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Ulterior Motives Embedded in Inclusivity

*A Qualitative Content Analysis of the Framing of Economic Development Within
Strategies for Swedish Development Cooperation*

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Abstract

Strategies for development cooperation are decorated with words of humanitarianism and altruism and are simultaneously influenced by the contemporary world order paradigm. By outlining the current turn in development discourse, the world order is defined as one governed by a turn to deep neoliberalism, which is used as the theoretical framework for this study. The essence of deep neoliberalism encompasses the importance of including poor people and countries in the global economy, connecting it to the enhancement of capitalism and economic development. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how economic development is framed in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' strategies for development cooperation. Seven strategies of the kind mentioned are used as the data for the analysis, chosen based on their relevance in topicality and content. The study is guided by the research question: *How is economic development framed in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' strategies for development cooperation in relation to the current deep neoliberal turn in development discourse?* The study is carried out using an inductive qualitative content analysis. The analysis finds that the Swedish MFA's strategies largely adhere to the deep neoliberal turn, mainly by promoting inclusion, institutionalization and proletarianization. Finally, it is concluded that development assistance extensively is motivated by donors' objectives which, in relation to deep neoliberalism, questions the potential of development assistance to ultimately benefit the poor.

Key words: Development; Economic Development; Development Cooperation; Aid; Foreign Aid; Neoliberalism; Deep Neoliberalism; Qualitative Content Analysis; Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Strategies for Development Cooperation.

Abstract

Svensk titel: Inkludering med baktankar: en kvalitativ innehållsanalys av hur strategier för svenskt utvecklingssamarbete beskriver ekonomisk utveckling

Strategier för utvecklingssamarbete beskrivs vara motiverade av humanitära och altruistiska drivkrafter. Samtidigt är de i stor omfattning påverkade av den samtida världsordningen. Genom att beskriva den rådande utvecklingsdiskursen definieras världsordningen som en som styrs av en fördjupning av neoliberala idéer. Denna diskursiva vändning fungerar som undersökningens teoretiska ramverk. Grundelementen i en fördjupad neoliberalism betonar vikten av att inkludera fattiga människor och länder i den globala ekonomin vilket kopplar ihop den med främjandet av kapitalism och ekonomisk utveckling. Uppsatsen syftar till att undersöka hur ekonomisk utveckling beskrivs i Sveriges Utrikesdepartements strategier för utvecklingssamarbete. För detta syfte har sju sådana strategier valts ut för analysen, baserat på aktualitet och ämnesrelevans. Undersökningen har genomförts utifrån frågeställningen: *Hur beskrivs ekonomisk utveckling i Sveriges Utrikesdepartements strategier för utvecklingsarbete, i relation till den rådande fördjupningen av neoliberalism?* Materialet undersöks med hjälp av en induktiv kvalitativ innehållsanalys. Resultatet av analysen indikerar att svenska UD:s strategier för utvecklingssamarbete överensstämmer med den fördjupning av neoliberalism som är synlig i världsordningen. Detta tydliggörs främst genom att strategierna förespråkar inkludering, institutionalisering och proletarisering. Avslutningsvis dras slutsatsen att utvecklingsarbete i hög grad motiveras av avsändarens intressen. I relation till fördjupningen av neoliberalism ifrågasätter detta möjligheten för utvecklingsarbete att i slutändan gynnar de fattiga.

Nyckelord: utveckling, ekonomisk utveckling, utvecklingssamarbete, bistånd, neoliberalism, fördjupad neoliberalism, kvalitativ innehållsanalys, Svenska Utrikesdepartementet, strategier för utvecklingssamarbete.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Problem Statement, Purpose and Research Question	2
1.2	Material	3
1.3	Definitions.....	3
2	Research Review	5
2.1	Conceptualizations of Development	5
2.2	Economic Growth as Development	7
2.3	Conditionality of Aid	8
2.4	Donor Motives	9
2.5	Swedish Development Assistance	12
3	Theory and Method	14
3.1	Deep Neoliberalism	14
3.2	Inductive Qualitative Content Analysis	19
3.2.1	Material and Data Collection	20
3.2.2	Outlining and Application of Method.....	22
4	Findings and Analysis.....	25
4.1	Reforming Institutions	25
4.1.1	Social Protection	25
4.1.2	Democratization.....	28
4.1.3	Conditions for Business Development.....	31
4.2	Beyond Development Assistance	32
4.3	Donor Motives	35
4.3.1	Swedish Resource Base	35
4.3.2	Swedish Objectives	37
4.4	Contextual Approach and Ownership.....	38
5	Results and Discussion.....	40
5.1	Summary of Results	40
5.2	Discussion	41
	References.....	45

1 Introduction

There is a growing divide between the richest and the poorest in the world, despite an overall increase in economic prosperity worldwide. The poorest – the Bottom Billion, as Paul Collier terms them – lack access to human rights, basic needs and opportunity to improve their living situation.¹ To aid the poor, various activities are carried out by multilateral organizations as well as by countries. According to the Government Offices of Sweden, “development cooperation is about helping to enable poor people to improve their living conditions”.² Development assistance is, accordingly, seeking to contribute to an all-encompassing enhancement of living standards and opportunities. Strategies for development assistance are embellished with great words of humanitarianism and human rights, and they set out to save the poor people of the world from a life without access to opportunities, human rights and prosperity. The content of strategies for development is also influenced by universal, overarching turns in international political discourse and tend to adhere to the prevailing political world order. The current world order is governed by principles of global capitalism, aiming at integrating people and countries into a global market. Moreover, capitalism is a system that inherently is creating winners and losers and has been shown to benefit the already rich and powerful.³ When considered in relation to each other, it is inevitable not to notice the contradictions between this capitalist world order-paradigm and the altruistic rhetoric of development actors. Consequently, development practices might not be as human rights focused as the discourse claims.

¹ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.10.

² Government Offices of Sweden, ”International Development Cooperation”. Accessed 2020-01-05.

³ Doug Porter and David Craig, “The Third Way and the Third World: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion in the Rise of ‘Inclusive’ Liberalism”, *Review of International Political Economy*, vol.11 issue 2, 2004, p.393.

1.1 Problem Statement, Purpose and Research Question

As stated above, development assistance is influenced by the current capitalist paradigm. The foundational aim of capitalism is creating and enhancing economic growth, which induces the importance of examining the framing of economic development in strategies for development cooperation. Such study will shed light on the nexus between the humanitarian rhetoric and the underlying motives of development actors. Thereby, it will clarify how economic development is embedded in a humanitarian discourse. In the development assistance-world, Sweden has a reputation of being a selfless, altruistic actor. Additionally, Sweden is considered to conduct activities extensively focused on poverty alleviation, representative for a humanitarian approach to development.⁴ For this reason, Sweden and its strategies for development assistance are especially interesting to study, as the potential existence of a focus on economic development that benefits them presumably would be deeply embedded by a humanitarian rhetoric.

The purpose of this study is to identify how economic development is conceptualized within the scope of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' (MFA) development assistance. To do so, this thesis will examine what activities and objectives are promoted by the strategies for development cooperation issued by the Swedish MFA. Further, the study aims to put the Swedish MFA's conceptualization in relation to a broader turn in development discourse, towards deep neoliberalism. Using an inductive qualitative content analysis with the deep neoliberal turn as a framework, this study will decode the conceptualizations of economic development and shed light on reasons and implications of an economic development focus. This purpose will be fulfilled by answering the following research question:

How is economic development framed in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' strategies for development cooperation in relation to the current deep neoliberal turn in development discourse?

⁴ Therese Brolin, "Conceptualizations of 'Results' in Swedish Policy for Development Cooperation From the 1960s to the 2000s", *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-Economic Series*, issue 33, 2016, p.13.

1.2 Material

To achieve the purpose of this study, this thesis will study the strategies for development cooperation issued by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The documents chosen are the thematic strategies (as opposed to country or region specific) effective in this current period of time. Outlining the framework for all Swedish development assistance activities, these documents can be regarded representative of Sweden's official standpoint on development. By studying the strategies, the analysis will provide an insight into the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' conceptualization of development, with specific regards to economic development. A more thorough description of the documents and the selection process is described in the method section of this thesis.

1.3 Definitions

In the field of development discourse and practices, there are few clear definitions of the terms used to describe the activities seeking to achieve development. This section will first define *development*, and thereafter separate and define the meanings of *development assistance*, *development cooperation* and *aid/foreign aid* as the terms will be used in this thesis.

First, *development* is, in this thesis, used when describing the aim of development activities. For example, if a development strategy seeks to reduce poverty, poverty reduction is *development*. Secondly, *development assistance* will be used as an overarching term for all practices that seek to progress developing countries. Thirdly, *development cooperation* is, according to a report to the UN's Economic and Social Council, an "activity that aims explicitly to support national or international development priorities (...) and is based by cooperative relationships that seek to enhance developing country ownership".⁵ In this thesis, the phrase *development*

⁵ José Antonio Alonso and Jonathan Glennie, "What is Development Cooperation?", DCF Policy Brief, No.1, New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. Accessed 2020-01-05.

cooperation is primarily used when referring to the Swedish strategies as this is the term they used when outlining their development operations and activities. Finally, *aid* or *foreign aid* is “money, food, etc. that is sent to help countries in difficult situations”, as defined by the Oxford dictionary.⁶ The report to UN ECOSOC explains it as a “transfer of resources from donor countries to developing countries”.⁷ According to these definitions, the term is focused on giving, rather than cooperating. In this thesis, the use of *aid* or *foreign aid* is mainly occurring in the research review, as other researches have used it in their studies. This does not, however, mean that they are solely referring to practices of giving. *Aid* and *foreign aid* tend to be used interchangeably with development assistance and development aid.⁸ This affirms the relevance of previous research used in this thesis, although it refers to development practices as *aid* or *foreign aid*.

