Danish Foreign Policy Review 2021

Edited by
Kristian Fischer and Hans Mouritzen

DIIS · DANISH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Preface

Danish Foreign Policy Review addresses Danish foreign policy globally, regionally and domestically. In addition to the articles by Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeppe Kofod, and Minister of Defence Trine Bramsen, the 2021 *Review* includes externally peer reviewed academic articles, whose authors represent only their own fields of expertise (for details of each author, see the respective articles). Abstracts of these articles in English and Danish can be found at the front of this volume.

Ioannis Galariotis and Fabrizio Tassinari reflect on the north–south cleavage in Europe in connection with the COVID-19 crisis, where Denmark was seen as part of the northern 'frugal four'. It is concluded that the solution of the crisis may be pointing in the direction of deeper continental integration, one of the most interesting derived effects of the process.

Denmark has willingly taken on a leading role in the global efforts against climate change. Jakob Skovgaard investigates how this role is played in practice through setting examples for others, generating relevant knowledge, and building coalitions. But difficulties in the implementation of the 2030 emission targets may create scratches in the paint for Denmark's global role.

Tanzania is traditionally the largest recipient of Danish aid. With Tanzania as a case study, Rasmus Hundsbæk Pedersen and Thabit Jacob argue that poverty alleviation may be exploited by a ruling party and adversely affect democracy and human rights – an unintended consequence.

What lessons can be learnt from 12 cases of Danish crisis decision-making since 1770, both as to substance and regarding the diplomatic profession? This is the research question of Carsten Staur's article, based on his recent book in Danish on the occasion of the 250 years anniversary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Finally, we present a selected bibliography of scholarly books, articles and book chapters about Danish foreign policy published in English or French in 2020. This volume has been edited by Director Kristian Fischer and Dr.scient.pol. Hans Mouritzen. Stud.scient.pol. Kasper Arabi has served as the assistant editor.

The Editors
DIIS, Copenhagen
May 2021

Chapter 1

Abstracts in English and Danish

This chapter includes abstracts of the academic articles in English and Danish.

Europe 'forged in crisis'? Problematising the North–South cleavage in Europe's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

Ioannis Galariotis and Fabrizio Tassinari

The COVID-19 crisis has laid bare cleavages and disagreements that have been underlying the relations between Europe's north and south, at least since the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis a decade ago. After tracing the origins of this divide in both a culturalist and an institutionalist dimension, the article first sets out to analyse how the division between Europe's south and the so-called 'frugals' (Denmark, Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands) has been framed since the COVID-19 crisis struck in the spring of 2020. It subsequently focuses on the discourses of selected southern European countries (Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) and on how the cleavages were overcome in the run-up to the European Council of July 2020. Thirdly the analysis explains, through the lens of the North–South dialectic, the unprecedented crisis resolution mechanism (the Recovery and Resilience Fund) that the EU devised. The article concludes by arguing that COVID-19 has changed Europe's North–South dynamic in a more institutionalist direction, pointing tentatively and yet clearly in the direction of deeper continental integration.

COVID-19 krisen har blotlagt kløfter og uenigheder mellem Europas Nord og Syd, som har eksisteret i det mindste siden Eurozonens gældskrise for et årti siden. Efter at have sporet ophavet til Nord-Syd-delingen langs både en kultur- og en institutionel dimension analyserer artiklen, hvordan delingen mellem Sydeuropa og de såkaldt "sparsommelige fire" (Danmark, Sverige, Østrig og Holland) kom til udtryk i COVID-19 krisen i foråret 2020. Dernæst fokuseres på diskurserne i fire sydeuropæiske lande (Portugal, Italien, Grækenland og Spanien) og på, hvordan kløfterne blev overvundet i processen op til Det Europæiske Råds møde i juli 2020. For det tredje forklarer analysen, set gennem Nord-Syd-dialektikkens linser, skabelsen af EU's kriseløsningsmekanisme (Genopretnings- og Resiliensfaciliteten), helt uden fortilfælde. Det konkluderes, at COVID-19 har forandret Europas Nord-Syd dynamik i mere institutionel retning. Hypotetisk peger dette klart i retning af dybere europæisk integration.

Danish climate policy in a polycentric world: how does Denmark lead?

Jakob Skovgaard

Global climate governance is increasingly polycentric, characterised by multiple institutions and key decisions being made at the national level rather than within UN negotiations. Within this context, Danish aspirations to lead on climate change have ample possibilities to succeed. These aspirations may take the shape of directional (setting an example for others to follow), cognitive (generating knowledge about how climate policies work) or entrepreneurial leadership (building coalitions within the UN climate negotiations or other international fora). The article finds that Denmark's record is most unequivocally successful in terms of cognitive and entrepreneurial leadership. Denmark provides important knowledge about technical solutions and is entrepreneurial internationally. Regarding directional leadership, targets of reducing emissions by 70% by 2030 and ending fossil fuel production by 2050 stand out, but difficulties in implementing the 2030 target and anti-climate policies make Denmark look like most other countries.

Global klima "governance" er i stadig højere grad polycentrisk, karakteriseret ved at involvere en flerhed af institutioner og at vigtige beslutninger træffes på nationalt niveau snarere end i FN-forhandlinger. Derfor er der rige muligheder for, at dansk lederskab kan få succes. Disse forsøg kan bestå i at udgøre et eksempel til efterfølgelse, generere viden om konsekvenserne af bestemte klimapolitikker og i at bygge koalitioner inden for FN-klimaforhandlingerne eller andre internationale fora. Denne artikel viser, at Danmark har været mest utvetydigt succesfuld med hensyn til at opbygge viden og bygge koalitioner. Danmark skaffer vigtig viden om tekniske løsninger og er en international entreprenør. I forhold til at være et eksempel til efterfølgelse er målene om at reducere udslip af drivhusgasser med 70% i 2030 og ophøre med at producere fossile brændsler i 2050 iøjnefaldende, men vanskelighederne med at opnå 2030-målet og anti-klimapolitikker får Danmark til at ligne de fleste andre lande.

Development assistance: the tension between aid for poverty reduction and the promotion of democracy in Tanzania

Rasmus Hundsbæk Pedersen and Thabit Jacob

The donor community continues to support growth and poverty alleviation in less developed countries, and the COVID-19 pandemic has led to calls for renewed efforts in this regard. Tanzania is the country that has received the most Danish aid. With this country as a case study, the article explores the extent to which development assistance aiming at poverty alleviation may pose a challenge for democracy and human rights. Like several other countries on the continent, Tanzania has undergone an autocratic development. Historic and more recent examples show how poverty alleviation has been used politically and helped Tanzania's ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), maintain legitimacy and power. The case demonstrates a latent tension between on the one hand the goal of poverty alleviation, and on the other democracy and human rights. The new president Samia Suluhu Hassan, who came to power due to the premature death of her predecessor, has signalled a return to more inclusive modes of governing. However, bearing in mind the authoritarian logic of CCM and the historic background, donors emphasising democracy and human rights should be clear on their priorities and careful about what they support.

Donorer støtter fortsat fattigdomsbekæmpelse i udviklingslande, og COVID-19-pandemien har styrket denne indsats. Tanzania er det land, der har modtaget størst dansk bistand. I denne artikel undersøges og diskuteres med udgangspunkt i Tanzania, hvorvidt støtte til fattigdomsbekæmpelse kan være en udfordring for fremme af demokrati og menneskerettigheder. Ligesom flere andre afrikanske lande har Tanzania gennemgået en autoritær udvikling. Historiske og aktuelle eksempler viser, hvordan landets regeringsparti, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), har brugt indsatser til at bekæmpe fattigdom til at fastholde legitimitet og magt og argumenterer for, at der er en iboende spænding mellem målene om fattigdomsbekæmpelse og at fremme demokrati og menneskerettigheder. Tanzanias nye præsident Samia Suluhu Hassan, der kom til magten efter sin forgængers tidlige død, har signaleret en tilbagevenden til en mere inkluderende form for regeringsførelse. Men på baggrund af historien og de autoritære tendenser i regeringspartiet bør donorer melde klart ud om deres prioriteter og nøje overveje, hvad de vælger at støtte.

Crossroads in Danish foreign policy 1770–2020

Carsten Staur

The article is based on a book by the same author, published on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It provides an interpretation of the main features of Danish foreign policy since 1770, based on an analysis of twelve critical decision-making processes, starting with the loss of Norway in 1814, the loss of Schleswig and Holstein in 1864, the establishment of the nation state in 1920, and the German occupation of Denmark in 1940. Denmark's role in the post-war multilateral system is analysed in the context of its UN membership in 1945, the establishment of NATO in 1949, the referendum on the EEC in 1972, and the end of the Cold War in 1989. The new world order after 2001 is the background for a review of Denmark's role in relation to EU enlargement in 2002, the Iraq war in 2003, the cartoon crisis in 2005, and the Climate Summit in 2009. On that basis, some general lessons are drawn in relation to Danish foreign policy and the diplomatic profession.

Artiklen er baseret på forfatterens bog "Skilleveje", der udkom i forbindelse med Udenrigsministeriets 250 års jubilæum. Bogen beskriver hovedlinjerne i dansk udenrigspolitik siden 1770, baseret på en analyse af tolv kritiske udenrigspolitiske beslutningsprocesser siden da, begyndende med tabet af Norge i 1814, tabet af Slesvig-Holsten i 1864, genforeningen i 1920, og den tyske besættelse i 1940. I forhold til Danmarks deltagelse i det multilaterale system efter 2. verdenskrig analyseres FN-medlemskabet i 1945, NATO-medlemskabet i 1949, EF-processen frem mod folkeafstemningen i 1972 og betydningen af den kolde krigs ophør i 1989. Den nye verdensorden efter 2001 ses som baggrund for en gennemgang af Danmarks rolle i forhold til EU-udvidelsen i 2002, Irak-krigen i 2003, Muhammed-krisen i 2005 og FN's klimatopmøde i 2009. På grundlag heraf formuleres nogle mere generelle iagttagelser både i forhold til dansk udenrigspolitik og det diplomatiske fag.

Chapter 2
Ministerial articles

The international situation and Danish foreign policy 2020

Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeppe Kofod

Pursuing foreign relations in a world under lockdown

2020 will enter our history books as the year of the worst pandemic in a century. Since the Spanish Flu in 1918, the world has become immensely more globalised and interconnected. By the end of 2020, around 1.8 million people had died from COVID-19, while more than 80 million people had been infected. Numbers keep growing. No one could have anticipated how big an impact COVID-19 would come to have on our societies, our health, even our everyday habits. The pandemic also brought geopolitical changes. It brought changes to how we conducted foreign policy with virtual meetings becoming the new normal.

So pronounced were its consequences that we may almost forget how 2020 began. Long gone seems the killing of Iranian General Soleimani in a US drone strike on January 3rd, igniting a spark in an already volatile region. In March, developments in Syria led Turkish President Erdogan to threaten opening Turkey's borders to Europe. By March, I had already participated in two emergency meetings of EU foreign ministers – the first of their kind since 2015 – to deal with the acute situation in the region. Meanwhile, the first reports of a new type of pneumonia were coming in. On February 27th, Denmark confirmed its first case of COVID-19. On 11 March, Denmark became one of the first European countries to introduce major lockdown measures. Just two days later, the WHO declared Europe the centre of the pandemic.

Borders closed, societies shut down and many of our daily activities were cancelled. An immediate and large-scale repatriation effort begun. At the height of the crisis, an estimated 117,000 Danes were travelling the world. In my ministry, we quickly reassigned more than 200 employees from their regular tasks. They had to hit the ground running, aiding and assisting Danes in their repatriation efforts in the largest scale operation ever witnessed in the history of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the day-to-day level, we all learned how difficult it is to maintain our social relations with limited ability to meet in person. This is the case for foreign policy too. Without the ability to travel and to meet in person – without that sense of confidence from meeting face-to-face – foreign policy is just harder to do. Luckily, advances in digital technologies have made video conferences much more convenient. COVID-19 remains first and foremost a global health issue. However, it has also become an accelerator of existing geopolitical trends – increasingly antagonistic relations between the US and China, pressure on the multilateral system and a global decline of democracy. Rivalries and competition in technology, supply chains, even health, became increasingly contentious issues on the global political stage. Increased use of proxy news sites and fake social media accounts gave conspiracy-ridden and polarising narratives a wider reach, including fake accounts on the origin of the virus. Disinformation and fake news were propelled to the forefront of political discourse while our vulnerabilities – e.g. in terms of supply chains and infrastructure – became ever more apparent. Perhaps also more exploitable.

At the same time, the crisis created opportunities for increased global cooperation in areas such as health and economic recovery. Increased attention to global challenges will hopefully spill over to other pressing challenges – most prominently climate and irregular migration. As a small and open country, Denmark is dependent on her alliances, on rule of law, on predictability. Without strong multilateral cooperation and a rules-based international order, we cannot defend our interests. This is why we need a values-based approach to our foreign policy as the best way to protect and promote our interests. On this basis, in 2020 I launched a global review of Denmark's foreign and security policy, involving a broad range of stakeholders.

In defence of a value-based international order

The spread of COVID-19 also seemed to accelerate the concerning trend of democratic backsliding. Autocratic governments used COVID-19 as a pretext to come down hard on democratic principles and human rights as the pandemic provided the instruments to restrict freedom of assembly, association and expression disproportionately.

On the global scale, the fight against the pandemic has fuelled geopolitical rivalry as countries tried to demonstrate how their system of governance was most effective in responding to it. This gave rise to a global contest of narratives – on the source of the virus and the effectiveness of countries in countering it, including states engaging in mask- and later vaccine diplomacy to boost reputations. It also included widespread mis- and disinformation regarding COVID-19 to promote foreign policy interests.

After years of autocratic trends and increasing pressure on freedom, human rights and democratic values, 2020 was the 15th year in a row with democratic decline. Not only that, it was also the worst of those 15 years, with nearly 75% of the world's population living in a country that faced democratic deterioration in 2020. At the same time, and accelerated by the pandemic, our international rules-based order continued to erode. The launch of the drafting of a new Danish foreign policy strategy guided by values of democracy, equality and an international rules-based order where rights and duties go hand in hand was, in part, a response to that.

A value-based approach requires strong cooperation with our like-minded partners, and the positive signals from President Biden that the US will put the defence of democratic values at the forefront of its foreign policy are encouraging in this respect. We need the US back in the game if we are to overcome the most pressing, global challenges.

2020 saw autocratic leaders come under pressure from protest movements. In Belarus, after 26 years in office, Lukashenko announced yet another landslide victory in the presidential election in August. Thousands of Belarusians took to the streets in protest at the falsified results. Determined to cling to power,

the Belarusian authorities refused to engage in any dialogue and mediation. Instead, peaceful protests led to mass arrests and clashes with riot police, who acted with brutal force and disproportionate violence against their own population.

Denmark's security and prosperity depends heavily on the state of our neighbours. Global democratic development makes Denmark safer and enhances our ability to protect and develop our welfare state. This is why Denmark actively supports democratic movements and civil society and takes a clear stance in the defence of human rights. To serve this cause, Denmark announced a new Democracy Fund to strengthen civil society and support people-to-people contacts in Belarus and our eastern neighbourhood.

Our voice is stronger and our actions more powerful when we act jointly. In the EU, I was a strong proponent of targeted measures against those responsible for the violent repressions in Belarus. We managed to approve three rounds of sanctions including sanctioning the so-called president. However, we as the EU must act more quickly and more resolutely, in particular when it comes to defending our values. I have been actively calling for a new global human rights sanctions regime enabling us to respond quickly and resolutely to serious human rights violations wherever they occur. In the Foreign Affairs Council in December, we approved this new regime.

In Russia, the grip on civil society was tightened further with critical voices being harassed and threatened. The human rights situation deteriorated with restrictions on civil society, as well as freedom of expression and assembly, including those of human rights defenders and journalists. Another blatant violation of international law came with the assassination attempt on opposition activist Alexei Navalny. Russia's lack of commitment to upholding our fundamental rules underlines the need for a continued tough stance, also when it comes to the grave human rights violations in Russia.

Values were also at the centre of great power politics in 2020. With China becoming more assertive regionally and globally, the US has increasingly been confronting China's selective adherence to international rules and norms. In 2020, this led to a rapidly deteriorating relationship between the two leading world powers. Issues of friction ranged from disregard for the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle in Hong Kong and the continuation of grave human

rights abuses in Xinjiang, to increasing tension over the Taiwan Strait and mutual accusations regarding the responsibility for the COVID pandemic.

In July, the EU foreign affairs council approved a coordinated package of measures on Hong Kong in response, but since then the situation has only deteriorated further – with negative impact on democracy and political pluralism. At the end of 2020, the legislative council no longer had any parliamentarians belonging to the pro-democratic wing. In Xinjiang reports of widespread surveillance, large-scale arbitrary arrests and detentions in so-called 're-education camps', and disproportionate use of force led to harsh criticism from a unified European Union at, among others, the UN human rights council.

2020 was also the year when China and the US increasingly locked horns over the issue of 5G networks due to concerns that technology provided by Chinese vendors could ultimately be misused by the Chinese government. Several European countries tightened rules and regulations for suppliers of critical infrastructure, notably telecommunications.

Denmark, and indeed most EU countries, find themselves fundamentally aligned with the US given our shared democratic values and strong bond through NATO. In 2020, the Alliance increased its focus on China as a rapidly emerging global power. At the same time, both the EU and the US have an economic interdependency with China, which is likely to grow. Difficult dilemmas and troublesome dynamics resulting from this conundrum were clearly on display in 2020, but they may not have peaked. In any case, EU, US and Chinese cooperation will be necessary to effectively address pressing global challenges such as climate change. It has led a number of actors, including the EU to increase their focus on the Indo-Pacific as a new strategic tool to manage the changing global power dynamics.

In the midst of increasing geopolitical tensions and with COVID-19 exposing our digital dependencies, technology took centre stage, leaving us with hard choices to make. While new technologies hold enormous potential to strengthen our democracy and help solve some of our most urgent global issues – such as climate change and affordable healthcare – they can also be misused to undermine democratic debate, attack our critical infrastructure and underpin authoritarian surveillance. Autocratic states have increasingly

discovered the effectiveness of digital tools to monitor their citizens and stifle democratic movements.

These challenges can only be addressed through reformed and revitalised multilateral cooperation. We need a stronger EU that uses its economic and political leeway and realises its full potential as a strong and progressive voice in defence of democracy and human rights. It includes the need for the EU to revitalise the spirit of European unity and reverse the trend of blocking the union's ability to strongly call out human rights offenders and autocrats globally. And it includes the UN, where a stronger and more united EU voice is needed to counter attempts to recalibrate our global values and rights.

At the UN Human Rights Council, in 2020 Denmark used its membership to the fullest to speak out loud against oppression. In September Denmark led a joint statement on the grave human rights situation in Saudi Arabia. Thirty-two countries joined us in calling for speedy reforms and release of political detainees. Addressing the horrific human rights violations in Belarus, we have worked intensively for the council to act, resulting in a resolution at the council session in March 2021 establishing a mandate for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to examine all alleged human rights violations in the country since May 2020.

The election of President Biden brought the US back with a strong voice in multilateral cooperation. Denmark, the EU and other allies must seize this opportunity. With US leadership and close transatlantic cooperation as the basis, 2021 may finally be the year to break the downward trend for human rights and democracy. That requires for all of us to step up – as individual countries, within the EU and in the UN.

Turning up climate ambitions

Expectations were high for 2020 as a milestone year for global climate ambition. Here COVID-19 also had its effect. With new or updated nationally determined contributions, 2020 should have culminated with COP26 in Glasgow. Due to global lockdowns, the summit was postponed for a year. Nevertheless, 2020 was far from a wasted year for climate action. With all its downsides, the pandemic also proved an opportunity for green recovery providing the impetus

to build back better and greener in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. The Danish government put this centre stage in our negotiations with the EU, the UN and in bilateral dialogues and cooperation.

Despite the pandemic causing an unprecedented temporary reduction in global CO_2 emissions in 2020, the challenges remain the same. Emissions are expected to bounce back as the world reopens and we are still heading for a temperature rise far beyond the Paris Agreement goals. Radical changes to global production and consumption of fossil fuels – and particularly coal – are required to set the necessary course. A whole-of-society approach will be needed to ensure that politicians, the public and private sectors as well as civil society contribute to lifting the level of ambition and concrete action.

Coal supplies cover one-third of global electricity generation. In order to reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement, it is necessary to reduce emissions from coal globally by 80% by 2030 and 100% by 2040. To this end, the Danish government launched in 2020 a long-term strategy for global climate action 'A Green and Sustainable World', setting the direction for Denmark's international climate efforts. The aim is to raise the global climate ambitions, reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by leading the way in the green transition, drive adaptation and resilience initiatives in the fight against climate change, shift global finance flows in a green direction and collaborate with the business community on green solutions that make a difference. We walk the talk and lead by example.

An encouraging milestone from 2020 and one of the great markers of our enhanced international climate cooperation was the new Green Strategic Partnership between India and Denmark that was agreed in September. India is key to ensuring a turnaround in global emissions – together with other major economies like China, South Korea and Japan, who announced higher ambitions in 2020 with targets for climate and carbon neutrality.

On top of this, Europe also ambitiously raised the bar by enhancing the EU's climate target to cut carbon emissions by at least 55% by 2030. Even in the midst of a pandemic and the ensuing financial crisis, the EU continued its climate leadership, looked ahead and prioritised climate ambition as a global frontrunner. The actual implementation of the enhanced 2030 target will be supported by the EU budget's new overall climate target of at least 30%, which was actively supported by my government.

To tackle the challenges of climate change we have placed special emphasis on efforts to strengthen the EU's climate and energy diplomacy. With coordinated and concrete actions, the EU can truly move things on a global scale. As the largest single source of greenhouse gases, coal requires special attention. Therefore, in 2020 I successfully promoted a global EU flagship project on just transition from coal to clean energy. This will be one of the focus areas of EU diplomacy in support of the COP26 presidency's energy transition campaign and an important response to the UN secretary general's call for an end to coal.

I was particularly encouraged by the commitment of the new US administration to strengthening international cooperation on climate diplomacy and coal phase-out. I had the pleasure of convening a talk on climate diplomacy just two days after President Biden's inauguration between my European colleagues and special presidential envoy for climate, John Kerry. The re-entry of the US onto the climate agenda is paramount to bolster the necessary momentum going towards COP26. The Biden administration's promise to invest heavily in green transition also paves the way for green Danish exports, benefitting both economy and climate. Together, we must continue to raise our climate ambitions and commitments throughout 2021 and beyond. I hope that the global response to the ongoing health crisis will inspire even more commitment to solving the climate crisis as well.

Irregular migration: facing realities, maximising responses

The global migration landscape changed dramatically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus and the responses to it at first led to mobility restrictions, changing both patterns, flows and compositions of irregular migratory movements worldwide. The pandemic and efforts such as those undertaken by the EU to better manage its external borders also affected irregular migration in Europe. 2020 saw the lowest level of irregular arrivals at the external borders in six years. With 95,000 arrivals, it was 23% lower than the previous year. However, the routes used by irregular migrants and refugees varied compared to 2019, with a significant reduction in arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece but a drastic increase in arrivals to Italy and Spain from countries in North Africa.

Despite historically few arrivals to Europe in 2020, the challenges of irregular migration remain. Climate change, increasing inequality and instability, socioeconomic challenges exacerbated by COVID-19 and not least an expected doubling of the overall population on the African continent by 2050 will most likely lead to increased migratory pressure on the EU's external borders in the future. Preventing, combatting and addressing the root causes of irregular migration remain key priorities for the Danish government.

If we are to provide long-term and sustainable solutions to the challenges of irregular migration, it is essential that we break the incentives for men, women and children to leave their homes and embark on dangerous journeys while human traffickers earn fortunes. Meanwhile, EU countries spend substantial resources on processing hundreds of thousands of asylum applications every year. However, more than half are not refugees and the problems faced with returning rejected asylum-seekers to their home countries remain. This threatens the social cohesion and the security of the EU and undermines public trust in the international system for protection of refugees.

In 2020 several steps were taken by the EU to jointly address the challenges of irregular migration. In September the European Commission proposed a new Pact on Migration and Asylum, which outlines how the EU should respond to challenges of irregular migration and forced displacement. The proposal is constructive, balanced and broadly in line with Denmark's ambitions for a fair and humane asylum system, although it does not sufficiently address the fundamental incentive for irregular migrants to embark on dangerous journeys to reach the shores of Europe.

Denmark is actively engaged in the ongoing negotiations of the pact and has especially been advocating for strengthened cooperation with the EU's southern neighbourhood. I firmly believe that comprehensive partnerships with relevant third countries, including with North African countries, remain vital in combatting irregular migration. Several countries in this region are both countries of origin, transit as well as destination for irregular migration.

In order to create a realistic, efficient and durable solution to the challenges of irregular migration, partnerships with relevant third countries should be tailor-made and mutually beneficial. They should interlink a wide range of policy tools and areas such as energy, climate, trade, health, infrastructure etc. Our position

on the southern neighbourhood is also reflected in our ambition to significantly increase Denmark's bilateral engagement in North Africa – including with an aim to enhance cooperation on irregular migration and climate issues. As a part of this endeavour, one of the few trips I managed to make in 2020 was to Egypt for bilateral discussions on how to strengthen Denmark's relations to this important region.

In 2020, the EU also reached agreement on the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). By merging existing financing instruments into one unified financial tool, NDICI will be the main funding instrument for EU external action, with a budget of approximately 80 billion euros for the period 2021–2027. After a strong Danish push with our like-minded partners, the overall political agreement sets a target of 30% of resources to climate change and around 10% to migration.

Long-term and sustainable solutions to irregular migration require new and innovative ideas – especially if we are to break the current incentive structure. Thus, a key element in the government's vision for a fairer and more humane asylum system is the possibility of transferring asylum-seekers to countries outside the EU for processing of asylum applications and protection. We are pursuing this ambition through equal partnerships with relevant countries in accordance with our international obligations. To this end, in 2020 we appointed a new Danish Special Envoy for Migration and established a permanent inter-ministerial task force.

Africa has a special focus in our efforts to fight irregular migration. Denmark is in favour of a stronger and strategic partnership between Europe and Africa that delivers results, not least regarding migration. In 2020 we strongly supported a renewed EU–Africa strategy that should pave the way for a stronger partnership with Africa across areas such as migration, green transition, job creation and trade, to provide young Africans with hope for a better future in Africa. The Danish government continuously urges the EU to make strategic use of all external instruments to this end.

A small state navigating troubled waters

The impact of the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 in the Middle East and North Africa furthered existing negative developments. As mentioned initially, the year began with an intensive crisis in the Gulf region. At an emergency session in January, together with likeminded countries I pushed for the EU to play a larger role in the region, which resulted in a strong mandate for the HRVP to promote regional dialogue on Gulf security and a stronger EU role in Iraq.

