

# Norwegian Western Balkan Policy

An Analysis of the Relationship between  
the MFA and Norwegian NGOs

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# Preface

After finishing the book *To End a War* by Richard Holbrooke, a central negotiator to ending the war in Bosnia in 1995, I was reminded again on how Europe and the international community failed to put an end to the cruelties that took place in the Western Balkans. It made me think that “we failed to do good for the people when they need the most. Are we doing the right things now?” What then started out as a research project trying to investigate whether or not Norwegian efforts make any difference in Bosnia-Herzegovina, ten years after the signing of the Dayton agreement, turned out to become a research project exploring the Norwegian engagement policy in the Western Balkans in order to better understand who actually constitutes this specific policy: the NGOs on the ground or the MFA?

I would first of all give special thanks to my helpful tutor and early bird, Jeffrey T. Checkel (V-07/H-07) for excellent theoretical insight and research advice, and my sub-tutor Kari Osland, (V-07/H-07) at NUPI, for helpful feedback, fruitful suggestions and encouragement from the beginning to the very end. I very much appreciate their thoughtful comments and leading hands, especially in times when the drafts started wandering off track.

I also wish to thank the Norwegian Atlantic Committee (DNAK) for giving me the opportunity to conduct field work in Sarajevo, April 2007. I could not have done it without the help from Harald Thørud, Marit Rye Ramberg and Chris Prebensen. In this regard I would like to thank the wonderful Serbian historian Angelica. Her warmth and inclusiveness was unforgettable when in Sarajevo.

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I would like to thank my good friend and 'sister-in-law' Amela Koluder-Døvre for sharing personal experiences and for providing primary insight to the Balkan Wars.

Last but not least my I wish to thank my parents, Ingeborg F. Nålsund and Roar Nålsund for support, love and comfort. They have always been there for me and never more than a phone call away.

Silje Fordal Nålsund

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

The end of the Cold War and globalisation processes have led to renewed interest in the study of transnational relations and the impact of transnational actors (TNAs) on world politics. Scholars have collected evidence that advocacy networks, epistemic communities and other TNAs can have a substantial impact on state policies, on the creation of international norms and on the diffusion of these norms into domestic practices (Checkel, 1997; Evangelista, 1999; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Price 1998; Risse-Kappen, 1995; Risse et. al., 1999).

Transnational actors are often assumed to be autonomous in their attempts to influence states and the relationship between them and states is often treated as one-dimensional. However, as recent studies have shown (e.g. Hègel and Peretz, 2005) whenever both states and transnational actors have convergent interests, opportunities for mutual influence exist, and states can try to use transnational actors to further their own objectives. States are thus not only targets of the advocacy of transnational actors – they can also influence and even initiate transnational actors' activities and efforts. Previous models of the interaction between transnational and state actors (e.g. Keck and Sikkink, 1998) treat the relationship between them as 'one-directional'. Transnational actors are often studied in their efforts to influence state actors. Thus, the reverse relationship is often not grasped. I will investigate this possibility, by examining development aid and the efforts of Norwegian NGOs and state authorities towards the Western Balkans.<sup>1</sup> My argument derives from a case study of Norwegian efforts towards the Western Balkans between 1999 and 2005, where the Norwegian state, represented by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and transnational actors represented by Norwegian NGOs each play a role. While the case of the Western Balkans is not unique in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> In the present study the Western Balkans includes the countries Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia (including Kosovo), Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania.

Norwegian foreign aid, it can nevertheless shed some light on how policy outcomes are partly shaped by the Norwegian state's interaction with Norwegian NGOs.

Based on the present study the main claim is that interaction between NGOs and Norwegian state authorities are characterized by a reciprocal relationship in which implies that mutual influence exists. This study shows that the Norwegian state (the MFA) can also influence transnational actors (Norwegian NGOs). However, the extent of state influence on NGOs is moderated due to at least two factors: (i) whether the NGO *connects with an international agency or international alliance*, (ii) the *scope of activities* or *expertise* possessed by the respective organisations. This study seeks to contribute to the further the work of the recent literature and to show that while TNAs on the one hand have an impact on policy outcomes and political priorities, the state nevertheless still is a central actor and can enable and constrain TNAs' activities.

## 1.1 Research question

A special feature of Norwegian Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the very large share allocated through NGOs. The main objectives of the NGOs are to enrol the support for peace and reconciliation and social development and to advocate the protection of human rights. On the one hand, it is often perceived that NGOs act as autonomous actors with an independent agenda. On the other hand, some argue that they nevertheless operate as instruments of the national government. Recent studies have shown that instances of reciprocal relationship can be expected to exist for many international issues, such as development aid, especially when the interests of transnational actors and states overlap or converge. Transnational actors, such as NGOs, and states can then cooperate to achieve common goals, and both can try to influence each other to further their own interests. Thus my research question is the following:

*Who influenced whom in the situation of Norwegian aid policy towards the Western Balkans (1999-2005)?*

The main objective of the analysis is to explain the relationship between Norwegian authorities – the MFA – and the Norwegian NGOs in the context of

Norwegian Balkan policy between 1999 and 2005. The time period is chosen because support to the Western Balkans changed from being purely humanitarian to becoming more focused on long-term development and rebuilding democracy. During the Kosovo crisis in 1999 the question of how to be able to contribute to peace and reconciliation in the region became more complex, and thus the need for more thorough thought through strategies was addressed.

Thomas Risse notes that “we know little about states and international organisations enabling and/or constraining TNAs’ activities” (Risse, 2002: 259), thus the implications of my argument is to gain further knowledge of the state/NGO relationship in terms of influence. My argument takes on a structural perspective to examine how institutional features of states – that is, domestic ‘structure of governance’ – affect the work of NGOs. I seek to contribute to the literature on state/NGOs nexus at the domestic level and examine how and to what extent actors in the context of Norwegian development aid can influence each other and under what conditions. While most of the empirical work so far has concentrated on the question of how and under what conditions TNAs of various sorts have managed to affect the nation-state, I show that one need to take the reverse relationship – that is states affecting TNAs – into account. I challenge the usually overstated significance of NGOs ability to influence states and argue that states are under specific conditions and to various extent able to exercise influence over NGOs work. In this study I investigate this possibility and address the following questions:

1. *How and under what condition does the MFA affect Norwegian NGOs?*
2. *What are the implications of the relationship between the MFA and the Norwegian NGO for our understanding of transnational actors and state institutions?*

My argument is as follows. Due to the convergent objectives held by the Norwegian MFA and Norwegian NGOs in the Western Balkans foreign aid field, reciprocal influence exists in terms of priorities, choice of means and activities. However, I argue that the Norwegian state authorities, exercise greater influence on some NGOs than on others. In other words, some NGOs are likely to be more influenced by the MFA than others. The extent of this depends on two conditions in particular. First, it depends