⁶ Aid, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Accessed 2020-01-05.

⁷ Alonso and Glennie, 2015.

⁸ Roger C. Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p.21.

2 Research Review

This chapter will identify and review major fields of research relevant for this thesis' purpose. The research review will first outline how development is and has been conceptualized within the contemporary world order. Secondly, the framing of economic growth as development will be reviewed, followed by a section on conditionality of aid. That section details how the preexisting conditions in a country is considered decisive for the successfulness of development assistance. Fourthly, research concerning donor countries' underlying motives for engaging in development assistance will be outlined. The last field concerns research on Sweden's development practices. This section is concluded by identifying a gap in research that this thesis seeks to fill.

2.1 Conceptualizations of Development

The conceptualization of what constitutes good development practices has changed over time. As Sahle notes, the changes in the development discourse is dependent on, and changing in accordance with, the contemporary world order and the hegemonic ideas that currently govern it.⁹ Starting in the post-World War II context, Sahle argues that the development discourse and practices has evolved to, first, one of modernization and, secondly, onwards to adapting a neoliberal approach to development.¹⁰ When the global economic crisis hit in the 1970's, the state became the scapegoat. It was blamed for interfering too much in the market and disturbing the natural forces of capitalism. Hence, the world order shifted to one that heavily rested on the principles of self-regulation by minimal state involvement.¹¹ The rise of the neoliberal approach to

⁹ Eunice N. Sahle, *World Orders, Development and Transformation [E-book]*, Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., Basingstroke, 2010, pp.47-48.

¹⁰ Sahle, 2010, p.26.

¹¹ Sahle, 2010, pp.38-39.

development was subsequent to this shift in the “general”, overarching world order.¹² The core features of the neoliberal conceptualization of development, Sahle argues, is the roll-back of the state in the economy, removing trade barriers, and liberating financial sectors. This would achieve the objectives of creating a neoliberal state where policies and practices aim at a wide commodification in the economic, social life, and nature spheres.¹³

The emergence of the current discourse on development is discussed further by Carrol and Jarvis. In line with Sahle, they argue that the contemporary world order – with specific focus on the hegemonic ideas that govern the global political economy – is highly influential as to how development practices are conducted.¹⁴ The authors take a closer look at the neoliberal paradigm and detail Sahle’s notion of the neoliberal development discourse. They divide the neoliberal development paradigm into three different parts, each with their own strategic approach rooted in contemporary international political economic world order. Differentiating between the Washington Consensus, post-Washington Consensus and deep marketization, Carrol and Jarvis call attention to the varying degrees of reliance in the state and market forces respectively. They highlight the fact that the current paradigm is “substantively focused on creating ‘enabling environments’ that support market building”. This means that development practices seek to improve conditions for an extension of global markets.¹⁵ The emphasis on a market extension and an all-encompassing commodification as the primary means for development is also supported by Evans and Musvipwa. In their chapter featured in the anthology *Knowledge for Justice*, they argue that the discourse on development is entrenched in the basic principles of capitalism. Development assistance seeks to enlarge and integrate markets and thereby create a bigger target group for multinational corporations.¹⁶

¹² Sahle, 2010, p.26.

¹³ Sahle, pp.44-45.

¹⁴ Toby Carrol and Darryl S.L. Jarvis, “The New Politics of Development: Citizens, Civil Society and the Evolution of Neoliberal Policy”, *Globalizations*, vol. 12 issue 3, 2015, p.289.

¹⁵ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.295

¹⁶ Henri-Count Evans and Rosemary Musvipwa, “The Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Agenda: Neo-liberalism, Unequal Development and the Rise of a New Imperialism” in *Knowledge for Justice: Critical Perspectives from Southern African-Nordic Research Partnerships [E-book]*, Tor Halvorsen, Hilde Ibsen, Henri-Count Evans and Sharon Penderis (ed.). Cape Town: African Minds, 2017, p.54.

2.2 Economic Growth as Development

Two of the major voices in the research field of development assistance are Jeffrey Sachs and William Easterly. The two economists debate whether aid provided according to the current model is leading to development and poverty reduction or not. Sachs argues that the end of poverty is something that is attainable in our lifetime and that it is doable through foreign aid practices. He claims that there is something called a ‘poverty trap’. This trap keeps people and countries from participating in the market economy and thus keeps them from achieving economic growth.¹⁷ Easterly contests Sachs’s ideas about the escape from the poverty trap and condemns them for being too generalizing, macro-level designed, and disregarding of the receiving context. However, Easterly is also concerned with the economic growth-angle on development and argues markets to be “the ideal vehicle for accountability and feedback”, factors he deems important for development assistance to be effective.¹⁸ The debate between Sachs and Easterly is emblematic for the current neoliberal turn in development. They disagree on several points, but share the fundamental idea that economic growth is the ultimate measure of whether development practices are successful or not. This consensus encompasses additional researchers, as claimed by David Miller. He makes the case that, despite the diametrically different opinions on development cooperation and foreign aid, economic development and growth are agreed upon as the undisputable indicators of whether development assistance is successful or not.¹⁹ To be considered effective and successful, a development program in this current paradigm must be achieving results and creating economic growth. This claim is supported by Schabbel, who argues that present-day aid is used with the primary goal of increasing economic growth, rather than reducing poverty. The justification for emphasizing economic growth over poverty reduction is that there is a linear connection between investment and growth, and that the growth

¹⁷ Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen in Our Lifetime*, Penguin Books, New York, 2005, p.56.

¹⁸ William Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and so Little Good*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p.23.

¹⁹ Daniel Miller, “Sachs, Easterly and the Banality of the Aid Effectiveness Debate: Time to Move On”, *Mapping Politics*, vol.3 issue 1, 2011, pp.73-74.

will eventually trickle down to the people in need.²⁰ However, Schabbel concludes his argumentation by stating that economic growth not necessarily leads to poverty reduction. Strategies guided by principles promoting economic growth are thus lacking support of empirical evidence as being effective in reducing poverty.²¹ The same conclusion is drawn by Miller, who claims that the extensive focus on economic growth is unwarranted for, as it has little to do with “actual” development.²²

2.3 Conditionality of Aid

Another central debate in the development field of research concerns the conditionality of development assistance. The pioneering work of Burnside and Dollar concludes that the policy present in the recipient country is influential in the outcomes of development programs. When aid is invested in ‘good’ policy countries, the probability for it to succeed in creating economic growth is higher than in ‘bad’ policy countries. The proposal generated from this is that aid should be conditioned on the quality of policy in the receiving country.²³ This stance is however partly contested by Jia, whose chapter in *Lessons on Foreign Aid and Economic Development* claims that there is no significant evidence supporting that policy plays an important role in the aid-policy-growth relation.²⁴ With support from research of Easterly, Levine and Roodman, Jia highlights that the quality of institutions in the recipient country is of higher importance than the particular policy environment.²⁵ The chapter by Dutta, Fakutiju and Williamson in the same anthology supports this claim by showing that the outcomes of aid differ depending on the preexisting institutional conditions.²⁶ However, as highlighted both by

²⁰ Christian Schabbel, *The Value Chain of Foreign Aid: Development, Poverty Reduction and Regional Conditions [E-book]*, Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2007, pp.9-11.

²¹ Schabbel, 2007, p.221.

²² Miller, 2011, pp.73-74.

²³ Craig Burnside and David Dollar, “Aid, Policies, and Growth”, *The American Economic Review*, vol.90 issue 4, 2000, p.864.

²⁴ Shaomeng Jia, “Foreign Aid Conditionality and Economic Growth” in *Lessons on Foreign Aid and Economic Development: Micro and Macro Perspectives [E-book]*, Nabamita Dutta and Claudia R. Williamson (ed.), Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019, p.22.

²⁵ Jia, 2019, pp.17-18 and p.26.

²⁶ Nabamita Dutta, Michael A. Fakutiju, and Claudia R. Williamson, “Can Foreign Aid Promote Political and Economic Freedom?” in *Lessons on Foreign Aid and Economic Development: Micro and Macro*

Jia and Dutta, Fakutiju and Williamson, the need for aid is most extensive in countries that lack high-quality institutions.²⁷ Connecting the conditionality debate to the neoliberal turn in development, Jia further shows that free market reforms were added as conditions to aid distribution, and thus highlights how the emergence of the neoliberal discourse under the Washington Consensus affected the conditionality of aid.²⁸

Hence, the conditions considered essential for development assistance to be effective are increasingly focusing on enabling economic development, indicating that it will lead to an overall increase in development. The claim that there is an increased focus on economic development is further substantiated by Langan. He states that the private and business sector has a more prominent role in development practices now than before. Moreover, he argues that the current turn in development, exemplified by the Sustainable Development Goals, views the private sector as the “missing link in development policies”.²⁹ The importance of high-quality institutions as a condition for receiving aid is in line with the arguments made by Carrol and Jarvis regarding the increased focus on creating enabling environments for economic development. According to the current turn in development discourse, an ‘enabling environment’ is not limited to liberalizing the market but also includes setting up of transparent, reliable and stable institutions.³⁰

2.4 Donor Motives

Roger Riddell highlights that aid has survived many years of doubtful achievements and criticism.³¹ The fact that aid and development practices are still ongoing, despite any clear results or any consensus regarding its effectiveness indicates that there are other

Perspectives [E-book], Nabamita Dutta and Claudia R. Williamson (ed.), Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019, p.209.

²⁷ Jia, 2019, p.26; Dutta, Fakutiju and Williamson, 2019, p.219.

²⁸ Jia, 2019, pp.16-17.

²⁹ Mark Langan, *Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of ‘Development’ in Africa [E-book]*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018, pp.200-201.

³⁰ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.295.

