Securing Development: The Conceptual Entanglement of Security and Development in Scandinavia

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Abstract

This paper revisits the recent history of “development” from a conceptual and transnational perspective by focusing on the linkages between the concepts of development and security. Taking Scandinavian development discourses as the point of departure, I highlight some aspects of the complex, entangled dynamics involved in the translation and adaptation of global/international development norms into national aid policies. Through a focus on contemporary mergers between development and other key objectives in international policies, in this case “security”, I aim to contribute to the critical understanding of how dynamic political concepts such as “development” are continually re-shaped by (trans)national actors.

1. Introduction: What Security-Development Nexus?

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been an evident trend toward explicitly combining issues of development and security in the foreign policies of Western states and in the work of many international organizations. The overall trend in Western aid policies has been to increasingly combine issues of economic and social development with those of security and human rights objectives into so-called “comprehensive approaches” toward development aid. In this regard, the concept of human security developed within the United Nations system in the early 1990s has been influential: This
concept originally sought to highlight the array of economic, social and environmental threats or challenges which – in addition to the threat of violent harm – endangered the security of people in developing countries and thus their opportunities to prosper.

After 11 September 2001, security and development experienced quite another type of “merger” as large portions of Western aid became devoted to security objectives connected to the fight against terrorism. As such, development aid was increasingly channeled to those countries and regions where this war was waged – especially the so-called “fragile” or “failed” states. The thinking was that policies combining security and development aims would assist in “winning the hearts and minds” of affected populations; that their use would boost economic development and thus counter radicalism and terrorism; that social and economic development would then counter state fragility and curb the spread of transnational crime; and finally that they would act to counter migration from countries affected by poverty and conflict. In the parlance of many critical scholars and other observers, development aid became securitized.

In very recent years, the idea of a more general interdependent and interlocking relationship between security and development has been codified through the concept of the security-development nexus. During the last decade especially, this idea has gained immense recognition and an abundance of volumes from a range of academic disciplines have been published on the issue – e.g. from international relations, economics, development studies, peace and conflict research, and anthropology/ethnography (where ‘human security’ has recently been envisioned as a sub-discipline in its own right). To name a few illustrative titles from recent years: Security & Development: Searching for Critical Connections (Tschirgi et al. 2010); Security and Development (Picciotto and Weaving 2006; McNeish and Lie 2010; Mavrots 2011); Exploring the Security-Development Nexus (Alava 2010); Security, Development, and the Fragile State (Carment et al. 2009); Security and Development in Global Politics (Spear and Williams 2012); The Security-Development Nexus: Peace, Conflict and Development (Amer et al. 2012); Handbook of International Security and Development (Jackson 2014). Already in 2004, the International Peace Academy in New York set up its Security-Development Nexus Program (see IPA 2004) and many research institutions in e.g. European countries followed suit with similar initiatives.

When considering the development and acceptance of the “nexus” within national and international policies, it appears that the growing academic focus on the security-development nexus has – although often critical – has also served a strong legitimizing function in relation to introducing new modes of “holistic”, e.g. security-oriented, development policy. It is clear, at least, that interest in the “nexus” between security and development has not been confined to the academic sphere. Rather, the idea has had a very substantial impact on both national and international political agendas. E.g. the term was codified and roundly praised by the members of the UN Security Council in a 2011 session and it has been the subject of numerous reports and initiatives from actors ranging from the UN Secretariat to the

1 For a review of recent literature, see e.g. Friis (2014).
World Bank and from the OECD to the European Union (the EU’s attention commenced with an initiative launched during Sweden’s council presidency in 2001; see Gänzle 2009). The perceived link between security and development priorities was promoted early on by the UK’s Labour government and it also formed part of the reasoning behind the U.S. government’s launch of the so-called *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* in 2010. The “nexus” has also been actively promoted in different ways by the governments of a number of smaller states, including the Scandinavian countries. However, until now the security-development link has received only passing mentions in accounts of national foreign policies and in the literature on international development efforts and institutions and there have been no major studies devoted to overlaps between security and development policies from the point of view of “donor countries” (in the aid terminology) – either from a country-specific, comparative or transnational perspective. Thus, we are so far only inching toward a clearer idea of how the widespread acceptance of this perceived “nexus” has shaped the security and development policy thinking in international or national settings and, indeed, what possible consequences it has had for the very concepts of security and development.2

The PhD project from which this paper draws takes a conceptual and transnational/comparative approach to the issue of security-development by focusing on Danish, Norwegian and Swedish policies as they have evolved over a (roughly) twenty-year period since the early-to-mid-1990s. It also investigated how these policies have related to international trends by studying the diffusion of concepts and ideas from the international to the national. It draws mainly on theory and methodology from conceptual and transnational approaches to history (see e.g. Schulz-Forberg 2013; 2014) and the diverse critical literature on security-development (see e.g. Duffield 2001; Chandler 2007; McCormack 2011).

This project is thus focused theoretically as well as empirically on the interplay between the *conceptual* and the *political*, investigating changes in contemporary policies through changes in key concepts over time, asking specifically: How have conceptual links between security and development in policy-making evolved in national and transnational settings? Furthermore, how have such processes of change impacted political understandings of concepts such as development? This paper traces the roots of today’s merger between development and security through focusing mainly on the decade before 9/11 and the global war against terrorism, in this way suggesting some building blocks of a deeper history of “the security-development nexus” or, as it has become known in the critical terminology, “the securitization of development aid” (see e.g. Saferworld 2011; for the concept of securitization see Buzan *et al.* 1998). Lastly, the paper offers a few concluding remarks on research directions within the study of security-development as political and conceptual history.

