6 Conceptual and practical changes to security in Denmark

Expect the unexpected, decide the undecidable

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Security, uncertainty, and possibility

As emphasised in the introduction to this volume, an empirical shift in how discourses, practices, and technologies become related to security, risk, resilience, and emergency management, at the expense of traditional Cold War thinking, can be observed in the Nordic countries (Larsson and Rhinard, this volume). This general development is mirrored in the changed discourse on national security threats to Denmark following the Cold War. Since the end of the Cold War, the threats to Denmark's national security are said to have not only mushroomed but also become increasingly volatile and unpredictable. This observation was recently confirmed by the Director of the Danish Defence Intelligence Service when he presented the organisations' yearly security risk assessment in November 2019. The director emphasised that 'the threat picture has not solely become more complex. It has also become increasingly capricious and hence unpredictable' (Findsen 2019).¹ Hence, the constantly changing and borderless nature of threats to Denmark 'has created a space of uncertainty, an idiom of unease' (Petersen and Tjalve 2018: 21).

The Danish Defence has traditionally been designed to defend Danish territory against known threats. Today, the Danish Defence has become a multiuse security policy instrument operating in an age of uncertainty and unpredictability (Barfod 2017; Nørgaard et al. 2008). This is reflected in the Danish Defence's development of a novel managerial security practice regime. As threats to national security have become increasingly complex, unpredictable, and uncertain, the Danish Defence has responded by paying profound attention to the competencies of its managers and their everyday security decision-making practices (Barfod 2017; Holsting & Nørgaard 2006; Holsting et al. 2007; Nørgaard 2010; Nørgaard & Holsting 2014; Nørgaard et al. 2008, 2015; Nørgaard & Sjøgren 2019;; Olsen 2006²). Empirically, this chapter investigates how the post-Cold War Danish national security discourse – enacting an uncertain and unpredictable future threat environment – has conditioned this novel managerial security practice regime in the Danish Defence. Decentralised decision-making and continuous

individual development and adaptability are the answers provided by the post-Cold War managerial security practice logic, but it offers no explicit answers when it comes to the increasing uncertainty and complexity of contemporary threats. It thereby obliges individual security practitioners to expect the unexpected and decide the undecidable.

The main argument of this chapter is that the changing security and threat discourse enacts a situation where the temporal uncertainty regarding the future threats to Danish national security is displaced on the everyday security practices in the Danish Defence. This implies that security decision-making is decentralised and the individual practitioners responsabilised. This is democratically salient, as the decentralised managerial security practices risk clashing with the traditional need for politicians and the institution of the armed forces to assume authority and responsibility to act in the interest of Danish national security. Moreover, I discuss the latent governance pitfalls in the growing tension between a desire to adapt to a constantly changing, unknowable, and uncertain threat environment vis-à-vis a desire to govern through conventional Weberian bureaucratic measures, including the challenges it brings to fundamental democratic values, specifically authority, accountability, and responsibility.

The development of the new managerial security practice regime in the Danish Defence reflects a broader trend in Danish public administration by which ‘the biggest challenge for welfare managers is the expectation that their leadership rests on the premise that all management premises are questioned. Thus, the basic premise for welfare management is the dissolution of premises!’ (Andersen and Pors 2016: 2). Consequently, the task of management becomes one of establishing ‘expectations about the future with the expectation that all expectations will undergo a radical change’ (Andersen and Pors 2017: 132). Following this line of thought, I show how the changing security and threat discourse has stimulated the development of a different type of societal security³ than the ones highlighted in other chapters of this book. It is a type of societal security that expects the Danish Defence and its security practitioners to organise a ‘double uncertainty’. In other words, the Danish Defence is expected to act as public sector body on an equal footing with all other public sector entities, while it simultaneously has to be the institution that fathoms and practices war and the state of exception⁴ in an uncertain threat environment. The organisational solution to this ‘double uncertainty’, I argue, becomes the establishment of a managerial security practice regime that focus on constantly creating potentials for the future. The managerial programme offers to dissolve the contradiction of this ‘double uncertainty’ by organising and making productive that which cannot be planned, expected, or decided. The feasibility of this is, however, questionable.