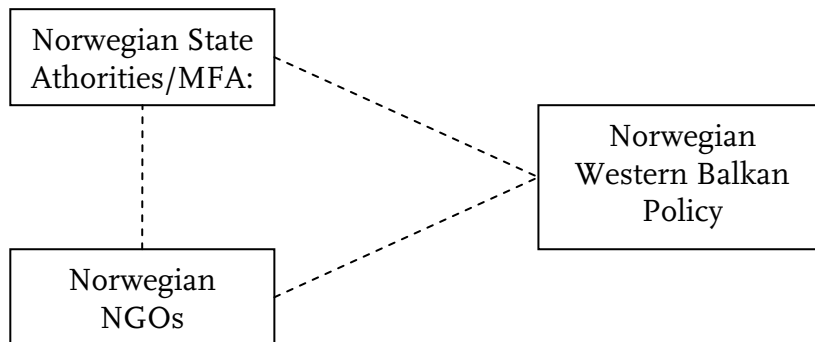
on whether the NGO *connects to an international agency* such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) or coordinates its work with an *international alliance* such as the International Save the Children Alliance. Both the Norwegian Red Cross (RC) and Save the Children in Norway (SC) are part of such organisations. I argue that the MFA exercises less influence on organisations part of or intertwined with international organisations or alliances, than other NGOs that are not part of such collaboration. The Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is to some extent part of an alliance in terms of their collaboration with international ecumenical organisations such as World Community of Churches (WCC), Lutheran World Federation, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and Action by Churches Together.

Secondly, the extent of influence the MFA has on NGOs depends to a certain degree on the *scope of activities or the expertise* possessed by the respective organisations. I argue that the more concentrated the organisations' expertise is in a specific area or the less extensive their scope of activities are (the extensiveness of their mandate), the MFA are less likely to exercise substantial influence on the NGOs' priorities and activities than organisations which are more 'flexible' or do not have specific attention areas or expertise (have a broader and perhaps less specific mandate). Organisations that possess expertise within specific foreign aid areas such as children's rights (SC), refugees (Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)), or emergency relief (RC) are more constrained by their mandate than organisations with less concrete and more flexible mandates. Both the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) are more flexible in terms of activities and prone to be influenced by the MFA due to their particular mandate, than the organisations SC, RC and NRC. The latter organisations are less flexible in their activities and priorities because their mandate constrain them to certain target groups and focus areas.

### 1.1.1 The Hypothesis

The relationship between Norwegian authorities and Norwegian NGOs in terms of Norwegian Balkan policy can be illustrated by figure 1. Figure 1 does not stipulate anything as to the relationship between the actors and the process of policy-making.

Fig. 1:



In theory it is possible to conceptualize the relationship between NGOs and state authorities as one-dimensional, with one influencing the other. For theoretical purposes one can assume that state authorities direct NGOs in order to reach their national interests. Similarly, one could assume that NGOs influence state authorities in order to reach their idealistic objectives or organisational interests (see fig. 2 and 3 below).

According to Hegel and Peretz (2005) most research privileges transnational actors' efforts to influence state actors in order to reach their material or normative goals. Transnational actors are often assumed to be autonomous in their attempts to influence states. Thus, research tends to neglect the possibility that states use transnational actors for their own interests. Hegel and Peretz claim that "a lot of research in the field seem to be guided by the 'society versus state' framework, wherein sympathies frequently side with social actors and their role as normative vanguards" (Hegel and Peretz, 2005: 468). They also assume that this approach probably captures the majority of 'real world' relationships between states and transnational actors. Their argument is that one should not uncritically assume that the relationship between state authorities and NGOs is one-dimensional with one influencing the other. But take into account a reciprocal relationship where both actors influence each other in order to further their interests, especially whenever transnational actors and states share common interests. On the basis of their argument I develop my hypothesis:

$H_0$  : Norwegian Western Balkan (WB) policy is determined by a one-dimensional relationship between state authorities and NGOs with one influencing the other (Fig. 2 and 3).

Fig. 2:

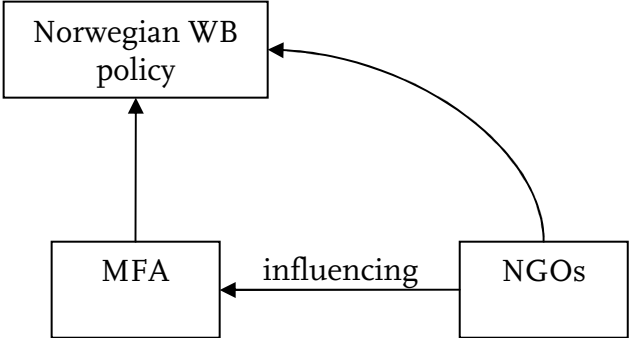
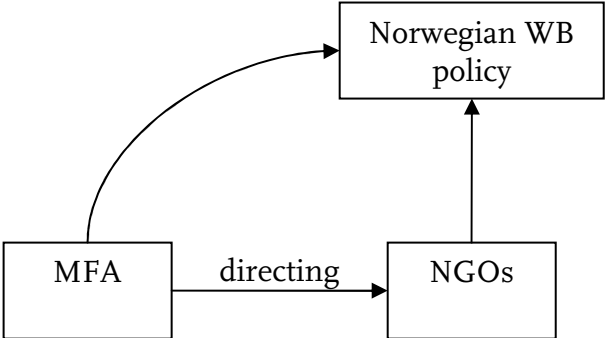


Fig. 3:

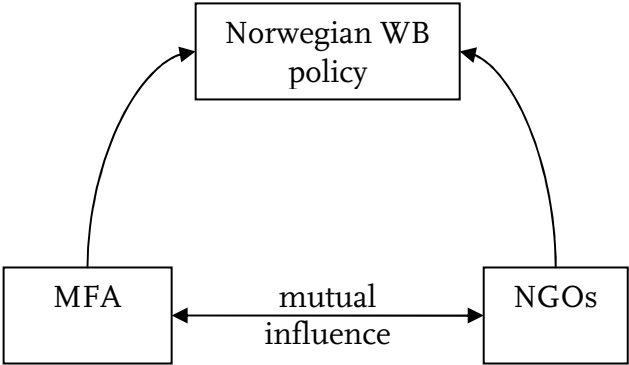


If the relationship between state actors and NGOs is presumably one-dimensional, it is likely to assume that one of the actors hold a resource preponderance of central importance. Thus, it is likely to assume the one-dimensional relationship being one actor “forcing” its preferred means on to the other part due an asymmetric power relation. In order to be able to be appealing and gain influence the actors have to offer something – most likely resources. These resources could range from information, funding and expertise, to political and normative power. With regard to the MFA and NGOs operating in the Western Balkan sphere, the preponderance of resources on the NGOs’ side would most likely be local as well as professional (technical) expertise, local networks and experience (the comparative advantages), quality services and efficiency, normative power

(based on the normative, non-profit, value interests, goals and popular support). The resource preponderance on the Government’s side would most likely be political power, funding, information (in terms of coordination abilities and a comprehensive strategy towards the region) and international networks<sup>2</sup> (such as the EU and the UN).

