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Questionable Intentions, Good Practice

Norwegian Aid to Education Influenced by the Objective of Preventing Violent Extremism

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Abbreviations

CESCR	United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
ICESCR	International Covenant Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
INEE	International Network on Education in Emergencies
MFA	The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NRC	The Norwegian Refugee Council
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Research Question

“With guns you can kill terrorists, with education you can kill terrorism.”

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Malala Yousafzai

These words by the widely celebrated Nobel Peace Prize Laureate join a series of world-famous quotes about how education plays a key role in social change. Education is not only a human right, and thereby “something good” in itself, it is also said to be a powerful tool to realize other human rights or other development goals. In recent years, education has also been highlighted as part of the solution to one of the greatest challenges of our time – terrorism.

The quote by Malala Yousafzai does not only reflect the belief in what education can do, it is also evidence of the growing disbelief in the effectiveness of the so-called “War on Terror”. Indeed, the perception that education can be used as a tool to prevent violent extremism was sparked by a shift in the counter-terrorism field. While counter-terrorism through military means was the main strategy the first years after 9/11, the battle against terrorism has now also moved into the field of development and human rights. A catalyst for this change might have been the growing recognition of the counter-productivity of the traditional counter-terrorism strategy, and of the fact that the widespread human rights violations occurring in the course of it might spark radicalization processes.¹ Consequently, the UN Security Council, other UN organs, international organizations and states have increasingly emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach addressing “*the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism*”², such as poor governance, human rights violations and lack of socioeconomic opportunities³.

One aspect of this approach has come to be known as countering violent extremism (CVE) or preventing violent extremism (PVE). These two terms, which are used interchangeably, are used to describe measures that states use to prevent violent extremism narratives that can incite terrorist attacks. These often include measures to empower youth, cultural, religious or community leaders, civil society groups, and to promote social inclusion and cohesion. Sever-

¹ Duffy 2015, p. 546

² A/RES/60/288, para. I

³ A/70/674, paras 24-31

al strategies and policy documents emphasize education as a central action area.⁴ Governments are encouraged to invest in education because it is argued that such an investment can contribute to the eradication of poverty and social marginalization, and build youth's resilience against ideologies of violent extremism.⁵ Consequently, donor governments have started to link foreign aid to education with the objective of preventing violent extremism.

On the one hand, the shift towards more focus on protection of human rights and promotion of socio-economic opportunities has been widely applauded. As Duffy points out, the legitimacy and effectiveness of any counter-terrorism measure depends on it being grounded in the framework of human rights and rule of law.⁶ In addition, the initiatives linking social grievances, human rights violations and the spread of terrorism fit neatly with the widely accepted idea that there is a nexus between security, development and human rights.⁷

On the other hand, the new approach to prevent violent extremism has also been met with skepticism. Some worry that these policies, which are based on vague definitions of violent extremism and oversimplified explanations of radicalization, are being transported and adopted uncritically.⁸ Since lack of development and human rights violations are seen as root causes of terrorism, others are concerned that funding for civil society working in these fields will be tied to prevention of violent extremism – thereby, compromising the independence and pluralism of civil society. Practitioners in the field also argue that the approach to prevention of violent extremism is in conflict with the rights-based approach to education and the principles of humanitarian action.⁹ This could be understood as the “securitization” of development policy, in which development issues, such as education, are viewed through the lens of security. In addition, some researchers are skeptical towards using education as an intervention area, as it is at best uncertain whether education actually can contribute to preventing violent extremism.¹⁰

⁴ See for instance: A/70/674, para. 54; UNESCO 2017

⁵ UNESCO 2017, p. 22-23

⁶ Duffy 2015, p. 457

⁷ Ucko 2018, p. 257

⁸ Kundnani and Hayes 2018, p. 3

⁹ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017b

¹⁰ Allan et al. 2015

Ultimately, the linking of aid to education and the prevention of violent extremism is a question of human rights. States must carry out counter-terrorism measures in a manner that is consistent with their obligations under human rights law. This is a matter of securing the human rights of both the perpetrators and the victims of terrorism. The new approach to prevention of violent extremism that sets out to reach its objective by promoting human rights therefore seems to be the perfect solution. Education is a human right protected under Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 13 and Article 28 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The CESR General Comment no. 13 determines that “education is a human right in itself, and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights.”¹¹ However, the pressing question is whether it is possible to kill two birds with one stone. Is it possible for states to fulfill their obligations to ensure the right to education at the same time as using education as a tool to prevent violent extremism? Or is something lost along the way?

While there is a substantial amount of research on how counter-terrorism has influenced foreign aid¹², not much research is concentrated specifically on how the emerging prevention of violent extremism approach influences foreign aid. By now, the critical research on prevention of violent extremism has been largely concentrated on domestic efforts in European states.¹³ More knowledge about state practice is needed in order to know if the concerns of the critical voices can be confirmed.

Since 2014, education has been one of the top priorities of Norwegian foreign aid, and a large percentage of the funds goes to education in emergencies.¹⁴ The increased efforts for education is justified by speaking of education as a human right, a necessary component of socio-economic growth and a source of normality and stability for children in emergency situations. However, in recent years education has also been tied to the prevention of violent extremism in official statements and policy documents.¹⁵ In 2017, the Norwegian government intensified its efforts in fragile and conflict-affected states and regions, combining aims of security, hu-

¹¹ E/C.12/1999/10, para. 1

¹² See for instance Brown and Gravingholt 2016; Howell and Lind 2009; Woods 2009

¹³ See for instance: O’Donnell 2016, Thomas 2016

¹⁴ Norad 2017

¹⁵ See for instance Meld. St. 36 (2016-2017), Meld. St. 37 (2014-2015)

man rights and development.¹⁶ As part of these efforts, foreign aid is argued to be an instrument to support security objectives. In other words, there are reasons to believe that the above-mentioned approach to the prevention of violent extremism is influencing Norwegian aid to education. Accordingly, the research question of this thesis is as follows:

How does the objective of preventing violent extremism influence the rationales, priorities and objectives of Norwegian aid to education?

To make the question researchable and the findings concretely communicable, the main question is supported by the following four sub-questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of the approach to prevent violent extremism, and the major critiques against it?
2. To what extent has the objective of preventing violent extremism changed the way Norway is thinking about foreign aid to education?
3. How are key concepts associated with the prevention of violent extremism used in Norwegian discourse on foreign aid to education?
4. Has the objective of preventing violent extremism influenced the objectives and priorities of education projects carried out as part of Norwegian foreign aid to education?

1.2 Definitions and Clarifications

For the purpose of the thesis it is necessary to introduce some core concepts that will be discussed throughout the analysis. First, the research question introduces the term *violent extremism*. There is no universal definition of violent extremism, but the term is often understood as “*the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals*”.¹⁷ Violent extremism is often understood as the ideologies that give rise to *terrorism*. There is no universal definition of the term terrorism either, but it may be understood as referring to “*a particular strategy adopted to achieve a political goal, which is singularly the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear*.”¹⁸ In this context, the term *radicalization* is often used to describe “*the processes by which a person adopts extreme views or*

¹⁶ The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017b

¹⁷ UNESCO 2017, p. 19

¹⁸ UNESCO 2017, p. 19

practices to the point of legitimizing the use of violence".¹⁹ However, all of these and similar definitions are widely criticized for being vague and problematic. Therefore, the purpose here is just to introduce the terms, and chapter five of the thesis will explore why they are so widely debated and why their use is contested.

The research question also introduces the term *preventing violent extremism* (PVE). This term normally refers to a holistic approach that includes a wide range of measures and methods. It normally goes beyond the traditional *counter-terrorism* measures, which make use of military force and coercion as available under criminal law. Usually, these policies also aim to prevent violent extremism before it has fully emerged by addressing underlying causes that give rise to violent extremism, and ultimately terrorism. Although the policies may vary between contexts, the core ideas and principles are the same.²⁰ Preventing violent extremism is used interchangeably with *Countering violent extremism* (CVE). Both the UN and Norway normally use preventing violent extremism, and so will this thesis. In the subsequent chapters, this thesis will refer to the set of policies and measures that are aimed at reducing violent extremism as PVE.

The research question also refers to *Norwegian aid to education*. Norwegian aid can be understood as the Norwegian Official Development Aid (ODA), which is defined by OECD as "government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries"²¹. This aid may be provided bilaterally, or channeled through civil society organizations or multilateral development agencies, such as UN organizations. This includes humanitarian assistance and assistance for refugees, but excludes aid to military equipment and services and anti-terror activities. For the purpose of this thesis, "Norwegian aid to education" then refers to the share of Norwegian ODA that is used to support education initiatives, both in long-term development work and in humanitarian aid.

For the purpose of this thesis, the term *fragile states and regions* is based on the OECD-definition of state fragility: "*the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks.*"

¹⁹ UNESCO 2017, p. 19

²⁰ Kundnani and Hayes 2018, p. 5

²¹ OECD 2018

*Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies*²²

The term *securitization* is in this thesis understood as the process in which a phenomenon not normally associated with security is attached with security value or a problem is constructed as a threat.²³ This concept will be further elaborated upon in chapter three, where the theory of securitization is presented.

1.3 Readers' Guide

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Following the present introduction, the second chapter about methodology presents the research design, as well as the methods for data collection, method for analysis as well as issues related to validity, reliability and generalizability and ethical considerations. Thereafter, the third chapter presents previous research that uses theory of securitization to analyze the influence of counter-terrorism on foreign aid before explaining how the present thesis will contribute to the existing body of research. A theory of securitization of foreign aid will be used to analyze how the PVE-approach influences Norwegian foreign aid to education. The fourth chapter presents the international framework on PVE as it has emerged through the UN-system, with special weight on the framing of education within this framework. The following chapter five presents and discusses the main criticism of the PVE-approach as well as critical research on the connection between education and the prevention of violent extremism. After this, chapter six presents the case of Norway by giving an overview of Norwegian development policy, including Norwegian aid to education, as well as Norwegian foreign policy aimed at protecting Norwegian security. Chapter seven presents and analyzes the main findings of this thesis in light of securitization theory and the international framework on PVE. The chapter finds that Norwegian aid to education is connected to the prevention of violent extremism in discourse. There are indications that the objective of preventing violent extremism is influencing the rationale for providing aid to education and priorities being made. However, this is not translated into changed objectives for the aid to education. Lastly, chapter eight provides a conclusion, as well as suggesting some areas for further research.

²² OECD2016

²³ Buzan et al. 1998

2 Methodology

This chapter will present the methodological approach of the thesis, both in terms of presenting the rationale behind the chosen methods and accounting for the way they were applied. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section presents the case study approach as the overarching research design; the second section presents document studies and semi-structured interviews as the methods for data collection and the third section presents thematic analysis as the method of data analysis. The fourth section discusses issues related to validity, reliability and generalizability, before the fifth section discusses ethical considerations.

2.1 Research Design

In seeking to understand how prevention of violent extremism is influencing Norwegian foreign aid to education, this thesis applies a single case study approach that is qualitative in nature. A case study is a suitable approach as it allows for the in-depth study of a particular situation, namely Norwegian foreign aid to education. The current study falls into the category that Levy labels as *theory-guided case studies*. Theory-guided case studies are idiographic in the sense that they aim to explain or interpret a single case as “an end in itself rather than as a vehicle for developing broader theoretical generalizations”²⁴. The thesis analyzes the Norwegian case through the use of a theory of securitization of foreign aid and with reference to the international framework on PVE, which will be presented in subsequent chapters. As such, it is a conceptual framework focusing on certain theoretical aspects of reality that guides the interpretation of the case. This approach is preferable as it may decrease the risk of logical contradictions and make validity testing easier.²⁵

2.2 Data Collection

In the collection of data, document studies were combined with semi-structured interviews. This section explains how and why this was done.

2.2.1 Document Studies

First, relevant documents were studied. A range of written documents contains a lot of valuable information about Norwegian aid to education. These documents include Norwegian white papers on relevant policy areas, strategies for the implementation of specific policies, position papers of relevant civil society organizations, as well as official statements of repre-

²⁴ Levy 2008, p. 4

²⁵ Levy 2008, p. 5

sentatives of the government and its implementing partners in Norwegian civil society. Thus, the study of these documents can give insight in how the Norwegian government is thinking about foreign aid to education, both in terms of the language applied and whether education is connected specifically to the prevention of violent extremism or to security policy more broadly. Many of the official Norwegian documents and public statements are only available in Norwegian. Therefore, direct quotations from these documents have been translated into English.