³¹ Riddell, 2007, p.2.

incentives than the actual outcomes of development assistance. Jean-Claude Berthélemy's study of donors' motives concludes that donors generally behave in an egoistic way, and that they tend to favor their trading partners when allocating aid.³² Further supporting the assumption of donor egoism, Langan highlights that development actors gain material advantages by altering governments through aid money and foreign investment.³³ Additionally, he concludes that development practices tend to favor donor and corporate agendas.³⁴ Dutta and Williamson also show evidence that bilateral trade intensity has a strong impact on aid distribution.³⁵ Further, they claim that rather than being altruistic, reasons for providing development assistance are highly influenced by the donor country's political, strategic, and economic interests.³⁶ Their study finds that there is a positive connection between voting compliance with the G7 countries and receiving adjustment projects and non-concessional loans, and between temporary members of the United Nations' Security Council and allocation of IMF funds.³⁷ This is substantiated by Alesina and Dollar, whose study also shows that voting patterns and colonial past determines the allocation of aid.³⁸ Dutta and Williamson conclude that allocation of project funding is driven by politics and self-interest and that aid and development assistance are used as political tools rather than for development purposes.³⁹ This claim is further supported by Durofika and Ijeoma, who take the Millennium Development Goals as a starting point when arguing that the framework for development is favoring developed countries and rich institutions. Echoing the findings of Sahle, their study argues that development assistance is working in favor of protecting a certain world order, namely a capitalist status quo.⁴⁰

³² Jean-Claude Berthélemy, "Bilateral Donors' Interests vs. Recipients' Motives in Aid Allocation: Do All Donors Behave the Same?", *Review of Development Economics*, vol.10 issue 2, 2006, p.192.

³³ Langan, 2018, p.26.

³⁴ Langan, 2018, p.202.

³⁵ Nabamita Dutta and , Claudia R. Williamson, "Aid Allocation and Outcomes: What Role Do Political Motives Play?" in *Lessons on Foreign Aid and Economic Development: Micro and Macro Perspectives [E-book]*, Nabamita Dutta and Claudia R. Williamson (ed.), Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019, p.154.

³⁶ Dutta and Williamson, 2019, p.152.

³⁷ Dutta and Williamson, 2019, pp.154-156.

³⁸ Alberto Alesina and David Dollar, "Who Gives Foreign Aid and Why?", *Journal of Economic Growth*, vol. 5 issue 1, 2000, p.55.

³⁹ Dutta and Williamson, 2019, pp.154-156.

⁴⁰ Anuoluwapo Abosede Durofika and Edwin Chikata Ijeoma, "Neo-colonialism and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa: A Blend of an Old Wine in a New Bottle", *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, vol.10 issue 3, 2018, p.360; Sahle, 2010, pp.47-48.

Aid allocation and development assistance do not only bring money to a country. As highlighted by Dutta, Fakutiju and Williamson, inflows of development activities also bring knowledge, expertise and technical knowledge to the recipient country.⁴¹ Such knowledge will, naturally, be biased by the donor context and its motives for conducting the development practices. The major international institutions for development assistance are the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization – prominent neoliberal players on the global arena. Those are, as Sahle emphasizes, powerful institutions when it comes to production and reproduction of knowledge about political and economic processes.⁴² In line with the neoliberal nature of development assistance, Evans and Musvipwa argue that the three core UN documents on the development agenda (the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and the Addis Agenda) all prioritize economic considerations. Further, they claim that the global development process aims at consolidating the power of Western countries using a discourse and practices on sustainable development that favors an enlarging of the market.⁴³

Returning to the study by Berthélemy, he shows that countries with stable, democratic political governance are more likely to receive aid than those that are conflict-ridden and undemocratically ruled.⁴⁴ This might seem like an altruistic motive – favoring and encouraging democracy – but, as Sahle argues, a neoliberal world order calls for both the promotion of markets and capitalist development, as well as the establishment of multi-party democratic governance.⁴⁵ In a study on the evolution of neoliberal development policy, Carrol and Jarvis shed light on the role of democratization in the neoliberalizing process. An autocratic regime hinders market and entrepreneurial development, by, as the authors phrase it, monopolizing economic opportunities. Consequently, such regime keeps the state’s resources, capital, and labor outside of the global market and out of reach for the “neo-entrepreneurial comprador class”.⁴⁶ A democratization and liberalization of economic opportunities would instead set the

⁴¹ Dutta, Fakutiju and Williamson, 2019, p.208.

⁴² Sahle, 2010, p.41.

⁴³ Evans and Musvipwa, 2017, p.54.

⁴⁴ Berthélemy, 2006, p.192.

⁴⁵ Sahle, 2010, p.42.

⁴⁶ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.285.

desired goods free for any capable actor on the market to access. The fact that democratization as a strategy for development is not for the population is further highlighted by the fact that economic liberalization in the global South has not changed the social structure of the society. When liberal ideas emerged in the global North, mass-industrialization, urbanization and social movements for rights changed the traditional social relations. This social process has, according to Carrol and Jarvis, not occurred in the global South. Instead, deep marketization has been mediated through existing social hierarchies and thus not contributed to a more egalitarian society, but rather one where existing social inequalities are deepened.⁴⁷

2.5 Swedish Development Assistance

Considering foreign aid and development assistance in the Swedish context, Ehrenpreis argues that the primary aim of Swedish development cooperation has been to raise the standards of poor people, i.e. poverty reduction. Historically, the Swedish strategies employed to achieve the desired outcomes have been closely linked to all-encompassing changes in the global discourse on development.⁴⁸ By outlining the history of Swedish development cooperation, Brolin agrees with Ehrenpreis in this regard. Brolin describes the history of Swedish development cooperation as starting off with modernization in the 60s, onto economic growth and basic needs focus in the 70s, structural adjustment programs in the 80s, and institutionalism and policy dialogue in the 90s.⁴⁹ Ehrenpreis subsequently claim that the Swedish development cooperation increasingly is focusing on enabling economic growth. This substantiates the argument that the Swedish discourse follows the international one, as that coincides with the current neoliberal emphasis in development discourse.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, pp.286-287.

⁴⁸ Dag Ehrenpreis, "Poverty – What to Do About It: Ideas and Policies in the International Community and in Swedish Development Cooperation" in *Where is Swedish Aid Heading?*, Bertil Odén and Lennart Wohlgemuth (ed.), Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, School of Global Studies, 2009, p.42.

⁴⁹ Brolin, 2016, p.13.

⁵⁰ Ehrenpreis, 2009, pp.45-46.

Brolin's study further argues that the strategies aim at promoting Swedish objectives. Such Swedish objectives should, as expressed by the Swedish Government in a Bill from 1993, have a prominent role in the development cooperation performed.⁵¹ Moreover, Brolin states that Swedish development cooperation is highly results-focused and that accountability, transparency, quality assurance, and risk management are important areas.⁵² The reason for an extended focus on results is that Swedish development cooperation is increasingly concerning itself with managing *of* development rather than managing *for* development.⁵³ This is connected to the previous section on donor motives in that managing *of* development empowers the donor in shaping the recipient's institutions and societal structure in a way they find fitting and benefitting. Also in the light of the previous section, it becomes evident that Sweden's development strategies adhere to the global trend of egoistic rather than altruistic motives for development cooperation. When examining Sweden's adherence to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP), Kløcker Larsen and Adler claim that Swedish business-supported development cooperation is favored. They argue that it is done at a pace that is too rapid for the monitoring institutions to implement the UNGP.⁵⁴ The apparent rush into such cooperation is indicative of an urge to quickly develop trade and business relations with developing countries, rather than ensuring the human rights compliance of the companies involved. In other words, economic development is prioritized over ensuring increased access to human rights.

As Brolin and Ehrenpreis note, Swedish development assistance tends to follow international trends. This thesis will provide a contemporary insight into Swedish development cooperation by studying the presently used strategies in relation to the current neoliberal turn in international development discourse and practice, outlined in the subsequent chapter. Additionally, this study will fill a research gap by having a pronounced focus on the framing of economic development within the Swedish context.

⁵¹ Brolin, 2016, p.17.

⁵² Brolin, 2016, p.15.

⁵³ Brolin, 2016, p.18.

⁵⁴ Rasmus Kløcker Larsen and Sandra Adler, "Applying the First Pillar of the UN Guiding Principles to Development Cooperation: The Performances of Swedish Agencies and State-owned Enterprises", *Business and Human Rights Journal*, vol. 3 issue 1, 2018, p.136.

3 Theory and Method

This chapter begins by outlining the theoretical framework used to analyze the findings extracted from the material. The theory section describes the current turn in development discourse towards deep neoliberalism by identifying its overarching themes and key constituents. Following the detailing of the theoretical framework, the chapter moves on to describing the methodological approach used. Firstly, the method section outlines the process of identifying and collecting data followed by a description of the inductive qualitative content analysis method and how it was used to obtain the study's findings.

3.1 Deep Neoliberalism

The theoretical framework of this thesis outlines deep neoliberalism and conceptualizations of the 'deepening' process within global development cooperation. As shown in the literature review, neoliberalist principles have impacted the global discourse on development explicitly since the 1980s, through the Structural Adjustment Programs. The neoliberalism of the 80s and early 90s were highly influenced by ideas of trade and market liberalization, and the minimalizing of state involvement. The current paradigm within development cooperation is instead concerned with all aspects of society in order to shape developing countries in accordance with capitalist principles.⁵⁵ The reason for this is neoliberalism's need for constant expansion of markets, more resources, and an ever-growing labor force.⁵⁶ This expansion and deepening of liberalism has been addressed by Doug Porter and David Craig as well as by Paul Cammack. Porter and Craig refer to this new paradigm within development as inclusive liberalism, whereas Cammack terms it deep neoliberalism. The phenomenon –

⁵⁵ Porter and Craig, 2004, pp.389-390.