H<sub>1</sub>: *Norwegian Western Balkan policy is determined by a reciprocal relationship between the MFA and NGOs* (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4:



On the other hand, assuming the relationship being a reciprocal relationship one would expect actors’ influence to be mutual rather than one-dimensional. The reciprocal relationship explanation may prove more adequate because deciding whether the MFA exercises influence over NGOs or the other way around is a difficult task due to several reasons. First, it is difficult to prove which resource is the most decisive in order to prove who influences whom. It is not only difficult to rank resources in a hierarchical order, it is most likely inappropriate (ineffective). They are all important in order to implement projects and carry out activities in an efficient, quality-conscious and sustainable way. Local network and expertise is clearly an advantage in order to “not only do the right things, but to do the right things right” (MFA, 2004a). However, it is at the same time important to coordinate activities and cooperate on the international level, thus international networks play a role. Likewise, most acknowledge that in order to provide

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<sup>2</sup> NGOs do also international networks, such as Save the Children and Red Cross in particular. However, my point here is to emphasize the inter-governmental and IO cooperation and coordination of activities in terms of foreign aid.

quality service one must be able to provide the essential funding. In many situations, ideas matter but money talks.

Secondly, due to the structural preconditions inherent in the Norwegian system, it is somewhat impractical to presume that influence is one-dimensional. The Norwegian system, or model, which emphasises close dialogue and cooperation between the NGOs and state authorities, may imply that NGOs and the MFA take advantage of each other's resources. It is thus difficult to verify the one-dimensional influence theory when the Norwegian system implies that interaction constitutes much of the foreign aid work.

Thirdly, it may be reasonable to presume that when objectives coincide it is likely that a reciprocal relationship between Norwegian state authorities and Norwegian NGOs exists. To recall Høgel and Peretz' argument, "manifold opportunities for reciprocal relationships between states and transnational actors exists, especially whenever they share common interests" (Høgel and Peretz, 2005: 468).

## 1.2 Background

The development aid debate has been concerned with a great variety of issues. The MFA itself characterizes the 'Norwegian Model' with by: a lasting will to contribute; the means and resources to do so, close cooperation with Norwegian NGOs, experience, and a positive relationship with central international actors; and no colonial past (MFA, 2007b). The MFA emphasizes that the Norwegian authorities and its respective peace efforts have shown a consistent and predictable policy with regard to development aid and peace efforts based on solidarity and long-term commitments, independent of government, and a high level of domestic consensus with regard to Norwegian foreign policy, herein development and peace policy included.

There is a widespread attitude in Norway that Norwegians both have a moral obligation to help people in need and that it is in our national interest to prevent instability and unrest in Europe as well as the rest of the world (see Jagland, 2001; Leira, 2005; 2007a; 2007b). International solidarity is one of the main pillars in Norwegian foreign policy. The development assistances main objectives have been to contribute to sustainable development with regard to economical, social and political conditions for the

people in the development countries. Special emphasis has been on helping the poorest of the people. While development assistance and development is primarily focused on alleviating people out of poverty (for an account on the Government's objectives on this issue, see e.g. MFA, 1995a, 2002a, 2004a), transitional support to countries such as in the Balkans is focused on strengthening democratic development and weak institutions, and to support peace and reconciliation efforts in order to secure economical and social prosperity.

Norwegian assistance is divided into three parts: a large amount is bilateral assistance (on a government-to-government basis); some is multi-bi assistance (development activities financed by one or more countries but implemented by an international organization or agency); and a third part is multilateral assistance (general assistance through multilateral organisations). Most of the bilateral assistance is administrated by The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) which is a directorate under the MFA. The remaining donation is taken care of by the MFA and is handled as an integrated part of the foreign policy.

The multilateral assistance and the multi-bi assistance are mainly channelled through the UN system and various development banks (for example UNHCR, OSCE, UNDP, IOM, UNICEF, the World Bank). The bilateral assistance is partly long term aid to priority countries,<sup>3</sup> and partly as project assistance either financial or other forms of support to individual development projects by NGOs – such as the 'Big Five' organisations (NRC, NPA, RC, NCA and SCN).<sup>4</sup> These countries are called programme countries.

Project assistance<sup>5</sup> to the Western Balkans since the early 1990s has been carried out in cooperation with agents of the international society. The MFA underlines one of the main purposes of the Norwegian development assistance as being part of internationally agreed processes which seek to re-establish regional stability through appropriate assistance with regard to current needs and issues of importance. This

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<sup>3</sup> Norway's foremost partner countries in bilateral development cooperation. The concept was introduced in May 1992 in Report No. 51 (1991-92) to the Storting) on North-South relations, replacing the earlier designations "Main Partner Countries" and "Special Partner Countries".

<sup>4</sup> These five organisations are often referred to as the "Big Five" due to the size of their budgets compared to other Norwegian NGOs and because they receive a considerable share of foreign aid funding provided by the MFA channelled through NGOs.

<sup>5</sup> Financial or other forms of support for individual development project.

approach implies that the project assistance adjusts in accordance with altering conditions and needs within the receiving countries. The Norwegian project assistance to the Western Balkans can be divided into three stages: (i) humanitarian aid; (ii) peace-keeping, restoration and the return of refugees; (iii) building institutions and regional integration. In the early 1990s assistance was aimed at humanitarian situations and critical aid to refugees. After the signing of the Dayton peace agreement in 1995, a greater share of the assistance was aimed at reconstructing areas directly affected by the acts of war. This assistance was in particular aimed at reconstructing houses, restoring schools, and infrastructure such as electrical power and water supplies. Today, building institutions and regional integration within the Euro-Atlantic cooperation are initiatives with great emphasis (MFA, 2007a). The Euro-Atlantic cooperation is supported through strengthening state institutions, the transfer of expertise, education and industry development. Great focus has been placed on efforts of democratization, with particular emphasis on human rights, an independent media, reconciliation and programmes aimed at youths.

