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A Solidarity Model of Foreign Aid?

– a case study of the Olof Palme International Center's projects in South Africa

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis is a qualitative case study of whether the Olof Palme International Center's (OPC) model of foreign aid, as a Swedish non-governmental organisation (NGO), is understood by leading figures of the three types of participants involved in the model; the OPC, Swedish member organisations, and, in this case, South African partner organisations, as taking either a solidarity- or charity-approach to foreign aid, in both theory and practise. The theories of Mutual Aid and International Solidarity are used to construct two opposing "solidarity" and "charity" models of foreign aid, against which the OPC model is compared. These two approaches are selected as they are most often associated with NGO foreign aid providers. The criticisms of, and suggestions for improvements to foreign aid practises are collected from aid experts and leading scholars in the field, such as Pearson (1970), the OECD/DAC, and the UN. These suggestions and criticisms are compared against both models and sorted accordingly as indicators in the analytical framework, whereby a preference among aid scholars and experts for the solidarity model is revealed. Empirical data is collected through semi-structured interviews with the involved parties and analysed through qualitative content analysis. By analysing which of the indicators in the analytical framework, belonging to the "solidarity-model" or "charity-model" were affirmed by a majority of the interviewees, it was found that both the OPC's model and the way it is implemented, is understood by all involved parties as a *solidarity model*.

Keywords: Foreign Aid, International Solidarity, Charity, Non-Governmental Organisation, Development Aid, South Africa, Sweden, Olof Palme International Center.

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List of Acronyms

Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF)
Civil Society Organisation (CSO)
Development Assistance Committee (DAC)
Foreign Aid (FA)
Landsorganisationen/Swedish Labour Organisation (LO)
Member Organisation (MO)
Multi-stakeholder Partnership (MSP)
Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
Official/Overseas Development Assistance/Aid (ODA)
Olof Palme International Center (OPC)
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
Partner Organisation (PO)
Strategic Partner Organisation (SPO)
Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
United Nations (UN)
World Bank (WB)

1. Introduction

Is there a universal foreign aid model? There are debates among scholars, politicians, and civil society actors on what the point of aid is, whether it is at all effective, and if so, how it should be conducted. Aid donors and recipients even disagree amongst themselves about whether aid through investment is sufficiently helpful in generating economic growth for either or both parties, whether development aid successfully combats corruption or bolsters it, whether donated goods after a natural disaster provide sought after relief or drives local producers of such goods out of business, and whether foreign aid can help a developing country find its feet or if it is simply another device in the neo-colonialist toolbox that increases poorer countries' dependency on the richer countries¹. In the literature on foreign aid, a common theme emerges from the criticisms of why aid is currently ineffective and suggestions on how to improve it. One suggested model for improvement is a model of *solidarity*. It entails that the developing countries' people lead their own development efforts and was described in the early days of foreign aid by the United States' President Truman as:

...Our aim should be to help the free peoples of the world—through their own efforts—to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing and more mechanical power to lighten their burdens ... Such new economic developments must be devised and controlled to benefit the peoples of the areas in which they are established ... Only by helping the least fortunate of its members to help themselves can the human family achieve the decent, satisfying life that is the right of all people. (Truman, 1949 as cited in Riddell, 2012, p. 25)

This sentiment was reiterated in the well-known *Pearson Report* wherein Pearson (1970, p. 6) argued that aid should be “an expression of genuine international co-operation, or an authentic expression of international interdependence or human solidarity” through an active and “genuine partnership between rich nations and poor”. Pearson (1970, p. 9, 10) was convinced that the “hard grinding work and saving”, which enables development, has been, and must be, “accomplished by the people themselves”. Nearly half a century later, Riddell (2012, p. 30) observed that “[m]any of [the Pearson report's] key messages ... remain as relevant today as they were when written...”.

In 2020, the United Nations (UN) published a guide on how to initiate and operate multi-stakeholder partnerships on the local, national, and international levels to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The 17th and final SDG, “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” (SDGS.un.org, n.d), frames the partnership approach as essential to achieving the collective SDGs (Stibble et. al, 2020, p. 10). This report too stated that the recipients in the local context must lead the design and implementation of foreign aid through partnerships “centre[d on] the lived experience of those closest to the problem being addressed” (Stibble et. al, 2020, p. 88).

Sweden is one of the countries that have strongly embraced the goals and responsibilities of meeting the SDG targets (SDGindex.org, 2022). Sweden as a foreign aid provider is also continuously held above the bar by aid scholars, in a class only accessible to a handful of countries, mostly consisting of the other Scandinavian countries (Neumayer, 2003, cited in

Dreher, Mölders & Nunnenkamp, 2010, p. 149). According to Pettersson (2022, p. 430) a characterising feature of Swedish foreign aid policy is that it has remained consistent, across time and different governments' ideologies. Thus, Sweden's "long-standing commitment to solidarity with the poor" and its foreign aid's core objective, written and introduced in Proposition 1962:100 by two leading Social Democrats, Olof Palme and Tage Erlander, being to "contribute to raising the living standards of the poor" (Riddell, 2012, p. 71) has largely been maintained. Sweden is thus furthermore distinguished from most state donors which tend to conduct their foreign aid policies according to their own state's political and/or economic interests (Riddell, 2012, p. 93).

Jonsson (2022, p. 36) describes the Swedish 1970s, which were largely shaped by Olof Palme, as "the decade of international solidarity". Palme's views on solidarity as "an ideological foundation and unifying force" (Jonsson, 2022, p. 35) had a significant impact on the Swedish Social Democrats and Labour Movement. This impact was realised through the founding of the Olof Palme International Center (OPC) by the labour movement to honour his memory in 1992 (Palmecentret, n.d.b). The OPC is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which receives some of its budget from Swedish Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). SIDA works in several ways to provide Swedish ODA, one of them being to collaborate with a limited number of Swedish strategic partner organisations (SPOs), such as the OPC, who work to "strengthen the civil society in partner-countries" (SIDA, 2021a, own translation).

Previous literature has found that NGOs as foreign aid providers tend to approach foreign aid differently from states, by not focusing on their own interests and possible gains through foreign aid. Dreher, Mölders, and Nunnenkamp (2010) found in their study on how Swedish NGOs that provide foreign aid compare to SIDA ODA that both SIDA ODA and Swedish NGOs are largely altruistic donors. Sweden has consistently upheld *solidarity* as a strong motivation for providing foreign aid (Pettersson, 2022). It is therefore of high interest to examine what such a solidarity model of foreign aid looks like.

When reviewing the literature on foreign aid and reading through the OPC's website, similarities emerge between how the OPC's model of foreign aid *is said to work* and how aid experts suggest foreign aid *should be conducted*: through *solidarity*. The OPC's model of foreign aid is built around partnerships wherein the OPC facilitates cooperation between Swedish Member Organisations (MO) within the labour movement and similar, like-minded partner organisations (PO) around the world¹. Furthermore, the OPC, as the "Swedish labour movement's umbrella organisation for international solidarity and advocacy" (Palmecenter, n.d.e), which was founded to honour the memory of Olof Palme who wrote Sweden's first foreign aid policy, exhibits clear signs of harbouring the essence of the Swedish solidarity-based model of foreign aid. It could potentially

¹ See appendix 10.7 for my illustrations of the roles, responsibilities and relationships between the OPC, MOs and POs.

be described as the exemplary case of Swedish solidarity-based foreign aid and is therefore the subject of this study.

The aim and main research question of this thesis is to investigate if the non-governmental organisation Olof Palme International Center's model of foreign aid is understood by all involved parties: the OPC itself, their Swedish member organisations, and their South African partner organisations, as following the *solidarity-model* of foreign aid or the *charity-model* of foreign aid. This is done by analysing empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews with leaders of the three groups.

Riddell (2012, p. 18) states that the definition of what foreign aid is and should do has been “donor-driven” for more than 30 years. This means that the way aid is allocated, implemented and evaluated, is largely determined by how the donor views the purpose of aid. It is therefore essential to investigate whether how the OPC's model of foreign aid as it *is said to work in theory* by the OPC itself is also how their aid model is *perceived to work in practise* by the different organisations involved in the OPC's aid projects, especially the POs as the recipients. This thesis therefore has the following sub research questions:

RQ 1. How do the Member Organisations, Partner Organisations and the Olof Palme International Center collectively understand the theory of the Olof Palme International Center's aid model?

RQ 2. How do the Member Organisations, Partner Organisations and the Olof Palme International Center collectively understand the practical implementation of the Olof Palme International Center's aid model?

This study is thus a case of how a Swedish NGO with clear ideological drivers understands their own model of foreign aid and if this understanding is shared by both themselves as donors and their partners as recipients.

The field of foreign aid is broad and complex and full of categories and definitions. For this thesis, which centres on development aid as provided by an NGO, Riddell's definitions will serve to differentiate between three major fields of foreign aid. Riddell (2012, p. 21) uses the terms “development aid” to describe all aid, including NGOs, provided or used for development purposes, “humanitarian aid” and “emergency aid” for aid intended for humanitarian and emergency purposes, and “ODA” as the DAC defines it: development and emergency aid provided by official donors. The structure of this thesis is explained in the following paragraph.

The subject of this case study, the OPC, is introduced in more detail in subchapter 1.1. The second chapter, the literature review, then presents previous scholarship on foreign aid that are relevant to this study: the different moral arguments for foreign aid, NGOs as aid providers, and the Swedish model of foreign aid. The literature gap this study aims to fill is how an NGO attempting to utilise a solidarity-model of foreign aid is understood not only by the donor but also by the aid-recipients. The third chapter outlines the theoretical approach and sets up the

contrasts between the two main approaches of NGOs as aid providers: charity and solidarity. This chapter also establishes that the suggestions of aid experts on how to conduct foreign aid; promoting recipient agency and ownership of the aid process by prioritizing internal capacity building through mutual learning, in order to facilitate long-term sustainable development, corresponds mainly with the central concepts of the theories of international solidarity and mutual aid. The operationalised concepts of the theories of solidarity and charity, are then presented as indicators in the analytical framework. The specified aim and research question are reiterated in chapter four. Chapter five details how the empirical data was collected through semi-structured elite interviews with the project leaders of six OPC projects in Cape Town and the OPC staff. This data is analysed in chapter six through qualitative content analysis by identifying interview-responses that align with the solidarity and/or charity indicators from the analytical framework. The results are presented in chapter seven. The findings of the study are presented and discussed in chapter eight, followed by the reference list and appendixes in chapters nine and ten.

1.1 Olof Palme International Center

The OPC was founded in 1992 by the Social Democrats, the Swedish Labour Organisation (LO) and the Cooperative Union (KF) (Palmecentret, n.d.b), with the objective being described in the statutes as:

The Olof Palme International Center works in the spirit of Olof Palme for democracy, human rights, and peace. The Palme Center is the Swedish labour movement's umbrella organisation for co-operation on international issues. Its task is to support the international activities of member organisations (Palmecentret, 2013)

The OPC now has 27 Swedish members which are organisations that make up a large part of the Swedish Labour Movement and have over a hundred years of experience in developing democracy and fighting poverty (Palmecentret, n.d.d). This experience is brought into the work conducted together with the 170 local and international labour unions, Social Democratic sister parties and civil society organisations that are the partner organisations (PO) in around 30 countries (Palmecentret, n.d.d). The POs are supported by the OPC “according to their own priorities and needs” (Palmecentret, n.d.d, own translation).

As an NGO in part funded by SIDAⁱⁱⁱ, the OPC is required to also do their own fundraising (Palmecentret, n.d.d) through donations from individuals and MOs (Palmecentret, n.d.a). Much of the OPC's budget comes from SIDA, which is funded by taxes, the OPC therefore has a “quality assurance assignment” and performs financial monitoring and audits and reports back to SIDA (OPC1²). The OPC also abides by SIDA's regulations and structures for evaluating outcomes, which since 2008, by initiative of the then right-wing government, has been “results-based management” (OPC2).

² OPC1 and OPC2 refers to the interviews I conducted with two staff members at the OPC.

The OPC follows the conduct of Olof Palme, the former Swedish prime minister who “always stood up against oppression and injustices - no matter how far away from Sweden they took place” (Palmecentret, n.d.c, own translation). The OPC’s core aims, inspired by Palme, are thus democracy, human rights, and peace from the “perspective of justice” (Palmecentret, n.d.c, own translation). Their international aim is to support democratic organisations who join in broader strategic alliances to reach a progressive societal development. Domestically the OPC aims to facilitate the Swedish labour movement’s improved global awareness and ability to stand up with straight backs, like Palme, for international solidarity.

The OPC’s overarching goal is “progressive development” which is detailed in the OPC’s “International Strategy” containing five political priorities (OPC1; OPC2). The OPC ensures each project stays on track towards progressive development by having each project plan describe how their work will target one or more political priorities of the regional log frames. These documents are referred to in the analysis, where they are further explained.

2. Literature review

Predominantly, the secondary literature on Foreign Aid (FA), centres on how Official Development Assistance (ODA) is allocated by donor states to recipient states, the foreign aid flows and whether FA works or not. These ideas are all shaped by what the perceived purpose of FA is, as in, what the donor’s moral arguments for providing aid are.

This literature review is thus structured into three chapters. The first covers the moral arguments for aid. The second chapter covers NGOs as increasingly important providers of FA. The third chapter focuses on the Swedish model of FA and how this model differs from the other FA models. There is a gap in the literature where Swedish NGOs in the field of development aid is concerned, and there is no previous literature written about the OPC.

2.1 Why is foreign aid provided?

Riddell presents three approaches to donors’ moral arguments for providing aid, two of which will distinguish the approaches to aid in the analytical framework: national self-interest (2012, p. 91), charity, and duty (2012, p. 119). This subchapter outlines the different types of foreign aid and providers of foreign aid that are most associated with each moral approach.

Riddell (2012, p. 17) defines foreign aid as “[a]t its broadest, [consisting] of all resources—physical goods, skills and technical know-how, financial grants (gifts), or loans (at concessional rates)—transferred by donors to recipients”. As such, foreign aid has been practised for centuries, although not under the name “foreign aid”. It began with churches and religious charities during the colonial era providing humanitarian aid and development to the poor, with the World Council of Churches estimating that between 40-60% of health, education, water, and food-security services in eastern Africa were provided by churches (Riddell, 2012, pp. 25-6). The

colonial states such as Britain and France also supplied aid directly to their colonies to build infrastructure and promote some development (Riddell, 2012, p. 24).

Foreign aid is not only a large and complex enterprise, but it consists of three different and major 'aid worlds': the world of official development aid, the world of development aid provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs), and the world of humanitarian and emergency aid, provided by official donors, UN agencies, those that are part of the Red Cross movement, and NGOs (Riddell, 2012, p. 8)

Of these three “aid worlds”, most of the literature, and consequently the perception of what aid is, is limited to Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Riddell, 2012, p. 8). ODA can be defined as:

ODA consists of flows to developing countries and multilateral institutions provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies, each transaction of which meets the following two criteria. (1) it is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective, and (2) it is concessional in character and contains a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent) (Fuhrer, 1994, p. 25 as cited in Riddell, p. 19)

The divisions between the three worlds are increasingly becoming blurred, both as ODA funds are given to NGOs to fund and support their humanitarian and development activities, and as the differences between development and emergency work are loosening up (Riddell, 2012, pp. 8-9). Aid for helping in emergencies such as natural disasters are rarely questioned. But development aid is widely disputed as to whether it succeeds in reducing poverty (Riddell, 2012, p. 1). The terms development aid or development assistance are commonly used by those interested in contributing to human welfare, poverty reduction and development by having rich countries give foreign aid to poor countries (Riddell, 2012, p. 17). Riddell (2012, p. 20) argues that purpose-based definitions of aid require that judgement be passed on what the purpose of aid should be and subsequently if the aid successfully lives up to the purpose. According to Riddell (2012, p. 20, 18) the judges are, in practise, the individual donors, and this “donor-driven” definition has stood largely uncontested for more than 30 years.

