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The concept of the 'Nordic Model' in Spain (2015 to present)

Bakgrund/Frågeställning

In 2016, the Spanish populist left-wing party Podemos published its program for the general elections in a format that resembled an IKEA catalogue, supposedly in order to make a connection between the party and progressive ideas associated with the Nordic countries. The party also stressed repeatedly that its source of inspiration is the Nordic model. This sparked public discussion with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the centre-right party Ciudadanos on what this concept actually means and who has the right to claim ownership over it.

The objective of this paper is to examine how the concept of the Nordic Model started to be used in Spain and what are the political uses and the meanings of the Nordic model in the public discourses of these three Spanish parties between 2015 and 2022. I will argue that the return of the concept of the Nordic model to Spanish political debate has to be understood as a consequence of the combination of four factors: First, the fact that the international economic crisis hit Spain with violence in 2008, while the Nordic countries in general went through it quite successfully. Second, the international circulation of this concept, something linked to the attempts of the Nordic Council to rebrand it and promote it internationally. Third, the impact of international rankings, or Global Performance Indicators, in Spain. the increasing use of these rankings as tools for exercising soft power on a global scale has brought about an allegedly objective, measurable, positive image of the Nordic countries, who often occupy a high place in them. Fourth, the emergence of a new political party in Spain, Podemos, who in its search for acceptability for its reformist program has attempted to capitalize on the goodwill attached to the Nordic model. Finally, in the background there is the fact that the concepts of the Swedish and the Nordic model were widely used in Spain in the 1970s and 1980s, having positive progressive connotations, which has provided fertile soil for the current debate to flourish.

This paper will provide new ground for reflecting on how the Nordic model (re)emerges, circulates and is appropriated outside of *Norden*, on how the several historical layers of meaning attached to this concept interact with new meanings, and on how all these layers are currently mobilised in a national context different from Nordic countries.

Metod och Resultat

Konklusion