter-cultural organisational relations is very challenging. One can spend decades trying to understand other people, but there will always be a layer underneath – a veil of separation! As humans, we can only give our closest interpretation of what other people might feel or think, but never truly be able to 'walk in their shoes' or think their thoughts. Occasionally we do get the opportunity to lift the veil and see a glimpse of what lay beneath. We can however improve finding that 'truth', through theory and practise. Thereby improving our inter-cultural understanding, and increasing our chance of lifting the veil. Hans Georg Gadamer bases his approach, on the study of context; gaining knowledge and experience about 'the other'. Intercultural understanding, according to Gadamer, it comes not from understanding the person and listing but also from understanding the world around – seeing their reality. Understanding must become a 'moment' – an occurrence where we change the way we think, in the realisation that we don't understand. That moment of revelation is gained by knowledge, understanding tradition and history. Namely, because pure logic is not enough because logic itself is based on cultural tradition. Thus, finding truth in intercultural relations either between people or between organisations, will always be about obtaining knowledge knowing our partner and then build 'our truth' on the best possible interpretation of the knowledge available. It is within that the realisation that intercultural-understanding is not an art or something un-obtainable that you must feel by living in the culture but a skillset, which with training, knowledge and practise can be learned. - A culture might have harmful practises but that does not negate the right of people to identify with their culture and develop it.

In the concept of intercultural understanding, the thing that becomes important to see, in the meeting / exchange, with 'the other' is that we become aware of the process that leads towards intercultural understanding. We each have our cultures and they are equally valuable to the identity of a person. We might disagree with the values, the attributes, and the effects of cultures in society but must nevertheless understand that a person's culture is inseparable from the identity. Even if the culture practise is harmful, it cannot be changed law or information alone. Cultural change must be followed with new cultural value - to fill the gap. Cultures are constructions and can be changed but that does not change their value or significance to a cultural group. They need cultural practise as a common denominator and without it; new methods are danger to their cultural survival. That is why development fail! Because development project might succeed in breaking down tradition but fail to build new tradition. The same is true about projects, which seek to implement new methods in

society. If a group stand to lose socio-cultural status with the success of the project, nothing can be gained. Their cultural status must be negotiated and a cultural-substitution must be defined.

Organisations working closely with the issues of inter-cultural understanding should see a need for a process, which ensures that the moment of revelation happens. That there indeed is, a system or methodical way of working which build toward inter-cultural understanding between organisations. Gardamer uses the hermeneutic circle as an approach to intercultural understanding. Understanding 'the other' / in the case of NMS, demands an understanding of our own expectations – our own pre-conceptions. The hermeneutic circle focuses not only on learning the process of the 'revelation' but also on understanding our own preconceptions. Knowing and building our pre-conceptions on knowledge and from that, interpret the context, and after that being open towards the feedback we gain from the interaction. In that way, the methods become a hermeneutic circle. Methods, which is not set in stone, but is dynamic, based on knowledge and is our best possible interpretation of that knowledge. With that and an open-ness toward re-adjusting our understanding; then the ability of NMS becomes to approach our partner knowing our pre-conceived ideas, building knowledge about their context, thereby eliminating stereotypes, and basing our partnerships on the best possible interpretation. - It is okay that we don't understand each other. In that, is found true partnership. In the power of the revelation. The fact that we come to understand – that we don't understand.

3.3.2 Communication and social roles

Communication is the process of text/speech being conveyed between people - individuals transmitting a message. Communication however is about transmitting meaning to a receiver. It is in this instance that intercultural understanding becomes relevant - when the message transmitted is to be understood by the receiver from a different culture i.e. when a person wants to convey / communicate with another person from a different culture. In the transmission between two people - between two cultures, the theory of communicative filters has a significant role in distorting the message. [41] Because of the difference in cultures and the different attributes one ascribe to the message send and the pre-conceived notion of the culture of the sender. A sender may try to adjust their message to whatever preconceived notions they may have about the other culture, but without grounded knowledge that may lead to even deeper confusion. Between us, we as subjective messengers, produce a certain discourse and if that is initially flawed we may never be able to

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41 HAUS, PP.74

create a shared horizon. Thereby never obtaining the ability between us, to generate shared meaning. Changing the discourse between people and cultures is one of the hardest things to do in an effective way. When settled, the discourse becomes set and we take its realities for granted and they become a part of understanding the shared horizon - but the discourse may be flawed and rippled with misunderstandings.

In that way "culture" becomes one of the most important words in the development discourse, and indeed in inter-cultural communication. Since culture is the basis for all meetings in an encounter between people, it affects how value is ascribed to signs e.g. to gender, ethnicity, body, professions, and social norms. Since people ascribe power, power is manifested only through actions. In that way, it is imbedded in actions. Therefore, we can see the intercultural exchange as something more than just two people with different cultures meeting. But also, two people interacting in a relation to power.[42] People/advisors/missionaries from Norway interacting with people in partner countries may have very different power relations, depending on whom they interact with. In the case of the partner-Church. We see that there often is a high level of respect for the Norwegian staff of NMS. The missionaries obtain instant high social status when they interact with people from the partners, and to some extend within the society in general. When interacting with people who just see the NMS staff as white foreigners, the power relation might be different. E.g. regarding public officials like police, or other persons with high level of power in society. In those relationships, the NMS staff may often utilise their status to enter a more equal dialogue with public officials, once the roles of power are settled, the hieratical power structures of African countries become very visible. Thus, the status and history of the Norwegian Mission Society because very visible in an African context, and if communicated helps negotiate the social roles between people.[43] But the social roles can only have power if both parties agree on the power of the role. If the policeman is unaware of what the Norwegian Mission Society is, then the role has no power. Therefore, we can see culture as a construct between people. Although under constant negotiation, the power of cultural norms is powerless if both parties don't agree. This is also, where we might see a breakdown of traditional social roles between Norwegian missionaries / staff and the members of the partner-Churches. Maybe especially those who work more closely with Norwegians. There is a tendency that people act along the same lines of power and are reaching equal levels of social influence. It therefore becomes interesting to explore the social roles of power between people from the different backgrounds in NMS and partner-Churches. The Nordic countries tend to try to break social

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42 JENSEN, PP. 91

43 JENSEN, PP. 91

hierarchies' systems, wherever they find them. Maybe based in the understanding that "this worked for us" – but however nice and equal this might seem, it will not benefit anyone without the proper explanation and guidance. And the action might be offensive and in that way one will only obtain personal…. And maybe ruin your change to talk about the important issue of equality. If using cultural signs and values that fall outside of local context, the objective you had might be overshadowed by inability to navigate the cultural roles.

3.3.3 The Inter-connected global sphere

A movement in the global population and migration is not a new concept. The human history is a history of migration, movement and change. Even the Christian history has fundamental stories about travelling and migrating. The first disciples contributed to that and in that way; missionaries throughout the years have been part of a history of movement and inter-connectivity. A truly unique denominator of a more global sphere has been made with the advancements in Internet technology and computers. From communication being something only the 'rich westerns' could do, it is now possible for everyone with a phone (62.9% of the global population[44]) to be present in social media and broadcast their reality. We have yet to see the full potential of the connectivity of the global south. The reality today, is, that if you have the right number you can call all the corners of our partner churches and they will send you a friend-request on Facebook. They are in that sense as close to your personal communication channel as your family. The 'global north' is a significant way able to listen to the 'feed' of the global south.

Communication and transportation defines the global sphere as ever before. Never has the global sphere of trade and transport been as inter-connected as it is today. Empires have ruled across the seas and there was a time where Britain was "The Empire on which the sun never sets". But not even then did so many nations have a spot in the global sphere of trade and information. Liberal market reforms, a capital investment in the markets in Asia, South America, and Africa has forced an apparent transformation of societies across the global. Never have communication between people of all nations been more swift and approachable, especially in the last decade with the increase in social media activity on a global scale. Direct contact is no longer limited to texting, email, Internet-forums, and telephone but social media has become a global message forum.