In the subsequent section, I first clarify my analytical approach. Next, I examine the conceptual developments in the reports of the Defence Commissions of 1988, 1997, and 2008. The analysis shows how the discourse on Danish national security has changed from primarily being structured

around known and determined threats to a situation in which future threats are increasingly perceived of as uncertain, unpredictable, and constantly changing. Hence, a divergence arises between the need for strategic and political security decision-making, on the one hand, and a greater uncertainty making it risky to determine the means and ends of security policy, on the other hand. The second analytical section examines how the post-Cold War Danish national security discourse has conditioned the development of a novel managerial security practice regime in the Danish Defence that aims at fostering potentials for the future in the face of uncertainty. It is, however, also a regime that decentralises political and military-strategic security decision-making. It thereby responsibilises the individual security practitioner in new ways. In conclusion, I discuss the democratic consequences of these conceptual and practical changes to security in Denmark.

Analytical strategy

Theoretically, the chapter shares the foundational assumption of Critical Security Studies (CSS) that ‘security threats and insecurities are not simply objects to be studied or problems to be solved, but the product of social and political practices’ (Aradau et al. 2015: 1). Moreover, the empirical developments observed in Denmark since the end of the Cold War potentially change what security is, the means by which it is provided, and by whom. Hence, the main concern of this chapter lies not in maximising or achieving better security, but in problematising paradoxical and contradictory conceptual and practical changes to Danish security by exploring the conditions for their emergence and development. A development, I argue, that not only affects how Denmark practice, organise, and govern security but also basic understandings of what societal security is.

In CSS, much attention has been given to the ways in which various security practices – such as risk management, scenario construction, data visualisation – aim at reducing uncertainty by rendering the future knowable and manageable (see e.g. Amoores 2013; Anderson 2010; Aradau and van Münster 2012; Aradau et al. 2008; Corry 2012; Petersen 2011, 2012). Alongside this development, we have witnessed the successful advance of the concept of resilience in both policy and academia, a concept that is predicated on emergent processes of adaptability (see e.g. Bourbeau 2018; Cavelty et al. 2015; Chandler 2014; Corry 2014; Petersen and Tjalve 2013; Walker and Cooper 2011). Olaf Corry (2014: 267) encourages us to ‘follow the idea of comparing resilience to what it might be replacing’, which enable us to ‘consider what the wider implications might be for security politics if resilience challenges the otherwise dominant idea of defence as the core concept of security’. Following this line of thought, I examine how various entanglements of security and temporality emerge and disappear in the national security discursive development and the managerial practices of security in the Danish Defence. This is significant, as the Danish Defence is still a core institution securing the Danish society, despite the increased Danish focus

on resilience building and societal threats such as terrorism, extremism, and cyber security risks (Berling and Petersen, this volume).

Arguably, the post-Cold War Danish national security concept and the Danish Defence security practice regime share similarities with resilience thinking, as they accept the future threats to Denmark as inherently uncertain. However, the Danish Defence managerial security practices are increasingly aimed not at absorbing uncertainty, but rather aimed at both maintaining and generating uncertainty in order to create new possibilities for security practices themselves. Consequently, a security practice regime emerges that is less concerned with questions of how to specify future threats and make them controllable and manageable. Instead, it is more concerned with how to make uncertainty productive through the development of personal competencies, which instils continuous adaptability and possibility at the heart of the Danish Defence managerial security practices. This raises a similar question to the one posed by Berling and Petersen (this volume) of whether it is possible to have political and military-strategic planning and decision-making at the macro level when uncertainty becomes not just the primary narrative, but a productive force.

To develop a research design for the analysis of the conceptual development of security for the Danish Defence, I first draw on conceptual history (Andersen 2003, 2011a), particularly the ways in which it has been developed by researchers working broadly on developments in public sector governance and management (Andersen 2003, 2011b; Andersen & Pors 2016, 2017). The aim is to uncover the ways in which meaning has been attributed and imbued into the concept of security in the Danish Defence Commissions reports of 1988, 1997, and 2008.⁵ This is thus a study of ‘comparative moments’ that develop around three clearly defined times that are tied to specific events (Hansen 2006: 78). Tracing and exploring the conceptual development of security enables me to, as a second step, understand how some managerial practices, decisions, and solutions become possible and others impossible for the Danish Defence. To explore how the conceptual changes convey and prescribe a novel security practice regime, I study how temporality and security emerge in the Danish Defence managerial programme, as it has developed in the past 15–20 years. This analytical move enables an analysis of how the Danish Defence enact and organise the narrative of the future as uncertain and unpredictable, including its effects on security governance as the distribution of political authority, responsibility, and accountability.

Conceptual changes to security in the Danish Defence commissions

This section provides an analysis of how meaning has been attributed and imbued into the concept security in the Danish Defence Commissions of

1988, 1997, and 2008,⁶ focusing particularly on changes to threat perception and temporality.

