8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a broad overview of the evolving paradigms of thinking and action at the intersection between development and security. This chapter will focus primarily on the major rich countries and the institutions they control, such as the World Bank and the OECD. It is these rich countries, after all, that provide the overwhelming majority of the development assistance and defines the practical terms on which it is given. Recipient countries surely do have a capacity to subvert donor agendas, but they do not set it.

It is written from the perspective of development professionals, analysing when and why they became concerned with matters of security (genealogy section, 8.2), and what sorts of things they do when they work at the nexus between development and security (typology section, 8.3). In the former section, there is a particular emphasis on teasing out the impact of the end of the Cold War and of 9/11 on development policy and practice. The latter section presents a brief overview of different operational and policy approaches to the development/security nexus. In the conclusions, the author points to the shrinking intellectual and operational gap between development and security since the early 1990’s (8.4).

8.2 Genealogy

During its first three decades, the development enterprise was totally agnostic towards matters of internal conflict and security. When violent conflict occurred, it was treated as an unfortunate occurrence, forcing development workers out and bringing humanitarians in – an order to be reversed when the conflict was over and normal development work could resume. The common dynamics leading up to conflict – inter-group resentment, social polarization, rising intolerance and extremism, militarization of society, human rights violations, and widespread impunity, to name but a few – were emphatically not part of the development mandate. Development practitioners might have deplored these matters in private, but did not believe they had to consider the implications of their own work on these dynamics, or explicitly seek to address them (Uvin 1998).

Of course, in our complicated world and a fortiori for a field of human endeavour as broad and diverse as development, any statement such as the one just made is always partially wrong. Indeed, development aid was from its very birth and foremost so for the United States, part of the security calculus of the Cold War. The precursor of modern development aid was the Marshall Plan following World War II, designed to reconstruct Europe and keep it out of the hands of communism – both of which it was successful at. Later, development assistance to developing countries was at least in part motivated by Cold War concerns. This link of aid to security was of a very different nature than what emerged from the 1990’s onwards. Before, the link was global and geo-strategic, and the mechanism by which the link operated was exclusively the allocation of development aid resources; it did not seek to affect conflict dynamics within the countries concerned.1

During the Cold War, countries that were at the frontline of the fight against communism (to mention but some, each reflecting different stages in the Cold War: South Korea and Vietnam; Zaire and Somalia; Egypt and Jordan; El Salvador and Guatemala) received massive and disproportionate amounts of development aid, as well as often military assistance, diplomatic support, preferential trade access, and intelligence support. But what was being done with those development aid funds had usually little to do

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1 On development aid as an economic security tool in the global ideological competition, see Radelet (2003a).
with domestic internal dynamics of conflict, and indeed quite a few of these countries were falling apart under the eyes of their sponsors, without the latter doing anything through their development programmes to halt this disintegration. The way the money was used was largely motivated by the standard schools of development thinking: investments in economic and social infrastructure; education and training; basic needs (basic health, primary education, and housing); structural adjustment and liberalization of the economy, among others.3

This situation has changed dramatically. Nowadays, the nexus between development and conflict within recipient countries (and even regions) is a central focus of almost all development thinking and practice. This metamorphosis reflects a number of major trends, some of which are related to the end of the Cold War and later to 9/11, and others which are internal to the development enterprise and independent of these outside factors.

8.2.1 1989 and the End of the Cold War

The main impact of the end of the Cold War on the development enterprise was indirect: it created a larger need for a change in approach and opened up a space in which it could emerge, but it did not dictate its content.

First, civil war and insecurity became much more prevalent and visible in the South after 1990, forcing development practitioners to come to grips with questions of (in)security. This often happened in countries that were until recently clients of the superpowers and whose models of political and economic (ill-)government were quickly falling apart. This was most visible in sub-Saharan Africa, of course, where way too many countries descended into a spiral of violence, destroying whatever tenuous improvements to which development aid might have contributed. At the same time, a large number of new recipients of development assistance emerged in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European bloc, many of which rapidly became theatres of violent insecurity. The overwhelming majority of these cases of violence were civil wars. As a result, the development community soon found that as much as one-third of all countries in which it worked were close to, engaged in, or just coming out of civil war.4

Second, the intellectual and political hegemony of the Western ‘liberal peace model’ became greatly strengthened, ideologically justifying much wider interventions in the internal dynamics of low-status countries, the list of which grew dramatically (Duffield 2001). Most of the Cold War-induced need to make friends with unsavoury regimes throughout the world had vanished. Especially in Africa, this led to disastrous results for the likes of Siad Barre of Somalia; Mobutu Sese Seko of the former Zaire; and Jonas Savimbi of Angola (admittedly not a head of state). This trend had already started under the Reagan administration (and its allies in Thatcher and Kohl), with an increasingly assertive adherence to free markets, minimal states, and elections, and a concomitant and decreased willingness to engage in talk about new international economic orders, rights to development, and other reformist agendas. When capitalism won, all competing ideologies were de-legitimized, and the willingness and capacity to intervene in third world countries’ domestic issues grew dramatically. This willingness to act on issues considered hitherto too political, too domestic, or too sensitive, is one of the factors that set the new development/security agenda apart from the preceding thirty years.

The prime reasons for the emergence of the development/security nexus in the 1990’s, however, lie in dynamics internal to the development community. First, there was the rise to prominence of the ‘good governance’ agenda. This agenda, whose appearance slightly precedes and totally mirrors the ascendancy of the conflict agenda, was an answer to the failure of structural adjustment. Adjustment policies were being only partly implemented in many countries, thus failing to produce their evident benefits. The World Bank and the main bilateral donors concluded that there must be something wrong with the political system from which these policies emerged: it was not accountable and transparent enough, hence allowing self-serving elites to get away with inefficient and detrimental policies from which only they benefited. Starting from this economic rationale, the field of ‘good govern-

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2 An exception to this is US aid to Central America in the 1980’s, when some of the internal use of aid was linked more directly than usual to anti-guerrilla strategies. Note that such use was typically decried in the strongest terms by leftist, critical scholars and practitioners.

3 For good overviews of changing development thinking, see Arndt (1987) and Peet (1999).

4 According to the World Bank website: “80% of the world’s 20 poorest countries have suffered a major war in the past 15 years” (www.worldbank.org). Bank lending to post-conflict countries increased by 800% between 1980 and 1995 (World Bank 1998a, 2005a).