Securitization of development: Threatening the agency of INGOs?
A single case study on the influence of securitization on INGO agency in the field of development

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**Introduction**

The concept of human security was constructed by a broad coalition of development actors, such as the United Nations (UN) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) in the 1990s. The term human security incorporates all threats which individuals come across during their daily lives by integrating the principles of *freedom from fear* and *freedom from want* (UNDP, 1994:22-24). Development objectives have been purposively integrated within the concept of human security in order to shift the attention and resources from traditional national security issues towards issues of human welfare and human development (Duffield, 2001:316; Paris, 2001:88; Hettne, 2010:44). Therefore, development actors aimed to make development aid more people-centred, enhancing the impartiality and neutrality of development aid.

Donors of development aid, such as states, have enhanced the coherence between development and security objectives by creating comprehensive development approaches. Subsequently, states have increased their development funds to enable INGOs to act as deliverers of development, since they are seen as representatives of beneficiaries and symbolize a people-centred approach in development (Agg, 2006:15; OECD, 2015). This is described as the privatisation of development through which states are donors that fund INGOs to deliver development aid (Duffield, 2001:312). Since INGOs have advocated for a people-centred approach in development, one would expect INGOs to be pleased with the influence of human security on states’ practices.

Yet, contrary to this expectation, some INGOs have criticized the manner in which states have integrated security and development. Oxfam Novib (2011:2-3) states: “Some donors are increasingly concentrating both humanitarian and development aid on countries and regions seen to threaten their own immediate security interests, while neglecting other equally insecure, impoverished and conflict-afflicted areas”. With this statement, Oxfam Novib (2011:203) criticizes how states use development aid as an instrument to pursue their national security interests. This undermines the intended people-centred approach to development aid as introduced within human security. The Humanitarian Policy Group (2004:4) argues development aid has been increasingly used by states as an instrument to contribute to the stability of fragile states after 9/11 with the aim to decrease threats such as terrorism.
Therefore, some INGOs imply that the link between development and security has not resulted in the prioritisation of human welfare, but rather has been used by states to pursue their national security objectives.

The academic debate on securitization, mainly based on the Copenhagen School, supports the criticism expressed by some INGOs. According to Buzan and Hansen (2009:214), securitization is the process of “presenting a problem in security terms”. Scholars from the Copenhagen School argue that securitization of development can be used by states to control the conditions of development. By criticizing this use of securitization by states, the Copenhagen School has a high normative character (Huysmans, 1998:571; Huysmans, 1998a:480-485). I argue that the securitization literature of the Copenhagen School lacks empirical evidence to support the normative debate. This study aims to contribute to the securitization literature by empirically analysing the relationship between securitization of development and agency of INGOs. It is relevant to understand this relation because the role of INGOs has increased since the 1990s due to the privatisation of development aid (Duffield, 2001:312; Hettne, 2010:42). This analysis will also contribute to the understanding of whether and how the conditions of development are controlled by states and the implications for people-centred development as advocated for by human security proponents. Therefore, this study will focus on the impact of securitization on the agency of INGOs. The research question that will be answered is: How does the securitization of development influence the agency of INGOs?

This study will first review the existing academic literature on human security and securitization in the literature review. Subsequently, the theoretical framework will explain how states have posed three different external pressures on INGOs as the result of securitization of development. The model by Oliver (1991), derived from organisational theories, is the foundation of the theoretical model that is used to describe how INGOs respond to those securitization pressures of states, explaining the agency of INGOs. Since this study builds on the securitization literature of the Copenhagen School, it joins the constructivist research approach. Changes in the agency of Dutch INGOs will be traced within a single case study, focusing on the agency of Dutch INGOs in Afghanistan between 1989 and 2015. The results of the analysis will be discussed, as well as the implications for people-centred development as advocated for by human security proponents.
Literature review

This literature review will address the academic debate on human security. Human security will be described as the deepening and broadening of the security concept, integrating human development issues. Second, the two main strands of criticism on human security will be addressed: the lack of academic and policy utility, and securitization.

Human security

The concept of human security has gained significance in the academic discourse since the publication of the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) *Human Development Report 1994*. Ewan (2007:184) states that the UNDP’s approach to human security is the benchmark of human security within academic debates. The UNDP (1994:23) describes human security as: “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs, or in communities.” Therefore, human security incorporates all threats which individuals come across during their daily lives and integrates the principles of *freedom from fear*, such as war-related violence, and *freedom from want*, such as poverty and underdevelopment. Four different features characterize human security: (1) human security is a universal concern, (2) the components of human security are interdependent, (3) human security is easier to ensure through early prevention than later intervention, and (4) human security is people-centred (UNDP, 1994:22-24).

Duffield (2001:316), Paris (2001:88) and Hettne (2010:44) argue that a broad coalition of development actors, such as the UN and INGOs, has purposively integrated development objectives within the concept of human security in order to shift the attention and resources from traditional national security issues towards issues of human welfare and human development. Proponents of human security such as Brown (2003:310-314) have supported this broad concept of human security since it incorporates non-traditional security threats to the daily lives of people. This notion of security can help to win resources and attention for neglected issues of human development (Ewan, 2007:184). Therefore human security can contribute to the people-centred focus in development aid.
The concept of human security can be described as a paradigm shift in the debate on security due to the shifted focus from national security interests to human welfare. During the Cold War, realists such as Waltz (1979) and Mearsheimer (2001) saw states as central actors within the security realm. Argued from a realist perspective, security is the potential of the state to protect the national sovereignty. Therefore, states were seen as main drivers and subjects of security. Liberalists shifted the focus in the international arena from the state level to the level of the individual in the 1970s and 1980s (COT Institute for Safety, Security and Crisis Management, 2007:25-29). The focus on the individual shifted the conceptualisation of security from national security to human security (Ewan, 2007:182). Due to this ‘deepening’ of security, the UNDP (1994:24) identified seven specific elements that threaten the security of individuals: (1) economic security, (2) food security, (3) health security, (4) environmental security, (5) personal security, (6) community security, and (7) political security. The inclusion of issues of human development within the concept of human security reflects a ‘broadening’ of security, since development and security were previously seen as separate concepts.