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2 Certainly, general concerns over “security” or “stability” pervaded the Cold War distribution of foreign aid to a significant extent – the Scandinavian countries being no exception (see e.g. Olesen and Pedersen 2010) – but it was not until the post-Cold War period that Western governments began to issue attempts at “comprehensive”, “holistic” or “coherent” policies covering the security and development spheres (see Chandler 2007).
2. The Global Merger of Security and Development

When describing the situation during the Cold War and even before, it is often claimed that security within international politics primarily meant the protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states from external threats that were most often military, political or ideological in nature, i.e. “national security”. Up to the late 1980s, it has been argued, “the concept of security had been interpreted as security of territory from external aggression, protection of national interests in foreign policy, or global security […] from the threat of nuclear holocaust” (Stokke 2009: 323). The new security situation after the end of the Cold War posed new challenges to aid – as did the extension of the security concept which followed. From the mid-1990s, the concept of human security came to represent an influential yet controversial attempt to redefine and broaden the meaning of security. Human security challenged the state-centric notion of security by focusing on the individual as the main referent object of security; in other words human security is or was “about security for people, rather than for states or governments” (Acharya 2011: 480).

Most observers trace the origin of the concept itself to the publication of the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Report of 1994, the fifth in a series of yearly reports conceptualized and overseen by a group of development economists led by the Pakistani Mahbub ul Haq. It is less often acknowledged that the term also appeared in the previous year’s report. The 1993 report argued briefly although forcefully for the introduction of “new concepts of human security” (note the plural, which would soon become singular). “The concept of security must change from exclusive stress on national security to a much greater stress on people’s security, from security through armaments to security through human development,” the report read (UNDP 1993: 2). The 1994 report, entitled New Dimensions of Human Security, expanded significantly on this issue, e.g. linking post-Cold War security concerns in developing countries to the “threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards” (UNDP 1994: 22).

It has often been argued that the concept of human security arose primarily on the basis of a new awareness of the rising number of intra-state conflicts, civil wars and ethnic cleansings – involving disease outbreaks, displacement of peoples and enormous loss of life – that almost immediately followed the end of the Cold War. In commonplace “internationalist” narratives, this combined with the post-Cold War opportunities for focusing on human rights, peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions to provide fertile ground for a new and broadened concept of security which emphasized the international community’s responsibility for the protection of individuals everywhere (see e.g. Schoeman 1998; Acharya 2011). More so than “securitizing” poverty and environmental issues, etc., the human security concept arguably sought to bring national security policies (or their agents) closer to poverty- and rights-oriented development thinking (emerging from the UN agencies based in New York more so than the Bretton Woods institutions of Washington, D.C.). However, this does not rule out the
possibility that *human security* contained a “securitizing” potential that would later be utilized by decision-makers, which I argue was the case.

As often acknowledged, widened and “humanized” ideas of security also have historical roots extending to the period before the lifting of the iron curtain. Already in the late 1970s onward, academics and decision-makers had begun to consider the concept of security in broader, non-military terms (e.g. Brandt Commission 1980; Ullman 1983; Thomas 1987). This was reflected in the work of several international commissions that offered expanded views on security looking beyond the Cold War emphasis on East-West military competition and traditional conceptions of external military threat. The report of the Palme Commission – chaired by the former (and future) Prime Minister of Sweden, Olof Palme, stressed in 1982: “In the Third World countries, as in all our countries, security requires economic progress as well as freedom from military fear” (Palme Commission 1982: xii). In 1987, among its other innovations, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (*Our Common Future*) drew explicit links between environmental degradation and conflict (Acharya 2011: 481). This commission was chaired by another prominent Scandinavian, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland.

Concurrent with the early-1990s work of Mahbub ul Haq and colleagues (perhaps most notably Amartya Sen) at the UNDP, the UN in 1992 also convened an independent panel known as the Commission on Global Governance (CGG). This was co-chaired by Ingvar Carlsson, Palme’s successor as Sweden’s prime minister (and Social Democratic leader). The commission published its findings under the title *Our Global Neighbourhood* in 1995. The report reflected a belief that the world was now “on the edge of a new time” which allowed for “looking at the future of the world in a more integral way” (CGG 1995: xv). *Our Global Neighbourhood* recommended six norms for global security policy in the “new era”, first among them the following: “All people, no less than states, have a right to a secure existence, and all states have an obligation to protect those rights” (CGG 1995: 84). This individual-focused conception of a right to security was followed up with a point broadening the concept; “to prevent conflict and war and to maintain the integrity of the planet’s life support systems by eliminating the economic, social, environmental, political and military conditions that generate threats to the security of the people and the planet...”

Within the UN, a new distillation of the human security issue was now beginning to emerge, taking the form of causal arguments as to the links or “nexus” between (in)security and development. By 2001, Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General 1997-2006, stated that there was even a general *positive* causal relationship between development and security. Security, according to Annan, “must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection,” etc., since “these pillars are interrelated; progress in one area generates progress in another” (Annan 2001). Summarizing the main finding of the report entitled *A More Secure World: Our Common Responsibility*, Annan stated even more unequivocally in 2004:
“Development and security are inextricably linked. A more secure world is only possible if poor countries are given a real chance to develop. Extreme poverty and infectious diseases threaten many people directly, but they also provide a fertile breeding ground for other threats, including civil conflicts. Even people in rich countries will be more secure if their Governments help poor countries to defeat poverty and disease by meeting the Millennium Development Goals.” (UN 2004: viii)

At this time, there were signs of a conscious and instrumental effort by Annan and his colleagues to link development and health-related challenges to the “security agenda” of the powerful UN Security Council, as witnessed when the council for the first time added ‘Africa’s problems of poverty and health’ to its docket in January 2000. With the United States in the Chair, the Security Council for the first time declared that the spread of HIV/AIDS now constituted a threat to international peace and security. U.S. Vice President Al Gore chaired the council when the issue was taken up (10 January 2000), which led to this arguable securitization of health issues receiving significant global attention. When announcing Gore’s participation in the session, U.S. ambassador Richard Holbrooke stated: “AIDS is far more than a health issue in Africa, it is also a security issue” (AFP, 5 January 2000). Now, emphasizing the link between security and development issues had arguably become a useful framing for dealing politically with a number of otherwise orphaned issues. Soon, more such issues would be added to the Security Council’s agenda (Emmerij et al. 2001: 202).