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44 MOBILE PHONE USER PENETRATION AS PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WORLDWIDE FROM 2013 TO 2019, SOURCE WWW.STATISTA.COM/

Hybridity and creolisation in Christian organisations, there is a hybridisation in the mix in the global Lutheran Churches, with the increase of movement of Christians across all regions and the adaptation of more 'open' or perhaps 'loose' services forms, the e.g. The increase of use city churches who adopt are more worship focused service with a speaker rather than a traditional sermon.[45]

3.3.4 Aspects of power in Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding might to some extent come down to conveying meaning between two people. In a way, a difference in culture is less relevant, but the communication part is truly the difficult part. The difficult thing with the cultural aspect in inter-cultural communication is, to know the signs, and how to ascribe meaning to them. Not only seeing the signs when they occur but also be able to interpret meaning. In that way, Intercultural understandings are not just about broadcasting a specific message but broadcasting it in a way make it possible for the receiver to be able to interpret sent message into something like the intended purpose. Within the topic of Intercultural understandings there is also an aspect of power. As we discussed earlier the balance of power between people and cultures (be it national or organisational) is a huge factor in the relationship / partnership between people. If the imbalances in relations were just about money, and who has them, the debate on challenges in partnership would be short. Indeed, the challenges mission societies and NGOs in general face, lies beyond what may be explained by numbers. Much of the complexity and challenges can be ascribed to asynchronous power relations.[46] The issues of lack of local ownership, defining objectives, method, and scope have traditionally been within the responsibility of the donor. In some cases, still is. If not totally, then in certain aspect and when it comes to defining the framework of how the partners work together. Then, on a programme or project level, the relations might be more equal. Donors and receiver verbally presented on the same level as partners, but when it comes to "the power of definition" what is the influence of the receiving organisation?[47] Contemplating the imbalance and finding ways, not to make both organisations equal but creating equity in the partnership – negating the imbalance, is then the true objective. Communication is therefore vital as a method for understanding between people and a way to comprehend meaning of actions and signs in a different culture. In that we can both talk about cultures as what a certain ethic or national group has or indeed what a certain organisation /

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45 ERIKSEN, PP. 123

46 YTREHUS, PP. 123

47 YTREHUS, PP. 123

Church has. The culture of a partner organisation and Church society will always have its own cultural signs and norms. This might not be that visible today in Norway where religion is increasingly as personal thing. But in many of the partner-churches the signs and norms are a way to distinguee themselves from other denominations. In that way one might see the religious landscape as fully consolidated in Norway, but in the context of many of the partners there is still a need develop their own norms and signs, as a strategy to consolidate their Church in society and hold on to their members.

Thus, staff in regular connection with partner churches in the global south should understand the importance of the way their message is broadcasted and indeed who it is intended for, and how it may be received. We often see Intercultural understanding as purely face-to-face but one should also contemplate that much communication between organisations is written in emails, project descriptions, evaluations and reports. In that way, the oral and written communication must correspond with each other. Especially, because the written form is often the way that we construct the framework for cooperation, a message on paper is just as important in Intercultural understanding as an oral message. Thus, a consistency in communication both written framework and oral presentation is important. And frameworks should not be constructed by one partner only but be created because of a shared sphere of understanding. NMS cannot always be the defining side in everything.

3.3.5 Intercultural Partnership - the relation between North and South,

An approach to understanding some of the deep-lying issue in development is the matter of discourse, the problem surrounding the whole way that development is discussed, for one part in the media and politics, and secondly in development organisations and academia. Although much of the racism in the discourse (e.g., regarding the abilities or work moral of Africans) were largely eliminated during the fifties and sixties, the doctrine of development still generally determines some areas of the world as Under-developed/un-developed as opposed to the developed Western world. This marks the underlying objective for ALL development to become 'developed' and they're in 'Western' or perhaps more fitting 'Modern'. There is thus, it seems, an underlying notion that to become 'Developed' means to become modern / democratic / western. The issue with the doctrine is, that the West becomes the 'key' to becoming developed and modern, and less about countries finding their own models for modernity. The measurement of 'being developed' also becomes an

arbitrary Western measurement. The movement toward development must be in tune with the receiving countries if there is to be any sort of ownership and understanding of the concepts implemented. E.g. understanding and ownership for elections laws, food security. We are currently seen examples of former revolutionary parties in Africa, who fought for democracy in 20th century bending the rules to stay in power.[48]

In the Christian tradition for development-aid the term 'Brotherhood' and solidarity with the poor, has been almost synonymous and is widely used. Perhaps the two are somewhat shaped in symbiosis — social-democratic notions of humanitarian aid and Christian fellowship, over the post-war decades. The organisational partnership model and the verbal Christian understanding of 'brother and sisters of faith', which underlines the connection to the grassroots in the developing countries. There is a deep connection not only on an organisational level but a fellowship between people.[49] A doctrine, which might be slowly changing by pressure from the right wing nationalistic parties, in Europe and the US. Development aid is under pressure from the right, for being inefficient, helping the wrong people, and not benefitting the nation interests directly. Development aid is rerouted to build fences and refugee camps in the MENA region rather than building wells and hospitals. Over the past two decades, organisations in the global North have been stream lining their approach to partnerships. Over the years, organisations in Norway (including NMS) have been forming formalised partnerships through written 'partnership agreements'. Partnerships often formed and dictated by the northern partner to combat problems identified and defined mainly by expats wanting to solve local challenges through legal framework.

3.3.1 Stereotypes and the image of 'the other'

The concept of stereotypes plays an important role in the 'intercultural meeting' and it forms the discourse in our interactions with 'the other'. Even though an individual might have extensive knowledge about a certain culture, the stereotype as a "common understanding" in an organisation about a partner might be different. There might be an overall commonly shared understanding of a partner organisation that is based on misunderstandings and wrong assumptions. Since Lippmann coined the term "stereotype" the topic has been at the forefront of Intercultural understanding.[50] When we discuss the concept of stereotypes we should understand it as a result as a simplified way

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48 YTREHUS, pp. 85

49 STRAND, pp. 25

50 ILLMAND, pp. 102

of seeing the world. Taking the information, you might have about people and creating a simplified view of them. In this way stereotypes helps us sort people into groups that are perceived to share some of the same characteristics. By arranging people into groups, we can better handle and arrange our information about them. In that way, specific groups can be ascribed with having the same qualities, values, and opinions as the individual they are based on. The function of having stereotypes often has a clear power-perspective where one group may often see their own values as superior to the 'other' and categorising the other as a contradiction to their own self-image.[51] Thus, the 'our' culture is used as a measurement the values of the other, and as deviating from 'our' norms. Although many, maybe most, stereotypical views can be broken down by contact with the group in question, stereotype's function as a method to understand and arrange the world in smaller parts, is harder to break down. E.g. if a worldview is formed that Africans are "like this" or "like that", then a person's view of an entire continent is linked to a stereotype, and that may be hard to break down. Especially, in cases with an unequal power relation, in the interaction. Here a stereotype might become self-fulfilling as the person with the power to define the framework, has a negative stereotype about that specific group and therefore acts in relation to the stereotype. Working with other cultures, there is always an aspect of power and in some cases an unequal power-relationship. Stereotypes are not only changed with facts alone. They must be broken down through but also people must ascribe new cultural value instead. If not the stereotype will tend to stick. In that way breaking down a stereotype and needs room for change and takes the willingness of all parties.

Although stereotypes must be broken down, they are often more what keep people apart than what brings them together. They create a 'them' and an 'us' - boundaries and differences.[52] Although we might have positive stereotypes to the point remains that stereotypes emphasises differences and creates boundaries, and limits possibilities. The stereotypes of other nations that nation states have formed over the centuries or that dictators have made about people who opposed them, where mostly promoted to create an 'us' and 'them' if someone is different from you and I, it is much easier to do terrible things to them. Groups of people have values ascribed to them in other to attack, de-humanise them and thereby building support for action. If your target-group is just like you and I, now body will ever agree to an attack. Therefore, it is important to combat stereotypes and break down the most damaging ones, by exchanging them with new values. Today there is a

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51 ILLMAND, PP. 103

52 ILLMAND, PP. 103

group of nations who call themselves "the West" and a war between those countries seem highly unlikely. Although only 100 years ago, the roles were very different. Only a few decades ago dehumanising blacks in the US were perfectly normal because they were not like 'you and I' they were different and thus 'whites' could do whatever they wanted to them.