The 1988 report: a moment of bounded transition

In the 1988 Danish Defence Commission report (DDCR 1988), the stable Cold War nuclear order is perceived as dissolving. The present is instead observed as a moment of transition: 'The pattern of security policy, which in the years following the Second World War constituted the security policy framework for the defence policy measures in the East and West, today seems to be entering a period of transition' (DDCR 1988: 25). In the stable Cold War order, experiences relating to the past drove expectations for future national security and threat developments. In 1988, however, the ambiguity of the future threat environment is accentuated. Consequently, the report emphasises that projecting future security developments based on current trends is paved with uncertainties (DDCR 1988: 26; DDCR 1988, appendix 1: 77).

Yet, the discursive change is ambiguous, since the relationship between the East and the West and between NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries continues to play the dominant role in the report. This is exemplified by the fact that the report is structured around a worst- and a best-case scenario for East-West disarmament (DDCR 1988: 26). The East-West relation is still the point of departure from where security challenges are derived, extrapolated, and projected (DDCR 1988; DDCR 1988 appendix 1). The relationship between East and West is, however, susceptible to change. The simultaneous importance of and change to the East-West relationship allow for both stability and change to emerge in the conditions of possibility for Danish national security and defence policy.

Similarly, the report underlines that the Danish Defence's core task still lies in providing security, understood as Denmark's continued territorial existence (DDCR 1988: 92, 1988b: 76). This demonstrates how the future threats to Danish national security are enacted as a continuation of past conditions. In sum, the 1988 report illustrates a moment of bounded transition that partly releases the conditions of possibility for Danish security policy from its Cold War straightjacket. The space for actively doing and deciding on security policy is about to open up, whereas the defence policy remains constrained, as the East-West dynamic is still very much structuring it.

The 1997 report: a moment of change

The report of the Defence Commission of 1997 (DDCR 1997) articulates a clear distinction between the context of the 1997 report and its predecessor of 1988. This distinction is of great importance for the articulated security

discourse. Most importantly, the ties to the past have now been finally cut (DDCR 1997: 17). The present is only to a very limited degree stretched between a common past from where problems are derived and projected and a future of continuation. A situation arises between multidimensional and changing images of the future on the one side and a one-dimensional Cold War past on the other side. The report explicitly underlines how the East-West relations have slipped into the background:

Since the Defence Commission of 1988 presented its report in 1990, Europe has undergone a number of major changes. It has not only had implications for the security policy picture in Europe, but also at the global level... The removal of the East-West conflict has fundamentally changed the threat picture from the potential threat of a massive and extensive attack from the East towards less clearly defined risks.

(DDCR 1997: 65)

This is directly linked to the tasks of the Danish Defence, as ‘the task of the defence has consequently changed character from being an element in a reactive and dissuasive security guarantee to also being an active instrument used for confidence building as part of Danish security policy’ (DDCR 1997: 17). The report further emphasises Denmark’s privileged situation through the introduction of the notion of ‘indirect security’, which merges classic national interests and idealism. In the absence of direct threats, priority can instead be given to spreading peace and creating stability which, in turn, is expected to, indirectly, benefit Danish security in the long term (DDCR 1997: 65; Olesen 2015: 414). Hence, defence policy is conflated with the broader notion of Danish security policy. Danish defence policy is thereby increasingly made an object for political-strategic decision-making (Heurlin 2004).⁷

Related to the diminishing importance of the East-West distinction, the threats to Danish national security are perceived of as having expanded, as the security agenda is heavily influenced by various global trends. The report concludes that there is a need to see military issues in a wider context, including in relation to political, economic, and cultural aspects. Second, it is an increasingly widespread notion that new issues such as environmental degradation, refugee flows, and organised, cross-border crime can become security concerns in line with traditional military challenges (DDCR 1997: 17).

The armed forces are not only supposed to be able to defend Denmark and Danish territory, now they also have to take into account that transboundary societal threats and risks such as migration and organised crime ‘can develop into security policy challenges similar to traditional military ones’ (DDCR 1997: 17). At the same time, the Danish military engagement in the Balkans underlined the perceived need for the Danish Defence to fight in military operations abroad. These fights are not forced upon the

military from an external adversary threatening to take over the country. On the contrary, Denmark can increasingly select the time, place, and intensity of the potential fighting, including whether to get involved or not (Heurlin 2004). In sum, the future of Danish security and defence policy cannot as easily as before be predicted and planned. Instead, the Danish security and defence policy is framed as having become increasingly transgressive at home and selectable abroad. This raises questions concerning assumed ways of thinking, structuring, and planning Danish security and defence policy in a changing security environment. In short, the changing threat environment allowed Denmark to become a strategic security actor (Rynning 2003).