⁵⁶ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.284.

the turn in development discourse and practice – they are describing is however the same. When referring to this paradigm, this thesis will use the term deep neoliberalism. In this section, Porter and Craig’s and Cammack’s studies are used to identify themes signifying the turn to deep neoliberalism.

The turn to deep neoliberalism is generally infused by ideas of inclusiveness. Including people and countries in the global economic market is the most prominent aim of development cooperation within the deep neoliberal paradigm.⁵⁷ The strategy to maintain the capitalist hegemony through development assistance is four-fold. The first indicator of this deep neoliberal turn is that development activities aims at expanding the labor force available to the global market. Cammack terms this process proletarianization, which highlights its essence of being an ongoing project of creating workers that can contribute to the expanding of the economy.⁵⁸ Exemplifying this, Cammack refers to the World Bank’s World Development Report from 1990, which he claims states that strategies for development assistance should provide social services in order to enhance productive labor.⁵⁹ This indicates that reforms that seemingly are seeking to enhance access to basic needs also have the ulterior motive of contributing to the productiveness of the country. Creating healthy and educated citizens – which, in many development strategies, is termed poverty reduction – is thus the same as creating a stable and productive working force.⁶⁰ As Cammack describes, the commitment to poverty reduction is real, but it is not the primary goal. Rather, it is conditional on the transformation of social relations and institutions enabling the expansion and reinforcement of the capitalist hegemony.⁶¹ Focusing on including people in the labor market and ensuring their access to basic needs is a way of incorporating the poor in the global economy. It is the individual dimension of including people in the deep neoliberal system.⁶² Porter and Craig holds this individual level inclusion in the labor force as the most important type of inclusion.⁶³ Social and economic development is

⁵⁷ Porter and Craig, 2004, pp.389-390.

⁵⁸ Paul Cammack, “What the World Bank Means by Poverty Reduction and Why It Matters”, *New Political Economy*, vol.9 issue 2, 2004, p.192.

⁵⁹ Cammack, 2004, p.191.

⁶⁰ Cammack, 2004, p.206.

⁶¹ Cammack, 2004, p.190.

⁶² Porter and Craig, 2004, p.392 and p.405.

⁶³ Porter and Craig, p.405.

connected by the conclusion that a well-educated and healthy working force will be more productive and thereby contribute to a larger global growth.⁶⁴ This explains the extensive focus on providing basic social needs that have been increasingly stressed during the turn to deep neoliberalism in development discourse and practice.⁶⁵

The second theme indicating the turn to deep neoliberalism is democratization. Democratization has the advantage, from a capitalist point of view, that it releases capital, resources and labor onto the global arena, instead of keeping it captured within the national context. If ruled by an autocrat, a country and its assets will not be accessible by any other actor on the international market and therefore not subject to competition according to capitalist principles.⁶⁶ The emphasized importance of “opportunity” is closely connected to this notion of participation and democratization. A democratizing process also has an individual dimension to it. According to Porter and Craig, deep neoliberalism argues that poor people will move from poverty into opportunity by being included in the global economy.⁶⁷ This claim is also asserted in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers referred to by Porter and Craig, which emphasize economic integration, liberalization and good governance as means to “ensure active participation in the project of building an inclusive world economy”.⁶⁸ Cammack claims that the process of democratization is presented as liberation and that it enables participation, while rather locking the poor in the capitalist system. This locking in occurs because everyone in the capitalist system is being dependent upon it.⁶⁹ Further, Porter and Craig shed light on the inequalities of the capitalist system, and how deep neoliberalism “is concerned to embed and secure a disaggregated social order”.⁷⁰ Thus, notions of democratization, participation and opportunity are rhetorical tools used to embed the turn to deep neoliberalism.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Cammack, 2004, p.195; Porter and Craig, 2004, p.405.

⁶⁵ Cammack, 2004, p.209.

⁶⁶ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.285.

⁶⁷ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.411.

⁶⁸ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.389.

⁶⁹ Cammack, 2004, pp.204-205.

⁷⁰ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.392.

⁷¹ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.393.

Thirdly, the emphasis on institutionalization is significant for this turn in development discourse and practice. In this context, institutionalization implies building and shaping institutions in a way that is suitable for the capitalist hegemony.⁷² Porter and Craig highlight how deep neoliberalism includes a reconfiguration of societal and governmental structures to align them according to the inclusive principles of the global system. The ultimate aim of this is to introduce more resources, labor and capital into the international market.⁷³ Cammack outlines how the World Bank – as a provider of development assistance – is, and regards themselves as, an authoritative source of knowledge. Thereby they are also highly influential in what is defined as good and well-functioning institutions.⁷⁴ Further, Cammack describes how the Comprehensive Development Framework of 1999 asserts that institutions are to be designed in a way that creates an environment conducive to private sector growth.⁷⁵ Additionally, it is shown that the reforms promoted in the contemporary global development discourse proclaim that states are to be restructured in a way that makes them hospitable for private capital.⁷⁶ A feature of this is that institutions are to be shaped to be profitable trading partners that can act as support for private capital.⁷⁷ Essentially, development actors' emphasis on institutionalization is derived from a desire to shape institutions in accordance with principles that are beneficial to the extension and deepening of the neoliberal system.

The final part of the turn to deep neoliberalism concerns the decentralization of power within developing countries. In order to reinforce the capitalist hegemony, participation and transformation of the institutional systems need to be ensured all the way down to micro-level.⁷⁸ A substantial degree of focus is on local capacity building, especially local economic capacity building.⁷⁹ By engaging at local levels, the spread of specific knowledge by development actors is facilitated.⁸⁰ As Porter and Craig argue, strategies for development are often concerned with promoting local ownership, but rarely

⁷² Cammack, 2004, p.209.

⁷³ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.393.

⁷⁴ Cammack, 2004, p.196.

⁷⁵ Cammack, 2004, p.199.

⁷⁶ Cammack, 2004, p.195.

⁷⁷ Cammack, 2004, p.197; Porter and Craig, 2004, p.401.

⁷⁸ Cammack, 2004, p.206.

⁷⁹ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.401.

⁸⁰ Cammack, 2004, p.196.

engages with real political challenge.⁸¹ Ownership is, in this turn in development discourse, extending beyond country officials to include local level actors.⁸² Further, political and economic problems are increasingly dealt with on a local level, which shifts responsibility and power from governmental instances onto local actors.⁸³ Increasing the focus on decentralization and the shifting of power and responsibility onto local actors is a way of focusing the development assistance on bottom-up strategies instead of engaging with the structural causes of poverty. By doing so, development practices are neglecting to focus on systematic problems and inequalities that cause poverty. Bottom-up strategies are instead promoted, which aims at helping the poor within a system that ultimately keeps them in poverty instead of transforming the system to the benefit of the poor.⁸⁴ This is also connected to notions of donor motives and rich and powerful countries' incentives to engage in development practices described in the research review.

In conclusion, the overarching theme in this turn to deep neoliberalism is inclusion. The objective of inclusion on an individual level is mainly to integrate people in the labor force in order to enhance productiveness.⁸⁵ Deep neoliberalism in development assistance is a process justified by claiming that the activities will include the poor in a system that gives them opportunities to make a better living for themselves. Inclusion is also apparent on a macro-level, where processes of institutionalization, democratization and decentralization seek to integrate the country into a global system based on neoliberal principles without altering global power structures. Development strategies based on the principles outlined above claim that economic development will ultimately benefit the poor by incorporating them in the system of capitalism and growth. However, as this thesis's research review noted, development assistance is often motivated by donor interests rather than altruism or real will to address the causes of poverty. Additionally, there is no clear evidence as to whether the interests of the poor align with the interests of the rich and powerful.⁸⁶ Rather, Porter and Craig claim that

⁸¹ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.413.

⁸² Porter and Craig, 2004, pp.399-400.

⁸³ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.415.

⁸⁴ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.418.

⁸⁵ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.405.

⁸⁶ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.411.

economic inequalities in the world is consistently growing, indicating that donor and recipient motives do not align and that deep neoliberalism is not efficient in changing the global power structures that keep the poor in poverty.⁸⁷

This thesis seeks to clarify how economic development is framed in the Swedish MFA's strategies for development cooperation. The theory detailed above is relevant for this purpose as it addresses the key aspects of the current turn in development discourse and practice. The theory highlights the role of economic development by revealing how the development discourse embeds the seek for economic growth in other terms. As this section has shown, the process of proletarianization is promoted because it increases the labor force by producing capable and productive workers who can participate in developing the global economy. The second process, democratization, is also connected to economic development in that it is releasing capital, resources and labor onto the global market and thereby also extending it. Thirdly, institutionalization aims at shaping institutions into adherence with international standards, facilitating smoother trade and other partnerships between countries. Lastly, decentralization distributes responsibility for development processes onto local actors on a grass root level which avoids systematic changes and becomes a way of refraining from addressing structural causes of poverty. Instead, decentralization consolidates current global power structures. Using deep neoliberalism as a framework will help reveal the conceptualization of economic development within Swedish strategies for development cooperation.

3.2 Inductive Qualitative Content Analysis

The thesis aims at investigating the strategies for development promoted by the Swedish MFA, and how economic development is framed within the strategies. A content analysis is appropriate to use, as the thesis will study the text data of the strategies.⁸⁸ This section will first describe the process of collecting and delimitating data, followed

⁸⁷ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.418.

⁸⁸ Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E. Shannon, "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis", *Qualitative Health Research*, vol. 15 issue 9, 2005, p.1277.

by a description of what an inductive qualitative content analysis is and how it was used to conduct this study.