**Critical perspectives on human security**

Within the academic debate, two main strands of criticism on human security can be identified. First, positivists have criticized the broad character of human security, undermining its analytical and policy utility. Second, post-positivists build on the work of critical approaches and emphasize the political dangers of the broadened security agenda in the securitization literature (Ewan, 2007:183).

*The analytical and policy utility*

According to positivist scholars, the “inclusiveness” and “holism” of human security undermines its analytical and policy utility (Walt, 1991; Suhrke, 1999; Paris, 2001; Thomas & Tow, 2002). Although human security has been constructed vaguely in order to be an “effective campaign slogan” (Suhrke, 1999:88), this ambiguity influences the utility of the concept negatively. According to Paris (2001:8) and Thomas and Tow (2002:181), it is impossible to study causal relations between issues of underdevelopment and people’s security since both variables are included in the notion of human security. According to Suhrke (1999:271), the inclusiveness of human security has obscured the distinction between human development and human
security, two concepts that should be differentiated on the basis of long-term structural change and sudden disruptions in order to be of analytical value. According to critics the utility of human security for policymakers is also undermined due to the inclusiveness of the term. Walt (1991:213) argues that the inclusiveness increases difficulty to prioritize between issues, and Paris (2001:93) argues that the wide variety of threats prescribes different and potentially incompatible solutions to resolve them. In order to enhance the utility of human security, positivists advocate to delimit human security to freedom from fear (Ewan, 2007:185).

Positivist scholars have provided the human security literature with a very legitimate criticism. Nevertheless, this study will focus on human security as a broad field in which security and development are integrated, because the broadening of human security has contributed to comprehensive development policies (Duffield, 2001), and has enhanced inter-agency cooperation in the fields of security, development and human rights (Uvin, 2004:353). Since this study will focus on the policy context, approaching human security from its holistic character is more appropriate.

Securitization
A second strand of criticism focuses on the political dangers of framing societal issues into security issues because this framing justifies extraordinary measures to remedy the situation. This field of criticism is based on the Copenhagen School. The Copenhagen School emphasizes the political consequences of replacing issues from ‘normal politics’ to the field of security, a process called securitization (Huysmans, 1998:571; Ewan, 2007:184). The concept of securitization was developed by Buzan (1983), who criticized the influence of frames and constructs of public and non-public actors on the field of security. According to Buzan and Hansen (2009:214), securitization is the process of “presenting a problem in security terms”. The Copenhagen School has followed up on this idea of securitization by studying how actors use security as a powerful frame to include societal issues within the security agenda that were traditionally separated from the latter. The framing of societal issues into security issues results in the ability “to place an issue above the normal rules of liberal democratic policies, and hence justify emergency action to do whatever is necessary to remedy the situation” (Abrahamsen, 2005:58-59). Human security is the result of a process of securitization through which human development issues have
been framed as security issues. Therefore, securitization cannot be presented as a criticism on human security. Based on the securitization literature of the Copenhagen School, the concept of securitization has increasingly referred to the normative criticism on the process by which states use securitization to pursue their national security interests. It is this perspective on securitization that will be further explained as a criticism on human security and on which this study builds.

Woods (2005:407), Stern and Öjendal (2010:18-23) and Duffield (2001:311) argue that states have increasingly used the human security framework, and the underlying interdependence between development and security, to frame how underdevelopment of states can be a threat to their national security. It should be noted that this literature does not criticize the individual level of human welfare, but the constructed linkage between development and security that states have deduced from the human security context to legitimise the use of development aid as an instrument to pursue their security interests on the state level. According to Huysmans (1998:577), the framing of an enemy as an existential threat to the society lies on the basis of securitization. Argued from this perception on securitization, developing countries are perceived as threats to the national security of other states. Especially in the wake of 9/11, fragile or conflict-affected states have been given priority within the development aims of governments in order to contribute to stability, since those areas are perceived as ‘terrorist hot spots’ (Fisher & Anderson, 2005; Walker & Seegers, 2012). Therefore, securitization of development can be perceived as a phenomenon by which states exploit development aid to pursue their national security interests. This results in the prioritization of national security objectives over development aims (Buzan, 2004:369; Fisher & Anderson, 2005:135).