Sano and Martin stress that despite document studies being one of the most prevalent methods employed by human rights scholars, it is often not considered as an element in the method toolbox.²⁶ Thus, there is often a lack of reflections among researchers on the advantages and disadvantages of studying documents. This thesis aims not to make this mistake. Although the study of these documents gives valuable information, it is not a sufficient method on its own. In the study of documents, it is important to have in mind what the documents are and what their purpose is. For example, they cannot alone give information on how Norwegian aid is implemented day to day, nor can they be treated as firm evidence of what they report.²⁷

2.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In view of the shortcomings of document studies, this method was combined with semi-structured interviews with professionals working in relevant positions within the Norwegian foreign affairs and the Norwegian aid system. Conducting interviews is a crucial method for gaining insight in the motivations that play a role in shaping policies, the interactions and internal debates between decision-makers at different levels, and the dynamics within and between bureaucracies and organizations.²⁸ Semi-structured interviews are flexible in nature as they are based on a set of prepared questions, but also allow for probing questions arising from the participant's response.²⁹ This type of interviews is a suitable method for this thesis, as it can be difficult to anticipate the responses of the interview participants and there may be need for follow-up questions.

²⁶ Sano and Martin 2017, p. 265

²⁷ Coffey 2014, p. 370

²⁸ Sano and Martin 2017, p. 272

²⁹ Morse 2012, p. 197

In order to find an appropriate sample of informants, I used purposive sampling – meaning that I systematically assessed who would be most relevant to interview.³⁰ Potential informants working in the relevant departments of the Norwegian aid system and relevant civil society organizations were identified through an initial review of the public information, reports and media articles about aid to education and prevention of violent extremism. Through initial contact with some of the potential informants, I received recommendations of new informants. Thus, the list of informants was slightly altered and expanded. In other words, purposive sampling was combined with snowball sampling.³¹

As will be explained in chapter six, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation manages Norwegian aid in close cooperation with multilateral organizations and Norwegian civil society organizations. In order to gain insight in different perspectives and experiences, the study includes eight informants from different parts of the Norwegian aid system. I interviewed two persons working with aid to education at a specialized level in the public authorities, one person working in UNICEF Norway and one person working in the Norwegian Refugee Council. Attempts were made at interviewing a representative from Save the Children Norway, but unfortunately the efforts proved fruitless. However, I managed to collect some data from this organization through telephone and email contact with two persons. I also interviewed a special envoy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' delegation to UNESCO in order to collect data about the Norwegian educational aid to UNESCO and about UNESCO's work on prevention of violent extremism. Lastly, I interviewed one person in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that has special knowledge about Norwegian positions and efforts in multilateral arenas where the prevention of violent extremism is discussed. An appendix with an overview of the informants, and time and place of the interviews is attached to the thesis.³² In the analysis, the informants will be referred to with their designated number from the appendix.

The interviews were all conducted in April 2018, and lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The interviews were conducted at the informants' respective places of employment in Oslo, except for the two representatives working abroad for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were interviewed by telephone. For practical reasons, the interviews conducted by telephone

³⁰ Rapley 2014, p. 54

³¹ Bryman 2016, p. 408

³² Appendix I

were not audio recorded. With the consent of the informants, all the other interviews were audio recorded, and later transcribed. All of the interviews, except one, were conducted in Norwegian, which means that any direct quotations from these interviews included in the following chapter have been translated into English.

Prior to the interviews, an interview guide was developed. This is attached in Appendix II.³³ The questions were grounded in the research question, and shaped by expectations after previous research, as well as the study of reports and documents on the issue. Since the informants had different experiences depending on their different positions, not all questions were equally relevant for every interview and follow-up questions varied. This confirmed that semi-structured interviews were a suitable method, as it gave me the opportunity to be flexible and continuously adapt to new research needs.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through the use of *thematic analysis*. This is a strategy for reducing and analyzing data by categorizing, summarizing and reconstructing data in a way that allows for capturing the most important themes within the data set.³⁴ A “theme” is a category that the data is organized into, in order to identify patterns and connections between different aspects of data. These themes can then be analyzed and interpreted in light of the research question. Thematic analysis is a flexible method that can be applied across a range of theoretical approaches,³⁵ and for the analysis of data collected through both document study and interviews.³⁶ Thus, it is a suitable method for this thesis, and I have applied Braun and Clarke’s six-phase guide to doing thematic analysis.³⁷

Firstly, I immersed myself in the data by repeated reading in an active way, looking for meanings and patterns. As I did this, I noted down my initial ideas. This phase also involved transcription of the interviews. After having familiarized myself with the data, I started coding it by writing notes and using highlighters in different colours to identify special aspects and potential patterns in the texts. Then I copy-pasted coded extracts from the texts into separate files so that the data with the same code were collated. When the data was coded and collated,

³³ Appendix II

³⁴ Maxwell and Chmiel 2014, p. 26

³⁵ Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 5

³⁶ Coffey 2014, p. 372

³⁷ Braun and Clarke 2006

I moved on to phase three in which I sorted different codes into potential themes and searched for relationships between the codes, and eventually between themes. In this process, I used a mind-map to help in organizing my thoughts. The candidate themes were reviewed and refined, making sure that the themes were coherent and could be clearly distinguished from each other³⁸. When having a set of themes I was satisfied with, I used time to carefully analyze each theme in order to identify the essence of each theme and how it relates to the overall story. Finally, when the themes were fully defined I made a written report that relates the findings of the analysis back to the research question, previous literature and theory. This report can be read in chapter seven.

2.4 Validity, Reliability and Generalization

Reliability and validity are two of the most common criteria for evaluating the quality of research. Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of study are repeatable. As social settings and phenomena change over time, qualitative research is difficult to replicate. Therefore, an alternative approach to increase reliability in qualitative research is to keep records of all phases of the research project, which may allow peers to evaluate whether proper procedures have been followed and assess if theoretical inferences can be justified.³⁹ It is with this aim that this chapter thoroughly describes the research process and the choices taken throughout it. In addition, the interview guide and an overview of the informants are attached in two appendixes to the thesis in order to ensure transparency.⁴⁰

Validity is the question of whether the findings accurately reflect the concepts and phenomena they are meant to denote. In the analysis of documents, the researcher must continuously be aware of the document's intended purpose and reflect on how the document is read, understood and used by its readers.⁴¹ By combining this method with semi-structured interviews, the validity is strengthened. While the documents can give information about discourse and official policies, the informants can give insight in how the policies are carried out in practice. By continuously reflecting upon issues related to validity and by placing the findings in to a larger scholarly context, I attempt to increase the validity. As chapter seven shows, some of the findings of this thesis are largely consistent with previous research.

³⁸ Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 20

³⁹ Bryman 2016, p. 383-384

⁴⁰ Appendix I and Appendix II

⁴¹ Coffey 2014, p. 372

As described in the research design, in a theory-guided case study the case is an end in itself, without aims of making broader generalizations. Thus, a limitation of this study is that it may be difficult to generalize the findings of the study, particularly considering the small number of people interviewed. The perceptions and experience of my informants are not necessarily representative of everyone working within the Norwegian aid system. This could have been improved by collecting data from a larger sample of informants. Preferably, a larger sample should have included informants from other civil society actors, informants responsible for the bilateral aid channeled through Norwegian embassies, as well as informants at the offices that civil society organizations and multilateral organizations have in the recipient countries. Also the document studies could have included the study of program applications, program reports and result frameworks of aid programs. With the current sample, the findings of this study merely serve as an indicator of the actual situation in the Norwegian aid system. Nevertheless, as I interviewed key persons within the largest actors in Norwegian aid to education, it is likely that they depict the situation quite accurately.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Prior to each interview, the informants were given information about the aim of the thesis, issues of consent, and given the opportunity to be anonymized. The majority of the interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the informants. As all informants were individuals working with the research topic at a professional level and the purpose of the thesis does not cover any issues of sensitivity, no major ethical issues were encountered. However, three of the participants chose to be anonymous in order to be able to speak freely about the issue. Therefore, special considerations were taken to ensure their anonymity. For this reason, I do not specify their gender. In addition, I only refer to them as working for the Norwegian authorities with the management of foreign aid or as a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, without specifying which department or institution. In the case of some of the informants whom have not been anonymized and whose critical comments have been directly quoted, I have clarified this and received their consent.

The project has been registered with and approved by the Data Protection Official for Research at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). All notes from the interviews, audio recordings and interview transcriptions will be deleted after the submission of the thesis.

3 The Influence of Counter-Terrorism on Foreign Aid

As this thesis aims to explore how Norwegian foreign aid is being influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism, it is necessary to give an account of previous research on this field and to introduce the theory that will be applied for the analysis. The first section of this chapter seeks to do so, before the second section presents how this thesis will contribute to the existing body of research.

3.1 Previous Research

There is a quite a substantive amount of research on how the broader counter-terrorism agenda is influencing foreign aid. Many of the scholars that have contributed to this field are making use of theories of “securitization”.

Securitization is a concept developed in the post-Cold War period. When “new wars” emerged and increasing amounts of foreign aid were channeled to conflict-affected and fragile states, the development and security sectors were brought closer together, and security as a concept was expanded to encompass more than the use of military force. In 1994, the UN Development Programme gave out the *Human Development Report*, which introduced the concept of human security. This concept allowed for the framing of social and economic conditions as security concerns,⁴² and as such it became very important for the study of the relationship between development, security and human rights. Since then, the claim that there is a nexus between these concepts has been repeated over and over again by NGOs, policy makers and UN officials. This perception can be summed up in the words of former Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan:

*Not only are development, security and human rights all imperative; they also reinforce each other. (...) While poverty and denial of human rights may not be said to “cause” civil war, terrorism or organized crime, they all greatly increase the risk of instability and violence. (...) We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.*⁴³

Numerous scholars have debated what this relationship entails and how it works, recognizing that it is far from straightforward.⁴⁴ Despite inherent restrictions in defining and understand-

⁴² UNDP 1994

⁴³ A/59/2005, Section IB, paras 16-17

⁴⁴ For an overview, see Spear and Williams 2012, pp. 7-36

ing the so-called nexus, the acceptance of its existence is so widespread that, as Duffield remarks,⁴⁵ it qualifies as a truth of our time.

In response to this expansion of the security concept, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde in 1998 gave out the book “*Security. A New Framework for Analysis*” which presents a new analytical framework built around the concept of “securitization”.⁴⁶ Here they argue that securitization must be understood as a discursive process in which certain problems are constructed as threats and fields normally not associated with security are attached with security value. Thereby, emergency measures are being legitimized. By claiming that securitization leads to emergency measures, often outside democratic control, the authors argue for the need to deal with special issues within the rules of normal politics, so-called “de-securitization”. As such, it is not only a framework for analysis; it also holds a strong normative component. This theory has become highly influential, and has shaped much of the research on how counter-terrorism is influencing foreign aid.

One of those who build on the “securitization theory” in analyzing how foreign aid is being used as a tool by donor states to back up their national security interests is Mark Duffield. He views securitization as an inherently problematic process, and argues that the relationship between security and development is not one of reciprocity. Rather, human rights considerations or development goals are being used to conceal the self-interest of Western states and legitimize military interventions.⁴⁷ According to Duffield’s view, linking security and development does not empower those suffering from insecurity and underdevelopment, but it makes foreign aid into a tool for the promotion of Western dominance and control.

Another scholar who presents a radical critique of securitization is Ngaire Woods. She was the first scholar to discuss post-9/11 securitization of aid across several donor cases,⁴⁸ and she presents a rather gloomy outlook for the future of poverty-oriented foreign aid. Her prognosis was that development goals risk being completely abandoned in the name of the war on terror, or as she put it: “Donors may hijack foreign aid to pursue their own security objectives rather

⁴⁵ Duffield 2007, p.1

⁴⁶ Buzan et al. 1998

⁴⁷ Duffield 2007, p. 3

⁴⁸ According to Brown and Gravingholt 2016, p. 9

than those which would help the poorest”.⁴⁹ Woods also criticizes the introduction of initiatives to ensure “foreign policy coherence”. Foreign policy coherence is mostly spoken of in positive terms. The idea is that by seeing different policy goals in relation to each other and by working on them simultaneously, it is possible to create synergies and positive trade-offs in several fields. Woods, on the other hand, argues that it might render development policies more susceptible to donors’ security interests.⁵⁰

Although both Duffield and Woods present powerful and important critiques, this thesis aims to apply a more nuanced approach, which recognizes that foreign aid can be securitized and at the same time motivated by normative goals of reducing poverty and protecting human rights. In the book *Counter-Terrorism Aid and Civil Society. Before and after War on Terror*, Howell and Lind examine securitization post 9/11. They show how counter-terrorism has consolidated the assumption that there exists a positive relationship between development and security and accelerated the trends from the post-Cold War era.⁵¹ While some attention is given to how security interests are being absorbed into the framing, structuring and implementation of foreign aid, their main focus is on the effects that securitization has on civil society.