3.2.1 Material and Data Collection

The strategies for development cooperation issued by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs are relevant and appropriate to study to investigate how economic development is framed in this context. These documents address the different areas of development cooperation Sweden operate within, and thereby influencing the way development assistance is carried out. These strategies can be considered to constitute a trustworthy representation of the Swedish MFA's framing of economic development, as they are the official documents issued by the MFA. The strategies were found at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' document database on the Government Office's webpage. The results were filtered on Content type: *Country and Regional Strategy*, Political level: *International*, Areas: *International Development Cooperation*, Ministry and other publishers: *Ministry for Foreign Affairs*. Because the purpose of this study is not related to any specific country or region, the country-specific strategies were disregarded. Instead, documents with a universal applicability that are relevant to the current period of time were chosen. Further, documents regarding multilateral development assistance and work with or through other organizations were disregarded in order to narrow the scope of the study and make it more focused.

The seven documents (document length in brackets) that fit the sample selection are *Guidelines for Strategies in Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance* (14 pages), which outlines the overarching principles that Swedish development cooperation is to be based upon. This document specifically emphasizes the importance of an integrated approach to development and the interconnectedness of strategies.⁸⁹ The *Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights 2018-2022* (4 pages) describes how development cooperation should tackle issues on gender equality. This strategy

⁸⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Guidelines for Strategies in Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance", 2019a. Accessed 2019-11-10.

highlights the importance of a gender perspective on all development assistance.⁹⁰ The third document is the *Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in the Areas of Environmental Sustainability, Sustainable Climate and Oceans, and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources 2018-2022* (7 pages). As revealed by the name, this strategy describes the measures to contribute towards an environmentally sustainable development.⁹¹ The *Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in Sustainable Social Development 2018-2022* (9 pages) outlines the approach Swedish development cooperation should have regarding the ensuring of every person's access to basic needs and the securing of every person's well-being and security throughout their lives.⁹² The *Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in Sustainable Economic Development 2018-2022* (5 pages) is concerned with creating a sustainable and inclusive economic development on an institutional as well as individual level.⁹³ Sixth, the *Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation in the Areas of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law 2018-2022* (11 pages) aims at creating inclusive democratic societies, equal rights and security, justice and accountability. Largely, this strategy highlights the importance of transparent and well-functioning institutions.⁹⁴ This is also emphasized in the *Strategy for Capacity Development, Partnership and Methods That Support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (10 pages). Additionally, this strategy details the role of Sweden's resource base in development assistance.⁹⁵ The study sets out to examine the framing of economic development by the Swedish MFA. For that purpose, these overarching

⁹⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights 2018-2022", 2018a. Accessed 2019-11-10.

⁹¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in the Areas of Environmental Sustainability, Sustainable Climate and Oceans, and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources 2018-2022", 2018c. Accessed 2019-11-10.

⁹² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in Sustainable Social Development 2018-2022", 2018b. Accessed 2019-11-10.

⁹³ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation in Sustainable Economic Development 2018-2022", 2019c. Accessed 2019-11-10.

⁹⁴ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation in the Areas of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law 2018-2022", 2017. Accessed 2019-11-10.

⁹⁵ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Strategy for Capacity Development, Partnership and Methods That Support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", 2019b. Accessed 2019-11-10.

strategies were relevant to study as they enabled a holistic understanding of the underlying ideas of Swedish development cooperation.

3.2.2 Outlining and Application of Method

In studying the strategies for development cooperation by the Swedish MFA, the basic principles of content analysis were followed. Content analyses study text by placing extracts from the data in different categories and drawing conclusions from that. It can be done either quantitatively or qualitatively. Historically, content analyses were mainly done quantitatively, categorizing material based on the number of appearances it made in a text. This approach was however criticized for being too generalizing and simplifying the material by breaking it down into quantifiable units. The qualitative approach was developed to enable a more holistic and all-encompassing view of the material, and is a “method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material”.⁹⁶ Therefore, this study relied on a qualitative approach in order to obtain the results. Further, a qualitative content analysis can be done either deductive or inductive. The deductive approach relies on already defined categories and themes when categorizing the data, whereas the inductive is more exploratory in its nature, letting the categories emerge from the material.⁹⁷ Researchers have highlighted how the deductive approach is useful when there is plenty of previous research on the subject and the study sets out to be theory-testing.⁹⁸ As Cho and Lee puts it, “the deductive approach is appropriate when the objective of the study is to test existing theory or retest existing data in a new context”.⁹⁹ The purpose of this study was to examine *how* economic development is framed in the strategies, and not *if* they adhere to a predefined set of ideas. Therefore, an inductive approach was relevant as it allowed themes to emerge in a more unprejudiced and unbiased manner.

⁹⁶ Ji Young Cho and Eun-Hee Lee, “Reducing Confusion About Grounded Theory and Qualitative Content Analysis: Similarities and Differences”, *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 19 issue 32, 2014, p.3.

⁹⁷ Ulla H. Graneheim, Britt-Marie Lindgren, and Berit Lundman, “Methodological Challenges in Qualitative Content Analysis: A Discussion Paper”, *Nurse Education Today*, vol. 56 issue 1, 2017, p.30; Satu Elo and Helvi Kyngäs, “The Qualitative Content Analysis Process”, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol.62 issue 1, 2008, p.111.

⁹⁸ Elo and Kyngäs, 2008, p.109; Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman, 2017, p.30; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p.1281.

⁹⁹ Cho and Lee, 2014, p.4.

The inductive approach has been criticized for having a tendency of neglecting to notice key themes because of the researcher's failure to grasp the full context of the data. This has the potential risk of misinterpreting the data and present the findings in an unrepresentative way. In this study, this challenge was eschewed by ensuring that the material was thoroughly reviewed at several times during the research process – a measure advocated by Hsieh and Shannon.¹⁰⁰ Another challenge for the inductive qualitative content analysis is that its reliability can be questioned because of the potential influence of the researcher's previous understandings of the subject.¹⁰¹ In order to ensure the reliability of the study and its findings, clear links between the data and the results are to be shown. This was done using numerous examples and citations from the data supporting the findings.¹⁰² Because of the subjective nature of an inductive approach, the chosen themes are somewhat influenced of the researcher's background and previous knowledge. The influence of previous understandings was however avoided as extensively as possible by examining the material with an open mind. Being aware of this risk also contributed to a more unprejudiced receptive reading of the data.

The analysis was done in a number of steps. Firstly, the selected documents were read and re-read several times in order to gain a holistic understanding of the material. The second step included a more careful examination of the data, highlighting words and concepts that are frequently recurring and seem to capture the essence and key features. Thirdly, an initial set of categories and themes were created by taking notes on those key features, in which the examples and citations of essential concepts were placed. In the following step the categories and their content were re-examined, arranged and grouped together into appropriate themes and sub-themes. The themes that emerged are *Reforming Institutions* with sub-themes *Social Protection*, *Democratization* and *Conditions for Business Development*; *Beyond Development Assistance*; *Donor Motives* with sub-themes *Swedish Resource Base* and *Swedish Objectives*; and *Contextual Approach and Ownership*. The inductive qualitative content analysis does not include the application of theory in the process of obtaining findings. Instead, the findings were

¹⁰⁰ Hsieh and Shannon, p.1280.

¹⁰¹ Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman, 2017, p.30.

¹⁰² Elo and Kyngäs, 2008, p.112.

put in relation to the theoretical framework after they had been identified and categorized. The analyzing process followed adheres to the how Hsieh and Shannon outlines the inductive qualitative content analysis approach.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p.1279.

4 Findings and Analysis

This study sets out to investigate how economic development is framed in the Swedish MFA's strategies for development cooperation. By using the method detailed in the previous chapter, the findings from the data was categorized thematically. Following a presentation of the findings, each theme is analyzed in light of the theoretical framework's outlining of the turn to deep neoliberalism.

4.1 Reforming Institutions

The data reveal a heavy emphasis on the need to reform and strengthen structures and systems in the recipient country. As noted in the literature review, it is essential for donors to shape recipient countries' institutions in accordance with principles that enable marketization and inclusion in the global market.¹⁰⁴ The institutionalization concerns different sectors, which is why this theme is divided into three sub-themes. First, the findings regarding institutions for social protection will be presented. Second, the setting up of democratic institutions is outlined and finally, the last sub-theme concerns the creation of institutional conditions for business development.

4.1.1 Social Protection

The focus on institutions for social protection is clearly present in the data. Such focus relates to economic development in that it aims to enhance the conditions for the labor force and thereby making it more productive. There is a general focus on creating sustainable and stable public systems for social protection.¹⁰⁵ This includes a holistic

¹⁰⁴ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.295.

¹⁰⁵ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.2.

approach to the developing of systems that benefit the individual, such as institutions for education, health, security, water and sanitation.¹⁰⁶ The strategy on social development sets out to “contribute to sustainable social development through improved, equitable and gender-equal health, quality lifelong education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene”.¹⁰⁷ The strategy on environmental and climate issues highlights the importance of access to basic services and housing for poor people.¹⁰⁸ These examples highlight the strategies’ focus on creating institutions ensuring social protection.

The importance of educating the people is emphasized in the strategy for social development. The strategy advocates a holistic approach to learning where every individual has the opportunity to gain knowledge.¹⁰⁹ Further, the strategy presents an aim to strengthen the quality and sustainability of education and learning systems.¹¹⁰ The strategy on climate issues also highlights that an enhancement of institutional capacity and education systems will promote knowledge about environmental sustainability and sustainable use of resources.¹¹¹ Evidentially, the strategies place great importance on improving educational systems.

Regarding labor market conditions and the creation of jobs, the strategy for economic development highlights the importance of strengthening people as economic actors.¹¹² People’s access to sustainable livelihoods, to productive employment and to decent working conditions are other things that are emphasized.¹¹³ To reach this goal, the strategy for economic development advocates “improved conditions for productive employment and decent work”.¹¹⁴ The strategy on environmental and climate issues asserts that “the transition to fossil-free societies (...) brings (...) the creation of new jobs”¹¹⁵, which, thus, is another way of contributing towards the goal of strengthening

¹⁰⁶ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.5.