In November 2020 Denmark reopened an embassy in Iraq in light of Denmark taking over the command of NATO's Mission in Iraq (NMI), and to further improve our dialogue with Iraq and our Allies. Denmark's leadership of NMI is a testimony of our strong commitment to NATO and to our determination to continue fighting Daesh/ISIS. Denmark and Danish troops have had to navigate a complex security situation in Iraq with the threat posed by Daesh/ISIS and heightened tensions between Iran and the US. Throughout 2020 tensions manifested with attacks on the international military and diplomatic presence in Iraq by pro-Iranian militias and attacks by the US on the pro-Iranian militias deemed responsible.

During 2020 the nuclear deal with Iran came under increased pressure. Iran increased the gradual breaches of the deal it had begun in May 2019. As a firm supporter of the nuclear deal as the best means to ensure the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, Denmark joined the E3 and five other European shareholders in INSTEX, a financial mechanism to facilitate trade with Iran. I appreciate E3's tireless diplomatic efforts and hope that Teheran will come back to full compliance with the deal.

In 2020 we witnessed some – but thankfully fewer – attacks against tankers in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. A Danish tanker in the port of Jeddah was subject to an incident in which a mine was placed on the side of the ship. As the world's fifth-largest seafaring nation, Denmark has a special interest in – and responsibility to – ensure maritime security and freedom of navigation. In complementarity with existing maritime security efforts and initiatives in the region, the Danish government contributed with a frigate to the European-led maritime surveillance mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) and took over the leadership of EMASOH's civilian and diplomatic track.

Roughly 95% of all kidnappings at sea in 2020 took place in the Gulf of Guinea. During 2020 two Danish operated vessels were subject to pirate attacks though thankfully no crewmembers were physically injured during the incidents. As a response to the deteriorating situation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence jointly appointed a new special envoy for maritime security in December 2020 to coordinate joint efforts with key partners.

The Sahel region remained a strategic priority in 2020. The situation continued precarious, with a military coup in Mali and continued activities by terrorist groups and transnational organised crime, despite strong international engagement. From late 2019 and throughout 2020, Denmark deployed a substantial contribution to the French-led anti-terror operation Barkhane and re-deployed to the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSMA. The multidimensional crises in the Sahel were exacerbated by lockdowns due to Covid-19, which impacted economic growth and increased food insecurity.

To boost the humanitarian support for the region, Denmark co-hosted an international pledging conference for the Sahel together with the UN, EU, and Germany in October 2020. Moreover, Denmark provided emergency aid through several COVID response funds and assisted a UNICEF flight with medical supplies during the flight lockdown in the spring of 2020, to help the most vulnerable in the Sahel. This testifies to Denmark's broad engagement in the Sahel at both the bilateral and multilateral level.

Russia continued its assertive behaviour and military build-up at Europe's borders. It continued to play an active and worrying role in conflicts in the eastern neighbourhood region as well as in the Middle East and North Africa; conflicts, which also affect our security and challenge the rules-based international order. Against this backdrop I went to Moscow in October 2020 to meet with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. I remain a firm believer in dialogue, also when relations are tense and difficult.

During my talks with Lavrov, I underlined the need for Russia to commit to upholding and respecting fundamental rules and values. In August, we saw the horrific poisoning of the Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny with an illegal chemical nerve agent. Since Russia remained non-responsive to international calls for the Russian authorities to investigate the incident and ensure accountability, Denmark pushed for EU sanctions against high-ranking individuals responsible for the assassination attempt.

I also strongly criticised the clear Russian violation of Danish airspace near Bornholm in August and raised my concerns over the increased tensions and Russian military presence in the Baltic Sea region. In view of the brutal crackdown on peaceful demonstrators in Belarus, I urged Russia to support an inclusive dialogue and respect the Belarusian people's right to decide their own future in a democratic way.

The severe pressure on the European security architecture and international system of arms control and disarmament reached new heights in 2020. With reference to Russian non-compliance, the US withdrew of the Open Skies Treaty and Russia threatened to follow suit, thereby putting the future of the treaty into question. The extension of the New START treaty regulating strategic nuclear weapons was hanging in the balance. Against this backdrop, Denmark together with like-minded allies and partners stepped up efforts to preserve effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security and to capture the appearance of new technologies and new actors on the scene.

The UN and multilateralism at a crossroads

If anything, the crisis of COVID-19 has underlined the need for countries to step up and promote multilateralism. In a truly interdependent world, responding to global crises such as the pandemic and climate change requires a strong and functional multilateral system fit for the challenges of the 21st century. At the same time, the multilateral system is under pressure like never before. Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2020, the UN is the strongest example of this paradox. As the most important forum for global cooperation with the necessary global presence and legitimacy, the UN has a key role in responding to a crisis like COVID-19. Yet, the UN Security Council was to a large extent paralysed by great global rivalry, not least between the US and China.

Symptomatically, the call from the UN secretary general for a global ceasefire due to the pandemic remained deadlocked for weeks, as the Security Council could not agree on a resolution to support it. The World Health Organisation also became a central battleground, as health was catapulted into the arena of geopolitics. While the US Trump Administration decided to remove its support for the WHO, accusing it of being controlled by China, the EU took the lead

in negotiating the WHO resolution initiating the independent evaluation of the international COVID-19 response led by WHO, and of scientific investigations of the origins of the COVID-19 virus. This is an important step towards reform of WHO and a way to draw lessons to prevent future pandemics.

While far from perfect, the multilateral system has proven its relevance in delivering a strong, coordinated response to COVID-19. However, our organisations and the multilateral framework are not yet fit to handle the new, increasingly complex challenges of today and tomorrow. It is pivotal that we reinvigorate our multilateral organisations – from the WTO to the UN. The September 21st unanimous adoption of the 'UN@75 Declaration' by the General Assembly was an important symbolic gesture, underlining the support for multilateralism. The answer is not less, but more, efficient and stronger multilateralism.

I find it crucial that a country like Denmark, as one of the founding members of the United Nations, does not stand on the sidelines. We must proactively defend and develop the institutions, values, norms and rules that have been the very foundation for our safety, prosperity and stability since the Second World War. This is why the Danish government has announced that Denmark is running for a seat at the United Nations Security Council in 2025–26.

Europe stepping up to meet the challenges

Within the European Union, 2020 was also marked by COVID-19 and its economic consequences. The first wave of COVID-19 exposed a number of problems that challenged the initial European response to the crisis. With borders shutting down to contain the virus, challenges to the free movement of goods and people quickly became widespread. European supply chains of critical protective equipment proved to be fragile. As Member States embarked on unilateral export controls on personal protective equipment, it quickly became apparent that joint responses at the European level were indispensable in the face of such a major, cross-border crisis, including protecting the integrity of the internal market.

The EU's joint vaccine approach has been key to delivering vaccines for the entire European Union, and the rollout of vaccines has become the strongest

weapon in the fight against COVID. Throughout 2020, the Commission and all Member States have negotiated intensively to build a portfolio of 2.6 billion vaccine doses through agreements with different vaccine producers. However, new virus mutations and an initial shortage of vaccine production capacity show that much more needs to be done. We need to boost production capacity and preparedness in Europe to overcome the pandemic and to prepare for future health crises. As Europe is moving into the next stage of the pandemic, the EU is working at full speed with Member States and the private sector to meet these challenges.

The EU is preparing itself to become more resilient to future pandemics through the European Health Union, the EU4Health programme and by building strategic stocks of medical equipment in Europe. Denmark will accommodate one of those stocks. It became clear during the pandemic that the integrity of critical supply lines is not just an economic question; it is also a question of security.

Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic was not only a health crisis, but triggered a major economic fallout. The European institutions and Member States acted swiftly and decisively to mitigate the negative socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic for citizens and businesses, thus providing a much quicker and more resolute response than it did to the economic and financial crisis of 2008.

For the first time ever, the Commission triggered the escape clause in the Stability and Growth Pact thereby allowing for a more flexible use of the budgetary rules. Rules for the cohesion funds were modified to allow for financing of health-related expenditure. Likewise, state aid rules were made more flexible in order to enable Member States to support healthy business that would otherwise have been at risk of bankruptcy. And a new instrument providing loans to Member States to finance national unemployment schemes was adopted.

It quickly became evident that the economic downturn necessitated a concerted, large-scale effort to relaunch growth and job creation. Under very difficult circumstances, European leaders agreed on a forward-looking EU budget for 2021–2027 and a recovery fund of 750 billion euros; a historically large recovery fund with 37% of the funds dedicated to green transition and 20% to digitalisation. It provides a chance to truly sustain a green European

recovery, while at the same time providing great opportunities for Danish businesses specialising in green and digital solutions and expertise.

Pandemic or no pandemic, Brexit was another reality that needed addressing in 2020. The British exit from the EU in January 2020 was followed by intense negotiations on the future relationship, with the expiration of the transition period by the end of 2020 and the threat of a no deal cliff edge looming. In the end the EU and the UK were able to conclude the Trade and Cooperation Agreement just before Christmas.

Brexit is a loss for all. It was a relief that we managed to secure an agreement and thereby avoid the worst-case scenario, which would have entailed severe political and economic consequences for both sides. Although strong EU unity and robustness throughout the negotiations ensured an ambitious and balanced agreement, it cannot offset the many negative consequences of Brexit, nor match the countless advantages of the internal market. Nevertheless, the agreement is crucial for Danish exports. Under current circumstances, it provides a solid basis for our future relations with the UK.

The UK remains a close friend, partner and ally of the EU and of Denmark. We will continue to develop our relations, including on foreign and security policy issues, climate change, free trade and rule of law.

As they say, 'it never rains, but it pours'. In addition to the above-mentioned challenges, the worrying rule of law developments that we witnessed in a couple of Member States over a number of years worsened. The independence of the judiciary, media freedom and media pluralism as well as women's and LGBTI rights have come increasingly under pressure in Hungary and Poland. These developments remain a threat to the EU, as they risk undermining the crown jewel of the EU – its internal market, as well as the EU's founding values.

But on this essential, yet difficult and divisive question, the EU took action. For the first time in the EU's history, a clear link between the EU budget – including the recovery fund – and rule of law has been established. We eagerly look forward to its full implementation and the Danish government will continue to contribute to the important effort of protecting and promoting rule of law across the EU. Protecting and promoting our values at home is a prerequisite for being a strong voice for our values in the world.

2020 was in many ways a turning point for Europe. Geopolitical developments as well as the effects of the pandemic triggered an important debate covering areas as diverse as foreign policy, trade, competition, and industrial policy. About how to make the EU stronger, more resilient and more competitive or, as some like to call it, how to build 'strategic autonomy'. There is broad consensus that the EU must strengthen its ability to make decisions based on its democratic values and strategic interests without turning its back on the world. That applies to the concept of 'digital sovereignty' as well.

From a Danish perspective, it is essential that the EU continue to cooperate and engage actively with international partners, building in particular on a strong transatlantic relation and partnerships with likeminded democratic nations across the globe. Not least when it comes to curtailing unfair trade practices and reforming global trade rules. Without open markets and strong global value chains, Europe cannot achieve the economic recovery and green and digital transformation we need in a post-COVID-19 world.

The Conference on the Future of Europe will be an important opportunity for an inclusive debate on questions about where the EU is headed, what the EU should look like in the future, and how the EU can strengthen its resilience. My hope is that these discussions will explore how the EU can best deliver real, tangible political results that matter to our citizens.

Shaping our priorities in a changing Arctic

Looking north, there can be no doubt that the Arctic is changing. Climate changes are affecting the environment and people's way of life. Not only locally, but also globally. The increased geostrategic interest in the Arctic is challenging our ambition for a low-tension region. Growing military presence of Arctic and non-Arctic actors often dominates today's media coverage of the Arctic. This is part of, but far from, the full picture.

Above all, the Arctic region is home to four million people. In my view, it is key to keep the human dimension in mind when dealing with the Arctic. For the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are centrally located in the Arctic and North Atlantic. What matters to the people of the Arctic are the same things that matter to you and me: good schools, public healthcare, jobs and social security.

Greenland, Denmark and the Faroe Islands worked in 2020 on a new joint Arctic strategy to be launched in 2021. The strategy will focus on initiatives that contribute to improving the lives of the indigenous peoples and local inhabitants of the Arctic while respecting the fragile and unique Arctic nature. Sustainable economic development, knowledge and research, climate and environment, international cooperation and security are some of the core aspects of our joint vision for the Arctic. A strategy with an overarching emphasis: the human dimension.

I give high priority to ensuring that our foreign and security policy safeguards the interests of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands as well as the general interests of the Kingdom of Denmark as a whole. My vision is to create a modern relationship characterised by mutual respect and trust, fit to address the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century. I aspire to a cooperation on foreign and security policy that reflects the cohesion between our three societies while also providing adequate room for manoeuvre to enable Greenland and the Faroe Islands to develop international partnerships related to fields of responsibility that they have taken over.

This requires a renewed and strengthened focus on cooperation between us. To this effect, I have initiated a focused dialogue with my Greenlandic and Faroese colleagues on specific ways to meet this objective. By thorough deliberations, we have expanded our common understanding of each other's priorities and perspectives, boundaries and possibilities. We are working to increase our common pool of knowledge and analytical capacity by significantly increasing our information-sharing practice and engaging in joint analytical exercises. We seek to contribute to general foreign policy capacity-building through, for example, the temporary stationing of young Greenlandic diplomats at the MFA in Copenhagen and we welcome Greenlandic and Faroese candidates for the general MFA recruitment as well as for specific positions as 'Arctic interns' at selected embassies.

My objective of ensuring strengthened cooperation and appropriate participation by Greenland and the Faroe Islands also extends to international meetings such as the July 2020 visit of US Secretary of State Pompeo to Copenhagen, which comprised a meeting between the US and the Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands). During the meeting, Minister Lynge, Minister Rana and I discussed Arctic and North Atlantic

matters with Secretary Pompeo. I attach great importance to having all parts of the realm aboard to discuss common challenges and opportunities. This has laid the groundwork for a nuanced and productive conversation.

2020 was also the year we reached a joint understanding between the Kingdom of Denmark and the US on lengthy negotiations regarding the Thule Air Base maintenance contract. On October 28th, the governments of Denmark, Greenland and the US agreed to conclude the negotiations with four documents clarifying legal issues and laying out a path for future cooperation. We could never have achieved what we did if it were not for the unshakeable cooperation between Denmark and Greenland – and our solid and far-reaching bilateral relationship with the United States.

Drawing lessons from a turbulent year

2020 was in many ways a gloomy year. The repercussions of COVID-19 will be felt for years to come – on global health, our economies, international cooperation, in conflict zones and much more. The pandemic has accentuated existing tensions and fault lines while creating new challenges of its own. In the process, it has reminded us of the degree to which we are interconnected and interdependent. It has reminded us of the negative consequences of globalisation, but also demonstrated the possibilities if we manage to provide global answers to our joint challenges. The vaccines arrived sooner and worked better than many people dared hope less than a year ago. And yet, while the world rolls up its sleeve, it has become clear that vaccines will not see off COVID-19 entirely. Instead, the disease seems likely to become endemic. It is therefore imperative that we act now and think ahead so we will not be caught off-guard when future health crises may endanger our societies and economies.

I mentioned to begin with that multilateralism has been in dire straits over the last years. The pandemic has not reversed that trend. However, there is consolation. New winds are blowing from the west with the election of President Biden. Europe is stepping up to the plate. Through swift action and unity, we are pushing the EU to provide pragmatic solutions to complicated problems.

In 2020, Denmark – along with many of our allies – scaled up our efforts to combat climate change, curb irregular migration and enhance our engagement with issues in our neighbourhood to the south and the east. I hope that 2021 will be the year we continue along this trajectory and create new impetus for strengthened multilateralism, further enhance global efforts against climate change and become even stronger global advocates of the values we stand for.

To do so, we must insist on fighting for democracy, human rights and communities of mutual obligations. With the new Danish Foreign and Security Policy Strategy, we will lay the foundation for our efforts in the years to come. It provides a compass for our international engagement based on our key values and will guide our endeavours to uphold our safety, protect and develop our welfare state and fight for a more democratic, greener, just and equal world defined by international cooperation and rules-based order.

The international situation and Danish security and defence policy 2020

Minister of Defence Trine Bramsen

It takes a village

Things that start small can reshape the world. That is what we learned in 2020. Few people noticed when news emerged in December 2019 that China had begun monitoring the outbreak of a new, pneumonia-like virus. Yet at the outset of 2020, COVID-19 changed life as we knew it – globally.

As countries implemented lockdowns to stop the disease from spreading, the pandemic wreaked havoc on the global economy and poverty rates spiked. The calamity hit everyone with no adherence to national borders, and by the end of 2020 some 1.7 million people had died from the virus. While the immediate impact of COVID-19 has been profound, its longer-term implications may be even greater.

From the start of the pandemic, far-reaching measures were taken to save lives. All the resources of states – and the EU and NATO – including our available military and defence capabilities, were mobilised in support of this core objective. As minister of defence, my primary task was to make sure that the COVID-19 crisis did not develop into a security crisis. Not nationally, nor internationally. So far, we have succeeded in maintaining all critical functions, readiness and preparedness at home. We have demonstrated our solidarity with partners and Allies, and we have retained our level of ambition with regard to our contributions to international operations and missions. This has not, however, been an easy feat. And we would not have been where we are today

if it were not for the resilience, adaptability, effectiveness and leadership of our armed forces and our civil emergency management.

Unity, solidarity and common purpose were indeed recurring themes in 2020. Each of us had a role to play in overcoming this pandemic, and all parts of our society came together in a spirit of collaboration unlike anything I have ever seen. Also in a European and international context, we pursued unity, solidarity and multilateralism. And while not frictionless, nor easy, we did well.

If the twelve months following the outbreak of COVID-19 justified farsighted caution, they also proved that our common efforts were not in vain. While serious challenges remained, the vaccines arrived by the end of the year and we made headway in addressing the virus. This was a new but fragile dawn in the fight against the disease. While the end of the pandemic might be in sight for some parts of the world, the pandemic has been a watershed event whose comprehensive consequences – way beyond 2020 – we can only begin to conceive of today.

In 2020, we saw how COVID-19 accelerated many of the global security challenges and dynamics that we have seen emerge during the last decades. The evolving international stage spells worrying scenarios with insecurity and geostrategic competition between the United States, China and Russia building up on many fronts: in terms of democratic values, systemic competition, trade, technology and security. There is no doubt that Denmark stands with the United States, democracy and the strong transatlantic bond. But the systemic competition is reinforcing the global struggle for values, and it involves more and more aspects of international cooperation. For a small, open, democratic and compromise-seeking country like Denmark, these waters are not easy to navigate.

At the same time, populism and authoritarianism are on the rise. Democracy's global march has slowed, and even reversed, as the prospect of cooperation framed by international law is being defied; as our values and way of life are being contested. The rules-based order and multilateral cooperation – carved out in the wake of World War II and nurtured ever since – are receding. For Denmark this is an encompassing challenge that links to many of the issues facing us in 2020 and beyond. If the rules-based international order continues to deteriorate, much will be at stake for a small state like Denmark, by definition more vulnerable in a world where might makes right and winners take all.

COVID-19, with all its implications, has also reminded us that security threats and tests of national resilience can take many forms. That the concept of security is all-encompassing. The potency of cyberspace, hybrid threats and space security, the clarity of climate change, the rapid development and accessibility of new disruptive technologies and the increasingly interconnected character of international relations suggest that some of the most obvious risks and threats are not necessarily of a military nature, yet they are at the very essence of the current security environment.

On top of this, instability and conflict are moving closer to our borders. Terrorism, fragile states and irregular migration continue to pose serious challenges with security implications at home and abroad. We are still facing a malign Russia that continues to challenge the norms and rules our society is built upon, and whose military presence in the Baltic Sea region and in the Arctic continues to increase. Chinese and the American geostrategic interest in the Arctic is growing as well. Combined, these challenge the preconditions for a peaceful development in the region.

2020 did bring some good news with it as well. Once again Europe has a committed transatlantic as our American partner. Yet the United States and Europe cannot simply rebuild the ties of a previous era if we are to succeed in meeting today's challenges. And it would be a mistake to think that the pressure from the United States on NATO Allies to increase defence spending will be eased. It will take a globally committed United States as well as a more self-reliant and capable Europe if we are to meet the challenges to our security and way of life, including our common values.

A gloomy depiction, I am aware. But we are facing daunting challenges – with direct consequences for the Kingdom of Denmark and at a pace that complicates responses at every level. They must be faced simultaneously and in close cooperation with our partners and Allies. This is a major and costly task, and it will require something from all of us, now and in the future. The rest of this chapter outlines the key strands in Danish defence and security policy and takes stock of the main international developments – in a year that was crowded with them.

NATO and the transatlantic bond. The bedrock of European security

With the election of Joe Biden as president of the United States in November 2020, a page was turned in the transatlantic relationship; an important page for NATO and for European security. Though there are of course still questions about the future direction of President Biden's foreign and security policy, the United States' role in NATO is not among them. The new administration's support to NATO, to cooperation and dialogue between Allies, and to Article 5 as the foundation of NATO's collective defence has been unequivocal.

There is much to repair and rebuild, both at home and abroad. But the new administration is above all a moment of opportunity. A reinforced transatlantic partnership is key for global change, and a globally committed United States is pivotal – in terms of defending our common values, strengthening the rules-based international order, investing in our multilateral institutions, and providing collective security in an era of great power competition.

A credible NATO is based on two things: a strong engagement from the United States and a strong and ready Alliance. The United States is our most important partner when it comes to security and defence, within NATO as well as bilaterally. Denmark has a long tradition of close cooperation with America, and we must maintain and strengthen it. Not to please the United States, but because it is important for Danish and for European security. Our common values – democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law – bind us together. The transatlantic bond is strong.

A close bilateral cooperation and relationship with the United States both regionally and globally is fundamental to Denmark's security. The roll-out of the first Danish F-35 fighter aircraft is a clear embodiment of our close relationship – a major step and a landmark event for cooperation between Denmark and the United States and for Denmark's ability to contribute to the collective security.

While the United States may speak more softly now, let there be no mistake. The new administration will not stop pressing the case for burden-sharing. Every modern American president has raised the issue with NATO Allies and

Biden will be no different. We can expect that The Defence Investment Pledge agreed at the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014 for Allies to aim to move towards 2% of GDP on defence will remain a top priority for the United States.

Denmark continues to be a core Ally in NATO. And NATO remains the cornerstone of Denmark's security – of our safety, welfare and way of life. These elements are intertwined, as security is a prerequisite for us to enjoy our freedoms and rights as well as the values we cherish. A prerequisite for our society to function. We have shown readiness and political will to carry our fair part of the burden, when it comes to cash, to capabilities and to contributions. The Danish Defence Agreement for 2018–2023 and the Supplemental Agreement from January 2019 raise defence expenditure to 1.5% of GDP in 2023. The Defence Investment Pledge will also be the premise of the next defence agreement from 2024 onwards.

Throughout its history NATO has endured because it adapts to each successive new challenge. As a testament to the values and interests we share, Allies have continuously generated political support for the Alliance – even if not always readily. In adapting to an ever more challenging security environment – including in the wake of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 – NATO has increased its focus on deterrence and defence of the Euro-Atlantic area and renewed its focus on collective defence. This has been the Alliance's most comprehensive adaption since the end of the Cold War. Yet adaptation continues to be pertinent and relevant – important strides need to be taken in countering challenges like hybrid and cyberthreats, the implications of climate change, the development in the Arctic region as well as the security implications posed by the rise of China. NATO's strength and value is contingent on the Alliance's ability to adapt and adjust over time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit all of us hard. Yet it has also accentuated NATO's strength and resilience. Despite challenges and disagreements – as well as Russia's and China's attempts to spread disinformation and create divisions among Allies – NATO's deterrence and defence remained intact and strong with unambiguous demonstrations of solidarity, unity and cohesion in the Alliance. The core of NATO is and will remain strong. We will stand united as Allies.

Our international engagements. Instability and terrorism

During 2020 almost every country in the world fought battles to get COVID-19 under control. This struggle came to affect international engagements as well. Despite these impediments, Denmark remained steadfast in our contributions to fight violence and instability. Throughout 2020, Denmark continued to participate actively in international efforts to counter terrorism, to curb irregular migration, and to contribute to stabilisation in some of the world's most fragile states and regions. Our contributions, both military and civilian, continuously had to adapt to the changing circumstances caused not only by the pandemic, but also by the changing security situation in e.g. Iraq, Mali and the Strait of Hormuz. Denmark contributed where our efforts were needed and our values were at stake. Our safety and security at home hinges on our actions abroad – and in times of change and turmoil, it is essential to persist and persevere. In 2020 we even went beyond perseverance and took a lead in the global fight against terrorism and instability.

Danish efforts span from the close proximity of our borders to the farthest regions. Close to home, 2020 saw a renewed Danish contribution to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia as part of the UK battle group. A necessary military contribution at a time where instability is no longer a term only applicable for faraway regions, but also for Europe. Our collective efforts within NATO to deter any aggressor are vital and the cornerstone of Danish security policy.

Denmark has continuously supported Allied efforts in Afghanistan in order to ensure that the country never again serves as a safe haven for terrorists. This was also the case in 2020 where Danish troops were deployed in support of NATO's Resolute Support Mission. The current situation in Afghanistan presents a unique opportunity for peace after decades of war. NATO has decided to withdraw militarily from Afghanistan in this light, recognising that there is no military solution to the challenges Afghanistan faces. The terrorist threat to the West from inside Afghanistan has been effectively eradicated, and the international community will remain vigilant. Lasting peace requires the will of the Taliban and the key Afghan political groupings to enter into a fruitful dialogue. It will be important for the future of Afghanistan that Allied

nations continue their support to the country, its people, and its institutions in non-military domains. Denmark's efforts to combat terrorism will continue. The focus will be on where the threat is greatest.

In Iraq, 2020 began with the immense Iranian missile attack on the Al Asad airbase in January where Danish and coalition troops were fortunate enough to evade danger. The incident displayed the volatile situation in the Middle East as well as the need for external support. The year also saw the completion of the five-years-long Danish capacity building commitment to Operation Inherent Resolve, training over 20,000 Iraqi soldiers as Denmark prepared to take over command of NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) in November 2020. Our leadership of NMI speaks to our commitment to NATO and to the rules-based international order.

These lines of engagement were complimented by Denmark's peace and stabilisation programme for Syria and Iraq aimed at reducing insecurity, terrorism and irregular migration as well as protracted displacement. By doing so, Denmark harnesses the comparative advantages of merging efforts in the humanitarian and developmental fields with peace actions, and by so doing remains at the forefront of the fight against terrorism in the region. The core objective is to enable Iraqi security forces to develop, to grow, and in time to be able to handle the security within Iraqi borders by themselves. This is not an easy task but it remains an important one; important for the security situation in Iraq as well as for our security at home.

Despite significant efforts to stabilise the Sahel region, the security situation deteriorated in 2020. Insecurity escalated and spread across porous borders with dramatic repercussions for the region's inhabitants. Jihadist terrorist groups threatened stability and external help was needed to support local security forces in their efforts. Denmark contributed to the UN mission in Mali, MINUSMA, with personnel and a transport aircraft as well as to the French-led Operation Barkhane with transport helicopters. The Sahel region continues to be a priority for the Danish Government as the volatility and instability remain high.