### 1.3 Towards a Complex Model of NGO and State Impact

One of the key assumptions of the present study is that the formulation of Norwegian aid policies cannot be fully understood by focusing solely on the formulation of aid policies towards the South. Equally important, I argue, is the situation with regard to foreign aid and the relationship between state authorities and NGOs in a European sphere. There is little literature available on the relationship between development actors and Norwegian foreign policy towards countries in Europe. Iver Neumann argues in *Maktens strateger* (Strategists of Power) that the lack of literature makes it even more important to discuss who is governing and dominating whom (Neumann, 2000). On the one hand there is a fair selection of literature with regard to Norwegian development aid in general. The trilogy describing the history of Norwegian development aid (Simensen, 2003; Ruud and Kjerland, 2003; Liland and Kjerland, 2003) shows how Norwegian development aid has developed over the years and clarifies who and what is involved. Knut Nustad focuses in *Gavens makt..* (The Power of the Gift...) on the development apparatus in general and discusses how well-intended development aid can generate unintentional consequences.

On the other hand, while these publications give a broad presentation of Norwegian development aid actors and their official intentions, they fail to explain how the relationship between state authorities and NGOs function, their link to foreign policy and under what condition one can expect one actor to influence the other. This study seeks to broaden the understanding of how the Norwegian MFA and Norwegian NGOs interact and influence each other by looking at the possibilities for a reciprocal relationship in terms of foreign aid policy and priorities towards the Western Balkans.

Many authors have ascribed to non-state actors quite a substantial influence on outcomes in international politics. It is true that transnational actors – from multinational corporations (MNCs) to International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) – have showed impact on the international system and that we cannot theorize about the international system without taking their influence into account. However, there is little systematic evidence to sustain claims that the transnational ‘society world’ comprised of these non-state actors has somehow overtaken the ‘state world’ (Risse 2002:255). Previous empirical work on TNAs has been rather unidirectional by looking at the impact of TNAs on inter-state relations, international organisations and institutions, and domestic change in general (e.g. Keohane and Nye, 1971; Keohane and Milner, 1996). Some of the recent literature has shown interest in states and international organisations enabling and/or constraining TNA activities (Hègel and Peretz, 2005; Risse, 2002). This study seeks to contribute to further the work of the recent literature and to show that while TNAs on the one hand have an impact on policy outcomes and political priorities. On the other hand, the state nevertheless still is a central actor and can enable and constrain TNAs’ activities.

One proposition claims that differences in domestic structures explain the variation in TNA policy influence: “Domestic structures mediate, filter, and refract the efforts by transnational actors and alliances to influence policies in the various issue-areas” (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 25). This proposition posits a somewhat inverse relationship between TNA access and TNA impact on domestic policy-making processes. The more open and less centralized a political system, on the one hand, and the more pluralist the society, on the other, the easier it should be for TNAs to gain access to decision-makers. While the United States probably represents the best approximation of such a domestic structure, the Norwegian system resembles a more intermediate model. But as Keck and Sikkink point out, emphasizing domestic institutional arrangements does not tell the



whole story of TNA impact: “They cannot tell us why some transnational networks operating in the same context succeed while others do not” (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 202). Their objection points to the weakness of the domestic structure argument. A ‘resonance’ hypothesis has been developed by students of international norms trying to explain the differential diffusion of domestic practises: “[T]he more new ideas promoted by transnational coalitions resonate or are compatible with pre-existing collective identities and beliefs of actors, the more policy influence they might have” (Risse, 2002: 266).

The present study shows that it is to some extent the case that domestic structures mediate, filter, and refract the efforts by transnational actors such as NGOs to influence policies and priorities in terms of the development aid area. However, the proposition must be qualified. The study shows that NGO characteristics moderated as the study also shows that NGO characteristics, particularly NGOs’ connection to international agencies, alliances, organizational capacities and expertise contribute to mediate, filter, and refract the efforts by state authorities to influence the activities and priorities of the NGOs. The former proposition does not rule out the latter, and visa-versa, but they work together simultaneously. I therefore suggest that in the case of the formulation of the Norwegian policies towards the Western Balkans, one should think about the relationship between non-state actors and the state in terms of influence as a reciprocal relationship rather than one-dimensional.

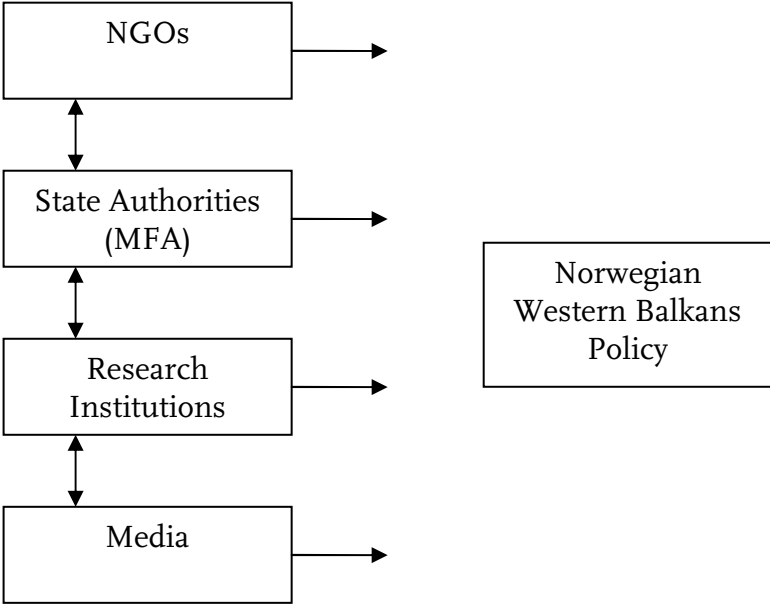
## 1.4 Method

There are two basic ways to test theories: experimentation and observation. Since my analysis is no experiment but observation of a single case (Norwegian Balkan policy), I apply case-study method to my research design. Robert Yin claims that “[t]he distinctive need for case studies arise out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena” (1994: 2). This case study seeks to better understand the Norwegian MFA and NGO relationship in terms of its impact on the Norwegian engagement in the Western Balkans. The purpose is to contribute to complementing existing theories on the relationship between transnational actors (NGOs) and state institutions, and actors’ impact on each other.

Performing single case studies has been criticised because its results cannot be generalised to other cases. Single case studies lack the ability to identify a theory’s antecedent conditions. However, Van Evera argues that the case method has two strengths that offset this weakness (1997:54). First, tests performed with case studies are often strong, because the predictions tested are quite unique. Second, inferring and testing explanations that define *how* the independent causes the dependent variable are often easier with case-study than the other variety of observational test.