Due to the prioritization of security, scholars such as Stern and Öjendal (2010) and Duffield (2001) have argued that the conditions of development are controlled by states through the use of securitization. Duffield (2001:311) argues that securitization of development is an instrument for Western states to control the conditions of development, and thereby the lives and activities in developing countries, aimed at enhancing the national security. According to Howell (2014:2) the securitization of development has resulted in states engaging with INGOs in order to align their policies with the national security agenda. This engagement with INGOs can take two different forms. First of all, donor governments can fund projects programmed by NGOs, which is also defined as aid to INGOs. Besides that, donor states can channel
funds through INGOs, by which state-initiated projects are carried out (OECD, 2015:2). Howell (2014) argues that the engagement with INGOs takes place under a stricter regulatory framework and has therefore shifted towards aid through INGOs (Howell, 2014:2, 8-10). Therefore, states impose external pressures of securitization on INGOs through funds, which INGOs are expected to internalise. Patel, Lee and Williams (2004:59) argue that as a result of the use of development as an instrument of national security, development aid has become influenced by “power and interests in the international system”. Therefore, Hamber et al. (2006) argue that securitization neglects and undermines the people-centred approach, which the human security agenda has advocated for. Based on the literature, it can be argued that the construction of human security has resulted in a different outcome than the people-centred approach originally opted for. In contradiction, states have used this framework to legitimise the use of development as an instrument to pursue national security interests.

Huysmans (1998:571; 1998a:480-485) argues that the securitization literature of the Copenhagen School addresses mainly ethico-political questions, therefore having a high normative character. However, political developments are not used to support or falsify the theory. I argue that the Copenhagen School, and the theoretical literature based on this school, lacks empirical evidence to support the normative debate. Besides that, the literature on securitization does not provide for an answer if and how securitization of development differs from other norms that are imposed on INGOs through the privatisation of development aid. This study aims to contribute to the securitization literature by empirically analysing the relationship between securitization of development and agency of INGOs in order to understand whether and how the conditions of development are controlled by states. Organisational theories explain how external pressures imposed on organisations influence their decisions. Therefore, organisational theories will be used in the theoretical framework to understand the influence of securitization on the agency of INGOs.

**Theoretical framework**

The Copenhagen School argues that states impose external pressures of securitization on INGOs in order to align their policies with national security interests. It is argued in the literature that this enables states to control the conditions of development. A
conceptual framework drawn from organisational theory is applied within this study in order to understand the influence of securitization, the independent variable, on the agency of INGOs, the dependent variable. This theoretical framework will first address organisational theories that study the influence of external pressures on organisations. Second, the model by Oliver (1991) will provide five strategic responses of organisations to external pressures that range from passive to active, categorizing the agency of INGOs. Third, the three dimensions of securitization, which this study focuses on, will be explained and the expectations drawn from securitization theory on the agency of INGOs will be recalled.

Organisational theory

Within the organisational literature two main theories, which explain how external pressures form the institutional environment can influence organisations, can be identified. These are institutional isomorphism and dependency theory.

First of all, theories of institutional isomorphism aim to explain why organisations are similar in different contexts. Meyer and Rowan (1977:348-353) explain how organisations have to compete for resources, political power and institutional legitimacy. Therefore organisations are being perceived as dependent on their environment. Due to this dependency, organisations are structured through the institutional environment and become more similar to this environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977:348-353). This isomorphic change is the result of three mechanisms: coercive isomorphism, mimetic processes and normative isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism is the result of formal and informal pressures that are exerted on organisations by other organisations on which they are dependent. Mimetic processes are the result of uncertainty. Organisations are imitated that are perceived to be more legitimate and successful. Third, professionalization is a normative source for isomorphic change, based on formal education and the growth and elaboration of professional networks (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983:150-152). Securitization theory perceives states as powerful actors that impose external pressures of securitization on INGOs through funds, which INGOs are expected to internalise. This perception on powerful states is shared by scholars of coercive isomorphism who perceive states as influential actors that can force organisations to incorporate external pressures, either through legal and technical requirements such as reporting requirements that ensure the eligibility for the receipt of funds, or through the legitimization of certain
structures (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:348-353). Following up external pressures is not necessarily linked to increasing the efficiency of the organisation. Therefore, the survival of organisations is attributed to passive conformity rather than active resistance with the aim to enhance legitimacy (Scott, 2008).

Scholars of resource dependency focus also on the institutional embeddedness of organisations and the external pressures that they face, but they study viable strategies of organisations to actively respond to those pressures. According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978:51), organisations are seen as dependent when a certain resource is necessary for their survival, but controlled by a relatively small number of organisations. However, contrary to the literature on institutional isomorphism, the literature on resource dependency focuses on the ability of organisations to actively respond to environmental contingencies by choosing strategies to maintain autonomy and power (Rauh, 2010:30-31). Thus, from this perspective, organisations develop different viable strategies to influence their institutional environment to their advantage. Examples of those viable strategies are “the crafting of new strategies, leveraging or eschewing partnerships, and pushing for or resisting new laws” (Beck, 2014:143). Therefore, scholars of resource dependency ascribe a more active form of agency to organisations.

**Agency of INGOs**

Both organisational theories have different perceptions on organisations’ agency. The concept of agency is derived from agency theories through which relationships between actors delegating work (principals) to others (agents) who perform the work are analysed (Eisenhardt, 1969). Within this study, agency is defined as the ability of organisations to resist external pressures and affect the institutional environment (Beck, 2014:142). In order to analyse the agency of INGOs as a continuum ranging from a passive and limited form to active (Rauh, 2010:37-38), the model by Oliver (1991) is used to describe different strategies used by organisations to respond to external pressures.