Jefferess (2021, p. 424) writes about the idea of “white saviourism” as an “orientation” which shapes the relations and interactions between the global North and global South. In his analysis of development and humanitarian aid as provided by charitable organisations such as the WE Charity, he argues that “the story of development aid” through upholding and recreating the orientation of white saviourism, has “overwrit[ten the] real relation” of how the global North, through various exploitative economic practises, historically have and still are inflicting the state of poverty on the global South (Jefferess, 2021, p. 424, 425). Now, “a ‘complex’ of government, schooling and NGOs propogat[e] the story that the North gives to the South rather than takes” (Jefferess, 2021, p. 425).

Alesina and Dollar (2000) *thematically* present three ways in which FA is allocated according to different aid models. Some former European colonial states choose to give aid to their former colonies. Other states such as USA (Alesina & Dollar, 2000) and China (Martuscelli, 2020)

allocate aid based primarily on their own political and material interests. Finally, the Nordic model wherein the donor states take a value-based approach and give to states in order to alleviate poverty and give more aid in correlation to the receiving countries having good institutions and openness (Alesina & Dollar, 2000, p. 33). Ali, Banks and Parsons (2015, p. 125) too describe how some donors stand out amongst the general interest-driven bilateral donors. The “Nordic Countries” especially get good grades and are described as: being motivated largely by “humanitarian considerations”, “philanthropic and developmental concerns”, not being influenced as much by political or commercial interests, giving a “higher share of aid to the poorest nations of the Sub-Saharan Africa”, following what they announce to be doing, giving more to “democracies and to recipients with good human rights record”, not giving “more aid to political allies” and fulfilling the UN target of 0.7% of GNP as ODA (Ali, Banks & Parsons, 2015, p. 127). The research on the Nordic and Swedish model will be further explored in the third chapter.

Ali, Banks, and Parsons (2015) provide a *historic* account of why and to whom donor’s allocate aid. They found that most donors have been, and still are, motivated by their own interests when deciding where to give aid. From its initiation post WWII in the form of “Marshal Aid” given from USA to rebuild Europe (Riddell, 2012, p. 24), and then various aid and assistance to states going through the process of decolonisation, “the rationale for foreign aid was on the one hand to enable newly independent countries to achieve economic growth, and on the other hand to keep them from joining the communist bloc” (Ali, Banks & Parsons, 2015, p. 117). Aid declined sharply after the end of the Cold War (Riddell, 2012, p. 2) which signalled its interest-based usage in securing materials and allies in possible conflicts (Boschini & Olofsgård, 2007).

Riddell (2012, 332) argues that “perhaps the most difficult and controversial issue” concerns the distinctions, or lack thereof, between “military and human activities”. Donors, for example the UK’s and US’s respective defence departments, disagree on whether “humanitarian-like activities, which are presented as tools for ‘influencing’, ‘hearts and minds’” should be separated from “humanitarian assistance, which is defined as ‘support provided to humanitarian agencies in an insecure environment’” (Riddell, 2012, 332). Similarly, Onyekachi (2020) argues that FA perpetuates neo-colonialism as it upholds and sometimes deepens the dependency-relationship between the former colonies and the former colonisers.

Singer (1972) presents a moral argument for providing aid. He argues that donating to foreign aid agencies such as Oxfam that provide famine relief, should be viewed as *obligatory* rather than as *supererogatory*. The basis of the argument is that as human beings, we should always choose to enable that someone else’s basic needs are met, if doing so only comes at the expense of us not being able to indulge in luxuries. One example provided is that one should choose to save a drowning child if the only thing we risk by doing so is ruining our own clothes. He argues that proximity to a crisis should not determine our obligation to try to alleviate it, as we who donate do not need to go and assist personally and we cannot use lack of awareness as an excuse not to help since we have reliable ways of accessing information about crises. He furthermore argues that the obligation to help cannot be transferred to or waived by the presence of others who are

already providing assistance, by donating or by implementing the crisis relief measures. This is because of two reasons, one is that, by this logic, if everyone thought someone else would help, no one would help, and the second is that the more people who help, or the more resources they have at their disposal to help with, the more effective the efforts become.

As shown in this chapter, previous scholars have established that there is a causal relationship between a donor's moral understanding of why they should provide aid and what the donor understands as desirable or intended outcomes/results of aid, which largely determines what type of aid the donor decides to provide and to whom. As such, the states tend to provide ODA in a way that directly or indirectly benefits the donor, by increasing the states access to material resources and/or political influence. However, as has been established, NGO's are a different type of aid provider and has different motivations for providing foreign aid. The next chapter thus presents a closer look at previous studies on NGOs as foreign aid actors.

2.2 NGOs as foreign aid providers

This subchapter covers previous scholarship on what the roles of NGOs as foreign aid providers have been and are.

The 1970s saw the introduction of “integrated rural development programmes” which were so complex that churches were outcompeted by NGOs specialising in different development fields (Riddell, 2012, p. 32). By the early 1990s, funding for NGOs that provided emergency and humanitarian aid increased significantly. NGOs began to take over the leading role as development aid providers, as they proclaimed to have both the skills and will to work with “the poorest of the poor” and the boost in funding they received came both from states, individuals, and private foundations (Riddell, 2012, p. 37). NGOs also saw it as their roles to advocate for the communities they were providing aid for and spent some of their resources on “trying to give a greater voice and greater power to poor people to influence policies, and the structures and institutions affecting them” (Riddell, 2012, p. 37). Since the 90s, “the role and importance of NGOs in providing emergency and humanitarian aid is even greater, with NGOs accounting for around one-third of ODA funds channelled to emergencies” (Riddell, 2012, p. 48). There exists no internationally agreed upon definition of foreign aid provided by NGOs. Not even the largest international NGOs provide a definition of their own aid on their websites (Riddell, 2012, p. 20).

Riddell (2012, p. 49) argues that it is not possible to generalise all NGOs as having one single approach to aid giving as some of them work with and some challenge the current aid methods and ideas of official donors. It is furthermore debated among NGOs themselves whether involvement in advocacy and lobbying to change structures that are harmful to the NGOs community groups, are considered legitimate development efforts (Riddell, 2012, pp. 262-3). Some argue that NGOs should only provide services to people in need, while others argue that NGOs should also try to strengthen the capacity of local communities to advocate for and strengthen themselves (Riddell, 2012, pp. 262-3). Riddell states that

If poverty is, in part, caused and perpetuated by structures, institutions, policies and processes that directly or indirectly impinge upon the lives of poor people and (poor) communities, then a lasting solution requires these to be identified and efforts directed at addressing them, no matter where they are found... (Riddell, 2012, 263)

Jefferess (2021) has analysed the rhetoric and conduct of the WE Charity which is the international aid branch of the larger WE collective of social enterprises and charities with its base in Canada. He found that the NGO, which is funded both by the Canadian government, private businesses and individuals who pay to participate in the oversea projects, “exemplifies the way global citizenship rhetoric in Canada draws upon humanitarian discourse to posit post-racial compassion while nonetheless reinforcing white supremacy” (Jefferess, 2021, p. 421).

Jefferess (2021, p. 422) problematises the way that some NGOs such as the WE Charity which have ties to corporate communities can, through relying on corporate funding, shift focus away from the actual development efforts and instead give private businesses a platform to “improve brand reputation” and “drive consumer exploration, consideration and purchase of products and services”. Furthermore, he argues that “marketing appeals of a wide range of humanitarian organisations” which use rhetoric wherein the increased functionality of developing communities is attributed solely to the “Northern NGOs”, “overtly echoes white supremacist colonial ideals, constructing people in the so-called developing world as ignorant and incapable, dependent on the benevolent tutelage of, in this case, (white) Canadians to provide order and possibility” (Jefferess, 2021, p. 425).

Dreher, Mölders and Nunnenkamp (2010) found in their study on how Swedish NGOs providing foreign aid compare to SIDA ODA that both Swedish ODA and Swedish NGOs are largely altruistic donors. Neither Swedish ODA nor NGOs were found to increase their aid to countries with more natural resources or high exports, showing a lack of interest-based aid allocation. However, the fact that NGOs appear to follow SIDA ODA does not mean that NGOs do not differ significantly in their goals, methods and outcomes. While the authors found that Swedish NGOs did not primarily operate in “particularly difficult institutional and political environments”, they argue that more research is needed to identify if the NGOs source of funding, being from SIDA ODA or private charities, affect their willingness to work in more high-risk contexts (Dreher, Mölders & Nunnenkamp, 2010, p. 169).

Previous studies establish that NGOs roles as aid providers consist largely of bigger international humanitarian organisations, such as the Red Cross, that provide humanitarian assistance and emergency relief aid. Furthermore, NGOs are also viewed as key development aid providers as they can integrate into the local communities and become experts at what is needed in the context. Significantly, NGOs as development aid providers appear to diverge from ODA in regard to the moral arguments for providing aid, which for NGOs are rights-based and altruistic (Riddell, 2012).

2.3 The Swedish Model of Foreign Aid

As previously established, Sweden stands out as a provider of foreign aid by the moral disposition underpinning its foreign aid policy. This chapter presents previous studies on the seemingly unique Swedish model of foreign aid.

Riddell (2012, p. 71) describes Sweden as one of the “largest of the ‘smaller’ donors” with a “long-standing commitment to solidarity with the poor” which guides the allocation of foreign aid towards especially “liberation movements and countries struggling to achieve political independence”. Swedish foreign aid has undoubtedly managed to make an impact as Sweden is often referred to as “the darling of the Third World” (Marklund, 2021, p. 171). Sweden emphasises development cooperation through aid and the sharing of responsibility with the recipients, towards equitable and sustainable global development, “through supporting activities aimed at strengthening poor people’s efforts to improve their quality of life” (Riddell, 2012, p. 71). By taking the human rights-based approach to development and poverty alleviation, Swedish aid aims to “strengthen and build the capacity of recipients” through sectoral aid programmes that support education, health and trade (Riddell, 2012, p. 71). Furthermore, a study by Canavire et al. on the aid flows in 1999-2002 found that self-interest-based allocation was appearing also with altruistic donors, except for Sweden and the Netherlands which remained unaffected by export interests (Ali, Banks & Parsons, 2015, p. 125). The civil society and development activities of NGOs, predominantly Swedish ones, have historically been prioritised, as has emergency relief (Riddell, 2012, p. 72).

Pettersson (2022, p. 400) found in his article on Swedish foreign aid, that Sweden has maintained a consistent development policy since the 1990s. The policy paradigm in the 1990s can, according to Pettersson, be described as:

a consensus around the goal for Sweden’s aid, to ‘contribute to an increase of poor peoples’ standard of living, through direct interventions on poverty and its causes’, together with the five subgoals: that aid should lead to growth, economic and social equalisation, economic and political independence, democratic development, and sustainable use of natural resources (Pettersson, 2022, p. 403)

The reason why Sweden’s foreign aid policy has largely remained consistent is because stability and consistency has been prioritised within the governing bodies, and the electorates opinions of the policy has not made a significant impact on the policy making (Pettersson, 2022, p. 400, 427-8). Pettersson (2022, p. 403) describes the policy area as “partly depoliticised with the locus of authority situated with the Government, the aid agencies and the experts at non-governmental organisations”. Furthermore, the “overarching goal for Sweden’s development cooperation” has only been revised four times since its inception in 1962 (Pettersson, 2022, p. 414). In 2003 it was revised by the Social Democratic government to include two perspectives which were to “permeate all parts of the policy” (Pettersson, 2022, p. 415). The two perspectives, which have been maintained since their introduction, were:

a rights perspective based on international human rights conventions; and the perspectives of the poor, meaning that poor people’s needs, interests, capacity and conditions should be a point of departure in efforts to achieve development (Pettersson, 2022, p. 415)

Sweden's foreign aid policy contains sub-goals for development efforts sorted into thematic areas which are "linked in different ways depending on the reality in which they are applied" (Pettersson, 2022, p. 417). The sub-goals have been explicitly stated not to be ranked or "prioritise[d] between or within areas" and are instead "adapted to each individual country, region or organisation" (Pettersson, 2022, p. 417).

A significant change in ODA came about due to "political ambition to demonstrate results or the effectiveness of aid" which made SIDA put extra effort into presenting the results in a more systematised way (Pettersson, 2012, p. 406). These efforts have been launched as "result initiatives" four times, the latest one in 2012 (Pettersson, 2022, p. 406).

Pettersson (2022, p. 403) says that Sweden's foreign aid policy and approach has basically become institutionalized and almost "depoliticised" as few attempts have been made to radically alter it. One of the most successful attempts happened under the Moderate Party's direction in 2006-2014 with major reforms focused on increasing efficiency. These reforms include the results-based reporting of aid effectiveness, the restructuring of SIDA that cut around 20% of its staff, which affected the agency's competency negatively (Sundström, 2022 as cited in Pettersson, 2022, p. 427), and transferred the role of forming and formulating policies and strategies to the MFA (Pettersson, 2022, p. 427).

In recent years, Sweden has increased the amount of ODA that goes through multilateral organisations and NGOs to 60% (Pettersson, 2022, p. 408-10. According to Pettersson (2022, p. 409), this could possibly be a response to the increase in autocratisation which has made Sweden seek to decrease aid channelled directly to partner countries.

Evidence^{iv} suggests that the paradigm shift in Swedish foreign policy, the "radical policy change", from international solidarity to a more interest-based policy, which "may be in the making" (Pettersson, 2022, p. 399), has indeed been made.

There is no previous literature about the Olof Palme International Centre (OPC), but this is a relevant angle to explore. This is because the OPC mission statement closely aligns with the recommendations scholars have made for improving FA and shares close ties to the creator of Sweden's first foreign aid policy.

2.4 The Research Gap

Most of the literature on foreign aid focuses on ODA, not NGOs. As established in the first subchapter, ODA has been shown to serve the donor's needs/interests rather than the recipients. As the second subchapter established, NGOs as development aid providers tend to take a different approach to traditional ODA. As established in the third subchapter, the Swedish foreign aid model has always been viewed by scholars and experts as taking a different approach to giving FA (Pettersson, 2020; Riddell, 2012). The difference lies in how the Swedish model is premised by the moral underpinnings of solidarity rather than either charity or donor interests,

although this is beginning to change with the new government. As there is persistent criticism of both the charity model and the interest model, and as the donor's moral understanding of why they should provide aid is held up as an important aspect, it is of high interest to investigate this angle further. Analysing an NGO instead of a state's ODA further shifts focus away from the most criticised interest-model and adds to the limited field of scholarship on NGOs as foreign aid providers. I have found no previous research on how *solidarity* modelled foreign aid functions, nor on what the recipients think of this type of aid. A case study of a potential *solidarity* model is thus needed to begin to fill this gap.

In light of the Swedish right-wing coalition government's attempt to overturn Sweden's long-standing position as a foreign aid role model, this thesis aims to examine a particular foreign aid actor whose approach aligns, or even is the exemplary case of the now challenged solidarity model.

3. Theoretical Approach

This thesis is premised on the ontological position of constructionism, wherein it is assumed that there are no objective or definitive social objects or categories (Bryman, 2017, p. 29). Instead, what one understands as a social object or category, is highly dependent on one's current context. For something to be socially constructed therefore means that a concept, phenomenon, a fact, norms etc is understood as being a certain way due to it having been imbued with that social meaning through continued interactions in society wherein that meaning is "continually being established, renewed, reviewed, revoked, revised" (Strauss et al. 1973, pp. 316-7 as cited in Bryman, 2017, p. 30). Social norms and behaviours are typical examples of things that are socially constructed and highly dependent on time, place and culture, among a myriad of other variables. They are thus not external to us as natural concepts, "but are built up and constituted in and through interaction" (Bryman, 2017, p. 30). The norms of our own societies and positions of power appear so natural to us as we are rarely exposed to other ways of being. Thus, these norms become internalised and upheld by us to the point where no justification is needed. This can in part explain why the idea of what foreign aid should be, and do, has been determined by the donors alone for such a long time. As Durkheim writes about societal norms, or "rules": "societies deem the rules necessary because they deem them necessary!" (Durkheim, 1984, p. 33).

As established in the previous chapter, the idea of what foreign aid is supposed to do and why it should be provided differs between different types of donors. One of the reasons for these differences is that NGOs have different roles from the states. As NGOs are often member-based organisations the goal, strategy and methodology are often discussed and decided by the members of the organisation. The idea of what the purpose of foreign aid is for NGOs, is thus socially constructed by the context in which they and their members exist.