The 2008 report: a moment of security and uncertainty

The opening paragraph of the 2008 Danish Defence Commission report (DDCR 2008) establishes a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, the report says that ‘since the end of the Cold War, Denmark has not been directly confronted with conventional military threats and therefore benefits from a favourable security environment unparalleled in history’ (DDCR 2008: 38). On the other hand, the report emphasises how globalisation has led to a widened security policy horizon, implying ‘that security policy will be carried out in a context with many dimensions as well as great complexity, dynamism and unpredictability’ (DDCR 2008: 38). The present is thus observed as a moment of simultaneous security and uncertainty. The present is no longer stretched between a common Cold War past – from where problems are derived and expected – and a future of continuation. The past is no longer considered relevant, as the future is no longer a continuation of it. This provides a country like Denmark with an increased opportunity to pursue an active foreign and security policy (DDCR 2008: 38).

The emergence of an increasingly complex threat environment is framed as providing a strategic opportunity for Denmark to include new issue areas and objects – sitting next to traditional territorial existence – in the security and defence policy. The importance of territorial defence does not disappear, but is complemented by a range of more abstract and open-ended security policy objectives all tied to globalisation (DDCR 2008: 38,39). These objectives include contributing to ‘stable and sustainable development’, ‘promoting democracy and human rights’, and ‘preventing terrorism’ (DDCR 2008: 39, 78, 89, 133). In other words, the security discourse has developed from a point where threats against Denmark’s security were presented in a simple particular form – here-and-now threats – to a point where the security and threat landscape is described in indefinite terms. Due to the changing figures of temporality visible in the report, the object of national security and the threats to it have become further selectable, political, and strategic. This development enhances the trend found in the 1997 report (see also Stiglund, this volume).⁸

Moreover, the 2008 report demonstrates an increasing awareness of the fact that the future towards which security and defence policy is carried out will have transformed into something different before the strategic efforts have been implemented. The tension between past and future is thus observed as a tension between multidimensional futures with uncertain and unintelligible consequences:

the future security policy development will be extremely complex and characterised by unpredictable factors, including the possibility of irregularities, disruptive and even catastrophic events of a global, security nature.

(DDCR 2008: 65)

The increased uncertainty and unpredictability presents a challenge when it comes to the formulating and planning of security and defence policy, as it opens a contingent horizon of different possibilities. This changing enactment of the past, the present, and the future entails a risk of tying Danish security and defence policy to specific future scenarios and threats, which might not hold true. The report hence underlines the difficulties in formulating policies and military strategies for a future that is based on the idea of having to expect the unexpected.

It has been more than a decade since the latest report from a Danish Defence Commission. As demonstrated elsewhere in this book, conventional geopolitics and threat perceptions have made somewhat of a return in the Nordic countries since 2008. However, the articulation of complexity, unpredictability, and uncertainty has by no means run out of steam, as the chapter's opening quote indicates (see also Petersen and Tjalve 2018; Berling and Petersen this volume). Hence, we are still faced with the puzzling situation in which security and uncertainty are simultaneously present. It is still a crucial policy challenge to balance unpredictable, uncertain, and ever-changing future threats, on the one hand, with the need to establish security policy and military-strategic ends and means, on the other hand.

In sum, the analysis demonstrates a significant development in the Danish security and defence policy discourse that brings an uncertain future to the fore and prescribes a threat environment that is increasingly complex, unpredictable, and always in flux. The development in security discourse hence demonstrates a conception of the future of Danish national security and the threats to it as something that cannot be imagined and described from the perspective of the present. The situation that emerges mirrors Ulrich Beck's argument 'that in conditions of extreme uncertainty, decision-makers are no longer able to guarantee predictability, security and control' (Aradau and van Münster 2007: 93). A present in which the idea of complete security has been abandoned in the face of unceasing uncertainty (Rasmussen 2006). The shifting security discourse is not replacing the former, however, but layered on top of or sitting next to it. The contemporary

Danish national security discourse seems somewhat fragmented and without a clearly defined strategic focus (see also Stiglund, this volume). In the following section, I shed light on the implications of this changing discourse on the Danish Defence's security practices.

Temporal changes to security practices in the Danish Defence

This section traces the emergence and development of the managerial security practice regime in the Danish Defence. It demonstrates how the enactment of uncertain and unpredictable future threats co-constitutes the development of decentralised and individualised political and military-strategic decision-making. In addition, it shows how the managerial security practice regime aims at cultivating personal adaptability and potentiality in order to dissolve the contradictory 'double uncertainty' demand of having to simultaneously be a conventional public sector body and the institution that comprehend and provide national security.