Stephen Brown and Jörn Grävingholt, on the other hand, apply the concept of securitization to analyze the actual effects of securitization on the aid system itself – on the rationales, policies, priorities and practices of donors. In the edited volume *The Securitization of Foreign Aid*, they apply an approach that differs from those applied by other scholars reviewed above. The starting point of Brown and Grävingholt is not a normative one in which all forms of securitization are written off as *ipso facto* negative. Rather, they explore securitization as a trend or continuous process taking different forms, in varying degrees at different times and at different levels.⁵² They divide the securitization into three main categories: that new discourses such as “fragile states” and “whole-of-government approach” is used to justify and implement changes; that institutional changes are carried out within and across government departments to reflect the changes; and that new directions of aid flows to strategically important or conflict-affected regions and states.⁵³

⁴⁹ Woods 2005, p. 1

⁵⁰ Woods 2005, p. 407; See also: Thede 2013, p. 797

⁵¹ Howell and Lind 2009, p. 4

⁵² Brown and Grävingholt 2016, p. 3

⁵³ Brown, Grävingholt and Raddatz 2016, p. 239

By comparing the EU and five major donor countries, they seek to explain what makes some aid systems more susceptible to securitization than others. They suggest that there are four factors that provide some explanation: First, the position that the donor country holds in the international system, suggesting that it is more natural for those with a hegemonic status to include security components in their aid programs; second, whether the foreign policy traditions of the donor country are more altruistic or self-interest based; third, the existence and mandate of institutions such as laws, and lastly, the role of personalities and leadership in shaping policies.⁵⁴

3.2 My Contribution

As will be shown in the following chapter, a key characteristic of the PVE-approach is that it aims to be holistic in the sense that all parts of government and all sectors of society are included and that a wide range of issues are addressed. This approach is premised on the idea that addressing human rights and development concerns can lead to greater security. Inherently, this approach lays the ground for the securitization of foreign aid. Thus, the theory of securitization is highly relevant for this thesis. It helps in understanding how an issue normally understood as a human rights or development concern, namely lack of education, can be understood as a security issue because it may lead to violent extremism. Therefore, this thesis will draw support from Brown and Grävingholt's approach to securitization of foreign aid, in analyzing how Norwegian aid to education is influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism.

However, while the authors contributing in the volume of Brown and Grävingholt analyze the securitization of entire aid systems, this thesis will only cover a small part of the Norwegian aid system, namely aid to education. Therefore, not every aspect of the theory of Brown and Grävingholt is entirely suitable for this thesis. The first category in their approach, that new discourse such as "fragile states" and "whole-of-government approach" is used to justify and implement changes, remains relevant for this thesis. For the purpose of this thesis, it can be interpreted as a sign of securitization when education is tied to terms as "fragile states", "radicalization" and "prevention of violent extremism". Since the "whole-of-government approach" is a cornerstone of the PVE-approach, this might also be reflected in the discourse on aid to education.

⁵⁴ Brown, Grävingholt and Raddatz 2016, p. 251

The second category of Brown and Grävingsholt is that institutional changes are carried out within and across government departments to reflect the changes. This category fits better for research on aid systems at a more overarching level than this thesis. Rather than making institutional changes, I presume that the influence of the PVE would be reflected in the programming dimensions of aid to education. If the foreign aid to education was seen only as an instrument to prevent violent extremism, this would entail changed objectives, priorities and activities of the aid programs. The third category of Brown and Grävingsholt is that aid is directed to strategically important or conflict-affected regions and states. In the case of the present thesis, it is relevant to investigate whether aid to education is increasingly being directed towards countries and regions that are seen as more vulnerable to violent extremism.

In exploring these issues, it is central to uncover the interactions and dynamics between the different parties involved in the management of the Norwegian aid to education. For instance, it would be valuable to know whether Norway's implementing partners have experienced a change in expectations from the Norwegian authorities, or whether they are themselves using concerns of violent extremism to mobilize additional resources or expand the reach of activities. This can help in understanding why or why not securitization is taking place. I will also draw support from the factors that Brown and Grävingsholt suggested as important for explaining why some aid systems are more susceptible to securitization than others. In sum, the analysis will explore to which extent the Norwegian government has promoted and enacted foreign aid to education as a tool to prevent violent extremism.

4 The International Framework on PVE and Education

This chapter gives an account of the international framework on PVE, and how education is being framed as an area of intervention within this framework. This is necessary in order to understand how foreign aid to education may become securitized. Norwegian foreign aid to education is not shaped in a vacuum, but within an international context. Therefore, one must understand the international framework on PVE, in order to understand how and why Norwegian aid to education might be influenced by it.

4.1 From a Security-Based Towards a Holistic Approach

The UN has dealt with counter-terrorism since the early years of the Cold War and decolonialization period. However, it was in the aftermath of 9/11, that counter-terrorism was brought to the top of the agenda in international forums such as the UN. Since then, the UN Security Council has had large influence in shaping both international and national counter-terrorism measures. One reason for the prominent role of the Security Council on this issue might be that counter-terrorism has predominantly been regarded as a security issue. Another reason might be that the passing of resolutions in the Security Council allows for rapid decisions. This is well illustrated by the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1373, only two weeks after 9/11. The resolution calls upon states to adopt broad-reaching measures to prevent, suppress and criminalize terrorist acts and their financing. Because Security Council resolutions are binding on all UN member states, under Article 25 of the UN Charter, this and subsequent resolutions have had large impact on forming national policies.

Too often, human rights have been sacrificed in the name of counter-terrorism.⁵⁵ By the mid-2000s, however, there was a widespread concern at the failure of the US-led “war on terror” and its negative impact on democracy and human rights. Thus, in 2006, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, aimed at promoting more comprehensive and consistent counter-terrorism efforts at national, regional and international levels. Annexed to the strategy is a Plan of Action comprised of four pillars: (I) tackling conditions conducive to terrorism; (II) preventing and combating terrorism; (III) building countries’ capacity to combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard; and (IV) ensuring respect for human rights for all and the rule of law while countering terrorism.

⁵⁵ Duffy 2015, pp. 456 - 661

Under the first pillar, factors such as prolonged unresolved conflicts, human rights violations, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and lack of good governance are to be addressed.⁵⁶ Among the proposed measures are “education and public awareness programs” promoting a culture of peace, respect and tolerance, and efforts aimed at eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development. Since its adoption, the Strategy has been reviewed every two years. Despite the more traditional counter-terrorism measures being favored over these softer measures in the first years after its adoption, the Strategy marked a shift in the counter-terrorism field. More attention has gradually been given to measures aiming at addressing the root causes of terrorism and at preventing violent extremism that is thought to give rise to terrorism. Consequently, the range of measures and the set of partners involved have been widened.⁵⁷ The vocabulary has also been broadened, from previously referring to terrorism, to now referring to violent extremism that may lead to terrorism.

In 2014, the UN Security Council for the first time passed a resolution calling for a more comprehensive approach against terrorism. In Resolution 2178, the Security Council *inter alia* “condemns the violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism”⁵⁸ and calls upon member states to prevent this kind of violent extremism, including preventing radicalization.⁵⁹ The resolution underscores the importance of international cooperation between states, but also with “*relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies (...) including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches*”.⁶⁰ Important to note, the resolution repeatedly asserts that some kinds of violent extremism are conducive for the spread of terrorism, without explaining what this entails. Similarly, the role of education in “countering terrorist narratives” is underscored without further explanation.⁶¹

⁵⁶ A/RES/60/288, para I

⁵⁷ For a historic overview, see: Ucko 2018

⁵⁸ S/RES/2178, para. 1

⁵⁹ S/RES/2178, para. 15

⁶⁰ S/RES/2178, para. 16

⁶¹ S/RES/2178, para 19

4.2 The Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism

In 2016, ten years after the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Secretary-General asserted that there was still a strong emphasis on security-based counter-terrorism measures, and consequently a need for a more comprehensive approach to prevent violent extremism. With basis in UN Security Council Resolution 2178, he presented a full-fledged Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. This Plan of Action, with more than 70 recommendations for global, regional, and national efforts, has been one of the primary catalysts for the PVE-approach. In Resolution 70/254, the UN General Assembly welcomed the initiative by the Secretary-General and took note of the Plan of Action⁶². In subsequent Resolution 70/291, the UN General Assembly recommended that member states “*consider the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Plan of Action, as applicable to the national context...*”⁶³

The Plan of Action notes that there is no clear definition of violent extremism⁶⁴, and circumvents the question by saying that it is the prerogative of states to define terms as “terrorism” and “violent extremism”, as long as the definitions are consistent with their obligations under international law. Thus, the Plan of Action is presented as “*a practical approach to preventing violent extremism, without venturing to address questions of definition*”.⁶⁵

While recognizing that there is need for more research on the drivers of violent extremism, the Plan of Action asserts that there are a few areas of consensus in research and bases its recommendations for action on a description of so-called push and pull factors causing violent extremism, respectively individual motivations and conditions that are conducive of violent extremism. Based on these factors, different areas for action are outlined, including: dialogue and conflict prevention; strengthening governance, human rights and the rule of law; engaging communities; empowering youth; gender equality and empowering women; education, skills development and employment facilitation; and strategic communications, the Internet and social media. Recognizing that violent extremism is multilayered and contextual, the Plan of

⁶² A/RES/70/254,

⁶³ A/RES/70/291, para. 40

⁶⁴ A/70/674, para 2

⁶⁵ A/70/674, para 5

Action encourages UN Member States to do their own analyses of local and national drivers of violent extremism, and then develop national and regional action plans.⁶⁶

In the development of these national plans, it is recommended that a wide range of government actors are included; the law enforcement, social service providers, ministries of education, as well as the broader society; including non-governmental actors.⁶⁷ This has come to be known as the “whole-of-government”-approach or “whole-of-society”-approach. With regards to the mobilization of resources for these measures, Member States are recommended to adapt existing funds in different sectors to be sensitive to violent extremism.⁶⁸ For instance, the Plan of Action refers to the Sustainable Development Goals and existing funds tied to them as relevant for the prevention of violent extremism.

For the purpose of this thesis, the Plan of Action’s recommendations in the field of education are naturally of further interest. Lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalization and discrimination, and human rights violations are mentioned as conditions conducive to violent extremism⁶⁹, and education is perceived as a tool that can contribute in addressing these challenges by equipping children with necessary skills, contributing to peaceful coexistence and tolerance and respect for human rights.⁷⁰ Further, low levels of education is mentioned as a factor making individuals more vulnerable for indoctrination,⁷¹ and education is thought to mitigate this by fostering critical thinking as well as media and digital literacy. On the basis of this, Member States are recommended to invest particularly in early childhood education as well as providing comprehensive primary to tertiary education, implement education programs that promote “global citizenship”, critical thinking and digital literacy, explore means of introducing civic education, provide relevant education opportunities that meet the demands of the labour market, and promote entrepreneurship in order to provide young people with career opportunities.⁷²

⁶⁶ A/70/674, para. 44

⁶⁷ A/70/674, para 44a

⁶⁸ A/70/674 paras 46-47.

⁶⁹ A/70/674, paras 24-31

⁷⁰ A/70/674, para 54

⁷¹ A/70/674, para 34

⁷² A/70/674, para 54

Needless to say, many states struggle with too little resources to create education systems that meet all of these aspirations. Therefore, international cooperation between states is encouraged, and the Plan of Action also calls for an all-of-UN approach to support the efforts to prevent violent extremism at the national, regional and global levels. Under this Plan, all UN entities are instructed to redouble the efforts to prevent violent extremism in cooperation with UN Member States.⁷³ In the course of this, UN organizations working with education should therefore adapt existing programs so that they target the drivers of violent extremism, as well as take on new initiatives where it is needed.

4.3 A Special Focus on the Role of Education

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an organization that has taken the UN Secretary-General's call for action seriously. As a normative organization, it has further developed the understanding of the role of education in preventing violent extremism. In 2016, the organization published "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism", and in 2017 "Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide for policy-makers". These documents were made in direct response to the UNESCO Executive Board's decision on UNESCO's role in promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism⁷⁴ and with reference to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The Teacher's guide is, as the name indicates, directed towards teachers and seeks to give practical advices on how to discuss the issue of violent extremism with students, and how to create an inclusive classroom environment.