This thesis examines the OPC's, as an NGO, and the participants' respective understanding of the OPC's model of foreign aid. The respective understandings of how the model works in theory and practise are assumed to be understood in the context in which the three different

groups exist and are thus socially constructed. The central distinction between whether the foreign aid model takes the solidarity- or charity-approach, is one of morality. Thus, the theories that I have selected, mutual aid and international solidarity, contrasted with charity, deal with how the two different approaches socially constructed understandings and views of human beings' capabilities and social relations, lead to the use of different strategies and methods for providing aid.

The next two sub-chapters present the theories of *solidarity* and *charity*. I have found no previous attempts at constructing identifiable foreign aid models out of the two approaches and will thus compare and measure the statements against the outlines from Spade's (2020) article on mutual aid, and categorize them accordingly to construct the models. Spade's analysis of the benefits of mutual aid is set in the national context, specifically the USA. This thesis thus furthermore contributes to the literature on foreign aid by showing that Spade's analysis is also highly applicable to the international context of foreign aid. Criticisms and suggestions by foreign aid experts are placed into either chapter based on which approach the statements align with.

Durkheim coined the concept of solidarity. His definition of solidarity was however confined to the national boundaries. Thus, Jonsson's (2022) and May's (2007) accounts of international solidarity are used to show that the solidarity of mutual aid is also applicable in the international realm. During each section, key concepts will be operationalized from the theories and placed into the analytical framework under either the solidarity-approach or charity-approach. At the end of each the sub-chapters, a paragraph presents the themes which were identified as most important by how many different authors mentioned them. These are however not necessarily how the indicators are phrased in the analytical framework, but the different indicators can be sorted into the themes^v.

The subject for this case study is an NGO, which in the literature is described as more altruistic or charitable donors. The approaches in the analytical framework are thus limited to the *solidarity-approach* and *charity-approach* instead of also including the *interest-approach* which is primarily attributed to states. The concepts taken from the theories will be presented in *cursive* but will be paraphrased in the analytical framework instead of using a full quote. All phrases appearing in *cursive*, except for titles of publications, in the following sections are thus *my own emphasis*, including the cursive appearing inside of quotes.

3.1 Solidarity

This section constructs a solidarity-approach to foreign aid by presenting the similarities between the ideas of mutual aid, international solidarity, and how aid experts suggest foreign aid should be conducted. A full list of the key concepts can be found in appendix 10.5.

In *The Division of Labour in Society* first published in 1893, Durkheim (1984) describes solidarity in the context of what constitutes a collective societal consciousness with a *shared perception of morality* and how such a community reacts to immoral acts such as crimes and injustice being inflicted on

a community member. He argues that social solidarity is a “wholly moral phenomenon” (Durkheim 1984, p. 24) which can connect people through for example shared domestic roles, professions, and nationality (Durkheim, 1984, p. 27) which Lumsdaine (1993, p. 185 cited in Riddell, 2012, p. 429) describes as “*shar[ing] a sense of group identity*”. Durkheim (1984, p. 75, 76-7) distinguishes between negative solidarity, the act of “refraining from harm”, and positive solidarity, the act of “rendering a service”, and argues that simply refraining from harming another is not enough if “men [are] to acknowledge and mutually guarantee the rights of one another”. Solidarity thus requires or makes it “*obligatory*” (Singer, 1972) to “*take[e] concrete action to support those with whom one is in solidarity*” (Lumsdaine, 1993, p. 185 cited in Riddell, 2012, p. 429), and to *fight for each other’s rights* and improved quality of life (Jonsson, 2022).

As the idea of solidarity stems from the Marxist school of thought, these notions are often expressed through *language of materialism and class struggle* (Jonsson, 2022, pp. 31-2). Similarly, Spade (2020), Riddell (2012) and Jefferess (2021) all identify the importance of being able to *identify, critically describe and address the root causes of needs* if a movement is to actually produce lasting improvements to marginalised and exposed people and communities. The struggle for a classless system featuring social and material equality becomes a global one around which workers of the world unite (Marx & Engels, 2017). What elevates the solidarity to be international, is the enhanced understanding and appreciation of actors and their relations existing *outside one’s own national community* (Jonsson, 2022, p. 31). Lumsdaine describes solidarity as:

refer[ing] not merely to sympathies but to *common bonds with those to whom aid is given*. It implies working to achieve *common goals, sharing risks and suffering with them...* [and] ‘*a willingness to tie one’s fate to that of others...*’ (Lumsdaine 1993, p. 185 cited in Riddell, 2012, p. 429)

May (2007, p. 189-91), argues that as solidarity is shown towards one’s community, international solidarity is tied to an *international community*. May (2007, pp. 189-92) suggests that international solidarity can occur when members of a social group recognize that they *share common needs* with other members of their social group, giving examples like “the need to prevent communicable diseases, or ... the need to prevent atrocities”.

In his article on mutual aid, Spade (2020, p. 147) presents several arguments for why “mutual aid projects are central to effective social movements” as that is how “we can *build our capacities for self-organisation and self-determination*”. The article is a discussion on how the *people who are left or made vulnerable by harmful societal systems* and social practises such as *capitalism, colonialism, sexism, ableism, racism* to name only a few, which *limits their access to material resources and opportunities*, must be put in a position where *they themselves can participate* in and bring about the needed *societal changes*, be they large and systemic or smaller and specific.

Summed up, mutual aid can create *exponential long-term development* as it encourages community members to actively participate during all parts of the development process, from identifying the core issues, to coming up with solutions, to spreading awareness about the topic, informing the public and garnering support and bringing in more people to participate, to implementing the reforms and doing the work to create change (Spade, 2020). The core elements of mutual aid are

that: “[p]eople at the front lines” of an issue (Spade, 2020, p. 137), *who share a need or concern* despite differences in identity and/or experiences (Spade, 2020, p. 137), *actively participate* (Spade, 2020, p. 133), as *equals that “all have something to offer”* (Mutual Aid Disaster Relief, 2019, p. 68 cited in Spade, 2020, p. 145), to the *analysis and discussions of the issue and the solutions* to it (Spade, 2020, p. 137, 145), and through “*consensus decision-making*” feel *collective ownership* of the ideas and plans which strengthens their commitments to the cause (Spade, 2020, p. 145), which is worked towards together in solidarity with one another while also *supporting one another’s more immediate needs* (Spade, 2020, p. 135, 137, 139).

The *dual strategy* of undertaking both “*immediate care and defence work alongside work to get at the root causes of harmful conditions and work to build alternative structures*” (Spade, 2020, p. 135) is another key aspect of mutual aid. People are both willing and *capable of political participation and mutual aid work* once they have received such assistance which brings them *out of immediate danger or state of crisis* (Spade, 2020, p. 137). By facilitating dialogue between people with shared needs or concerns who have different experiences, members of the mutual aid projects *together construct an analysis of societal issues* which portrays the members not as helpless victims due to their own moral shortcomings, but as survivors of *harmful societal structures* which become the target of reforms (Spade, 2020, p. 137).

Spade (2020, pp. 145-6) notes the importance of practising dealing with conflicts, giving and receiving direct and *constructive feedback* and working to “build shared analyses and practises that recognize and address ... systems of meaning and control that produce harm between participants”. Establishing structures for feedback and communication within and about the project leads to *more transparency and accountability towards the mutual aid community* (Spade, 2020, p. 146).

Spade (2020, p. 137) writes that the members of mutual aid projects do not need to have similar experiences to each other. This refers to how members can both *share some identities* and differ from each other on other identities, which means that they can both *connect on their shared identities and experiences*, and *learn from hearing about the other members differing experiences*. Thus, Spade and Durkheim are not in opposition over the importance of connecting over *shared lived experiences*, and furthermore it is shown that *mutual learning* from one another’s different experiences is an important aspect of solidarity.

Truman (1949), Rosenstein-Rodan (1943), Chenery and Strout (1966) and Pearson (1969) all emphasise that *improving the capacity* of the people in the developing countries to *lead their own development efforts*, was key to successful development (all cited in Riddell, 2012, pp. 25, 29-30). Pearson (1970, p. 6) thus argues that aid should be “an expression of *genuine international co-operation*, or an authentic expression of *international interdependence or human solidarity*”, where the transfer of resources to ease material inequalities should be viewed as the “*natural obligations ... [of an] increasingly close and interdependent world community*” (Pearson, 1970, p. 7) where there is “*great concern in all nations for the fate of all other nations*” (Pearson, 1970, p. 8). Through this mindset,

foreign aid is something that is done because of a desire or want to support others because of *shared interests or concerns*.

On evaluating aid outcomes, Pearson argues that *development cannot be measured exclusively through economic instruments and comparative statistics* such as gross national product per capita as “there is much more to the quality of life than a rising income” (Pearson, 1970, pp. 8-9). He also urges that *evaluations wait until the aid has had some time to be implemented* as results take time to materialise (Pearson, 1970, pp. 8-9) and that said results should be *evaluated within the context* they are in, against the endogenous and exogenous obstacles which exist (Pearson, 1970, p. 6). It is suggested that *systematic review and evaluation of aid performances* should take place regularly in *forums where both donors and recipients participate*, to evaluate both current progress and needs (Pearson, 1970, p. 10).

Pearson’s approach to the developing countries as being *key agents in their own development* fits well with Spade’s description of how those at the front lines of issues must lead the processes of solving them. Pearson (1970, p. 9-10) gives much credit to the developing countries peoples’ “hard work and saving” which he argues is what enables development and must therefore be “*accomplished by the people themselves*” through “*the will and the work*” to see development through. Pearson (1970, p. 10) argues that “[t]o be satisfactory to both developed and developing countries, aid must be planned to help an economy *reach the point where growth is self-sustaining*, and can be maintained without foreign financing on concessional terms...”. To that end, Pearson (1970, p. 10) suggests that the rich and poor countries enter into “*an active and a genuine partnership*” which is described as a “*sustained relationship centred upon long-term development objectives*”. It is important for the donor and recipient to “*fully understand[d] and participat[e] in the process by which [the aid] allocation and use is decided*” and to *limit the donor’s involvement in the recipient’s policy-making* to “*be[ing] heard and ... informed about decisions* which basically affect the development it is helping to support” (Pearson, 1970, p. 10).

The World Bank (WB) joined with Pearson (1970) in arguing that development, which according to the WB (2000, cited in Riddell, 2012, p. 40) is driven by “expanding economic opportunities, facilitating empowerment and enhancing security”, should *be strategized and implemented by the poor countries themselves*. Aid should, to that effect, contribute to “*building capacities, strengthening institutions and improving governance*” (Riddell, 2012, p. 40). The WB argued that aid would be effective when “provided to recipients who are *committed to using it well*, supported by policies and institutions which facilitate its efficient use” (Riddell, 2012, p. 40).

The 1996 OECD/DAC publication *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation* also pushed the idea that recipients should be in control of their own development processes (Riddell, 2012, p. 42). Riddell identifies these points as among the most important ones of the publication:

- The need for *aid recipients to take control of the development process*, for aid to be integrated into *recipient-owned and -led policy frameworks*, developed with the *co-operation of local civil societies*.
- The need for recipient countries to *foster internal accountability* for their activities.
- The need for strong and effective *partnerships between donors and recipients*...

- The emphasis given to the *building of institutions and capacities*.
- The need to rethink *how aid-giving is assessed*, with a focus less on what is provided and more on results, *and the wider impact of the aid provided* (Riddell, 2012, p. 42)

Recipient-country ownership, as heavily promoted by the UN Millennium Project 2005, is described as “each poor country [creating] its own development strategy, built on the MDGs, with development finance filling any unmet financing needs” (Riddell, 2012, pp. 44-5). The UN advisory board argues that aid should help countries break out of the “poverty trap” and contribute to “*self-sustaining [economic] growth*” by improving the poor countries’ capital stocks (UN Millennium Project 2005, pp. 50-2, cited in Riddell, 2012, p. 45). When replacing the MDGs with the SDGs, the UN defined partnership as:

Voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together *to achieve a common purpose* or undertake a specific task and, as *mutually agreed*, to *share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits*. (UNDESA, 2015, p. 13)

Partnership is still the argued by the UN to be the foundation for sustainable development. The definition of a multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) provided in on of their latest SDG 17 report is as follows:

An *ongoing collaborative relationship* between or among organisations from different stakeholder types aligning their interests around a *common vision*, combining their *complementary resources and competencies* and *sharing risk*, to maximise value creation towards the Sustainable Development Goals and *deliver benefit to each of the partners*. (Stibble et. al, 2020, p. 23)

This report too stated that the *recipients in the local context must lead the design and implementation* of foreign aid through partnerships. Stibble et al (2020, p. 88) argued that “[e]ffective partnerships centre the *lived experience of those closest to the problem being addressed*. This means ensuring that the *relevant organisations or communities are able to fully inform the partnership's design, implementation and evaluation*” and emphasised the role of civil society organisations (CSO) and non-governmental organisations (NGO) as implementors of the partnerships (2020, p. 28).

Stibble et al (2022, p. 45) writes that often it is enough for the partners to have “sufficient compatibility of values for the context”, meaning that if the partnership is more at “arms-length”, it can be enough for the partners’ values to not be “antithetical to each other”. For a closer partnership, however, it is important that a *mutual “trust”* can be established, and in those cases “*shared underlying values/ common interests*” are likely to form part of the foundation for trusting each other (Stibble et al, 2022, pp. 49-50).

Zedillo argued that there should be commonly agreed upon instruments and procedures for deciding what the international community does in terms of foreign aid, suggesting a voluntary pooling of resources that would *fund recipients’ own development strategies*, and to which the *former recipients would also contribute once able to do so* (Riddell, 2012, p. 43).

Some concepts have been highlighted by several different writers throughout this section³. These can be presented thematically as *shared values, the recipients themselves are the experts in and on their contexts, recipients are capable of defining their needs, participating in the design-process and, leading the*

³ See the full list in appendix 10.5

implementation of aid, which generate benefits for all involved parties, are long-term genuine partnerships based on exchanging experiences and knowledge, evaluated not based on statistics but on the wider impact of the aid in the community given the complex and nuances that are present in the context.

3.2 Charity

This section constructs a charity-approach to foreign aid by presenting the similarities between how Spade (2020) describes the practise of charity, and how aid experts critique current foreign aid practises. It is important to note that Pearson's moral arguments for foreign aid come from a mix of both charity and solidarity, while his criticisms mostly take aim at the interest-approach. As such, he promotes some practises which Spade criticises. The full list of key concepts of the charity-approach can be found in appendix 10.6.

Spade (2020, p. 140-1) criticises the "charity models" of providing aid and services for feeding into ideas of *paternalism, saviourism* by "promot[ing] the idea that most *poverty is a result of immorality*" which reproduces the dichotomy of rich versus poor and elevates it through assigning moral superiority to the rich which justifies their position in the hierarchy. Mahembe and Odhiambo share Spade's (2020) criticism of viewing "*poverty [a]s a result of poor people's 'dissolute behaviours'*" and agree that the root causes of poverty: "uncorrected market failure" should be the target for reforms (Ravallion, 2015, p. 1971 cited in Mahembe & Odhiambo, 2019, p. 4; Mahembe & Odhiambo, 2019, p. 4). Charity makes the *rich look generous and deserving of their wealth* which legitimizes and upholds the capitalist system (Spade, 2020, p. 140). By imposing "*eligibility requirements*" such as "sobriety, piety, curfews, participation in job training or parenting courses, cooperation with the police, or identifying the paternity of children", charity frames only those capable of displaying the morality necessary to meet the requirements as "deserving" of aid (Spade, 2020, p. 140). Pearson falls into this line of arguing that immorality causes poverty by suggesting "population control" measures such as "birth rate control" be "stressed by both donors and recipients when planning aid programmes" to combat *overpopulation* (Pearson, 1970, p. 17, 10).

Eligibility requirements for receiving social services and assistance have the same function as *conditionalities for receiving foreign aid*. The conditions of the structural adjustment programmes (SAP) forced potential recipients to agree to "tighten fiscal discipline, the reordering of public expenditure, tax and exchange rate reform, financial and trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation" (Williamson 1994, 2004 cited in Riddell, 2012, p. 236). Conditional aid thus becomes a way for *donors to exert power over the recipients' policies and regulations*. Imposing these western, neoliberal ideas and practises from rich, developed countries on the poor, developing countries reproduces the colonial ideas of European moral superiority and "the white man's burden" (Jefferess, 2021, p. 423).