Today, most people see that Swedes and Germans are just as you and I. They have value just like everyone else. In the same way, all 'others' have value and it is simply stereotypes creating an "us and them". Breaking down does stereotypes is the foundation of a friendship. It is at this point we come to see the person in the stereotype. Working with other cultures, there is always an aspect of power, and thus people who engage in intercultural understanding should be highly aware of their stereotype of the people they are meeting. If you have a lot of contact with someone, it might not be hard to communicate but it might still be prudent contemplate your views and maybe try to break some of them down. We define our partners as the other, and have some stereotypes about them. Our assumptions are sometimes wrong and therefore our actions are made on false basis. Breaking down stereotypes means mitigating potential faulty stereotypes. In being active in your own awareness of what stereotypes you have are the essence for starting to work methodically with intercultural understanding.

3.3.2 Listening to the global south

The face of the global Church has been changing almost seamlessly over the last three or four decades. Maybe the invisibility is only starting to show as academia production concerning Church growth in the global south has been slow to surface, for various reasons. The defining powers of theology and academia are still concentrated in the global north, although 2/3 of Christians today inhabit the global south.[53] Western-centric power balance is not only defining theological realities, but also indeed framework for partnership/friendship between global north and south. The imbalance in the ability to affect and define the framework stream from the North to the south and not vice-versa. Aspiring theologians' just don't 'pilgrimage' from Wittenberg to Nairobi but often in the other direction. Scandinavian mission societies don't send volunteers/staff to Africa to be educated but assists an extensive number of people from the partner-churches to travel to Scandinavia to take university diplomas.

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53 HWA YUNG, PP. 132

In this section, we have looked at how we can reach "moments of revelations" and understand that we don't understand. We have seen how understanding can become a conscious process which can be repeated by development staff and how that will enable organisations in renewing this approach to organisational development. We have seen how social roles in intercultural-partnership are important and how messages are conveyed have meaning beyond your control. And how we have roles within the partnerships which we inherent from the staff/missionaries who came before. Furthermore, we have seen how social practise defines the framework for partnership and how power is held by structure, organisational structure, and the power to define. We have explored how Christians are becoming part of global sphere common Christian hybridisation and how that might affect Churches in all corners of the world. We have also explored how partnership has developed and how Christian brotherhood and solidarity are important aspects in Christian development tradition today. Finally, we have seen how stereotypes defines how we think about 'the other' and how an 'us and them' discourse is very harmful if we want equal partnerships. We have established that Christian brotherhood demands intercultural understanding and that 'we' as westerners should make a better effort in truly listen to our partners. This concludes the theoretical framework and what follows is the analysis chapter which will give my reflections and approach to analysis and present the findings from the interviews through a discourse analysis.

4   Analysis

The analysis starts with a reflection on my approach to the analysis process from data collection to conclusion. Some of the key steps along the way, what I might contribute with, and how I see this thesis fit in academic field, and finally how my knowledge of the field would be balanced by the empirical evidence and theoretical framework. This section also contains some reflections on the validity of my findings and how my method and approach to analysis is relevant and valid, in saying anything significant about practise and discourse in the debate on partnership. The section before the analysis also offers my reflection on my preconceived notions of the field, NMS as a partner, professional knowledge about certain partners, and an understanding of the current discourse in the development-aid. Finally, in this chapter I will present my findings and analysis of the collected data from the interviews.

The analysis is based on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, which seeks to analyse the 'text' and how the interviewee uses it to shape meaning, attitude, and power in partnership. Furthermore,

how language is used to shape social practise, and within shapes norms in the current context, social roles and how it is used to shape change.[54]

4.1   Reflection on Analysis

One of the challenges of the analysis in working with qualitative interviews is that it becomes a living part of the entirety of the thesis. In that way, the analysis must become an integrated dynamic product of the fieldwork.[55] Therefore, my approach to the analysis started with in some of the early work I did for the MIKA program in autumn 2015, where I did a smaller qualitative study of some of the topics in this thesis. The fieldwork therefore started as this point, because I saw an opportunity to contribute to an important issue. The analysis and choices started at this point with papers I wrote on the foreshadowed problem, since I also knew that, that would be an important issue for my thesis. Therefore, it is also important that the researcher is aware of their own pre-conceived notion of the topic in question, as they might otherwise affect the process from pre-fieldwork and theoretical framework to analysis. Making the pre-conceived understanding known to others/the reader is a way of making the work from fieldwork to analysis more transparent. In that way, the core of ethnographic findings is not to hide personal views or ideas but to be aware of what they are, and in that way work to negate them and find a balance. They might not invisible but in an analysis, there should therefore be a good balance in the argumentation, as well as a critical reflection on the researchers' role and approach to working with data-collection and data-analysis. Therefore, the interviewer should, in the data-collection and setup is a focus on collecting simple new and relevant information.[56] The following section will discuss the validity of the data and my approach to negate my pre-conceived notions of the topics.

4.1.1   Validity of the analysis

When it comes to an analysis of qualitative one can always contemplate the validity of analysis relative to the field of study and number of interviewees. In this case, there were four participants for the interviews with a total of eight sessions, a total of approx. six hours in total in the topic of partnership in an intercultural context. The question then becomes – what can we really say about

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54 FAIRCLOUGH, PP 65

55 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 159

56 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 217

the Norwegian Mission Society with the produced data set? Is six hours enough to say anything of value, with substance and validity? - What can be done is to pair data set with the theoretical background and argue for current tendencies; in the practice NMS program work. Interviewees are senior advisors, all with long experience working with partners. Their views and attitudes towards partnership is a major part of how NMS policy is formed. That in mind, these four people represent roughly half of the staff in the Stavanger office. That in mind, the local representatives also play key role in the daily activities with the partners, and their views of how the partnerships might be shaped in the future are also important. Nevertheless, policy on the overall direction in the framework around partnership is for the most part, formed in Norway in the program department, with a high degree of influence on the details in directions of the projects and partnership. The program staff all has years or experiences from working with the partner-churches. Their knowledge is based both in their knowledge working directly in the field, both from project follow-up trips and seminars. They also have years of experience from working in the partner countries. In that way, they have a high level of access to the field and have a high competence level regarding cultural understand in the context and how to interpret the local partner. In that why they are also used to the current framework and one might subsequently contemplate how they would change current challenges with the partnership model with the knowledge they hold. We have established my approach to analysis, and how I bring validity into the field. Next, I will discuss some ethical reflections and how this thesis adds new knowledge to the field of study.

4.1.2 Foreshadowed problem

Qualitative research is about interpretation meaning from signs and actions. The signs in form of words. Research starts with a problem, or a challenge and in that way the very nature of research is an exploration toward finding a solution. But it also builds on the premises that there is a 'problem' to be found! If we as scholars' set out to find proof for our thesis, all we will find is proof. Thus, we might hope to find proof of a problem since that is the more interesting outcome, but personally even though I know errors have been made in the NMS, I also think that the organisation is much more self-reflective today. In that I hope in some way for both outcomes; I hope to find a problem and with that a possible solution, and I hope not to find a serious problem. In some way that is both a good and a bad starting point for a thesis. Nevertheless, a reflexive standpoint which allow for both outcomes.

Thus, I feel on the safe side of having pre-conceived notions; that there is a specific problem to be found, but more a knowledge to be found and shared than to point out errors. Errors regarding NMS

and partnerships has been made, and that it is important to avoid them in future. Especially, in an era where the global south, might become more independent both culturally and financially, thus, this thesis, and fieldwork did not set out to find a specific problem, but did set out to find ways to critically analyse the nature of partnership in NMS today. Knowing that there has been made mistakes and thinking there is a problem now, is not the same thing. Some of the issues may have been mitigated by local developments in education and economy, and other by changes in NMS strategies towards including partner' churches/organisations in the decision-making. In that way, I set out with an open mind to adjust my theories according to the findings and theoretical framework.[57] Thus, developing the research problems becomes an integrated part of the pre-fieldwork phase. The foreshadowed problems become a part of the entirety of the research project. In this case, a matter of describing a generalised account of the practise and perception of the staff in NMS Global and their interaction with partners' in the global south.[58] There should therefore also be an openness to change the research problem if the initial problem was based on faulty assumptions. Changes in research problems could also happen due to issues with finding empirical evidence that connects to theories.

As a researcher with professional experience from the field, my approach is naturally affected by previous experiences from the context but the research approach is methodical and academically sound. I have spent three years working closely with the very core of one of the oldest partners in the NMS, the Malagasy Lutheran Church, an organisation with almost 150years of continues cooperation. Meaning both organisations have a deeply inter-linked in a complex web of history. Thus, the pre-conceived understanding of the issues at hand should come under extensive scrutiny. Prior knowledge cannot be the ruling method of defining the research problem but rather we must move from the substantive to the formal and generic and thereby find patterns, which are more universal to the work of NMS and their partners in general. Thereby also circumventing some ethical problems of exhibiting specific people or organisations' problems to the world.

