

# EXCEPTIONAL RULES – US ASSISTANCE POLICY IN AFRICA

Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) Thesis

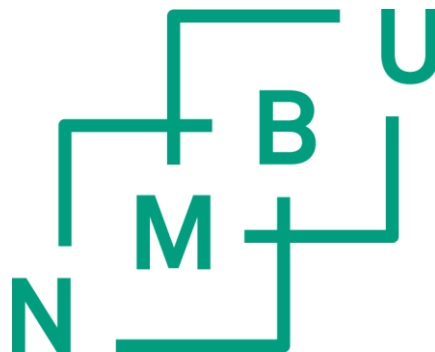
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Ås 2015



Thesis number 2015:49

ISSN 1894-6402

ISBN 978-82-575-1292-7

# Abstract

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Presented and justified as moral duty and a humanitarian responsibility, development assistance has often been used by states as a tool of power to achieve own national security and foreign policy interests. Development assistance is a main juncture of hierarchical interactions between nations. In this thesis, I explore how power shapes the conceptualization and operationalization of interactions between nations through the concept of assistance. Development assistance is appropriated by states as an element of foreign policy. What is the meaning of development assistance when it is used as a power tool to achieve the self-interests of states? How is development policy formulated, justified and then used as a tool for power projection, and what type of outcomes are associated with this sort of power projection? The thesis presents the case of the United States as a powerful hegemon, and its approach to development assistance in Africa as a function of foreign policy since the end of World War II through to the first Obama administration. Using an eclectic theoretical framework based on *power*, this thesis is a Foucauldian excavation into the American assistance discourse, its formation and justification in relation to historical contexts, and its operationalization on the African continent. The thesis begins with a problematization of *development* as a concept that structures hierarchies between races. Using the example of colonial history, I highlight how racial hierarchies are transformed into cultural, political and economic hierarchies and explore the expression of these through the concept of assistance. Using Foucauldian archaeology and genealogy, and Lukes' conception of power, I trace the relationship between the American assistance policy in Africa and the Cold War, the post-Cold War, and the post-9/11 contexts through the executive branch discourse. As such, this research examines the usefulness of development assistance when it is used beyond its theoretical premise by the United States, primarily as a strategy to achieve national security and foreign policy objectives.