In the Mediterranean, Denmark provided a substantial contribution to the European Union's efforts to curb irregular migration. We also took responsibility within the maritime domain as the situation in the Strait of Hormuz called for

extraordinary measures. As a seafaring nation, Denmark stood up for freedom of navigation, and by the autumn of 2020, the Danish frigate Iver Huitfeldt had joined the European-led surveillance mission (EMASoH). The frigate returned to Denmark in December, and Denmark will take the lead for the mission in early 2021.

Across the globe, COVID-19 challenged the adaptability of both our military and our civilian engagements to enhance peace and stabilisation. For the regional programmes funded by the Peace and Stabilisation Fund, the pandemic required extraordinary flexibility and agility, as numerous planned activities such as exercises and training courses were cancelled. In the Horn of Africa, despite activities being cancelled, Denmark was able to continue to assist Kenya in its efforts to counter regional violent extremism and cross-border organised crime at sea by providing the Kenyan Navy with COVID-19 protective equipment. In Ukraine, the Danish efforts continued during the pandemic as Denmark continuously supported defence reforms through a number of deployed military advisors and mobile training teams.

2020 also marked the 20-year-anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – a resolution that has established a powerful normative framework to ensure women's needs, voices and perspectives in preventing, resolving and recovering from conflict and building sustainable peace. In 2020 Denmark launched its 4th National Action Plan, and the Danish Defence launched an individual action plan aiming at strengthening the gender perspective in international operations and international security forums, as well as women's participation in peace and security efforts. An additional core objective of the action plan is to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations.

Looking ahead towards the years to come, Denmark will strengthen her engagement in multilateral efforts, including through our candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council 2025–26. Only through cooperation will we collectively succeed in our common fight against terrorism and instability.

Increasing opportunities and rising challenges in the Arctic

As the Arctic becomes more easily accessible, new security dynamics and an increased geostrategic interest in the region are unfolding – especially from the fallout of international systemic competition. Russia is increasing its military presence, and China is striving for more influence and a larger footprint in the region. These developments have put the ambition for low tension under pressure. If we are to achieve low tension, a careful balancing of state actors' initiatives and responses as well as a keen observance of the special role of the Arctic coastal states for the security in the region is essential.

The Kingdom of Denmark is centrally placed in the Arctic as one of five Arctic coastal NATO Allies. And we take our special responsibilities in the region very seriously. Danish Defence has been present for many years in the Arctic and the North Atlantic, and recently a political agreement was reached on investments in strengthened surveillance and more Arctic capabilities. But the geography is vast and cannot be covered by one state alone. Only in close cooperation with the United States, our partners and Allies can we ensure a peaceful and stable development in the region.

The main task for Danish Defence is to enforce the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark and to defend our interests. This requires surveillance, presence and cooperation with our Arctic NATO Allies. We have a continuous military presence in the region at sea, on land and in the air. This will persistently be strengthened as a result of previous political agreements and the current Defence Agreement, including major improvements to our subsurface surveillance capabilities with new sensors for two frigates and our maritime helicopters.

The recent political agreement on Arctic capabilities from February this year also includes investments in long-endurance unmanned aerial systems (UAS) for surveillance, an air surveillance radar to close the current radar gap between the United Kingdom and Iceland, space-based surveillance and communication, increased cooperation with our Arctic NATO Allies, and a new basic military training unit in Greenland to engage more Greenlandic citizens in the defence of Greenland. Our increased and strengthened efforts in the

Arctic and the North Atlantic will provide both military and civilian benefits, including strengthened support for search and rescue operations, emergency operations, environmental surveillance and climate. Another key objective is to limit our carbon footprint to the extent possible in order to protect the vulnerable Arctic environment.

We will continue our fruitful dialogue with the Faroe Islands and Greenland as well as with our Arctic allies on the agreement and its implementation of new capabilities. Depending on the future development of the security environment in the region, additional increases in our abilities to operate and be present in the region may be required.

With growing accessibility, state interest and activities – especially Russian military presence and build-up – NATO needs to pay more attention to the Arctic. This would also be in the Kingdom's interest as NATO is the cornerstone in our security and defence. I would expect it would necessitate increasing visibility and activities in the region, but such activities need to be tailored to the special circumstances and characteristics of the Arctic. This would increase the expectations of the Kingdom of Denmark in terms of contributing to credible deterrence and defence – to enforce our sovereignty, to uphold our interests, and to do our part for our collective security in NATO. As an Arctic state, the Kingdom of Denmark has a special role, responsibility and knowledge as well as capabilities. We need to do our part. In close cooperation with other NATO-allied Arctic costal states.

Truth and trust. Defending our society on new fronts

If anything, 2020 served to underline that hybrid threats against us are constantly evolving and continue to challenge our understanding of conflict and peace. COVID-19 accelerated great power rivalries with disinformation taking a principal role. The pandemic was a reminder that today's battle is not just about winning the race to have the most advanced military hardware or sophisticated technology. The battle is about truth. About controlling the narrative. In today's conflicts, we must acknowledge that anyone or anything can be a target in the eyes of our opponents if it is perceived as a strategic

means to an end. This includes you and me as private persons as well: what we think and how we communicate. We can all be exploited as the weakest link in a chain that will end up affecting others.

For years we have been accustomed to Russia trying to influence Western decision makers and experts across the political spectrum, using NGOs, think tanks, and political parties to further their interests. However, since the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia has expanded its operations to also include fabricated and deliberately false information about the disease, its origin, and the efforts of Western governments to deal with the virus.

Importantly, China did not refrain either from deliberately using disinformation about the origin and handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were negative reactions in China as well following news in the Danish media pointing to China as the initial source of the COVID-19 virus. Essentially, COVID-19 has been a reminder to all of us that what we trust as the truth is up for grabs and that we cannot take the values underpinning our society for granted.

Trust is an essential pillar. As one of the most digitalised countries in the world, Denmark embraces the great benefits that digitisation, interconnectedness and new technologies bring about. But the fact that we are able to trust our democratic institutions, our companies, one another, and our technological infrastructure, is exactly what is now being used against us as a vulnerability. We need to ensure that we control our digital networks, even more importantly with a view to the newest technology and 5G.

The cyberthreat against Denmark remains a persistent feature of our security landscape, and cyberattacks continue to target our supply chains, critical infrastructure, democratic institutions, financial stability and intellectual property rights. Danish companies such as ISS, DESMI, Amgros, GlobalConnect and Ritzau all became a part of the statistics when they fell hostage to crippling malware attacks last year. And, most recently, the SolarWinds attack – initially targeting the US and then spreading throughout the world – once again showed how borderless and potentially disruptive cyberattacks can be.

Clearly, this unacceptable and irresponsible behaviour calls for consequences. Fortunately, Denmark does not stand alone with these views. In fact, far from it. By collaborating with our close partners and allies, we can ensure that it carries a heavy price tag when malicious actors try to violate our digital

integrity and destabilise the foundations of our society. The EU is an important platform for Denmark in this regard. This is also why Denmark was one of the frontrunners in 2020 when we introduced the first-ever EU cyber sanctions, targeted at culprits from Russia, China and North Korea, under the framework of the EU's Cyber Diplomatic Toolbox. But we need to do even more. This is why I continue to advocate for a strong European commitment against malicious cyberattacks, as well as a resilient NATO Alliance that will deter and discourage attacks on our security, interests and values.

Important steps towards closer Nordic cooperation. The Danish chairmanship of NORDEFCO

In 2020 Denmark held the chairmanship of the Nordic defence cooperation, NORDEFCO – a cooperation framework that continues to grow in relevance and importance. In a time characterised by an increasingly complex security environment, the Nordic countries continue to be bound together by our common values, culture, geography, and shared interests. A strong Nordic cooperation is key in securing stability and security in our region.

We were only at the beginning of 2020 when the newly established NORDEFCO crisis consultation mechanism proved its relevance; the missile attack in Iraq in January affecting our Nordic troops followed by the outbreak of COVID-19 underlined the importance of being able to rapidly convene and consult each other during crises. In these cases, our Nordic defence cooperation demonstrated how robust and agile it has become.

During the Danish chairmanship of NORDEFCO in 2020, my Nordic colleagues and I actively worked to further develop and strengthen our cooperation. We took important steps within key prioritised areas such as cybersecurity, green defence, the Arctic, and not least the ability to cooperate in times of crisis and conflict. As an example, I signed an agreement entering Denmark into a closer cooperation with Norway, Sweden and Finland on security of supply – an area of cooperation made even more relevant by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Danish chairmanship also worked actively to strengthen Nordic–Transatlantic relations, signing a letter of intent securing continued joint US–Nordic participation in the Nordic-led Arctic Challenge Exercise.

Looking ahead. Implications for Danish Defence

The rapidly evolving and unpredictable security environment is already impacting Danish defence and security policy and will continue to do so in the coming years. We must make sure that we are prepared and equipped to meet the challenges of today and of tomorrow both nationally, in our region, globally and in new domains; that we continue to be a core Ally in NATO, and that we are able to keep up our active engagement at home and abroad.

We must take stock of the situation and act accordingly. In the next defence agreement from 2024 onwards important decisions will be made for the future of Danish Defence. These decisions must be based on a solid foundation. Recognising this as well as the character of the current security environment, the Danish government has established a high-level group of national officials to conduct a thorough analysis of security developments and their consequences for the Kingdom of Denmark and Danish Defence. The analysis is expected to be completed by the beginning of 2022 drawing on Danish, Greenlandic, Faroese and international expertise, and will be a stepping-stone towards preparing for the next Danish defence agreement. Our defence and security policy must stand on solid ground.

By extension – and a point I have emphasised repeatedly – Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security. This will require us to meet our responsibilities in NATO. The Alliance must be strong enough to deter any potential aggressor from challenging our cohesion and the integrity of Allies. For Denmark, a core member of NATO, it will be a priority to continue our path to deliver on the Wales Defence Investment Pledge, to prioritise NATO capability targets in our future defence planning, and to deliver and participate in NATO operations.

There is broad political support for the next defence agreement to have the Wales Defence Investment Pledge as its premise. The next agreement must address a deteriorating security environment and the effects of new and easily accessible technology – the implications of which we have seen recently in Ukraine, Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh. Maintaining European and transatlantic

security in the face of new threats requires investments in hard and high-end military power covering all domains. Denmark will continue make such investments, but they cannot stand alone. Conflict prevention and a stable security environment, especially close to our own and our Allies' borders, are vital for our security. This requires military and non-military contributions. Denmark will continue to show readiness and political will to carry our fair part of the burden. And we will continue to contribute to Allied and global security.

To meet longer-term challenges as a result of climate change, we must act and accelerate our path to drastically reduce our carbon footprint. This will require future investments in sustainable solutions, also in our armed forces, where such solutions will reduce our logistics footprint and thereby increase our operational efficiency.

The COVID-19 pandemic taught us the importance of thinking security and defence beyond military capabilities. The pandemic has accelerated – and will continue to accelerate – our efforts to strengthen our national resilience through innovative solutions as well as dual-use of existing capacities. Civil–military cooperation has proved efficient in maintaining critical public functions in the civil sector as well as in assisting internationally. These results should be recognised and function as a catalyst for the further inclusion of civil and military capacities in preparedness planning and crisis management.

Our forces must be available, combat-ready and interoperable to be relevant. This will require better logistics, more training, and increased readiness for our current forces. Concurrently, we must continue our contributions to international and national operations as well as to the broader society. This calls for dual-use capabilities and a whole-of-government approach to future crises, security related or not. Our forces should be more sustainable with a low carbon footprint, and we need to cooperate more closely with our industry to keep us high-end and high-tech. Meeting these targets will be a challenge. It will require more funds, but also strategic prioritisation between legacy systems and new technology, which must be analysed and then balanced to meet the current and future threats that our forces could potentially face. I have no doubt that we have to invest in our security and prioritise our defence if we are to effectively protect our democratic values and way of life – as well as the security and safety we enjoy every day.

So where does all this put us? Concluding remarks

2020 did indeed prove to be an exceptionally tumultuous year in international affairs. Security concerns came very close to home, moving targets abounded everywhere – and the COVID-19 pandemic hit us hard.

While there were grounds for cautious optimism as the year finally drew to an end, a challenging year lies ahead of us. When I wrote my article for this volume last year, the world was coming to terms with a long and demanding journey ahead. One year on, the end of the pandemic might be in sight for some parts of the world. It is much too soon to declare victory, however. The fall in COVID-19 cases in many countries signals a new but fragile dawn. Deaths and transmission are still high. Access to vaccines has become a matter of national security. And variants of the virus continue to threaten progress.

As minister of defence it is my priority to ensure the safety and security of Denmark, of the Danish people, and of our society. The volume, pace and unpredictability of the threats we are facing requires that we follow a clear course. The objective of making sure that the COVID-19 pandemic does not develop into a security crisis is no less relevant today than it was a year ago. As there are still many possible scenarios as to how COVID-19 will reshape the world order, much is at stake. We must continue to take action to ensure that our efforts have not been in vain. Terrorist organisations cannot regain foothold. Fragile states cannot fall back into chaos. And we must prioritise Denmark's commitment to maintaining an effective multilateral and rules-based international order – and strengthen our cooperation with those with whom we share values, in Europe, North America and beyond. We must ensure Denmark's position in a strong European and transatlantic relationship and remain committed to our partners and the NATO Alliance.

As a final but vital point – we must make sure that we are at the forefront. We need to be alert and to adapt. Recognising the character of the threats and challenges facing us, there is simply no way around it: we must continue to invest in our security and defence. Our readiness, preparedness, resilience and robustness are essential if we are to enjoy our freedoms and rights. If we are to live our everyday lives safely in a society based on democratic values. We must never take them for granted.

Chapter 3
Academic articles

Europe 'forged in crisis'? Problematising the North–South cleavage in Europe's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

Ioannis Galariotis[1] and Fabrizio Tassinari[2]

Introduction

The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that hit European countries at the end of February 2020 has been a dramatic event, whose public health, social, economic and political ramifications are bound to be profound, long-lasting and, at the moment, are hard to entirely foresee. In collaboration with governments and private companies, the research community has been racing to swiftly develop a number of vaccines with the goal of making a return to normal lifestyles a realistic prospect in the medium term. Apart from the considerable health implications of the pandemic that have been documented extensively by the scholarly community, the widespread social lockdowns that most countries of the world imposed have provoked an unprecedented economic downturn. Most countries were literally closed, and international travel stopped to a great extent. From the moment of the imposition of these extraordinary measures, European governments were obliged to cease or reduce social and economic activity. That has been the case in most economies in the world with a few exceptions such as Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea that had previous experience in the management of pandemics, such as SARS.[3] It has been calculated that, so far, the cost of the pandemic at a global level is equal to US$10 trillion in forgone GDP over 2020–21.[4] In Europe the lost economic production reached a level of 5.6% of annual GDP (Hafner et al. 2020).

The close interconnectedness of the countries participating in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) presupposes that both the spread of the contagion and the economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis have impacted the whole European continent. This notwithstanding, the impact of the pandemic and the lockdown measures has varied greatly, depending on each country's specific response system and pre-existing structural conditions and weaknesses. Against the background of this diversity, the response of the European Union in the crisis has become increasingly important. At the beginning of the pandemic, the focus was on solidarity and the sharing of PPE equipment, medical machinery and personnel. In a second phase, the focus shifted to the economic consequences and measures. A total budget of €1,824 billion has been foreseen to fight the consequences of the pandemic and recover the European economies, including an extraordinary €750 billion on top of the regular seven-year EU budget, which is to fund the recovery plan for post-pandemic reconstruction.[5] At the time of writing, the focus has shifted again, to the policies and strategy regarding COVID-19 vaccination procurement and distribution.

The goal of this paper is to focus on the cleavages between Europe's southern countries and the so-called 'frugal' bloc (Austria, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and later Finland) as they played out during the pandemic crisis and to highlight the causes of the disagreements, the lines of convergence and the economic solutions proposed to face the consequences of this crisis. After tracing the origins of this intra-EU divide in both its cultural and its institutional dimensions, the article sets out to analyse how these divisions have played out since the corona crisis struck Europe in the spring of 2020. We do so in two stages; firstly we focus on public statements made by key figures of selected southern European countries (Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) and of the 'frugal' coalition, and then we examine how the cleavages were overcome in the run-up to the European council of July 2020. Given that the object of the article is a current and ongoing negotiation spanning different national contexts, most of the evidence originates from secondary sources or publicly available statements and texts. The analysis proceeds to interpret the unprecedented crisis resolution mechanism named the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF) that the EU devised in the wake of the corona crisis. Last but not least, it will zoom in on the role of the Franco-German axis, and especially Germany's stance as the main arbitrating power to bridge the gap between the frugal coalition and southern Europe. The paper concludes by arguing that the crisis resolution mechanisms devised within the EU to tackle this unprecedented crisis point tentatively but clearly in the direction of more integration.

The sources of Europe's North–South divide[6]

The divide between Europe's north and south has spawned a cottage industry to provide possible explanations: from social trust and tax collection to labour market legislation and competitiveness. For years, southern governments would repeatedly entreat the north for more solidarity, and for recognition of design flaws of the single currency and balance-of-payments disequilibria in the Eurozone. Northern countries, on the other hand, stressed on their inability to take on more liability for debts incurred by nations they had learned to mistrust. 'Over the years', writes Matthias Matthijs of Johns Hopkins University, 'there was a gradual widening of the popular-perceptions gap separating a "financially more orthodox" northern core of surplus countries that mainly saved, invested, produced and exported, from a "debt-ridden" southern periphery of deficit countries that predominantly borrowed, consumed, and imported' (Matthijs 2014).

Underpinning this narrative, however, there is another kind of dualism, not between north and south, or creditors and debtors. It is between, on the one hand, the pursuit of homogenising and amalgamating political and economic cultures, specifically through the formulation, implementation and enforcement of common rules, standards and schemes and, on the other hand, there is continued and inherent acceptance of differentiation among the different countries that will influence their institutional and policy responses. The tension between amalgamation, standardisation and ultimately integration on the one hand and differentiation and distinction on the other has accompanied modern European history, pervading the EU's public discourse. It has impinged on social and political practices and, more recently, on the overall effectiveness of mechanisms put in place to manage our interactions. The continent's enduring North–South divide offers a particularly useful window to explain why the same rules, approaches and policies have produced different outcomes in different national contexts.

The two mindsets are also opposed in their conceptual inspiration. The idea of standardisation and amalgamation stems from the hypothesis that rule making and rule implementation are a direct consequence of rational choices. Accordingly, government action may be inspired by different criteria and preferences but is ultimately the result of economic rationality. Advancing towards common policies and standards, in this reading, is regarded as a logical

step, and variations between countries are seen as temporary and ultimately secondary. In paper about the lesson from the Swedish socioeconomic model, entitled 'How Bright are the Northern Stars?', US scholar Marcur Olson, one of the most prominent proponents of the virtues of *Homo Economicus*, put this bluntly: 'Every culture and every people have some obviously distinctive characteristics ... but after sustained examination these claims usually turn out to be pseudo-explanations' (Olson 1990).

A diametrically opposite proposition accords national differences a central place in the formation and evolution of the processes of governing. This may lead to gradual processes of socialisation, but at its heart it posits that historical experience and cultural variation influence political and economic institutional responses. There is a vast literature that underpins this thesis. It traces back to the origins of 'cultural economics' two hundred years ago and reached a peak in Max Weber's thesis about the role of Protestant ethics in the formation of capitalist prosperity.[7] Perhaps because of the oversimplification entrenched in the Weberian hypothesis, the cultural argument in institutional analysis gradually lost steam. Yet it has been resurrected over time and is now experiencing an intellectual revival, sparked by Robert Putnam's seminal articulation of social capital in central Italy (Putman et al. 1990). This can, at its heart, be viewed as a work of cultural economics applied to institutional development and it inspired a group of institutionalists, championed by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, authors of the celebrated *Why Nations Fail.* Their merit, other than popularising a number of highly interesting case studies from all over the world, has been to put the role of culture in context, and to qualify its importance in the formation of prosperity (Acemoglu & Robinson 2012).

In Europe itself, this argument has an even longer pedigree. One of the seminal works in this genre is Eric Jones' *The European Miracle* which is as systematic as it is groundbreaking in its tracing of Europe's political and economic development across history as a product of its geography. As he puts it, quoting H.G. Wells: 'Europe did not "spend the gifts of its environment as rapidly as it got them in a mere insensate multiplication of the common life"' (Jones 1981, 3). Europeans, posits Jones, got lucky with their geography. Mountains and rivers created natural boundaries which, across time, delimited polities, their sizes and their specificities, into principalities, semi-imperial units, and proto-national states. This rather deterministic approach seems to ignore

the contribution of man-made developments, notably the Enlightenment or the Industrial Revolution, to the modernisation of Europe. For the purpose of our exploration, however, Jones' thesis, as criticised as it may be, is useful to introduce the ethnographic foundations of division in Europe, and particularly those that relate to the North–South divide.

The process of cultural and institutional amalgamation is imperfect and painstaking. It often clashes with equally natural tendencies towards differentiation and even disintegration, which resurface time and again when a crisis is looming or taking place. The experience of the Euro crisis, epitomised by Germany's insistence on austerity measures and Greece's inability to implement them, brought this dichotomy once again to the fore in European public debate. Tabloids ran photoshopped images of German chancellor Angela Merkel in Nazi fatigues to underscore Berlin's imposition of rules; innuendoes were made to the effect that Greece could only meet the demands of creditors by mortgaging its islands – to underscore Athens' lack of options. The vocabulary of European integration is usually centred on the need to accept common rules and take on common burdens in order for all to reap the benefits. Yet, it took a cataclysmic pandemic to move any discussion regarding possible mutualisation of public debt beyond some of the most damning cultural stereotyping that Europe has ever seen.

The present characterisation of the North–South divide is not intended to suggest that some geographical or even cultural markers fixedly determine policy responses within the EU. Nor is it intended to neatly divide countries as firmly belonging to one camp or the other – it is not always easy in any such dichotomy to locate, for example, cases like Belgium or Ireland, not to mention the new member states of Central Europe, which provide scope for a whole different (East–West) taxonomy. The North–South cleavage is intended to contextualise certain key positions with a view to understand the unfolding of intergovernmental and community responses. By locating certain discursive signposts, the backgrounds and possible outcomes of the postures and positions of individual countries become more apparent. And by relating these positions diachronically to how they have evolved in previous crises over time, it is possible to sketch a broader pattern in the trajectory of European integration.

North–South cleavages in the COVID-19 crisis

Not unlike previous major crises within the EU, the COVID-19 crisis has ripped the mask off to reveal the fundamental divisions among the EU member states regarding the political and economic management of the EU. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the initial phase of the pandemic the internal European discourse on issues such as solidarity or burden-sharing among member states virtually picked up from when it had left off after the Euro crisis. Rather than balance of payments, the crux of the matter this time was assistance with provision of PPE materials and personnel. Member states at first hesitated in providing mutual help and focussed on prioritising domestic policies and restrictive measures. Consequently, the early stages of the pandemic underscored the weaknesses of the EU's unique institutional architecture and yet, at the same time, revealed unlikely sources of the interstate collaborative logic that would be necessary for a convergence of positions.

Unlike the Euro crisis, of course, the pandemic had a levelling effect, insofar as it affected all countries symmetrically and irrespective of whether they are wealthy or poor, advanced or backward. Tragically and yet revealingly, wealthy regions, for example northern Italy, have been most wounded by the pandemic, despite their prosperity and well-funded healthcare systems. This made the classic Northern arguments about the South's lack of preparedness and sloppy institutional responses harder to sustain.

Another characteristic made evident by the COVID-19 crisis was the importance of the public healthcare systems. Governments and policymakers in Europe, regardless of their political reference points, rallied around the paramount importance of the public character of health systems, which cannot be replaced with private health infrastructure. While healthcare per se is not part of the EU legal competence,[8] it would be fair to assume that this underlying mindset about the scope of European healthcare and welfare formed the backdrop and paved the way for the decisions that followed.

Finally, the initial phases of the pandemic laid bare to a great extent the inefficiency of the EU at responding cohesively to such a severe problem. Without any common EU institutional architecture that could lead crisis management and planning, the pandemic response was initially everything

but coordinated: EU countries started to close their borders with unilateral decisions and without any harmonisation based on Schengen area rules. They followed very different strategies against the virus with little if any inter-state coordination.

Despite the failure of the EU leaders to formulate a joint reaction to the initial health ramifications of the COVID-19 crisis, the economic response was more articulated. That is also where the memory of the Euro crisis, both positive and negative, probably played a bigger role. From early in the pandemic EU leaders had aligned to a fundamental stance that some kind of fund should be formulated at an EU level to support the recovery of the injured European economies (Eisl & Tomay 2020). The intention to establish some kind of common fund for recovery seemed non-negotiable from the beginning, precisely to minimise the kind of fallout previous crises had seen, such as the sovereign debt crisis of the early 2010s (Grund et al. 2020).

At the same time, the exact content, format and scope of a potential fund was a negotiable issue. The major issue of controversy among the EU leaders was the size of the fund and, moreover, whether the fund would function as a lender or as a grant provider to the economies in need. Associated problems to that were whether the money would be attached to a strong conditionality policy, and identifying which activities the money should be used for in order to be most effective within the worst hit economies. Above all, the fundamental point of contention was whether EU member states were ready to agree on the sort of pure debt mutualisation process that will rely on EU institutions.

The Union initially divided into two major camps revealing the above-described cleavages and disagreements on the future politico-economic governance of the EU between the countries of Europe's north and south. On the one hand, there was a prudent, 'frugal' bloc represented by Germany and Northern European countries including the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Austria (with Finland remaining on the sidelines) advocating a conditionality approach based on strict criteria for reforms, economic spending and fiscal targets to which all beneficiaries should be subjected. This is a line of reasoning faithfully descending from the austerity-driven responses that had characterised the Euro crisis management and that relied on calls for harmonisation and convergence of standards.

On the other hand, there was the logic of the other coalition, led by South European economies such as Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain (and to which France also subscribed), which concentrated on a solidarity approach based on fair economic planning in which the majority of the funds are disbursed to support poorer countries and regions with the backup of the richer ones. The logic here followed the same kind of differentiation and flexibility that southern member states advocated and have fought for during and since the Euro crisis. It helped in this regard that the crisis generated by the coronavirus had very different characteristics and starting points than the sovereign debt crisis of 2008–2009. To put it simply, the northern bloc could not blame their southern colleagues for not having done their homework regarding fiscal conditionality and prudent economic reforms. On the contrary, it could be and was argued that the austerity imposed during the Euro crisis caused severe cuts and reductions of public healthcare services, precisely those services that were so necessary in this situation of emergency (Kentikelenis et al. 2014).[9]

So, paradoxically, the tables turned regarding the preconditions and consequences of differentiation and convergence in European countries' crisis responses. Distinctions had to be made, based not on institutional cultures or reform agendas, but on the objective impact of the pandemic in the various countries. Convergence and harmonisation of policies among member states was understood to be beneficial, for example in relation to coordination on border closures and travel bans. However, at the beginning of the pandemic, with countries struggling with unprecedented emergency measures at home, coordination of policies was not nearly the top priority among the preoccupations of the various European chancelleries. It is all the more remarkable, then, that notwithstanding these powerful differences in the preconditions and consequences between the two crises, that the positions of the various countries in the ensuing discussions on the economic response initially mirrored some of the postures displayed in the Euro crisis and aligned along very familiar lines.