The Policy Guide, on the other hand, gives recommendations on more overarching levels. In the same manner as the Plan of Action, the policy guide accounts for drivers of violent extremism. Although the guide accounts for the same structural causes of violent extremism as the Plan of Action, it is mainly focused on understanding "*the personal journeys of radicalization that can lead an individual to commit a violent act*".⁷⁵ As such, the role of education is also described at the individual level: "*to create the conditions that build the defences, within*

⁷³ A/70/674, para. 58

⁷⁴ 197 EX/46

⁷⁵ UNESCO 2017, p. 20

*learners, against violent extremism and strengthen their commitment to non-violence and peace”.*⁷⁶

On this basis, the Guide proposes action in five areas: education policies for inclusion and diversity; pedagogies that strengthen learner’s resilience to resist extremist narratives and promote constructive engagement; creating safe and supportive school environments; targeted measures against learners at risk of radicalization; and cooperation with stakeholders such as families and religious communities.⁷⁷ It is emphasized that responses must be tailored to the national context both in terms of the nature of violent extremism and in terms of the capacities of the education system, and that education can only have limited impact on prevention. The need for activities that are human rights-based and in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education for all is also underscored. On this note, it is worth mentioning that SDG 4 includes a target on promoting education that promotes a culture of peace and non-violence as well as global citizenship.⁷⁸

4.4 Other Relevant Developments

Among other important international documents and resolutions on the prevention of violent extremism is the report “Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity” published by the UN Development Program (UNDP) in 2016. The objective of the report is to present a development approach to the prevention of violent extremism. It stands out from other documents by clearly pointing at the role of global politics in destabilizing regimes and inflaming regional tensions contributing to the spread of violent extremism, for instance in Libya and the Israel-Palestinian conflict.⁷⁹ This report also holds that education plays a role in fostering global citizenship and respect for human rights and diversity. Importantly, it also recognizes that education can be used for the opposite – contributing to radicalization. It refers especially to unregulated religious schools preaching conservative sectarianism, and on this basis underscores that experts are calling for the standardization of school curricula.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ UNESCO 2017, p. 22

⁷⁷ UNESCO 2017, ch. 3

⁷⁸ A/RES/70/1, Sustainable Development Goal 4.7

⁷⁹ UNDP 2016, p. 19

⁸⁰ UNDP 2016, p. 32

Another important document is the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 Youth, Peace and Security which recognizes the role of youth in maintaining and promoting peace and security. The resolution puts due weight on the positive potential of giving youth a voice in decision-making and peace processes. It also stresses the need to address factors that might put youth at the risk of radicalization, and on this basis emphasizes the positive role of education and importance of creating job opportunities.⁸¹

In terms of relevant actors at the international arena, outside the UN, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum must be mentioned. This is a consortium of 30 states and the European Union, established in 2011. The Forum was established as a reaction to a perceived ineffectiveness of the UN system, and those states that had invested most in the “war on terror” believed that international cooperation in counter-terrorism would be more efficient outside the bureaucracy of the UN.⁸² Nevertheless, the forum has a stated goal of supporting and catalyzing the implementation of the UN counter-terrorism framework, including the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.⁸³

Another relevant actor is the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). This network has both states and non-governmental actors as their members. The main objective of the network is to work for access to safe, quality, and relevant education in crises and conflict situations. Referring to the UN Plan of Action, INEE has also taken part in the debate about the role of education in preventing violent extremism. In a thematic paper on the topic, INEE, like UNDP, argues that education has two faces: on the one hand, it can promote inclusion and develop more engaged citizens; on the other hand, it can exacerbate existing tensions, and reproduce unequal structures. According to INEE, in order to prevent violent extremism, education initiatives must therefore “look both within and beyond the classroom”.⁸⁴ That INEE is active on this issue indicates how the PVE-approach is influencing on other actors, also outside the UN system.

⁸¹ S/RES/2250, paras 11, 12 and 16

⁸² Kundnani and Hayes 2018, p. 35

⁸³ Global Counter Terrorism Forum (n.d)

⁸⁴ International Network for Education in Emergencies (n.d), p. 4

4.5 Concluding Remarks

The emerging international framework on PVE is relevant for the aim of this thesis, as it shows how education can be framed as a security issue within this approach. In addition, the framework can be expected to influence Norwegian policies and practice. As previously accounted for, the UN Security Council Resolutions are binding on all UN Member States and play an important role in shaping customary law. Although non-binding, the UN General Assembly resolutions may become international customary law and influence national policies and practices. So do the reports and guides from UN agencies such as UNESCO and UNDP, which Norway is a member of. A recent content analysis of nine different countries' national action plans to prevent violent extremism, finds that education is one of the measures that is most frequently mentioned.⁸⁵ This indicates that the international framework plays a large role in shaping national policies, and that education is being promoted as a way of preventing violent extremism. It is within this international context that Norwegian policies on preventing violent extremism and aid to education are shaped. Hence, the subsequent chapters analyzing how Norwegian aid to education is influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism will proceed with reference to this framework. However, before doing so, the next chapter will present some of the critiques against the PVE-approach.

⁸⁵ Fransen, Anderlini and Holmes 2017, p. 10

5 Problematizing the PVE-Approach

As the international framework on PVE is emerging, and more states are implementing national action plans to prevent violent extremism, a number of scholars and practitioners are problematizing it. This thesis aims to contribute by critically assessing how the objective of preventing violent extremism is influencing other policy areas. Thus, this chapter will give an overview of some of the main critiques. By doing so, the chapter seeks to enhance the understanding for why it is important with insight in how Norwegian aid to education is influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism.

5.1 Vague Concepts

As briefly touched upon in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the terminology surrounding violent extremism and efforts to prevent violent extremism is complex and contested. Because the PVE-approach aims at preventing possible future acts of violence, these efforts depend on clear definitions of the problem as well as plausible explanations of cause-and-effect. This has generated research trying to understand violent extremism and the factors giving rise to it,⁸⁶ and giving policy recommendations based on this knowledge.⁸⁷ But it has also led to a great deal of research problematizing concepts such as terrorism and violent extremism, arguing that the definitions of these terms are vague. It is argued, that in turn these vague definitions may lead to opportunistic and politicized policies to prevent violent extremism, for example with a disproportionate focus on Muslims.⁸⁸

After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, laws have been rewritten, policies have been changed and extraordinary measures have been imposed in order to suppress terrorism. But the universal condemnation of terrorism has not been accompanied with a universal definition of the term. Terrorism is a diverse and complex concept, and today there are at least 250 definitions of terrorism.⁸⁹ The diplomatic attempts to draft a global terrorism convention have yet to succeed, mainly because it is difficult to reach consensus about a single definition of terrorism.⁹⁰ Thus, terrorism is an imprecise and ambiguous term. Several scholars have, however, argued

⁸⁶ Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010

⁸⁷ Ragab 2015; Allan et al. 2015; Frazer & Nünlist 2015

⁸⁸ Thomas 2010; Kundnani and Hayes 2018, p. 13

⁸⁹ Lidén 2018, p. 5

⁹⁰ Duffy 2015, p. 30

that perhaps a legal definition of the term is not necessary, as long as acts that are part of terrorist activities are illegal.⁹¹ Indeed, many of the acts that are typically associated with terrorism are prohibited by international conventions as well as domestic laws, for example as terrorist bombings, hijacking, and hostage-taking.⁹² On the other hand, many scholars are concerned over UN Security Council resolutions imposing legally binding obligations on states to take extensive counter-terrorism measures – without defining terrorism.⁹³ These resolutions then leave it up to states themselves to define the terrorism when imposing measures against it. Thus, this gap opens up for misuse of the term terrorism – with negative implications for human rights.⁹⁴ In relation to this, the director of Amnesty International USA, Steven Hawkins warned against repressive states “taking advantage of CVE-mania” and “using international funding to violate human rights in the absence of appropriate safeguards”.⁹⁵

As spelled out in some of the Security Council resolutions discussed in the previous chapter, violent extremism is put on the agenda because it is understood as a phenomenon giving rise to terrorism. Like with “terrorism”, there is no universally accepted definition of “violent extremism”. While some critics have argued that violent extremism is just a cosmetic replacement of the word terrorism,⁹⁶ it is generally understood as a wider term than terrorism. Terrorism is often thought of as a particular strategy adopted to achieve a goal, while violent extremism does not only refer to the violent actions, but also the ideological sympathy that allows for these actions.⁹⁷ As explained in the previous chapter, the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action holds that it is the prerogative of states to define violent extremism, and thereby circumvents the definitional issues. UNESCO, on the other hand, defines violent extremism as “the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals”⁹⁸. As noted in the introduction of this thesis, this is probably the most common understanding of the term. The Norwegian authorities use a similar definition.⁹⁹ Yet, this definition has been criticized for being vague and based on problematic pre-

⁹¹ Walter 2004, p. 24

⁹² Duffy 2015, p. 68

⁹³ See for example S/RES/1373

⁹⁴ Duffy 2015, p. 73

⁹⁵ Hayes and Qureshi 2016

⁹⁶ Frazer & Nünlist 2015, p. 2

⁹⁷ Frazer & Nünlist 2015, p. 2; Kundnani and Hayes 2018

⁹⁸ UNESCO 2017, p. 19

⁹⁹ Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2014

sumptions. For example, critical voices have pointed out that this definition would also cover those who, because of ideology, support military interventions by the US and other Western states carried out for political purposes, such as regime change.¹⁰⁰ As noted by Lidén, any notion of violent extremism is relative to a notion of the “normal” or non-extreme.¹⁰¹ Research on how to prevent violent extremism is therefore, according to him, based on a set of presumptions. Although most scholars start out by nuancing or problematizing these presumptions, they do produce knowledge that is used to forward the PVE-approach. Too often, the nuances are not reflected in the policies under this approach.

Also the term *radicalization*, often used to describe the process of an individual becoming a terrorist or violent extremist, is problematized by many. This process is often associated with religious fundamentalism that is inherently anti-liberal and anti-democratic. Critical voices argue that this notion of radicalization overlooks that radical ideas or ideologies are not problematic *per se*, and that history is full of examples of radical ideas being catalysts for positive social change, for example the abolition of slavery or universal suffrage.¹⁰² Others have even called the very notion of radicalization “ill-defined, complex and controversial”.¹⁰³ In sum, many of the terms that constitute the basis for the PVE-approach are problematic.

5.2 Misguided Strategies

Nevertheless, the lack of precise definitions has not halted the implementation of policies to prevent violent extremism. The approach quickly gained momentum, as it harmonized with several other processes at the UN, such as efforts to integrate the UN’s work on development, human rights and security, and efforts to productively engage with civil society.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, a variety of policies and measures are being implemented by states all over the world. Because violent extremism is generally understood to be a wider concept than terrorism, preventing violent extremism is also a broader project than counter-terrorism. Indeed, the aim is precisely a holistic approach addressing the underlying causes of violent extremism both at micro and macro levels by using preventative measures rather than reactive measures. Despite

¹⁰⁰ Kundani and Hayes 2018, p. 12

¹⁰¹ Lidén 2018

¹⁰² Frazer & Nünlist 2015, p. 2, UNDP 2016, p. 4

¹⁰³ Coolsaet 2008, p. 240

¹⁰⁴ Ucko 2018, p. 256-257

the inevitable positive sides of addressing grievances and injustice that are perceived as the root causes of terrorism, this all-encompassing approach has been problematized in several ways. Some argue that whole-of-government approaches and establishment of systems to address “early warning signs” of radicalization, such as in UKs *Prevent* strategy, has turned government institutions such as schools into policing agencies.¹⁰⁵ In addition, there is a fear that these policies might render whole groups of people suspicious because of their connection to a particular religion or ideology, and that too often there is an overly strong focus on Muslim violent extremism.¹⁰⁶

Further, Kundani and Hayes stress that broad-reaching measures to prevent violent extremism are often imposed without much evidence of their effect, and that it seems like these policies are exempted from the normally high demands for evidence-based policies.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, in the previously discussed UNESCO guide for policy makers on how to use education to prevent violent extremism, it is held that “*While there can be intense discussion about the specific role of education in the prevention of violent extremism, it is UNESCO’s view that choosing to do nothing until the debate is resolved is not an option*”.¹⁰⁸ Of course, there are overwhelming arguments for acting promptly against the threat of terrorism. However, research on the influence of the PVE-approach is not only important in order to know if the approach is effective in terms of combating violent extremism, but also to ensure that it does not produce negative, unintended effects or even further the issue that it is aimed at combatting.¹⁰⁹

The international framework on PVE includes many worthy objectives, such as strengthening governance, human rights and the rule of law, engaging communities, empowering youth and women, and promoting education and skills development. Thus, intensified efforts on these areas could be seen as only positive. However, both scholars and practitioners working in the field of human rights and development have argued that these objectives should be pursued for their own sake, and not be subsumed into counter-terrorism measures.¹¹⁰ Some fear that instead of programs being evaluated according to their original objectives, due weight will be

¹⁰⁵ Thomas 2010, O’Donnell 2016,

¹⁰⁶ Thomas 2016,

¹⁰⁷ Kundani and Hayes 2018, p. 6;

¹⁰⁸ UNESCO 2017, p. 24

¹⁰⁹ Kundnani and Hayes 2018, p. 6

¹¹⁰ Ucko 2018, p. 258; Novelli 2017, p. 843;

given to their contribution to preventing violent extremism and that this will lead to more top-down steering.¹¹¹

Further, both development actors and humanitarian actors have argued that PVE is a political agenda driven by donors' self-interest. According to this view, foreign aid directed towards preventing violent extremism is political by nature, and conflicting with the humanitarian principles of providing impartial and neutral aid based solely on needs.¹¹² Providing aid to education in order to prevent violent extremism is also argued to be in conflict with the human rights based approach to education. Not only is this perceived as wrong in principle, but also feared to have negative consequences such as programs being tailored towards groups or regions perceived as more prone to violent extremism – such as youth in the Middle East.¹¹³ Another concern is that if recipient communities become aware that combatting terrorism is the main motivation behind foreign aid it might make community ownership and partnership more challenging.¹¹⁴ Likewise, some argue that it might put organizations and their employees at risk if they are perceived to be “agents” of donor states.¹¹⁵ In response to many of these concerns, Frazer and Nünlist argue that there is a need to distinguish between those efforts that are *specifically* targeted at preventing violent extremism and those that are *relevant* for preventing violent extremism. They highlight that not everything which is relevant for preventing violent extremism, must be labeled PVE.¹¹⁶

In sum, the PVE-approach is being problematized in a range of ways. In addition, much of the criticism against promoting education in order to prevent violent extremism is grounded in uncertainty about whether education actually has an effect on violent extremism. The next section will give an overview of some of the research on education and violent extremism.