The aim in this case must be to analyse practise and discourse in the contexts, and thereby exploring empirical evidence, comparing it to current and relevant theories of the field. Thereby supporting the theoretical framework and offer something new to the existing field of study. In such a way that the focus of the works becomes a matter of developing the underlying theories derived through the process itself, rather than proving or testing an existing theory.[59] In choosing a specific theoretical

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57 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 21

58 HAMMERSLEY & ATKINSON, PP. 24

59 HAMMERSLEY, ETNOGRAPHY PP. 21

framework there is not an inherited foreshadowed problem with the discourse surrounding development work, Christian mission in Africa, globalisation, and Intercultural understanding and indeed inter-organisational cooperation between people/organisations in Norway and Africa.

Therefore, the chosen approach of exploring current development theory, or rather the theory in the spectrum between Christian partnership/Christian development and secular development practise and the implication in practice. As well as the concept of globalisation, which affect development theory and finally exploring the issues of Intercultural understanding in relation to inter-organisational partnerships. In that way, I aim to negate negative consequence effects of my pre-conceived notions of the issues at hand and rather use them to form relevant basis for relevant and critical thesis. The next section presents the findings of the reflexive qualitative interviews through critical discourse analysis, and is organised in two main sections discourse and semantic meaning and social practise, both with three sub-sections.

4.2 Findings

The analysis is divided in two main parts based on Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis. A discourse analysis of the interviewee's semantic implicit or explicit understanding, and secondly an analysis of social practise, both concerning the main themes of development, intercultural understanding, globalisation, and partnership regarding the partner. The analysis will therefore constantly circle around the topic of partnership, from the different perspectives from the theoretical background. The analysis will, through the analysis answer current practise and discourse to answer what some of challenges are in working in current partnership–model. This will lead to the discussion of the findings and subsequently to the conclusion of the thesis overall research question. The analysis presents relevant quotes from field notes and audio recordings which were combined in a field document gathering the data under the major themes from the theoretical framework. The analysis was then done as a discourse analysis of semantic meaning and social practise.

4.2.1 Discourse and semantics meaning

This section will explore the words the interviewee uses and interpret their implicit/explicit meaning in the context. The meaning of words is important since it says something about how the interviewee thinks consciously or unconsciously about partnership in Africa. They the follow

analysis will thus offer an interpretation of the text and what it might mean. If it challenges or reinforces statement of the dominant doxa.

4.2.1.1 Understanding partnership

In the collected data, we find several examples of what the interviewees want from the partnership with the partner-churches in Africa.

As one respondent puts it: "As Christians <u>we are friends</u> / <u>brothers and sisters</u> of Christ"[60] This quote underlines a more general tendency among the respondents, that they have or wish that they have something more than a "co-operation" or "formal partnership" with the partner. Something like a "friendship". In this case, we see that the words used a closed linked to a Christian understanding of friendship. It is the understanding that the staff uses this type of wording when communicating with the partner.

On a more structural level, the same respondent said:

"In one way, <u>we are friends</u> - but we also have a <u>formal friendship</u>."[61]

A friendship where there is a formalised partnership, where the rules and expectations is formulated by NMS. In that answer, we might also see the first notion of a certain duality in the partnerships current state. One, being the formalised partnership, which is documented and written, in both partnership agreements and which is seen through the framework of working through projects. The NMS partnerships are in way very organised (some more than others) and that tend to demand a certain level of formality concerning who does what, when, how, and with how much money. The systems for the projects usually build on development project and the principles within the new public management systems. It promotes measurable outcomes, high-level of reporting, and control. That side of the duality of the partnership is what is said verbally during visits of staff and missionaries/development advisors; they propagate a similar agenda as advisory staff in Norway.

 'Respondent A' has a hope for a more equal partnership, where the issue of money and finances are less of an issue. There is a general tendency across the respondents where one respondent notes:

"Now maybe <u>NMS is changing direction</u>, building a focus on asset-based development."[62]

Thereby underlining the need to change 'something' maybe problems and challenges which are yet to be understood or maybe just a lack of a better model. Or, perhaps there the staff is some of the

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60 RESPONDENT B, CORPUS PP 3.

61 RESPONDENT B, CORPUS PP 3.

62 RESPONDENT A, CORPUS PP 1.

first ones to see the duality and a need for change and as such, the grassroots and elected leadership of NMS needs to see the same need for change. Both because NMS cannot play the same parental/parent role as before, and because there is a deeper understanding today, about the faults in the parent / child 'relationship. The fact that this still exist creates a strain on the partnership today because the many partners in Africa are more independent today.

Respondent D thinks NMS have something that more secular organisations doesn't have (Example Norwegian Church Aid):

"I think, take an example, there are other partners like secular organisation, Church aid… but NMS has partnership like a marriage. Meaning that you stick to the partner no matter what happens. When things go wrong – you fix it – you communicate. And you go further."[63]

A very interesting choice of words which lead us again to seeing that NMS wants something more than a formal partnership but a 'marriage'/partnership between organisations. But also, that there is already something more than what some secular NGOs have. In the interviewee's perspective. The same respondent continues: "There is a paradox in our wish for partnership, when we kind of 'fall out' of the brotherhood. When the relation becomes parent / Child and the father has to punish the child. Then NMS has the power to punish. With money."[64] This very nicely underscores the complexities NMS has with being a partner. That sometimes "…We kind of fall out of the brotherhood" and take the role of the parent. Takes the responsibility – tries to teach the child through punishment. The reflexion of this staff member is in itself significant and the fact that NMS knows this happens questions the wish for brotherhood in general.

4.2.1.2   Understanding aspects of globalisation

The topic of globalisation and intercultural partnership is increasingly important. In a context were NMS has been an intricate part of the history and development of many of the partner Churches, the changes formed by globalisation processes, and the way the organisation cooperates must be in tune with the current global. While some might jump on the discourse that globalisation is harmful to the developing world and thereby the partnership. There are many reason why NMS should be careful enforcing that discourse. Because there are both positive and negative effects of globalisation. Some enable NMS staff to be closer to the projects in the partner-church, others create a broader understanding of a communality between Christians across the globe.

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63 RESPONDENT D. CORPUS PP 7

64 RESPONDENT D. CORPUS PP. 9

For one thing, globalisation allow people in our partner-countries to benefit from participation in the global market, it allows the spreading of ideas as democracy, universal human rights etc. granted that global economic growth is not benefitting the extremely poor, as much as other. But the effects of globalisation also allow NMS staff to be closer to the people in the partner organisation through communication, and travel-opportunities. The spreading of mass media also means that the global news sphere is becoming increasingly shared and that people from different cultures relate to more of the same global events. This means that our common sphere of understanding is closing in on each other, and the 'foreign' and 'strange' is becoming part of our own reality. In that way, the easy access to communication channels in both spheres is enabling NMS staff and grassroots to be closer to our friends in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, especially in times of difficulties. Thus, globalisation is indeed enabling us Scandinavians to be better 'brothers and sisters' by showing and telling our friends that we care. This is nicely underlined by one of the respondents:

"… Faith is also something that <u>binds</u> us together. We are all limbs on the same body. If one limb <u>suffers</u> all suffer. That is perhaps the 'added value' of our partnerships that we are together. That is what I experience in the Churches, that they say: Please, please, please pray for us, we need to know that you are there, that you are with us."[65]

In that way, this quote underlines the paradox in NMS, that the partnership "suffers" if one suffer. It is interesting how the organisation or perhaps is in that way embodied as something living, which can suffer.

4.2.1.3   Intercultural understanding in partnership

The topic of Intercultural understanding is highly important for the Norwegian Mission Society. Even with decades working with the same partners and cultural groups, there is always a need to intemperate a local context and the local cultures. Especially when we consider that cultures are not static but changes with time and local realities change, both because of globalisation and because of the nature of culture; that it changes and is unable to be static. NMS today can therefore not relay an interpretation of cultures twenty years. Local realities also change and people change. The interpretation of cultural signs and ascription of attributes must therefore be constantly updated.