The Norwegian Model depicts the existence of many relationships and interactions between various actors in the domestic as well as the foreign political domain. This can be illustrated by the following figure:

Fig. 5:



I make use of two categories in which NGOs and states can influence each other. They make either use of formal channels or informal channels. The formal influence channel is activities that are open and rule-based. The informal channels are point of contacts between NGOs and the MFA that are conducted in an unofficial way. The democratic system of governance implies that the policy-formulation is a process in which the Government elected by the people decides what priorities should be made with regard to foreign policy and such. The Government in Norway is the executive power and proposes in the National Budget what should be Norwegian interests and priorities. The

Parliament, *Stortinget*, is the legislative organ and decides whether the National Budget should be approved or not. Normally, Norwegian NGOs can influence the political instance. However they cannot direct them.

#### 1.4.1 Demarcation of the Study

The study's scope is limited to development aid to countries in the Western Balkans, with projects aimed at civil society development, in cooperation with Norwegian NGOs and local partners. The study includes primarily development aid – meaning long-term assistance<sup>6</sup> or transitional aid – because in 1999 and the following years, actors involved needed to adjust their tools and strategies from being aimed at humanitarian relief to more comprehensive long-term strategies. The study is also limited in the way that it only investigates the relationship between the MFA and the 'Big Five' organisations. These are the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Save the Children in Norway (SCN), and Norwegian Red Cross (RC). The 'Big Five' organisations are chosen due to the size of their budget and their extensive project portfolio in the Western Balkans.

The question to be asked is why the 'Big Five' organisations and not smaller organisation with perhaps a more compact targeted approach to the situation in Western Balkan countries? Alternatively the study could have selected organisations based on particular function, such as organisations promoting human rights as their core objectives.<sup>7</sup> Human rights organisations play an important part in the efforts of rebuilding post-conflict societies. However, for the purpose of this study I find the 'Big Five' organisation more adequate due to their extensive efforts in terms of scope of projects, budget size and their consistent activities and persistent presence in the region.

Of the total bilateral budget by the MFA allocated to the countries in the Western Balkans, the amount channelled through NGOs has to a great extent been channelled through the 'Big Five' organisations (Rattsø-utvalget, 2006). At the same time the 'Big Five' organisations cover a relatively wide area of activities in which coincides with the

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<sup>6</sup> It also includes refugee aid because managing IDPs and projects aimed at returning refugees to their previous homes are projects of a long-term character.

<sup>7</sup> Both The Norwegian Helsinki Committee and Nansen Dialogue Project, members of the Norwegian Human Rights House, have been and still are engaged in the Western Balkan region.

objectives of the MFA towards the Western Balkans. Activities initiated by Norwegian NGOs since 1999 have been, as an example, aimed at education (SCN), HIV/AIDS prevention (SCN, NCA), civil rights projects (NRC), health care (RC), trafficking (SCN, NCA), a free media (NPA), mine clearing action (NPA), support for women (NPA, NCA), refugees (NCA, NRC, NPA, RC).<sup>8</sup> My argument is that smaller organisations' contribution is neither insignificant nor less interesting. However, things considered and for the purpose of this study, their efforts constitute less of the total bilateral budget (MFA) and their impact area is less extensive. In this specific regard I consider the "Big Five" organisations as sufficiently representative of the "universe" of Norwegian humanitarian NGOs.

On the one hand, it might be problematic to compare the organisations because they differ on various characteristics. While most organisations have the same objectives – contributing to peace and reconciliation in the region – the organisations differ with regard to focus area, target groups, sister organisation connections and international network. On the other hand, they are similar not only in terms of their main objectives but also to the fact that they are actors that have been part of the effort in the Western Balkans since the implementation of humanitarian assistance and the transition to long-term assistance. They are also actors operating in and aimed at the civil society. Civil society is the primary target within both the socio-economic sector and the political sector. Development assistance within the socio-economic sector contains several projects aimed at assisting the sustenance and/or repatriation of refugees and IDPs, investing in primary education and basic health services, including HIV/AIDS related projects, and to reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. What characterises the overall efforts by NGOs within these domains is the "bottom-up" approach to developing society. The development assistance and support for projects within the political sector has gone to democratization projects (such as support for broader local participation), assistance to several projects in support for human rights, civil society, free press and media, and peace and reconciliation.

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<sup>8</sup> The respective organisations' own strategies and information provided by Norad.

## 1.4.2 Defining the Variables

A good explanation tells us what specific causes produced a specific phenomenon and identifies the general phenomenon of which this specific cause is an example (Van Evera, 1997:15). An explanation cast in specific terms that accounts for a distinctive event. Like theory it describes and explains cause and effect, but these causes and effects are framed in singular terms (Van Evera, 1997:15). Thus, from a Realist's perspective, he or she highly regards the values of national security and state survival, and would argue that "the main point of foreign policy is to project and defend the interests of the state in world politics" (Carlsnaes, 2002). Moreover, instability in the Balkan region causes a risk (threat) to (perhaps an opportunity for the projection of) Norwegian interest, causes active and extensive engagement by Norwegian state authorities in the Western Balkans. The former is a theory, the latter a specific explanation. The interesting question is "of what is Norwegian engagement in the Balkans an example of?"

With regard to the main objective of this study, the dependent variable (DV) is *Norwegian Western Balkan policy*. The next step is to identify the independent variables (IV), that is to say the variables that can explain the dependent variable. To describe exclusively all factors in which together can explain Norwegian Balkan policy is a difficult task. The context in which the policy is formulated must be taken into account. This implies that circumstances in the region and elsewhere abroad, as well as domestic politics have an influence. At the same time Norwegian Western Balkan policy is affected by the actors involved. Actors such as Norwegian and Western Balkan state authorities, NGOs, private enterprises, epistemic communities, International Organisations and so fourth have in one way or the other a token in the matter. Other IVs such as domestic popular flux, media, academic institutions, as well as international politics and society is truly also part of the policy outcome process. The context in which the variables interact is complex, thus it is difficult to explain outcomes in terms of two or three variables. In other words, the complete picture is hard to pin down. However, this analysis is an attempt to leave the overall picture and focus on two variables that can explain a part of the policy. These variables, hence the independent variables, are the Norwegian MFA and Norwegian NGOs. This analysis acknowledges that there exist several causal chains in order to explain the outcome completely, that is, Norwegian Balkan policy. While the case given attention to in this analysis is the relationship between Norwegian NGOs and the

MFA (the phenomenon) towards the Western Balkans (the context), other causal paths are relevant in order to explain the Norwegian Balkan policy as a whole. It is not simply the nexus between NGOs and the MFA that determines what the outcome of Norwegian Balkans policy should be. However, for the purpose of this study I have chosen to keep alternative IVs aside (constant), and rather focus on a single causal path, the relationship between two transnational actors, in order to explain relevant fragments of the whole picture.