¹¹¹ Frazer & Nünlist 2015, p. 3

¹¹² Norwegian Refugee Council 2017a; Modirzadeh 2016

¹¹³ Ucko 2018, p. 262

¹¹⁴ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017a, p 4; Ucko 2018, p. 262-263

¹¹⁵ Veenkamp and Zeiger 2015, p. 155; Novelli 2017, p. 843

¹¹⁶ Frazer & Nünlist 2015, p. 3

5.3 The Disputed Role of Education

There are quite a few examples of scholarly work analyzing the effect of education on violent extremism. In 2015, Allan et al. conducted a comprehensive review of academic literature on the causes of violent extremism and factors contributing to its development and persistence. On the basis of the review, the authors give recommendations for UK's Department for International Development's (DFID) policies for preventing violent extremism. One of the hypotheses Allan et al. examine is that education can contribute to the prevention of violent extremism, and their conclusion is that existing research on the topic fails to prove that there is a causal link between education levels and extremism.¹¹⁷

While some studies highlight that individuals with low levels of education are more susceptible to negative ideological narratives promoted by religious leaders because they lack the ability to critically analyze and question them,¹¹⁸ others point out that educated individuals are more likely to become leaders of extremist organizations and that these organizations themselves prefer such candidates.¹¹⁹ A report from Burde et al. argues that despite strong evidence showing that unequal access to education contributes to conflict initiation and that youth without access to education is likely to join violent conflict, there cannot be established a clear link between education levels and the support for or participation in violent extremism.¹²⁰ This picture is further complicated by figures showing that individuals that have been involved in terrorism vary widely in terms of socio-economic status, literacy levels, family status and occupation.¹²¹

An article from Brockhoff et al. can provide some insight to why there is no consistent pattern. They conclude that whether education has a positive or negative effect on terrorism is dependent on country-specific circumstances.¹²² According to them, education contributes in removing grievances and reducing risk of radicalization in countries where broader socio-economic conditions are favorable. Conversely, when the socio-economic situation in a coun-

¹¹⁷Allan et al. 2015, p. 28-29

¹¹⁸ See for example: Nwafor and Nwogu 2015

¹¹⁹ Allan et al. 2015, p. 28-29

¹²⁰ Burde et al. 2016, p. 26

¹²¹ Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010, p.805

¹²² Brockhoff et al. 2015, p 1191

try is unfavorable, education can increase feelings of frustration as individuals become able to recognize injustice and grievances and are perhaps at the same time unable to take up a job matching their qualifications. In other words, their research suggests that the effect of education is lower in countries that typically receive aid. Brockhoff et al. warn against relying on education as a tool to prevent violent extremism, and suggest that education must be combined with efforts aimed at addressing poor socioeconomic, demographic and governance conditions.¹²³ Similarly, the literature review by Allen et al. concludes that DFID should not assume that educational interventions are effective in preventing violent extremism.¹²⁴

5.4 Concluding Remarks

Summing up, it is at best uncertain whether education can contribute to preventing violent extremism. Coupled with the many concerns about vague definitions and possible negative effects of the emerging PVE-approach, there are quite substantial arguments against the implementation of this approach. However, since a key trait of the PVE-approach is that it aims to be holistic, it is likely to indirectly or directly influence other policy areas. Considering that many of the recommended measures are normally thought of as development and human rights issues and that states are encouraged to use funding for the Sustainable Development Goals for these efforts, it is likely that the PVE-approach will influence foreign aid. Yet there is little research exploring whether these concerns of the critical voices can be confirmed. There is a need for more knowledge about how the conceptions of the PVE-approach actually influence the spheres that it interferes with. In the subsequent chapters this thesis aims at filling this gap by drawing support from existing research on the securitization of foreign aid post 9/11, and by taking a closer look at Norwegian aid to education in the face of violent extremism.

¹²³ Brockhoff et al. 2015, p. 1208

¹²⁴ Allan et al. 2015, p. 28

6 Education in the Face of Violent Extremism: Presenting the Norwegian Case

This chapter seeks to present the Norwegian case that will be analyzed in the following chapter seven. In order to understand how aid to education can be influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism, one must have an understanding of the context where this takes place. Therefore, this chapter will proceed by first giving an overview of the Norwegian aid system, the different actors involved and the main policy documents that are relevant for this thesis. Thereafter, the chapter will continue by presenting how security policy, including prevention of violent extremism, has become a central focus in Norwegian foreign policy over the years. Finally, the chapter ends with concluding remarks that sums up why Norway is a suitable case for this study.

6.1 Norwegian Development Policy and Aid to Education

The objectives and priorities of Norwegian development policy are determined by the Norwegian parliament, following proposals from the executive government through the annual state budget, white papers and propositions. Grounded in the adopted policies, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) manage most of the Norwegian aid. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs manages bilateral aid through its embassies, as well as multilateral aid and humanitarian aid. Norad is a directorate under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose main task is to contribute to effective management of funds and provide quality assurance and monitoring. In addition, Norad funds civil society organizations, research, higher education institutions and industry that cooperate with partners in developing countries.

The last decade, Norwegian Official Development Aid has yearly amounted to 1 percent of the Norwegian GNI, meaning that Norway is a quite large donor relative to its size.¹²⁵ The overarching objective of Norwegian development policy is reduction of poverty and promotion of human rights. In addition, the Norwegian government aims to mainstream efforts to promote and protect human rights in all aspects of Norwegian foreign policy,¹²⁶ and to align Norwegian development policy with the Sustainable Development Goals.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Norad n.d a

¹²⁶ Meld. St. 10 (2014-2015)

¹²⁷ Meld. St. 24 (2016-2017)

In 2014, the Norwegian government announced that education was to be one of the top priorities of Norwegian foreign aid, and that it wants to double its funding for education.¹²⁸ The same year, the white paper “Education for Development” was presented in parliament. This is the guiding document for Norwegian foreign aid to education. The educational efforts are categorized into five focus areas: financing of education, quality and learning, education in emergencies, girls’ right to education and vocational training. Most of the aid to education is long-term development support, but Norway has also made education a priority in humanitarian aid to crises and conflicts by earmarking much of its humanitarian aid to education. Lebanon, Syria and Jordan are the main recipient countries of the humanitarian aid to education.¹²⁹

Norwegian aid to education is channeled in three different ways. First, over half of the aid to education is channeled through multilateral organizations¹³⁰, and the actors within this category that receive the most funds are UNICEF, UNESCO and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). UNICEF has for several years been the single actor that has received most funds from Norway. Second, a quarter of the Norwegian aid is channeled through civil society organizations, and Save the Children Norway and the Norwegian Refugee Council are the largest recipients within this category.¹³¹ The third way of channeling aid to education is through bilateral aid, and this aid is primarily managed by the Norwegian embassies.¹³²

In terms of geographic distribution, the government in 2017 announced a concentration of Norwegian bilateral aid to 20-25 partner countries in three categories.¹³³ These three categories are: (1) countries for long-term cooperation where Norway has special preconditions for playing a role; (2) countries directly or indirectly in conflict, with large humanitarian challenges and high degree of fragility, and where there is a risk of the conflict spreading to other countries; and (3) countries where efforts aimed at solving global challenges such as climate, global health and global security are of special importance. Both with regards to the second and the third category of partner countries, the prevention of violent extremism is a compo-

¹²⁸ Prop. 1 S (2017-2018), p. 50

¹²⁹ Norad 2018

¹³⁰ Norad n.d. b (numbers from 2017)

¹³¹ Norad n.d. a (numbers from 2017)

¹³² Norad 2017

¹³³ Meld. St. 24 (2016-2017), p. 71

ment of the objectives. In addition to these 20-25 partner countries, Norway provides aid to 85 countries. Along with humanitarian aid, the aid channeled through civil society organizations is exempted from this geographic concentration,¹³⁴ meaning that the criteria governing the choice of these partner countries should not influence this aid.

6.2 Security as Part of Norwegian Foreign Policy

Having outlined the main characteristics of Norwegian aid to education, we can now turn to the issue of security within Norwegian foreign policy. The recent years, the Norwegian government has presented several new policy documents and taken initiatives, with the aim of addressing security challenges. In the following, these initiatives will be introduced.

In 2015, the Norwegian government presented the white paper “Global Security Challenges in Norway’s Foreign Policy – terrorism, organized crime, piracy and cyber threats”¹³⁵. The phenomena in the title are presented as particularly pressing threats in a more difficult and complex foreign policy landscape, which also affects domestic policies.¹³⁶ In this white paper, security, human rights and development is explicitly linked by describing how state fragility, conflict, and problems of governance and development are increasingly becoming Norwegian security concerns. As this white paper contains a separate chapter on terrorism, it is an important document for understanding Norwegian perspectives and policies on the prevention of violent extremism.

Following this paper, the Norwegian government established an aid program amounting to 100 million NOK per year with the aim of preventing radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism in states and regions characterized by conflict, violence and fragility.¹³⁷ The white paper also underscores the importance of and Norwegian support to the UN initiatives to counter-terrorism. Also the importance of broad and early efforts to prevent violent extremism is underscored, and by this view the government announced that it will make prevention of violent extremism part of the long-term development cooperation. With relevance for this

¹³⁴ The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017c

¹³⁵ Meld. St. 37 (2014-2015)

¹³⁶ Meld. St. 37 (2014-2015), p. 9

¹³⁷ Meldt St. 37 (2014-2015), p. 36

thesis, education on “citizenship, human rights, peace culture and non-violence” is highlighted as important for de-radicalizing extreme groups and preventing radicalization.¹³⁸

In 2017, the Norwegian government presented a second white paper in response to what it describes as a challenging security situation: “Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy”.¹³⁹ This white paper presents a range of new measures to strengthen Norwegian security by coordinating efforts at national, European and international levels. Several aspects of this white paper is relevant for this thesis: it announces an increased focus on the “unstable neighborhoods of Europe” by implementing a strategy for Norwegian efforts in fragile states and regions and by increasing Norwegian aid in the instable areas in the Middle East, North-Africa and Sahel.¹⁴⁰ The increase in aid to these areas is justified with reference to the humanitarian imperative of helping people in need, but also by describing how it is in the interest of Norway to work for peaceful and just development in fragile states as it can contribute to preventing violent extremism.

Following this white paper, the “Strategic Framework for Norwegian Efforts in Fragile States and Regions” was presented in 2017. This document is meant to provide a framework for greater engagement for stabilization, conflict prevention, resilience building in countries and regions affected by fragility and conflict. A key characteristic of this framework is that efforts in six different priority areas are to be combined: inclusive political solutions; security; human rights, governance and rule of law; inclusive growth and better living conditions; improved coordination between humanitarian relief and assistance for long-term development; and regional platforms for cooperation.¹⁴¹

Lastly, the Norwegian Action Plan against Radicalization and Violent Extremism launched by the government in 2014 is of relevance. In line with the recommendations from the UN Plan of Action, a whole-of-government approach for addressing violent extremism is presented, in which areas of responsibility are shared between ministries. The main focus of the Action Plan is domestic measures, but one of the prioritized areas is European and global coopera-

¹³⁸ Meld. St. 37 (2014-2015), p. 40-41

¹³⁹ Meld. St. 24 (2016-2017)

¹⁴⁰ Meld. St. 24 (2016-2017), p. 7

¹⁴¹ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017a

tion.¹⁴² By the end of 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported on the progress in this area.