Riddell (2012, p. 45) calls out the hypocrisy of the UN Millennium Project 2005 regarding how their report still "*details how aid ought to be spent to achieve the different MDGs*" which takes away from the initial push for recipient ownership and agency in creating their own development plans. In a similar vein, Jefferess (2021, 427) criticises the "*focus on providing education and empowerment*" as it

implies that the “problem to be remedied is the *ignorance and incapability* of those constructed as in need”.

The privatization of charity where *non-profits compete for grants* and contracts to address social issues leads to the *wealthy and privileged gaining influence through donations* which can and has reproduced “antidemocratic racist and colonial relationships between the winners and losers of extractive, exploitative economic arrangements” (Spade, 2020, p. 140). Pearson (1970, p. 6) also criticises how *donors seek own political and economic gain* from aid.

From the charity approach Pearson (1970, p. 7) states that “[e]very accepted system of values in the world proclaims the *duty of the rich and the privileged to help the poor and the deprived*”, and that “it is the duty of those who have resources and skills to share them with those who have not”. Such statements signal saviourism and a *pitying of the wretched poor* which uplifts the rich countries as benevolent donors with moral superiority (Spade, 2020, p. 140). Pearson also argues that if this moral “duty” of the rich to help the poor, which he describes as an “instinct”, is ignored, it will lead to “dehumanising ... consequences” (Pearson, 1970, pp. 7-8). This can be interpreted as a warning to donors that if they cut foreign aid, the global community will think them immoral and cruel, which frames participation in foreign aid as a way for *rich countries to redeem their morality and justify their position of wealth* by participating in charitable acts (Jefferess, 2021).

Jefferess (2021, p. 424) describes “*white saviourism*” as “an orientation” through which the world is understood which

connotes the way that in the global North, the *global South is defined as (having) a problem*, the global citizen or humanitarian is constructed as the solution to that problem, and the way it is *the ‘saviour’ who has the power to delineate these roles and this relation*. (Jefferess, 2021, p. 424)

Jefferess uses Cole’s (2012, cited in Jefferess, 2012, p. 424) critique of how a New York Times Columnist, in his discourse around the Kony 2012 campaign, “does not connect the dots or see the patterns of power behind the isolated ‘disasters’. All he sees are hungry mouths... *All he sees is need, and he sees no need to reason out the need for the need*”.

Some concepts have been highlighted by several different writers throughout this section⁴. These can be presented thematically as *saviourism, paternalism, poverty resulting from immorality, ignorance and incapability, aid being used by the wealthy to exert power over recipients and redeem their own morality, ignoring the systemic causes leading to a need for aid*.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework below depicts two models of foreign aid: (i) a solidarity model and (ii) a charity model described above. The concepts used to describe the respective models come from the theories in the previous subchapters. The themes drawn out during the previous sections can

⁴ See the full list in appendix 10.6

be sorted into four categories depending on what component of the foreign aid process and foreign aid logic they address. The categories are: Donor’s moral arguments for aid, Underlying assumptions about the recipients, Implementation processes, and Goals and Measuring aid outcomes. The categories are portrayed as columns, with the central concepts sorted into a respective category. The framework is applied to the data on how the OPC as an aid actor is understood by the active parties, in order to investigate if the descriptions of the OPC’s model in theory and practise matches more with the concepts associated with the solidarity model or the charity model.

In examining the why different donors provide and allocate their aid differently, it is clear that the *donor’s own moral arguments for providing aid* plays a big part. Spade (2020) and Mahembe and Odhiambo (2019) point out that *donor’s moral arguments for aid* are related to what the *donor’s underlying assumptions about the recipients* of aid are. *Recipients* typically refer to the population that receives the foreign aid, but as this thesis focuses more on the relations between the three parties involved in the OPC’s model of foreign aid, the term will refer to the partner organisations as they are the primary recipient in the transfer of resources. The other two categories, *implementation and design*, and *evaluating outcomes* are brought up by several aid experts, as shown in chapter 3.1, as key parts of the aid process which need to be reassessed in order to improve aid effectiveness.

For the indicator *mutual learning*, the word “mutual” does not imply that the interacting parties learn the exact same thing from each other during the interaction or the occasion. The word “mutual” is to be understood in the same context as how something being “mutually beneficial” does not mean that both parties get the exact same benefit, but that they both benefit in their own ways from the relationship. *Mutual learning* was expressed as a process of co-learning in the interviews. *Shared lived experiences* was expressed as sharing commonalities due to working in similar fields. *Paternalism* was expressed as experiencing top-down behaviour. *Empathising with struggles* was expressed as global struggles. These inductive indicators have been added to the analytical framework.

As foreign aid is often analysed as ODA which is state to state, the concepts concern larger socioeconomic and geopolitical policies than what is common within mutual aid which is mostly local within a town or a state. Putting both types of concepts in the framework makes it easier to identify interview answers by the language which is used, as some answers will use international/foreign aid language and some will use local/mutual aid language.

The first row in the analytical framework indicates which research questions each category corresponds to. The four categories and their respective indicators are presented on the vertical, with the two approaches presented with solidarity in the top part and solidarity in the bottom part of the framework.

RQ ->	RQ1	RQ1	RQ2	RQ1
Category	1. Donor’s moral arguments for aid:	2. Underlying assumptions about	3. Implementation processes: who sets tasks	4. Determining goals and measuring aid outcomes:

	why give aid?	recipients: why is aid needed and who are the recipients?	and plans, whose resources and responsibility?	whose goals and measurements?
Approach to aid	Solidarity	Solidarity	Solidarity	Solidarity
	Shared needs/concerns/interests/values	Systematized lack of opportunity	Consensus decision-making	Transparency and accountability to the community; internal accountability
	Empathising with struggles; <u>global struggles</u>	Systematized lack of material resources	Encourages participation in analysis of issues and solutions	Constructive feedback
	Fighting for each other's rights	Willingness to implement development measures	Collective ownership of project	Long-term exponential development; addressing the root causes of the needs; systemic change
	Collective concern for fates of all nations	Actors at the front lines are the experts and should take the lead	Both immediate relief and systemic change, simultaneous strategies	Consensus decision-making
	A sense of international community	Able to define their own needs	Contributing according to one's abilities	Establishing an international community
	Shared lived experiences; <u>Commonality</u>	Developing countries should also provide FA when they've become capable; Capable of supporting others once out of crisis	Capacity building for self-organisation and self-determination; building capacities, strengthening institutions and improving governance	Systematic review and evaluation of progress and needs conducted in forums where donors and recipients participate
	Obligatory; natural obligation	In charge of deciding their own future	Recipient-owned and -led policy frameworks; Strategized and implemented by recipients	Growth becomes self-sustaining
	Shared interests due to interdependent world		A sustained, long-term, active and genuine partnership; active participation	Evaluations are long-term and nuanced
	Language of materialism and class struggle; identify and critically describe the root causes of needs		Development is to be accomplished by the people themselves	Outcomes are measured within the context
			Mutual learning; <u>Co-learning</u>	Development not measured through economic instruments and

				comparative statistics
			Co-operation with local civil societies	Aid is assessed based on results and wider impact
Approach to aid	Charity	Charity	Charity	Charity
	Rich countries saving the poor countries	Lack of natural capacity/helplessness	Overarching goals determined by donor	Donor redeems their own humanity
	Supererogatory	Lack of morality	Recipients compete for funds on the aid-market	Donor appears generous
	Saviourism	Overpopulation	Conditional aid; Eligibility requirements based on donor's view of a moral lifestyle	Donor's increased access to materials and/or influence
			Paternalism; Donor knows best; <u>Top-down</u>	Donor influences political activists

4. Specified aim and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate whether the OPC's model of foreign aid is understood by the involved actors as following the *solidarity-model* of foreign aid or a *charity-model*. As Sweden has up until recently held up solidarity as a strong motivation for foreign aid, it is of high interest to (i) examine the OPC as a potential *solidarity model* of foreign aid, and furthermore to (ii) test whether this model of foreign aid is also *collectively understood as such* by both the donors and recipients of the foreign aid. In order to find answers to this puzzle, this bachelor-thesis sets out to answer the following research question:

RQ: Is the Olof Palme International Center's model of foreign aid understood by the involved actors as more aligned with a *solidarity-model* or a *charity-model*?

Sub questions:

RQ 1. How do the Member Organisations, Partner Organisations and the Olof Palme International Center understand the Olof Palme International Center's aid model?

RQ 2. How do the Member Organisations, Partner Organisations and the Olof Palme International Center understand the implementation of the Olof Palme International Center's aid model?

5. Method and Research Design

In this chapter, I detail the research design and research methods that were used to collect and analyse the data for this study. The chapter begins with the research design, then follows the data collection methods, and finally the data analysis methods.

5.1 Research Design

This study is a qualitative case study (Bryman, 2017, p. 60) of the OPC as an aid actor where I investigate how the OPC and the respective participants in its foreign aid projects, understand the theory and implementation of the OPC's model of foreign aid. There is an ethnographic element to this study as I interviewed the leaders (elite interviews) of each project, many on a location relevant to each project, which means the data collection happened in the field (Halperin & Heath, 2022) The ecological validity (Bryman, 2017, p. 42) is thus high as the interviews were conducted on location with the people who work every day within the investigated context.

There are no previous studies about the OPC, which warrants a case study to gain novel and in-depth knowledge about this organisation (Bryman, 2017, pp. 60-1, 64). This study thus contributes to the limited research on NGOs in FA. Furthermore, there is very little research done on the methods employed by aid organisations that proclaim to be guided by solidarity. The OPC is an unusual/unique case (Bryman, 2017, p. 62) in the field of FA because it claims to follow the ideals of solidarity which has been consistently, if indirectly, promoted by experts in FA.

As Bryman (2017, pp. 383-4) points out, measuring a study's reliability and validity is more difficult with qualitative studies as the measurements are adapted primarily to quantitative studies. The tendency to measure a study's academic value through predominantly quantitative criteria creates a bias for quantitative research viewed as being of higher value than qualitative research (Bryman, 2017, p. 390). Several suggestions for alternative criteria for evaluating qualitative research has been produced, among them Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1994 cited in Bryman, 2017, p. 390). I use both the traditionally quantitative criteria as well as Lincoln and Guba's proposed qualitative criteria to evaluate my methodology during this chapter.

As this is a single case study, all findings are most relevant to understanding this specific case. The external validity is thus low (Bryman, 2017, p. 62) as no generalised conclusions are drawn (Bryman, 2017, p. 64, 383). I do however provide significant and deep insights into how foreign aid can be conducted in accordance with international solidarity, and this "thick description" (Geertz, 1973a cited in Bryman, 2017, p. 384) of a solidarity model can serve as a source of knowledge to be applied or transferred outside this specific case study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 cited in Bryman, 2017, p. 384). The inferential validity (Bryman, 2017, p. 42) is high as the conclusions are limited to answering the research questions in a descriptive manner.

The internal validity is high as all concepts are consistently defined and used during the thesis which enables an accurate analysis (Mason, 1996, p. 24 cited in Bryman, 2017, p. 383). The credibility of this research was tested and improved through "respondent validation" (Bryman, 2017, p. 385) as I explored some of the topics of interest through dialogues with a partner organisation in an OPC project in Namibia during the proposal-stage. This was done outside the study and will not count towards the data collection.

Lincoln and Guba suggest a qualitative study should be evaluated on its "authenticity", a measurement this thesis should score high in (Bryman, 2017, p. 386). This research is useful for

the OPC, member organisations and partner organisations to better understand the model's method and each other's roles in it. This better understanding should enable all parties to engage in constructive dialogue on how to make necessary adjustments to improve their methods and their work. This thesis can thus be classified as "action research" (Bryman, 2017, p. 387).

This study can be replicated as I have included the interview guides and detailed how the research was carried out in this methodology chapter. The results might however differ upon replication as studies in social science tend not to produce the exact same results when repeated. This is because the environment and context in which the study takes place is not controllable in the same way laboratory studies are (Bryman, 2017).

I decided not to do a comparative study between the OPC and another aid organisation. While doing so would potentially have generated valuable insights into how the different methods/aid models compare to each other in similar contexts (Bryman, 2017, p. 68), it was not feasible to undertake such a study given the limited time and resources accessible to me. As there are no previous studies on the topics covered in this thesis, there is also no previously established baseline to which I could have compared the new results.

5.2 Collection of data

My research questions are about how all involved parties perceive the social relations and power dynamics between the donors and recipients of the OPC's model of foreign aid. I thus conducted several sets of qualitative, semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2017, p. 466) with three types of actors involved in the OPC model of FA. The 12 interviews were conducted over zoom or in person and followed one of four interview guides (see appendixes 10.1-4), depending on which group the interviewee belonged to: OPC, Partner organisations, and Member organisations.

- First, I interviewed two staff members at the OPC headquarters that deal with the OPC's own methods and the South African projects, in order to get more knowledge on how they themselves define their methods and their setup as a FA actor. These interviews were used as a reference point against which the other interviews were compared, in an attempt to analyse the internal validity of the OPC's proclaimed aid-logic.
- The second round of interviews were conducted with representatives of six partner organisations (PO) on site in South Africa. These interviews inquired about how the aid relationship between the PO and the OPC and the member organisations are understood and valued by the partners.
- The third set of interviews were conducted over Zoom with four representatives of the Swedish member organisations (MO) who make up the second part of the duo in most aid projects.

As of March 2023, when my research plan was made, there were 12 active OPC projects in South Africa. In most cases, I interviewed both the Swedish and South African project leaders from their respective organisation. Thus, scaling down the number of interviews by selecting a smaller

number of projects was necessary due to time and workload considerations. The selection process considered accessibility through both travel distance and expenses. Limiting the projects by accessibility left seven projects located in Cape Town. Of those seven, one was left out as it had just recently started up, which meant there was a potential lack of data as the participants have not had much time yet to experience the model and reflect on it. For ethical reasons of ensuring the confidentiality of the interviewees, I will not disclose which organisations participated.

When preparing for the interviews, I reflected on several factors which could affect my level of success in generating relevant and significant data. The questions must be understood and feel answerable by the interviewee; the questions must be relevant to garner the type of answers which contain relevant data; and I as the interviewer must present myself and my research in such a manner which makes the interviewee want to participate in the study through their interview. Things like my young appearance could signal inexperience and create hesitancy as to whether I was capable of responsibly carrying out this research. Above all, me being “white” and my nationality being Swedish could have affected the dynamics of the interviews carried out with the partner organisations in South Africa (Halperin & Heath, 2022, p. 356). This dynamic stems from the wider context in which foreign aid is conducted, as argued by Jefferess (2021), something which will be further discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

Research which includes human participants, for example through interviews, is “presumptively subject to [research ethics committee] REC oversight” (WHO, 2011, p. 2). The national law in Sweden however exempts undergraduate studies from needing to undergo an ethical review process (WHO, 2011, p. 2; SFS 2003:460, 2§). Ethical considerations have nonetheless been made. The criteria of “informed consent” has been fulfilled through verbally presenting the subject and aim of my study and what the data collected through the interviews will be used for (SFS 2003:460, 16§). At the beginning of each interview, I asked each interviewee, all of which were over 18 years old, to verbally consent to being interviewed and to the interview being recorded through video or audio (SFS 2003:460, §17). The one interviewee which did not consent to the interview being audio-recorded, consented to the interview being recorded through me taking written notes. The topic of investigation for this thesis is political in nature with questions being asked about how interviewees understand and value political interactions and power dynamics. Any risks that might be associated with participating in this study have thus been reduced by not using the interviewees names in the thesis and not asking any questions directly about their personal and private identities such as sexuality or political affiliations (WHO, 2011, p. 13, 14).

The four interview guides are structured chronologically and thematically. The questions are grouped together based on which category and research question they are assumed to generate data for. During the semi-structured interviews, I asked the questions according to the guides, which serve as the main questions for topics of interest (Halperin & Heath, 2022, p. 173). I also prepared follow-up questions intended to encourage elaboration of previous answers. RQ1 has been investigated by asking questions to the OPC, POs and MOs about their understanding of

the theory behind the model; why the OPC is involved with foreign aid and what they think foreign aid should be. RQ2 has been investigated by asking questions to the OPC, POs and MOs about their understanding of how the OPC's model works in practise; how the foreign aid should be designed and implemented.