The question is how one can measure whether one influences the other? And how can one establish correct operational measures for the concept being studied? What variables can explain/describe the relationship between state authorities and Norwegian NGOs? In other words, how do (a) Norwegian NGOs influence state authorities in order to reach their material (altruistic) or normative goals, and (b) state authorities influence/direct Norwegian NGOs in order to realize their policy objectives?

The indicators of NGOs influencing state authorities in their priorities in the Western Balkans can also be regarded as the NGOs comparative advantage in terms of competing aid channels. I argue that the NGOs influence state authorities through their comparative advantage as presented by the organisations themselves and the conventional apprehension of organisations as such within the MFA. The picture is mixed in terms of particular pattern with regard to the channels of development assistance within the socio-economic and political sector with emphasis on the civil society. However, many of the projects of the Norwegian NGOs as listed above fall within this domain. Other channels, such as multilateral institutions (UN, EU, OSCE), and bilateral cooperation are also utilized and pose a competitive challenge to the NGOs efforts. Thus, the main comparative advantage NGOs possess in terms of actors of development cooperation in the socio-economic sector (civil society) is that they can offer (i) expertise/specific competence and local knowledge, (ii) quality aid with a less bureaucratic system, (iii) support in areas that are often politically sensitive, acting as “gap-fillers” for the Government, and (iv) moral and idealistic initiatives justified by their basis in popular support.

### 1.4.3 Sources and Collection of Data

The data relevant to this study are material that can explain what has been the main focus and objectives, both by NGOs and the Government by the time support to the Western Balkans changed from being purely humanitarian to becoming more focused on long-term development and rebuilding democracy. The goal is to give an account of the comprehensive strategy. Two types of data have been used: (i) Written sources on public financial and administrative systems within this sector, and (ii) a number of interviews have been conducted.

The number of written sources that have been used are government documents, policy papers, evaluation reports and scientific articles. The most important and relevant Norwegian white paper active during the period this study covers is the White Paper no. 13 (1999-2000). Additionally, various national budgets between 1999 and 2005 from the MFA are of importance and to some extent the foreign political accounts to the Parliament in 2000 and 2001, given by the minister of foreign affairs. The MFA/Norad document *Tilskuddsordninger for norske og internasjonale frivillige aktørers humanitære bistands- og utviklingssamarbeid* of 2002 (Subsidy arrangement to humanitarian aid and development cooperation by Norwegian and international non-governmental actors) is also central to this study.

On the NGO side policy papers, regional and global strategies documents and final reports to the MFA have been central data material. In order to present a more nuanced picture I make use of interviews with officials at the Western Balkan Section (MFA) and with representatives from the respective organisations. The interviewees are Nils Ragnar Kamsvåg and Jan Braathu from the MFA, Kari Kjærnet at the NPA, Benedicte Petersen at the NCA, Oddbjørn Nesja and Karsten Solheim at the Norwegian RC, Søren Pedersen at the SCN, and Lisbeth Pilegaard and Runa Myrvold at the NRC. The interviews were conducted in order to examine how influence has been exercised (mainly described in chapter 5). They have also been important in order to provide background information. I have also had several conversations with them, either by telephone or e-mail to clarify points and provide additional information and background. The chapter on Norwegian and NGO interest (chapter 4) is based on primary sources such as annual reports, budgets and policy papers.

## 1.5 Structure

In order to discuss the relationship between state and NGO in the Norwegian context, a more general understanding of this relationship is necessary. The analysis proceeds in the following steps. The aim of Chapter 2 is to introduce the reader to the research on states and transnational actors not only with a view to inform the discussion in latter chapter but also with a view to situate the argument within the literature on the subject. Chapter 3 will explain the contextual framework in which one can expect mutual influence between NGOs and state authorities to exist in terms of foreign aid and efforts towards the Western Balkans. Understanding the foundation for the relationship between state authorities (the MFA) and NGOs helps to better understand what *kind* of relationship exists. Chapter 4 will examine this relationship more closely in terms of opportunities for mutual influence if and when actors share common interests. The aim is to show *how* the objectives and interests of both the MFA and NGOs have come to converge in the case of the Norwegian policy towards the Western Balkans. Chapter 5 investigates how mutual influence is exercised and also how the extent of state influence on NGOs in this case is moderated by various characteristics of the 'Big five' organisations.



# Chapter 2:

## States and Transnational Actors

Transnational relations often are referred to “contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments” (Keohane and Nye, 1971: 330). This study does not deal with transnational relations in general but with interactions between transnational actors and foreign political organs thus constituting the basis for transnational relations. It is commonly perceived that transnational actors – from Multinational Corporations (MNCs) to (International) Non-Governmental Organisations ((I)NGOs) – have left a mark on not only the international system but also affect national structures.

In order to discuss the relationship between state and NGO in the Norwegian context, a more general understanding of this relationship is necessary. This chapter will introduce the reader to the research on states and transnational actors not only with a view to inform the discussion in latter chapter but also with a view to situate the argument within the literature on the subject. My argument on the basis this review is that the research on transnational relations does not adequately explain, or take sufficiently into account, the role of the state/NGO interaction at the domestic level. While some argue that domestic structures, and not exclusively international structures, matter in shaping political outcomes, most fail to explain what exactly goes on at the domestic level.

Two perspectives seem to dominate in the analysis of transnational actors’ role in world politics (Högel and Peretz, 2005). The first perspective examines how transnational actors establish private international rules to execute non-state governance for transnational issues, circumventing the need for intergovernmental regimes (e.g. Ronit and Schneider, 2001). The second perspective examines the more prominent role of transnational actors in world politics and their attempts to shape international governance by influencing states’ foreign policies, inter-state negotiations and the international organisations set up by states (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

As this chapter will show, with only a few exceptions, relationships between transnational actors and states are often discussed in a world political context. However, I wish to draw attention to the domestic level where one can expect such a relationship to exist, because in many cases decision-making starts at home. While many studies examine the roles of transnational actors in world politics, few examine how interactions between states and non-state actors go about at the domestic level in terms of issues that has consequences beyond the national domain. I also challenge the popular notion that the relationship between states and transnational actors, such as NGOs, is mostly unilateral where the latter influencing and circumventing states to fit their aims and objectives. Transnational actors such as NGOs are often treated as autonomous actors that stand apart from states, either trying to influence or to circumvent them (Högel and Peretz, 2005: 470). This focus probably captures the majority of 'real world' relationship between states and transnational actors. Thus, transnational actors have gained a prominent role in world politics by for example influencing states' foreign policies. However, most studies seem to neglect the possibility that states use transnational actors for their own interests. This study takes up this challenge and seeks to reveal the ambivalent nature of, and diverse relationship between, non-state and state actors in the foreign assistance field towards countries in the Western Balkans. Most studies focus on development aid towards countries in the South in terms of fighting poverty and peace building efforts. Very little literature is available on supporting states in transition between war and peace, and not least from authoritarian system to democratic governance. The purpose of this study is to draw attention to the concept of transitional aid in post-conflict countries situated on the European continent.