Practicing security in a constantly changing threat environment

The development of the novel managerial regime is predicated on the acceptance of a changing post-Cold War role for the Danish Defence:

the role of the defence has changed in significant areas. The conventional military threat to Danish territory has lapsed and has instead been replaced by a number of new asymmetric and transnational threats.

(Holsting and Nørgaard 2006: 10)

Following from this, it is found necessary in the managerial programme to consider 'how these changes in the security policy conditions are reflected in the military organisation and its leadership practices' (Holsting and Nørgaard 2006: 11), as well as 'what the consequences are of the increasing politicisation and globalisation of the military tasks for the individual soldier and for the organisation overall' (Holsting and Nørgaard 2006: 12). In light of the changing and uncertain security and threat environment, the Danish Defence's overall answer to these questions is that

the military security task is therefore not a predefined and determined task, but a relationship that is constantly challenged and redefined... Security, in this sense, does not refer to an objective reality, but must rather be seen as a social construct that designates something and makes it a matter of security.

(Holsting and Nørgaard 2006: 27)

At the heart of the emergence of the new Danish Defence's managerial security practice regime thus lies an attentiveness and recognition of security as

negotiable, contextual, and questionable. The view on the military practice and profession that follows from this demonstrates a break with the traditional view of the military task. This view is expressed in Samuel Huntington's 'The Soldier and the State':

The military profession exists to serve the state. To render the highest possible service the entire profession and the military force which it leads must be constituted as an effective instrument of state policy. Since political direction comes from the top, this means that the profession has to be organised into a hierarchy of obedience.

(Huntington 1957: 73)

The new military managerial security practice regime, however, does not refer to clear political and military-strategic direction from the top. Instead, the recognition of the social and contextual construction of security expresses an acceptance of its ultimate contingency. In other words, we see a reversal of the relationship between frame and function so that the frame is no longer presupposed but is constructed and chosen relative to the function.

The change in the perception of what security is and how it comes about has profound effects on the framing of the managerial practices in the Danish Defence. In a publication on 'military ethics and management in practice', it is stated that

in the new "political wars" the military effort will not just create security. It must also promote good governance, human rights and economic and social development, i.e. shaping the whole of civil society and its political and moral constitution.

(Nørgaard et al. 2008: 34–35)

Moreover, the conceptual transformation of security from a narrow, traditional problematisation of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and military defence to a wider, more comprehensive set of problematisations covering multiple areas of social, political, economic, and ecological life seems to have effect on the military management practices of security. Consequently, the management program acknowledges that 'the battlefield and the Danish Defence as an organisation have both become more and more complex. The Danish Defence must be able to do it all in different contexts' (Barfod 2017: 5).

Rather than politicians combining parts in larger policy and military-strategic wholes, a new form of security and defence governance emerges that increasingly rely on the individual security practitioner to define the specificity of Danish national security and the threats to it. The individual decision-makers hence face the precarious situation of having to embrace the whole and the parts as well as the strategic and the situational simultaneously, be it at home or abroad (Nørgaard et al. 2008: 34–35 and 57).

The logic stemming from this is that the only stability left is uncertainty and constant change, which demands continuous construction and selection of future threats. As emphasised in critical security and risk studies, this entails a futurisation of the present (Aradau and van Münster 2012) by which the security decision-making space is opened up to cope with threats situated in a multitude of possible scenarios and unknown futures. The future threats, however, cannot function as a stable premise for security decision-making in the present due to their uncertainty and unpredictability. Still, the security practitioners are urged to conduct security decision-making in the present by determining, acting on, and shaping the future. The managerial security practice regime thus seems to rely on an inherent dilemma as it, on the one hand, stresses the inability of deciding on the future while it, on the other hand, demands exactly that (see also Berling and Petersen's description of the Swedish resilience logic, this volume).

Thereby the authority and responsibility for deciding upon what Denmark's security entails and how it is best ensured are gradually decentralised and devolved from politicians and the institution of the Danish Defence to the individual security practitioners. The security practitioners are faced with having to make 'trade-off decisions between political, military and economic considerations' (Nørgaard et al. 2015: 12), as they increasingly play the 'role of strategic sparring partner in a complex and changeable security policy terrain' (Nørgaard et al. 2015: 16). The local, practical, and operative decision-making processes hence become increasingly political. As expressed in the Danish Defence managerial programme:

we are turning our attention away from the organisation as an ethical arena towards the soldier as an ethical/political actor – from the organisational decision-making context towards each soldier as a decision-maker and risk taker.