¹⁰⁷ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.3.

¹⁰⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018c, p.2.

¹⁰⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.9.

¹¹⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.4.

¹¹¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018c, p.4.

¹¹² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4.

¹¹³ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.5.

¹¹⁴ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.2.

¹¹⁵ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018c, p.2.

people as economic actors. Further, support for economic growth within the informal economy is accentuated as important because that is where a majority of women's work is performed. An effective social dialogue and good market relations are claimed to be fundamental parts of achieving this.¹¹⁶ Improving systems for labor market relations is another way of ensuring people's access to social protection within the sphere of labor.

The focus on improving health care systems is spelled out in the strategy for social development.¹¹⁷ It concerns the provision of preventive care and treatment for individuals, as well as the improvement of the capacity to "prevent and manage various risk factors and health threats".¹¹⁸ Additionally, the strategy underlines the importance of strengthening the systems that supplies people with water and sanitation. Another factor concerning health care is the emphasis on the spreading of knowledge about hygiene, sanitation and safe water management.¹¹⁹

Analysis

Increased social protection through public systems corresponds to the ideas presented in the theory section regarding proletarianization. There is an emphasis on creating systems that concern different aspects of society and that affect people and their ability to be productive workers: education, health care, labor market, and the environment. By ensuring access to these public services, the quality of the workforce will be better and its productiveness is prone to rise. The increase in productiveness is also due to the labor market becoming more inclusive, as people will be better educated and of better health. Providing social protection through enhanced systems for basic needs is an investment that, in the long run, will lead to greater economic development. As highlighted by the theoretical framework, social protection is dependent on well-functioning institutions. It is the institutions that are to be reformed in a manner that enables proletarianization and inclusion in the labor market, and thereby enhancing economic development. This is visible in the strategies, proving that they align with the

¹¹⁶ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.5.

¹¹⁷ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.3.

¹¹⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.8.

¹¹⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.9.

theoretical framework and its emphasis on institutions designed in a way that furthers inclusion and leads to economic development.

The extracts from the material show that emphasis is put on *systems* for social protection, demonstrating that the solution is to reform systems on an institutional level and not by solely including individuals in the systems already existing. The aim of the reforms is to include individuals, but the action is still to be taken at an institutional level, explaining this sub-theme's connection to the major theme of reforming institutions.

4.1.2 Democratization

The second sub-theme in the category of reforming institutions concerns democratization, (anti-) corruption, and the rule of law. Democratization, as explained in the theory, aims at including people in decision-making processes and can thereby be seen to aim at operating on an individual level.¹²⁰ However, the strategies also highlight the importance of creating institutions that facilitate democratic processes, emphasizing the connection to reforming institutions. The activities within the scope of the strategies are to contribute to “strengthened democratic principles, processes and governance for independent and transparent societies based on the rule of law”.¹²¹ The importance of this is argued for by claiming that a democratic society permeated by the rule of law is considered a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights for all.¹²² A decrease in democracy limits opportunities for organizations promoting women's rights to contribute to societal change.¹²³ The strategy on human rights, democracy and the rule of law contends that “poverty-related societal problems (...) can be fully or partially explained by the rule of law being supplanted by abuse of power, arbitrariness and corruption”.¹²⁴ The goal of counteracting corruption and instead strengthening

¹²⁰ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.411.

¹²¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017, p.5.

¹²² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017, p.6.

¹²³ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018a, p.2.

¹²⁴ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017, p.7.

democracy is addressed in several of the strategies.¹²⁵ Aligning with the focus on democratization, the strategies promote increased participation and influence.¹²⁶ The strategy for environmental and climate issues supports this, declaring that “greater participation in decision-making processes, access to justice and transparency promote environmental sustainability and can contribute to preventing conflict”.¹²⁷

Including marginalized people is an essential part of democratization, as it enables increased participation. When inclusion is mentioned in the strategies, it is mainly concerning poor people’s integration in the formal labor market and economy. The strategy for sustainable economic development claims its most prominent aim to be “contributing to global conditions for inclusive and sustainable economic development, growth and livelihoods for people living in poverty”¹²⁸ – in other words, including poor people in the world economy. Further emphasizing the importance of inclusiveness, activities within the strategy’s framework “should contribute to inclusive sustainable economic development”.¹²⁹ The strategy explains that economic development is about the contributions people make to the growth process and their enjoyment of its effects, and thus highlights the importance of being included in the creation and partake in the outcomes of economic development.¹³⁰

Throughout the strategies, an extensive focus is also put on the inclusion of women in society by an enhancement of women’s rights. Implementing the principle of leaving no one behind enables a focus on the most marginalized people – primarily women, girls, LGBTI persons – and addresses the importance of including them in the society.¹³¹ In line with this, women’s economic empowerment is one of the goals for the strategy on economic development.¹³² Women’s and girls’ possibilities to equally access and participate in the formal labor market, as well as their access to economic and political

¹²⁵ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.1; 2017, p.5; 2018b, p.5; 2019b, p.8.

¹²⁶ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017, p.5.

¹²⁷ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018c, p.4.

¹²⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.1.

¹²⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4.

¹³⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.3.

¹³¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018a, p.2.

¹³² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.2.

power are addressed by the strategy on gender equality.¹³³ The inclusion of women and girls also encompass their access to education and knowledge as well as the spread of knowledge about gender equality that contribute to an increase in activities, global policy, and capacity-building within this field.¹³⁴

Analysis

To a large extent, the strategies frame the inclusion of people in economic terms by, inter alia, referring to the importance of economic empowerment. The economic focus of the strategies aligns with the theory's claim that democratization is a process that releases capital and labor, and thereby furthers the agenda of the neoliberal, capitalist discourse. Inclusion is also, as previously noted, an essential part of proletarianization. By including people in the formal labor market and economy, the labor force able to contribute to economic growth, on a national as well as international level, is increasing. The data also highlights the importance of participation and integration, which is a part of the process of locking the poor and marginalized in a system that will consolidate rather than transform power structures.¹³⁵ This section further shows that democratization and inclusion will provide possibilities for participation and the enjoyment of human rights. As explained in the theoretical framework, this phrasing is a way of embedding the turn to deep neoliberalism by presenting it as reforms that will increase liberty and participation.¹³⁶

Moreover, the emphasis on the creation of transparent systems governed by the rule of law, evident in the data, is a part of the democratic institutionalization process. This process is fundamental in including the country in the global market. As highlighted by the theoretical framework, institutions are to be designed in a way that is conducive to economic and private sector growth.¹³⁷ When institutions are shaped that way, the country constitutes a good partner for expanded trade, which further increases economic development and growth. This is connected to the notion of why democratization is

¹³³ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.5; 2018a, p.2.

¹³⁴ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018a, pp.1-2; 2018b p.4 and p.8.

¹³⁵ Cammack, 2004, p.209.

¹³⁶ Cammack, 2004, p.196.

¹³⁷ Cammack, 2004, p.199.

promoted, as it puts the power and influence over labor, capital and resources in the hands of the market forces instead of with an authoritarian state.

4.1.3 Conditions for Business Development

The institutional reforms promoted by the strategies seek to create favorable conditions for economic and business development. The strategy for economic development highlights the importance of improving “conditions for private sector development, sustainable business as well as responsible and sustainable investments and innovation”.¹³⁸ Moreover, it addresses the importance of an effective resource mobilization and an increased financial stability, and the improvement of conditions for productive employment and work.¹³⁹ In the same strategy, the importance of government institutions for a “country’s development, resource mobilisation, provision of public services and regulatory compliance and, inter alia, conditions for business and the private sector” is highlighted, connecting public institutions with private sector and business development.¹⁴⁰ “Functioning regulatory frameworks and markets, the investment climate, free and fair trade, effective management of public funds, sustainable public investment and basic social services without corruption” are dependent on well-functioning public institutions, according to the strategy on supporting the 2030 Agenda.¹⁴¹ This is further asserted by emphasizing the goal of strengthening the capacity of public institutions and enhance possibilities for free and fair trade.¹⁴² Moreover, the strategies highlight the importance of well-functioning systems for taxes and resource mobilization, supporting economic growth within the formal economy.¹⁴³ Development assistance is to contribute to “developing capacity in partner countries with a focus on strengthening public institutions, other actors in society and partnerships”.¹⁴⁴ The activities within the framework of the strategy for economic development should seek to create conditions for greater financial flows, by

¹³⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.2.

¹³⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, pp.1-2.

¹⁴⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.2.

¹⁴¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.5.

¹⁴² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4.

¹⁴³ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.5.

¹⁴⁴ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.7.

for instance, creating functioning domestic financial markets, sustainable procurement, and systems that assure responsibility. Additionally, the mention of ‘responsibility’ aligns with the importance of transparent and accountable institutions which is pronounced in several strategies.¹⁴⁵

Analysis

The creation of conditions for business development is concerned with releasing capital, resources and labor onto the global market. The data highlights that institutions regulating trade, taxes and, inter alia, investments are to be transparent and accountable. Such reforms seek to ensure favorable conditions for business development, which is a way of adjusting the recipient country’s institutions to conform with the capitalist hegemony. Accordingly, this is emblematic of the institutionalizing process outlined in the theoretical framework. The importance of business development can be derived from the extensive focus on economic growth present in the development discourse.¹⁴⁶ As noted in this thesis’ research review, economic growth is advocated by referring to a trickle-down logic. However, as argued by Schabbel, there is no evidence of such correlation.¹⁴⁷ Rather, it is favorable for rich donor countries to include more countries in the global capitalist system, as shown in the research review. The strategies’ aim for economic growth is not explicitly mentioned in the extracts in this category, but conditions for business development is a paraphrase of this as developing businesses – especially private business as is focused on here – has the ultimate goal of creating growth and enhancing economic development.