This chapter will introduce the reader to the 'new transnationalist' scholarship and show how criticism of the state-centric paradigm has pointed at its inadequacy when exploring the effects of transnational relations and world politics. The literature have also shown that one need to take the existence of transnational actors (TNAs) and their interaction with states, as well as the intervening influence of both domestic and international structures, into account when exploring world politics. While this presents an interesting and descriptive view of the interactions at the international level, it does not sufficiently explain how this has an effect at the national level in terms of political outcomes and activities in which constructed and thus aimed at the international political

level. The following chapter seeks to substantiate the necessity to take interaction between states and NGOs at the domestic level into account when discussing political outcomes.

The next section will briefly define what scholars regularly regard as transnational actors, before I introduce the historic development of transnationalism within international relations (IR). Special emphasis is given to the term ‘new transnationalism’ and its contribution to the field. Then I will give an account on approaches to the relationship between transnational actors and state institutions held by various IR scholars. I conclude with that while most scholars have put emphasis on the relationship between states and TNAs in a world political context their interaction at the domestic level is often neglected. Thus I argue that the state/TNA nexus at the domestic level need to be further analysed in order to better understand how interactions between state authorities and NGOs play a central role shaping the outcomes of foreign aid efforts.

## 2.1 Transnational Actors in World Politics

Transnational actors constitute a very heterogeneous group. The empirical literature on transnational relations of the 1970s largely concentrated on MNCs and transnational special interest groups, in which are motivated by instrumental goals and try to promote the well-being of the organisation or the members of the group (Risse, 2002: 256-59). The new transnationalism of the 1990s concentrated more on the transnational non-profit sector, such as epistemic communities, value-based advocacy networks, (I)NGOs and cross-border social movements (Risse, 2002: 256-59). The very concept of transnational relations implies an international system composed of nation-states as well as the distinction between state and social actors within a given nation-state. Most empirical work on TNAs remains rather unidirectional, however not exclusively, by looking at the impact of TNAs on interstate relations, international organisations and international institutions in general. The following literature seeks to address the importance of examining states’ ability to enable and/or constraining TNAs activities, with special attention given to state/NGO relationship operating in a transnational environment.

Transnational actors gained much attention during the 1970s and their role in the world politics are still a debated topic. This section shows how earlier literature have

questioned the state-centric paradigm and emphasised the need to take transnational actors into account when explaining world political outcomes. The conventional wisdom nowadays is that 'global and 'local' can no longer be neatly separated. The 'new transnationalism' moves beyond prior attempts to raise awareness about 'external' and 'internal' factors in each field (both international relations and comparative politics) and instead proposes a seamlessly integrated research agenda that fully spans comparative politics and international relations. The classic paradigm of interstate politics focuses on governments as the agencies through which society deal politically with each other. Interstate politics is conceptually distinguished from, although linked to, domestic politics; transnational interactions are ignored or discounted. Proponents of the state-centric view observed transnational interactions, yet, they deliberately excluded transnational relations from the interstate system on the grounds that their direct political importance is small and that their indirect effects enter, along with domestic factors, into the formation of national foreign policies (Keohane and Nye, 1971: 343-344).

### 2.1.1 Challenging the State-Centric Perspective

The first generation of the 'new transnationalism' represented by Keohane and Nye's *Transnational Relations and World Politics* emerged in the early 1970's and challenged the rigidity and state-centrism of the (neo-)realist mainstream. Keohane and Nye argued that more attention should be paid to the effects of transnational relations and that the state-centric paradigm is not adequate when exploring these effects. They did not refuse or ignore the importance of the nation-state; however, they introduced non-state actors and transnational relations as autonomous agents and forces that needed to be taken into account. They called for a broader focus and it invigorated challengers who questioned the strict separation of domestic and international politics (Keohane and Nye, 1971).<sup>9</sup>

Under conditions of *complex interdependence*, Keohane and Nye view non-state actors as possible direct participants in world politics. The existence of multiple channels of contacts among societies implies that transnational actors, trans-governmental relations and international organizations play an active role in world politics. The authors

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<sup>9</sup> For other works challenging the state-dominated work, see for example Huntington, 1973; Keohane and Nye, 1977; Rosenau, 1980.

argue that transnational actors such as multinational firms, private banks and other organizations have become “a normal part of foreign as well as domestic relations” (Keohane and Nye, 1989:26). These actors are important not only because of their activities in pursuit of their own interests, but also because they “act as transmission belts, making government policies in various countries more sensitive to one another” (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 26). More particularly, the importance of such actors will vary according to issues. The political process under complex interdependence implies that “transnational actors will introduce different goals into various groups of issues” (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 30). They also challenge the definition of politics in terms of state behaviour alone, thus it may lead us to ignore important nongovernmental actors that allocate value and that use means similar to those used by governments to achieve their ends (Keohane and Nye, 1971: 344).

A second challenger to the state-centric paradigm was Peter Gourevitch. Gourevitch introduced the term ‘second image reversed’ and argued how international factors can also affect the domestic realm (Gourevitch, 1978). He argued that much of the literature which explored the interaction between international politics and domestic structures had neglected the comparativist’s perspective, that is, the reasoning from international system to domestic structure. While Keohane and Nye emphasised the importance of transnational actors as intervening factors of in state behaviour and political outcomes, Gourevitch argued that international factors should not be neglected. He argues that to be able to explain the nature of the domestic structure—why it is as it is, how it got that way, why one structure differs from the other—the international system may itself become an explanatory variable. Thus, Gourevitch claimed that instead of being a cause of international politics, “domestic structure may be a consequence of it” (Gourevitch, 1978: 882).

The neo-debates in the 1980’s dominated the mainstreams in the field of international relations and focused mainly on the possibilities and limits of peaceful cooperation as well as the extent of autonomy of international institutions; moreover the major proponents developed a distinct domestically driven perspective on world affairs. The literature accomplished thereafter two goals; first, it opened up the domestic realm to those interested in international outcomes, and secondly, it established the idea of intergovernmental organisations as playing a more autonomous role in global affairs

(Orenstein and Schmitz, 2006). However as they focused on domestic sources of international outcomes and the autonomy of international institutions, the state largely remained the focal point of decision-making and values attributed.