(Nørgaard et al. 2008: 72)

This development heralds a decentralised security practice that loses its reference to traditional exceptional political decision-making. There is then a risk that security practices become increasingly routinised and invisible (Bigo 2006; Huysmans 2006, 2011). Moreover, we run the risk of security becoming detached from decisions of political and military leaders, including their strategic directions on where to go and how to get there. It thus becomes harder for the public to hold policy professionals responsible and accountable for security policy developments, and it becomes equally difficult for the security practitioners to defer responsibility with reference to the political and the military systems.

This raises the issue of how to strike a balance between centralised security political authority and governance vis-à-vis individualised security

practices that increasingly function as security policy and military-strategic decision-making. The inherent dilemma in striking this balance is seen across the Danish public administration, as we have witnessed a general shift in the perception of the future as being increasingly unpredictable and uncertain, a development that largely opposes central political and strategic planning (Andersen and Pors 2016, 2017). Consequently, the task of public administration managers has become one of establishing ‘expectations about the future with the expectation that all expectations will undergo a radical change’ (Åkerstrøm and Pors 2017: 132). Again, managers need to expect the unexpected and decide the undecidable. As the next section will demonstrate, the Danish Defence managerial programme aims at making these impossible demands productive by cultivating managerial security practitioners that are able to continuously create possibilities and potentials out of future uncertainty.

Practicing security between uncertainty and potentiality

The conditions of possibility for Danish Defence managerial security practices are further complicated by the fact that uncertainty is also enacted on the inside of the organisation, so to speak. According to the managerial programme, the individual security practitioner is faced with two contradictory logics, stemming from two management stereotypes: the ‘warrior’ and the ‘administrator’.⁹

The Danish Defence solves its tasks under very different and often rapidly changing conditions. On the one hand, the Armed Forces must solve risky operational tasks in accordance with the mission of the Armed Forces. On the other hand, the Armed Forces must be run like any other public administration in Denmark in accordance with the administrative framework that applies in society in general. This requires that management in the Armed Forces can support both external and internal efficiency. In practice, this means that managers must be able to handle complex operational tasks that require military risk management, while they are also able to handle the optimisation of management tasks that require administrative management considerations (The Danish Defence management protocol 2008: 11).

The separation of and contradiction between the administrative and the operative logics are not easily coped with, as these dual demands of military risk management and administrative governance are difficult to separate in time and place, and will therefore often manifest themselves in dilemmas and paradoxes. The assigned management tasks must therefore be handled by balancing incompatible or opposing considerations (The Danish Defence management protocol 2008: 12) (Table 6.1).

The new managerial security practice regime is thus reliant on the individual managers’ ability to develop the necessary skill-set to cope with these

Table 6.1 The logics of the warrior and the administrator

Warrior	Administrator
Manager	Managed
Risk-willing	Cost-effective
Unpredictability	Political requirements
Operational conditions	Administrative requirements
Trust logic	Cost-consciousness
Decentralisation	Centralisation

seemingly impossible demands. In the words of the managerial programme, the Danish Defence security practitioners must therefore

acquire a professional judgment that is not based on abstract principles and rules, but on a sustained educational effort that draws on his entire horizon of experience. It is thus the edification work that shapes the soldier's ethical competence, i.e. his ability to distinguish between good and bad decisions, both as a “warrior” and as a “administrator”, i.e. both when exercising operational risk management and when exercising public administration management.

(Nørgaard et al. 2008: 18–19)

It is, hence, only through continuous educational and edification efforts that the security practitioners become capable individuals that can manage to navigate the commonalities and contradictions between the two logics. Moreover, the managerial security practice programme calls upon the managers to act politically and strategically:

a greater openness and “political readiness” is required, which will enable both the warrior and the administrator to act as ethical and strategic actors in the political battlefield. They both must practice ethically and effective judgment and professional risk assessments, whether fighting the Taliban or conducting budget negotiations.

(Nørgaard 2010: 14)

Security is enacted as a matter of adaptability and agility spurred by a need to constantly evaluate, revise, and be reflexive about one's actions and decision-making, as it produces (in)security and risks. This development mirrors the focus on resilience in security politics that refers to the learning and understanding of the role of the self in the production of new risks (Chandler 2014; Dalggaard-Nielsen 2017; see also Berling and Petersen, this volume on how this type of resilience is also present elsewhere in the emergence of Danish societal security).