The model by Oliver (1991) combines insights of institutional isomorphism and dependency theory within a typology of five strategic responses for organisations to external pressures that range from passive to active: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation. The first strategy of acquiescence is the focus of institutional isomorphism and is likely when organisations believe that conforming
to imposed norms increases their access to resources and/or legitimacy. Acquiescence has three different forms based on the mechanisms of institutional isomorphism: compliance, imitation, and habit. Compliance refers to active compliance with norms that are perceived to enhance access to resources or increase legitimacy. Imitation refers to mimetic isomorphism through which organisations imitate other organisations that are perceived to be more legitimate and successful. Habit refers to complying with social facts that are taken for granted.

The second strategy is compromise, within which organisations only partly comply with imposed pressures, and includes balancing, pacifying and bargaining. Balancing is used by organisations to respond to conflicting pressures. Pacifying results from appeasing actors with as little resources involved as possible. Bargaining refers to a process of negotiation in which organisations try to increase the benefits of their organisation (Oliver, 1991).

The third strategy is avoidance by which organisations seek opportunities to avoid compliance. Avoidance consists of concealment, buffering, and escape. Concealment refers to non-compliance while organisations pretend to comply with imposed pressures. Buffering refers to withdrawing activities from the formal relation with organisations imposing pressures. For example by cancelling financial support. Escape refers to the organisation that exits the relation with the organisation imposing pressures in its entirety (Oliver, 1991).

The fourth strategy is defiance, which includes dismissing, challenging or attacking the imposed pressures. Dismissing refers to the ignorance of rules. Challenging refers to the contest of established norms and rules. Attacking is a more grave form of challenging (Oliver, 1991).

The last strategy is manipulation, which ascribes the most active form of agency to organisations. Manipulation exists of the potential to co-op, influence, or control (Oliver, 1991). However, it is highly unlikely that organisations dependent on resources and legitimacy are engaged in this fifth strategy (Rauh, 2010:36-40).

Within this research, this model by Oliver (1991) will be used to assess how INGOs respond to external pressures and how their agency is influenced. Agency is not seen as a zero-sum outcome, but an ability to resist and respond to external pressures that ranges from passive to active and which can take different forms.
Securitization

Following up on the Copenhagen school, securitization of development creates different external pressures that states impose on INGOs. Developing states are increasingly perceived by states as potential national security threats. For example, Walker and Seegers (201) and Fisher and Anderson (2005) explain how conflict-affected or fragile states are increasingly perceived as ‘terrorist hot spots’ after 9/11, threatening the national security of Western states. Macrae and Leader (2001:295) have showed that developed states make strategic choices to control those threats. Considering internal problems within states are often identified as sources of conflict, development aid has targeted those causes as a means of conflict prevention and resolution. Another strategic choice, as a result of the securitization of development, is the increasing cooperation between development actors, such as INGOs, and security actors, such as the military and police. Howell (2014:10) describes how the service delivery of INGOs is used by governments to ‘win the hearts and minds’ of the local population in order to maintain military hold in certain areas. Through this approach, development aid can be described as an adjutant to military strategy. This study will focus on those three dimensions of securitization: (1) the prioritization of fragile states in development aid, (2) the strategy of development aid as an instrument of conflict prevention and resolution, and (3) the increased cooperation between development and military actors.

Based on the securitization theory, one would expect that governments use the securitization of development to control the conditions of development. By aligning the development funds available for INGOs with the three dimensions of securitization, securitization scholars expect INGOs to internalise the three dimensions of securitization in order to ensure the eligibility for the receipt of funds and legitimacy. The internalisation of securitization dimensions can be observed if INGOs (1) shift their programmes to ‘fragile’ states that are seen as national security threats by governments, (2) shift their objectives, and the accompanied intervention strategies, towards conflict prevention and resolution, (3) are more willing to cooperate with military actors. Based on the model of Oliver (1991), this internalisation of the dimensions of securitization can be categorized as compliance, a form of acquiescence, since complying with securitization pressures increases the access to resources and/or legitimacy. Therefore, the internalisation of the securitization dimensions can be perceived as a passive conformity rather than active
resistance. This would suggest that securitization has a limiting influence on the agency of INGOs. This limited agency can be perceived as the result of the dependency of INGOs on finance and legitimacy necessary for their survival. Through this underlying relation between securitization and agency, states would be able to control the conditions of development aid in order to meet their state-interest. This expected effect of securitization on the agency of INGOs will be traced in Afghanistan between 1989 and 2015.

**Research design**

This research design justifies the choice for a single case study on the agency of Dutch INGOs in Afghanistan between 1989 and 2015 first. Second, it explains how causal-process tracing has been applied. Third, it will be mentioned which data has been used within this study.