3. Scandinavian Approaches to Security-Development

In the early 1990s, the collapse of Soviet Union proved both the cause of both new international aspirations and new security concerns among Scandinavian decision-makers. “The threat of the Cold War is gone,” declared Denmark’s Conservative Prime Minister Poul Schlüter in the aftermath of the NATO Summit in November 1991. The challenge now, the Danish center-right government believed, was to integrate the Central and Eastern European countries within a common European security structure. Initially, the Danish government made optimistic noises about strengthening the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE until 1990, then OSCE), a forum for cooperation established with the Helsinki Accords in the summer of 1975. In the early 1990s, a significant

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3 In an interview conducted in 2002, Kofi Annan described his own role in this strategy: “I had a conversation with the council members just before they went to Africa. [Richard] Holbrooke was going, and it was his first trip to Africa. He said, ‘What should I do?’ I said, ‘Focus on AIDS. You will be surprised.’ They came back, and he said, ‘It’s amazing what I saw… I want to put this in the council.’ I said, ‘That would be great, but they may resist it.’ The only way we could put it in the council was to say, ‘It’s a security issue, because it has security dimensions to it apart from the economic and health’” (Weiss et al. 2005: 300).

4 “Truslen fra den kolde krig er væk,” Berlingske Tidende, 10 November 1991.
component of this new East-West security arrangement was also envisaged to be a special Nordic-Baltic relationship; indeed, Denmark and Sweden would ultimately compete to “adopt” the three newly independent Baltic states.

While the perceived security threat from the east had disappeared, a new kind of economic and political threat came to the fore. In September 1991, Liberal Party Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen launched a plan for Danish assistance to the former Warsaw Pact countries mainly aimed at strengthening democratic reforms. Ultimately, this aid package would act as a contribution to Denmark’s own security, Ellemann-Jensen explained: “Should these countries’ processes of reform stall due to lack of outside assistance, the consequences could easily be political chaos and economic depression. This means that just outside of Denmark a conflict zone would emerge, and this would have consequences for Denmark’s security.”

The concern was that Europe would experience significant migration from East to West during the 1990s, with migrants driven by poverty, instability and environmental problems; the presence of “hungry Russians knocking on Europe’s door,” as journalist Flemming Rose summarized these concerns. As such, Danish assistance to the former Eastern bloc also contained the explicit motivation that a steady process of democratization (often framed simply and more pragmatically as “stability”) in Eastern Europe would tangibly help to defuse a potential threat to Denmark posed by refugees.

At the same time, or with only very slight delay, the Danish government identified a different emerging demographic threat in the South: “Right up under Europe’s soft, fat underbelly there are countries where population growth is exploding,” Ellemann-Jensen warned. Poverty in North Africa, according to the foreign minister, led to a feeling of hopelessness and ultimately to religious fundamentalism. This was a threat that development aid might counter: “The world’s poor cannot be kept from the door by placing well-armed forces at the borders. We therefore need to find the balance that creates security and stability and the economic effort that creates hope for the world’s poor.”

Economic assistance would not (only) be designed to keep others out, but also to prevent a new Iron Curtain – “this time of an economic nature” – from emerging on (Western) Europe’s eastern and southern borders. In the government’s view, this realization should entail Danish economic assistance to North Africa and the Middle East, where Denmark had not traditionally been a significant aid donor, with the aim of curbing an otherwise “massive immigration” [sic] flowing from these regions. On the Eastern front, Ellemann-Jensen also described the need to build a mutually binding form of security

5 Conservative Finance Minister Henning Dyremose also felt that Eastern aid would “hit two birds with one stone” on a different level: For him, aid would be given “partly in support of Eastern countries, partly as help for self-help for Danish businesses.” See “Dansk støtte til østlandene,” Berlingske Tidende, 27 September 1991.


7 “Vi har stadig brug for at beredskab,” Dagbladenes Bureau, 10 September 1990.


cooperation – not only for Europe but the world – which should be based on the concept of “collective security”. This type of international cooperation in the security sphere also meant that the existing principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states – as laid out in the UN Charter – had to be rethought.10

Among Denmark’s Social Democrats, the main opposition from 1982 until 1993, the assessment of post-Cold War threats did not differ greatly from that of the center-right government. Social Democrats such as Christian Kelm-Hansen, one of the leading forces behind Danish development aid since its inception in the 1960s, were also heavily prone to “securitizing” the refugee issue in connection with development aid. In line with Thorvald Stoltenberg, a high-profile Norwegian politician then serving briefly as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Kelm-Hansen described the key challenges through the dramatic imagery of “dismantling the unexploded poverty bomb” and thus avoiding “massive migrations,” aims which could only be achieved through greater economic aid to the poorer parts of the world.11 Social Democratic opposition leader Svend Auken agreed with the government of the need for massive aid to Eastern Europe and expounded the need for “common security” arrangements. He insisted that further assistance to Eastern European countries should be found within the Defense budget and not be “taken from the poor” in the South. Now that the military threat had been dramatically reduced, it was time for Denmark to harvest the much vaunted “peace dividend”, that is, the economic benefit of decreased military spending. Remarkably, Auken even suggested that the Danish Defense Forces (Forsvaret) could become more directly involved in “international security and humanitarian work”, which was framed by Auken as two interlinked fields of work. This was meant to soften the blow of a gradual 50 per cent cut in the defense budget (alongside a doubling of development aid). The center-right government did not receive Auken’s suggestions enthusiastically.12