We are, however, still left with a question of how the security practitioners are expected to make sense of and navigate this impossible ‘double uncertainty’. The answer provided in the Danish Defence managerial security practice regime is that the development of a non-binary ethics is needed:

we must devise a practical ethic that is not bound by a binary “either-or logic”... instead, we shift the perspective to a “both-and logic” which does not exclude either of the professional logics, but considers them both on the basis of the difference that separates and connects them.
(Nørgaard 2010: 55)

The warrior can only become an administrator by calling off and suspending themselves. The managerial programme thus reaches for a unity that can never be. The demand to develop managerial skills through continuous educational and edification efforts, however, becomes a way for the managerial programme to make the observed uncertainty and unpredictability productive, as it, paradoxically, demands the exercise of the warrior practice and the administrator practice – separately – together (Nørgaard 2010: 14–15). This paradoxical move entails a hybridisation of the managerial security practices:

in this context, hybrid organisation can be understood as an internal restructuring that occurs when the decision-making processes in the organisation become so complex that they cannot simply refer to either the operational or the administrative domain, i.e. neither the warrior nor the administrator practice, but must address both of them as a whole in one and a single manoeuvre.

(Nørgaard 2010: 61)

By relying on a hybrid logic, the managerial security practice regime attempts to call upon managers to double themselves, obliging them to create their own management and decision premises (Andersen 2011b: 228), as these are neither given at the military nor political level. In this way, the uncertainty of the future is no longer enacted simply as something counterproductive and risky that cannot be managed and contained, but as something productive. In this way, uncertainty becomes a potentialiser:

... it becomes clear that the hybrid logic is not a new management technology that modern leaders need to attend a course to learn. Rather, it is an active principle in complex organisations, which enables them to “translate” between and act in different and competing management arenas simultaneously. The benefit of the hybrid logic is that it is not forced to make yes/no decisions, but opens up a range of new action and interpretation possibilities.

(Nørgaard 2010: 65)

This quote reflects the way uncertainty is treated as a resource in the Danish Defence managerial programme. Uncertainty is desired as it fosters possibilities. Its triggering potential lies in security practices becoming a process of open-ended, self-generating, self-management. It becomes a way of cultivating a managerial security practice that facilitates an independence where the practitioner continually confronts him or herself by reflecting on whether a given action or procedure might be carried out differently or might be rethought. In the words of Andersen and Pors, this boils down to the dictum: everywhere and always – it could be different (see Andersen and Pors 2016, chapter 3). A pitfall is that this fosters a security practice that risk being more preoccupied with constantly creating new opportunities and potentials for future security practices than achieving the realisation and determination of these, as they could always be different.

This illustrates how the Danish Defence responds to the ‘double uncertainty’ by increasing organisational and managerial undecidability. The managerial programme, it can be argued, aims to increase possibilities by making it an open question who holds responsibility for deciding upon what Denmark’s security entails and how to ensure it. Democratically, this is problematic. When political decisions and military strategies are no longer viewed as the given frame but as different possible forms that the security managers continuously create, the individual managerial security practice has to assume political responsibility for what it defines as Danish security and threats to the country.

This development is in line with the development of resilience thinking demonstrated in Berling and Petersen’s chapter. In this case, the managerial security practice regime developed in the Danish Defence – much like the resilience logic of security – offers solutions on how to practice security in a context of changing and unexpected threats, as it puts trust in the individual practitioner’s capabilities to self-adapt, self-manage, and self-reflect. Consequently, security solutions are increasingly offered at the level of individuals rather than at the organisational and political level of the military and the government. As argued by Berling and Petersen, this is ultimately democratically untenable, as no positive vision and direction on where we, as a society, want to go is provided.

In sum, the Danish Defence practitioners are expected to politically and strategically experiment with the means, ends, and performances of security, their organisation, and themselves depending on the specific always-uncertain challenges and situations they co-constitute. Moreover, we see a move towards uncertainty as an enabler for potentiality management that aims at grasping the horizon beyond the horizon and thereby produce new possibilities for defining what Danish national security entails and the threats to it are. The managerial security practice regime shows a desire for consistency with respect to conventional administrative and bureaucratic tasks, on the one hand, and a seemingly opposite desire to adapt, open up, and transgress due to the uncertain and unpredictable future threat environment, on the other hand.