5.3 Analysis of data

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the OPC, member organisations (MO) and partner organisations (PO) participating in the six selected South African OPC projects. The interviewees were the project leaders who all have significant involvement in the projects. By selecting the people who are most likely to work regularly within the projects, the chances of getting useful data from the interviews increases. My illustrations of the interviewee groups' respective roles in the aid relationship, also showing the differences between the MO-involvement tiers, can be found in appendix 10.7. The interviews, which were recorded as videos or audio and written down, were treated as texts and qualitative content analysis was utilised to analyse the data said texts contain (Halperin & Heath, 2022, pp. 373-4). Qualitative content analysis was used to identify how the interviewees' statements corresponded to the indicators in the analytical framework (Halperin & Heath, 2022).

The whole texts were examined for the prevalence of each operationalised concept (Halperin & Heath, 2022, p. 378) which are stipulated in the analytical framework as *indicators* belonging either to the solidarity model, or to the charity model. The coding protocol (Halperin & Heath, 2022, p. 379) consists of the analytical framework's operationalised *indicators* for each category of each model. The data was reviewed for instances of answers or sentiments either affirming or refuting the indicators belonging to either the solidarity- or charity-approach in each category. Selecting the codes was an abductive process as I was open to significant themes emerging through the interviews which I might not have been aware of during the initial establishment of the analytical framework. Examples of such inductive indicators are “co-learning”, “commonality” and “top-down” which are underlined in the analytical framework.

The results of which indicators were identified and if they were affirmed or refuted, have been analysed in two ways. First, the relevancy of the indicator was tested by if it can be identified in one or more interviews. The more indicators are identified as affirmative, the more likely it is that those indicators can be used to identify which approach the OPC's foreign aid model is understood as. Second, the more a specific indicator is found to be affirmative by a majority of the interviewees, spread across the three interview-groups (OPC, MO, PO), the more significant the indicator is for determining if the OPC's model is understood as taking the approach the specific indicator responds to. It is important that not only a high number of interviewees affirm the same indicator, but that the interviewees that affirm it are spread relatively evenly across the three interview-groups. This way, it can be ensured that the OPC's model is understood as taking either approach by all three groups, which means the RQs can be answered.

6. Data Analysis

The data collected from the 12 interviews is presented and analysed in this chapter. Sections 1-4 present the collective data from all interviews in accordance with the categories in the analytical framework. Each of these sub-chapters prelude with an explanation of what type of information the respective categories cover and conclude with a statement of which approach the OPC's model, or implementation of it, is understood by the interviewees as taking based on the data analysed. When an indicator is affirmed, it means that the interviewees understand the model/implementation of the model as taking the approach that the indicator belongs to. When an indicator is refuted, it means the model/implementation is understood as not taking the approach the indicator belongs to. The more indicators that are affirmed for either approach by all groups, the stronger the evidence is that the interviewees understand the model/implementation of the model as being either approach. The 5th and final section presents the answers to the two sub-RQs and the main RQ based on the data analysis, which is also displayed visually as a colour-coded version of the analytical framework where green means affirmed and red means refuted. I have distinguished who said what by referring to the interviewees as OPC1-2, PO1-6 and MO1-4.

6.1 Category 1: Moral arguments for aid

To find out the interviewees' understanding of the moral arguments for why the OPC provides aid, I asked everyone why they think the OPC provides foreign aid.

Both OPC1, OPC2 and PO6 answered the question of why the OPC provides foreign aid by explaining the connection to the Swedish Labour Movement and its long history of international solidarity. PO5 referred to Sweden's "historical relationship with South Africa" and OPC2 gave the anti-apartheid struggle, that many Swedish Labour Movement activists partook in, as an example of how international solidarity is something "quite *natural*" that "*runs with the blood for us in the Labour Movement*". MO4 described the OPC as "*living their values*" of and being the "driving force when it comes to international solidarity" within the labour movement. All Swedish interviewees said that participating in international solidarity work was "*a given*" thing for them and OPC1 described the act of providing aid or support as "*obligatory*", which affirms the solidarity-indicator *obligatory/natural obligation*.

All interviewees had very similar ways of defining the idea of solidarity. PO3 said that to them,

Solidarity... is based on the concept of 'Ubuntu'... where there is a genuine mutual relationship between people, there's no coercion, oppression or suppression of any kind, everyone gets to benefit in the end, everyone gets to share, have their own opinion and it's inclusive, rather than exclusive, and it also puts everyone on the same level... it's different from charity. (PO3)

Echoing PO3's definition, PO6 explained that "it's about working with and respecting the politics and authority of those you are working with in deciding what should be done". PO2 said "International solidarity, it's about having *a common vision, right? Addressing a particular need or a particular cause* by having *multiple voices that are literally speaking the same language*". OPC2 explained

that “*we work with like-minded organisations*” within areas of “trade unionism, women’s organisations, human rights and democracy”. The OPC seeks to support and collaborate with partner organisations that *share the OPC’s understanding of these priorities as important core values* (OPC1). PO6 expressed their understanding of this as “there’s a feeling that we fit well with the intentions of the OPC”. OPC1 said “we are openly *value-driven*” and this emphasis on the importance of *shared values* in the partnerships was expressed by every interviewee, which strongly affirms the *shared needs/concerns/interests/values* solidarity-indicator.

Also significant are the reasons the POs and MOs gave for why they connected and/or relate to each other. OPC1 suggests that while it is difficult to say for sure, the reason why the POs share the values of the OPC and Swedish Labour Movement is “perhaps [that] they have *experienced this in their lives*” where “this” can be, for example, discovering the significance of having a strong trade union movement for being able to freely advocate for one’s rights and drive society to develop. PO3 stated that “in a way [*we*] *identify with [our MO]* as it does research work, democratic processes and identifies with young people”. PO2 also connected with their MO on *working in similar spaces* with exposed, hurt and marginalized groups and helping them reclaim their power, which was described by PO2 as having “*commonalities*”.

This way of *relating to one another* by *sharing lived experiences* and *commonalities* affirms the solidarity-indicators, *shared lived experiences* and *empathising with each other’s struggles*. MO4 described this as “from my point of view with popular education, it’s kind of in our value baseline to see how you can *connect people’s lived experiences to the global issues*, and international solidarity is just a given part of that in your analysis”.

Interviewees referred to how “*the solutions to globalized conditions are also global*” (PO3) and “I think that *our struggles and our movements are global* ... there are no borders for our struggles” (MO4) and “solidarity means *recognising an international community*, that it is not good enough for trade unions to only be strong in for example Sweden, but also *around the world*” (PO6). This affirms the solidarity-indicators we live in an *interdependent world* and have *concern for fates of all nations* as part of an *international community*.

Seven out of eight solidarity-indicators were affirmed, and none were refuted. Zero out of three charity-indicators have been identified for this category. The consensus among all parties is that the OPC provides foreign aid because of *solidarity*.

6.2 Category 2: Assumptions about aid recipients

The second category covers what the donors assume about the recipients, their capacities, circumstances, what kind of aid they need and why the recipients need to access the required resources and support through foreign aid.

OPC1 said that the type of aid that each PO needs varies depending on their internal and external circumstances, and that every context is different. OPC2 said that the POs in South Africa “need

money, of course” and that the rest of the support-needs are “very individual”. Strong POs that are established, have strong organisational structures and potentially other sources of funding, might *need capacity strengthening* for “developing the way they work with gender or anti-corruption” and *benefit more from the international network* which the OPC provides access to (OPC1; OPC2). Access to the OPC’s international network was depicted as a beneficial opportunity as all POs and MOs as one of the major benefits and *opportunities which are accessed* (affirmed solidarity-indicator) through being part of an OPC project. Weaker POs that may be newly formed, *operating within repressive contexts*, have weak administrations and only receives funding from the OPC, need a lot of support, like institutional support and organisational development, on top of the funding that finances their activities (OPC1).

In response to the OPC, PO2 here is the spokesperson for the sake of avoiding repetition. PO2 described how “*the biggest issue is funding*, because the more funding you have, the more resource you are able to bring on board” and that “*the passion is there, the commitment and the dedication is there*, but again, we are risking overstretching the staff”. This understanding of the POs already *possessing the will, ambition and competency* (affirms solidarity-indicators *willingness to implement development measures, systemic lack of resources and opportunities*) to carry out their work, both as part of the project and in their daily operations, was expressed by every interviewee. One example of this is that the interviewees consistently mentioned that both organisations in each project have existed and carried out their work in much the same way, before they entered into a collaboration with the OPC. PO3’s stated of “for a very long time, I think even up to for almost 13 years, we were never funded [by a donor or a sponsorship] and the *capacity of the work then was still huge*”.

These “*capacity-strengthening trainings*”, that the OPC provides were described as “we are strengthening the partner organisations for them to be able to do their work ... because *they know best what to do in their context*, what they want to achieve in their context, we can’t do that for them, so *we have to strengthen them* to be able to be stronger and have a bigger outreach for their work” (OPC2). All POs and MOs shared this description of the OPC’s model as based on “partnership” (PO1) where the *POs themselves define their contexts, needs and ideas*. This strongly affirms the two solidarity-indicators *actors at the front lines are the experts and should take the lead* and *able to define their own needs*. By supporting the POs to build the capacity of their organisation and members so that they more effectively can work with and bring in more people to participate from their target groups in the community, many of whom are going through or have gone through hardships, the solidarity-indicator *capable of supporting others once out of crisis* is also affirmed.

PO6 said that when a collaborating in a context featuring material inequalities, “you can still have opinions, *but it is about [being aware of] the power relations*”. The issue of the *built in power imbalances in an aid-relationship*, was addressed at some point during each interview. As an example of this awareness, OPC2 stated that “of course this is very tricky, because we have the money and they don’t want to say ‘we don’t like you’” and “we have the money, and that’s a thing we can never run away from, so they are dependent on us”. PO6, which receives the equivalence of “general budget support” (Riddell, 2012) from the OPC instead of project-based funding, was highly critical of how “project funding can be a way of enforcing [NGOs] fragility”. PO6 described the

general shift in foreign aid from general budget support to project funding as being driven by “*a conservative political agenda trying to limit civil society organisations’ autonomy and agency by saying how they can and cannot work*” as limiting how an organisation spends their money becomes a way of saying “I don’t support your existence, I support you working on this specific thing”. Interestingly, the other POs who do receive project-based funding from the OPC, did not express experiencing the OPC’s type of project-funding how PO6 described the general practise of it. Instead, PO2, PO3, PO4 all described the project-budget as “flexible” in how “we can amend, we can change the budget every year” to make it possible to focus on different outreach-areas or shift focus if the context changes. A common source of frustration within all POs is however that the overall budget amount for the five year-period is however not flexible, which is an issue given the recent inflation and increases in “load-shedding” that all POs have to endure. All interviewees shared PO4’s understanding of this not being an issue easily fixed by the OPC itself as “you get allocated a certain amount every year, subject to whether the Swedish government decides to renege on its commitments”.

On the question of “if and why the support and resources need to come from outside sources (foreign aid)” PO6 said that “NGOs are the weeds that spring from the cracks in the pavement” meaning that they emerge from within *inhospitable and sometimes hostile contexts*. PO6 explained how “some of these organisations were established to address the *lack of resources* devoted to certain issues”, which was affirmed by PO2, and it does not make sense to impose demands of “financial sustainability” on these organisations as *they exist due to a lack of funding* and it also makes no sense to assume that “funding would just magically appear” once the NGO does. MO4 shared this sentiment as “I don’t think there’s so many different *funding opportunities* out there for them”. OPC1 too described how many POs operate in “*difficult contexts, [in many cases featuring] repressive regimes*” which has *kept the POs from accessing certain knowledge*, which the OPC can contribute with, on top of funding (OPC1).

PO3 stated that “it’s a double-edged blade” in that “we are from a place that was *disadvantaged historically by the place* where the resources are coming from”, but by “getting these resources... we are able to build sustainable ideas that will generate our own economical resources that we can build on, instead of always having to get foreign aid”. PO3 furthermore stated that “in terms of being resourceful, we are met with resistance by the elite” who view “making people understand people’s power, working class power” as “a threat and a danger to them” to the point where “even our small alternatives that we try, experiments [with food gardens or a small local business] are shut down [and] always get blocked”. For PO3, the biggest change has been that they can scale up their operation through improved access to material resources (“office, equipment”), and the collective have gained a sense of stability and sustainability for the members who felt like they were “constantly being squeezed, slowly but surely” by “neoliberalism and capitalism intensifying itself”. They finished with “*we should not be in a position to need help from the outside*, but right now we need help”. All the above statements affirm the solidarity-indicators *systematized lack of opportunity [and] material resources* and *identify and critically describe the root cause of issues* as the contexts the POs exist within have limited their abilities to fully meet their own needs.

Several MOs also stated that they know their *POs have a lot of capacity already* and have done and can do their work without the MOs' and the OPC's support, but that the more support the POs get, the more effective they can become. The charity-indicator *lack of natural capacity/helplessness* is thus refuted. Furthermore, OPC1 said that her experience working with POs about identifying, and implementing policies against internal corruption is that corruption stems more from *lack of knowledge of such internal control mechanisms, rather than someone being ill-willed* and wanting to steal money. This also refutes the charity-indicator *lack of morality*.

OPC2 explained that the reason why the organisations are called “partner organisations” is “because we see them as partners”. To the OPC it is “very important that it’s the *partners themselves that defines their needs, what’s important for them in their context*, and then we support them” (OPC1). OPC2 said that through the “*capacity-strengthening trainings*”, that the OPC provides, “we are strengthening the partner organisations for them to be able to do their work ... because *they know best what to do in their context*, what they want to achieve in their context, we can’t do that for them, so *we have to strengthen them* to be able to be stronger and have a bigger outreach for their work” (OPC2). All POs and MOs shared this description of the OPC’s model as based on “partnership” (PO1) where the *partners themselves get to define their contexts, needs and ideas* (PO1; PO3; PO4). This strongly affirms the two solidarity-indicators *actors at the front lines are the experts and should take the lead* and *able to define their own needs*. By supporting the POs to build the capacity of their organisation and members so that they more effectively can work with and bring in more people to participate from their target groups in the community, many of whom are going through or have gone through hardships, the solidarity-indicator *capable of supporting others once out of crisis* is also affirmed.

Seven out of eight solidarity-indicators were identified as affirmed, and none were refuted. Two out of three charity-indicators were refuted, and none were affirmed⁵. I therefore find that the interviewees responses place the OPC’s model into the solidarity-approach in this category as well.

6.3 Category 3: Implementation processes

This category concerns the process of implementing the foreign aid through the six projects. Questions were asked about the roles and responsibilities of the POs, MOs, and OPC during the process, who determines strategies and makes plans, and who supplies what resources.

OPC1 said that “it’s very important for us that it’s *a local ownership, that [the POs] own their own projects*”. All interviewees stated that the POs are most often the *main contributors to writing the project plans* and it is the POs’ *main responsibility to implement the project plans*. As such, the interviewees

⁵ While it is tempting to find the charity-indicator “lack of natural capacity” affirmed by the emphasis on “capacity-building” from the Swedish side, these sentiments were never expressed as “the POs just are not intelligent enough to figure it out themselves” and instead the need was attributed to systemic lack of access and opportunity. This is discussed further in the conclusion.

affirm the solidarity-indicators *recipient-owned and –led policy frameworks, strategized and implemented by recipients* and thus that the *development is to be accomplished by the people themselves*. PO3 stated that “I think that what is most flexible in a sense with being part of the OPC project is also the fact that you get to be the one that proposes ideas of that you want to do and how you then deepen the work in terms of the context that you are working under”. PO6 described the importance of an organisation having the independence to set its own agenda and goals as “people who do what they think is important are more useful than people who just do what they are told”. Everyone was furthermore in agreement that the POs are *the implementors of the projects*, and that the MOs and/or OPC provides *capacity building support* by sharing their methods and experiences with the POs (and vice versa) leading to *mutual learning*, which affirms those three solidarity-indicators.