The South's coalition perspective

From the beginning of the pandemic crisis, the countries of the South presented the crisis as an unprecedented event that required exceptional and brave solutions from the European leaders (Leitão 2021). The concept of 'solidarity', clearly borrowed from and echoing the vocabulary of the Euro crisis, became the main point of reference of this representation of the crisis among the countries of the South. This approach was fleshed out on 25 March 2020 when a wider coalition of nine EU member states, comprising Belgium, Spain, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovenia, sent a letter to the president of the European Council, Charles Michel, expressing their desire for a sort of 'coronabond' with the backing of all EU member states.

The approach was clear enough: asking for debt mutualisation across EU member states to ensure long-term economic stability. As the nine leaders pointed out in the letter: 'We need to work on a common debt instrument issued by a European institution to raise funds on the market on the same basis and to the benefit of all member states, thus ensuring stable long-term financing for the policies required to counter the damage caused by this pandemic'. And, more than that, they expressed their aspiration that this effort should be articulated as a joint response by all the EU countries 'since we are all facing a symmetric external shock, for which no country bears responsibility, but whose negative consequences are endured by all … we are collectively accountable for an effective and united European response. This common debt instrument should have sufficient size and long maturity to be fully efficient and avoid roll-over risks now as in the future'.[10]

Italy, which was the first country most wounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, called early for EU solidarity in order to minimise the storm that corona was unleashing on the European economies. Giuseppe Conte, the Italian prime minister, took the lead from the very first weeks of the corona outbreak in March 2020 by raising the alarm to his European colleagues that the EU needed to build a brave, common borrowing system that would permit the poorer countries to get cheap money against the guarantee of the richer countries. In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, Conte explicitly characterised a chasm between the 'frugals' and the coalition of the South, regarding the future economic management of the EU and how solidarity should be governed among the EU countries.

As Conte declared to the newspaper:

> We have what it takes to stimulate Europe's forward momentum. We need to build a European line of defence right now to increase European firepower. This is why it is unacceptable to respond to this epochal challenge with traditional instruments, such as the existing ESM programmes, which require countries to be subjected to heavy conditionalities. The shock that overwhelmed us is symmetrical, it concerns all states in Europe and in the world: we cannot respond with tools built for a world that no longer exists.[11]

Conte's call was backed up by his counterparts in Greece, Spain and Portugal. The prime minister of Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, openly supported both the solidarity approach and the issuing of prospective 'coronabonds' in a statement he made directly after the EU leaders summit at the end of March 2020. As Mitsotakis noted:

> When it comes to the economy, Europe can do much more united. Increased resources will be needed to support citizens and employment, as well as to extend help to affected businesses. And this will be taking place against falling state revenues. Undoubtedly, Europe will have to borrow more, to be able to spend more. Together with eight fellow leaders of state we signed, yesterday, a letter, asking for preparatory work on issuing a special Eurobond aimed at fighting this unparalleled crisis. … There is no 'prudent' or 'reckless' here, those 'responsible' or 'irresponsible'. We are all faced with the same threat, 'we are boiling in the same pot'. 2020 is not 2010.[12]

In an article for *the Guardian* Pedro Sánchez, the prime minister of Spain, explicitly called for 'solidarity between Europeans as "a key principle" of the EU treaties'. He explained:

> Without solidarity there can be no cohesion, without cohesion there will be disaffection and the credibility of the European project will be severely damaged. Europe was born out of the ashes of destruction and conflict. It learned the lessons of history and understood something very simple: if we don't all win, in the end, we all lose. … It is time to act with solidarity in creating a new debt mutualisation

> mechanism, acting as a single bloc for the purchase of essential medical supplies, establishing coordinated cybersecurity strategies, and preparing a major emergency plan to ensure that the continent's recovery is rapid and robust. This solidarity has to ensure that there are no gaps between north and south, that we leave no one behind.[13]

António Costa, the Portuguese prime minister, entirely supported this principle by saying that 'Either the EU does what it has to do, or it will end'.[14]

In an effort to consolidate their leaders' approach towards an EU framework of solidarity that could effectively diminish the effects of the COVID-19 crisis in European societies, the ministers of labour and social rights of Spain, Portugal and Italy jointly called for a European minimum income system that would be legally binding and adopted by all member states. As they jointly declared: 'We have to ensure that all people are guaranteed the satisfaction of their basic needs, so we need a common minimum income system to combat poverty and social exclusion from an ambitious and integrated perspective'. Moreover, they continued in their official text by saying that 'Europe must unite around solidarity. A coordinated European response is needed to avoid a new economic and social crisis like the one we experienced after the 2008 crisis'.[15]

All the above public statements from the leaders of the main countries of the South reveal how the coalition managed, via certain discourses, to contextualise the pandemic crisis as a 'historical' occurrence that demands extraordinary solutions. This approach made their request for debt mutualisation politically feasible and legitimate in the eyes of the public; that is, a solution that departs fundamentally from the present European Stability Mechanism structure and existing strong conditionality programmes. In addition to that, the coalition of the South discourse also uncovers the desire of this bloc of countries to articulate a governance system that is less disposed to attach strict conditionality rules but, rather, has the elasticity to be framed based on each country's policy priorities and needs, with flexible repayment rules that can be extended over a long-term period.

The frugal 'hardliners', the revival of the Franco-German axis, and Germany's shift

Germany, through the mouth of chancellor Angela Merkel, was always hesitant about supporting such an idea of debt mutualisation across Europe, instead testing solutions such as the European Stability Mechanism as deployed in the Greek case. In *Handelsblatt* the German minister for the economy, Peter Altmaier, warned that a potential discussion of Eurobonds is a 'phantom debate' and urged 'caution when supposedly new, ingenious concepts are presented which often enough are just long discarded ideas coming back from the dead'.[16]

In the same camp stood countries such as the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, backing up Germany's stance, and often going beyond the German position and asking for more conditionality across Europe. In reaction to the fundamental clash between Italy and Germany in March 2020 regarding the coronabonds, Mark Rutte characteristically declared that a sort of debt mutualisation would mean 'crossing a Rubicon' for the eurozone.[17] In a fierce counter-response declaration, the Portuguese PM Antonio Costa replied to Rutte's comment: 'This type of response is completely ignorant, and this recurring pettiness completely undermines what makes up the spirit of the European Union'.[18] Denmark initially displayed a similarly firm, albeit better-articulated stance: 'We want to show solidarity' said government spokesperson Christian Rabjerg Madsen, 'and we want to help contribute to Southern European economies getting back on their feet. But the Danish position is clear – we are against assuming debt on behalf of others, and we are against mutual loans'.[19]

Facing the rapidly worsening pandemic and serious economic fallout in Europe's south, the frugals decided to step back and revise their strict economic approaches in favour of the establishment of a common EU financial package.[20] A major first step toward a coordinated EU approach against the pandemic economic impact was made in a Eurogroup video-conference on 9 April 2020 when the EU finance ministers agreed a substantial package of €540 billion to back up national economies, their companies and workers.[21] That decision was a fundamental breakthrough, because the first signs that the posture was changing within the frugal camp came to the fore. A few weeks later, on

23 April 2020, the EU leaders took an essential decision to formulate an EU recovery fund so as to provide a more synchronised solution to the economic ramifications of the COVID-19 crisis.[22] The EU leaders tasked the European Commission to articulate, as soon as possible, a proposal that would make a connection between the proposed fund and the EU budget feasible in the long term.[23] It was becoming evident, from that moment onwards, that the majority of the EU leaders were realising that the severity of the COVID-19 fallout was an extreme and exceptional case that should be met with extraordinary financial instruments.

As a turning point in shifting the balance towards this direction, Merkel admitted publicly that the creation of a recovery fund was in Germany's interest and that Germany would be prepared to provide more contributions to the EU budget. As she declared at the Bundestag before the summit on the 23rd of April 2020: 'In the spirit of solidarity, we should be prepared to make completely different, that is to say significantly higher, contributions to the European budget over a set period'.[24]

As is always the case when a crisis hits the European edifice, the Franco-German axis plays a particularly central role, if not always as the 'motor' of European integration, at least as the litmus test of different sensitivities within the EU. The momentum was particularly propitious in light of the then impending six-month German presidency of the European council, which was starting on the 1st of July 2020. On the 18th of May 2020, Merkel and Macron announced during a joint video-conference their support for the formulation of an EU bond to raise €500 billion on the markets.[25] This proposal would act as an additional funding mechanism on top of the next EU budget arrangements, i.e. the Multiannual Financial Framework and the €540 billion in the form of loans that the Eurogroup had already established.

The main idea behind this proposal was that the European Commission would be responsible for this debt issuance, i.e. a sort of debt mutualisation, with aid money from this fund not being repaid by the countries which would receive it. The proposal was welcomed by both the Commission and those EU member states which were in favour of the issuance of coronabonds. The Italian prime minister Guiseppe Conte tweeted that 'The Franco-German proposal (€500 billion of grants) is an important first step in the right direction along the lines intended by Italy. In order to overcome the crisis and help businesses

and families we need an ambitious #RecoveryFund. We are confident in @EU_Commission proposal'.[26] In the same vein, Pedro Sanchez, Spain's PM, followed Conte's declaration by saying: 'We welcome the proposal by France and Germany to establish a €500 bn European Recovery Fund based on grants. It is a positive step in the right direction, in line with our own demands. Now it's time for #EU to put forward a proper financial package. We should keep moving forward'.[27]

As a reaction to this proposal, in late May 2020 the remaining 'frugal four', i.e. Austria, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, restated their critical position in a joint paper (Frugal Four non-paper 2020). The basic line was a reaffirmation of their longstanding stance that a debt mutualisation scheme was not acceptable, when combined with the very short timeframe for the repayments by the countries that will benefit from those aid programmes. Their approach was a fundamental departure from the Franco-German proposal, but nevertheless signs of compromise were evident in the document of the frugal bloc. As the Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz declared on the German broadcaster *Deutschlandfunk* 'We believe that there needs to be a discussion about how much of that €500 billion is grants and how much is loans', stressing also that the critical issue is 'how we give this aid a clear and binding time limit, so that we don't have a full debt union as the next step'.[28]

The response by the European Commission went beyond this diatribe. It proposed a new recovery instrument, i.e. the Next Generation EU, equal to €750 billion to aid EU member states to recover from the pandemic crisis, restart their economies through innovative investment plans and restructure their priorities to activities with a long term, viable perspective.[29] This new instrument would be embedded in a seven-year EU budget, the new Multiannual Financial Framework equal to €1100 billion. Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, declared in an ambitious message that:

> The recovery plan turns the immense challenge we face into an opportunity, not only by supporting the recovery but also by investing in our future: the European Green Deal and digitalization will boost jobs and growth, the resilience of our societies and the health of our environment. This is Europe's moment. Our willingness to act must live up to the challenges we are all facing. With Next Generation EU we are providing an ambitious answer.[30]

The commissioner in charge of the EU budget, Johannes Hahn, aligned the Commission proposal with the position of the Southern European coalition by expressing that 'Our common budget is at the heart of Europe's recovery plan. The additional firepower of Next Generation EU and the reinforced multiannual financial framework will give us the power of solidarity to support member states and the economy. Together, Europe will arise more competitive, resilient and sovereign'.[31]

When North met South: new solidarity principles with conditionality rules

In the run-up to the final agreement before the critical EU summit in July 2020, the negotiations between the two camps were fierce. Despite the robust approach that had started to be articulated at EU-level to counter the repercussions of the pandemic crisis, there were still fundamental issues to be co-decided: a) the balance between grants and loans in the new recovery instrument and b) the criteria upon which decisions will be taken about how much funding the member states will receive.[32] The frugal alliance remained staunch on their main position concerning the new budgetary arrangements. They asked for the larger portion of money to be distributed through loans that should be paid back by the countries that receive them. As the Dutch government wrote in a letter to its national parliament: 'There is no clear justification for providing grants (rather than loans) from the Recovery and Resilience facility'.[33]

The frugal's behaviour was a significant obstacle to the articulation of a strong response to counter the implications of the pandemic crisis and the establishment of an EU economic approach based on solidarity principles. However, the Southern European coalition found an unexpected supporter who now became explicitly outspoken concerning how the future EU economic governance should be designed: German chancellor Angela Merkel. A few weeks before the July 2020 EU summit, Merkel declared in public that she would accept only small changes in the structure of the fund proposed by the Commission but not changes in the scope and size of it. As she said: 'It is important that what we now have as a recovery fund is massive, is something special and is not reduced to dwarf size. It is not possible to commit to every detail in advance, but it must be a special effort that makes it clear that Europe

wants to stick together at this difficult time. There is a political dimension to this beyond the figures, and that is what the project must be measured against'.[34]

Merkel was very cautious in her public speeches about mentioning anything close to debt mutualisation; but on the way toward the crucial July summit she started to work clearly on finding a mutual solution between the two camps. Conte, the Italian PM, was anxious about the stance of the frugals and the final decisions that would be formulated in the next critical meetings with his EU counterparts. He was in favour of a very ambitious package, not only for providing necessary funds to his country but for the mutual benefit of the EU because otherwise there was a danger of serious damage to the single market which 'even for financially stronger countries would lead to the destruction of value chains and ... would be bad for all'.[35] This was also around the time when Denmark's position started to shift away from the 'frugal' orthodoxy towards a more accommodating stance that favoured the issuing of EU grants, albeit still in a smaller proportion as compared to loans.[36]

As anticipated, reaching agreement at the 21st of July 2020 EU summit was not an easy task. After several days of negotiations, the EU leaders managed to settle on an unprecedented €1.8 trillion recovery and budget deal structured into two components: a €750 billion recovery element called 'Next Generation EU' and a €1074.3 billion long-term EU budget for 2021–2027.[37] Both sides could claim victory: on the one hand southern Europeans managed to receive a substantial amount of funds to recover their economies from the pandemic crisis. On the other hand, a degree of conditionality remained in place, to the effect that all member states eligible to receive EU money should link this budgetary assistance with internal reforms within their economies. The frugals managed to avoid unconditional aid and, in addition, won rebates on their EU contributions.[38]

While, at first sight, the agreements of the July 2020 EU summit cannot easily be explained given the fundamental divisions between the coalition of the South and the bloc of frugal countries, sources of convergence can be identified in the public exchanges of statements and texts between and among the camps. The non-paper the frugal bloc made public in late May 2020, despite its clear statement that frugals would not be willing to accept 'any instruments or measures leading to debt mutualisation nor significant increases in the EU budget', begins with an acknowledgement that opens the ground for dialogue

and compromise: 'The COVID-19 crisis is affecting all EU Member States hard. Socially and financially. It is in the interest of all to restore growth to Member States' economies as soon as possible. This calls for European solidarity and a common recovery strategy' (Frugal Four non-paper 2020). The non-paper continues by recognising the necessity for a recovery fund as follows: 'We therefore suggest setting up a temporary, one-off Emergency Fund to support the economic recovery and the resilience of our health sectors to possible future waves. This would come on top of a modernised MFF and as a supplement to the package of 540 billion euros already agreed on by the European Council and other far-reaching and unprecedented initiatives at EU as well as national level' (Frugal Four non-paper 2020).

Those last statements hinted at a possible opening by the frugal countries in search of compromise solutions. Coupled with that, the south European countries also recognised that any recovery fund, either COVID-19 crisis-contingent or with a more long-term, stable perspective, should be linked to a degree of conditionality. The approach though was that this conditionality framework should not be coupled with strict governance and fiscal rules; but that it should be structured in such a way that it takes the particularities of each country into account (see, for instance, the French non-paper 2020 and the Spanish non-paper 2020). The German stance was significant in creating a 'middle-ground' towards a grant-based approach with a 'looser' structure of conditionality.

The way forward: deeper integration by crisis management

Against the background of these shifting and converging positions the agreements of the July 2020 European Council appear to constitute a significant milestone towards further and deeper European integration. Despite the enduring divisions between the north and the south of how rules should be upheld in the realm of economic management and, consequently at a political level, both blocs shared mutual beliefs on the way towards a more robust European economic and political integration (Becker 2020). A basic common line for both coalitions is the need for reforms that should take place

in each country to formulate stronger foundations for their economic recovery. To this end, the fiscal domain is at the forefront, with three major perspectives: a) build-up of a common fiscal capacity at the Eurozone level so as to foster economic and financial stabilisation among the Eurozone members; b) novel fiscal rules to back up long-term sustainability of public debts; and c) strong coordination of national fiscal policies (Caetano et al. 2021).

Apart from this, both camps tend to agree that new investments should be delineated in order to restore and initiate crucial infrastructure projects in all EU economies. These projects could enhance the health sectors of the economies severely hit by the COVID-19 crisis, promote the 'Green Deal' for a wider sustainable EU economy and foster the digitalisation of the European economic sphere, to name but a few. Last but not least, the COVID-19 shift heralds a convergence, at least at the level of discourse, and in achieving it, all EU countries gradually sidelined the ominous rhetoric of moral hazard or free-riding partners that had characterised the Euro-zone crisis. The conclusions of the July 2020 EC Council were decisive in generating a mutual basis between north and south 'breaking taboos that have damaged the discussion on the role of the EU Budget in the integration process' (Caetano et al. 2021, 129).

Jean Monnet famously argued that 'Europe will be forged in crises and it will be the sum of solutions adopted for those crises' (Monnet 1976). The jury is still out on how and when the gargantuan crisis presented by COVID-19 will be resolved, and what implications it will have. At the time of writing, about one year since the outbreak of the crisis, recovery remains marred by continuing lack of coordination, including episodes of 'vaccine nationalism'. On the implementation front, some of the concerns raised by the 'frugals' may yet prove valid. Compliance, accountability and prudence are fundamental principles guiding the frugals' logic and cannot be embraced in a 'middle ground' approach. They have been upheld in the new EU pandemic budgetary arrangements: heeding the frugals' demands and concerns it is likely that the European Commission will insert strict milestones, targets and audits to ensure control. In the same vein, with regard to the southern countries that are set to be the largest recipients of the recovery fund, the long-term reform effect remains to be seen in terms of ensuring a growth agenda based on digital and green transition.

If, however, these short-to-medium term hurdles can be overcome, the overarching indication of the EU's COVID-19 crisis management will be vindicated. The contradictions between the two logics over the management of the pandemic crisis and, more than that, of the future economic integration of the EU bloc found a middle ground at the July 2020 EU summit. The agreements reached during that summit overcame the main discourse posturing, paving the way for the summits of November and December 2020 when the final agreements for the recovery package were adopted by the European Council (European Council 2020). This middle ground contains both an element of solidarity as advocated by Southern European member states and the economic conditionality approach cherished by the frugals.

Key in tipping the scale towards this solution has been the role and attitude of Germany, which moved from a perceived hawkish and uncompromising line during the Euro crisis, as the standard-bearer of today's frugals, towards a less intergovernmental and more supranational approach of solidarity. If this key change holds even after the departure of Chancellor Angela Merkel, and if the recipient countries will in fact deliver on the requirements of the RRF, then the EU will have managed to turn a systemic crisis into a step towards deeper continental integration.

Notes

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Danish climate policy in a polycentric world: how does Denmark lead?

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Climate change has been consistently rising on the international and Danish political agenda. The 2019 parliamentary election was dubbed the 'climate election', as for the first time climate change took first place among voter priorities. The subsequently formed Danish social democratic minority government has declared that Denmark should be a 'green great power' (Danish Government 2020), and according to the 2019 climate law, Denmark should lead on climate change through influencing other countries and has a historical and moral responsibility to do so (Danish Parliament 2019). According to the government's global climate strategy being a green great power entails influencing other states through multi- and bilateral efforts; 'showing the road' to a green transition is compatible with job creation, welfare and growth; supporting adaptation to climate change; changing financial flows from 'brown to green'; and collaborating with the private sector (ibid). In terms of showing the road, the Danish Parliament has adopted a target of reducing emissions by 70% compared to 1990 levels by 2030 (Danish Parliament 2019). The 2030 target is high compared other developed countries, for instance has Sweden a 2030 target of 63% and the EU as a whole one of 55%. Yet the Danish government's climate policy was, in February 2021, deemed inadequate for reaching the 2030 target, leading to heavy criticism of the government not just from green NGOs and the centre-left parties supporting the minority government, but also from business and industry associations and right-wing opposition parties.[2] This schism between on the one hand the image of Denmark as a leader that is promoted by the government internationally and on the other hand the domestic criticism is not new, but has been a feature of

Danish climate politics for at least the last twenty years (Andersen & Nielsen 2016; Dyrhauge 2021). Nor is it unique to Denmark, as other traditionally green countries, including the Netherlands and Norway, have been characterised by similar schisms (Liefferink & Birkel 2011; Eckersley 2016).

Yet, increasing urgency of and attention to climate change means that the Danish leadership aspirations play out in a changing international and domestic context. Internationally, it is crucial to understand the Danish leadership aspirations in the context of an increasingly fragmented international governance architecture addressing climate change, an architecture referred to as the polycentric climate system (Jordan et al. 2018; Keohane & Victor 2016). The last ten years have witnessed changes both in how climate change has been perceived as a problem (as an issue of low-carbon transition rather than collective action, see Bernstein & Hoffmann 2019) and how it has been addressed (by a multitude of institutions and actors on different levels rather than just the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC]). In this polycentric system, dynamics are bottom-up rather than top down, with states committing to nationally determined contributions (NDCs) within the UNFCCC and the NDCs being shaped by more domestic factors than other states' commitments. This situation changes the context for national leadership aspirations, since it allows for more pathways through which leadership can influence other actors (Wurzel et al. 2019). Furthermore, the international context has also changed in terms of the vast majority of countries, which are now adopting climate policies aiming to significantly reducing their greenhouse gas emissions in light of the climate crisis. Since Denmark only accounts for 0.1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, an ambitious Danish climate (mitigation) policy can only have an effect on climate change if it affects emissions in other countries. On the domestic level, these international developments have implications for climate policy, especially since they reduce the risk of Denmark acting on its own with little effect on climate change and a negative effect on its competitiveness. Small states such as Denmark have few material power resources to influence other states but have nonetheless managed to influence others through non-power-based mechanisms such as cognitive or entrepreneurial leadership, especially regarding environmental issues (Liefferink & Birkel 2011; Wivel 2013; Andersen & Nielsen 2016).

At the same time, the corona pandemic and the stimulus packages adopted to contain its economic consequences provide both a window of opportunity for redirecting public finance from environmentally harmful activities towards climate friendly ones and a competing issue pushing climate change down the political agenda (Pihl et al. 2021; Hepburn et al. 2020; Kuzemko et al. 2020). Thus, Danish climate leadership aspirations are at a juncture, especially since the government has framed its leadership aspirations in terms of providing an example of how to combine the low-carbon transition with creating jobs and restoring the economy after the pandemic (Danish Government 2020). Taken together, the international context, with more channels for exercising leadership and reduced risk of loss of competitiveness, and the domestic context of the climate election combined with past climate leadership, should make Denmark a most-likely case for climate leadership. While other Nordic countries are also highly likely to lead, due to past climate leadership and public climate concerns, they have not experienced a climate election in the way that Denmark has. But they are relevant for comparison. This article explores the degree to which Denmark actually exercises such leadership.

As existing literature has demonstrated, a constant feature of Danish climate policy and foreign policy has been the desire to project climate ambition abroad and to have followers internationally (Dyrhauge 2021; Wivel 2013). The current Danish Government explicitly states that it seeks to gain international followers and sees a strong connection between acting domestically to reduce emissions and influencing other countries through multi- and bilateral interaction (Danish Government 2020). Existing literature has outlined different kinds of leadership, from ideational, directional and entrepreneurial to power-based structural leadership. On this background, the article explores how the Danish attempts to exercise different kinds of leadership have played out. How the Danish leadership attempts have influenced other countries is illustrated through examples, since an in-depth exploration of such following is beyond the scope of the article. The article contributes to the understanding of Danish climate policy and leadership by placing Danish climate policy in the context of global, polycentric climate governance, studying recent domestic developments and broadening the scope of the climate policies studied. Regarding the latter, existing literature on Danish environmental or climate policy and climate leadership aspirations has mainly focused on policies designated as climate policies and aiming to reduce Danish emissions and on Denmark's role within the EU (Dyrhauge 2021; Andersen & Nielsen 2016;

Skovgaard 2017). This article expands the focus by also including public finance provided to developing countries to support mitigation and adaptation (so-called public climate finance), and policies that increase net emissions (so-called anti-climate policies, see Compston & Bailey 2013). The article focus on mitigation rather than adaptation since leadership attempts focus on the former rather than the latter, and adaptation is more of a local and national issue than an international one (Rübbelke 2011).

The article proceeds with a description of the current, polycentric state of international climate governance and its implications for Danish leadership aspirations. This section is followed by an outline of the four kinds of leadership identified by the academic literature, namely directional, cognitive, instrumental and structural leadership, with the latter (power-based) one not being relevant to Denmark. Subsequently, the current Danish efforts to lead are discussed in terms of these three kinds of leadership, finding that while Denmark has adopted cognitive leadership by developing new knowledge and entrepreneurial leadership by building new coalitions in international fora, the record on directional leadership is more mixed. The Danish government has succeeded in setting an ambitious 70% reduction target for 2030 and a 2050 phase-out date for oil and gas extraction, but the implementation of policies for meeting the 2030 target has dragged out. The conclusion argues that while Denmark leads in cognitive and entrepreneurial terms and in terms of its 2030 target and fossil fuel exploration phase-out, its problems in implementing the 2030 target could in the long run affect other kinds of leadership negatively.

Polycentric climate governance

The international effort to address climate change has centred on the UNFCCC, which was established in 1992. Especially in the UNFCCC's first fifteen years there were few other international institutions that addressed climate change. Central to the UNFCCC in its first years and to the Kyoto Protocol adopted by the UNFCCC parties in 1997 was the notion that climate change constitutes a global tragedy of the commons, which can only be solved if states agree to reduce their emissions to secure the global public good of a stable climate (Bernstein & Hoffmann 2019; Aklin & Mildenberger 2020). According to this understanding, states benefit from emitting but also from avoiding climate change, which gives them an incentive to free ride on the mitigation of other

states unless a global agreement specifies how much each state should mitigate and ensures compliance through monitoring and ideally also sanctions (Barrett 2005; Hovi et al. 2009). The Kyoto Protocol followed this logic and distributed mitigation targets among the developed countries, which would then be subject to monitoring and (de facto toothless) sanctions if they did not meet their targets. The US did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol and preferred a so-called 'pledge-and-review' system in which states (including developing countries) would pledge to undertake mitigation actions determined by themselves, and their compliance with these pledges would be subject to review by other states. The conflict between the adherents of a Kyoto-style agreement and of a pledge-and-review agreement marred the 2009 Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP15) in Copenhagen, which ended with a tarnished Danish presidency and an outcome, the Copenhagen Accord, based on pledge and review. The Copenhagen Accord also contained provisions on adaptation and climate finance for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries, most notably the target that developed countries should mobilise USD100 billion annually in public and private climate finance by 2020. The logic inherent to the Copenhagen Accord was cemented in the 2015 Paris Accord adopted at the Twenty-First Conference of the Parties (COP21), which also committed countries to a target of keeping climate change to 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue 'efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5' degrees (UNFCCC 2015).