In April 1992, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen replaced Svend Auken as leader of the Social Democrats. He became prime minister upon the resignation of the centre-right Schlüter government in January 1993. At this point the threat of “hungry Russians” already appeared less of a Danish foreign policy concern. The new centre-left government’s first foreign policy statement of June 1993 instead identified four main focus areas – common security; democracy and human rights; economic and social development; and an enhanced international environmental effort – which were reportedly shaped in large part by


11 “Valgkampen har glemt U-landene,” Politiken, 10 December 1990. For remarks by Thorvald Stoltenberg, see “En bombe under verden,” Berlingske Tidende, 5 August 1990; “Stadig flere folk på flugt,” Politiken, 29 October 1990. See also the summary of Stoltenberg’s remarks at the (2nd) Nordic conference on refugees in Stockholm, 19 February 1990: “Stoltenberg advarer mot fattigdomsrevolusjon,” NTBtekst, 19 February 1990. Here he warned against the prospects of a “new revolution; the rebellion against poverty”, and said: “Countering poverty internationally must become part of our security policy. If we realize that our own security is at stake, the resources will appear and violence can be avoided.”

Auken, an influential figure although relegated to the role of Minister of the Environment. An overall objective was strengthening the United Nations and its power to intervene in the internal affairs of states, especially in protection of human rights and minorities, echoing both the former government’s view and recent UN reports and initiatives (Danish MFA 1993). The report also stated that the end of the conflict between East and West had resulted in an expansion of the concept of security: This should be understood to mean that the military instrument now represented only one element of security policy, which mainly had to play on economic, political and environmental strands. UN cooperation, development aid and the promotion of democracy and human rights – “areas to which Danish foreign policy has traditionally attached great importance” – could now come into their own. Nourished by their country’s “soft” security policy tradition, Danes could now play a role through international activism, the report enthused (Danish MFA 1993: 59-62).

While the report did not explicitly discuss how this “expanded” notion of security might affect Denmark itself, this was a prominent theme in the public statements by government representatives at the time. In line with the government’s foreign policy statement, Minister for Development Helle Degrn believed that the emerging “new world order” would be characterized by ethnic, social and economic conflicts. According to Degrn, the seeds of future security threats should especially be found within global social inequality, which therefore had to be reduced. In response to an aid reduction proposal put forward by the Liberal Party’s chief spokesman, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Degrn said: “This is no time to skimp on our own security. This is the time to invest in those millions of people who are starving and dying. We must invest in our own security.” Such explicit linkages between Danish self-interest and development aid were not yet found within official policy documents. Yet to a much greater extent than earlier publications, the government’s new aid strategy (“Strategy 2000”) emphasized a perceived negative correlation between local/regional conflicts and the lack of development, a dynamic which it perceived as a growing problem in the developing countries themselves. Helle Degrn’s foreword to the strategy spoke vaguely of an increase in international “insecurity”, “instability”, “tensions”, “problems” and “crises” and identified a need to “reverse the trend, especially in Africa”. According to Degrn’s foreword, the previous years had led to the realization that development cooperation must be seen within “a broader foreign policy perspective, which includes all our relations with developing countries, i.e. also issues of human rights and democracy, women, environment, trade, debt, etc.” (Danish MFA 1994: foreword: 4).

Again, national security objectives were still absent from this “broader foreign policy perspective” when placed in the context of Denmark’s official aid policy. In line with the previous years’ political signaling, a section on refugees mentioned the need for “preventive development efforts” combating the flow of refugees and described refugees themselves as the cause of “growing problems” (again unspecified) in Denmark and Europe (Danish MFA 1994: 53). National security considerations or

themes such as armed conflict resolution were not (yet) part of the official aid discourse, even in this new “broader” perspective.

In the early and mid-1990s, a series of summits organized by the United Nations served as a main platform for an ongoing expansion of the international development agenda. During the period, summits were held on themes such as the well-being of children (New York, 1991), environment and development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), human rights (Vienna, 1993), population (Cairo, 1994), social development (Copenhagen, 1995) and women and development (Beijing, 1995). In the summer of 1994, preparations for the following year’s UN World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen was already underway. It was therefore in Copenhagen that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) decided to present the newest issue of its annual Human Development Report, which was to become the most debated and possibly most influential in the history of the institution, on 1 June 1994. The main focus of the report was the security of poorer countries and their inhabitants. As already mentioned, this was a type of security which the report also found under threat in the “broader” sense, that is, through environmental degradation, poverty and hunger, social inequality, unemployment and a range of other problems. The central concept for this framework, human security, was not so distant from the increasingly “holistic” development thinking on the rise in the Scandinavian countries at the time. Certain similarities certainly existed between the presentation of the Danish development policy in 1993-1994 and the human security framework in 1994-1995. Notably, when “selling” the idea of human security to aid donors, UNDP protagonists also placed a heavy emphasis on the link between foreign aid and national self-interest, not least in relation to the issue of refugees.15

Danish decision-makers also embraced the concept of human security in connection with the Copenhagen summit. “We have come to a turning point for humanity,” said Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen to the press on the occasion of the summit’s opening in March 1995. “At last,” he continued, “we recognize that human security is the main issue on the international agenda.”16 In the first lines of his welcome address, the prime minister emphasized that social development on the one hand and peace and security on the other were “two sides of the same coin”.17 In the mid-1990s, Nyrup Rasmussen similarly placed great importance on Denmark’s (potential) contribution to a so-called “soft security”, which mainly concerned the prevention of armed conflicts with economic development as the

15 See e.g. interviews with (and quotes from) Mahbub ul Haq in Politiken, 1 June 1994; Berlingske Tidende, 13 December 1994; Ritzaus Bureau, 9 March 1995; B.T. 22 October 1995.
17 This enthusiasm would prove remarkably short-lived: It has not been possible to find examples of Rasmussen – or his three successors to date – later employing the term human security or variations thereof in their public statements. The term was used only once (that I could locate) by a Danish foreign minister, namely in light of the wars in Kosovo and East Timor. See Niels Helveg Petersen, “Menneskelig sikkerhed og udvikling,” Jyllands-Posten, 23 September 1999.
main tool. Soft security “is roughly speaking about economic and social development in poor countries as the best means of preventing new wars,” Danish tabloid B.T. explained. The UNDP’s emphasis on the need for more holistic perspectives on security threats was not taken into much account within the “soft security” concept: Instead, “soft security” reduced the issue of refugees, social inequalities, extremism, and Danish/European security into an equation between poverty and violent conflict.