**Single case study**

Within this study, a single case study is analysed from a qualitative approach. This method has enabled the researcher to track changes over time within the case and to determine how organisations respond to external pressures from their environment (Kazdin, 2011). Besides that, the qualitative case study afforded the opportunity to study the case in-depth (Bryman, 2008:52-54). The single case study is therefore the most appropriate design to analyse how securitization influences the agency of INGOs over time. The Copenhagen School emphasizes that securitization is a powerful instrument to control the conditions of development. Therefore, the literature analyses securitization from a constructivist approach in which international relations are perceived as constructed rather than an inevitable consequence of the social world (Bryman, 2008:366). Since this study builds on the Copenhagen School, it joins the constructivist research approach. In order to enhance the understanding of how agency of INGOs is influenced by securitization, a specific single case study is analysed as a first attempt to analyse this relation empirically. Therefore, modest conclusions can be drawn on the relationship between the securitization of development and its influence on the agency of INGOs. This study does not aim to generalize the results to other cases.
This research has analysed the change in agency of Dutch INGOs in Afghanistan as a result of securitization. This case enabled the researcher to study the influence of the dimensions of securitization on the agency of Dutch INGOs in-depth. Due to the ongoing instability and its breeding ground for violent fundamentalism, the Dutch government has prioritized Afghanistan as structural beneficiary of development aid in 2003. The overall aim of development aid has been described as the promotion of peace, security and stability (Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 2003:3). Besides that, cooperation between development and military actors has been established during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan between 2006 and 2010 (Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 2005). Therefore, the three dimensions of securitization, (1) the prioritization of fragile states in development aid, (2) the strategy of development aid as an instrument of conflict prevention and resolution, and (3) the increased cooperation between development and military actors, can be identified in the Dutch approach towards development aid in Afghanistan. Since the case is an exemplifying case in which the relation between securitization and agency of INGOs can be studied at different junctures, it is highly relevant to study (Bryman, 2008:56).

This study has focused on the five Dutch INGOs that have spent the most in Afghanistan in absolute terms, based on the Dutch NGO Database. Those five NGOs are Cordaid, Healthnet TPO, ICCO, Oxfam Novib, and ZOA (CIDIN, 2016). A disadvantage of the Dutch NGO Database is that the data is only gathered from 2008 onwards. In order to make the sample more reliable for the period between 1989 and 2008, the selection of INGOs has been completed with other INGOs that are active in the Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan (DCU), since all members of the DCU were active in Afghanistan in the 1990s. Based on this approach, DCA-VET and Save the Children are added to the selection of INGOs that are taken into account.

**Causal-process tracing**

Within this research, causal-process tracing is used to study the relationship between securitization of development and the agency of INGOs. This study has traced the three dimensions of securitization at Dutch INGOs active in Afghanistan. By studying the relationship between securitization and agency of INGOs in-depth, the change in agency of INGOs can be understood and explained (Van Evera, 1997:64). The relation between the securitization of development and the agency of INGOs is based on the theoretical framework.
Within this single case study, causal-process tracing is used as a method to analyse the agency of Dutch INGOs active in Afghanistan between 1989 and 2015. This timeframe is chosen since Dutch INGOs became active in Afghanistan since the end of the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan in 1989. Many of the INGOs involved in Afghanistan in the 1990s or early 2000s were still active in Afghanistan in 2015. Therefore, 2015 is chosen as endpoint of the studied timeframe. This chosen timeframe allowed for an adequate and in-depth study of the influence of securitization on the agency of INGOs, as it incorporates the start of the human security debate in 1994, as well as the debate concerning the dimensions of securitization in the 1990s.

This case study will be divided into two junctures based on different occupations. First, the period between 1989 and 2001 refers to the occupations of the Mujaheddin (1989-1994) and the Taliban (1994-2001). Second, the period between 2001 and 2015 refers to the American-led military occupation within Afghanistan (Van de Goor & Van Leeuwen, 2000). Based on the theoretical framework, it is expected that the securitization of development has taken place since the 1990s and has been reinforced after 9/11. This is even more likely due to the involvement of the Taliban in the attacks.

Data
A document analysis is carried out in order to analyse the relationship between the securitization of development and agency of INGOs: policy papers and annual reviews of INGOs are assessed. Additionally, secondary data has been analysed. The analysis of those documents has focused on the activities and strategies implemented by Dutch INGOs in Afghanistan. In order to understand the identified changes in INGO policies and strategies, Dutch policy reports are analysed on the Dutch approach towards Afghanistan. Requirements to apply for development funds have been of main focus aiming to explain how securitization dimensions influence the agency of INGOs. Account evidence and sequence evidence (Collier, 2011) are used in order to analyse the changes in agency of INGOs. The sequence of the dimensions of securitization and the changes in agency is used to understand the relation between the securitization of development and the agency of INGOs (Collier, 2011). This provides evidence for the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Van Evera, 1997:65).
Analysis

Within this analysis, the changes in agency of Dutch INGOs in Afghanistan will be described within two periods: (1) the occupation of the Mujaheddin and the Taliban, and (2) the American-led military occupation. The three different dimensions of securitization will be analysed within both periods. Differences in agency will be analysed on the basis of changed dependency of INGOs on the Dutch government.

Mujaheddin and Taliban occupations (1989-2001)

Different Dutch INGOs have started humanitarian aid projects in Afghanistan due to the severity of the damage and destruction within the country after the Soviet occupation of 1979 to 1989. This damage was highly visible in the agricultural sector. Before the Soviet occupation, the agricultural sector contributed to fifty per cent of Afghanistan’s national income and almost eighty per cent of the income out of export (Van de Goor & Van Leeuwen, 2000:67-68). Besides the agricultural sector, eighty per cent of the Afghans were dependent on livestock for their livelihood. However, in 1988 it was estimated that fifty per cent of the cattle and seventy per cent of the small ruminants had been lost (DCA-VET, 2000:3). Due to this damage and destruction, the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan Veterinary Programmes (DCA-VET) (1988), Oxfam Novib (1989), ICCO (1989) and Healthnet TPO (1993) decided to start activities in Afghanistan. In the late 1990s and beginning 2000s, more INGOs became active in Afghanistan, such as Save the Children (1997), ZOA (2000) and Cordaid (2001).