4.2 Beyond Development Assistance

Cooperation that creates opportunities for relations beyond the frameworks of development assistance is vastly encouraged in the strategies. Development practices “are to contribute to broader and more self-sustaining relations between Sweden and

¹⁴⁵ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.5; 2017, p.5; 2019b, p.8.

¹⁴⁶ Miller, 2011, pp.73-74.

¹⁴⁷ Schabbel, 2007, p.221.

partner countries”.¹⁴⁸ Such relations are regarded to contribute to greater prosperity and sustainable development.¹⁴⁹ Strengthening of the partner country’s own systems is considered foundational for relations that go beyond development cooperation.¹⁵⁰ When the partner country’s systems are well-functioning, development assistance should “play a catalytic role in mobilizing new resources”.¹⁵¹ The emphasis on development cooperation being *catalytic* highlights the ambition for it to eventually lead to self-sustaining relations between the partner country and the international community. Moreover, the incentives for Swedish authorities to engage in development assistance beyond the scope of the formal strategies are to be strengthened and include, for instance, increased access to financial resources.¹⁵²

More specifically, the strategies focus on creating economic relations, and conditions for such, that go beyond the scope of development assistance. The main objective for the strategy for economic development is “contributing to global conditions for inclusive and sustainable economic development, growth and livelihoods for people living in poverty”. One way of doing this is working for “strengthened conditions for free and fair trade”¹⁵³, which implies the improvement and increase of trade relations beyond development assistance practices. Conditions for free and fair trade is extensively promoted throughout the strategies.¹⁵⁴ The strategy on environmental and climate issues claims that “free and fair trade can contribute to creating more sustainable production and consumption patterns”¹⁵⁵, which is “necessary to reduce the negative impact on climate and the environment and human health”.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, well-functioning tax systems are crucial. Also in connection to trade, the importance of access to markets – local, regional and global – is emphasized.¹⁵⁷ Integrating poor countries in the world economy is one way to create economic relations beyond

¹⁴⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.10.

¹⁴⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.8.

¹⁵⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.5.

¹⁵¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, pp.4-5.

¹⁵² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.8.

¹⁵³ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.1.

¹⁵⁴ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.1.

¹⁵⁵ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018c, p.3.

¹⁵⁶ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018c, p.3.

¹⁵⁷ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.5.

development assistance and for them to “benefit from the opportunities provided by trade, and increase their productivity where there are comparative advantages”.¹⁵⁸

The capacity of countries to mobilize their resources and to increase productiveness is also considered important by the strategies. Productiveness is strived for in several of the objectives of the strategy for economic development.¹⁵⁹ The same strategy aims at promoting “innovative solutions for mobilisation of capital”¹⁶⁰, and activities should seek to enhance developing countries’ capacity to mobilize their resources.¹⁶¹ The guidelines for development cooperation also promotes effective operations that contribute to mobilizing financial resources.¹⁶²

Analysis

The creation of self-sustaining relations that go beyond the scope of development assistance is an expression of the strategies’ aim to include actors in the global capitalist system. As highlighted by the theoretical framework, the fundamental of deep neoliberalism is to, in various ways, include poor people and countries in the global capitalist system.¹⁶³ The extracts from the data highlight how the strategies promote operations that enable recipient countries’ capacity to independently participate in, primarily, trade. Additionally, one strategy also emphasizes Sweden’s role in this by asserting the importance of incentives for Swedish actors to engage in cooperation and collaboration with partner countries. Relations that go beyond the scope of the development assistance strategies are extensively promoted, indicating the perceived importance of poor people and countries’ inclusion in a global capitalist system even beyond the scope of official development assistance. Such emphasis on inclusion is noted in the theoretical framework as a fundamental of the turn to deep neoliberalism as it enables economic development outside the limits of development cooperation.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, pp.4-5.

¹⁵⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.2.

¹⁶⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.2.

¹⁶¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4; 2019b, p.4.

¹⁶² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019a, p.2.

¹⁶³ Cammack, 2004, p.206.

¹⁶⁴ Cammack, 2004, p.197; Porter and Craig, 2004, p.401.

4.3 Donor Motives

The outlining of Sweden's role in the development assistance practices is reoccurring in the strategies. Separating this into two categories, one focuses on the opportunity for Sweden to share its knowledge with partner countries, and the other on attaining the Swedish objectives.

4.3.1 Swedish Resource Base

Sweden's resource base is frequently mentioned as an asset for the development practices.¹⁶⁵ Providing an explanation of the term 'resource base', the strategy for social development claims the Swedish resource base to contain "experience, expertise and networks in different sectors of society".¹⁶⁶ The same explanation of 'resource base' is made in the strategy for gender equality.¹⁶⁷ According to the strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Swedish resource base refers to "a broader group of Swedish actors in the public and private sectors and in civil society".¹⁶⁸ Further, the same strategy emphasizes the importance of using "Swedish experiences, competencies and networks in various sectors of society (...) in an innovative and strategic way".¹⁶⁹ Sweden is presented as a valuable actor on the development assistance arena based on its credibility and continuous commitment to promoting rights issues. This gives Sweden added value because of its experience and knowledge within such fields.¹⁷⁰ Another dimension of this category is the highlighted opportunity for reciprocal learning, for Swedes to gain knowledge from partaking in development practices.¹⁷¹ The strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda stresses the importance of exchanging knowledge, expertise and resources, as well as the

¹⁶⁵ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4; 2018b, p.8; 2018c, p.5; 2018a, p.4.

¹⁶⁶ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.8.

¹⁶⁷ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018a, p.4.

¹⁶⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.6.

¹⁶⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.6.

¹⁷⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018a, p.3.

¹⁷¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.3.

opportunity for Swedes to “get experience of and competence from international development cooperation and international organizations”.¹⁷²

Analysis

The focus on using and developing the Swedish resource base corresponds to the part of the theoretical framework concerning the provider of development assistance as the authoritative source of knowledge on development.¹⁷³ The parallels concern the possibility to influence the discourse and practice in a direction beneficial to the authority. On this note, the research review states that inflows of development assistance bring knowledge to the receiving country, knowledge that is biased by the motives and aims of the donor.¹⁷⁴ In these strategies for development cooperation, Sweden is appointing themselves as an authority in knowledge by emphasizing their competencies and experiences as important constituents of a development cooperation program. This is a way of expressing that Sweden has knowledge that is not available, and is superior to what the existing, in the partner country. The strategies do, however, also note that there is a possibility for the Swedish resource base to evolve by engaging in and interacting with other actors in international development cooperation. This can be regarded a way of localizing and decentralizing the development activities, a process outlined in the theoretical framework, enabling the spread of specific knowledge and extending its reach further.¹⁷⁵ Such extension is beneficial for the donor – Sweden – as it gives them the power to decide what knowledge and ideas are influential in (re-) building of institutions and societal systems. Additionally, it is in the interest of Sweden as a player on the international market to include more actors and thereby releasing more capital, labor and resources. The connection to economic development here is that, as it is in the interest of Sweden to introduce more actors in the international economy, the knowledge spread will likely advocate an enlarging of the global capitalist system.

¹⁷² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.6.

¹⁷³ Cammack, 2004, p.196.

¹⁷⁴ Dutta, Fakutiju and Williamson, 2019, p.208.

¹⁷⁵ Cammack, 2004, p.196.

4.3.2 Swedish Objectives

When Swedes are positioned in international development assistance, the possibility of exposing Swedish values and priorities is increased. Participating in international development assistance is to contribute to promoting issues that are prioritized by Sweden.¹⁷⁶ The strategy on human rights, democracy and the rule of law states that support can be given to organizations, networks or other actors, but, importantly, it shall contribute to Swedish priority issues.¹⁷⁷ Support that is channeled via multilateral organizations is to be directed at organizations that are compatible with Swedish priorities.¹⁷⁸ By working in a strategic, appropriate and flexible way, Swedish policies and positions will be advanced.¹⁷⁹ The strategies highlight the importance of impacting global normative policy in accordance with Swedish priorities.¹⁸⁰ To achieve this, the importance of Swedish representation in strategic posts is emphasized.¹⁸¹ The strategies also point out that Sweden, in some areas, have higher ambitions than the 2030 Agenda.¹⁸² In addition, they “must stand up for issues that are not sufficiently highlighted by other actors in international cooperation”.¹⁸³ This is another way of emphasizing the desire to promote interests that are particular to Sweden.

Analysis

These extracts represent the parts of the strategies that explicitly mention the Swedish motives for development cooperation. What really constitutes “Swedish priorities” is somewhat unclear, but the frequent mention of it supports the claim that development cooperation is motivated by donor interests, made in the research review.¹⁸⁴ This claim is also one of the overarching themes of the theoretical framework. The theory details the different ways of deepening neoliberalism within the global system, but the underlying reason for the extension and deepening of the neoliberal system is that some

¹⁷⁶ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4.

¹⁷⁷ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017, p.9.

¹⁷⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4; 2019a, p.4.

¹⁷⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.10.

¹⁸⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018b, p.8; 2017, p.9; 2019c, p.4.

¹⁸¹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.3.

¹⁸² Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.4.

¹⁸³ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019c, p.4.

¹⁸⁴ Berthélemy, 2006, p.192.

actors on the international arena benefit from it.¹⁸⁵ The aim of increased economic development is thus embedded in the emphasis on advancing Swedish objectives and priorities.