The idea that development aid might be used to prevent refugee flows would remain influential in the years to come. In February 2000, Minister of Development Jan Trøjborg wrote matter-of-factly to his parliamentary colleagues: “The greatest successes [of development aid] are the refugees who never came.”

In Norway, decision-makers chose to up their humanitarian commitments in the Middle East in the context of the Gulf crisis. Discussing the long-term peace prospects in the region and the challenges facing the UN Security Council, Prime Minister Brundtland issued a reminder that “Norway has repeatedly spoken up for expanding the concept of security to include economic, social and environmental factors.” Only two years after this decision, Foreign Minister Johan Jørgen Holst claimed that prioritizing aid to conflict areas, including those in the Middle East, was now key to Norway’s credibility in taking a “coordinating role” in Middle East peace negotiations.

With peacekeeping and conflict prevention coming into focus as key foreign policy concepts, the Norwegian press noted the Danish plan to set up a rapid reaction force as encouraged by UN Secretariat (the force, SHIRBRIG, became active as of December 1996). Also noted was the fact that Norway itself had increased its efforts in conflict prevention; Norway had reportedly dispatched “more than 500” advisors, mediators and observers to assist with conflict prevention efforts abroad during 1994. In the Norwegian political debate, these trends were captured under the heading of “humanitarian” foreign policy, often denoting a wide range of activities including peacekeeping and diplomatic efforts. In this way, humanitarian/emergency aid in the narrow sense was made emblematic of – and difficult to separate from – a broader foreign policy emphasis on achieving altruistic, globally oriented aims. As a result, this type of foreign policy engagement was contrasted by commentators (including critics) with a “traditional” foreign and security policy in which diplomatic efforts were assumed to be mainly oriented towards other Western capitals.

Indeed, in early 1995 the Social Democratic government faced criticism from the bourgeois press that it was ignoring Norwegian foreign policy self-interest through its focus on “humanitarian” efforts in developing countries. These accusations set off a lengthy debate on the issue, where the government vehemently rejected accusations that naïve and altruistic humanitarianism had become the only core element of Norway’s foreign policy. “We very much get something in return. Safety for others leads to

greater safety for us,” responded foreign minister Bjørn Tore Godal, adding that humanitarian efforts in fact strengthened Norway’s position abroad. This was the case, he argued, because humanitarian efforts had gained in importance within Western security institutions, and therefore, Norway’s expertise was in high demand. Godal linked the Norwegian emphasis on what he called “the safety of the individual” to broader foreign policy priorities of a self-interested kind. He wrote: “By promoting justice and welfare for the weakest in global society, we will in the long run serve the cause of peace and strengthen our own security. Humanitarian, peacekeeping and security policy efforts are important and mutually reinforcing […]” The foreign minister also warned against setting up an “artificial contradiction” between national interests and aid to “vulnerable people in countries hit by conflict and war,” that is, between realism and idealism.22 Godal’s state secretary (deputy minister) Jan Egeland, himself a prominent figure, also entered the debate and rebuked unnamed critics for “thinking that Norway has just recently introduced a new concept of security, when in fact the expanded concept of security has been part of the West’s perception of reality since the end of the Cold War.”23

This revealed that in the perspective of key Social Democratic actors, Norway’s emphasis on humanitarianist foreign policy was in fact embodying the supposedly new and widened security thinking of “the West” as a whole (to whom it was therefore also providing a valuable service through its frontrunner status). It was with some bemusement that the Stockholm correspondent of Norway’s largest daily, Aftenposten, noted around this time that NATO was still a “bad word” in neighbouring, neutralist Sweden. Jan Eliasson, Egeland’s counterpart as Sweden’s State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and already an experienced UN diplomat, was quoted for the viewpoint that military threats were no longer preeminent: Instead, ordinary citizens now viewed unemployment, nuclear dangers, demographics and mass immigration as the most pressing challenges to a good and secure life.24 In Norway and Denmark, decision-makers now identified their humanitarian traditions with a (newly) humanitarian or cosmopolitan version of a “West” concerned with the worldwide protection of the vulnerable, in Sweden the argument was the opposite. Yet the similarity was that decision-makers in all three countries displayed notable efforts to emphasise how their internationalist concerns happened to resonate with their particular, national security arrangements and allegiances. In doing so, the “expanded concept of security” or “widened concept of security” proved both a useful and flexible argumentative tool.

In Norway, perhaps more than elsewhere, an increasing emphasis on idealistic or altruistic policy objectives served as a continuation of a nationally-constructed humanitarian tradition. A new “policy of engagement” emphasising the peaceful, UN-based components of conflict resolution was seen as an alternative to traditional security policy (Lægreid 1996; Liland & Kjerland 2003). Yet the newly prominent place for foreign policy activism seemed to herald a novel, remarkably ambitious self-

understanding concerning Norway’s place in the international system. In the words of Jan Egeland: “Our largest error until the 1980s was that we underestimated Norway’s role. We contented ourselves with funding international organisations and recipient countries. We were passive and we underestimated our own potential.”