The rehabilitation of the agricultural sector gained a priority within their activities. For example, Oxfam Novib carried out programmes to contribute to the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector and veterinary training in order to enhance the livelihood of Afghans by contributing to income generation and food security (Oxfam Novib, 2000; Oxfam Novib, 2000a). Also DCA-VET was active in livestock activities in order to improve the health of the livestock and thereby increasing the productive output (DCA-VET, 2000). Besides those activities aimed at the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector and livestock, INGOs provided humanitarian aid to the returned refugees and internally displaced persons. Those activities were mainly aimed at the provision of shelter, the provision of health care and the provision of education, since those activities are highly vulnerable in the context of crises and conflict. ZOA also
provided water and sanitation for internally displaced persons and contributed to the establishment of main infrastructures (ZOA, 2003). Cordaid contributed with livelihood programmes to the vulnerable situation of marginalised groups (Cordaid, 2006). Oxfam Novib (2000a), ICCO (2000), Save the Children (2003), and ZOA (2003) provided those activities mainly as humanitarian aid projects. Healthnet TPO executed projects in order to rebuild and support the healthcare system. With this approach, Healthnet TPO aimed “to bridge the gap between medical relief and structural health development” (Healthnet TPO, 2003:2).

The Dutch government supported the humanitarian projects in Afghanistan financially (Van de Goor & Van Leeuwen, 2000:61, 70). The contribution of the Dutch government was based on the recognition of Afghanistan as ‘one of the most underdeveloped countries’ characterized by on going conflict and instability in the beginning of the 1990s, due to the increased violence of the Taliban (Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 1990:244-245). This underdevelopment was perceived as a cause for political instability and conflict, negatively impacting the Dutch national security (Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 1990:69; Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 1993:28). So although the Dutch government supported humanitarian projects of Dutch INGOs based on short-term relief and rehabilitation for Afghanistan, the Dutch government did not support structural development aid aimed at the long term originated from the Medefinancieringsprogramma. The Medefinancieringsprogramma (MFP) was since 1965 the largest fund through which four traditional INGOs were financially supported, among which Cordaid, ICCO and Oxfam Novib. Those INGOs were responsible on the development expenses of the received funds as a result of positive evaluations. Since the MFP was not aligned to a clear policy framework (Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 1990:309-311; IOB, 2006:5-6), it can be argued that the traditional MFP was a fund to INGOs.

The data shows that INGOs did not experience clear pressures of securitization by the Dutch government during the analysed period. Due to the minimal fund requirements, INGOs decided relatively autonomously to start humanitarian activities in Afghanistan aimed at the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector and livestock, and the provision of relief services. None of the INGOs has reported in the analysed period on cooperation with security actors.
American-led military occupation (2001-2015)

INGOs started to increase structural development activities within Afghanistan additional to humanitarian aid in the beginning of the new millennium. The rehabilitation of Afghanistan became a focus for many INGOs. This focus on Afghanistan as beneficiary of structural development aid is very meaningful since INGOs drastically decreased the countries in which they were structurally involved. For example, Oxfam Novib (2003) decreased the amount of countries in which they were structurally involved in development aid from sixty to eighteen in 2003. While Save the Children was involved in over hundred countries in 2003, they decreased their structural involvement to twenty conflict-affected countries in 2006 (Save the Children, 2003; Save the Children, 2006). Although the exact amount of countries in which ICCO was involved before 2003 could not be found in the data, ICCO (2003) reported that they decreased the countries in which they were structurally involved in to ten countries. This has been followed up by INGOs reporting on their new focus on fragile states as main beneficiaries of development aid, based on the idea of development as a mean of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. In 2006, Save the Children (2006) reported that conflict-affected areas would become the focus of their structural development aid. Also, Oxfam Novib (2010) reported that fragile states would become the sole focus of structural development activities. This strategic choice has been the basis for the application for new subsidies of the Dutch Government. ICCO (2010) started to explore possibilities for complementary programmes in fragile states since 2010. Cordaid (2015) has reported that their focus has been on fragile states and conflict-affected areas since 2015. Also ZOA and Healthnet TPO have emphasized their focus on fragile states. Although both organisations are since their start active in countries that have a history of conflict and violence, they have changed their terminology and emphasized their role and contribution to fragile states (ZOA, 2010; Healthnet TPO, 2015). It can be concluded from this data that the focus on Afghanistan, and other fragile states, as main beneficiaries of structural development aid has come at the expense of other countries since 2003.

The vision that humanitarian aid and development aid can contribute in conflict prevention has resulted in different projects of INGOs aimed at peace building within Afghanistan. For example, Oxfam Novib increasingly started to focus on conflict prevention and resolution from 2003 onwards (Oxfam Novib, 2003), while
ICCO developed a new programme aimed at democratization and peace building (ICCO, 2003), which was implemented in Afghanistan from 2007 onwards (ICCO, 2007). ZOA has also focussed more on peace-building within its programmes in Afghanistan (ZOA, 2010). Due to the increased programmes aimed at conflict resolution and peace building, expenditures have decreased for other programmes. Based on data of Cordaid (2015), ICCO (2015), Oxfam Novib (2015) and Save the Children (2015), programmes specifically aimed at conflict resolution and peace building account for ten till twenty per cent of the total expenditures of INGOs. According to Healthnet TPO (2003) and Save the Children (2003), other programmes aimed at the provision of health care and the provision of education contribute also indirectly to conflict resolution, since underdevelopment is amongst the root causes of conflicts and instability. However, those activities were already programmed by the INGOs. Therefore the preponderance of INGO’s expenditures has not been affected by the inclusion of programmes aimed at conflict resolution and peace building.