In the intercultural 'meeting' between people one seeks moments of understanding where we come to understand each other and a common understanding of reality occur. Not the realisation that we understand that we don't understand but the moment where we lift the veil and share a moment of

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65 RESPONDENT B, CORPUS PP. 8

understanding. These moments are important for NMS to achieve and to a large extremely important to be able to recreate again and again, in a variety of cultures. Therefore, it is important that NMS staff find tools that help them realise the moment of understanding. As described in the theoretical part, these 'moments' can be achieved systematically through practise and method. In a partnership between organisations where there is money involved the receiving side might often be desperate to get funds for their activities and even though NMS might have a wish of an equal partnership it can be difficult for equality with a partner desperate for funding. In that way, the partner becomes desperate to understand the framework of NMS and what it will take to live up to the requirements. On the question of the transparency of the NMS framework one respondent answered:

"we write program plans and in those we have very clear agendas on what we want to work with and support. But I have noticed that some partners don't know these exist, even-though we give them every third year."[66]

Following that the respondent continued; that there is a difficulty in understanding the formalities in framework through the different levels of communication through the partner. At least to come to a point where the plans are clear and understood by the partners. This underlines that the framework for cooperation is known only to NMS and that many partners struggle in that. Finally, the respondent said:

"Because we also want to know their agenda! We want to know their real agenda! If we know that, we can better cooperate."[67]

The interviewee is highly reflexive on the challenges in contemporary discourse of friendship / partnership / brotherhood and on the other hand the donor-organisation knows it is pushing a framework on the other.

We see a wish for coherent and shared plans for cooperation but they might be limited by different ways of communicating wishes or by the imbalance in power, with two sides in imbalanced partnership where one sides deliver both funds and framework. There is clearly as wish for balance but the framework is limiting both sides in manoeuvre freely. Mainly because the framework doesn't fit the view on what an equal partnership and friendship should look like. The same respondents note, in the second interview that these topics of partnership are interesting to explore but that there is usually on time to reflect on them in the daily work.[68]

66 RESPONDENT C, CORPUS PP. 4

67 RESPONDENT C, CORPUS PP. 5

68 RESPONDENT D, CORPUS PP. 7

The power of defining and putting words on reality is one of the most powerful forces of change in the world. The people who possess the ability to change the way we speak about something can change the world. Reality is therefore not just the world around us, but also rather the world as we see it. Reality seen by humans is therefore subjective and we reflect ourselves in it and thus, putting words and forming 'reality' through words is one of the most important forces for change in the world. As established, there seem to be a genuine interest from the staff in NMS global to obtain something beyond a formal cooperation and partnership. There is an eagerness to have friendship and a brotherhood with the churches and organisations NMS cooperates with. But at times, the staff see the effects of globalisation i.e. an increased vocalised division between the rich in the north and the poor in the south as a barrier for creating an equal partnership, as described here by one of the respondents:

"Partnership is about balance – within the power. The balance of the power between the North and the South, and rich and poor. Partnership is a good cooperation between two organisations / Churches, they learn from each other, learn not to create dependency. Try to make the weak more independent."[69] The topic we deal with here is a reality where there is an un-balanced relationship in power. Where two organisations, who are thought, in principle should be equal, have become un-equal maybe to some extent through the discourse in the organisations. NMS has been a faithful partner to the poor organisations but also been the catalyst of many projects over the last hundred years.

When working with global partners in today's world, an organisation which has a firm belief in the equal partnership, must to some extend leave the realities of the 'old world' behind, both when it comes to cooperating and defining the partnership model. As stated by one of the respondents:
"The partnership is a good cooperation between two organisations; they learn from each other, and does not create dependency. Make the weak more independent."[70]
In our case the weak being the African partner. But there also seem to be a change in the way that partnership is viewed from the North. Because there currently a clear image of the effects of partnership policy of the last 10-20 years, where 'partnerships' / cooperation has been formalised and became very rule-based and fixed within a certain framework which is also highly influenced by national development policy. In that way, the policy of formalised written cooperation-partnerships should some extend failed. Their need for documentation and them bureaucracies the partnership itself, to an extend to where partners are force themselves to act in a certain way

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69 RESPONDENT C, CORPUS PP. 1

70 RESPONDENT A, CORPUS PP. 1

because 'that is what the rules say!' e.g. withholding funding as punishment; A wise choice if you set out the follow the rules - but a problematic choice if you want a brotherhood / friendship.

In the intercultural context, it is important that NMS is aware of its role and how it creates reality through communication. For example, when NMS defines partnership agreements, they are a sign of cultural meaning, that NMS wants a certain level of control over the projects. That NMS will punish a partner of they don't adhere to the rules. Rules normally defined by NMS. It communicates a very clear message that defining the framework belongs to NMS. This is well founded in the data: "Sometimes when I read the partnership agreements, still NMS wants to control man things in the partners and I feel that the agreement, is very strict and says a lot about how NMS will punish the partner of they do this and that. It is not a Christian way to express friendship." [71] subsequently, communication to the partner is not only about what is said about brotherhood and friendship but indeed all communication and the actions which are done.

4.2.2 Discourse and social practise

This section will explore the social practise which the interviewee describes and the inherent meaning in the context. The social practice within the partnership is important since it says something concrete about current practise in the field. The following analysis will therefore offer an interpretation of the meaning of current practise.

4.2.2.1 Understanding effects of globalisation

Standardisation as an important or crucial aspect of globalisation, in the case of this thesis, we might even see Christianity as force of standardisation, as it has shaped cultures across the globe and introduced highly standardised forms of religious practise. Standardisation is thus, not just a force of economic and democratic process but also deeply rooted in the European/Christian colonisation of Africa. In that way, the Christian mission and indeed the partners, that NMS have helped create, reflect the culture of the people who built it. They share, on a fundamental level, a mutual understanding of 'brotherhood of faith' and in that way Christian faith creates a fundamental foundation for partnership/friendship. As one of the respondents puts it:

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71 RESPONDENT A, CORPUS PP. 13

"I feel I get a close connection because most of the people I meet are Christians, they are used to the same teachings, praying, services even though they are different we are in the same 'framework of faith.". [72]

As such, the partnership between Christians in different organisations and indeed cultures a primed by their fundamental teachings of their faith to seek brotherhood with other Christians and see them as family and friends. Because they act on the same fundamental teachings AND that religious practise in the partner-churches are to some extend build on a Scandinavian model of Lutheran practises. The partnership and Christian values because an important driver for global standardisation. People across the globe come to share a mutual belief with similar cultural attributes. It gives Christians a mutual framework of understanding and cane be used directly within development as a common reference for generating change. Thus, not all forms of globalisation are bad but rather relative and subjective for any society or culture. Consequently, because of globalisation, the partner is also becoming more aware of what is going on in Norway on e.g. Norwegian Church policy and how NMS works. As reflected by one of the respondents:

"The know much more about us than they did before because of globalisation. So it might change much more than we think. Our realities are in that way coming closer."[73]

A textbook on intercultural understanding could not have said it better. The global south as we know it is rapidly coming to understand us and can see the West in their own eyes through the modes of globalisation. That is in some way the essence of the challenge, both positive and negative - That Mission and development does not have to be, and should be about NMS 'giving' and the partner 'receiving' but can become about sharing.

4.2.2.2   Understanding partnership and Christian brotherhood

NMS promotes equal partnership and the objective is well founded in the data, as we see in a quote from one of the respondents:

"As Christians' we are friends – brothers and sisters. In one way, we are friends but we also have a formal partnership. I think today, I would be welcome even though I don't bring any money. Because they value the fact that we are friends, that someone is looking after someone and us cares. Someone visiting and praying for they us. In some way, we agree that money has to be there. This a kind of an unspoken agreement about all these formal things but we are also friends."[74]

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72 RESPONDENT B , CORPUS PP. 15

73 RESPONDENT C, CORPUS PP. 18

74 RESPONDENT B CORPUS PP. 3

If we see this as the partnership the global south want. Someone to walk along with them and support them, in their walk toward modernity. Maybe the agreement for the partnerships, which are stressed, should be revisited and formulated in are way where NMS and its partners can talk about the things that divided them e.g. funding and ways of communicating. The framework of how NMS supports the partners does not seem to be in tune with the objective of NMS to have friendships. If NMS in personal meetings promotes friendship then the framework should reflect that.