Conclusion: the need for accountability

In a world in which governments have long since retreated from the promise of universal security (Aradau 2014: 83), the chapter demonstrated how the societal security lens allows us to explore the ways in which contemporary security practices tap into or are at odds with traditional forms of security policy authority and democratic accountability and responsibility. It did so by identifying and exploring changes to the concept and the practice of security in Denmark since the end of the Cold War. The chapter showed how the concept and practice of security co-constitute an enactment of the future of Danish national security and the threats to it as uncertain and unpredictable. The analysis revealed how this changed notion of temporality, on the one hand, has fostered decentralisation of security political and military-strategic decision-making, as well as a responsabilisation of the individual security practitioners in the Danish Defence. On the other hand, it showed how this, partly, allows the Danish Defence to encompass paradoxical – if not antagonistic – demands for managerial security practices by establishing a managerial programme that focuses on constantly creating potentials for the future. The managerial programme hence offers to dissolve the contradictory management logic of ‘double uncertainty’, by claiming to organise and make productive that which cannot be planned, expected, or decided. However, this comes at the price of placing security decision-making at the managerial and individual level, thereby risking to make it more opaque. Letting go of political and military decision-making at the macro level makes it harder for the public to hold the political level of government and the military organisation responsible and accountable for security developments.

The Danish Defence’s approach to security as constructed, contextual, and intersubjective is very much in line with the theoretical grounding of this analysis. Yet, it does require us to consider the possibility for democratic governance, including the distribution of authority, accountability, and responsibility. If we, in the name of uncertainty, unpredictability, and contextualism, give up on the possibility of political and military-strategic planning, we simultaneously give up on the ambition of having a public and democratic discussion of the way we practice security and war. If we let go of the idea that the practitioners act on behalf of, or with instructions from an accountable political level, we simultaneously question the premise of democracy itself (Tjalve 2012: 10). This problematisation does not entail a longing for traditional Weberian bureaucracy. With its somewhat depoliticised and technocratic approach, such a tradition presents its own democratic challenges. It is rather necessary to insist on having a visible and responsible political and military leadership at the macro level that the public can hold to account, both when societal and military forms of security are to be provided.

There is a massive focus on which of today's trends and developments may constitute the threats of the future. A major challenge of crafting political and military-strategic planning in a changing world is less unpredictability per se, but the question of how to democratically cope with the uncertainty of making choices when the outcomes are not fully predictable. How can societal as well as military security be governed on the basis that the object of governance cannot be unambiguously defined nor controlled by conventional tools of governance?

Notes

- 1 All quotes are translated from Danish into English by the author.
- 2 The texts referred to are all published by The Royal Danish Defence College which has spearheaded the development of a novel managerial security practice regime.
- 3 Following the expanded scope of what constitutes Denmark's national security and the threats to it, Denmark has seen an increased – although somewhat peripheral and fragmented – focus on societal security, understood as collective emergency preparedness and increased resilience building (Petersen and Berling, this volume). Nevertheless, the concept of societal security or total defence is not as present in Denmark as in Sweden and Norway (see Larsson and Morstut, respectively, this volume).
- 4 See e.g. Bartelson (1995), Walker (1993), Wæver (1995).
- 5 Denmark has had eight defence commissions since the first was established in 1866 after the loss of the southern duchies in 1864. The next commission was established in 1902 to prepare laws for the organisation of the Army and Navy in 1909. After World War I, a third commission was established in 1919 and after World War 2 a defence commission was established in 1946. Four years later a fifth commission was established in order to prepare the new law on defence. In connection with the Social Liberal government co-operation with the Liberals and the Conservatives in 1969, a fifth defence commission was created. In recent times there has been defence commission in 1988, 1997 and most recently in 2008. <https://fmn.dk/eng/allabout/Pages/DefencecommissionsinDenmark.aspx>.
- 6 For an in-depth – yet differently focused – analysis of the Danish Defence Commission of 1988 and 1997 see Bertel Heurlin (2004): 'Riget, magten og militæret: Dansk forsvars- og sikkerhedspolitik under forsvarskommissionerne af 1988 og af 1997'.
- 7 This development is mirrored in the intense debate on Danish activist foreign policy (see e.g. Olesen 2015, Petersen 2004, Rahbek-Clemmensen 2017, Rasmussen 2005).
- 8 As well as other areas of the Danish public administration (see Andersen and Pors 2016, 2017 for an overview).
- 9 Not only the warrior but also the administrator navigates in a context of uncertainty:

in the new "strategic role" not only must the warrior, but also the administrator continuously assess his risks and distinguishing between "friends and enemies". Not only the warrior, but also the administrator must deal with "asymmetric threats" and manoeuvre in an unpredictable political terrain characterised by struggles to win support to specific strategic objectives

(Nørgaard 2010: 12–13).

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