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**Analysing (In)formal Relations and Networks in Security Force Assistance:  
The Case of Belgian Special Forces in Niger**

by

Nina WILEN\*

**KEYWORDS.** — Military; Security Force Assistance (SFA); Networks; Niger; Belgian Special Forces; Operation New Nero.

**SUMMARY.** — The present paper uses a ‘social network analysis framework’ to provide an in-depth microanalysis of relations between different SFA providers and the recipient state: Niger, focusing on the Belgian mission ‘Operation New Nero’. Drawing on field observations and more than fifty interviews in Niger, the present study increases our understanding of how dynamic (in)formal social networks impact the development of SFA. It points to the importance of timing, contingency and individual encounters as central in the understanding of how SFA develops and at times strays from strategies.

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\* Director Africa Programme, Egmont Institute for International Relations & Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Lund University  
Email: n.wilen@egmontinstitute.be