In this report, Norway highlighted its efforts for creating international networks, and support for UN's holistic approach against terrorism and violent extremism. Here it is stated that Norway thinks that the UNs role in the efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism should be strengthened, and that the UN-system must coordinate the work better.¹⁴³ Therefore, Norway has supported the establishment of UNs counter-terrorism office, and is providing financial support for other countries development of national action plans to prevent violent extremism.¹⁴⁴ In addition, Norway has, in partnership with Jordan, established a permanent UN Group of Friends for preventing violent extremism, with the objective of promoting dialogue and exchange of best practices between states. Norway is also active in the relevant international networks outside the UN, described in chapter four. Although Norway is not a member of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, it takes part in several working groups of the forum. Further, both Norway and Norwegian civil society actors are active in the international network on education in emergencies.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

In sum, there are several reasons for why Norwegian foreign aid to education provides as an interesting case for this study. Education is a highly prioritized theme in Norwegian aid, and education in emergencies is a prioritized area. In recent years, the prevention of violent extremism and terrorism has been awarded higher priority in Norwegian foreign policies. As part of these efforts, foreign aid is increasingly framed as an instrument, rooted in the perception of a connection between development, human rights and security. Norway outspokenly supports the UN's efforts to prevent violent extremism, and has made a national action plan to prevent violent extremism. The ultimate question is whether the increased efforts in education are in any way connected to the increased efforts towards preventing violent extremism. While this chapter has touched upon several factors that may contribute to the securitization of Norwegian foreign aid, there are also factors pointing towards the opposite: a strong human

¹⁴²Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2014, p. 25

¹⁴³Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2017

¹⁴⁴ [4]

rights focus in the foreign policies, and poverty reduction as the overarching objective for the foreign aid. The next chapter seeks to provide insight in these questions.

7 Education in the Face of Violent Extremism: from Discourse to Practice

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the data collected through document studies and semi-structured interviews. In order to assess how Norwegian foreign aid to education is being influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism, the findings have through thematic analysis been structured into three overarching themes. The themes are grounded in the collected data and guided by perspectives from the theory on securitization of foreign aid in light of the international framework on PVE. The chapter is divided into thematic sections. The first section explores how education is being connected to the prevention of violent extremism in discourse. The second section explores how discourse is not fully reflected in policy and practice. The third section explores reasons for this discrepancy between discourse and policy. Lastly, I present some concluding remarks.

7.1 Policy Discourse: Education can Prevent Violent Extremism

Through the data collection, I found several examples of education being directly or indirectly connected to the prevention of violent extremism both in policy documents, speeches and public statements. While this connection was only found once in the white paper “Education for development”¹⁴⁵, which serves as the normative framework for Norwegian aid to education, it was found multiple times in policy documents and speeches related to security and prevention of violent extremism.¹⁴⁶ In the previous chapter, I introduced the Norwegian government’s recent efforts on global security challenges and fragile states. In arguing for a focus on fragile states, the Norwegian government states that there is a link between development, human rights and security, and holds that development efforts in fragile states is “good security policy”.¹⁴⁷ More peaceful and just development in fragile states in Europe’s neighborhood

¹⁴⁵ Meld. St. 25 (2013-2014), p. 17: “Historically, education has been the backbone of nation building, and knowledge is a necessary instrument in the fight against terrorism and religious and political fanaticism (...) Hate and extremism cannot be prevented only through education, but it is difficult to imagine that such phenomenon can be eliminated without intensifying efforts in education” [translated from Norwegian to English].

¹⁴⁶ Meld. St. 37 (2014-2015), p. 14; Prop. 1 S (2017-2018), p. 13,

¹⁴⁷ Meld. St. 36 (2016-2017), p. 36

is argued to be in the interest of Norway, as it is important for preventing violent extremism.¹⁴⁸

Education is framed as a component of these broader efforts. In the new strategic framework for increased efforts in fragile states, one of the measures is strengthening quality education and vocational training.¹⁴⁹ Education also appears in the framework as a measure to prevent migration.¹⁵⁰ As these efforts were presented, former State Secretary Tone Skogen stated that “*Children and youth that do not get education, do not get a job and can easily fall into the hands of violent extremists*”.¹⁵¹

In Brown and Grävnholt’s volume on the Securitization of foreign aid, the far most common term to emerge as part of the securitization discourse is “fragile states”. According to them, the discourse on fragile states is “inextricably linked with the post-9/11 securitization of foreign aid”. The term is used to justify policies by explaining how unstable and conflict-affected countries that threaten international security need of support for state building in order to promote development.¹⁵² The way Norway argues for its focus on fragile states fits neatly with this description. In addition, the Norwegian government frames education as an instrument in increased efforts in fragile states. In sum, there is firm evidence of the securitization of foreign aid to education in discourse.

I also found evidence of foreign aid to education being promoted as a component of the broader efforts to prevent violent extremism. The clearest example of this is perhaps a speech on preventing violent extremism held by former Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende, in which he says:

“Let us fight them with education – and show them what a formidable weapon knowledge can be. Classrooms are where young people prepare for a meaningful future; where they enable themselves to find a job and take care of their families, and perhaps even start businesses on their own. Being able to write the script of your own life is the best remedy against extremism.

¹⁴⁸ Meld. St. 36 (2016-2017), p. 38

¹⁴⁹ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017a, p. 16

¹⁵⁰ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017a, p. 19

¹⁵¹ Speed 2016, [translated from Norwegian to English]

¹⁵² Brown and Grävnholt, p. 242

*Education is also a key to job creation and economic development. That is why the Norwegian Government has decided to double its funding of education globally by 2017, when it will reach 500 million dollars.*¹⁵³

In this speech, education is explicitly spoken of as a means of preventing violent extremism. Violent extremism, combined with objectives of job creation and economic development, is presented as the reason for the increase in aid to education. This rationale has also been repeated in speeches in the UN,¹⁵⁴ and in statements at the domestic arena. In an op-ed in a Norwegian newspaper in 2015, the Norwegian Prime Minister, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of European Affairs, Minister of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and Minister of Justice wrote: *“Since last summer, the Government has had a National Action Plan against radicalization and violent extremism. Education and vocational training is the key for young people, enabling them to create their own future. Therefore, the Government will in the period until 2017 use half a billion dollars on education and vocational training in developing countries”*.¹⁵⁵ Since the op-ed is signed by several different ministers in the Norwegian government, this statement also bears evidence of another sign of securitization according to the theory of Brown and Grävingholt, namely the whole-of-government-approach.¹⁵⁶ The cross-departmental efforts are central in the PVE approach. The Norwegian government’s action plan to prevent violent extremism is also structured after this model, with areas of responsibilities divided between the different ministries. Within this approach, aid to education is framed as one of many tools to prevent violent extremism.

These findings from the document studies were supported with findings from the interviews. One of my informants from the Norwegian authorities said that the question of whether and how education can prevent violent extremism is a topic that is being frequently discussed in

¹⁵³ Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende, “Countering Violent Extremism”, Statement at CVE Summit 2015

¹⁵⁴ For instance in a statement at International Youth Day 2017 by Chargé d'affaires a.i Mr. Halvor Sætre, Permanent Mission to the UN in New York: *“Education is key, and Norway has made education a top priority for our development cooperation.”*

¹⁵⁵ Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende, former Minister of European Affairs Vidar Helgesen, former Minister of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion Solveig Horne and former Minister of Justice Anders Anundsen, Op-ed in VG 2015 [translated from Norwegian to English]

¹⁵⁶ Brown and Grävingholt, p. 244

the informal settings of meetings between government representatives from different states.¹⁵⁷ Two of my informants from Norwegian civil society said that they had noticed that the government increasingly linked education to the prevention of violent extremism, and that this made them concerned.¹⁵⁸

All of these statements show that Norwegian aid to education is being securitized in discourse. Lack of education is framed as a security problem because it can cause the spread of violent extremism and terrorism, and therefore foreign aid to education is framed as a tool to prevent this. According to securitization theory, the first step of securitization is precisely such “speech acts”: that a phenomenon is spoken of as a security issue.¹⁵⁹ However, it is important to underscore that for the most part the justification for foreign aid to education is still education as a human right and an important factor for creating positive socio-economic development, which will be explored further in the next section. Again, this reflects what Brown and Grävnholt argue in their theory: that foreign aid can be motivated by security interests at the same time as more altruistic objectives of reducing poverty and securing human rights.

In addition, that education is linked to the prevention of violent extremism in discourse is in itself not evidence that foreign aid to education is being subsumed into the objective of preventing violent extremism. The Norwegian authorities could have several reasons for emphasizing their focus on foreign aid to education in relation to prevention of violent extremism. For instance, it could be a strategic move, to create support for aid to education – both among the Norwegian public and other states. A report from 2017 concludes that in response to growth in populist and anti-aid movements it has become an important political defense to present aid as a way of promoting the self-interest of donor countries.¹⁶⁰ It could also be a way of showing that Norway is acting upon the threat from violent extremists, and following up the recommendations from the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action.

One of my informants from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs held that the PVE-approach is not asking for action in any new areas. He noted that the importance of education,

¹⁵⁷ [3]

¹⁵⁸ [5],[7]

¹⁵⁹ Buzan et al. 1998, p. 26

¹⁶⁰ Kharas and Rogerson 2017, p. 13; Brown and Grävnholt, p. 250

human rights and good governance has been discussed for a long time, and the only thing that is new is that these aspects are seen as important for counter-terrorism.¹⁶¹ The Norwegian government has clearly brought foreign aid to education into the field of preventing violent extremism, but the question is whether prevention of violent extremism is also brought into the field of foreign aid to education. The next section aims to answer this question.

7.2 Discourse not Fully Reflected in Policy and Practice

7.2.1 The Underlying Rationales for Providing Education

Surveying the data, I found that there is a strong human rights focus in Norwegian aid to education. As mentioned above, the normative framework for Norwegian aid to education is the white paper “Education for development” from 2014. The main focus in this white paper is education as a human right and as a prerequisite for socio-economic growth.¹⁶² With regards to education in emergencies, the white paper argues that the school can help in creating a sense of normality and stability in children’s life. Further, education can equip children and youth with knowledge and skills that they need for when the conflict or crisis is over, and the work with rebuilding or reconciling the society will begin.¹⁶³ This approach to education is repeated in subsequent white papers¹⁶⁴ and in the state budget.¹⁶⁵ The findings from the document studies were backed up by all of my informants, who spoke about education as a human right, and said that this was at the core of their work.¹⁶⁶ In addition, several of the informants spoke about the belief that education has a positive effect for the wider society,¹⁶⁷ and is necessary for socio-economic growth.¹⁶⁸

With regards to the prevention of violent extremism, however, the group of informants was not unanimous in their perceptions. On the government side, I spoke with two representatives that were involved in the management of foreign aid to education. The first informant had a strong conviction that Norwegian aid to education is motivated by the normative duty to fulfill the right to education, preventing “a lost generation” in cases of conflict and crises, and

¹⁶¹ [4]

¹⁶² Meld. St. 25 (2013-2014), p. 8-9

¹⁶³ Meld St. 25 (2013-2014), p. 24

¹⁶⁴ Meld. St. 10 (2014-2015); Meld. St. 24 (2016-2017)

¹⁶⁵ Prop 1. S (2017-2018)

¹⁶⁶ [2],[3],[4],[5],[6],[7],[8]

¹⁶⁷ [2],[3],[5],[8]

¹⁶⁸ [3]

reaching the Sustainable Development Goals-motto of “leaving no one behind”¹⁶⁹. The other informant also spoke about these aspects, but in addition implied that the prevention of extreme beliefs and extreme ideologies is part of the underlying rationale of foreign aid to education. This informant explained:

*“It is widely believed that more education can reduce extremism in general, presumably also violent extremism. But it is easy to point to examples showing that those who have committed the most violently extreme actions have had higher education. So there is no causal link. (...) But under all of this is the notion that the more enlightened you are, the better will you understand the consequences of extreme actions and therefore refrain from them and find other instruments for reaching your objectives.”*¹⁷⁰

The informant went on to say that s/he thought that in case there is a need to prioritize, for example which geographic areas to concentrate on, the possibility to prevent violent extremism will be given due weight: *“One example is the extreme situation in Syria. Syria and the neighboring countries has been a very important area for Norwegian humanitarian efforts the last years, also for education. More than 15 % of Norwegian aid to Syria goes to education. There are many reasons for this, but one of them is probably that it is assumed that having children and youth in a structured school situation has a positive effect in creating resilience against extreme opinions because one meets objections and a system that is based on learning. There are many other reasons for this support, but this is one reason that I am sure that is relevant”*.¹⁷¹

This statement is interesting, as the informant claims that prevention of violent extremism is part of the motivation for geographical priorities also in humanitarian aid. As explained in the previous chapter, prevention of violent extremism is one of the objectives for the choice of partner countries in bilateral aid. Humanitarian aid and aid channeled through civil society is supposed to be exempted from these criteria. However, the other informant involved in the government authorities’ management of foreign aid said that s/he did not experience that the

¹⁶⁹ [2]

¹⁷⁰ [3]

¹⁷¹ [3]

objective of preventing violent extremism had any consequences for how the aid was being managed.¹⁷²

The informant from UNICEF Norway explained that every year, in the humanitarian support to UNICEF, Norway has earmarked the support to geographic areas as well as earmarking support to education. He said that Norway often provides funding to the countries that are on top of UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children appeal, which comes out every year, and highlighted Syria, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo as examples of such countries. He said "*If they [Norway] have other motives than those that UNICEF has... Well, I don't know about it*". He described Norway as a "good donor", saying that his general perception was that Norway's support to their humanitarian projects was motivated by need, and not national interests.¹⁷³

Indeed, it may be difficult to assess whether the geographic distribution of Norwegian aid to education, especially the education support that is part of humanitarian aid, is influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism. Many of the countries that are characterized as vulnerable for violent extremism are also the countries with great humanitarian needs, for example Syria and the neighboring countries. The edited volume by Brown and Grävingsholt on securitization of foreign aid points at a clear trend of aid flows increasingly going to conflict-affected fragile states. They interpreted this as a sign of securitization, but they also note that the changes in aid flows are based on security interests co-mingled with other aims, such as poverty reduction.¹⁷⁴ This is also in line with the explanations given by my informants: that prevention of violent extremism may be part of the motivation, but far from the only motivation.