The Paris Agreement embodied the transition to polycentric climate governance in three ways. First, countries' mitigation pledges would be contained in nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which means that their mitigation policies to a larger degree would be defined domestically rather than during negotiations. This more bottom-up approach reflected the growing understanding that states' climate policies already in the 1990s and 2000s had been shaped by domestic factors rather than concerns over whether other states would act or not (Aklin & Mildenberger 2020). Within the domestic political dynamics determining a state's climate commitment, it not only matters who will benefit from climate policies (e.g. those vulnerable to climate change or to other kinds of fossil fuel pollution, low-carbon industries) and who will lose (e.g. industry and labour within heavily emitting sectors such as oil extraction) but also whether the relationship between on the one hand climate mitigation and on the other jobs and growth is framed as one of synergy or one of trade-off (Skovgaard 2014). The Paris Agreement reflected

this situation but arguably also reinforced it (since it left more discretion to the states) and sought to address it by allowing states to increase but not decrease their commitments over time.

Second, although the UNFCCC is still the central node in the polycentric system, climate change is governed by a range of different institutions and actors that all constitute interacting parts of the system (Jordan et al. 2018). These institutions and actors include intergovernmental institutions (beyond the UNFCCC) created to address climate change issues such as the Clean Energy Ministerial and Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform, as well as pre-existing institutions whose outputs are important for climate change, such as the World Bank (Zelli et al. 2020). They also include non-state and public-private institutions such as the C40 cities committing to act on climate change and the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition consisting of states, sub-state governments, companies and civil society organisations.

Third, the underlying logic of the efforts to address climate change has changed from one of collective action to one in which actors interact to enhance 'innovation, learning, adaptation, trustworthiness, levels of cooperation of participants, and the achievement of more effective, equitable, and sustainable outcomes at multiple scales' (Ostrom 2010). Leadership can play a range of roles within such a system, and a state can influence other states and non-state actors through pathways outside of the UNFCCC. Simultaneously, there has been a development towards less focus on mitigation as something that entails concrete and immediate costs and diffuse (globally and over time) benefits and more focus on the transition to a low-carbon society and on the co-benefits of mitigation in terms of health, other environmental issues (e.g. biodiversity) and technology development (Bernstein & Hoffmann 2019; Rayner & Jordan 2013). In this context, leadership can consist inter alia of experiments that others can learn from, as well as of acting as normatively exemplary leaders and of promoting climate mitigation in forums beyond the UNFCCCC, as is outlined in the following section.

Types of leadership and their role within polycentricity

In the climate governance system, both in its past and current incarnations, states have played different roles. Some have led the way; others have been laggards. The latter group include countries that do not fulfil their commitments (e.g. Canada overshooting its Kyoto Protocol reduction target by 30%), refuse to take on commitments (the US under the Bush and Trump administrations) and use the unanimous decision-making within the UNFCCC to block negotiations (notably Saudi Arabia). The former group have comprised a wider group of countries exercising leadership in different ways. The literature on climate leadership has established various typologies for understanding the different kinds of leadership (see e.g. Eckersley 2020; Liefferink & Wurzel 2017; Grubb & Gupta 2000). Despite some differences between the typologies, their leadership categories can be organised into four groups.

First, there is what has been referred to as *directional*, unilateral or exemplary leadership, which emphasises 'leading by good example' through a combination of internal and external initiatives aiming at influencing the perceptions of climate action of other actors, particularly the normative perception of what level of climate action is appropriate (Kilian & Elgström 2010). Scholars working on environmental leadership distinguish between the external and the internal faces of leadership, i.e. between showing ambitions internationally and domestically (Liefferink & Wurzel 2017; Wiering et al. 2018). I argue that only directional leadership consists of both dimensions, since the other kinds are inherently external. In concrete terms, the external face of directional leadership consists of setting (mainly unilateral) targets and objectives, especially for emissions, and the internal face of adopting policies to meet these targets. In case the internal face of directional leadership is less ambitious than the external one, it may lead to accusations of 'cost-free leadership' that may undermine the external dimension of leadership (as it has been the case with the Netherlands, see Liefferink & Birkel 2011) as well as other kinds of leadership.

The EU (which negotiates and undertakes commitments as one bloc within the UNFCCC) has been studied as an example of an actor exercising such directional leadership, notably by in 2007 adopting a unilateral reduction target

of 20%, which would be scaled up to 30% in case of comparable actions from other actors (Schreurs & Tiberghien 2007). The (unsuccessful) intention was to encourage other major emitters to undertake deeper reduction targets at COP15 (Skovgaard 2014). Yet, EU directional leadership has waxed and waned, and in a polycentric climate change system the EU member states can exercise directional leadership influencing not only the EU (e.g. by adopting national targets that makes it easier for the EU to adopt higher targets) but also other states within and beyond the EU (Rayner & Jordan 2013; Skovgaard 2014; Parker & Karlsson 2017). While directional leadership has often been conceptualised in terms of reduction targets, it is also increasingly relevant in other policy areas, such as climate finance, fossil fuel production and anti-climate policies. Polycentricity allows for addressing climate change in other ways than just those that all of the 200 UNFCCC member states can agree to. Most notably, smaller coalitions of states and/or non-state actors can agree to focus on climate policies that may prove controversial within the UNFCCC.

The international efforts to address climate change have focused on the consumption of fossil fuels (particularly within the UNFCCC) rather than the production of fossil fuels (Newell & Simms 2020; SEI et al. 2020). Yet, within the polycentric climate system there has been growing attention to the production outside the UNFCCC, as witnessed in the calls for ending public finance for fossil fuel production and placing an end-date for fossil fuel production and exploration in several countries (Rayner 2020). This development grants countries the possibility to exercise directional leadership by ending such finance or production permits, inter alia through international institutions such as the Powering Past Coal Alliance that aims to end the use of coal.

Furthermore, while there has both politically (especially within the UNFCCC) and academically been a tendency to focus on policies that intend to reduce climate change, climate change has been affected as much by policies that unintentionally increase climate change, so-called anti-climate policies (Compston & Bailey 2013). These policies cover both the production and consumption of fossil fuels, such as airport expansions, investments in road infrastructure, permissions for fossil fuel production as well as subsidies for fossil fuel production and consumption. Attention to fossil fuel subsidies for production and consumption have increased in importance since the 2009 G20 commitment to reform or phase out such subsidies, inter alia due to such subsidies amounting to USD 3–600 billion globally or twice the amount of

subsidies for renewable energy (Skovgaard & van Asselt 2018). This includes the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform, a group of nine non-G20 states committed to reforming fossil fuel subsidies and within which Denmark has played an active role from the beginning (Rive 2019).

Regarding climate finance, developing countries have not only committed to mobilising USD100 billion in public and private finance by 2020, but also to communicating how much they provide each year in public climate finance from the state budget (unlike private climate finance which comes from private companies). Thus, developed states have the opportunity to exercise directional leadership by providing large amounts of climate finance respective to income. In this respect, the UNFCCC provisions that climate finance should be new and additional to development aid are important. Only a few developed countries have met the target of providing development aid corresponding to 0.7% of the Gross National Income target (Denmark is one of them). Developing countries have argued that only if this target is met can finance above this level be characterised as climate finance (Weikmans & Roberts 2019).

Second, *cognitive* or intellectual leadership redefines the cognitive ideas of others regarding 'what climate change is', particularly its causes and the consequences of policies that address it (Liefferink & Wurzel 2017). Cognitive leadership is exercised through developing new knowledge e.g. through experiments with new policies that other states can learn from. Hence, learning is an important pathway through which cognitive leaders can influence other actors (Dolowitz & Marsh 2000). When it comes to states' climate policies, the countries that were the first to adopt policies such as carbon taxes, emissions trading, fuel standards for cars, etc. have influenced the adoption of similar policies in other countries (Skovgaard et al. 2019; Jänicke 2005; Biedenkopf et al. 2017). In a polycentric system, such cognitive leadership can influence others through a range of channels. This makes it easier for experiments with new kinds of policies to be scaled up by being adopted by several (often larger) countries (Bernstein & Hoffmann 2019). This dynamic is as common as the often-expected race to the bottom, in which states compete to adopt increasingly lower environmental standards (Gallagher 2009). Denmark and other Northern countries have often been identified as such first-movers when it comes to environmental policies, e.g. being by the first countries in the world to adopt carbon taxes (Skovgaard et al. 2019).

Third, there is the *instrumental*, entrepreneurial or problem-solving leadership consisting of the exercising of political skill and creating new coalitions in negotiations and other multilateral and bilateral institutions (Dupont & Moore 2019; Kilian & Elgström 2010). Such leadership is generally exercised by an individual official on behalf of the state. While instrumental leadership earlier took place almost solely within the UNFCCC, e.g. by creating coalitions among different groups of countries, in the polycentric system it is increasingly exercised within other institutions. These other institutions include those addressing non-climate issues such as trade or development (e.g. the World Trade Organization) as well as institutions created to address climate issues such as Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform or the Powering Past Coal Alliance. Setting up the latter kinds of institution also constitutes instrumental leadership. These institutions do not only cover states, but also private corporations, international organisations, NGOs and substate actors (cities, provinces, etc). Yet, as highlighted above, the UNFCCC still plays a nodal role and forging coalitions, especially those that include both developed and developing countries, has proven important for UNFCCC agreements such as the Paris Agreement (Blaxekjær 2020).

Fourth, *structural* or power-based leadership concerns the exercise of power based on a state's political and material resources, both generally within the global order and specifically regarding the policy issue at hand (Eckersley 2020; Andresen & Agrawala 2002; Grubb & Gupta 2000). In the case of climate change, the latter also concerns a state's emissions, since the higher the national emissions, the more important the state is to the success of a climate change agreement (Kilian & Elgström 2010). For instance, agreement between the US and China has proven important for blocking (in the case of COP15) and enhancing (in the case of COP21) negotiations within the UNFCCC (Eckersley 2020; Christoff 2010). However, Denmark has little general and climate-specific power in the sense inherent to structural leadership, except for indirectly through the EU and potentially through the conditional use of development aid (but this has not been utilised) Hence, this kind of leadership is of little relevance to studying Danish leadership and will not be included in the analysis.

Danish climate leadership: some kinds of leadership are easier than others

When assessing Danish climate policy in terms of the different kinds of leadership, the role of the EU is important. As mentioned above, the EU adopts targets, implements policies to meet these targets, produces new knowledge about policy instruments and participates in international climate institutions, all of this on behalf of and with effects for Denmark. Regarding directional leadership, the EU has adopted a 55% emissions target for 2030 and a target of being carbon neutral by 2050. When it comes to cognitive leadership, it has developed the world's first and largest emissions trading system as a means to achieve its climate targets, constituting an example for other countries contemplating this policy (Biedenkopf et al. 2017). Concerning instrumental leadership, the EU negotiates in the UNFCCC on behalf of its member states, is a subject to UNFCCC agreements in the same way that its member states are and participates in a range of other (formal and informal) international institutions (Dupont & Moore 2019; Kilian & Elgström 2010). Finally, as the world's second largest economy and third largest emitter, the EU has considerable potential for structural leadership, although this potential has not often been utilised. Yet, with the exception of structural leadership, none of this prevents Denmark from exercising leadership e.g. by adopting and implementing targets, developing new policies, or creating new alliances and institutions within and beyond the EU. Moreover, Denmark has the possibility for exercising leadership within the EU (Jänicke & Wurzel 2019).

Directional leadership

Directional leadership is a key element of Danish leadership. Much of the Danish cognitive and instrumental leadership depends on being recognised as a directional leader (Dyrhauge 2021). Historically, Denmark has shown willingness to take on and implement targets that are high compared to other developed and EU countries (Jänicke & Wurzel 2019). When assessing current Danish directional leadership, a key element is the target of reducing Danish emissions by 70% compared to 1990 levels by 2030. The target was adopted as part of the agreement between the Social Democratic party and the centre-left parties establishing the Social Democratic minority government, and later enshrined in the Danish Climate Law (Danish Parliament 2019;

Socialdemokratiet et al. 2019). The target should be seen in the light of Danish emissions in 2020 being about 38% below 1990 levels and expected to drop to 44% below 1990 by 2030, with the policies in place when the target was adopted (Klimarådet 2021). Denmark also has a target of achieving net carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest, which implies that any emissions should be offset by measures such as uptake in forests. These two targets are (just) compatible with the Paris Agreement's target of keeping global temperature increases within 1.5 degrees Celsius, a target which the Danish government defines as a key objective in its global strategy (Klimarådet 2021; Danish Government 2020).

The 70% target constitutes a clear case of directional leadership, as it is high compared to the targets of other developed countries (it is difficult to compare with developing countries due to different UNFCCC obligations, historical and current emissions and economic capabilities). The UK, Sweden and Norway have targets of, respectively 68%, 63% and 50–55% by 2030, and the EU as a whole has a target of 55% reduction. Only the Finnish target of carbon neutrality by 2035 is de facto more ambitious than the Danish target among the developed countries. The carbon neutrality target stands out less compared to other countries, with the EU, several developed and developing countries (e.g. Argentina, South Africa) having similar targets (China having a target of 'before 2060') and Finland, Austria and Sweden having respectively 2035, 2040 and 2045 as the target years. While it is too early to assess the impact of the 70% target, it has been noted internationally and – together with other high 2030 targets among EU member states – used as an argument for the EU's 2020 decision to increase its 2030 target from 40% to 55%.[3]

Yet, in February 2021 the independent Climate Council found it was not likely that the government's overall climate efforts (current and planned) would achieve the target. The climate policies adopted since the agreement on the 2030 target are only expected to close a third of the gap to the 70% target, and the plans for the remaining two-thirds are unclear and to a large degree dependent on new and untested technologies (Klimarådet 2021). These untested technologies notably include carbon capture and storage (capturing CO_2 and storing it) and power-to-X (converting electricity into hydrogen to be used in industry or transportation). Carbon capture and storage has been criticised for being unlikely to deliver the promised mitigation and de facto being used for delaying transformative climate action.[4] Beyond reliance on

untested technology, four issues complicate meeting the 2030 target. First, government scepticism of a carbon tax with a consistently high level across sectors, despite such a tax being supported by the Climate Council, green NGOs and most (both centre-right and centre-left) parties and business associations. The minister of climate change and energy highlighted the fear that Denmark would not serve as an example for others if climate policies led to jobs relocating from Denmark.[5] Second, the government has preferred an emissions trajectory in which most reductions take place in the later part of the decade with an indicative target for 2025 of 46–50% below 1990, compared to the target of 50-54% proposed by the centre-left supporting parties and the Climate Council.[6] Third, a political agreement to address emissions from agriculture has proved difficult, with the government choosing to start the process anew in February 2021.[7] Third, and less driven by choices of the current government, biomass from harvested trees used in heat and electricity production is accounted for as a zero-emission fuel, although its immediate emissions take at least 30-40 years for newly planted trees to offset, provided that such trees are planted (Klimarådet 2018).

The government's arguments against carbon taxes and for pushing reductions to the end of the decade highlight the negative consequences of climate policies, and frame them in terms of a trade-off between on the one hand jobs and growth, and on the other climate protection. Such a trade-off rhetoric empowers those who lose from climate policies, e.g. those employed in carbon-intense sectors, vis-à-vis those winning from them, e.g. those most exposed to climate change and related pollution and those employed in low-carbon sectors and makes transformative climate policy more difficult to adopt (Blair 2017; Aklin & Mildenberger 2020; Skovgaard 2014). This rhetoric diverges from the international rhetoric emphasising synergies between the climate transition and jobs (see below). It may also make it more difficult to change strategy in the future and adopt policies that – unlike the current technology-intense measures – include (economic and political) costs that fall outside the public budget. The pace and technology-orientation of policy adoption (not just new technologies but also existing ones such as wind power) cannot be ascribed to the parliamentary situation, since the minority government is supported by a group of centre-left parties in favour of immediate action using different kinds of instruments. The difficulties in meeting the 2030 target have been noted internationally,[8] and may influence the credibility important to Danish leadership if they persist (see Dupont & Moore 2019 on the importance of credibility for leadership).

Regarding the production of fossil fuel subsidies, the Danish decision to stop oil and gas extraction in the North Sea beyond 2050 is a case of directional leadership on a par with the 2030 target. Denmark is not the first country to end fossil fuel production in the world (Costa Rica, France and New Zealand have adopted similar decisions) but it is the first major oil and gas producer to do so. The Danish oil and gas reserves are decreasing, and the cost of ending oil and gas extraction amounts to an estimated DKK 90 million in lost annual revenue (Regeringen 2020). Job losses are not immediate but will be incurred in the decades to come. The government was initially hesitant not to extend the licenses but bowed to pressure from its supporting centre-left parties and civil society, which noted the inconsistency between aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050 and continuing to extract oil and gas beyond that date. A key element of the agreement to end the production was the desire to 'inspire and pressure other countries to accelerate the green transition' [author's translation], and that Denmark should take on leadership in creating a new initiative seeking to move forward the global discussion about the phasing out of fossil fuel production (ibid). The decision made headlines in international media and led to calls for countries such as the United Kingdom and Norway to also provide an end date for fossil fuel production.[9] Thus, while the decision is relatively low-cost (and continuing fossil fuel production until 2050 is hardly compatible with the 1.5 or 2 degree targets), it constitutes a case of directional leadership within an area with little global leadership.

Anti-climate politics have figured lower on the Danish political agenda compared to designated climate policies, a common situation internationally. Most notably, Denmark has actively promoted the reform of fossil fuel subsidies internationally, including within the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform a group of developed and developing non-G20 members. It has also endorsed the communiqué calling for fossil fuel subsidy reform (Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform 2015). Yet, domestically, Denmark has, like virtually all other countries (also other members of the Friends such as Sweden and Norway) struggled to reform its subsidies. The Danish subsidies (mainly tax exemptions, support for district heating and for fossil fuel extraction) have been estimated to average more than DKK 1 billion[10] prior to the corona pandemic (Danish Ministry of Climate Change, Energy and Utilities 2019). Currently, some subsidies (such as those to district heating) are being phased out.

Yet, Denmark has also recently adopted anti-climate policies that lock in fossil fuel consumption for decades to come, go against the notion of redirecting financial flows from brown to green activities and make carbon neutrality difficult to achieve. These include providing more than DKK 4.6 billion (€ 600 million) in support for aviation and building an DKK 800 million gas pipeline (European Commission 2020a; European Commission 2020b; Danish Ministry of Climate Change, Energy and Utilities 2021). These policies are justified mainly in terms of securing jobs, the aviation support especially in the context of crisis following the corona pandemic. The support to aviation comes – unlike similar support from e.g. the French and Austrian governments – without conditions in terms of demands for greening aviation.

Finally, regarding climate finance, Denmark is among the countries that provide the highest amount of public finance per capita (UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance 2018). Public climate finance is important for addressing collective climate goals and historical responsibilities by reducing emissions and improving resilience in developing countries, and as a side-payment in the climate negotiations (Eckersley 2020). The Danish climate public climate finance has been scaled up continuously, with substantial increases in recent years to a level of DKK 2.2 billion (approximately € 290 million) in 2019. Yet, total Danish development aid (of which the public climate finance constitutes a part) has decreased from 0.88% in 2009 to 0.71% of GNI in 2021 (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021). In the light of developed countries pledges to provide 0.7% of GNI in development aid and that climate finance should be new and additional, this has led to criticism from Danish NGOs that only the public climate finance above the 0.7% (DKK 100 million in 2021) can be considered new and additional. The lack of additionality of climate finance has been strongly criticised by developing countries in the UNFCCC negotiations (Weikmans & Roberts 2019). Given that close to all developed countries face problems with defining additionality similar to Denmark's, this criticism is not particularly directed at Denmark.

Cognitive leadership

Denmark has, since the late 1970s, played an important role in pioneering climate instruments that have subsequently been adopted in other countries drawing on Danish experiences. This has been the case with technologies such as wind power as well as with policy instruments such as carbon taxes and

incentives for energy efficiency (Andersen & Nielsen 2016). The Danish wind power policy has allowed Danish governments and businesses to promote Danish experiences and solutions globally. The Danish carbon tax was adopted in 1992 as one of the first countries in the world after Finland, Sweden and Norway, and initially had a high tax rate which helped reduce emissions, but which subsequently has been subject to exemptions and lowering of rates, making it less effective (ibid). While new taxes are rarely popular even in Scandinavia, Danish carbon tax and other environmental taxes were widely accepted (Andersen 1994).

Danish cognitive leadership has not just been about developing new technologies and policy instruments but also disseminating experiences about how such technologies work in the wider societal context, including public acceptance of them. On this basis, it is unsurprising that a cornerstone of the current government's climate policy is to inspire other countries with examples of successful Danish climate measures (Danish Government 2020). Specifically, the ambition is to support Denmark's role as a 'green great power' and demonstrate that 'green transition, growth, welfare, job creation and education go hand-in-hand' and specifically target job creation and technology development (ibid. author's translation). Denmark provides expertise to 16 of the world's largest emitters, particularly regarding renewable energy and energy efficiency. For instance, the collaboration with India on offshore wind, long-term planning and integration of renewable energy supports the Indian goal of quintupling the amount of renewable energy by 2030 compared to 2020 (Danish Energy Agency 2021). While the impact of Danish expertise on these policies has not been studied, it is worth noting that the policies potentially entail emission reductions larger than those of the Danish 2030 target.

The strategy also seeks to build on efforts to develop new technologies such as carbon capture and storage and power-to-X (Danish Government 2020). Thus, the strategy reflects the government's approach emphasising technology development and job creation, rather than the experiences with fiscal instruments such as carbon taxes, although redirecting financial investments does constitute an important part of the strategy. The framing of the synergistic relationship between on the one hand jobs and growth and on the other climate mitigation diverges from the domestic trade-off rhetoric of the prime minister and the minister of climate change, energy and utilities that overambitious and non-technology-based climate policies could hurt jobs and

wellbeing. As discussed above, the use of synergy or trade-off frames does matter for climate policy.

Altogether, the Danish cognitive leadership is likely to continue to play a role regarding technologies such as wind power and energy efficiency, and also power-to-X (if future policies prove successful). As an indication of such leadership, Prime Minister Frederiksen was invited to participate in the US-led Leaders' Summit on Climate in April 2021 as one of 40 state leaders and was introduced as the leader of a country pioneering the wind industry.[11] Yet, with the current policy mix, other countries will not be able to learn much from Denmark about transitions outside the energy sector or how to secure public acceptance of policies that target behaviour as well as technology change. This is important, both since meeting the 2030 and 2050 targets is difficult relying solely on technological change and because other countries face similar challenges when decarbonising. Especially regarding carbon taxes, a rapidly growing set of countries (developing as well as developed) are adopting or contemplating such taxes with a strong interest in how to make them socially just (Skovgaard et al 2019). Consequently, countries looking for cognitive leaders using substantive carbon taxes as part of transformations (sometimes also addressing social justice concerns) will have to look to countries such as Sweden, the Netherlands or Ireland.

Instrumental leadership

A key feature of the Danish Government's role in international climate governance is the interaction between bi-and multilateral efforts (Danish Government 2020). The bilateral efforts include the above-mentioned provision of Danish experience to large emitters to induce them to increase their ambition, inter alia in the NDCs they submit to the UNFCCC. This kind of bilateral interaction makes more sense in a polycentric system where national climate contributions are driven more by domestic factors than by top-down UNFCCC negotiations. Regarding the UNFCCC, Danish ministers and officials, especially from the climate ministry, have traditionally had a high profile in international climate governance, including in the intense last stages of the climate negotiations. Even the tumultuous scenes at COP15 did not do long-term damage to their ability to shape new alliances, especially between European and vulnerable developing countries in favour of more ambitious climate action (Blaxekjær 2020). The instrumental Danish leadership has

continued during the current government, with the minister of climate, energy and utilities and his officials playing especially active roles within the UNFCCC and other fora. The corona pandemic has meant that a range of important meetings have either been postponed or become virtual, leaving less space for the informal contacts important for creating alliances and new shared beliefs. Most notably, the crucial COP26 in Glasgow, at which countries are supposed to agree on scaling up climate action for the period until 2030, has been postponed until November 2021. This also meant postponing a range of the meetings in which the content of the COP26 agreement should have been negotiated. Yet, one of the UK COP26 presidency's initiatives is the Energy Transition Council promoting the transition to low-carbon energy (including job creation and other co-benefits) and involving representatives of 21 countries including Denmark.

Outside the UNFCCC, the Danish government is also active within other institutions promoting energy transitions in ways that enhance job creation and social protection. This includes participation in the above-mentioned leaders' summit on climate, leadership roles at the UN Energy Summit in September 2021 and the International Energy Agency's commission on just energy transitions, which will deliver a report feeding into the COP26 negotiations. Within the EU, Denmark has consistently been placed among the countries promoting more climate-friendly policies, occasionally taking the lead on issues such as phasing out the sale of fossil fuel cars and increasing the EU 2030 target from 40% to 55%.[12] Furthermore, the Danish Government continues to be active in a range of other institutions that promote climate change by creating coalitions among different states, companies and international organisations. These institutions inter alia focus on renewable energy (e.g. the Clean Energy Ministerial), fossil fuel subsidies (Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform) and greening investments (e.g. the Climate Investment Coalition being led, among others, by the Danish government and the Danish insurance and pension trade organisation). Danish involvement within these institutions reflects Danish government priorities and draws on domestic Danish experience. On a more radical note, shortly after the decision to stop extraction , the climate minister together with his Cost Rican counterpart called for the world (especially '[w] ealthy, diversified, fossil fuel producing countries') to follow their example of setting end dates for fossil fuel production, since this is necessary for meeting the 1.5-degree target.[13] Similarly to much of the other Danish entrepreneurial leadership, this call emphasises just transitions and job creation.

Conclusions

The Danish government aspires to directional, cognitive and entrepreneurial leadership in a polycentric climate governance system that provides several possibilities for such leadership. Given the polycentric international context, the climate election and past climate leadership, Denmark is a most-likely case of climate leadership. As the discussion above has demonstrated, this expectation is borne out to some degree. The Danish cognitive and entrepreneurial leadership is, so far, the most unequivocally successful kinds of leadership. Denmark provides important knowledge, especially about technical solutions, and it is highly active in international fora promoting green transition, especially socially just and job-creating energy transitions. The consistent emphasis in Danish climate leadership and policy on technological solutions, jobs and growth means that Danish cognitive leadership is strongest concerning such technological development, and less so regarding behavioural change and the changes to high emissions sectors such as aviation, heavy industry and agriculture. When it comes to directional leadership, the picture is more blurred. While the Danish targets of ending fossil fuel production by 2050 and of reducing emissions by 70% by 2030 stand out compared to other countries, the difficulties in implementing the 2030 target (and the persistence of anti-climate policies) make Denmark look less like a leader and more like other countries. In the longer run, these difficulties may impact other kinds of Danish leadership. The external and internal faces of Danish climate leadership are connected: the 70% reduction target inspires fewer followers if Denmark does not seem to be able to meet it. And while Danish cognitive leadership (especially the bilateral provision of expertise) on technologies such as wind power is long-running and less sensitive to Denmark not meeting its target, the entrepreneurial leadership is more likely to be affected by it.