PO2 described the OPC’s model as “a partnership, it might not necessarily be 50/50, right, we might say 60/40”. PO2 explained this power difference as “there is no way that an institution doesn’t have its own kind of expectations of you” and “as much as we might be given an opportunity of engaging our donor [to give input], but the donor also has its own, you know, terms of reference at the end of the day”. PO2 said that only “if we were living in some sort of fantasy, we could talk about 50/50”, but “the reality is, money comes from somewhere [and] you have to account to that person who gives you certain terms” and “[the OPC] also have to go out, whether it’s SIDA or whether it’s other Swedish based aid, and present a specific model which speaks to *their own* donors”. Improving it to 50/50 is thus difficult, but “the fact that it’s transparent, ... there’s constant engagement, it’s good” and “if it was a closed off issue where we were purely given instructions, that would be kind of concerning” (PO2). PO3 said that “even though you can’t really change the internal mechanisms [of the aid framework]... you can work around it so it suits your interests in your context”, which PO2 echoed as “they will structure it, but you can still pinpoint our input in their model”. The POs’ understanding of the OPC’s aid model as being somewhat *paternalistic* but ultimately impacted by their position as a recipient themselves, is discussed in the conclusion.

All POs *contribute according to their own capacities* towards reaching the desired outcomes (behavioural change indicators) stipulated in their respective project plans which follows the Log Frame for their respective regional programs (OPC2). The log frames were *developed together “jointly”* (OPC2) with all the involved POs and MOs at program planning workshops at the beginning of the program period (OPC1). During the workshops, everyone discusses what kind of behaviour changes they want to see under each actor group and political priority and how they each can contribute to achieving the changes. PO3 furthermore said that “cultivat[ing] a collective understanding” of “the thing... we are talking about” is important, since “when you go out and you say you are going to defend socialism, we all need to *have a collective idea* of what that socialism looks like”. They therefore “invite various NGOs, women who are directly affected by this to come and speak about their own experiences, and from those experiences we develop materials” that PO3 uses to make an impact. This affirms several solidarity-indicators: *collective ownership of project, encouraging participation in analysis of issues and solutions, contributing according to one’s abilities*, and to a certain extent, *consensus decision making*.

Not everything in the log frames is up for debate at the workshops, as the frameworks, such as, what the different actor groups and the political priorities are, is *decided by the OPC according to their international strategy* (OPC1), which affirms the charity-indicator *paternalism*.... However, the *international strategy* was *developed together with reference groups* representing some MOs and POs (OPC1), which shows the importance of including all invested parties in determining what their collective goals should be.

The projects also need to explain how they will work with the OPC's "four integrated perspectives" (gender equality, environment-climate, anti-corruption and conflict sensitivity), which *the OPC believes need to be "mainstreamed or integrated in everything we [and our partners] do for there to be progressive development"* (OPC1). According to OPC2, not everybody was automatically on board for introducing the four perspectives into their work, as some reactions were "*why do you force us to [do] this?*" These perspectives were introduced one at a time through trainings hosted by the OPC, and some POs did criticize the way some of these trainings were held. They said that "the training felt very *top-down* in the sense that it was '*this is how the OPC sees corruption*' rather than having the space to engage people and ask '*how do you see corruption in your context?*'" and that the OPC did not ask the PO for a local analysis beforehand. This behaviour affirms the charity-indicator *paternalism; donor knows best; top-down* as there was seemingly a lacking communication ahead of the training wherein the PO *did not get to contribute to the content of the session*.

The OPC's three-tier system for MO involvement in the projects (MO-owned, PUA and Sponsorship⁶), aims to make it easier for the MOs to keep engaging in their international solidarity efforts by taking over the administrative tasks from the MOs that wanted to *focus on the collaborative partnership* elements entirely. MOs could now choose to maintain administrative responsibilities (MO-owned), shift administration to the OPC and focus only on the collaborative partnership with their POs (PUA) or sponsor a project mainly through paying the MO's own contribution to the total project budget and have the opportunity to engage with their PO if both parties want to (Sponsorship) (OPC1; OPC2). Most POs emphasised the importance and uniqueness of how "*long-term*" the partnership with the OPC and/or their MOs is. On top of each project period lasting five years, the people who get to engage with each other in the project develop *close, supportive and mutually respectful friendships* and *share their knowledge* with each other. When the MOs are not as engaged, the OPC steps in and supports the POs, "*with capacity-building support*", which is often *tailored to the POs' expressed needs*, in order to perform *their main role as implementors of the projects* (OPC1). The OPC thus facilitates the POs and MOs *contribution according to their own abilities, building of capacities within recipients* and *active participation* in a *sustained, long-term and genuine partnership*, heavily featuring *mutual learning*, which affirms those solidarity-indicators. As all the POs are NGOs that are part of the civil society and all *collaborate with other civil society organisations*, that solidarity-indicator is affirmed as well.

⁶ See the illustrations of the three tiers in appendix 10.5.

PO1's way of working affirms the solidarity-indicator *both immediate relief and systemic change*, as they work with and advocate for their target groups' rights *in the more immediate sense*, aiming to increase land ownership for the rural farm workers and communities, while also teaching the same target group how to *advocate for themselves and build their grassroots movement*, with the goal being to *push through political reforms* that secure the rights of the community (PO1). The method they use to *build the capacity* of the rural women and farm workers are study circles which their MO *provides methodological support* for (PO1; MO1).

The solidarity-indicator *mutual learning* is affirmed by every interviewee as a significant part of the partnerships. *Mutual learning* is found at the network meetings, which the OPC hosts, and is described by OPC2 as a platform for "*exchange of experience and peer-to-peer learning*" where the POs "*can learn from each other*", and that the OPC's transition in 2020 from individual "country programs" to regional programs was made with the intention of facilitating for the "likeminded [partner] organisations in [the region] that we are working with" to "connect in a more natural and organic way".

All 11 solidarity-indicators were affirmed. Out of four charity-indicators, one was affirmed. As such, I find that in this category too, the OPC's model is, overall, described by the interviewees as fitting with the solidarity-approach. A more extensive discussion of the significance of the affirmed charity-indicator will however be carried out in the conclusion.

6.4 Category 4: Goals and outcome measurements

The final category deals with how goals and outcomes are determined and measured for the projects. The approaches in the analytical framework differ on whose goals are prioritised (donor's or recipient's), the process of deciding the goals, and how the results of the aid process are measured and evaluated.

OPC2 described the four integrated perspectives as "*issues or themes that we want everybody to ...reflect on*" and how for some "it was a process for them to grip what we meant and how to incorporate it, but nowadays it is natural for everybody". Anti-corruption was the second perspective to be introduced and it was met with hesitancy, which led the OPC to focus on dialogue with POs to *reflect on their own anti-corruption policies, financial strategies and practises*. For example, what they would do with leftover food that had been ordered from the project budget for a training session: take it home for themselves, give it to the participants, or give it to homeless people. OPC2 stated that "there's not a right answer here, it's just to make people reflect on 'what is corruption?' and 'is that corruption?'". OPC2 continued with "it is really interesting to see how our partner organisations more and more take [the latest integrated perspective, just transition] in and *reflect on it*". Reflecting on how flooding and extreme weather could affect the ability to host a training which can impact the ability to reach a project goal and as such, the goal is not to centre whole activities around the integrated perspectives but to *keep them in mind during the planning and evaluation processes* (OPC2). This encouragement of reflecting upon the local context shows the importance of *measuring outcomes within the context*, which affirms that solidarity-indicator.

The OPC takes an “actor-focused approach” wherein “*behavioural change indicators*” are composed into “log frames” that are used to target and *measure outcomes directed at specified actor groups within society*⁷ (OPC1). OPC2 made a point of how the OPC’s aim is to “not call them ‘projects’” because within the OPC “there’s been a shift from having projects to focusing more on the partner organisations” and supporting them to “see the *development within the organisations*” instead of only “*count[ing] activities*”. PO3 states that “even in the reporting process you will find questions of wanting to understand what types of changes have happened [that you can underline] through each activity... and intervention we are doing”. Things like “a lot of people have started to notice our work and many invites are coming from different spaces and organisations, which is getting the attention that we are pushing for” are understood in the model as progression, according to PO3. By using the log-frames to measure development efforts, along with “narrative reports” (OPC1) which traces the steps the project took and what results came of it, *development is not measured through economic instruments and comparative statistics* and the *aid is assessed based on results and wider impact* (affirmed solidarity-indicators).

By focusing on *organisational capacity training* and starting a dialogue with POs about what internal corruption can look like, the OPC lays the groundwork for *transparency and internal accountability* (affirmed solidarity-indicator) within the POs which helps them become stronger organisations that are able to effectively implement their activities, reach and be able to advocate for their target groups, influence decision makers and make an impact (OPC1). OPC1 suggested that if there are strong civil society organisations that are internally democratic and follow the values and principles of e.g. gender equality, they will be able to push for democracy and gender equality on the local and national levels. The goal is thus aligned with a desire to see *long-term exponential development* (affirmed solidarity-indicator) come about as a result of internal capacity building. OPC2 also expressed hopes that the POs’ need for support is not permanent and that the OPC “would like them to be *as strong as possible in order for them not needing us*, of course”, while pointing out that “there is no such thing as a perfect organisation” and that “you always need capacity trainings in something”. This affirms the solidarity-indicator that the goal is that *growth becomes self-sustaining*.

The Southern Africa log frame for the current program period (2020-2024, revised in 2021) feature goals directed specifically at the POs, such as “POs creates [sic] an ideology of shared vision and united front” and “POs act to increase their knowledge on Just Transition localised to building resilient communities” (Palmecentret, 2021). These goals could arguably fall into the charity-indicator *donor influences political activists*. However, as the regional log frames are *discussed and agreed upon by the OPC, MOs and POs in each region*, with the POs having an annual opportunity to *revise the log frame to reflect changes in the regional context*, and the POs being viewed as the experts in their fields (OPC1; OPC2), the solidarity-indicators *consensus decision making* and *outcomes are measured within the context* are affirmed instead.

⁷ The actor groups are: decision makers, rights holders, actors working in cooperation, and partner organisations.

The OPC thus holds *annual dialogue meetings* with all POs individually where the OPC takes in feedback from the POs about the partnerships, how the POs are managing, if they want more support from the OPC or their MO, if they want more capacity training in some areas, and if they are on track with reaching the agreed upon goals (OPC2). Both the network meetings and dialogue meetings were given as examples by PO1 for how important *dialogue with the partners in decision making* is to the OPC. Something which was brought up in every interview was also the benefits gained from accessing the OPC's wider international network of likeminded organisations. This serves several purposes, two of which being to promote "peer to peer learning", and to *establish an international community* (affirmed solidarity-indicator).

OPC1 also performs internal evaluations of the OPC's "capacity-building support to partners". During this evaluation, they ask the POs what the OPC's and MOs' capacity-building support has ultimately resulted in, what changes the support has led to, if it has been addressing the actual need of the partners, if there has been overlap with support given from other donors, if there are unmet needs and if the POs have input on how to improve the support (OPC1). The OPC's internal methodology evaluation, program planning workshops where the log-frames are jointly developed every five years, along with the annual dialogue meetings and network meetings, shows that the OPC conducts both *systemic review and evaluation of progress and needs in forums where donors and recipients participate*, encourages *constructive feedback*, and performs *long-term and nuanced evaluations* (affirmed solidarity-indicators).

MO1 explained that when the MO visits PO they conduct their own evaluations, independent of what the OPC requires, by having the PO, the study-circle leaders and the study-circle attendees answer an "evaluation form"⁸ that the MO developed. By doing so, this project exhibits, *transparency and accountability* to not only the OPC, MO and PO community, but to the PO's local community as in target groups as well. PO3's own internal evaluation methods also aligns with *transparency and accountability to the community* as they carry out monthly reports to each other within the group. They also carry out workshops on the themes identified in their project plan, wherein they get the participants to *participate in the process of defining the political terms, issues and struggles* and workshop to come up with *solutions anchored in the community*.

All 11 solidarity-indicators were affirmed. None of the four charity-indicators were identified. As such, the interviewees are shown to understand the OPC's model as one of solidarity for this final category too.

7. Results

This chapter presents the results of the study and answers to the two sub-research questions based on the findings in the analysis. First, the analytical framework is shown, this time with the

⁸ "Utvärderingsblankett"

indicators that have been found in the interviews marked as green for affirmed and red for refuted. Then the findings will be discussed, and the results presented.

RQ ->	RQ1	RQ1	RQ2	RQ1
Category	1. Donor's moral arguments for aid: why give aid?	2. Underlying assumptions about recipients: why is aid needed and who are the recipients?	3. Implementation processes: who sets tasks and plans, whose resources and responsibility?	4. Determining goals and measuring aid outcomes: whose goals and measurements?
Approach to aid	Solidarity	Solidarity	Solidarity	Solidarity
	Shared needs/concerns/interests/values	Systematized lack of opportunity	Consensus decision-making	Transparency and accountability to the community; internal accountability
	Empathising with struggles; <u>global struggles</u>	Systematized lack of material resources	Encourages participation in analysis of issues and solutions	Constructive feedback
	Fighting for each other's rights	Willingness to implement development measures	Collective ownership of project	Long-term exponential development; addressing the root cause of the needs; systemic change
	Collective concern for fates of all nations	Actors at the front lines are the experts and should take the lead	Both immediate relief and systemic change, simultaneous strategies	Consensus decision-making
	A sense of international community	Able to define their own needs	Contributing according to one's abilities	Establishing an international community
	Shared lived experiences; <u>Commonality</u>	Developing countries should also provide FA when they've become capable; Capable of supporting others once out of crisis	Capacity building for self-organisation and self-determination; building capacities, strengthening institutions and improving governance	Systematic review and evaluation of progress and needs conducted in forums where donors and recipients participate
	Obligatory; natural obligation	In charge of deciding their own future	Recipient-owned and -led policy frameworks; Strategized and implemented by recipients	Growth becomes self-sustaining
	Shared interests due to interdependent world	Language of materialism and class struggle; identify and critically describe the root causes of needs	A sustained, long-term, active and genuine partnership; active participation	Evaluations are long-term and nuanced

			Development is to be accomplished by the people themselves	Outcomes are measured within the context
			Mutual learning; <u>Co-learning</u>	Development not measured through economic instruments and comparative statistics
			Co-operation with local civil societies	Aid is assessed based on results and wider impact
Approach to aid	Charity	Charity	Charity	Charity
	Rich countries saving the poor countries	Lack of natural capacity/helplessness	Overarching goals determined by donor	Donor redeems their own humanity
	Supererogatory	Lack of morality	Recipients compete for funds on the aid-market	Donor appears generous
	Saviourism	Overpopulation	Conditional aid; Eligibility requirements based on donor's view of a moral lifestyle	Donor's increased access to materials and/or influence
			Paternalism; Donor knows best; <u>Top-down</u>	Donor influences political activists

RQ 1. How do the Member Organisations, Partner Organisations and the Olof Palme International Center understand the Olof Palme International Center's aid model?

The answer to this question is based on which indicators in categories one, two and four were identified as affirmative by the majority of interviewees. Overall, 37 out of 39 solidarity-indicators were affirmed throughout the interviews. This indicates that the OPC's model of foreign aid is understood by a varying range of interviewees as taking the solidarity-approach. Furthermore, two of the 16 charity-indicators were refuted, which shows that the model is understood by some interviewees as *not* taking the charity-approach. One of the charity-indicators were identified as affirmed.

The strongest evidence for the OPC's model being understood as taking the solidarity-approach, is found in the indicators which are affirmed by the vast majority of interviewees, across the three groups. What follows is an account of which indicators were the most widely affirmed across the interviews, category by category.

For category one, moral arguments for aid, the solidarity-indicator that was affirmed by all interviewees was *shared values*. Furthermore, every interviewee did explicitly mention "solidarity" as the reason why they think the OPC provides foreign aid. By asking the control question "how do you define solidarity or international solidarity?" I was able to establish that the interviewees

all shared the same understanding of what solidarity is in theory and how it works in practise, which matched with the way solidarity has been defined in the theory chapter of this thesis.

For category two, underlying assumptions about recipients, the solidarity-indicators which were affirmed by all interviewees were that the POs, *as the actors at the front lines, are the experts and should take the lead*, and are *able to define their own needs*.