4.4 Contextual Approach and Ownership

The measures for conducting development cooperation are, detailed in the strategies, to be context-specific, flexible and promote national and local ownership. This is captured in the strategy for human rights, democratization and the rule of law which states that the “activities must be contextualized and inclusive and provide support to nationally and locally owned and run processes”.¹⁸⁶ The approaches are to be innovative and flexible, making them able to be forward-looking.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, the support should promote national and local ownership in that it is to support development based on partner countries’ priorities.¹⁸⁸ The adaption of development cooperation to the partner country’s own strategies for development is considered a key aspect.¹⁸⁹ Partly, this is based on the claim that “the responsibility for development within a country lies with that country”.¹⁹⁰

Analysis

Promoting local ownership is part of the decentralization process which is essential to reinforce the current world order, as highlighted in the theory section.¹⁹¹ When extending the activities to the local level and customized to the receiving context, the spread of specific knowledge to peripheral areas is enabled. What knowledge is distributed to the recipient is decided by the donor, giving them considerable power in what is framed as the “good” and “right” way of governing, administrating, etc. Moreover, as stated in the theory section, the localization of activities and reforms is a

¹⁸⁵ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.418.

¹⁸⁶ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017, p.10.

¹⁸⁷ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.6; 2018b, p.8; 2018c, p.5.

¹⁸⁸ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, p.5.

¹⁸⁹ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019b, pp.5-6.

¹⁹⁰ Government Offices of Sweden: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019a, p.3.

¹⁹¹ Cammack, 2004, p.206.

way to include the poor in a system that will keep them poor, instead of engaging in the root causes of poverty.¹⁹² Consequently, this is a way of furthering economic development by creating an all-encompassing inclusion in the economy on all levels of society.

¹⁹² Porter and Craig, 2004, p.418.

5 Results and Discussion

This chapter begins with a summary of the results which will return to the research question – *how is economic development framed in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs’ strategies for development cooperation in relation to the current deep neoliberal turn in development discourse?* By referring to the neoliberal turn detailed in the theoretical framework, the summary seeks to clarify recurring connections or deviations from the theory. Following that, the results of the analysis will be discussed in light of previous research in the field. To conclude, potential implications of an economic development focus on development and the equalization of the global social order is discussed together with a suggestion for further research on this topic.

5.1 Summary of Results

This study shows how the Swedish strategies for development cooperation in different ways emphasize the importance of economic development as a means to development. To a large extent, the strategies focus on activities aiming at increased institutionalization and proletarianization. In this context, institutionalization refers to the shaping of institutions according to a set of principles that enables the country’s inclusion in the global capitalist system. As shown in the analysis, the strategies promote institutional reforms increasing transparency and democratic and liberal elements in the financial systems, trade and the mobilization of resources. Connected to the theoretical framework, this liberalization promotes economic development as it introduces more resources, labor and capital on the global market. Proletarianization regards the enabling of including individuals in that same system. This concerns inclusion on an individual level by increasing access to, and improve conditions on, the formal labor market. Additionally, proletarianization includes establishing structures and systems for ensuring people’s access to basic needs, which is extensively

emphasized in the strategies. As outlined in the theoretical framework, proletarianization relates to economic development by increasing the labor force and thereby increasing its productiveness. Also pronounced in the strategies is the focus on Sweden's objectives for conducting development cooperation. The theoretical framework describes the spread of a specific knowledge to the development-receiving context as important for the donor country. The results of the analysis do thereby align with the theory, as it is beneficial to Sweden to promote the spread of knowledge that enhances economic development. The theoretical framework regards democratization as a category of its own, whereas the strategies promote the increase of democratic elements subtler, as parts of other reforms. Democratization is rather spoken about in terms of inclusion and the setting up of accountable and transparent institutions. However, the essence of democratization outlined by the theory is present in the strategies, linking it to the focus on economic development. Additionally, the strategies do not emphasize decentralization and local ownership as extensively as the theory. It is mentioned, but slightly overshadowed by the focus on other themes.

In conclusion, the strategies promote an extensive inclusion of individuals, organizations and institutions. They seek to reform institutions in order to deepen and assert the global neoliberal system, enabling it to permeate all sectors of society. Overall, the analysis has shown that the strategies adhere to the overarching theme – inclusion – of the theoretical framework, and it concludes that economic development primarily is framed by emphasizing institutionalization and proletarianization.

5.2 Discussion

As presented above, the results of this study show that the Swedish MFA's strategies for development cooperation emphasize the importance of economic development. To a large extent, this is done by arranging the recipient country in a way that enables economic development. Revisiting the research review, this result aligns with Carrol and Jarvis' claim that the current development paradigm is characterized by the creation

of ‘enabling environments’.¹⁹³ They highlight that this ‘enabling’ includes creating opportunities for market extension, which also captures the essence of this study’s findings. As shown in the analysis, the data emphasizes the importance of institutionalization and proletarianization. When examining the content of the findings, the emphasis on these two processes is another way of phrasing ‘enablement’, encompassing both the individual and institutional level. The focus on creating relations beyond development assistance is also interesting illuminated by the concept of ‘enabling environments’. When institutions are designed according to international standards and principles, it facilitates smooth and easy trade, benefitting the powerful actors already present on the global market. Democratization also relates to ‘enabling environments’ as it releases capital, labor and resources onto the global arena instead of keeping it captured in the hands of an autocratic person or group of people within a country.

Relating the findings to the research review’s highlighting of economic growth, this study’s results differ slightly from previous research. As noted, there is a wide consensus that economic growth is regarded the ultimate indicator of whether a development program is effective or not.¹⁹⁴ However, this is not expressly emphasized in the strategies. Instead, they focus on inclusion in the economy and creating conditions for an increasingly productive labor force and an extension of the market. One perspective on this is that the creating of conditions – ‘enabling environments’ – lays the foundation for economic growth. In light of the theoretical framework, this perspective aligns with the idea that deep neoliberalist development practices aim to penetrate all sectors of society in order to enhance economic development.¹⁹⁵ Assuming this perspective on the findings, this is also indicative of the turn *from* the Washington Consensus and post-Washington Consensus paradigms *to* deep neoliberalism and deep marketization in that the strategies encompass reforms that not only seeks to minimize state interference.¹⁹⁶ The turn away from a sole focus on economic growth and liberalization of markets is also highlighted by previous research on conditionality. This

¹⁹³ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.295.

¹⁹⁴ Miller, 2011, pp.73-74.

¹⁹⁵ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.411.

¹⁹⁶ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, p.295.

turn emphasizes the increased importance of high-quality institutions as conditions for the effectiveness of development assistance.¹⁹⁷ Aligning with this, the analysis shows that there is an extensive focus on establishing institutions, also indicative of the turn to a comprehensive permeation of the state and society. Rather than focusing on the economic outcomes, the strategies appear to rely on that a solid foundation will eventually lead to economic development and increase human well-being.

There is an emphasis on Sweden's objectives in the data, connected to the research review's indication on the importance of donor motives in development assistance. 'Swedish priorities' are repeatedly emphasized as guiding principles for activities within the scope of the strategies. Additionally, the Swedish resource base is portrayed as an important source of knowledge which is to be spread through the development assistance. This phenomenon is highlighted several times in the research review, stating that it is in the interest of donors to assert the power of what knowledge is distributed throughout the world.¹⁹⁸ Thereby, Sweden benefits from the spread of its ideas and values as it enables the spread of a certain ideology and world view that works in favor of Sweden, as is also highlighted by Langan.¹⁹⁹

Essentially, the results of the analysis align neatly with the theoretical framework as well as with other research outlining the current development paradigm. It shows that the Swedish MFA's strategies for development cooperation clearly follows the international trend, supporting the claims of Ehrenpreis and Brolin.²⁰⁰ This trend is evident in the data as the findings indicate the all-encompassing pursuit to permeate all sectors of society in order to facilitate inclusion of people and countries in the global market system. As the analysis shows, there is an extensive focus on creating conditions for business development and relations that go beyond the scope of development assistance. This also aligns with previous studies concluding that Swedish development cooperation is prone to promote business development, showing that Sweden has tendencies of favoring business and economic development over maintaining and

¹⁹⁷ Jia, 2019, pp.16-17.

¹⁹⁸ Dutta, Fakutiju and Williamson, 2019, p.208.

¹⁹⁹ Langan, 2018, p.26.

²⁰⁰ Ehrenpreis, 2009, p.42; Brolin, 2016, p.13.

enhancing human rights.²⁰¹ The go-to indicator of development assistance effectiveness is economic growth, highlighting the importance of economic development in strategies for development assistance. Further, the aim for the comprehensive inclusion advocated in the strategies is ultimately to contribute to economic development, which is in the interest of the providers of development assistance as they benefit economically from that.²⁰² The justification for this is that a country's overall economic prosperity eventually will trickle down and benefit the poor as well. This is described as a logical consequence of profits made by business moguls and high-ranking politicians. However, such focus on economic development is problematic with regards to "actual" development, as this correlation not is established.²⁰³ Instead, emphasizing economic development is a way of upholding a neoliberal, capitalist status quo in the world order which inherently seeks to secure a disaggregated social order.²⁰⁴ Such inclusion has been shown to operate within and through existing social hierarchies rather than attempting to create a more egalitarian society.²⁰⁵ Despite the rhetoric of humanitarianism and inclusiveness, development assistance shows no real commitment to change the global structures that equalizes the social hierarchies of the world.

This and many other studies show that development assistance is conducted with the donor's motives and objectives in mind. In other words, donors tend to engage in activities that benefit them. Considered in combination with the idea that this current capitalist word order that creates winners and losers, the conclusion is that what benefits donors will not benefit recipients. This quandary is imperative to study further, in order to investigate the potential of conducting development assistance that ultimately *do* profit the intended beneficiaries.

²⁰¹ Kløcker Larsen and Atler, 2018, p.136.

²⁰² Langan, 2018, p.26.

²⁰³ Schabbel, 2011, pp.9-11.

²⁰⁴ Porter and Craig, 2004, p.393.

²⁰⁵ Carrol and Jarvis, 2015, pp.286-287.

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