In a polycentric climate system and at a time of a pandemic, Danish climate policy has several possibilities for leading. National responses to climate change are at a crossroads in the context of the economic stimulus packages, which they can direct to emitting sectors and thus enhance the current lock-in of fossil fuels, or to low-carbon alternatives thus breaking the lock-in. At the moment, the Danish leadership seems if not cost-free, then politically risk-free, but it is increasingly dependent on untested technologies (carbon capture and storage and power-to-X). If these technologies in the long run do not deliver the needed reductions or prove too costly, not only is Danish directional leadership

at risk, but other countries that have followed the Danish technology-dependent example may regret it. A more multipronged approach for meeting the 2030 target would be less risky, and also make it easier to meet post-2030 targets, especially by removing anti-climate policies.

Notes

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Development assistance: the tension between aid for poverty reduction and the promotion of democracy in Tanzania

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Introduction

A new wave of autocratisation has become apparent in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The trend is characterised by democracies undergoing gradual setbacks while upholding a legal and democratic façade (Lührmann & Lindberg 2019). It also affects several countries receiving Danish development assistance. The debate over whether aid therefore should primarily be given according to criteria along the autocracy–democracy dichotomy has therefore re-emerged with much strength. While some scholars as well as opposition politicians and activists in recipient countries have argued that aid should be reduced or withheld, others, like Tim Kelsall, have stressed that political and economic development may be interrelated, but 'they do not always develop along parallel tracks'.[3] By way of highlighting how, for instance, Ghana swung between democracy and authoritarianism while at the same achieving real development gains that served the country well when it eventually became a democracy with transfers of power, he proposes thinking more about how to maximise human welfare than focusing narrowly on the autocracy–democracy dichotomy.

Autocratisation however poses a real challenge to Western donors like Denmark, who value and promote democracy and human rights. This has not become less acute with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to calls for more support to mitigate its social and economic consequences one the one hand, and been used by some authoritarian leaders to consolidate their

own power on the other.[4] Can good intentions to help alleviate poverty help incumbent rulers and parties maintain power? In this article we briefly discuss the debate on aid, poverty alleviation and democracy and, by using Tanzania as a case, explore the extent to which development assistance for poverty alleviation may pose a challenge for donors who also have the promotion of democracy and human rights as a goal. The paper demonstrates a latent tension between the goals of poverty alleviation, and democracy and human rights, which at times when autocratic tendencies are on the increase, calls for donors to be clear on their priorities and, if they are serious about their commitment to democracy, be willing to adjust their support accordingly.

The end of the Cold War led to a shift in donor priorities towards good governance. Donors could hardly impose democracy from the outside, but around the same time pressure for change from within African countries was on the increase (Bratton & van de Walle 1997). Combined external and domestic pressure helped trigger economic and political reforms in a large number of countries (Diamond 2021). This was part of a broader international third wave of democratisation which, however, was incomplete and many countries were characterised by electoral authoritarianism, that is a tendency where illiberal regimes 'play the game of multiparty elections' but 'violate the liberal–democratic principles' (Schedler 2006, 3; see also Barkan 2000; Eisenstadt 2000; Diamond 2002; Brancati 2013). Nonetheless, with time real gains were made as formal democracy became the only game in town, albeit with significant variation among countries (Lindberg 2006; Lynch & Crawford 2012; Kovacs & Bjarnesen 2018). This is the trend that now seems to be reversing, with declining quality of democratic institutions in what have been called counterfeit democracies (Cheeseman & Klaas 2018).[5]

The role of aid in such developments has always been ambiguous as many donors increasingly pushed for democracy and human rights on the one hand, but also kept pursuing their own goals related to economic or geopolitical interests, or focusing on how to realise development goals in partnerships with recipient country governments on the other. The Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness in the mid-2000s aimed at increasing aid and improving its effectiveness through recipient country ownership. But it has also been argued that the agenda came to be pursued with an emphasis on results and partnerships more than on downwards accountability (Vilby 2007; see also Marriage 2016). Critiques of the narrow focus on democracy however

became stronger, in part through interrogating and questioning the links between political reform, stability and economic development. Van de Walle identified 'democracy fatigue' where some scholars and donor actors, tired of the messiness in democratic processes, tended to view authoritarian rule as being more effective in terms of achieving developmental impact (van de Walle 2016). Robert Bates et al. suggested that political reforms had fostered higher economic growth for the larger rural parts of populations, but at times also instability, and that countries had become 'too democratic relative to their income levels', which in turn fostered democratic backsliding (Bates et al. 2012; see also Bates 2010).

The focus on economic outcomes and results, however, risked glossing over the potential role aid could play in upholding authoritarian regimes (Hagmann & Reyntjens 2016). The literature on whether development assistance promotes or undermines democracy is diverse and not very conclusive. In a major review of empirical research Dijkstra concludes that aid from Western donors after the end of the Cold War on a whole had a positive effect on democracy (Dijkstra 2018). This could lend credence to the argument that even in the context of declining democracy and human rights, donors may achieve more by threatening but staying than they can by leaving. Dijkstra however also presents some research findings which suggest that outcomes to some extent differ from one country to another; that the positive effect may be less significant in Africa, or when countries are strategically important to donors, and outright negative if it comes from autocratic donors (Dijkstra 2018, 229).

This calls for attention to the importance of country context and raises the question whether generalised debates about aid and democracy sufficiently account for how different types of aid may have different effects in different regimes today. In a recent systematic review combined with a comparative analysis on the role of 'democracy aid' it is suggested that it has a modest but positive effect and no evidence of negative effects. It however also suggests that such aid appears to 'be more effective at supporting ongoing democratisation (upturns) than at halting ongoing democratic backsliding (downturns)' (Niño-Zarazúa et al. 2020, 135). Similarly, it has been suggested that when and how social transfers to alleviate poverty are institutionalised differs among more and less electorally competitive countries, related to political survival strategies (Lavers & Hicky 2020). The findings bring new salience to the need for research into and debates about the effects different types of aid may have in countries with different types of regimes.

Poverty alleviation covers a wider range of elements including, for instance, economic growth that may reduce poverty as well as social interventions aimed at improving the lives of the poor. In this paper we pay more attention to the latter, using Tanzania as a case. Tanzania is the country that has received the most Danish development assistance over the years, and it has at times been labelled a donor darling because of its warm relations with donors and the large amounts relative to GDP it has received (Harrison & Mulley 2007). After the reintroduction of multi-party elections in 1994–5 the country underwent gradual liberalisation and democratisation that, with time, led to high economic growth and increasingly competitive elections.

Since 2015, however, Tanzania has experienced a rapid deterioration in democracy and human rights that culminated in the 2020 elections, which were marred by irregularities, intimidation of the opposition, and an overwhelming victory for the ruling party (Collord 2021).[6] To some extent this made the country similar to more autocratic donor darlings like, for instance, Rwanda and Ethiopia (see Hagmann & Reyntjens 2016).[7] For donors like Denmark, which have both poverty alleviation and democracy and human rights as goals, these recent developments posed a conundrum, which was not new – elections in Tanzania were never entirely free and fair – but it became more urgent. Political rights in four out of seven Danish partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa have declined over the last decade and two countries have better scores according to Freedom House (see appendix). This trend towards backsliding, albeit broken by occasional gains, reflects wider trends on the continent as reported by Freedom House and the Economist's Democracy Index (2021), which in its latest edition identified the lowest score for the sub-Saharan African continent since the Index began in 2006 (The Economist 2021).

This paper is based on a qualitative research methodology and draws on previous research on social protection under the Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, University of Manchester (see Jacob & Pedersen 2018; Pedersen & Jacob 2018). This work built on a political settlement approach which was initially developed to provide for structured analyses of politics and power in developing countries, but in its adapted version (which was developed in order to analyse social protection in low-income developing countries) it highlights the importance of paradigmatic ideas, and transnational (donor) influence in coalitions with key domestic actors, each of which may help shape social protection policies (Khan 2010;

Lavers & Hickey 2016). Rather than providing a complete review of Danish and international development assistance to Tanzania, the article therefore provides an overview of how government–donor relations have developed since the reform period in the early 1990s and combines this with examples of how the Tanzanian government under Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the party that has ruled the country since independence in 1961, has at times instrumentalised support to maintain legitimacy and power.

It begins with a brief background section on how Danish development assistance to Tanzania has developed, mirroring some of the shifts in Danish aid priorities more broadly. It is followed by a section on the grand bargain between the Tanzanian government and Western donors in the mid-1990s that set Tanzania on a social and economic reform path. The fourth section outlines how thinking on social and economic development in the ruling party gradually shifted from the mid-2000s without however significantly affecting government–donor relations or Tanzania's development towards a more democratic society. The fifth section describes how internal dynamics in the ruling party, in combination with the selection of Jonn Magufuli as presidential candidate, spurred a rapid decline in democracy and human rights and saw re-emergence of authoritarian tendencies, which in turn worsened relations to some donors. Samia Suluhu Hassan became president after Magufuli's premature death in March 2021 and signalled a return to a more liberal political and economic development path. Some would argue that this potentially provides a new window of opportunity for donors who value democracy and human rights. This is further discussed in the final section.

Background: aid, democracy, Denmark and Tanzania

The history of Danish development assistance to Tanzania is also a significant part of the story of Danish development assistance more broadly. When Denmark began its bilateral assistance in 1962 Tanzania became a major recipient, which had to do with the fact that the country had gained its independence at about the same time and that Denmark could be part of a joint Scandinavian project, the Kibaha Education Centre (Andersen 2005). The country became the biggest recipient of Danish aid because President's Nyerere's focus on

social development with an emphasis on social development, i.e. education and health, resonated with Danish welfare state ideas, but also because it was a stable country that was not an ally of the Soviet Union, a condition for Danish aid at the time (Bach 2008, 235, 345).[8] It has also been highlighted that Tanzania and President Nyerere in turn preferred donors like the Scandinavian countries, which did not have a recent colonial past and whose welfare state models he admired (Andersen 2005, 62).

Danish development assistance at the time was initially merely focused on supporting developing countries, as embodied in the law on development cooperation in 1962 and in a revision in 1971, which further stated that cooperation should pursue economic growth and thereby help promote social development and economic independence (Andersen 2005, 119). This also came to imply a not insignificant role for Danish companies providing goods and services to achieve these goals. The emphasis on democracy and human rights only emerged in the 1980s and with an action plan from 1988 it became a systematic priority. With the end of the Cold War, it was also moving up on the international agenda, for instance with an international summit on human rights in 1993. A new Danish strategy for development cooperation in 1994 made democracy and respect for human rights a crosscutting priority and a requirement for aid (Stepputat et al. 2012).

This denoted a further move away from non-interference, which had begun with pressure for economic reforms in the early 1980s, towards a more politicised mode of assistance. After a period with instances of stop-and-go provision of aid due to specific events that were perceived to be undemocratic or undermine human rights, a more pragmatic approach emerged where the overall direction towards democracy and human rights was considered more important than specific events (Bach 2008, 473). Whereas democracy has remained a mainstay priority in Danish assistance it has also been observed that Danish development cooperation in the 2000s and 2010s was increasingly shaped by domestic Danish priorities and interests in terms of security, management of refugees and mobilisation of the private sector and that this to some extent blurred the overall objectives of aid and was a contributing factor to the reduced emphasis on partnership that gradually became apparent (Engberg-Pedersen 2007; Stepputat et al. 2012; Engberg-Pedersen & Fejerskov 2018).

Research has suggested that during the period of African Socialism under the Cold War, foreign aid in Tanzania contributed to sustaining and prolonging policies that were detrimental to economic growth and development, but also that donors eventually helped push through reforms at the end of the Cold War (Rugumamu 1997; Edwards 2014). By then Tanzania was indeed becoming more democratic, partly out of the pressure from donors, but also due to internal changes where for instance the former President Nyerere worried that the ruling party had become complacent after decades of one-party rule and could be invigorated by multiparty elections (Snyder 2001). The first multiparty elections were conducted in 1994–5 and even though the speed of opening up social and political space continued to be controlled by the party it did, over the following decades, result in the emergence of new actors, organised opposition parties and increasingly competitive elections (Tripp 2000; Paget 2018; Pedersen & Jacob 2019). This process however ended with the elections in 2015, the most competitive ever, after which the civic and political space quickly started to shrink (Collord 2021).

Though this article does not include a systematic review of Danish assistance to Tanzania, available evidence suggests that today's assistance still reflects some of the broad changes outlined above. Denmark supported the first multiparty elections; it has supported a large number of civil society organisations in the country over the years and its current country programme still has a thematic programme on good governance and human rights (Andersen 2005; MFA 2014). In the mid-1990s there was a shift from support to projects towards more programmatic approaches with support to sectors that allowed for greater government ownership. Donor support for the health sector became more coordinated with the adoption in 1999 of a sector-wide approach, which Denmark became part of, and which was evaluated rather positively as having contributed to improvements in health outcomes (MFA 2007). At around the same time, Denmark began supporting the private sector that aimed at improving the framework conditions (Bach 2008, 494). Denmark is still involved in supporting the business and health sectors.

Relations between the Tanzanian and the Danish governments have however deteriorated as Tanzania embarked on a more authoritarian development trajectory and the future of development cooperation is uncertain.[9] When an extension of the current Tanzania country programme was discussed at a meeting in the Council for Development Policy (an advisory body) in

November 2020, it was a one-year extension only. This was partly linked to the development of a new Danish overall development strategy, but there can be little doubt that Danish decision makers are increasingly wary of supporting the Tanzanian government directly. At the meeting members of the Council expressed such concerns (MFA 2020). General budget support, which had begun around 2001 and continued towards the end of the 2010s has now been phased out, even though it had previously been evaluated as having contributed to improvements in growth, non-income poverty and education (Booth et al. 2005; Lawson & Kipokola 2013; MFA 2014). The only Danish direct support to the government left is through a joint donor health basket fund, which is targeting the most vulnerable.

The grand bargain between the Tanzanian government and Western donors in the 1990s

The deterioration in relations between the Danish and Tanzanian governments in recent years is not unique in Tanzania's relations with Western donors. It does however mark a low point that has not been as grave since the last major crisis in the early to mid-1990s, which led to the reduction of aid around 1994 (Wangwe 2002; Edwards 2014). This was a time of major change, when the country concurrently embarked on a liberalisation process and allowed for the reintroduction of multiparty elections. Donors had, however, tired of a policymaking process in which economic reforms were passed under the auspices of the reform-minded and liberal President Mwinyi, only to be undermined by traditionalist CCM ministers and bureaucrats during implementation (Therkildsen 2000; Lofchie 2014). They also feared the misuse of funds. Tanzanian decision makers, on the other hand, complained about the intrusiveness of donors (Killick 2004; Harrison & Mulley 2007).

At the suggestion of and with the financial support of Denmark and the support of other, likeminded, donors, the Tanzanian government established a group of independent local and international advisors to investigate the problem. Their report (called the Helleiner Report after its chairman) observed a fragmentation of aid into multiple projects and programmes and a lack of alignment between the government and donors (ibid). It therefore called for donors to allow for greater country ownership on the one hand, and more proactive management

by the government on the other. Eventually this led to unfreezing the relations and the emergence of an informal grand bargain, in which the government accepted progress in the implementation of reforms and donors accepted that they should apply a more hands-off approach in their dealings with domestic affairs to increase Tanzanian ownership (Lofchie 2014).

The bargain subsequently gave the new president, the reform-minded and market-friendly Benjamin Mkapa, who was elected in 1995, a freer hand to pursue and implement reforms, even if traditionalists remained part of the party. He emphasised good relations with development partners and the importance of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the private sector (Edwards 2014). In contrast to the early phases of liberalisation, however, these elements were increasingly coupled with reforms of social services that aimed at improving coverage and quality and expanding social protection elements. Mkapa's Vision 2025 was an exercise in persuading the Tanzanian population that it is better to go through the hardship of economic reform than to introduce a change in direction. It stated that the sense of stagnation and decline in terms of eradicating poverty, ignorance and disease should be addressed by new interventions:

> Ideally, a nation's development should be people-centred, based on sustainable and shared growth and be free from abject poverty. For Tanzania, this development means that the creation of wealth and its distribution in society must be equitable and free from inequalities and all forms of social and political relations which inhibit empowerment and effective democratic and popular participation of social groups… (URT 2000).

This shift coincided with a similar shift in global donor priorities, where the Millennium Development Goals and support for poverty reduction strategies provided new resources for social interventions. In Tanzania, the importance of debt relief and Poverty Reduction Budget Support was on the increase, the latter introduced in the financial year 2000/1 (Booth et al. 2005; Lawson et al. 2005). Denmark was among the donors. In a country like Tanzania, which had reintroduced multiparty politics, it however also allowed the political elite to balance between liberalisation that inflicted short-term hardship on the population on the one hand, and the expansion of social services that could ameliorate the pain and help win elections, on the other. A gradual but

systematic expansion of physical health and education infrastructure ensued that was popular, not least in rural areas, where people tended to remain staunch CCM supporters.

Though the main focus of the 2000 CCM election manifesto was on the economy, free primary education was also promised during campaigns the same year, a return to the CCM's pre-structural adjustment policies. The combined government and donor interest in improving education services led to the construction of nearly 30,000 new classrooms in the following years and a massive increase in school enrolments (Mkapa 2002; Vavrus & Moshi 2009; Nyaluke & Connolly 2013). These trends continued in the context of the most recent elections. Hugely popular was the expansion of the coverage of secondary schools under President Kikwete, which led to transition rates from primary to secondary school increasing from 20.2% in 2006 to 53.6% in 2012 (Lawson & Kipolola 2013). At the 2015 election, this feat provided the platform for the abolition of secondary school fees. Other examples benefitted Tanzania's rural majority, such as the introduction of Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) that combined community-driven infrastructure projects and work programme interventions in year 2000, and the reintroduction of fertiliser subsidies, a policy included in the 2005 manifesto and extended further prior to the 2010 elections (Kjær & Therkildsen 2013; Jacob & Pedersen 2018).

Though never entirely free and fair, elections did become more democratic and civic space more open during this period. In 1995, Freedom House concluded that the elections 'were marred countrywide by administrative chaos and irregularities, and in Zanzibar by outright fraud' (Freedom House 1996). Zanzibar remained a concern in terms of democracy and human rights over much of the period, with CCM using all means to maintain power and frequent outbreaks of violence, a dynamics that led to tensions between President Mkapa and donors, who at times withheld aid to the archipelago.[10] The national elections in year 2000 were characterised by 'a modest improvement' and the political rights ranking improved from 5 to 4 (Freedom House 2001). So it continues, with gradual improvements in the quality of electoral process and rights albeit the ruling party never renounced its access to state resources and control of the media. The 2010 elections were the most competitive ever with the main opposition parties getting better organised.

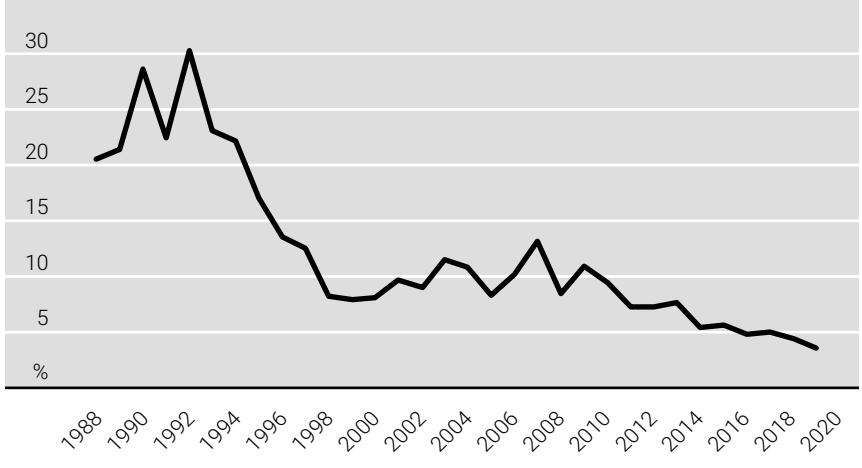
Fractures in the grand bargain under post-liberalisation. New thinking but continued support

Something was however changing in the bargain between Western donors and Tanzania's political elite and our research suggests that fractures could be observed earlier than the advent of President Magufuli in 2015, albeit more in the economic and social services sphere than in the political arena. Whereas Mkapa had pursued a fairly liberal development model aimed at maintaining good relations with Western donors, attracting FDI and forging close ties with domestic businessmen who could help fund the party, thinking in the ruling party gradually shifted under his successor. President Kikwete linked to broader political dynamics with a more vocal civil society and better organised opposition parties. It first emerged in the mining sector, where civil society in the early 2000s had begun criticising allegedly disadvantageous and shady deals in the sector. This, and allegations of corruption more broadly, became a platform for the opposition in the latter half of the 2000s. Combined with the dynamics within the ruling party this came to include shifting ideas on the roles of the state, the private sector and FDI in the economy; a process that, for instance, led to the shelving of plans for privatising the Tanzania Electric Supply Company in 2005–6, the enactment of a new Mining Act in 2010 with increased taxation and a government stake in new strategic mining operations, and the reintroduction of five year development plans in 2011, which highlighted the role of the state and state-owned enterprises in the economy (Pedersen et al. 2020).

The gradual shift in thinking within CCM coincided with a number of new developments in the funding landscape during this period. In the mid-1990s, economic growth began picking up and in the early 2000s it reached an average of around 7% annually (Kasidi & Said 2013). In the mid-2000s tax collection as a share of GNI also began improving (Fjeldstad & Therkildsen 2020). With time, this reduced Tanzania's dependency on aid from Western donors as indicated in the figure below. Two more developments should be highlighted that came to influence the relation between Tanzania and its donors, first the find of offshore natural gas in large quantities in the Indian Ocean in the southern part of Tanzania in 2010, which fuelled expectations that the country could soon rely more fully on its own resources for its development (Pedersen, Jacob et al. 2020).

Secondly, the advent of China as a more important actor led to intensified bilateral relations between the two countries in the late 2000s as well as more aid, trade and FDI. China's aid statistics are not transparent, but proportionwise Chinese aid was far less important than Western aid and this is still likely to be the case. China however supported projects with fewer conditions, which in turn allowed the Tanzanian government to pursue its own priorities more clearly. China's growing importance became conspicuously clear in 2011 with the announcement of Chinese funding for the construction of a USD1.2 billion state-owned gas pipeline, a model that had not found support from Western donors, with 95% of the finance coming in the form of a loan from the China Export Import Bank (Pedersen & Bofin 2019; Bofin, Pedersen et al. 2020). This marked a peak in Chinese loans to Tanzania, which CARI assesses surpassed USD2 billion for the period 2000-2019.[11] Furthermore, Chinese investments and trade grew rapidly over the period and China became Tanzania's main trading partner in the 2010s, especially with respect to imports (Shangwe 2017).

Net Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Tanzania received as percentage of GNI (1988-2019)[12]



In the health sector, the first sign that change was underway in Tanzania's relation to Western donors was the introduction of the ten-year Primary Health Services Development Programme (MMAM) in 2007. Tanzanian ruling politicians and donors had not always agreed in the earlier phases of reforms, but the former mainly made their mark on the health sector reforms proposed

by bureaucrats and donors by deciding the speed of implementation of the reforms aimed at adjusting expenditure to revenue and attempts to raise funds through, for instance, user fees, health insurance, and the accommodation of development partner priorities (see Pedersen & Jacob 2018). The collaboration between government and development partners had generally improved with a sector wide approach to health and a Health Basket Fund, but a number of global health initiatives targeting specific diseases like HIV-AIDS, malaria and leprosy, at times linked to the Millennium Development Goals, led to renewed fragmentation of development partner interventions.

In a context of intensified political competition, Tanzanian politicians now also began introducing their own interventions, focusing more on reaching out to the rural majority, who made up the core part of the population and who tended to vote CCM. The making of MMAM had not really been discussed with the development partners, who were preparing for a new multi-year Health Sector Strategic Plan, which was part of the normal government–development partner dialogue. Furthermore, the first version of the MMAM was in Kiswahili, which most actors on the development partner side were not able to read. Whereas MMAM provided for a broader range of interventions aimed at improving preventative healthcare, among development partners it was seen as a reversal of a classic Tanzanian government emphasis on expanding physical infrastructure. Many partners were surprised, and feared that the plan would prove unaffordable, leading to clinics empty of staff and medicine, and would distract from a focus on improving quality in the sector, and indeed, many facilities did remain unfinished or staffed with unqualified personnel (Mujinja & Kida 2014).

One may argue that since the priorities in MMAM had been a part of the CCM's election manifesto in 2005 (CCM 2005), the programme should not have come as a surprise, but it did. MMAM directly emphasised the importance of fulfilling the 2005 CCM election manifesto promises, which focused particularly on child and maternal mortality rates (which remain high to this day) by expanding physical health infrastructure. Whereas the reduction of child and maternal mortality was also a priority internationally, the inclusion in the manifesto indicates that the MMAM was also a matter of electoral politics. Communities were supposed to deliver 20% of the input to the financing of the programme through labour and material inputs (URT 2007), a welcome platform for local CCM leaders who would be the implementers in place. That political motives

were involved was also the perception among other stakeholders in the sector, such as this NGO representative, who reflected on the dynamics relating to the programme:

> The interest of the government is to get re-elected. So they come out with, I would say, simple strategies to convince citizens that they have performed. And for them, they thought that, if you engage in infrastructure expansion, these are the numbers that are visible and are easy to sell on political platforms. And that is what happens until today. And then we ended up with a lot of ghost facilities – new facilities that are not operating (Interview, 15 December 2017).

By then, most development partners had stopped supporting physical infrastructure, apart from Denmark's Danida and Germany's KfW Development Bank, who supported rehabilitation of physical infrastructure through grants to local governments. Initially, MMAM seems not to have had any significant impact on development partner funding, which remained high, at 40–50% during the following years.[13] To sum up, the different priorities among government and development partners that appeared with MMAM in 2007 did not mean that collaboration came to a halt. It was more that a pattern was emerging, in which the government continued collaborating on the administrative reforms of the health sector that would improve its efficiency and quality and keep the development partner funds flowing to the sector, while pursuing a separate track reflecting long-held ruling party priorities on expanding public health infrastructure that were popular and could help win elections.

The breakdown of the bargain under autocratisation?

Although there were occasional tensions for instance related to allegations of corruption, relations between the government and Western donors remained largely cordial during most of President Kikwete's tenure.[14] As a former minister of foreign affairs Kikwete was well-versed in dealing with foreign relations, he travelled widely, and his contributions were valued internationally, for instance as member of the Danish Africa Commission, which in 2008–9 focused on

how Africa could benefit from globalisation to generate economic growth and employment (MFA 2016; MFA n.d.). There were examples of newspaper bans and attempts to silence critics, but generally political and civic space became freer, as evidenced in for instance the Freedom House scores for that period. The 2010 elections were historically competitive and gave the opposition parties a strong platform in parliament for the first time (Paget 2017).