The programmatic approach to increase stability and security has been enhanced with the cooperation with actors from the security sector. This cooperation can be identified on the local level and on the national level. On the local level, INGOs such as Save the Children (2010:35) and Oxfam Novib (2015:27) have increasingly included local security actors, such as police officers and public agents within their programmes, since they perceive human security as a basic requirement for sustainable development. Those security actors are trained to enhance their responsiveness, capacity and accountability towards the society. Besides the inclusion of local security actors, the cooperation with the military has also increased in the context of Afghanistan. The cooperation between INGOs and the military can be identified in the context of Uruzgan. Cordaid, DCA-VET, Healthnet TPO, Save the Children and ZOA have started development activities in Uruzgan, a southern province of Afghanistan, since 2006. Before 2006, the different members of the DCU were barely active in the southern, and more violent, parts of Afghanistan. The start of activities in Uruzgan followed the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) that was deployed by the Netherlands as part of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). INGOs that became active within Uruzgan established the Dutch Consortium Uruzgan (DCU) in order to enhance the complementarity between the activities undertaken (Van der Lijn, 2011:45). Cooperation was established between the DCU and the TFU. The Dutch government aimed with this cooperation to “win the hearts
and minds” of the Afghan population, thereby decreasing support of the local population for the Taliban. This cooperation was also meant to increase the security for active INGOs in this area (Van der Lijn, 2011:32-33). According to ZOA (2010), this military involvement was necessary for the stability within the area, but created also new threats for the INGOs. The increased cooperation between political, military and humanitarian workers can be exploited by terrorist organizations, thereby increasing the insecurity of the INGO staff in the field. In order to limit the cooperation and protect a neutral and impartial position, the DCU has pursued a strict policy in which the member organisations only shared information necessary for the implementation of projects. This communication between both actors took only place at the embassy in Kabul. The director of Healthnet TPO, Willem van der Put, has been very vocal criticizing the cooperation between military actors and development actors within Uruzgan. According to Healthnet TPO, neutrality is a luxury that only ‘rich’ INGOs can permit (Van der Lijn, 2011:45). Since Healthnet TPO did not have such a luxury position, they joined the DCU and started activities in Uruzgan in 2006. Other INGOs such as ICCO and Kerk in Actie have not started activities within Uruzgan since they doubted the reconstruction purpose and the centrality of the needs of the local populations within the mission. Also Oxfam Novib did not move to Uruzgan since its international guidelines require a visible and strict separation of the military (Van der Lijn, 2011:44-45). Those INGOs remained active in the northern and central parts of Afghanistan.

The INGO interventions have become more aligned with Dutch development policies between 2001 and 2015. In 2003, the Minister of Development Cooperation published a new policy framework that aimed to increase the effectiveness of development aid and to promote peace, security and stability. According to the new framework, issues such as on going conflicts and instability demanded a new approach in development aid. As a result, the Dutch government decreased the amount of partnerlanden, states that receive structural development aid, from 49 to 36. Although Afghanistan was not a partnerland before 2003, it became included in the new policy framework since 2003 due to the negative impact of the instability for the national security of the Netherlands. Therefore, the Dutch government started to support rehabilitation efforts in Afghanistan significantly. The principles of good governance, capacity building and the respect for human rights were leading within the Dutch approach towards Afghanistan (Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal,
Since 2007, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focuses solely on fragile states as main beneficiaries of Dutch development aid. Those activities are carried out within an integrated approach through which defence, diplomacy and development actors and resources are combined. Therefore, INGOs were expected to align their intervention strategies with the Dutch integrated approach (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2007:12). This expectation of the Dutch government can be seen as an external pressure for Dutch INGOs.

It can be argued that Dutch INGOs have become increasingly dependent on the Dutch government. Since 2003, the MFP has been renewed in order to enhance the alignment of INGO activities with Dutch development aims. MFP-Breed opened up for all INGOs and was characterized by competition and increased accountability. On the basis of project proposals, INGOs were selected to receive a fund for the period 2003-2006 (IOB, 2006:5). This focus on cooperation and competition was further integrated in the Medefinancieringsstelsel I (MFS I), the successor of MFP-Breed, through which MFOs were financed between 2007 and 2010. Although MFS I does not require INGOs to work in certain countries or to cover certain themes, INGOs applying for a fund had to justify how their programme proposal was related to the focus of Dutch development aid (IOB, 2009). With the start of the Medefinancieringsstelsel II (MFS II) in 2010, the Dutch government aimed to spend at least sixty per cent of ODA within partnerlanden (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2009:13). Besides the regular medefinanciering, the Dutch government has opened the Stability Fund in order to contribute to peace, security and stability (Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 2003:37). The Dutch government has also opened up funds for INGOs that would become active in the province of Uruzgan (Van der Lijn, 2011:44). Those funds have been based on the framework for Civil and Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in which defence, development and diplomacy aims are integrated to contribute to the security and stability of fragile states. Therefore, it can be stated that within the analysed period the Dutch funds for INGOs have shifted from funds to INGOs to funds through INGOs.