For category four, goals and evaluations of outcomes, the solidarity-indicators which were affirmed by all interviewees were *systemic review and evaluation of progress and needs in forums where donors and recipients participate, development not measured through economic instruments and establishing an international community*. *Systemic review and evaluation...* stands out as the only indicator not affirmed through the interviewees subjective understanding of whether this actually happens. The network- and dialogue meetings this indicator is affirmed by, both take place regularly and are as such objective truths rather than subjective interpretations. Therefore, what is significant for this indicator is that all interviewees expressed that these meetings have a positive effect and are a good thing, which speaks to the interviewees subjective understanding of the solidarity-indicator and, through that, the solidarity-approach.

Based on the indicators from categories one, two and four, the answer to sub question RQ1 is that the OPC, MOs and POs all understand the OPC's model of foreign aid as *solidarity*.

RQ 2. How do the Member Organisations, Partner Organisations and the Olof Palme International Center understand the *implementation* of the Olof Palme International Center's aid model?

The answer to this question is based on which indicators in category three were identified as affirmative by the majority of interviewees. 12 out of 12 solidarity-indicators were affirmed throughout the interviews. This indicates that the implementation of the OPC's model of foreign aid is understood by a varying range of interviewees as taking the solidarity-approach. Furthermore, two of the five charity-indicators were refuted, which shows that the model is understood by some interviewees as *not* taking the charity-approach. Out of the three-remaining charity-indicators, one was affirmed by one PO, showing that the implementation of the OPC's model of foreign aid was understood by one interviewee as taking the charity-approach.

While there was one instance of a PO expressing that they experienced some "top-down" behaviour from the OPC, which affirmed the charity-indicator *paternalism (donor knows best)*, this was not a reoccurring theme in the PO interviews. As this sentiment was not expressed by the MOs or OPC and only once by one PO, it cannot be inferred that the implementation of the OPC's model of foreign aid is being understood by the three actor groups as consistently promoting or displaying paternalism from the donor towards the recipients. The strongest evidence for the implementation of the OPC's model being understood as taking either approach, is found in the indicators which are affirmed by the vast majority of interviewees,

across the three groups. In this case, those were all solidarity-indicators. What follows is an account of which indicators were the most widely affirmed across the interviews.

For category three, implementation, the solidarity-indicators that was affirmed by all interviewees was *recipient-owned and –led policy frameworks, strategized and implemented by recipients, capacity building for self-organisation and self-determinations, building capacities, strengthening institutions and improving governance and, mutual learning.*

While the majority of the solidarity-indicators were affirmed across the interviews, there were also instances of charity-indicators being affirmed. These experiences and perceptions are not left without further consideration and will be discussed in the next chapter. However, as there was no charity-indicator that was affirmed by a majority of the three groups, whereas several solidarity-indicators were. As such, based on the indicators from category three, the answer to sub question RQ2 is that the OPC, MOs and POs all understand the implementation of the OPC's model of foreign aid as *solidarity*.

The answers to both sub questions are that the OPC's model of foreign aid, and the way it is implemented, is collectively understood by the interviewees, as shown by how only the solidarity-indicators for each category were strongly affirmed by all three interview-groups, as being *solidarity*. Consequently, the answer to the main research question:

RQ: Is the Olof Palme International Center's model of foreign aid understood by the involved actors as more aligned with a *solidarity-model* or a *charity-model*?

Is that the OPC's model of foreign aid is understood by the involved actors as being aligned with the *solidarity-model*.

8. Conclusion

The final chapter of this bachelor thesis begins by presenting the answers to the research question, after which a critical discussion of the methodology, and suggestions for future research on the topic of solidarity models of foreign aid. Finally, the findings are unpacked and discussed in relation to the wider aim and objective of the thesis and the field of study at large.

As concluded in the previous chapter, both sub-RQs are answered as the OPC's model, and its implementation being understood by all involved parties as that of solidarity. The main research question for this thesis, to investigate whether “the Olof Palme International Center's model of foreign aid [is] understood by the involved actors as more aligned with a *solidarity-model* or a *charity-model*?” is thus answered as the model being collectively understood as more aligned with the *solidarity-model*.

The aim of this thesis was to “investigate if the OPC is described as an example of the solidarity type of foreign aid” by investigating whether there was a correlation between how the model is (i)

said to work and (ii) perceived to work by both the OPC, MOs and POs. As the first sub-RQ took aim at investigating how the OPC's model is understood to work *in theory*, and the second sub-RQ took aim at investigating how the OPC's model is understood to work *in practise*, this correlation was indeed found. The OPC's model of foreign aid is collectively understood by all involved parties to be working based on the same ideological principles as it is claimed to.

It is not possible to conclude whether the OPC's model is objectively a solidarity-model, as there, according to constructivism, are no objective truths. However, the fact that all interviewees outright states that they thought the OPC's model was premised by adhering to the principles of solidarity, and that a control question was asked which established that the interviewees had the same understanding of what the principles of solidarity are, lends the potential conclusion some credibility.

The solidarity-indicators that were affirmed by a vast majority of the interviewees are: shared values (cat 1, moral arguments), the POs (recipients), as the actors on the front lines of issues, are the experts on their contexts and thus are best equipped and consequently tasked with defining their needs (cat 2, underlying assumptions). Through consensus decision making, the involved parties enter into and engage actively in long-term, genuine partnerships wherein the POs design, implement and by extension, lead the projects which are owned collectively and based on mutual learning and capacity-building (cat 3, implementation). Finally, the projects are evaluated based on the wider impact they have on the context in which they are implemented, the evaluation frameworks are flexible and systematic reviews of the progress are done in joint forums, which also serve as a forum to build an international community (cat 4, goals and evaluations). Significantly, for both category one, two and three, the solidarity-indicators which were affirmed by the majority of interviewees, are the ones that were identified as having the strongest support from the theories, based on how many references to them there are in the literature. It can therefore be inferred that these indicators are some of the most significant ones to affirm for an aid model to be classified as taking the solidarity-approach.

Some indicators were not identified in the interviews at all. This cannot be counted as evidence for the model being closer or farther away from either approach. The solidarity-indicators which were not found mostly consist of language which is taken from aid experts speaking of ODA provided by states, rather than NGOs. Therefore the indicators are more likely to be identified when interviewing a state representative involved in ODA. The charity-indicators which were not found are more likely to be identified when interviewing a representative of an NGO in the humanitarian/emergency aid field. Not finding those indicators is thus a reflection more on the type of person and organisation which are interviewed, rather than the questions or the indicators in the analytical framework itself.

Due to a limited sample size this thesis did not emphasize the comparative element between the three different MO involvement-tiers. There was not enough data to accurately draw conclusions as to whether the MOs involvement had any significant impact on the understanding of the OPC's FA model being solidarity or not. A future study containing a larger sample size of data

entries would potentially get closer at pin-pointing if it is the OPC's or the MO's approach and involvement that has the greatest contribution to its solidarity essence.

Jefferess (2021, p. 427) argues that “development initiatives that focus on providing education and empowerment imply that the problem to be redeemed is the ignorance and incapability of those constructed as in need”. The OPC focuses a lot on capacity-building as part of their aid, which comes in different forms, one of which is the training seminars which were described as “top-down” by one interviewee. I still found that *paternalism*, which expresses itself as top-down behaviour as the donor assumes they know best, was only found in the third category. This is because all interviewees described the POs as already capable of working towards change. The reason why the OPC is understood as needing to provide both material resources and capacity-training is not because the POs are assumed to be less capable of figuring out how development works, but because they have been systemically denied access to resources and opportunities. Another study comparing the way the concept of “capacity” and “capacity-building” is used and understood by different NGOs which claim to be taking the solidarity- or charity-approach to aid could shed some light on this.

During the interviews, the OPC's model was praised by all interviewees as “good” or even “the best we have had”, and this was expressed even by those who were more openly critical of some aspects of it. Through asking everyone what they thought about the model and if they thought the OPC was a unique foreign aid actor, I found that the consensus among the interviewees was that the OPC is indeed a unique and different donor. It is however highly important to be aware of the wider context in which the answers to the questions were given. As several of the interviewees touched on, it is both tricky and risky to be critical of a donor. After all, the saying goes, “don't bite the hand that feeds you”.

While overall, this study found that the interviewees overwhelmingly understood the OPC's model and its implementation as taking the solidarity-approach, there were still several instances of charity-indicators being affirmed. The most affirmed charity-indicator was *paternalism* which arguably is part of the practise of saviourism as a theory. This finding is not surprising as it was suggested in Jefferess' (2021) article that development and humanitarian aid as a global industry and practise is premised on the “orientation” of white saviour ideas and rhetoric that uphold the binary opposition of the global North as the good, capable helper to the immoral, incapable, needy global South. Interestingly, these indicators were only affirmed for the categories three and four, on the design, implementation, and evaluation of aid. As an NGO that relies heavily on Swedish ODA funding from SIDA, it would be highly interesting to further study to what degree the OPC has adapted its practises to SIDA's changes in regulation in order to secure funding. While Sweden as a state has historically been motivated by solidarity in its foreign aid policy, it is relevant to question how that “solidarity” is defined. As such, applying a similar analytical framework used in this study, with the addition of the interest-approach, in a future study of Swedish foreign aid policy could gain such insight. Alternatively this study could be replicated by investigating and comparing some of SIDA's other strategic partner organisations (SPO) to see if

SIDA's civil society strategy shapes the general conduct of the SPOs or if the SPOs have a high degree of autonomy and agency.

In our current capitalist world system, with the historical context of colonialism, as many interviewees referred to, the practise of foreign aid too is tainted by the features of the system. Jefferess (2021, p. 424) writes that a major issue with foreign aid is that it has normalised the idea of the needy South and disregarded the responsibility of the North to reflect on and “acknowledge the violence of a colonial past” as the source of the need. Therefore, I argue that it is significant that many interviewees made explicit reference to the irony of foreign aid in general being portrayed as an act of generosity and kindness when the resources which are being given to the global South by the global North were historically stolen from the receiver by the giver. If I had asked “why do you think foreign aid exists?” and “has your understanding of why foreign aid exists changed in any way through being involved in an OPC project?” instead of only “why do you think the OPC provides foreign aid?”, a deeper analysis of to what degree the OPC model might be understood as intentionally cultivating a critical understanding of the foreign aid practise as a system (which is a key aspect of taking the solidarity-approach) would have been possible.

In accordance with previous literature which suggested a causal relationship between the donor's moral understanding of why they should provide aid, and how the aid is allocated, designed, implemented and evaluated, the OPC's model is described through the interviews as maintaining the solidarity-approach throughout the whole process. As the OPC's model was found to align with the approach suggested by foreign aid experts, the wider implication of this finding is that if the goal of foreign aid is to promote sustainable, long-term, exponential development, donors of foreign aid must approach recipients from the perspective of solidarity. Although, due to the immense complexity of the foreign aid industry, which is designed and constructed by the donors (Riddell, 2012) and twists the narrative of how the world's inequalities came to be (Jefferess, 2021), I question whether an ideal type of solidarity can at all exist in a system which does not want it to.

Jefferess (2021, p. 425) states that “my individual renunciation of the *mentality* of the white saviour does not extricate me from the way saviourism provides an *orientation* for making sense of, and acting within, global order”. I find that throughout the interviews, both this distinction and the complexity of needing to abide by certain standards, norms and rules mandated by a system which orientation differs from one's own mentality, have been confirmed. One striking example of this is how OPC2 answered the question of how to define international solidarity: “I mean, it is what it is. It's not aid, it's solidarity. It's a big difference between aid and supporting via solidarity... in my world, in my head”.

I want to end this thesis right where it began, by answering my own question “is there a universal foreign aid model?”. My overall analysis, from reviewing previous literature, reading different theories, to hearing what some aid donors and recipients had to say, has led me to conclude that, no, there is no universal model of foreign aid.

So how about we instead give international solidarity a try!

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10. Appendixes

10.1 Interview guide for OPC1

Introductory questions

- What is your name and role at OPC and how long have you worked here?
- Have you previously worked at OPC within another role/what is your background in this field?
- What does your job consist of?

Moral arguments for aid

- Why does the OPC provide foreign aid?
- How would you define “international solidarity”?
- What does “international solidarity” mean for the work the OPC does?

Assumptions about recipients

- What type of aid do the recipients need and why?
- *Is the need permanent?*

Initiation process/allocation model

- Can you take me through the project-process, how are the partners and members selected and how does the project begin?
- What are the desired outcomes of the projects?
- How are the project plans and goals decided?

Implementation process

- What are the differences between the three or four project-tiers (MO, no admin, sponsor, OPC)?
- What are the member’s, partner’s and OPC’s respective roles in the projects? Who provides and does what?
- *Why?*

Measuring aid outcomes

- How are the projects evaluated and/or results measured?
- What types of issues are common with and within projects and what strategies do you have to address them?
- What is the OPC's approach to project feedback?

10.2 Interview guide for OPC2

- What is your name and role at OPC and how long have you worked here?
- Have you previously worked at OPC within another role/what is your background in this field?
- What does your job consist of?

Moral arguments for aid

- Why do you think the OPC provides foreign aid?
- How would you define “international solidarity”?
- What does “international solidarity” mean for the work the OPC does? *How does the OPC work?*

Assumptions about recipients

- What type of aid do the people in South Africa need and why?
- What type of aid do the partner organisations need and why?
- *Is the need permanent?*

Initiation process/allocation model

- How many projects are there currently in SA and how would you group them together? *By location, member-tier or area of work?*
- Who are the partners and members of the projects and why were they paired up or selected?
- What are the desired outcomes of the projects?
- *Could I access the project plans?*

Implementation process

- What are the member's, partner's and OPC's respective roles in the projects? Who provides and does what?
- *Why?*

Measuring aid outcomes

- How do the projects score during evaluations? What results have been measured so far?
- What types of issues are common with and within the projects?
- What strategies do you have to address them?
- What is the OPC's approach to project feedback?
- Do you think the OPC is a unique actor in the field of foreign aid?

10.3 Interview guide for POs

General information about the partner organisation

- What is your name and role within your organisation and in the current project?
- What does your organisation do and why?
- What is your current project through Palmecentret about?

Moral arguments for aid

- Why do you think Palmecentret provides foreign aid?
- Can you describe Palmecentret's model of foreign aid?
- How would you define solidarity or international solidarity?

About underlying assumptions

- What type of resources and support do you need in order to do your work?
- Are these the types of resources you get access to through the OPC project?
- Does this support need to come from outside sources/actors? *Why or why not?*

Initiation process/allocation

- When did this project come to be? *What did the application process to become part of an OPC project look like for you?*
- Why are you doing this specific project with your specific MO?
- Has becoming part of an OPC project had an impact on your goals as an organisation?
- How was the project plan created?

Design and implementation processes, roles, resources and responsibilities

- What are your, your MO's and Palmecentret's respective roles and responsibilities? *Why?*

Measuring aid outcomes

- How is the progress and outcomes measured for the project?
- Do you think these measurements are useful and/or helpful?
- Do you have your own evaluation processes?
- Are there any issues you struggle with in regards to the project? *According to Palmecentret?*
- What support do you get to address these issues?

Opinions about the model

- What do you think of this model? *Pros and cons?*
- Do you feel like this is a partnership?
- Do you feel like you are encouraged to give honest feedback to your member organisation and Palmecentret?
- What improvements do you think need to be made to this foreign aid model?

10.4 Interview guide for MOs

General information about the member organisation

- What is your name and role within your organisation and in the current project?
- What does your organisation do and why?
- What is your current project through Palmecentret about?

Moral arguments for aid

- Why do you think Palmecentret provides foreign aid?
- Can you describe Palmecentret's model of foreign aid?
- How would you define solidarity or international solidarity?

About underlying assumptions

- What type of resources and support does your partner organisation need in order to do their work?
- Are these the types of resources they get access to through the OPC project?
- Does this support need to come from outside sources/actors? *Why or why not?*

Initiation process/allocation

- When did this project come to be? *What did the application process to become part of an OPC project look like for you?*
- Why are you doing this specific project with your PO?
- Has becoming part of an OPC project had an impact on your goals as an organisation?
- How was the project plan created?