Arguably, promoting the image of Norway as a “humanitarian great power” served as an outlet for its ambitious decision-makers in lieu of gaining EU membership (rejected through referendum in November 1994). In a variation of this hypothesis, a competitive desire led Norway to compete with Sweden “as the moral great power of the North” after the bourgeois government of Carl Bildt had made it clear that Sweden would focus its sight on the EU rather than the world beyond (Liland & Kjerland 2003: 82-84).

Already in 1989, the Norwegian government of Gro Harlem Brundtland had declared in an ambitious foreign policy statement that “the overarching task for Norway’s foreign policy is to promote Norwegian interests abroad, including a contribution to [...] reaching common solutions on international issues” (Norwegian MFA 1989: 9). The keyword here was arguably “including”, a wording which presupposed that Norwegian global commitment should be considered an aspect of national interest rather than its opposite. In the 1990s, self-interest and altruism were to an increasingly large degree perceived as “pulling in the same direction” by the Norwegian foreign policy leadership (Liland & Kjerland 2003: 84). Internally, it would become necessary for decision-makers to internally reconcile this “policy of engagement” with the aim of defending Norway’s interest and the fundamental security of its own citizens. In the case of Norway, it seems that this dynamic played a key role in strengthening the conceptual links between development, diplomacy and humanitarian aid.

In Sweden, Pierre Schori, an early Social Democratic colleague of Olof Palme, was appointed Minister for International Development Cooperation in 1994 after a long career as civil servant in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1995, commenting on the EU process that led to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Schori stated that the most important aim of the Barcelona summit (27-28 November 1995) would be to “take a holistic approach to security and development.” The purpose of this holistic approach concerned European self-interest: “We’ll have no security in Europe if we don’t have decent development in the Mediterranean area,” Schori argued.

Earlier that year, Schori had even put before parliament a proposal to evaluate the African security landscape as a whole. With a view to incorporating proposals for “security-building efforts” in future Swedish aid, a committee was given the eight-month task of “analyzing security and development in

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Africa with an emphasis on Southern and Eastern Africa,” according to media reports. General improvements in the security situation in Southern Africa allowed for such an initiative, Schori believed, although developments in Rwanda were at the same time evidence of “new threats to human security.” He commented: “Peace and security are closely linked with political, social and economic development.”

Schori continued to make the case for aid on the basis of an expansive notion of self-interest: “Aid must not become a gift of mercy, but must be seen as an instrument of peace, security and development. Ultimately it is about humanitarianism, quality of life and the survival of our children in a world where everything is connected and everything concerns everyone.”

The issue of Sweden’s active role in demining efforts would come to play a large role in the discussion concerning links between aid, development and security efforts. In 1996, Schori commented on the problems posed by anti-personnel mines concerning reconstruction in post-conflict situations: “Security and development are so obviously interconnected. This is why it’s important to find new ways of working within development aid.”

Years later, his idea of a “holistic approach” was still gaining traction: In 2003, Sweden introduced its first “comprehensive policy” on global development – in fact the first such policy anywhere in the world, according to the Swedish government – entitled Shared Responsibility: Sweden’s Policy for Global Development. The groundwork was laid by the so-called Globkom commission set up by the Swedish government shortly after Schori left office in the autumn of 1999. Globkom first presented its proposals for a “broader view on development policy” in March 2002. This took into account trade and industry, migration, environmental issues, agriculture and, of course, security. The 9/11 attacks had, according to its authors, “shown the world new threats and given new insight to many – that not only terrorism must be fought, but also poverty, which at times creates its breeding ground.”

The commission drew on the work of Amartya Sen (1999) and the UNDP in identifying and repeatedly emphasizing three structural dimensions of poverty to be addressed through capacity building; “lack of opportunities, power and security.” “Lack of security is part of the essence of poverty,” the report stated (Globkom 2002: 115). It also endorsed an understanding of the human security concept that emphasised not the holistic nature of threats but rather the growing risk of violence directed against civilians during conflicts (sometimes called the “freedom from fear” perspective). The Swedish parliament would ultimately rejected Globkom’s proposal to limit Swedish aid to twenty countries, instead re-committing it to “wherever it is meaningful”, but it strongly endorsed Globkom’s emphasis on tackling development challenges from a “comprehensive” perspective.

Shared

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31 A wish to be the “frontrunner” in conforming to international norms may have been a factor; Globkom’s report came at a time when the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) had recently begun to advocate measures toward “coherent” and “comprehensive” approaches in its periodic evaluations of donor countries.
Responsibility contained the government’s assessment that: “Armed conflicts are the most serious obstacle to development in many poor countries. Countless conflicts are in progress around the world, and apart from the loss of life and injuries that they cause they lead to a deterioration of the population’s living conditions and undermine the prospects for future economic development.” It then offered a remarkable claim later repeated in a variety of contexts (e.g. Swedish MoD 2004: 43): “Increasingly, security policy today is about reducing poverty, closing gaps and ending oppression and tensions between different groups, alongside measures to safeguard national territorial security” (Swedish MFA 2003: 29; emphasis added).