It is highly likely that INGOs have (to a large extent) based their proposals on the development policies of the Dutch government, due to their dependency on government funds. Between 2000 and 2006, Oxfam Novib has for example received two-thirds of its income by the Dutch government (Oxfam Novib, 2000, Oxfam Novib, 2003; Oxfam Novib, 2006). This reduced in 2010 to 55 per cent, but increased
again in 2015 to almost 73 per cent. (Oxfam Novib, 2010; Oxfam Novib, 2015). Although most INGOs provide no disaggregated data within their annual reports on the received funds of the Dutch government, it can be expected that they also receive a significant amount of funds by the Dutch government. Therefore, it is likely that the financial dependency of INGOs has contributed to the internalisation of dimensions of securitization by INGOs. This claim can be substantiated by the focus of INGOs on donor diversification in order to create a more independent position, and the statements of INGOs that recalled the funds of the Dutch government as main reason to start activities in Uruzgan (Van der Lijn, 2011:45).

**Conclusion**

This research has aimed to answer the research question: How does the securitization of development influence the agency of INGOs? This case study has shown how INGOs have aligned their intervention strategies with the Dutch policies on development since the start of the new millennium. First of all, the analysed INGOs have increasingly perceived different forms of underdevelopment as a root cause in conflicts. Due to the focus on conflict, INGOs increased their focus on Afghanistan since 2003. This choice is very meaningful since INGOs have drastically cut the amount of states in which they were structurally involved in since 2003. Therefore, the focus on Afghanistan has come at the expense of other countries. Second, development aid has been increasingly mentioned as a mean to contribute to conflict resolution and peace building, but the extent to which INGOs have changed their interventions strategies is limited. Activities focused on conflict resolution and peace building have steadily grown since 2001 until they accounted in 2015 for ten till twenty per cent of INGOs expenditures. More traditional programmes aimed at income generation, the provision of health care and education, and capacity building have remained the main focus of INGOs since they are perceived to contribute to conflict resolution indirectly. Lastly, INGOs have increased the cooperation with security actors on the local level, such as police officers, and with military actors in Afghanistan, such as the TFU.

With those shifts in development aid, INGOs have increasingly adapted their policies and strategies to the perspective of the Dutch government that perceives development aid as an instrument to contribute to national security interests. The
increased privatisation of development aid, enhanced by the advocacy for a people-centred approach by human security proponents, has been identified as the underlying mechanism through which INGOs have become increasingly dependent on the Dutch government. However, the development funds have changed from funds to INGOs to funds through INGOs, describing the more stringent fund requirements that aim to enhance national security interests through development aid. Besides that, competition and accountability have been additional factors that have contributed to INGOs internalising the securitization dimensions of the Dutch government. Due to the significance of the Dutch governmental funds for the income of the INGOs, it is likely that the internalisation of the dimensions of securitization by INGOs can be best explained by the strategy of acquiescence in which INGOs belief that active compliance to the Dutch policies results in access to resources and legitimacy. Since those Dutch development policies do not prioritize the people-centred approach, it can be argued that INGOs follow up external pressures that are not necessarily in their own interest. This finding generally shows a passive strategic response and limited agency of INGOs to securitization pressures.

However, it should be noted that INGOs have not only acted on the basis of acquiescence and other more active strategic responsive have been applied. For example, balancing, a form of compromise, has been applied by the DCU by limiting the cooperation with the TFU. Also, buffering could be identified by ICCO, Kerk in Actie and Oxfam Novib, since they avoided cooperation with military actors in order to remain a more neutral and independent position. In exceptional cases, INGOs have also challenged the securitization of Dutch development aid, which is a form of defiance. This could be identified by the critical position that the director of Healthnet TPO, Willem van der Put, took within the public debate on civil and military cooperation.

It can be argued that the securitization of Dutch development policies constrains the agency of INGOs. However, some INGOs have been involved in more active strategic responses to the securitization pressures. Therefore, the influence of securitization on the conditions of development is more nuanced than assumed by the Copenhagen School.
Discussion

Although the influence of securitization on the conditions of development is more nuanced than theorized by the Copenhagen School, securitization of development influences the principle of security for whom. Passive acquiescence could be clearly identified in the choice of INGOs to become active in structural development aid in Afghanistan since 2003, and to focus on fragile states in general. However, the citizens of fragile states are not necessarily the most vulnerable or marginalised. This finding suggests that the people-centred approach, as advocated for by human security proponents, has been undermined by the securitization of development. The Dutch government has used the privatisation of development to impose external pressures of securitization on INGOs, although this mechanism was aimed at enhancing the people-centred approach. This would suggest that human security has not induced a paradigm shift in the conditions of development aid, since national security interests are still of major importance.

The findings of this research should be read prudently, because this study has some limitations. First, it can be questioned if securitization of development is an external pressure imposed on INGOs through the privatisation of development aid, or if it is in itself a powerful ‘instrument’ used by states to control the conditions of development as theorized by the Copenhagen School. This could not be determined within this study. The Copenhagen School identifies both legitimacy and access to resources as mechanisms through which securitization influences the conditions of development. This study has mainly analysed the influence of access to resources. Therefore, more empirical research should be done to the role of legitimacy. Second, the holistic concepts of human security and securitization have complicated the precision in tracing dimensions of securitization. For example, the belief that both securitization and development are interdependent is integrated in the concept of human security. Therefore, it has been hard to identify if INGOs have transferred this perception to the state level or if this has been the result of securitization. Both questions should be further analysed, preferably through in-depth interviews with INGO staff to give meaning to their strategic choices concerning the dimensions of securitization. To conclude, further research is needed to understand the influence of securitization on the agency of INGOs and to contribute empirically to the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School.
References