Design and implementation processes, roles, resources and responsibilities

- What are your, your POs and Palmecentret's respective roles and responsibilities? *Why?*

Measuring aid outcomes

- How is the progress and outcomes measured for the project?
- Do you think these measurements are useful and/or helpful?
- Do you have your own evaluation processes?
- Are there any issues you struggle with in regards to the project? *According to Palmecentret?*
- What support do you get to address these issues?

Opinions about the model

- What do you think of this model? *Pros and cons?*
- Do you feel like this is a partnership?

- Do you feel like you are encouraged to give honest feedback to your PO and Palmecentret?
- What improvements do you think need to be made to this foreign aid model?

10.5 Full list of key concepts for the Solidarity-approach

- Shared perception of morality (Durkheim)
- Sharing a sense of group identity (Lumsdaine)
- Common bonds with those to whom aid is given (Lumsdaine)
- Obligatory (Singer)
- Take concrete action (Lumsdaine)
- Fight for each other's rights (Jonsson)
- Language of materialism and class struggle (Jonsson)
- Identify, critically describe and address the root causes of needs (Spade; Riddell; Jefferess)
- Outside one's own national community (Jonsson)
- International community (May)
- Common goals (Lumsdaine)
- Sharing risks and suffering (Lumsdaine)
- A willingness to tie one's fate to that of others (Lumsdaine)
- Share common needs (May)
- Shared need or concern (Spade)
- Build our capacities for self-organisation and self-determination (Spade)
- People are left/made vulnerable by harmful systems such as capitalism, colonialism, sexism, ableism, racism (Spade)
- Limited access to material resources and opportunities (Spade)
- They themselves participate (Spade)
- In the analysis of issues and solutions (Spade)
- Striving towards societal change (Spade)
- People at the front lines (Spade)
- Differences in identity and/or experiences (Spade)
- Actively participate (Spade)
- Equals that all have something to offer (Spade)
- Consensus decision-making (Spade)
- Collective ownership (Spade)
- Support of immediate needs (Spade)
- Societal changes (Spade)
- Exponential long-term development (Spade)
- Dual strategy (Spade)
- Immediate care and defence work alongside work to get at the root causes of harmful conditions and work to build alternative structures (Spade)
- Capable of political participation and aid work once out of immediate danger or state of crisis (Spade)
- Together construct an analysis of societal issues (Spade)
- Harmful societal structures (Spade)
- Constructive feedback (Spade)
- Transparency and accountability towards the community (Spade)
- Share some identities (Spade)
- Connect on shared identities and experiences (Spade)
- Learn from hearing about other's different experiences; mutual learning (Spade)
- Improving capacity (Truman, Rosenstein-Rodan, Chenery and Strout; Pearson)

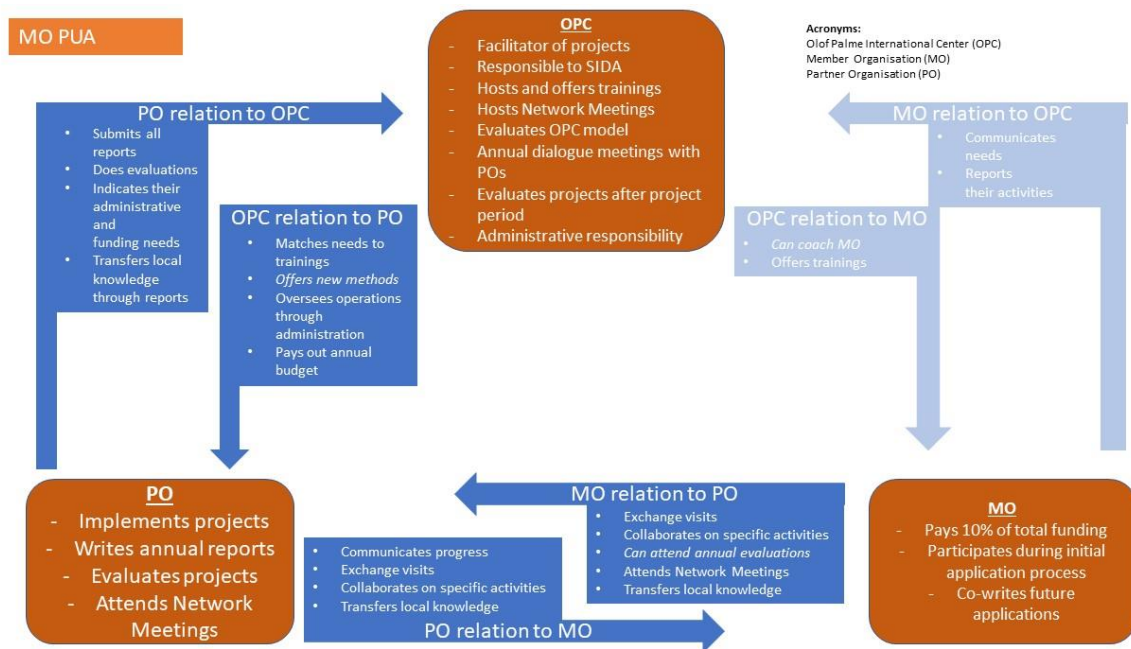
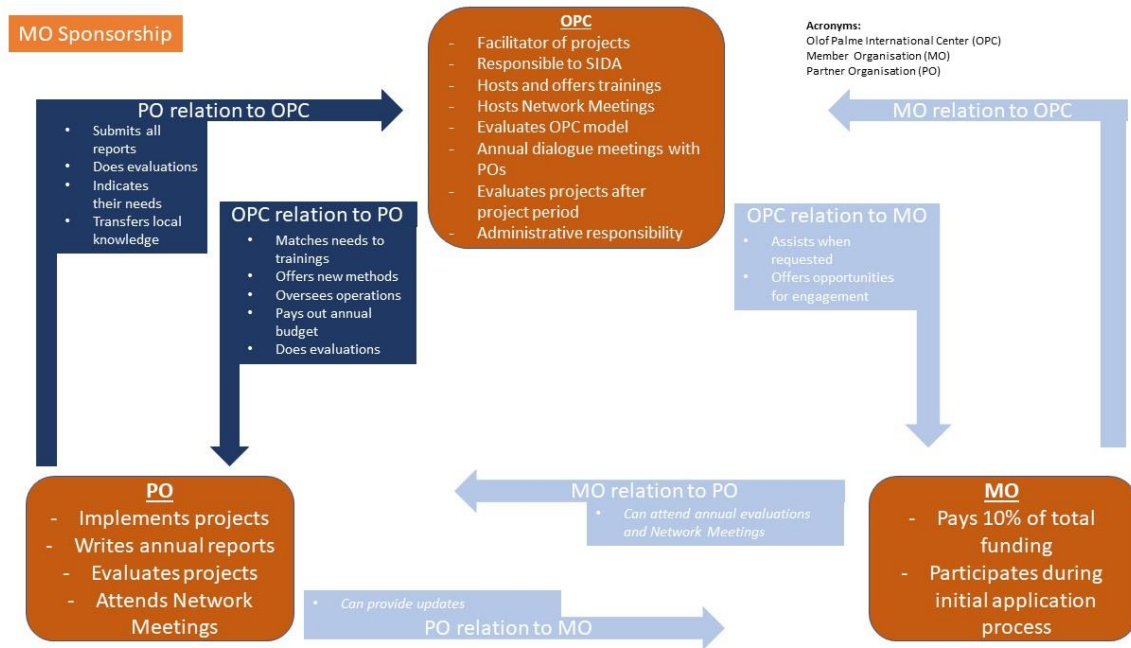
- Lead their own development efforts (Truman, Rosenstein-Rodan, Chenery and Strout; Pearson)
- Genuine international cooperation (Pearson)
- International interdependence or human solidarity (Pearson)
- Natural obligations (Pearson)
- Interdependent world community (Pearson)
- Shared interests or concerns (Pearson)
- Development cannot be measured exclusively through economic instruments and comparative statistics (Pearson)
- Evaluations wait until the aid has had some time to implemented (Pearson)
- Evaluated within the context (Pearson)
- Systematic review and evaluation of aid performances in forums where both donors and recipients participate (Pearson)
- Recipients being key agents in their own development; accomplished by the people themselves (Pearson)
- The will and the work (Pearson)
- Growth becomes self-sustaining (Pearson)
- Active and genuine partnership (Pearson)
- Sustained relationship centred upon long-term development objectives (Pearson)
- Understand and participate in the process by which the aid allocation and use is decided (Pearson)
- Limit the donor's involvement in the recipient's policy-making to being heard and informed about decisions (Pearson)
- Strategized and implemented by the poor countries themselves (WB; Pearson)
- Building capacities, strengthening institutions and improving governance (WB)
- Recipients committed to using it well (WB)
- Aid recipients take control of the development process (OECD/DAC)
- Recipient-owned and led policy frameworks (OECD/DAC)
- Co-operation of local civil societies (OECD/DAC)
- Foster internal accountability (OECD/DAC)
- Partnerships between donors and recipients (OECD/DAC)
- Building of institutions and capacities (OECD/DAC)
- Assessed on results and the wider impact of the aid provided (OECD/DAC)
- Recipient-country ownership (UNMP2005)
- Each poor country creating its own development strategy (UNMP2005)
- Self-sustaining economic growth (UNMP2005)
- Voluntary and collaborative relationships (UNDESA)
- Achieve a common purpose (UNDESA)
- Mutually agreed (UNDESA)
- Share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits (UNDESA)
- Ongoing collaborative relationship (Stibble et al)
- Common vision (Stibble et al)
- Complementary resources and competencies (Stibble et al)
- Sharing risk (Stibble et al)
- Deliver benefit to each of the partners (Stibble et al)
- Recipients in the local context must lead the design and implementation (Stibble et al)
- Lived experience of those closest to the problem being addressed (Stibble et al)
- Relevant organisations or communities are able to fully inform the partnership's design, implementation and evaluation (Stibble et al)
- Mutual trust (Stibble et al)
- Shared underlying values/common interests (Stibble et al)

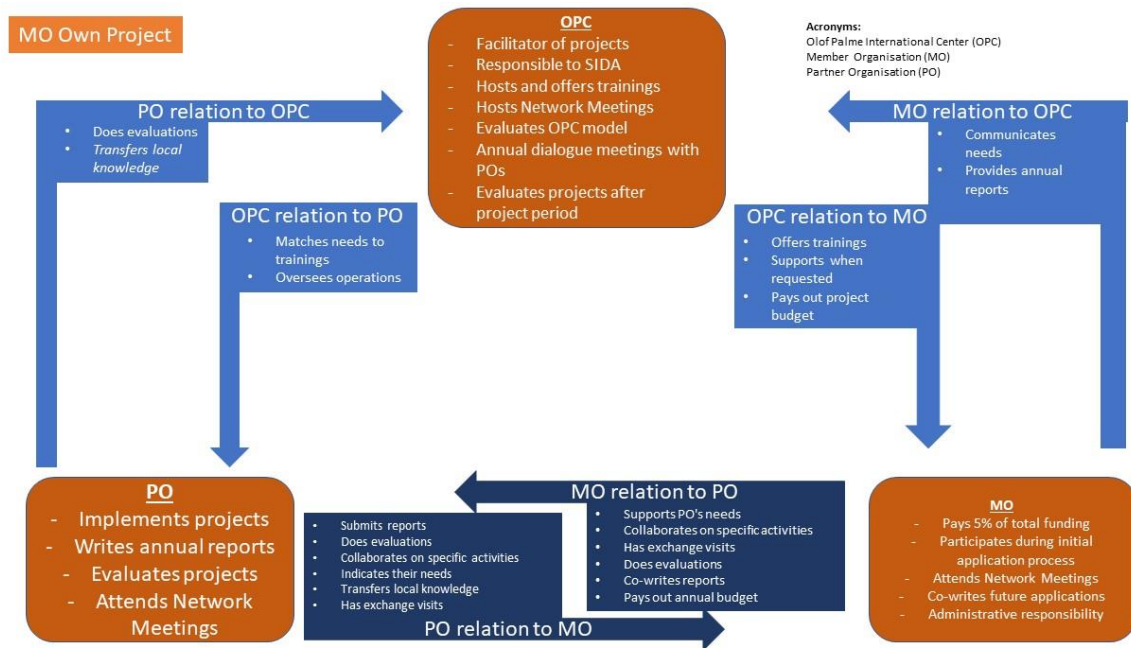
- Fund recipients own development strategies (Zedillo)
- Former recipients would also contribute once able to do so (Zedillo)

10.6 Full list of key concepts for the Charity-approach

- Paternalism (Spade)
- Saviourism (Spade)
- Poverty is a result of immorality (Spade) or dissolute behaviours (Mahembe & Odhiambo)
- Rich look generous and deserving of their wealth (Spade)
- Eligibility requirements (Spade)
- Overpopulation (Pearson)
- Conditionalities for receiving foreign aid (Riddell)
- Donors exert power over the recipients' policies and regulations (Riddell)
- Aid must be spent to achieve donor's objectives (Riddell)
- Focus on providing education and empowerment (Jefferess)
- Ignorance and incapability (Jefferess)
- Non-profits compete for grants (Spade)
- Wealthy and privileged gaining influence through donations (Spade)
- Donors seek own political and economic gain (Pearson)
- Duty of the rich and the privileged to help the poor and deprived (Pearson)
- Pitying of the wretched poor (Spade)
- Rich countries redeem their morality and justify their position of wealth (Jefferess)
- White saviourism (Jefferess)
- Global South is defined as (having) a problem (Jefferess)
- The saviour constructs and defines the roles and relations (Jefferess)
- Can only see the need and is not interested in reasoning out the cause of the need (Jefferess)

10.7 Visuals of the OPC model's different MO-tiers







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ⁱ As these debates remain ongoing, this bachelor thesis will approach the topic of foreign aid with the assumption that aid can work and should be conducted.

ⁱⁱ This is in due part to how the Social Democrats have remained in government for a majority of the past 100 years.

ⁱⁱⁱ The OPC was one of SIDA's 17 strategic partner organisations (SPOs) which all receive funding for working to "strengthen the civil society in partner-countries" (SIDA, 2021a, own translation during the period 2016-2022 and received 4.1 percent of the 1,9 billion SEK CSO-strategy support budget of 2021 (SIDA, 2022).

^{iv} Pettersson (2022, p. 430) successfully predicted that given that both the Moderates and Sweden Democrats have a propensity to be more aid-averse than the other parties, along with how the Christian Democratic base appeared to be shifting away from their traditional position of aid-defenders to aid-sceptics, the three parties' increase in political power after the election, would open up to the increasing possibility of a paradigm shift in Swedish aid policy. The current right-wing government has decided to cut the foreign aid budget by "around 7,3 billion SEK next year, with increasing [cuts] the following years" (Svantesson, 2022 cited in Larsson, 2022 own translation), leaving 56 billion SEK in the 2023 budget (SIDA, 2023). This has left SIDA with only 25,2 billion SEK in their 2023 budget which has led SIDA to "work on finding alternative sources for funding development" (SIDA, 2023, own translation). Furthermore, despite having expressed during the election that they had a "will to strengthen the civil society, as important actors for sustainable development in all countries", the current coalition government has cut SIDA's budget for supporting the civil society by 10% (Concord Sverige, 2022 own translation). This means cuts in the funding to the SPOs. Furthermore, massive cuts to the information and communication operations, from 155 million SEK to a mere 20 million SEK, is predicted to end the efforts of getting feedback from the people and organisations affected and impacted by Swedish foreign aid (Concord Sverige, 2022). This is likely to have a significant impact on SIDA's aid efforts as SIDA attributes high value to the expertise of the local civil society in knowing the local challenges and how to face them (SIDA, 2021b). It is therefore a normative and moral challenge that the current right-wing coalition government's foreign aid budget, featuring big cuts and new priorities, "clearly shows that this government views the foreign aid policy as a tool to 'pushing for and promoting' Swedish interests" (Tötterman Andorff, 2022, cited in Larsson, 2022 own translation).

^v Unfortunately, the identification of these themes happened during a very late-stage revision of the thesis, and I was thus unable to fully incorporate the themes into the analytical framework even though I recognize the potential usefulness of doing so. Making this change would have meant a complete restructuring of the analysis, which was simply not possible due to time constraints.