In the current model, it seems that something is indeed problematic if we look at what the interviewees said:

"… I feel we are pressuring them! Forcing them further than we should. We should allow time for them to have a process. But then again we have forms which needs to be filled."[75]

In this the interviewee is very clear on the formal structures. Namely, that they do not fit the partnership very well. The framework/NMS as an organisation is "pressuring them" On the other side of that duality we see the notion of friendship / brotherhood of Christians which the staff in Norway seem to wish for. It is also shared verbally when staff and grassroots visit the partner locally. There is a notion in the data-material that the partners also want a friendship and brotherhood.

These examples of the differences in world view very nicely captures the difficulties in the challenge at hand and in some way, we might need to contemplate who needs to learn from whom. If NMS in the personal / oral meeting broadcasts 'the brotherhood of Christ' and with the formal framework aims for a different objective can we really blame the smaller or less organised organisation for answering that the objective is the fulfilment of the Mission Commandment? It underlines the need for the cultural North to control, not necessarily to poor in the south, but more the system/framework/money and so forth.

"The Norwegian culture which is very controlled, very bureaucratic, very high level of organisation – a product of our culture. We can control everything and need documentation for everything."[76]

In that way, the Norwegian culture is primed for control but the culture in Christianity is, at least today, a message of brotherhood and solidarity with the weak and poor. One might ask, who is right or wrong in their quest for modernity; Norwegian Christians who proclaims brotherhood with the poor of poor but demands documentation for the founds or the poor who seek someone to walk with them with the objectives of spreading the word of God! A Norwegian culture where everything is and must be controlled, as opposed to cultures where only God is in control of chaos will cause

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75 RESPONDENT B, CORPUS PP. 4

76 RESPONDENT B, CORPUS PP. 3

tension at times. Keeping that in mind one must remember to consider possible misunderstandings within communications at least account for differences understanding between cultures.

In that way, the framework and discourse with the topic of globalisation forms a system where there is division. Where some are poor and some are rich. To some extent because globalisation in the eyes of many people in the west is about capitalism and thus we might see ourselves trapped in a discourse and global framework where you are only a 'winner' if you are richer than others. A discourse which might be enforced by the national development sectors in Scandinavia which are driving by a modern neoliberal economic agenda and in that way part of the framework which pushes the wheels of globalisation through <u>standardisation</u> of modernity. In the case of NMS and the partners, both are part of their own context and must act as such. Thus, NMS must be credible in the Norwegian development contexts, because it gives access to knowledge, funding, and networks that improves the work abroad. As described by respondent D:

"We (NMS red.) Spend a lot of time on producing reports and documentation for NORAD / DIGNI. But there is an added value to cooperating with them / being in 'the system'. Because one of NMS' roles is to be civil society in Norway. Our partners are civil society in their context. Our role is to be credible in our context, which means living up to national standards for development and that means cooperation with our partners in a professional manner." [77]

The modernity that NMS pushes out towards the partner is not just a Christian mode of standardisation but also a standard of organisational and project practise. Again, we see a duality, here in the different modes of globalisation and standardisation where NMS pushes two agendas which often seem to collide.

4.2.2.3 Understanding development practise

Thus, NMS must act within its national context and if one wants to be a responsible, professional, efficient, and with an approach to the various themes of development that fit the development framework. In cooperation with DIGNI the respondent also see the benefits of the work of NMS to improve and maybe improve strategies and methods for working with development in the partner countries. As respondent D says:

"These national umbrellas give us someone to generate ideas with." [78]

Thus, work within a globalised context where development work /aid, is standardised to reflect the modern western style of nation building, namely toward professionalism, efficiency etc. and thereby

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77 RESPONDENT D, CORPUS PP. 19

78 RESPONDENT D, CORPUS PP. 9

defining the system for what it means to cooperate with NMS. It would most likely mean living up to quantitative goal achievement, professional – attributes that the staff knows cannot be achieved by all partners, because they do not have the organisational / structural ability yet. Therefore, the partnership becomes locked in a continuous movement to catch up to a system where 'we' as partners in a Christian partnership/friendship are always behind. There is always something new to work with, and rarely time to contemplate what is right and wrong. There is rarely time to work the long game, and discuss fundamental changes or shared-long-term-objectives. Because we must reach modernity for an entire society and church-movement. That might be possible with smaller NGOs working on smaller scale, with professional staff in both partners.

Sometimes, one might even see NMS as the limitation of the further self-reliance of the Churches. Here formulated by one of the respondents:

"Sometimes NMS is a hindrance! Sometimes NMS take the responsibility and perhaps more than we should. Because they lean on us, and we take their responsibility. Because we see a need and we go in and save the day…"[79]

In paradoxical way NMS thus becomes a duality against what it seems the organisation (or perhaps staff) really want. NMS want brotherhood, first it forces itself to act according to rigid framework it made itself (i.e. Which could be ignore if wanted) and then secondly, hinder the partner in reaching self-reliance / self-respect by taking responsibility and action, and thereby undermining local initiative / action and ability to meet (NMS) on an equal playing field. In times of instability or conflict between two partners, dated rulebooks might indeed hinder equality in the partnership on how and when to act. Adding on that they historical relationship of NMS, in/with some of the partners is also something to consider. As noted by a respondent:

"I notice, mostly in Africa, that partners at project level are very much 'waiting' for my opinion more than trying to find a good solution."[80]

If that is a general the partners, it would not be entirely wrong to assume that the socio-cultural status of missionaries i.e. all NMS staff, is in some cases beyond healthy for an equal partnership to form. This might be mostly true with the older generations but it is nevertheless an issue to consider. How does NMS as a partner compensate for people not wanting to give the wrong answer to someone they have learned to honour and see as 'parents'. Current and older missionaries are held in the highest regard locally and honoured. In that way, there is a need to continuously work with people to help them see missionaries in a new light where we can reach more than the parent /

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79 RESPONDENT C, CORPUS PP. 6
80 RESPONDENT C, CORPUS PP. 16

child relation and reach friendship / brotherhood with each other. In a culture where missionaries seen as parents and not brothers / sisters there is really no foundation for equal partnership. There is not a culture there must be destroyed but there is a need to build a new understanding, and a new understanding in NMS and deeply in the grassroots on both sides, must build the message of brotherhood in Christ and equality before true friendship can be reached.

On a very fundamental level, the gathered data seem to show a level of deep self-realisation in the fact that the churches are not always heard, or at least that the level of "professionalism" needed for participating in many projects with NMS as partner, is too much to handle for some of the partners. As one respondent says on the topic:

"The Churches are not always heard… when you have a lot of projects, it becomes too much to have control. Sometimes NMS just have to make decisions because of the lack of competence in the leadership and project leadership."[81]

The question is if the sheer size of NMS' engagement with some of the partners, is simply too much to handle. With dozens of projects to attend and consider the level of detail, knowledge and in the overall leadership in the partner might just be too great for some to handle. Made up of qualified, educated people leadership often don't have a skillset equalling the needs. This would not be a problem as such if the organisations NMS cooperate were different. But NMS often deal with organisations with a strict hierarchy where the elected leadership have a very high level of power over people, projects, funds, and decision-making processes. They are to a large extent expected to make the decision, and on a project/program level, decisions they are not necessarily to make. This is less of a problem in Europe and Norway. For the same projects and programs, NMS' elected board has professional staff with both experience and education to handle these issues and give their recommendation. Church leadership in Africa does not have the same luxury. Do the Presidents in NMS' partner Churches have people they can trust, around them? At least this point should pose the question if the organisations can be equal if there are the same expectations as today.

When Church leadership in Africa negotiate project-plans, funding and strategies. They don't discuss these topics with the grassroots or elected board of NMS, rather they mostly negotiate with professional development advisors, who have a very high skills level in organisational development and certain areas of professional expertise in the project-topics. There is to that degree little to discuss on a professional level between a well-meaning pastor and a professional development advisor. Not to say, that that is always to say but there is an issue to address on what/which level

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81 RESPONDENT A, CORPUS PP. 1

NMS expect the Churches to respond. On the other hand, there is a need to contemplate who are qualified to make decisions and on which level and the weight of decision. We might ask ourselves when working in the strictly hierarchal African Church structures, what a project manager is able to decide and if it will still be the same after a conversation with Church leadership. As established money is in some ways everything, because it is the only thing the partner doesn't have, and that one thing that does that some partners need NMS. As also stated by one of the respondents:

"Being the one with the money is frustrating. Because the starting point becomes money." [82]

In a matter of money / funds! Everything and anything is at stake if it is a programme manager who is negotiating with NMS. If that is not really the position NMS staff feels good about, maybe that is a theme for change.