The informants from Norwegian Refugee Council and Save the Children Norway did not share the perception as the informant from UNICEF Norway. They expressed concern over the Norwegian government increasingly linking education to the prevention of violent extremism in discourse, and strongly disassociated themselves from it.¹⁷⁵ The informant from the

¹⁷² [2]

¹⁷³ [8]

¹⁷⁴ Brown, Grävingsholt and Raddatz 2016, p. 247

¹⁷⁵ [5],[7]

Norwegian Refugee Council explained that the organization had seen that several of their main donors increasingly spoke about preventing violent extremism, to such an extent that the Norwegian Refugee Council saw the need to develop position papers marking the organization's stance on the topic. In June 2017, the organization released the position paper "Countering Violent Extremism and Humanitarian Action"¹⁷⁶ with the annex paper "Countering Violent Extremism and the Role of Education in Humanitarian Action".¹⁷⁷ According to both these papers, the Norwegian Refugee Council will not accept funding where the primary objective is to prevent violent extremism, or where "the terms of that funding risk compromising a rights- and needs-based approach".¹⁷⁸ According to my informant, the organization does not have a habit of developing such position papers, but felt that it was necessary in this case because of the pressure from donors on preventing violent extremism. She underscored that Norway is less explicit than other donors and that the organization did not experience that the funds from Norway came with any strict guidelines. She praised that Norway is championing education, but said that when she saw words as "radicalization" and "violent extremism" in policy documents, it made her question what the rationale behind the education support really is.¹⁷⁹

Similarly, Save the Children Norway has publicly opposed what the organization perceived as a framing of education as an instrument to prevent violent extremism by the Norwegian government, warning against having unrealistic expectations about what education can do.¹⁸⁰ A representative from Save the Children said to me: "*When the increased efforts in fragile states and regions were launched, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende wanted to use all the tools he had available – also aid to education. Education was connected to the prevention of violent extremism in public speeches and policy documents. You know, when one politician sneezes, everyone in Norway gets pneumonia – so when the leadership in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was speaking about this, it was brought up in discussions everywhere.*"¹⁸¹ In other words, this is a description of the securitization of education as part of the increased efforts in fragile states and regions. Education was promoted as an instrument to

¹⁷⁶ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017a

¹⁷⁷ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017b

¹⁷⁸ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017b, p. 3

¹⁷⁹ [5]

¹⁸⁰ Røst 2016

¹⁸¹ [7]

back up security objectives, and that created broader ripple effects among the Norwegian aid actors. This statement also points at the personal efforts of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the volume of Brown and Grävingsholt, it is concluded that personalities and leadership can play an important role in making decisions affecting the securitization of foreign aid.¹⁸² Indeed, the increased efforts in fragile states, under which education is framed as an instrument, was launched under the leadership of previous Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende. However, I do not have a substantial amount of data confirming that his personal leadership was a crucial factor for the linking of education and the prevention of violent extremism.

In sum, Norwegian aid to education is motivated by a human rights perspective, as well as a belief in education as an important component for positive socio-economic development. In addition, there are strong indications that this is also stretched into a belief that education can contribute to creating more peaceful, stable societies and thereby also to the prevention of violent extremism. With regards to geographical priorities, prevention of violent extremism is part of the motivation for bilateral aid. In addition, there are indications that it might influence the geographic distribution of humanitarian aid to education. Education has been linked to the prevention of violent extremism to such an extent that some of the civil society organizations feel the need to disassociate themselves from it.

7.2.2 In Practice: Dominating Focus on Rights and the Humanitarian Imperative

Despite prevention of violent extremism being present in discourse and seemingly also in the underlying motivation of aid, neither my informants from the side of the Norwegian authorities nor from any of the implementing partners, reported that they had seen or heard of prevention of violent extremism being explicitly mentioned in any calls for applications, funding applications or project reports.¹⁸³ Through the interviews, I only uncovered one instance where prevention of violent extremism had been brought up in conversations between Norway as a donor and a Norwegian civil society organization receiving funds for aid to education. It was an informant from the Norwegian Refugee Council who shared the story about this incident,¹⁸⁴ explaining that in a conversation about the establishment of a new education

¹⁸² Brown, Grävingsholt and Raddatz 2016, p. 251

¹⁸³ [1],[2],[3],[5],[7],[8]

¹⁸⁴ [5]

project in Nigeria, a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had suggested that the project could be important for preventing violent extremism. My informant had responded by referring to the two position papers mentioned above, which were under development at that point in time. These position papers determine that the Norwegian Refugee Council opposes any link of humanitarian assistance to the countering of violent extremism, as the organization sees it as a fundamental threat to principled humanitarian action.¹⁸⁵ The Norwegian Refugee Council distributed this position paper to all their donors, and my informant explained that since then neither Norad or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have brought up expectations about preventing violent extremism in conversations with them. It is notable that the project in this incident was in Nigeria, namely a country in Sahel. This region is highlighted as important in the Norwegian government's launch of increased aid to fragile states.¹⁸⁶

As already explained, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Save the Children Norway have opposed the linking of education to the prevention of violent extremism, because they claim that education is a right, not an instrument¹⁸⁷ and that it conflicts with the principled humanitarian action.¹⁸⁸ The multilateral organizations that are implementing partners of Norwegian aid to education also approach education as a right, and speak of the humanitarian imperative of providing education in crisis situations. However, in light of the all-of-UN-approach to PVE, many of the humanitarian UN agencies might find themselves working within this approach. One of my informants working for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that there are ongoing efforts to coordinate all UN agencies in work for PVE, and that Norway supports these efforts.¹⁸⁹

As explained in the previous chapter, UNESCO is one of the main recipients of Norwegian aid to education. Norway supports several UNESCO institutions; Institute for Statistics, International Institute for Education Planning, International Bureau of Education and Institute for Lifelong Learning, as well as a program for capacity development aimed at reaching the Sustainable Development Goals on education.¹⁹⁰ The stated aim of this support is to contribute to

¹⁸⁵ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017b, p. 3

¹⁸⁶ Meld. St. 36 (2016-2017), p. 38

¹⁸⁷ Speed 2016

¹⁸⁸ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017b, p. 2

¹⁸⁹ [4]

¹⁹⁰ Norad (2017)

the strengthening of UNESCO's normative position in the education field. One of my informants, a special envoy in the Norwegian UNESCO delegation, said that, as far as he knew, prevention of violent extremism was not a component in the Norwegian funds to UNESCO. However, he also explained that prevention of violent extremism is mainstreamed into all of UNESCO's work, and that the organization plays an important role in the normative work on the topic. Indeed, in 2017 UNESCO was ranked as the leading UN entity in terms of implementing projects on the prevention of violent extremism.¹⁹¹ The policy guides on how to use education to prevent violent extremism, that were discussed in chapter four, are examples of the work UNESCO does on this topic. Thus, through its strong support to the overall work of UNESCO, Norway is indirectly contributing to the linking of education with prevention of violent extremism.

My informant from UNICEF Norway said that he believed, but did not know for sure, that the material developed by UNESCO on how to use education to prevent violent extremism, would be used in the UNICEF system. He said: “*UNICEF works with this. Maybe one does not call it counter-terrorism education... But for example in Colombia, we work with conflict resolution in schools in a completely different extent that one would for example do in Norway.*” He then went on to stress that there are several arguments for providing education, and that the most important argument is the child, not the prevention of terrorism.¹⁹²

In sum, even if prevention of violent extremism is part of the underlying rationale for Norway to provide aid to education, this is mostly not translated into concrete expectations or strict guidelines for the aid channeled through civil society organizations and multilateral organizations. Whether prevention of violent extremism is part of the priorities and objectives of the education projects then depends on the approach taken by the implementing partner. While the civil society organizations assessed in this study have disassociated themselves from the PVE- approach, the all-of-UN-approach on PVE influences the work done by the UN organizations. The next section aims to explain the reasons for these discrepancies between discourse on the one hand and policy and practice on the other hand.

¹⁹¹ 202/EX/7

¹⁹² [8]

7.3 Reasons for Discrepancy

7.3.1 Same Education, Different Wrapping

The previous chapters showed that there is a strong focus on education as a human right. Some of the informants said that the very reason for why prevention of violent extremism was not an objective of their work, was because education is a right and often a component in humanitarian action.¹⁹³ In other words, they perceive the approach to PVE as conflicting with human rights-based aid and humanitarian action. This could be one explanation for why the Norwegian aid to education is not strongly influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism. In chapter six, I mentioned that the Norwegian government had established an aid program with the objective of preventing radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism in states and regions characterized by conflict, violence and fragility. The establishment of an own aid program with this objective indicates that after all there is an understanding of the need to keep work aimed at preventing violent extremism and aid to education separate. Brown and Grävingsholt suggest that policy tradition is an important explanation for why the degree of securitization of foreign aid differs between countries. As pointed out by them, the Nordic countries have strong commitments to a high level of altruistic foreign aid.¹⁹⁴ Within this strong tradition, then, foreign aid to education is not easily subsumed into the agenda of preventing violent extremism.

The informant from the Norwegian Refugee Council explained that in the single incident when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had mentioned prevention of violent extremism in a conversation about the establishment of an education project, the organization's response had been to push back saying that this was conflicting with the humanitarian principles. The informant said that it was very helpful for her that the organization had developed a strong stance on this question, and that she believed that the position papers have had a positive effect.¹⁹⁵ One of the informants representing the Norwegian authorities also said that the Norwegian government respects that their implementing partners want their position and maneuverability to be as free from the government as possible.¹⁹⁶ This informant also said that s/he thought the organizations felt a special need to mark their distance from the approach to prevention of violent extremism because it is a relatively new phenomenon and a new set of ex-

¹⁹³ [2],[3],[5],[7]

¹⁹⁴ Brown, Grävingsholt and Raddatz 2016, p. 251

¹⁹⁵ [5]

¹⁹⁶ [3]

pectations. Thus, the very fact that the large Norwegian civil society organizations have opposed the linking of education to the prevention of violent extremism can also be part of the explanation. This is also in line with the findings of Brown and Grävingsholt, who concludes that institutions matter, as they can prevent or slow down securitization.¹⁹⁷ In the case of Norwegian aid to education, the system of having civil society organizations as implementing partners may have a preventative effect.

However, by viewing these findings in light of the international framework on PVE, some interesting perspectives may be added. In the PVE approach, education is argued to have a positive effect when it contributes to learning respect for human rights, developing a sense of global citizenship, developing critical thinking and contributing to tolerance, inclusion and diversity.¹⁹⁸ These attributes are also highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goal on education¹⁹⁹, in the UNCESCR General Comment on the right to education²⁰⁰ and are already important parts of the Norwegian aid to education. The informant from the Norwegian Refugee Council explained that they see other actors in the field naming projects for “peace education” or including components for preventing violent extremism. Instead, the Norwegian Refugee Council calls it a “life skills package”. According to one of the organization’s position papers, the naming of and motivations for a project are of great importance in order for the action to be in line with the humanitarian principles and because it can influence the organization’s relationship with the local community.²⁰¹

An informant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained that in negotiations on PVE in the UN, it has been important for Norway to stress the importance of stimulating critical thinking and tolerance through education.²⁰² If the education projects under Norwegian aid already promote these aspects, then there is perhaps no need to lay down strict guidelines for objectives on preventing violent extremism. The same informant pointed out that even if a project is not specifically labeled with “preventing violent extremism”, this does not mean that it is not relevant for preventing violent extremism. This is also in line with what the informant from UNICEF Norway said, when explaining that the organization’s work with con-

¹⁹⁷ Brown, Grävingsholt and Raddatz 2016, p. 251

¹⁹⁸ UNESCO 2017, ch 3; A/70/674, para. 54

¹⁹⁹ A/RES/70/1, SDG 4

²⁰⁰ E/C.12/1999/10, para. 4

²⁰¹ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017a, p. 4

²⁰² [4]

flict resolution in schools is relevant, although it is not called “counter-terrorism education”.²⁰³ Speaking about education projects that are implemented around the world in the course of different states’ national action plans for preventing violent extremism, the informant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said “*it is unlikely that those who are part of these projects will know that they are part of efforts to prevent violent extremism.*”²⁰⁴ Thus, it could be that the Norwegian aid to education is partly motivated by the objective of preventing violent extremism, without this being visible throughout all levels of the aid systems.