Within the ruling party change was picking up under the pressure of intensified electoral competition. As a response to such outcomes, in 2011 the party embarked on a process of distancing itself from corrupt party members in a rebranding campaign famously known in Swahili as 'Kujivua gamba' ('like a snake shedding its skin'), which included internal reforms. The major elements were (i) to bring the leadership of the party closer to the people, by having the members of the party's national executive committee elected at the district instead of regional level, and (ii) to take action against corrupt leaders.[15] Whereas changes had thus been underway for some time, the implementation of the Kujivua gamba campaign appeared, if not half-hearted, then very slow in the early years, possibly due to power struggles within CCM. However, some of Tanzania's richest men did depart as CCM MPs in the years that followed, and in the run-up to the 2015 elections Lowassa, a party grandee perceived to be corrupt, was deselected and John Pombe Magufuli was selected as a compromise presidential candidate. Magufuli ran on an anti-establishment ticket of 'change', portraying himself as an outsider who was siding with the people against a corrupt elite.[16] He won in the most competitive elections ever.

The internal workings of CCM are not very transparent to the public and it can therefore be hard to disentangle whether it was the new leader or broader changes within the party that catered to what was to come. Already in the run-up to the 2015 election there were signs of change with new acts – the introduction of the Statistics Act and the Cybercrimes Act – that 'had the potential to significantly limit freedom of expression, civil society activities, and access to information' were passed (Freedom House 2016). They did. Furthermore, as mentioned above, thinking on the economic development model had been changing for some time and Magufuli emphasised that he had been elected to implement CCM's manifesto and so should all public servants.[17] This agenda meant an increased focus on mobilising domestic resources for large-scale infrastructure projects.

At the same time, the approach towards the opposition and other centres of power hardened after years of expanding civic and political space. The activities of the opposition parties were suppressed through a number of measures. First, live TV coverage from parliament was ended and then, in June 2016, an indefinite ban on public meetings, including party rallies, was announced, denying the opposition major platforms to reach out to new constituencies (Paget 2017). Justifying these measures, Magufuli repeatedly contrasted politicking at rallies between elections with his vision of developing the economy:

> 'Some people have failed to engage in legitimate politics; they would like to see street protests everyday (…) We want to build a strong economy for all Tanzanians, and we are on the right track. Let us be patient: Tanzania will become a land of honey'.[18]

Many Western donors, initially delighted by Magufuli's anti-corruption agenda, were disappointed and some donors, especially bilateral ones, began reconsidering their support. Denmark's reduction of direct support to the government has been mentioned in section two above. Sweden decided to reduce aid by 25% and countries like the UK and the USA were also reported to be reviewing relations (Africa Confidential 2020).[19] In 2019 the World Bank froze lending due to disagreements linked to pregnant schoolgirls being expelled from public schools and the Statistics Act that had made it illegal to question official statistics.[20] Compromises were, however, reached with the World Bank backtracking, the embargo lifted and renewed support to, for instance, the new Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), a government programme targeting the poorest through public work and cash transfer interventions, was announced.[21] It has later been reported that there were examples of TASAF being rolled out in the runup to the 2020 elections and clearly linked to the ruling party.[22] How systematic this was is not clear, but a similar rollout was conducted prior to the 2015 elections, which we know more about.

TASAF had a longer history with an emphasis on support for infrastructure focusing on school, health and water facilities and livelihood grants to existing functioning community savings and investment promotion groups. The novelty in the third phase that was introduced in the 2010s was a cash transfer scheme with a more systematic, individualised approach that targeted the poorest of the poor (Jacob & Pedersen 2018). The expansion of such provisions were part

of an international drive that included, for instance, the United Nation's Social Protection Floor Initiative launched in 2009 and the Sustainable Development Goals (Lavers & Hickey 2020). Even though the cash transfer part of Tanzania's programme was referred to as a productive social safety net, with an emphasis on its productive element, its core is an unconditional grant of TSH10.000 (USD4.5) per month for all households that can be topped up with various conditional transfers, typically linked either to children attending school or to health interventions, such as sending children for vaccination.

The cash transfer method had been designed and tested in the late 2000s, first through a pilot in three districts financed by the Japanese government, and then rolled out as an expanded pilot in these same districts through an increased World Bank credit in 2009. Based on these ideas and experiences, TASAF III was to begin as a new ten-year programme in 2012, with a design phase before implementation could gain speed. The decision to scale up the programme, and thus also its final design, was brought before the cabinet for approval in 2013, because it involved another World Bank credit. By then, the government was committed to a larger element of co-financing than previously, but some time passed before the required additional donor funding was mobilised (Ulriksen 2016). Under the new arrangements, the government would provide a third of the funding from its own revenues, a third was to come from a World Bank credit and a third from other development partners. Of the latter, DFID and SIDA became the biggest contributors out of a group of more than ten actors, including five UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP, ILO, UNFPA and UNDP), to provide technical assistance.

The implementation of TASAF III with its cash transfer element was conspicuously correlated with the upcoming 2015 elections, a period of unprecedented political competition in Tanzania. Under the scale-up of PSSN, the identification of the beneficiaries was completed halfway through 2015, when the electoral activities set in, well before the elections on 25 October 2015. By December 2015, all 1.1 million households had been paid by the cash transfer programme, which was quite a feat in a country where payments from the public purse are frequently delayed, and in a year which ended with rapidly increasing arrears to domestic private suppliers (IMF 2015). According to a World Bank publication, 8–10% of the entire population got covered (Beegle et al. 2018). Donors were well aware that a large cash transfer programme could be used politically, and therefore stressed the need to separate the

identification of beneficiaries from the election campaigns, which started in mid-2015:

> Cash transfers are a good political tool. You can use it to buy political support. So we did not want certain political parties to use it to target their voters – we wanted the targeting to be completed before the elections period started (Interview with donor representative, 19 January 2018).

We are not to judge on how convincing this focus on procedure in the selection of beneficiaries is but do find it unlikely that the rollout of such a programme did not affect elections. Earlier phases of TASAF have also been linked to electoral politics (Marx 2017). It is worth noting that Tanzanian politicians historically have been reluctant to hand out cash without conditions, stressing that money should be put to productive use. That was also the reason why Tanzania as one of only a few African countries chose to attach conditions, which were disliked by many development partners, to its cash transfer programme (Davis et al. 2016). Out of the 1.1. million recipients, 600,000 were initially expected to be in public work during the programme. However, the money that the government had committed – one-third of the budget – did not materialise and, therefore, the programme ran out of money for this activity, reaching less than half, close to 300,000 (interview with development partner representative, 15 January 2018). According to the donors, the government simply stated that it had no money. When the new president took power, he had indeed inherited substantial deficits and arrears. FDI had also decreased as the global commodity boom abated.[23] However, his government soon initiated a number of large infrastructure projects to implement CCM's election manifesto using government money.

Conclusion

With the wave of autocratisation that has materialised in many – but not all – countries in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years, the debate about the political effects of aid has become more salient. The voices of scholars as well as of opposition politicians and activists in recipient countries that call for reductions in aid to such countries have grown louder. There is a large and largely inclusive literature on whether development assistance promotes or

undermines democracy. There is no doubt that Western donors in combination with domestic pressure contributed to the reintroduction of multiparty elections in a number of countries in the early 1990s as was the case with Tanzania, and that donor support has contributed to the institutionalisation of elections. Bratton & van de Walle (1997) however suggest that donors were more influential in more aid-dependent countries and Dijkstra (2018) that donor intentions matter, with aid given by non-democratic regimes or to countries that are strategically important to donors being negative. This points to a complex relationship between aid and democracy, influenced both by donor and recipient country characteristics. It also calls for more attention to how different types of aid may have different effects on democracy.

In this article we have explored whether development assistance for poverty alleviation may pose a challenge for donors like Denmark, who also have the promotion of democracy and human rights as a goal. By way of unpacking government–donor relations in Tanzania, which is the country that has received most Danish aid over time, we show how a grand bargain emerged between Western donors and the government of Tanzania, which resulted in economic growth, improved social welfare and a gradually expanding civic and political space. This bargain however gradually began fracturing in the late 2000s and was under threat of splintering in the second half of the 2010s with a rapid deterioration of democracy and human rights and the flawed elections in 2020 as a consequence. More factors contributed to this development; the decreasing importance of Western aid, shifts in thinking in the ruling party fuelled by intensified electoral competition, and the vulnerable position and autocratic personality of the late President Magufuli, who got elected in 2015. We do thus not argue that the examples of aid for health and social transfers highlighted in this article undermined democracy throughout the period or are to blame for the setback from 2015 onwards.

We do however suggest that such aid for poverty alleviation helped the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), which has ruled the country since 1961, maintain legitimacy and power. Some would argue that this effect was worth the prize in terms of poverty alleviation. It may indeed make some sense to support a country whose civic and political space becomes freer as was the case with Tanzania until around 2015. With the advent of the new president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, who came to power in 2021 after the premature death of Magufuli and has signalled a return to a more liberal and inclusive

development model, there could, furthermore, be a new window of opportunity for Western donors.[24] By staying and supporting development, donors could strengthen Suluhu Hassan's and her allies vis-à-vis hardliners in CCM. We, however, also tend to concur with the assessment by the democracy expert Nic Cheeseman and colleagues that one should be cautious about the prospects for democratisation and furthermore suggest that the ruling party 'has always been authoritarian, but did not always need to use the full weight of its powers' (Cheeseman et al. 2021: 86; see also Pedersen & Jacob 2019).

Samia Suluhu Hassan appears to have a different personality and different policy inclinations than Magufuli, but it may take more than that to break the authoritarian logic of CCM. It is worth bearing in mind that political and civic space in Tanzania was never completely free. In such a context a country cannot become 'too democratic' relative to its economic development as suggested by Bates and others; without pressure it is unlikely to ever become truly democratic. Donors who value democracy and human rights should therefore be clear on their priorities and careful about what they support. A small bilateral donor like Denmark may have limited influence on the development in Tanzania, but it could seek to influence the larger ones, not least the multilateral donors like the World Bank and the EU to whose activities it contributes financially. They are the bigger donors in Tanzania as well as in many other countries and they have hitherto demonstrated more flexibility when it comes to democracy and human rights.

Notes

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2 Thabit Jacob, Ph.D., is a visiting researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies.

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Appendix: Political rights in Denmark's partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa

The below figure on the development in political rights in Danish partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa builds on Freedom House's rating system with 1 marking the greatest degree of freedom and 7 the least. The years 2010 and 2020 represent developments in the previous years, that is from 2009 and 2019.*

	2010	2020
Burkina Faso	5	4
Ethiopia	5	6
Kenya	4	4
Mali	2	5
Niger	5	4
Somalia	7	7
Tanzania	4	5
Uganda	5	6

When comparing 2010 with 2020 four countries fare worse, two are unchanged and two fare better. The figures thus to some extent concur with the democracy researcher Nic Cheeseman, who earlier has noticed significant variation and that there have also been positive developments (Cheeseman 2020). This of course calls for caution when evaluations change on a continental level, but it does point to a negative trend that can also be observed in the Economist's Democracy Index, which in its latest edition identified the lowest score for the sub-Saharan African continent since the Index began in 2006 (The Economist 2021).

* The ratings are developed based on analyses and consultations with local stakeholders. The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4), and Functioning of Government (3). See more on https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology. Data received from Freedom House by email 8 February 2021.

Crossroads in Danish foreign policy 1770–2020

Carsten Staur[1]

On the 24th of December 1770, Christmas Eve, King Christian 7th signed the executive order that established the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ('udenlandske affairer') as a separate ministry and appointed the former envoy to Naples, Count Adolph Sigfried von der Osten, as foreign minister. Until then, the responsibility for Denmark's foreign affairs had rested with a larger department which primarily dealt with the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, and its newfound independence was an element in the comprehensive government reforms, initiated by Johann Friedrich Struensee. Struensee's position as *de facto* regent came to an abrupt end with his arrest and later execution in 1772, and many of his reforms were undone, but the creation of a ministry of foreign affairs proved durable. In 2020, it celebrated its 250th anniversary.[2]

The creation of the Danish Foreign Ministry in 1770 highlighted the fact that the management of foreign relations was crucial for a mid-sized European power. Alliances could easily shift, as kings, princes and dukes gave up some of their traditional alliances and entered into new ones, for longer or shorter periods of time. War was a recognised way to settle disputes. All sovereigns and their advisors thus needed to be vigilant, to observe developments closely and to have good networks in other capitals to pick up news, discourse and emerging foreign policy decisions. Diplomatic services and envoys – resident ambassadors or ministers in major capitals – provided valuable pieces of that kind of information.

The impending 250th anniversary made me accept, in late 2018, to write a book on the history of Danish foreign policy, daringly covering the entire timespan from 1770 to 2020. The book was published in September 2020.[3]

The project provided a unique opportunity to take a closer look at the fundamentals of Danish foreign policy over a longer time span and, not least, at the fundamental shift from neutrality before the Second World War to actively embracing, although also with some initial hesitance, the new multilateral system, which emerged after 1945. It allowed me to look at how Danish decision makers – kings, ministers, key parliamentarians, senior diplomats – interacted to define and defend the interests of the Kingdom of Denmark: how they analysed the changing international environment, defined their room for manoeuvre, and assessed the security and commercial implications for Denmark as well as the wider political implications in relation to all those bigger and stronger powers that surrounded the country.

As always, history provides fundamental insights and background to better understand the issues and dilemmas that we face today. I have tried to sum up the history of Danish foreign policy through analyses of twelve critical situations where the future of Denmark, and sometimes its fate as a state or a nation, has been at stake, and where foreign policy decisions thus became crucial to the future of the country and to the continuation of the Danish way of life. It is a fairly quick, but necessary, journey through two and a half century of Danish foreign policy challenges and conundrums, in order to draw some important lessons learned, also in relation to the role of Danish diplomats and the professionalisation of Danish diplomacy.[4]

Kiel, 1814

Denmark-Norway counted two and a half million people and geographically included present-day Denmark and Norway, the two primarily German duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and also the Danish West Indies (now the US Virgin Islands) in the Caribbean, the trade posts Tranquebar and Serampore in India and the Gold Coast (in present-day Ghana). A conglomerate of a state in any meaning of the word, with only 40% of its population being Danish speaking. The executive order, the 'birth certificate' of the new foreign ministry, was written in German: 'dass das Bureau

der auländischen Affairen gäntzlich von der Teutschen Kanzelley Separirt und abgesondert werde' (Kjølsen & Sjøqvist 1970; Glenthøj & Nordhagen 2014).

Denmark-Norway was an outward-oriented kingdom, heavily engaged in trade with its neighbours and exploiting the potential of colonialism, albeit on a smaller scale but nevertheless engaged in the trading of slaves from the Gold Coast to the West Indies from where sugar and other commodities were shipped to Copenhagen. Denmark-Norway also controlled the access to the Baltic Sea, as ships had to pass through Danish waterways – Øresund, Storebælt or Lillebælt – on their way back and forth. That in itself placed the kingdom in the midst of regional wheeling and dealing, having to closely navigate its relations with surrounding greater powers like Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Austria and Prussia (Germany).

Keeping this multinational and widely dispersed state together remained the ultimate goal of the autocratic monarch (King Frederik 6th, regent from 1784 and king from 1808–39), but it steadily became harder. The Napoleonic Wars (1803–15) eventually put strong pressure on Denmark-Norway to choose sides and abandon its traditional position of neutrality. The British bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 forced the King's hand and made him join Napoleon's side in the conflict.

As Russia changed sides, and as Sweden also joined the anti-French coalition, the Danish position became increasingly untenable. Foreign minister Niels Rosenkrantz suggested that Denmark-Norway also changed its position but was rejected by the King. Frederik 6th doubled down, as he saw the alliance with Napoleon as the only possibility to keep Norway as part of his domain. Changing alliances would mean an almost sure loss of Norway, and thus a significant part of his Kingdom.

From a dynastic, autocratic perspective, it made some sense, but it was a gamble, and it failed. Denmark had to cede Norway to Sweden. During the peace negotiations in Kiel in January 1814, the Danish envoy Edmund Bourke used all his diplomatic skills to play the few cards he had and secure both financial compensation and continued Danish sovereignty over Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Denmark had become a small European state – with a huge German population, and with Holstein choosing to join the newly founded German Confederation, while Schleswig did not (Feldbæk & Jespersen 2002; Nørregård 1954).

Given the military defeat of Napoleon and his allies, Danish diplomacy salvaged what could be salvaged. But the losses in 1814 also laid the basis for the struggles to come.

London, 1864

The Kingdom of Denmark accounted for almost two thirds of the king's subjects, and the three German duchies, which had the king of Denmark as their duke and 'lensmand', for the remaining just over a third. The construction worked originally but it quickly came under pressure from both increasing nationalism throughout Europe and the steadily more confident and powerful German Confederation, led by Prussia.

The problem was complicated, and yet quite simple: The Danish king – whether Christian 8th (1839–48), Frederik 7th (1848–1863), or Christian 9th (1863–1906) – wanted to maintain his position as duke of the German duchies. Ministers in the new Danish Government, which came to power after the abolition of autocracy and the introduction of a partly parliamentary system in 1848, wanted Danish sovereignty over the duchy of Schleswig, which had a significant Danish population, but did not want to hang on to Holstein or Lauenburg which were entirely German. Prussia and others wanted to include all three duchies in the emerging German Confederation. The Danish minority in Schleswig wanted closer ties with Denmark, whereas the German–speaking majority in Schleswig wanted to stay together with Holstein, as they had been promised in 1460 ('up ewig ungedeelt'). Different pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that simply did not fit (Bjørn & Due-Nielsen 2003; Glenthøj 2014; Møller 1958).

The logical solution was there almost from the beginning: a division of Schleswig according to nationality – separating the Danish-leaning population in the north of the duchy from the predominantly German-leaning population in the southern part. That conclusion ran counter to the ambitions and goals of all negotiating parties, but in a reasonably equal manner, and would give each what they most wanted. But as so often, the best way to get there is not always a straight path. This time around, the detours were formidable and it took more than a century to finally find a solution. In the meantime this issue, and its implications for Danish–German relations, remained the dominant theme in Danish foreign policy.

In 1864 it came to war between Denmark and Prussia/Austria. It was partly provoked by political and constitutional mistakes on the Danish side, but also by clever manipulation by the Prussian Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, who saw the war as part of his wider plans for German unification. It was an uneven match. The German forces outnumbered the Danish and were better equipped and trained. The Danish forces abandoned the old Dannevirke fortification and withdrew to Dybbøl, where the decisive battle took place on 18 April 1864. The Danish forces lost and had to withdraw further, to new positions in Als. Parallel to the events on the battlefield, the United Kingdom convened a peace conference in London to try to work out a political settlement to the conflict (Glenthøj 2014; Neergaard 1916).

The London conference became one of the major blunders in Danish diplomatic history. The negotiators in London were not up to task, the government in Copenhagen did not fully understand the precariousness of the situation, and the new king, Christian 9th, even less so. Also, the newly appointed permanent secretary in the foreign ministry, Peter Vedel, was too wavering and did not step up to what could be expected of the country's most powerful foreign service official. Instead of accepting a possible compromise that would allow for a partition of Schleswig, maybe not that far from the present border, the government engaged in various mirages. In the end Prime Minister D.G. Monrad left it to the King to take the decision, leading to a rejection of what was on the table. Four days later, Prussian forces successfully attacked the Danish positions in Als and, in reality, ended the war. Denmark had to cede the whole Duchy of Schleswig, including the thousands of Danes living in the northern part of the duchy. It was a national setback of unprecedented proportions (Sjøquist 1957; Glenthøj 2014; Bjørn & Due-Nielsen 2003).

Paris, 1919

The German defeat in the First World War in November 1918 created an opportunity to redress the situation. Denmark had remained neutral during the war and had succeeded in maintaining commercial relations with both sides. More than forty years under German rule had weakened the Danish minority in Schleswig; many had left for the kingdom – or sought their fortune in the United States or elsewhere. Danish language, schools and news media had been suppressed or intimidated. More than 30,000 young Danish men had

been forced to serve in the German army during the war, and many lives had been lost.

The German defeat made possible what had not been so for many years: to redraw the border between Denmark and Germany based on nationality – and to get this solution included in the outcome of the Paris peace conference with the approval of the major powers who had won the war and now decided the terms of peace.

The centre-left leaning Danish government led by Carl Theodor Zahle reached out cautiously, fully aware that the German defeat in the First World War would not change geography. Germany would always be a major force in Europe, and the only country with which Denmark has a land border. The Danish government knew exactly where in Schleswig the line could be drawn between those nationally affiliated with Denmark vis-à-vis those primarily affiliated with German language and culture. The bigger towns in the northern part of Schleswig, especially Tønder, had a German majority, whereas the countryside was predominantly Danish. In the middle part of Schleswig there was a clear German majority, also in Flensburg, which had experienced a continuous German influx over the preceding decades. In the southern part of Schleswig there were few Danish-leaning people (Lidegaard 2003; Fink 1979).

The division of the old Duchy of Schleswig suggested by the Danish government meant the inclusion of 4000 square kilometres and around 165,000 people, 30,000 of whom, primarily in the bigger towns, identified as German-leaning. In relation to the Paris peace conference, the proposal was an open door and a showpiece for the new principle of national self-determination. The Danish government could have claimed more, but wisely kept to the nationality principle which became evident in two referenda held in 1920: north of the proposed new border (zone 1), 75% of those entitled to vote chose to join Denmark, south of the border (zone 2) 80% voted to remain part of Germany. This was a more clear-cut border correction, based on nationality, than any other following the First World War (Fink 1979).

The major challenge was domestic. The right-leaning parties in opposition to the government wanted to include Flensburg in Denmark, even though 75% of the city's population had voted to remain part of Germany. Even with the peace agreement close to being finalised, the opposition still proposed

to internationalise Flensburg and other parts of the German-leaning zone 2, at least for a decade or more, until 'the wrongs' of German rule could be corrected, and another referendum organised. For some on the right this was a deeply felt political conviction; for most it was a more tactical position to regain political power. Shortly before Easter 1920, it ended in a major constitutional and political crisis, where King Christian 10th (1912–47) dismissed the Zahle government and appointed a new government without parliamentary support. Threat of a general strike, and massive protests in Copenhagen, led to a temporary solution and to new elections where the former opposition won handsomely; it did not subsequently attempt to reopen the border issue (Kaarsted 1969; Fink 1979).

The Easter Crisis of 1920 was the last time the King played a substantial role in Danish foreign policy. It was also the beginning of more parliamentary oversight and participation in this policy area, with the creation in 1923 of the statutory Foreign Policy Committee of Parliament. Foreign policy went from being directed by an autocratic sovereign (1770–1848), over being a joint responsibility of king and government (1848–1918) to being, since 1918, a joint responsibility of government and parliament. The government still had the constitutional right to define foreign policy, but it had to operate within the political parameters established by parliament or face a vote of no confidence.

Copenhagen, 1940

The premonition of the Zahle government, and not least its foreign minister, Erik Scavenius – that a defeated Germany would always rise again – came to fruition in the 1930s, where Foreign Minister P. Munch and his senior officials consistently tried to avoid political conflicts with Nazi Germany, once in a while also putting pressure on Danish newspapers not to criticise what happened there. As Germany needed access to Norway as part of its military plans, the Danish government was not successful – as it had been from 1914–1918 – in avoiding a military confrontation with its southern neighbour. German forces quickly occupied Denmark on 9 April 1940 and remained as occupying power until their surrender in May 1945 (Helstrup 2000; Branner 1987).

Danish neutrality had been 'violated', but P. Munch, the government and the parties in parliament tried to establish a fiction of continued Danish sovereignty,

despite being under occupation. Eric Scavenius was soon brought back as foreign minister, and later prime minister, to deal with the occupying power. The government continued to function as did public institutions in general, including the Danish judicial system. The Danish government managed to buy some time and to slow down the inevitably increasing German pressure.

In Washington, envoy Henrik Kauffmann quickly established a parallel 'free' foreign service recognised by the US government. In 1941 he entered into an irrevocable treaty with the United States that gave the Americans military sovereignty over Greenland. In exchange, Kauffmann secured access to funds necessary to finance the 'free' foreign service. Meanwhile the foreign ministry in Copenhagen became the gatekeeper in negotiations between the military and civilian German authorities and the Danish government, in order to maintain the 'fiction' of Denmark still being a (partly) sovereign nation, dealing with another country. As the war progressed, tensions between the occupying power and occupied Denmark became increasingly strained. In 1943 the Danish Government resigned after a widespread public uprising, and the resistance movement gained momentum. In 1944, most of the Danish police corps was jailed and transferred to the Neuengamme concentration camp (Lidegaard 2003).

After the Scavenius government's resignation, the permanent secretary of the foreign ministry, Nils Svenningsen, became the de facto head of the Danish Government, although in close contact with the political leaders. Most public institutions kept working during the occupation, and economically, Denmark was much less affected by the war than most other countries.

The German Government did not raise the border issue during their occupation. It did not need to, as it controlled the whole of the territory, but on the Danish side this was also seen as an implicit recognition of the 1920 border between the two countries. After the war, the Danish liberation government immediately declared its support for the existing border. That did not, however, prevent the issue of a border revision from becoming part of Danish political discussion over the next few years, driven by right wing circles. The government policy remained clear and consistent: the 1920 border was not to be changed. It still took until 1955, and the Copenhagen–Bonn declarations, before all minority-related questions were settled (B. Olesen & Villaume 2005).

San Francisco, 1945

The platform of the liberation government of 1945, with ministers both from the political parties and from the resistance movement, set out that the country would remain neutral, but the government also proudly accepted that Denmark should participate in the establishment of the United Nations in June of 1945. Accepting this invitation was not for discussion; it placed Denmark solidly in the winning camp. At the same time, the government hesitated to fully embrace the United Nations and its collective security systems, anchored in the unique authority of the Security Council. It only gradually came round to acknowledging the importance of the Security Council, and of the various human rights bodies of the UN.

Only in relation to women's rights did Denmark take on an early leadership role, driven by its 3rd Committee representative, Bodil Begtrup, who became the first chair of the Commission on the Status of Women. Gradually, the idea of a rules-based international order being beneficial, not least for small countries, took root and the United Nations eventually became one of the three dominant multilateral pillars in Danish foreign policy, alongside NATO and the EU (Staur 2014; Lidegaard 1996; Begtrup 1986).

When Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld introduced more ambitious UN peace-keeping operations in 1956, Denmark and other Nordic countries quickly became major troop contributors. Denmark alone contributed around 7% of all UN peacekeepers from 1948–1989, primarily in Gaza and Cyprus. Denmark also became one of the early participants in the UN development efforts, following the independence of former colonies and the growth of UN membership in the 1950s and 1960s. The UN target for Official Development Assistance (ODA) of 0.7% of GNI, set in 1970, quickly became the norm for Denmark's official development assistance (ODA). Denmark reached the 0.7% in 1978 and has not been below since (Staur 2014; Mariager & Wivel 2019).