In the development-aid context we could also find one of the reasons why NMS sometimes needs to take control of projects and sometimes needs to punish the partner. Namely, in the frameworks which are defined by the project-framework of NORAD which pushes a certain

The practise is that sometimes, NMS must punish the partner to teach them that rules and regulations defines the partnership rather than the brotherhood. In a 'brotherhood', there would be really no reason to punish each other, but the framework used in modern development-aid organisation has an inherent need for financial and management control and when a partner steps over the rules funding might be cut, until the problem is solved. This well documented in the findings e.g. respondent D describes it like this:

"There is a paradox in our wish for partnership, when we kind of fall out of the brotherhood, when the relation becomes or is parent / child and the father has to punish. Then NMS has that power to punish. With money." [83]

Continuing the same topic respondent C said:

"I might be wrong but I think this is also a difference between partners. Some are very open and clear on their needs. They say what they need and what they want. Other can be very difficult to find out what they really want. And difficult to find out what is right. But here in Norway we don't have the direct contact to the partner." [84]

In the evidence found between the four respondents, the problems with misunderstand on a project level might occur as an Intercultural understanding problem with misunderstandings on an inter-organisational / cultural level. Meaning, that the difference in culture is not just between national-

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[82] RESPONDENT B. CORPUS PP. 14

[83] RESPONDENT D. CORPUS PP. 9

[84] RESPONDENT C, CORPUS PP. 5

cultures but differences of organisational cultures. Where there is not enough focus on the difference in how organisations function and the fundamental framework of the organisations as such. To some extend the issue might come down to miscommunication on both sides. Everyone knows who has the money and who needs them in the partnership. But the battleground becomes formal framework and how both sides convey what they want. On one hand NMS needs to communicate how the money should be spend, in within a formal framework, and the partner needs to ask for them with in the same formal framework. The fault lines exist when asking for and giving money is miscommunicated. NMS often broadcast the discourse of 'Christian brotherhood' and 'friendship' but one might contemplate if the formal framework which, to some extend is imposed on the receiving partner, is also signalling 'friendship' with partners' who are desperate to receive founding and with a founding framework which might not be entirely clear to them. As respondent B puts it:

"When you see the objective in a formal project application, is the Mission Commandment (from the Bible red.) This is something that we agree on, but it shows the different worlds we live in! – I feel we are pressuring them, forcing them further than we should."[85]

The mission of NMS is friendship and to some extend that is broadcasted, but there is formal framework that does not match the pursuit for intercultural understanding and equality. Because it is mainly NMS' formal objectives which dominant projects. The development-aid framework doesn't allow the mission commandment to be an objective. It shows very different approaches to project-work and perhaps to reality in general.

4.2.3 Summary of findings

In the findings, we have found that in relation to understanding partnership and what NMS wants, that overall the respondents have a feeling that they already have something more than a formal cooperation with the partner-churches in the global south. They have an understanding that their faith-based approach to cooperation and development gives NMS an advantage in working with development-aid in Africa. And indeed, an advantage over non-faith-based organisations because NMS is committed to stick to their partners. There is a common understanding that they see themselves as friends with the people in the other organisation, and perhaps as friends of the organisation in general. There is a common understanding that NMS needs to change directions but there is currently not a clear alternative besides finding a model which better include the partner-

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85 RESPONDENT B, CORPUS PP. 5

church in more of the decision-making process. They all have a feeling that sometimes they "fall out of brotherhood" and make hard decisions that they feel must punish their partner, perhaps because of the partnership model or that NMS somehow feel pressured, because they want to be responsible development organisations in their own context (Norway). When NMS does those to punish their partner everyone suffers because partnership suffers.

In the findings concerning aspects of globalisation, we see that because of globalisation that faith based commonality is something that really binds people together across vast distances. The foreign and strange thus become familiar and safe when NMS meets other Christians in the world. Because they share the same cultural codes and that these are common because of the standardisation of cultural religious practise which is shared between Christian cultures and not only a static religion given by NMS but a truly a negotiation of shared cultural signs.

In the findings, we also see how the intercultural understanding is working in the daily practise of NMS. The staff are reflective over the role that they and NMS has in the partnership and in the meeting with other cultures. We do nevertheless see that in the busy calendar and many projects to be managed it can be difficult to act in the way you might, if there were a change to reflect over the opportunities. The development framework is as such, not just a hindrance of the partner but also a barrier for NMS staff since it clearly doesn't communicate well to the partners nor offer they choices for NMS staff to act as 'good brothers'. NMS does have very aware staff and their abilities within intercultural understanding is hard to miss. They also feel a need for a more balanced partnership-model but that can be very difficult to change structures properly because the structures also manage all the funds allocated to the projects every year. Changing the partnership model would therefore take a re-modelling of the way the program offices works with project.

There is also a clear consensus that NMS is, to some extent pressuring their partners beyond what the staff are comfortable with and perhaps beyond what the friendship can take. There is a strong sense that the current partnership-model is very controlling and a product of Norwegian culture and a shared understanding of what an equal partnership should be. There is a need for time and perhaps more long-term process on how the partners should develop their management skills – "Allow time for them to have a process". There is a shared understanding that NMS in some cases has double standards concerning what is said contra what is done. Finally, there is an understanding that even with the challenge NMS has an added value of being part of the Norwegian development-aid community and that it enables NMS to fundraise and develop skills which ultimately benefit the partners.

We found that NMS sometimes pushes the partnership too hard and that the current model where the organisations commits themselves to ridged project frameworks sometimes pushes NMS to take responsibility and control away from the partner, because the alternative might lead to economic

consequence for both organisations. Sometimes NMS wants to help and sometimes acts but that action in some cases mean becoming the parent in the relationship and not the brother. That is something that NMS staff struggle with and something which came up a couple of times. It seems again, to be mainly due to the routines and many projects to manage which takes too much out of the partnership to control. When the partner cross the line of what NMS thinks is wrong, NMS sometimes "fall out of the brotherhood" and punishes the partner financially.

It seems that some projects in the partnership are not really need and perhaps more a result of what NMS think the partner wants, and something the partner has agree with to get money for other projects. Some partners are more difficult to 'read' than other and perhaps something regarding real needs are being lost between cultures. The findings are a bit inconclusive on that.

Finally, we see that on a very fundamental level the partners and NMS properly agree on fundamental parts. Namely, why they are partners, friends and brothers! Because they are in partnership because their Christian values and their faith drives them to try to better the lives of other people. What comes in the way is then everything in between objective and action.

Following the findings, the thesis will continue into the discussion of the findings and their implications. What they all mean in relation to policy makers in NMS and practisers with the knowledge that we have in the discourse.

5 Discussion

The discussion takes its offset in the connection between theory and empirical evidence. The methodical approach in the discussion. The discussion is mainly build over overall findings as well and comparing finding to theoretical framework. Drawing back lines to the general theories of globalisation, development and intercultural understanding and influence on partnership. With that we want to know what the findings has shown use, why it matters in the context, what we can learn, and what the findings might teach about the future. (my contribution to the field / offer answers)

What have we learned?
The findings have shown us how NMS understand partnership and what they want from it, and furthermore shown what the challenges are in working with the partner-church regarding development-aid, globalisation, and intercultural understanding.

- NMS understand partnership as an equal partnership between organisations and that they want an equal and balanced friendship based on the ideas of brotherhood between Christians. We see that the staff thinks that their partnership with organisations in the global south is something "more" than a formal cooperation or partnership – rather a friendship. The findings have shown, that because of global standardisation of Christianity and the disembedding of friendship out of time and space gives staff in NMS a sense of being part of the reality of the Christians in the global south. The findings show that the mission society creates a sense of communality across organisations mainly due to shared purpose and perhaps both due to a history of sticking to the partner. NMS is thus, in the partnership for the long perspective and in an NMS perspective that is often decades of cooperation on different types of projects which benefit the partner. In that way, the answer the research is simple; NMS <u>wants</u> friendship and understand itself as an organisation which needs equal partnerships.

Now that we know want NMS want we can discuss some of the Challenges!