In later years, it was perhaps most notably Gunilla Carlsson, the first member of the right-wing Moderates to hold the office of Minister of Development (2006-13), who most forcefully argued for the combination of security and development as policy spheres in tangible terms, opening the door for including a number of international budget items previously treated as defence spending within the aid budget.32 The tightened and overburdened defence budget, it was often argued, surely could not fund Sweden’s own territorial defence and every aspect of its missions abroad. In this, Carlsson very openly drew on Schori and the Social Democrats’ willingness to fund demining efforts through the aid budget. At the same time she then argued that such security-development overlap showed that military and development efforts could not be kept separate in practice. Thus, in a rhetorical twist, since the overburdened military had now been given the responsibility for “security-building” efforts originally considered development work, it only made sense that the military could also dispose over parts of the aid budget. At a debate on development aid with Schori also participating in early 2007, Carlsson remarked:

“Already today, some aid can be used to fund military activities, e.g. demining and demobilizing troops. [...] Security building efforts, that is, demobilization of forces, collecting light arms, clearing mines, are already achieved today through the Swedish aid budget, as pushed forward earlier by the Social Democrats. And many times we use the military for demining. It isn’t Save the Children out there clearing mines.”33

In all three Scandinavian countries, arguments concerning the limits of stand-alone development work came to figure prominently in political debates concerning especially Afghanistan, where each country had committed troops, and to a lesser extent Iraq and other “fragile states”. Soon after the invasion of the country in 2001-02, Afghanistan came to be one of the main recipients of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish development aid. Often-heard arguments as to the need for military

32 It was also during Carlsson’s time in office that the Swedish government issued its first “policy for security and development”. This document interestingly referred to the Responsibility to Protect as the relevant international framework for responses to conflict and post-conflict situations. It also aimed at demonstrating e.g. “how foreign and security policy can contribute to promoting development goals” (Swedish MFA 2011: 10, 9).
involvement and physical protection as an indispensable focus area within Scandinavian development efforts there – ensuring and securing the rule of law, women’s rights, newly built schools, NGO workers themselves, etc. – were explicitly meant to serve as a defense against calls for military withdrawal from the country. In this sense, such arguments were arguably successful, most likely because they based their legitimacy on already-tangible security-development efforts; furthermore, these arguments were a reflection of a well-established security-development discourse promoted by earlier political entrepreneurs – one which had come to be inextricable from the “humanitarian” self-perception of politicians across the political center.

In each of the Scandinavian countries, an arguable “securitization” of development discourse and practice was closely related – perhaps even co-constitutive – with what we may call a simultaneous “humanization” of the security discourse.

4. Discussion: Security and Development as Policy and Research

Since around 2003-04, the “security-development nexus” has enjoyed an enormous boom in attention within academia and civil society. In December 2003, the “Security-Development Nexus Program” was launched by the International Peace Academy (IPA) in New York. Interestingly, in the absence of conclusive research, the launch conference in December 2003 revealed some initial hesitance as to the linkage between the two spheres among the invited speakers. The conference summary asks: “In addition to the need to improve conflict management strategies, fundamental questions remain to be addressed: can or should security and development strategies be necessarily [sic] linked? Are external interventions intended to avert conflict and build peace actually doing what they intend?” (IPA 2004: 3). In his keynote address, UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown supported the idea of giving “rigor” to the understanding of the nexus. However, he also warned against “misleading generalities” and emphasized the need to develop a conceptual framework that fully captured the complexity of the relationship between conflict and development (IPA 2004: 15; see also Chandler 2007: 375). Much the same concern was reflected in the program description, which suggested that “there has been relatively little systematic assessment of the implications for policy and practice of the interplay between security and development concerns in conflict contexts and the effectiveness of current approaches to conflict management” (IPA 2004: 21).

In a conference organized by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled UN and Global Security in Stockholm, 8-9 February 2005, two sessions and a panel debate were devoted to the issue of “Development and Security”. Sweden’s Prime Minister Göran Persson remarked in his opening address: “Conflict and development are closely interrelated. Without economic and social development […] you won’t get peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, by eradicating poverty and creating a sustainable development, you will help prevent renewed conflict.” Persson also commended the so-called ‘High-
Securing Development

level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change’ for acknowledging the same link between security and development, even helping to prove the viewpoint that “security and development must be addressed together” (UNA Sweden 2005: 10-11).34 “I believe there can be no security without development and no development without security,” minister for development Carin Jämtin echoed in her speech (UNA Sweden 2005: 58-59).

At the same conference’s “Caucus on Security and Development”, some were more hesitant. Academic invitees asked for more research on the complex causes of insecurity and NGO representatives expressed fears that development aid budgets were increasingly being diverted to “security operations”. Paul Eavis, director of the UK-based organization Saferworld, responded to the latter concern with what might be described as a disciplining of his NGO peers: “If development NGOs try to build a fence around development, then development will not get the same level of importance as security issues. I want NGOs to improve their documentation of activities relating to security. [...] Do no harm, yes, but we must also understand the impact aid can have. We must build a conflict sensitive development.” (UNA Sweden 2005: 77). On the same occasion, Joanna Spear, director of the U.S. Foreign Policy Institute at George Washington University, said that one of the main challenges faced in “the field [...] of development and security” were both “showing the nexus between the two” and creating “a more positive relationship between the two”. Spear criticized the UN Security Council for having so far neglected development issues, stating that the UN’s previous division of the security and development fields had “reflected the dominant thinking of the Cold War years” being challenged by the concept of human security (UNA Sweden 2005: 48-51).

Scandinavian support for strengthening the institutional framework of the nexus was also evident outside Scandinavia itself. For instance, the International Peace Academy (now International Peace Institute) program was partly funded by all three Scandinavian governments. Three years in the making and launched in 2005, the Canada-based Human Security Report Project (HSRP) – headed by former advisor to the Norwegian and Swedish foreign ministries, Andrew Mack – also received financial support from the governments of Norway and Sweden as well as support from research institutions in the two countries, namely Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, respectively. As a supporter of the HSRP, the state development agency in Sweden, Sida, elevated human security to one of its five “fields of work”. By 2010, however, the Danish equivalent (Danida) had elevated not human security but “stability and fragility” to one of its five strategic focus areas. Under a new center-left government taking office in 2011, this was altered only slightly to “stability and protection”. “Security is a precondition for development and development is a precondition for lasting peace and stability,” subsequent development strategies both stated (Danish

34 Gareth Evans, a member of the UN’s ‘High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change’ that had recently produced the report A More Secure World: Our Common Responsibility, participated at the conference as a representative of that panel. Evans, a former Australian foreign minister, was also a main author of the ICISS report and thus one of the main entrepreneurs behind the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) doctrine.
MFA 2010; 2012). This was a mantra already adopted and internalized by key public servants some years prior. Discussing links between civilian and military efforts in Afghanistan, the head of Danida’s office for humanitarian assistance said in 2005: “Both are necessary. I have this slogan: “No development without security and no security without development”. And it is so obvious, when you’re out there travelling around, that you need to have both” (Ankjærgaard & Langskov 2005: 138).