Washington, 1949

Denmark's traditional neutrality guided its initial post-war security policy, as it eagerly pursued the concept of a Scandinavian Defence Union (Denmark, Sweden and Norway), which seen from Copenhagen should be able to find its proper – neutral – place in northern Europe between two emerging superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft tried to bridge the difference between a neutral Sweden and a more transatlantic-oriented Norway, but in vain. In April 1949, Denmark followed Norway into NATO, pursuing the American security guarantees and the promises of support in case of a Soviet attack – which remained a real threat to Denmark throughout the Cold War, not least after the experience of the Soviet Union 'liberating' the island of Bornholm in 1945 and maintaining its military presence there until April 1946. The Danish government was less eager when it came to the acceptance of permanent American bases in Denmark, which never materialised, and Denmark also rejected the positioning of nuclear weapons in Denmark in peacetime (B. Olesen & Villaume 2005).

In relation to Greenland, Kauffmann's 1941 treaty was renegotiated in 1951, and the United States maintained its military superiority over Greenland. The Cold War highlighted the strategic American interest in the Arctic, and the US expanded the Thule airbase in the early 1950s. In 1957, Prime Minister H.C. Hansen secretly accepted that American nuclear weapons were positioned in Greenland (DUPI 1997).

Early membership of the UN was an offer you could not refuse in 1945 – and although approached hesitantly, UN membership was perceived as a recognition of Denmark and the contribution of the Danish resistance movement to the Allied victory. NATO membership was the inevitable default, when the Scandinavian Defence Union did not succeed. However, NATO membership also quickly became a key pillar of Danish foreign and security policy, with strong political backing in parliament, accepting Danish military integration into the Alliance. As for the economic aspects, the picture was more blurry. The major part of Danish trade was with other European countries, and especially with the United Kingdom and Germany. In the 1950s these two major trading partners moved in different directions.

Brussels, 1972

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the United States moved to heal the wounds of war in Europe, and to delineate its strategic interest in Western Europe. The vehicle was the Marshall Plan, which helped rebuild the Western European economies after the devastations of war, and at the same time served to integrate Germany – West Germany that was – into the emerging Western European group of liberal market economies. This also sidelined the issue of retribution and reparations, which had proved so damaging after the First World War.

The Marshall Plan was managed by the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in Paris. Out of it grew the European Steel and Coal Community (ESCC), established by France, Italy, West Germany and the Benelux countries, which successfully tested the idea of international cooperation with a strong supranational executive – the future European Commission. In 1957 the ESCC was followed by the European Economic Community (EEC), which included one of Denmark's most important trading partners, West Germany. Denmark joined the United Kingdom and other countries in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), but this was not seen as a long-term solution. Denmark wanted to join the EEC, but only together with the United Kingdom. That move was blocked by the French president, Charles de Gaulle, until his resination in 1969. In 1973, and following a national referendum, Denmark together with the United Kingdom and Ireland finally joined the EEC, and got most of its ducks in a row, economically speaking. Membership of the EEC, later the EU, has been of immense economic importance to Denmark for almost fifty years (B. Olesen & Villaume 2005; Lidegaard 2001, 2002; Ryborg 1998; Udenrigsministeriet 1995).

The conditions on which Denmark joined the EEC, however, were not entirely transparent and clear to the Danish voters. What from the very beginning was an economic *and political* European project, built on ever-increasing economic integration – the apotheosis of which was the European Single Market from 1986 onwards – was presented as a purely, practical trading arrangement, beneficial not least for Danish agriculture. In shorthand: the EEC membership was 'sold' to voters in an EFTA packaging. This sales pitch allowed, over time, for a surge in perceptions of growing flaws and failures in the EEC membership terms. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Denmark became 'foot-dragging' in its

approach to the EEC. In 1986, a majority in the Danish Parliament opposed the single market, but a referendum showed that the measures were supported by 55% of voters. Still, increased scepticism with regard to the ultimate goal of European integration – and fear of a continuous 'slide' towards symbolism and hyperbole in the further development of the European project – remained an important factor in Danish politics and public discourse.

It was a train wreck waiting to happen. In 1992, Danish voters rejected the Maastricht Treaty by 50.7% against 49.3%. Faced with the clear refusal by other European governments to renegotiate the treaty, and based on proposals from the opposition parties, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed four opt-outs, only affecting Denmark, and thus acceptable to European partners. The Danish opt-outs as defined in the Edinburgh Decision – on the future Euro, on European defence policy and on justice and home affairs – were carefully crafted to primarily address concerns about the longer-term development of European economic and political integration. The fact that the opt-outs were developed together with some of those who had been most sceptical towards the Maastricht Treaty broadened their domestic political acceptance (Petersen 2004; B. Olesen 2017; W. Olesen 2018).

It turned out, however, that the future was now. A few years later, the Euro became a reality, only to be rejected by Danish voters in 2000; defence cooperation began without Denmark; and justice and home affairs, and not least common asylum policies, became a key policy area within the EU. Danish voters rejected to join the latter as late as 2015. The status quo was good enough – and most Danes seem to agree that the Danish opt-outs were part of their European 'aquis'.

Berlin, 1989

The end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union demonstrated that the Soviet bear had been standing on feet of clay for some time. Now it tumbled down. A few years earlier, NATO had decided to deploy 572 Pershing II-rockets and cruise missiles in response to the Soviet military built up in Eastern Europe. A centre-left majority in the Danish Parliament found this move would hamper disarmament efforts and forced the centre-right government to insert various footnotes in NATO

decisions, which became a point of domestic contention in the early 1980s. In 1988, the majority demanded that the Danish stance against nuclear weapons on Danish territory in peacetime be communicated directly to American naval vessels visiting Denmark. This led to elections and the formation of a new government, which brought an end to the previous parliamentary majority against the government on this issue.

This all took place only a year before the end of the Cold War and the creation of a new political landscape in Europe, no longer divided between East and West. For Denmark, the political attention quickly focussed on the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and their independence from the Soviet Union *en route* to eventual membership of both the EU and NATO. Denmark, and not least Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, strongly supported Baltic independence, almost to the limit of what the United States and major European powers could accept with their eyes on not jeopardising German re-unification and the START negotiations on nuclear weapons. The foreign ministry was reorganised in 1991 in order to better support these priorities, and Danish diplomats were heavily engaged in this agenda, working closely with likeminded EU member states (Petersen 2004; W. Olesen 2018; DIIS 2005).

Denmark's support for the Baltic states was not only political and diplomatic. A great number of civil society cooperation projects were initiated, and participation in the development of the three Baltic states became a widely supported area of attention and engagement for Danish civil society as well as for Danish investments and business opportunities – and for technical cooperation to develop capacity and build transparent and accountable democratic institutions (Hansen 1996).

Copenhagen, 2002

9-11 changed everything. The terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York came to symbolise the end of the American hegemony that had defined the 1990s. The United States' position in the world was no longer unchallenged. The war on terror gradually created divisions also in relation to traditional American allies. Russia showed its head again on the international scene, replacing the Soviet Union as a global power. Impressive economic growth since 1978 gave China sufficient critical mass to translate its economic strength into political

power. The European Union reached out to potential new member states in Central and Eastern Europe. For Denmark, these developments emphasised the need for closer collaboration with EU partners and the United States.

Denmark, holding the rotating EU presidency in 1993, pushed for a path to EU accession for the new states from Central and Eastern Europe. The Copenhagen Criteria defined that new EU members should be democratic, abide by the rule of law and protect minorities; they should have a well-functioning market-based economy; and they should be able to shoulder the obligations and aspirations inherent in membership. Sweden, Finland and Austria joined the EU in 1995, and by the end of the decade another twelve European countries had applied for membership, representing an expansion of the territory and total population of the EU by almost a third. Enlargement had become a key political issue for the EU – and for NATO as well, with the United States driving a similar enlargement process (Petersen 2004; Udenrigsministeriet 2001).

The EU opt-outs started to create real problems for Denmark. The European Security and Defence Policy mandated security operations in which Denmark could not participate. Closer EU collaboration on justice and home affairs also left Denmark outside the door. The lost referendum in 2000 further meant that Denmark could not join the Euro as the new European currency. Denmark could, however, be helpful to the EU by going all-in on the enlargement issue, and luckily this potential coincided with the Danish EU presidency in 2002.

The centre-right Danish government, led by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, early on went for 'a big bang' scenario: the admission of ten countries, primarily from Eastern and Central Europe, as new members of the EU. The negotiating process was complicated, but also blessed with some luck, as potential deal breakers were solved (like access to the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad) and thus disappeared from the agenda. The Danish government – and Danish diplomats, both in Copenhagen and Brussels – worked hard to create a solution, which could be implemented at the EU summit in Copenhagen in December 2002. The final negotiations should not be clouded by too many competing agendas.

As usual, money proved helpful to settle the last outstanding issues, some of which proved to be miniscule in substantive terms, but still political realities. The agreement in Copenhagen paved the way for ten new member states

joining the EU on 1st of May 2004, later followed by Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. In the final negotiations, and behind the scenes, tensions were high between the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Brussels delegation, but the process still succeeded (Ulveman & Lauritzen 2003).

Iraq, 2003

Shortly after this breakthrough – and the creation of a new, enlarged and more diversified European Union – the Danish government decided to join the American-led coalition in Iraq, despite the lack of an explicit mandate from the UN Security Council. The UN Charter clearly specifies that in conformity with international law only the Security Council can authorise the use of military power against threats to international peace and security – with the exception of self-defence as stipulated in article 51 of the Charter. Even though there was no evidence of any direct involvement of the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, in the 9-11 attacks, American neo-conservatives in particular advocated for a military intervention to secure 'regime change' in Iraq, an issue which in their view was mistakenly left unsolved in the First Gulf War (1990–91) (Mariager & Wivel 2019).

In parallel with the military build-up of forces close to Iraq, the United States tried to gain support in the UN Security Council for a resolution mandating the use of force against Iraq. This met with opposition not only from Russia and China, but also from France and Germany, who asked for more time for the UN inspectors to search for the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq, that US and British intelligence claimed were there. In March 2003, the US-led coalition of 35 countries, including Denmark, began its military operations, and quickly defeated the Iraqi forces. Keeping the peace, however, proved much more difficult than winning the war. Insurgencies, roadside bombs, attacks on American and other forces led to a great number of casualties, also signalling that the Sunni minority in Iraq, on which Saddam had built his regime, did not want to give way to the Shia majority. Iraq became a quagmire of civil strife and conflict (Halskov & Svendsen 2012; Porter 2018).

The government's decision to join the coalition, without a mandate from the Security Council, was a contentious one, as it did not have the customary

broad-based parliamentary support, with the major opposition party, the Social Democrats, voting against. In legal terms, it also deviated from Denmark's well-established policy of only participating in military operations based on a UN mandate (with the exception of Kosovo and Serbia 1998–99 which was based on humanitarian grounds).

The legal department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued that a UN mandate existed, based on continued application of previous Security Council resolution from 1990 and 1991. A recent analysis of Danish participation in the military operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq concluded that this argument was not 'fully waterproof' (Mariager & Wivel 2019).

The legal opinion failed to clear three important alternative thresholds argued to be critical in situations without a specific Security Council mandate: the considered opinion of the UN Secretary-General (who found the Iraq intervention to be 'illegal'); the position of members of the Security Council (where a majority of members were opposed to the US resolution); and the absence of a 'humanitarian imperative', i.e. specific circumstances that called for immediate action from the international community on humanitarian grounds (with the situation in Iraq in March 2003 not being materially different from the situation in 2002 or 2000) (DUPI 1999; Staur 2014).

Driving Denmark's participation in the US-led military operation in Iraq was Prime Minister Rasmussen's strong commitment to the political and military alliance with the United States and his personal relations with President George W. Bush. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs generally argued to stay within the UN framework – for a solution to be 'anchored in the UN' – and to try to avoid splitting the EU further on this issue. Among the Danish public, as in many other countries, it mattered whether a military intervention was based on international law, as defined by the UN Security Council, or whether it was a unilateral decision by one or more countries to intervene in another country. The lack of evidence of any WMDs in Iraq significantly increased popular opposition to the Iraq war throughout Europe (Mariager & Wivel 2019).

Viby, 2005

Denmark was not done with the Middle East. In September 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, headquartered in Viby, close to Aarhus, published a number of cartoons, depicting the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam. This led to Denmark's most serious foreign policy crisis since 1945, and a crisis where Denmark became fairly isolated internationally, leaving even close allies somewhat bewildered. It was all about freedom of speech. Were there any limits to what you could say – or depict – as long as it was not libellous or incitement to hatred as defined in the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?

Asked about the government's position on the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen did not do the usual balancing act: to distance the government from the content of the cartoons as something completely outside governmental control, but also stressing that their publication was completely legal and legitimate due to the broad interpretation of freedom of expression that was guaranteed by the Danish constitution and an inherent part of Danish way of life. Instead, the prime minister backed the cartoons and their implicit political messages, probably as a reflection of his political alliance with the Danish People's Party and its anti-Muslim agenda (Thomsen 2006; Klausen 2009; Hansen & Hundewadt 2006).[5]

This might not in itself have created a huge international crisis. But, unfortunately, many parties in the Middle East were in search of 'the perfect storm'. In Egypt, in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, in Syria, Lebanon and Iran, and in Gaza and the West Bank, the Danish cartoons played into domestic political situations and could be used and abused in the quest for political legitimacy and leadership.

Across the Arab and Islamic world, the Iraq War was seen as a Western attempt to dominate other parts of the world, and the cartoons were easy to understand in the Arab street: a sacrilege and a direct attack on one of the key tenets of Islam. British and American news media – and authorities – had difficulties understanding why it was acceptable to purposefully hurt religious identities of others. Also across continental Europe it was difficult to accept the inherent notion of Prime Minister Rasmussen's position: that distancing oneself from an expression or opinion put forward equalled an attack on free

speech as such. Disagreeing with each other was what politics was all about (Thomsen 2006; Klausen 2009).

Denmark tried to solve the crisis by reaching out to Arab governments – also through public diplomacy efforts, undertaken by Danish embassies – to explain and contextualise the issue. The crisis grew and in January 2006 led to a widespread consumer boycott of Danish products in many Arab countries. The economic implications were limited – as were Danish exports to this part of the world. But it was quite a new experience for Danish diplomats to find themselves in this kind of exposed and isolated position. The prime minister started to soften his position, making it clear that freedom of speech did not include incitement of hatred.

In early February 2006, *Jyllands-Posten* expressed its regret over unintentionally hurting the feelings of many Muslims by publishing the cartoons – in the Arabic translation it was an apology. In Damascus, the Danish embassy was attacked and looted by a mob controlled by the government, and the same happened in Beirut and Teheran. This proved to be a turning point. It was no longer an issue of a few Danish cartoons, it was about the general safety of diplomatic missions abroad. Governments in the region, which had had a certain interest in keeping the fire alive, did not want to be seen as dissociating themselves from the very basis of the Vienna Convention, and maybe protests had also gone on long enough to make the point. It became much easier for Denmark to get support from other EU member states and from the United States, and to successfully play down the crisis in various international organisations. The crisis quickly became an issue of the past and relations between Denmark and Arab governments were easily restored and reactivated (Hansen & Hundevadt 2006; Thomsen 2006).

Copenhagen, 2009

The battle scars which Denmark had earned during the cartoon crisis of 2005–06 – some of which were self-inflicted – were one of the arguments for Denmark seeking to host the UN climate summit in Copenhagen in December 2009. The Danish government wanted another international image than that of the cartoons. Other arguments were very progressive Danish policies on climate mitigation and the use of renewable energy. The target of limiting the

rise in global average temperature increase to +2 degrees Celsius by 2100, compared to pre-industrial levels, had been affirmed by scientists, and the idea was now to strike a global deal at the meeting of state parties (COP 15) in Copenhagen in December 2009.

From the very beginning the efforts of the Danish negotiation team were hampered by disagreements between the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Climate and Energy, which had the technical expertise. The Prime Minister's Office wanted to focus on the major powers, the G20 countries, which accounted for 80% of the global economy – and CO_2 emissions. If a deal could be struck at the highest level between the United States and China, others would follow. This also meant lifting the COP negotiations from the level of ministers for the environment, energy and/or climate change to the level of heads of state and government. The Ministry of Climate and Energy wanted to stick with the traditional COP working methods, relying on experts and eventually bringing in ministers to close the deal. In the end, the two ways of working was combined – with negotiations starting at senior technical level, later expanded to ministerial level, and, for the last two days, a summit of presidents and prime ministers to finalise the agreement (Meilstrup 2010; Staur 2014).

The negotiations were derailed almost from the beginning. Danish negotiators had tested some possible solutions with a number of key delegations at senior level. Some of these suggestions were leaked to *The Guardian*, probably by the Chinese, and this created a lot of animosity among those who were not in the know – and, more tactically, also by some who were. Negotiations soured and became counter-productive. In the end, the Danish negotiators worked out a much shorter outcome to be discussed among selected heads of state and government, which created further resentment among those not included. Chinese Prime Minister Wen wanted to postpone negotiations until the next COP meeting a year later, but US President Barrack Obama eventually struck a deal with China, India, Brazil and South Africa on the outstanding issues, after which he left to get back to Washington before a blizzard hit the US capital. On his way to the airport, the president praised the meaningful and unprecedented breakthrough in the negotiations. Then all Hell broke loose (Antholis & Talbott 2011).

Prime Minister Wen left soon after Obama, and within a few hours there were no leaders left. Only ministers and climate negotiators, some of whom were

furious with both the process and the outcome. The *Copenhagen Accord* was not a legally binding agreement, stipulating country-specific emission reductions. That idea had been set aside months before. Instead, the accord was based on a bottom-up approach, where countries themselves defined their reduction targets, and where joint political responsibility, scientific evidence and public opinion were meant to gradually increase the efforts of all parties, both industrialised countries, and – as a breakthrough – also emerging economies and poorer developing countries. Other important elements were closer measuring, reporting and verification of emissions, and a pledge of 100 billion US dollars annually in support of the necessary transitions of developing countries (Meilstrup 2010; Staur 2014).

A few Latin American countries (Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Bolivia) refused to adopt the outcome and would only take note of the document. In that respect the outcome was a public relations failure, and at least for a few years 'we don't want another Copenhagen' became UN shorthand for unsuccessful negotiating processes. At the same time, the key features of the *Copenhagen Accord* – and especially its bottom-up approach – clearly laid the foundation for the Paris Agreement at COP 21 in 2015, which was based on the same principles. It only took a few more years to get from Copenhagen to Paris.

Lessons learned

With a few exceptions, Denmark was a *neutral power* from 1770 to 1945, constantly and carefully managing its relations with greater – and militarily stronger – European powers and readily responding to changes and challenges in the relationships between these powers. Due to Denmark's strategic position as the gatekeeper of the Baltic Sea, neutrality was seen as the best way of maintaining the necessary freedom to manoeuvre, allowing Denmark to constantly position and reposition itself vis-à-vis the major European powers, primarily France, Germany (Prussia), Russia (Soviet Union), Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The era of neutrality provided lessons in flexibility, adaptability and of the importance of an *open economy*, which allowed Danish merchants and companies to produce and trade as freely as possible, living by their wits and

the value added through innovation, creativity and the Protestant work ethic. This has proved to be a lasting feature of Danish foreign policy.

There are lessons of *geography*, as much as there are lessons of history. Norway was 'lost' in 1814, the Gold Coast in 1850, Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg in 1864, the West Indies in 1917 and Iceland became independent in 1918, before Denmark in 1920 was restored as the nation state we now have, with the inclusion of the northern part of Schleswig.

Most of all, from mid-19th century onward, Denmark's foreign policy was about its *relationship with Germany*. Two major wars (1849–51 and 1864), the difficult delineation of the present border in 1920, the tensions of the 1930s and five years of occupation from 1940–45 speak for themselves.

The end of the Second World War – and the establishment of the new multilateral system – provided a unique opportunity for Denmark to reset its foreign policy. From 1945 onwards the multilateral system – with all its various organisations, institutions, bodies and legal instruments – made it possible for Denmark to *redefine its relationship with Germany* and engage its most important neighbour in a multilateral framework and on more equal and rules-based terms, not least within EEC/EU and NATO.

The multilateral system also gave Denmark *a stronger voice* and potential impact in the overall development of the emerging rules-based international system, and with this also more room to manoeuvre in its best foreign policy interest whether in the EU, NATO or the UN. The multilateral system has become more fragile in recent years, and nationalistic pressures are rising in many places. Denmark has invested heavily in the system and has a strong interest in its survival and further development. It would not be in Denmark's best interest to contribute to undermining any international organisations and institutions, including international conventions – even if these bodies might voice occasional criticism of Danish policies and decisions (Staur 2014: chapter 7).

The multilateral system is also the only place where countries can jointly and comprehensively *address cross-border issues* like climate change, terrorism, WMDs, irregular migration and the many other issues which former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called 'problems without passports' and which

now primarily define international relations. In addressing these issues, the system in practice levels parts of the traditional differences in economic and military power, and encourages consensus building and political solutions, based on compromise – all to the benefit of small states. The new Biden Administration in Washington provides a potential platform for renewal of multilateralism. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

In this multilateral context, the *membership of the European Union remains the most fundamental asset* in Danish foreign policy. EU cooperation has clearly demonstrated that sovereignty is not a zero-sum game, but that we all exert our national sovereignty in the context of others, and increasingly together with others. Despite the exit of the United Kingdom, the EU is a major international player, economically and as a global trading partner. The Danish opt-outs from 1993 are not conducive to Denmark's quest for more influence in the EU; ideally they should be abolished, allowing Denmark to fully participate in all EU cooperation. Over time, however, the opt-outs have become integral parts of the membership terms, as understood by most Danes. Most likely, therefore, it will take a burning platform to be able to change this.

The experiences throughout history, and especially since 1945, have provided us with a number of important lessons learned:

For a small state like Denmark, *foreign policy continuity and predictability* is important. Political zig-zagging creates confusion and weakens other countries' understanding and acceptance of Denmark's positions. Policies will, of course, develop over time, as the world changes and Denmark will need to adapt to these changes. But it should be done consistently, carefully and in full daylight.

Danish foreign policy should be based on *broad political agreements* among parties in parliament. This will also ensure that Danish foreign policy is weatherproof with respect to the outcomes of parliamentary elections. Domestic political disagreements weaken Denmark in the eyes of those around us – and create a blurry picture of Danish foreign policy objectives (e.g. the 'footnotes' of the mid-1980s, or the Maastricht Treaty in 1992–93).

Broad-based political support for Danish foreign policy also means that this policy area ultimately becomes a *low-intensity policy area*. Occasional domestic

disagreement (e.g. Iraq 2003) only underlines this. The potential downside of this development is the risk of part of the foreign policy agenda being overtaken by single-issue groups, and/or issues being defined in divisive terms, losing the sense of proportionality and defying usual diplomatic practices (e.g. the cartoon crisis of 2005).

Since 1945, parliament has gained progressively more influence over the main direction of Danish foreign policy, not least in relation to the EEC/EU membership since 1973. As foreign policy though EU legislation has also become increasingly aligned with domestic policy, the *'foreign policy tent' has grown bigger*, giving much more voice to business interests, social partners and civil society actors in the formulation of Danish foreign policy. It is important for government and parliament to maintain an open dialogue with all these interests and forces in Danish society.

The levelling effect of the multilateral system means that also smaller powers like Denmark can take policy initiatives within the framework of the system. Such proactive and dedicated *Danish foreign policy initiatives* can help Denmark attain its policy objectives, and support the promotion of Danish values or interests. But they must be politically consistent, well prepared and well managed, and fully resourced (e.g. the policy on the Baltic states 1990–91 vs. the climate summit of 2009).

Government will always drive day-to-day foreign policy. There is no doubt that *policy directions* in general, including in crisis situations, have been *set by political leaders in government*, as they should be, and not by senior ministry officials or diplomats. The various difficult situations described in this article have been dealt with by those holding political power; they have taken the final decisions – and suffered the consequences.

Government ministers have at the same time always been *extensively advised* by foreign ministry officials at home and by Danish ambassadors abroad, and more often than not concrete policy proposals have been developed by foreign ministry officials. Looking at a few situations like 1864 in retrospect, one could wish that senior officials had tried even harder to impact political leaders.

Once policy decisions have been taken, senior foreign ministry officials and Danish diplomats abroad have, of course, played an important role in their

implementation – explaining them to the world at large, defending them at the negotiating table, identifying the best possible compromises.

Traditionally, political appointments in Denmark have been limited to the ministerial level. This has created a *close and direct relationship* between ministers and senior foreign ministry officials, which has been beneficial for policymaking.

The *professionalisation* of Danish diplomacy started in the early 1920s and gained further momentum after 1945, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic service became increasingly meritocratic in the recruitment and promotion of staff. Diplomatic training continues to be heavily based on 'on-the-job' training, where members of the foreign service acquire deep personal experience and diplomatic skills in a broad range of areas, before they often specialise in particular areas of expertise.

That is why we so often refer to '*the diplomatic profession*' and to 'the craftsmanship of diplomacy'. The trade can only be learned by wholeheartedly engaging in it, day in and day out. Any diplomat needs patience, skills and experience in international negotiations, but not least to have 'walked the mile' and personally experienced how it is done in practice and how to bring all one's talents into play. It is all about experience and training, in the same way as in so many other professions. Diplomatic prowess is not a divine gift of grace. It takes hard work.

What professional diplomats can provide is a solid analysis of fluid and ever-changing international situations, a clear understanding of the true interests of various parties and players, and a proper assessment of the opportunities and threats that define the specific room for manoeuvre which Denmark has. A *sober and realistic analysis of the situation* will always be critical, as will the ability to cut away wishful thinking and work with the realistic options at hand. The key requirements are a deep knowledge of what really drives the agenda and other actors, where their red lines are, and how these can possibly interact with Danish interests. These need to be paired with the ability to turn the analysis into forward-looking strategies, defining interests and objectives, and to negotiate internationally, and effectively, on that basis. All qualities that, in short, together constitute: *diplomacy*.

Notes

1 Carsten Staur is Denmark's ambassador to OECD and UNESCO in Paris (2018–present), former ambassador to the United Nations, both in New York (2007–13) and in Geneva (2013–18), and former State Secretary for International Development Cooperation (2001–07). Joined the Danish Foreign Ministry in 1981 and also previously served as ambassador to Israel and as Under-Secretary for Management.

2 On the creation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see Kjølsen & Sjøqvist (1970).

3 See Staur (2020). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the project by agreeing to buy a number of copies for distribution to staff members, but otherwise gave me a free hand and did not in any way interfere in the selection of topics nor the content of the book. There was no review of the manuscript; the Ministry only saw the book when it received the agreed number of copies from the publisher. To avoid any conflict of interests, I did not accept any royalties for the copies acquired by the Ministry.

4 References in this article have been limited, only referring to major works. More detailed references are available in the original book. I have, of course, relied heavily on previously published research on the specific subjects. I also remain extremely thankful to the historical experts and former colleagues who have kindly commented on earlier drafts of the book.

5 The prime minister's defining interview with Jyllands-Posten was published 30 October 2005.

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Chapter 4

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