7.3.2 Lack of Evidence

One recurring theme throughout the data collection was the lack of evidence of a link between increased levels of education and the prevention of violent extremism. This is underscored in the position paper of the Norwegian Refugee Council,²⁰⁵ and the informant from the organization said the same: “*There is no evidence of it. Someone dreamt it up one day*”. The lack of evidence of education contributing to halting the growth of extremism and terrorism was also stressed by the director of education in Save the Children Norway, in an interview with the Norwegian aid magazine *Bistandsaktuelt*.²⁰⁶ She held that to promote aid for education as an instrument to counter terrorism, creates unrealistic expectations to what education can do. In turn, this could contribute to undermining the role of aid. Others also spoke about not having too high expectations about what education can achieve, and that it needs to be part of a more holistic approach.²⁰⁷ The need for a holistic approach for the prevention of violent extremism is also found in the white paper “Education for Development”.²⁰⁸ Interestingly, the representative from the Norwegian authorities, who implied that Norwegian aid to education is partly motivated by the objective of preventing violent extremism, said that if the Norwegian government knew more about casual links that could prevent violent extremism, it might have aligned the policies differently: “*Prevention of violent extremism is necessarily a highly prioritized task, but we know very little about how to approach this issue through the use of education. Therefore it is difficult to create a policy that has a defined goal, describes instruments and leads to a grant or a measure.*”²⁰⁹ It is widely agreed that education can play a positive

²⁰³ [8]

²⁰⁴ [4]

²⁰⁵ Norwegian Refugee Council 2017b, p. 2

²⁰⁶ Speed 2016

²⁰⁷ [6],[8]

²⁰⁸ Meld. St. 25, p. 17

²⁰⁹ [3]

role in socio-economic development and in reducing conflict. Therefore, there is also an assumption that education can reduce violent extremism, although research has not proven a connection between education levels and levels of violent extremism. Thus, it is possible to draw the conclusion that a very strong reason for why education is linked to the prevention of violent extremism in discourse, but not in policy and practice, is that there is an assumption, but no evidence, that education can contribute to the prevention of violent extremism.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has analyzed data collected through document studies and semi-structured interviews with the aim of uncovering how the objective of preventing violent extremism is influencing Norwegian aid to education. The chapter has demonstrated that Norwegian foreign aid to education is partly securitized. The Norwegian government has frequently connected foreign aid to education with the prevention of violent extremism in public discourse, both in public statements and in policy documents. Through interviews with different actors within the Norwegian aid system, I found that Norwegian foreign aid to education is mainly motivated by a human rights perspective and the objective of promoting positive socio-economic development, but partly also by the objective of preventing violent extremism. This is part of a broader trend in which the Norwegian government sees security, development and human rights as interlinked, and foreign aid as an instrument to back up security objectives. In other words, the objective of preventing violent extremism has influenced the way the Norwegian government is thinking about foreign aid to education.

However, this is generally not translated into concrete expectations or strict guidelines for the programs implemented as part of Norwegian aid to education. As the chapter demonstrates, there are several reasons for this. First, the fact that Norwegian civil society organizations have strongly opposed the linking of foreign aid to education with the prevention of violent extremism may have had a preventative effect. Second, Norway has a policy tradition of foreign aid aimed at poverty reduction as well as a strong human rights focus in its foreign policy. Therefore, the aid is not easily subsumed into the counter-terrorism agenda. Third, the UNs approach to PVE promotes education with many of the same characteristics that are already found in Norwegian aid to education, namely critical thinking, global citizenship and human rights. Thus, there is no need to change the content of Norwegian aid to education in order to be in line with the international framework on PVE. Fourth, the expectations to what

education can contribute with are lowered by the fact that research is inconclusive on the link between education and the prevention of violent extremism.

The findings of this chapter are supported by the theory of securitization of foreign aid provided in by Brown and Grävingsholt,²¹⁰ both in terms of signs of securitization and in explanations for why the securitization is not absolute. One explanation that they provide for why some aid systems are more susceptible to securitization than others is which position the donor country holds in the international system. They suggest that those states that have a hegemonic status are more likely to include security components in their aid programs. This explanation did not appear from my data. However, as Norway is a relatively small state, without the same motivations as for instance the US in maintaining its hegemonic status, this can provide an extra piece to the puzzle.²¹¹

²¹⁰ Brown and Grävingsholt 2017

²¹¹ Brown, Grävingsholt and Raddatz 2016, p. 251

8 Conclusion

This thesis has studied how the objective of preventing violent extremism is influencing Norwegian aid to education. The aim has been to answer the following research question: *How does the objective of preventing violent extremism influence the rationales, priorities and objectives of Norwegian aid to education?* In addressing the research question, document studies of Norwegian public documents and statements were combined with semi-structured interviews with professionals working within the Norwegian foreign affairs and aid system. A theory of securitization of foreign aid has been applied in order to understand how lack of education, which is normally thought of as a development or human rights issue, is at times understood as a security problem. Through this lens, foreign aid to education is framed as a security tool, as it may contribute to the prevention of violent extremism, and thereby the spread of terrorism. Presenting the Norwegian case in light of the international framework on preventing violent extremism, which recommends a holistic approach that includes all parts of government and all sectors of society. Within this framework education is highlighted as an important area for intervention as it can contribute to promoting global citizenship, tolerance, respect for human rights, as well as building individual resilience against extremist narratives. The thesis also presented the major critiques of the international framework on preventing violent extremism: that its vague definitions lead to misguided strategies; that it conflicts with the humanitarian principles, the human rights-based approach and undermines civil society; and that it is highly uncertain that education has any effect on the prevention of violent extremism.

The analysis demonstrated that foreign aid to education is frequently linked to the prevention of violent extremism in discourse. The rationale for providing aid to education is that education is an important human right and an important component in positive socio-economic development. In addition, there are strong indications that preventing violent extremism is also part of the rationale behind the education efforts. This must be understood within the Norwegian government's broader understanding of a nexus between development, human rights and security, where foreign aid can be a useful tool to support security objectives. Through the data collection, I found indications that the objective of preventing violent extremism is influencing the geographic priorities for aid to education. However, I did not have the capacity to investigate this further, and this is a recommended area for further research.

Except for one incident, I uncovered no evidence of the Norwegian authorities having concrete expectations that the foreign aid to education should contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. Therefore, whether the objectives of foreign aid to education are changed depends on the stance of the implementing partners that the aid is channeled through. The civil society organizations assessed in this study have opposed the approach to prevention of violent extremism, because they see it as conflicting with the humanitarian principles and the human rights based-approach. The UN organizations are also emphasizing the importance of providing impartial aid based on need, and on approaching education as a human right. At the same time, however, their work is influenced by the all-of-UN-approach to the prevention of violent extremism. This is especially evident in the case of UNESCO, which has put prevention of violent extremism on top of their agenda.

With regards to the reasons for the discrepancy between discourse, policy and practice, I found a combination of explanations. The Norwegian government might speak of foreign aid to education as a tool to prevent violent extremism for strategic reasons, such as to create support for the aid from the Norwegian public, and to show both its own citizens and other states that it is acting upon the threat of terrorism. The Norwegian policy tradition of providing foreign aid aimed at poverty reduction coupled with Norwegian civil society strongly opposing the prevention of violent extremism approach is likely to have had a preventative effect on its influence on foreign aid to education. At the same time, there is a prevailing view that not every measure that is relevant for preventing violent extremism must be labeled as a “preventing violent extremism”-measure. The Norwegian aid to education is understood to be relevant for preventing violent extremism, without altering the objectives and priorities of the programs carried out. Lastly, a recurrent theme in the data was the lack of evidence of the effect that education has on the growth of violent extremism. As long as there is no strong evidence from research confirming that there is a link between education levels and violent extremism, it is unlikely that the implementation of aid policies will be aligned towards to the prevention of violent extremism. On a more general level, the findings of this thesis may also serve as an example of how the implementation of foreign aid are shaped by many competing interests and perspectives within the aid system. Thus, the practice of foreign aid does not always mirror the political discourse.

Throughout this study, it became evident that Norway is a strong supporter of the UN-led approach to prevent violent extremism. In multilateral forums where this approach is dis-

cussed, Norway is stressing the importance of education. Arguably, the main intention of connecting education with the prevention of violent extremism could be to transform the discourse on terrorism towards softer means for intervention, and not to change the foreign aid to education. However, this means that although the objectives of Norwegian aid to education are largely unchanged, the context in which the educational aid operates in is likely to be influenced. If more states implement national action plans to prevent violent extremism in which educational efforts are highlighted, this might increase the legitimacy for using education as an instrument to prevent violent extremism. I therefore recommend that further research in this field is devoted to assess how the dynamics of the approach to prevent violent extremism is influencing the practice of aid to education on the ground in recipient countries. In order to truly grasp how aid to education is influenced by the objective of preventing violent extremism, one must also understand how this relationship is perceived and enacted upon in recipient states and communities, and among aid workers on ground. For instance, research could look into whether recipient states use prevention of violent extremism as an argument in calling for aid to their education systems. Research could also look into whether the perceptions of teachers and other employees on the ground in aid projects are influenced by the international framework on education and the prevention of violent extremism.

This thesis started with a quote by Malala Yousafzai, symbolizing the belief in education as the key to prevent violent extremism. This view is being championed by those who oppose the war on terror, but also by those who argue that education is a human right and not an instrument. As more states are implementing policies to prevent violent extremism, the skepticism against these policies is growing. Through the study of Norwegian aid to education, this thesis has contributed with insight in how the objective of preventing violent extremism is clearly influencing the discourse on aid to education but not so much policies and practice. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the Norwegian case, the worst concerns of the critical voices have been not confirmed. Perhaps it is precisely because these voices have had a preventative effect.

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Appendix I: List of Informants

Number	Position	Time and place
1	Education Adviser, Save the Children	30.01.18, Phone Conversation
2	Anonymous Representative of Norwegian authorities involved in management of foreign aid to education	06.04.18, Oslo
3	Anonymous Representative of Norwegian authorities working with foreign aid to education	10.04.18, Oslo
4	Anonymous Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	13.04.18, telephone interview
5	Global youth specialist, Norwegian Refugee Council	19.04.18, Oslo
6	Special envoy, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	20.04.18, telephone interview
7	Director of Education, Save the Children Norway	Contact through email and telephone March and April 2018
8	Director for children's rights and sustainability, UNICEF Norway	26.04.18, Oslo

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Introduction

Introduction: Introduce myself with name, university and master program. Introduce the objective of the interview and the thesis

Confidentiality: Inform about my duty to confidentiality and give the informant the opportunity to be anonymous. Underscore that as a researcher I have full confidentiality with regards to all sensitive information, information that is not supposed to be publically available, and name and statements of anonymous informants. Explain that it is only I that have access to the data material and that all data will be deleted when the project is completed.

Consent: Inform that it is voluntary to give consent, and that informants can cancel the interview at any point and withdraw from the study without providing a reason.

Sound recording: ask if I can record the interview. It will only be used for transcription as a supplement to personal notes, and no one else will listen to or have access to the recordings. It will be deleted when the project is completed.

Ask if all the information above is understood, or if there are any questions before the interview starts.

Background

Can you please tell me short about your position, and what tasks you have?

Do you work with aid to education and/or the prevention of violent extremism? If so, how?

Can you briefly describe the main objectives of your organization's/institution's/department work with education?

Can you explain how you work to reach these objectives?

Education and prevention of violent extremism

Several UN-documents and UN-resolutions on the prevention of violent extremism mention education as an important measure to prevent violent extremism.

Do you relate to this framework in your work?

Can you tell me about the stance of your organization/institution/department on education as a tool to prevent violent extremism?

What is the background for this stance? Has it developed or changed over time?

Influence on the aid to education

Have you experienced that education is being linked to the prevention of violent extremism in the Norwegian aid system?

Do you experience that the objective of preventing violent extremism is, directly or indirectly, influencing Norwegian aid to education?

Has the prevention of violent extremism ever been brought up in conversations about aid to education, in relation to applications for funding, signing of funding agreements, reporting or in other dialogue between donor and recipient?

If so, please elaborate on when, where and how it happened. Has it changed over time?

Ending the interview

Is there anything you want to add?

If I need to clarify anything, can I contact you per email?

Thank you for the interview!