In 2010-11, the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) created the research program “Defence, Security and Development Policy” – the only program at the institute not defined geographically – which was explicitly devoted to issues such as the security-development nexus (see Sörensen 2010). The research program website explained the reasoning behind the initiative: “Historically, security and development were approached as two separate fields of research. However, these fields have become increasingly integrated both in theory and practice since the 1990’s. It has now become a standard truth that development requires a certain degree of security and that security requires a certain degree of development.” 35 Celebrating the launch of a special issue of the journal Development Dialogue (“The End of the Development-Security Nexus?”), the UI organized a seminar on “The Relationship between Development and Security”, which took place on 11 May 2012. “Development in the 21st century is widely understood as intimately connected to security,” the seminar invitation stated approvingly. “Development is necessary for security and security is a precondition for development.”

This project concerns the remarkable merger between two global policy fields whose adaptation by (trans)national actors has not yet been investigated in depth. In one sense, this project addresses a point of shared concern within the overlapping fields of transnational and conceptual history, investigating a section of the contemporary history of liberal internationalism shaped and defined in no small part by public agents who move between the worlds of government, diplomatic assignments, international institutions, transnational NGOs and other intersecting fora. As such, by choosing to focus

on the role of these actors in producing a conceptually delimited set of discourses – those surrounding security-development – this project addresses how key normative concepts are adapted into specific national contexts, from where they are again projected outwardly.

It has been argued that the post-9/11 landscape has been witness to an unprecedented penetration of national development policies by issues and concerns linked to the global “war on terrorism” and conflicts in the global south (Beall et al. 2006; Fowler & Sen 2010). For instance, Denmark’s policies since 2003-04 have been singled out as an important early example of the explicit overlap between security and development policy after 11 September 2001 (e.g. Beall et al. 2006). It has been noted that the Danish government in 2004 chose to explicitly commit its development efforts to the “fight against the causes of terrorism” (Danish MFA 2004a; 2004b) while other Scandinavian countries did not.

There seems to have been less effort devoted to understanding other aspects of the “security-development nexus” empirically, that is, as the conceptual expression of an array of politics applied through foreign policies. Although there have been efforts to understand what this “nexus” has meant at the theoretical level – from which a variety of possible meanings have been uncovered – it has not been treated systematically as a pairing of political concepts (indeed one which has proved both flexible and highly variable in its uses) in specific political contexts, whether nationally, internationally, or transnationally/comparatively. The most likely explanation for this is that the security-development pairing did not emerge as an explicitly normative scholarly/political idea, as was the case with human security beginning in 1993-94. Instead, the security-development link is today taken by many researchers, civil society representatives and decision-makers alike to refer to a common sense analysis of an actual state of affairs, that is, as a reality “on the ground” in developing countries. In other words, the “nexus” between security and development is treated as real; as a relationship not constructed but discovered.

In fact, there is no agreed-upon term to describe “security and development” as an array of policies. Rather, the security-development relationship is treated as if it were self-perpetuating, both when its positive synergies or causalities (security creating development, development creating security) and its negative (lack of development creating lack of security, and vice versa) are perceived. Even so, it is nonetheless “acknowledged” that the security-development relationship is neither monolithic nor universal but heavily dependent on broad contextual factors such as armed conflict and state stability/fragility. This is something of a paradox.

More so than with the concept human security, criticism of the conceptual pairing between security and development is a difficult enterprise. Many have therefore turned to such notions as “the securitization of development (aid)”, an idea which is arguably well-chosen for critiquing changes in the allocation of foreign aid but less well-suited if the aim is to confront underlying notions about the security-development relationship on which foreign/aid policies are based. It is obvious that there is more to security-development policies than the dynamic of “securitized development” or “securitized aid”. Indeed, there is no reason why the ‘catch’ should not – to some extent – go both ways: It is difficult
to imagine why security as a concept should, in fact, be completely unaffected by its pairing with other concepts which carry their own normative aims and their own modes of agency. As such, security policy has also become effectively “humanized” in certain ways, some of which I have tried to illustrate here.

Yet decision-makers responsible for aid policies have for the past decade continually asserted that the security-development relationship is indisputably real. They have done so e.g. through meta-textual references to statistics produced by academics working in think tanks and international organizations; to emerging conventional wisdom (“it is now widely acknowledged that...”); and to learning experiences emerging from efforts which, arguably with some irony, followed as a direct result of the “war on terrorism” since 2001 and the “failed states” paradigm. As an illustration of this point, Denmark’s Minister for Development, former NGO head Christian Friis Bach, said in a 2012 interview:

“I have to admit that I’ve evolved and gotten smarter. Before I thought that security and development policy shouldn’t be mixed at all. Today I believe the complete opposite, actually. We have to join up our thinking on these issues, otherwise it’s no use. Look at Afghanistan and Mali: Development is completely impossible without security.” (Esbensen 2012: 46)

In the Scandinavian countries, the political emphasis given to the various dimensions of the link between security and development during the 1990s and after came to serve a key role in justifying and legitimizing large-scale small-state foreign policy activism in an international arena seen to be characterized by increasing interdependence and interconnectedness. The link between security and development as policy fields represented, in this sense, the conceptual dimension of “widened” and “holistic” policy concerns in an era marked by the perceived disappearance of boundaries and thus also characterized by the growing threats and opportunities of global entanglement.

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