- There is a general problem with the partnership framework, there current framework based on formal partnership model influenced by secular development models might be a bit too strict, and lacks transparency throughout the hole supply-chain. The current model for how NMS has partnerships and how it does projects is rigid and hard to change. It is closely linked with the traditional understanding of what partnerships should be, and linked with the traditional parent / child relation rather than the brotherhood NMS want.
- Globalisation poses some overall challenges; one thing is that it pushes a certain discourse into the way people talk with each other. It pushes the idea that the West is always right and that Africa need to follow our lead. Even if staff NMS are aware of the problem and society around pushes a neoliberal development discourse and NMS is limited in its manoeuvrability because of the cooperation with NORAD and the management structures which follows.
- There is a tradition that NMS-partnerships, is formed and formulated from the perspective of NMS and does not often include partner-churches in formulating the framework for cooperation. The ability to 'define' still mainly belong to NMS. Even though NMS is aware of the problem there is little room or rime to hear the voice of the partner!
- There cases where NMS "fall out of brotherhood" and sometimes NMS makes bad decisions which hurt the partnership. Sometimes NMS pressures the partner to follow certain rules and will punish the partner if they think it is needed.

- In regard there to Intercultural understanding, there seem to be problems in truly understanding each other when it comes to needs in the partner and how that is matched with what NMS wants to create projects in.

Since we now know what NMS wants, what the challenges are we can look at why the findings matter in practise. It might go without saying but since we have established that NMS wants equality with the partner-churches, then there is a need for changes in the way that the partnership-model works and how NMS cooperates with its partners on projects. Perhaps especially when it comes to projects in cooperation with Norad which pushes high standards for structures and reporting which many partners might find difficult to operate within. There is simple very little transparency toward partners on how the projects work and how the partners are involved in the different levels of decision-making processes. It matters in the sense that the findings give us indication of what NMS might change in their actions if they want partnerships which fit what they say want. In matters in indicating how NMS might be the voice of the developing world and how NMS and others might share their understanding of the world and propose an alternative to pushing the global neoliberal agenda. Not because it is bad model but simple because people should define their own path. Finally, the shows us that NMS leadership should listen more to their staff and create more opportunities for staff and grassroots to discuss fundamental directions for NMS. The grassroots don't have the knowledge of the staff, and the professional staff doesn't have the time with the given framework to also contemplate changes in structure and partnership approach. Therefore, any change starts with someone saying stop! – we need a new direction. All parties in the partnership grassroots and staff in both organisations are busy. NMS needs a safeguard and sometimes to take a step back and evaluate.

We have explored what NMS want, some of the challenge and why the findings matter in the context. This leaves us with a discussion of what the future might bring.
NMS has something special, partnerships which stretch back decades and some even hundreds of years. NMS has a strong foundation for cooperation and partnership, perhaps even friendship. Faith is something that brings, people across cultures and organisations, together is a vital component in building new partnerships in the future. There evidence that there is a shared wish friendship based on a fundamental Christian brotherhood. In that way, the findings fit the theory of globalisation and 'disembedded friendship' – friendship and brotherhood is 'lifted out' of the physical existence and people who belong to very different social and physical realities becomes friends and brothers through mission of NMS. The many Churches together with NMS and other international partners adapt as shared sense of community and in thus a form of globalised standard for brotherhood of

Christians is formed. Finally, we might see all the Churches working with NMS as part of one shared movement of mission lead by NMS. There is created or generated as shared sense of culture, memory, and objectives inter-linking people from different into one global community. As such the mission, is creating something "above formal partnership" and that possibility is possible in theory – "lifting friendship out of physical space and time" through globalisation and communication. That is also what is found in the analysis want and have something more than partnership.

6 Conclusion

What follows is the conclusion of the thesis where I will give a comprised overview of the whole thesis focusing on findings, answers to the research questions and give some perspective of the way forward.

The research question in this thesis is "How does the NMS Program staff, understand partnership between their organisation (NMS) and the partner-churches in Africa, and what are some of the challenges, working with partnership in relation to globalisation, intercultural understanding, and development?"

This question should therefore explore current social practise in the field and the professional discourse of program staff and how that matches, with what the NMS wants from the partnerships it has in Africa. To support the research three sub-questions where proposed in the introduction:

- What does NMS want with the partner-churches?
- What are the main challenges NMS face working with the partner-churches?
- What are the prospects for future partnership?

When we look at the general tendencies in the findings we see that there is a returning theme. - The Norwegian staff wants a friendship with the partner! Something beyond formal partnership based on an equal friendship between brothers and sisters. But practical challenges are a barrier to equality. NMS is challenged by the approach to partnership-model combined with their wish for friendship and brotherhood. One of the main barriers are the organisations to be responsible NGOs in their contexts. That means that NMS must follow e.g. NORAD guides and frameworks for project management. There is little to be done about that. That said, NMS benefit hugely on being a relevant civil society NGO. But there are challenges and implications which reach far into the organisation. NMS is sometime forced, to take the responsibility from their partners and that is a problem. That combined with NMS defining the partnership-framework, means that it is always NMS / the West which holds all the negotiation decision-power, and the ability to define most aspects of the partnership. Even if everything is written down, agreements are often written by

NMS and shaped by NMS. It might be interesting to redefine 'partnership' with a blank agreement and have grassroots in both organisations come up with a shared agreement.

There also seem to be an overall will to assist the global south with development projects and that these projects, funded mainly by Norwegian funds, should reflect real challenges in the global south and not be based solely on what westerners find is 'wrong in Africa'. There is a theoretical basis for the claim that westerners are most often interested in problems in Africa, and less interested in what the West might learn. However, the theory underscores the increased standardisation of global systems and that also influences development aid and indeed how the mission society works. It is very difficult for an NGO working in Africa not to standardise processes of finances and management. Those systems work under international standards and thus, it is difficult to imaging a viable system existing outside the current. Mainly because it is the west that is funding development. But with increased economic self-sufficiency developing countries may not seek, nor need, the same approval as today.

As argued, there is a duality in what NMS wants their partnerships to be like. On the one hand NMS wants brotherhood with an equal partner-organisations, and the people within the organisation i.e fellow Christians. On the other hand, there are instances where NMS find it difficult to act as equal partners, due to inequality in power, when it comes to managing funds, decision-making processes, and the local partner's ability to navigate within the framework. In the NMS, there is only a dream of reaching an equal friendship.

The spheres which NMS and its partners belong to are changing and we see that modern communication possibilities are bringing realities closer together. Global events spread quicker and the depth of society can be deeper than ever before. In that way, NMS has the possibility to 'be closer' to their brothers and sisters, in the global south than ever before. When a drought hits Ethiopia or Cameroon NMS's reach has increased. The local is however still 'local' and as such there are few global events, which are not rather "Globalised local events". However, there is an increased feeling that the 'global' namely because more of our cultural signs are being shared. In that way, nothing is new in Europe, because we have been doing that for hundreds of years, and shared an equal existence and history in the West. For good and bad but we have shared a European existence for hundreds of years. The new thing is that the rest of the world is now able to participate in the 'global' and participate in a shared sphere. We can share more cultural signs with the global south and perhaps, to an increased extent begin to form culture on an equal basis.

To sum it up with a quote from one of the respondents: "I think today I would be welcome even though I don't bring any money. Because they value the fact that we are friends, that someone is looking after us, and someone cares. Someone is visiting and praying for us."[86] In all truisms, is that not what friendship is, that someone cares and our friends know that we are looking after them…? - Not because we need their money to survive but we need them to walk next to us, and sometimes to pick us up. And in that, we might say 'whose reality matter?' and as friends with a partnership based on Christian values, we will only answer that our realities are the same - because we are friends. Our spheres of cultures have mixed together through years of partnerships and there cannot be one without the other. The person who wrote the commandments of Jesus in the objective of a project description, is the only true hero in the Christian partnership. Because the foundation of a Christian friendship should be beyond the formal cooperation. It should be a friendship based on brotherhood and equality, in every aspect. One brother might be rich, one might be strong, one might be smart but together they form a family.

If this thesis tells us anything about the future, it is that even with the challenges which faces NMS, the main challenges are not rooted in fundamental disagreements or lack of faith in each other. But rather practical problems with old systems and outdated understandings of what and how NMS should do things. A step back from current practise, and experimental with new forms of partnership and project approach might be all NMS really needs. NMS does most things right, but there is an urgent NEED for a reformulation of the partnership-model and a new approach to working with projects in the partnerships. A method which better illuminate what the partner really wants and a new approach to how to include the partner even in formulating the framework.

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