### 2.1.2 The Second Generation of ‘New Transnationalism’

When transnational actors re-emerged in the 1990’s as an important subject of IR theory, focus shifted away from the old ‘state-dominated’ versus ‘society-dominated’ perspective on world politics to putting questions about the interaction between transnational actors, states and international organizations at the centre of the analysis (see for example Adler and Haas, 1992; Haas, 1992; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Reinicke, 1998; Risse-Kappen, 1995; Rosenau, 1990, 1997). The second generation of new transnationalism differed from the earlier efforts to challenge the state-centrism of mainstream international relations scholarship in two ways. First, they did not claim that the state necessarily loses power and influence to non-state actors. Secondly, the constructivist approach let students of transnational relations better understand the role of normatively driven behaviour and make claims about its significance beyond the realm of material capabilities.<sup>10</sup> Recent works in the field emphasize the power of ideas in driving political outcomes, and attempt to move beyond the rationalist-constructivist divide that has dominated international relations discourse in recent years, and chart a pragmatic middle-ground between ideational and interest-based analysis (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004; Rosenau, 2003; Slaughter, 2004; Tarrow, 2005). This new literature showed that while most scholars acknowledged the growing importance of TNAs, the state is still assumed to be playing a central role and that one should take the role of non-state actors as well as state actors into account when international or domestic structures are investigated. Additionally, assessing transnational diffused norms and domestic identities and collective beliefs concentrated on the discourse prior to behavioural practise of actors have gained more attention in the recent years.

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<sup>10</sup> For works on constructivism or sociological institutionalism in international relations see for example Kratochwil, 1989; Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986; Wendt 1987, 1999; Checkel, 1998; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Keck and Sikkink, 1998.

## 2.2 Explaining the Relationship between Transnational Actors and the State

So far I have described the development of the literature within transnational relations. Most of the empirical work asks what effect, if any, TNAs have on structures and processes of world politics. However, most of the contemporary work in international affairs no longer disputes that TNAs influence decisions and outcomes (compare, for example, Waltz 1979 with Krasner 1995, 1999). Rather, current scholarship focuses on the conditions under which these effects are achieved and most of the controversies center around the significance of these intervening factors (e.g. Kaufmann and Pape, 1999; Moravcsick, 2000). TNAs are also often assumed to be autonomous in their attempts to influence states. Much literature have been concerned with transnational actors as intervening factors, influencing states and international organisations to fit more in line with their objectives. While, it probably captures the majority of ‘real world’ relationships between states and transnational actors, others have posed the question differently and asked how states have an impact on TNAs.

### 2.2.1 The Statist, the Societal and the Transnational Approach

In a contribution by David Skidmore and Valerie Hudson, *Limits of State Autonomy*, they seek to assess the relative influence of various kinds of societal groups by identifying and discussing three alternate theoretical approaches for analyzing state and society relations (Skidmore and Hudson, 1993). These three approaches – the (weak) statist, the societal, and transnational approaches – are based on differing assumptions about the relative influence of societal groups in shaping foreign policy. The first approach evaluates the foreign policy process within the context of the “weak statist” approach. In this approach, the “national interest” is largely still pursued by states, but the particularistic interests of some groups may have some limited effect (Müeller and Risse-Kappen, 1993). The “strong versus weak state” dichotomy works well on countries that seem to be ideal candidates of either the “strong state” (i.e. France) or “weak states” (i.e. the US). However, the model fails to adequately describe the Norwegian domestic structure which holds an intermediate position between a society dominated and a

centralized political system and comes more close to a democratic corporatist model. There are obvious analytical problems to the “weak vs. strong state” model because it ignores the effects of political culture, ideology and history. Some scholars also regarded the model as ‘apolitical’ because it is unable to explain specific policy outcomes.

The transnational perspective takes societal groups and their messages influence policy within their own state and beyond. These contributions look more closely at the process of how these transnational social movements affect policy (Dorsey, 1993), or looks specifically at the role of the global human rights movement in contributing to the end of the Cold War (Meyer, 1993). The transnational perspective describes much of the real world politics, but it nevertheless focuses on world politics. Thus the role of societal groups is more remote from foreign policy formulation

The society model seems more adequate in this regard because it allows domestic influences on the foreign policy of nations to vary according to specific issue-areas. It also opens up for variances in the responses of different countries to the same external pressures to be explained by domestic political structures or by coalition-building processes. While this model seem more adequate to explain why societal groups successfully or unsuccessfully influence state policies it nevertheless neglects the possibility that states can try to influence non-governmental groups to further their interests.

### 2.2.2 Bringing the State Back In

Transnational actors, such as NGOs, are often assumed to be autonomous in their attempts to influence state. However, recent studies show that whenever both share common interests opportunities for mutual influence exist and states can try to use transnational actors to further their own objectives (Högel and Peretz, 2005). Why this has to a large extent been neglected seems according to Högel and Peretz to be due to at least three reasons. First, most non-governmental organisations (NGOs) present themselves as independent from states. Second, a lot of research in the field still views politics from a society versus state perspective, wherein their sympathies frequently side with social actors and their role as normative vanguards. Third, there still seems to be a strong reliance on social movement theory which assumes it to be social action in



opposition to and directed against state politics. Hence transnational actors, be they profit-oriented enterprises or non-profit civil society organisations are studied in their efforts to influence state actors in order to reach their material or normative goals. Thus the reverse relationship is being undermined, and most research neglects the possibility that states use transnational actors for their own interests.

This assumption is also supported by Thomas Risse who says that “TNA dependence on the resources of states and international organisations suggests that it would be preposterous to claim that the INGO world simply represents global civil society *against* the interstate system” (Risse, 2002: 260). Hègel and Peretz argue that one should not assume that the relationship between state authorities and NGOs is one-dimensional with one influencing the other, but rather take into account a reciprocal relationship where both actors influence each other in order to further their interests (Hègel and Peretz, 2005: 468-72). Whereas Risse argues that transnational advocacy groups and INGOs should not be seen as necessarily in opposition to the interstate system. Rather their work often conforms to the interests of states and international organisations (Risse, 2002: 260).

In the case study of the Jewish diaspora, Hègel and Peretz also find support for the argument of introducing the category of ‘State-Influenced NGOs’ (SINGOs) into the study of transnational relations (Hègel and Peretz, 2005:484). As NGOs have become relevant players in world politics, Hègel and Peretz suggest it is more useful to conceptualize the relationship between transnational actors and states along a continuum.<sup>11</sup> On the one side are ‘pure’ civil society organisations that operate without any participation of state actors, seeking to influence the state actors. On the other side are Governmentally Organized NGOs (GONGOs) and Governmentally Regulated and Initiated NGOs (GRINGOs) as state agencies with a private legal standing. For the latter part it is the state that directs the organisations. However, instances of a reciprocal relationship can be expected to exist for many international issues, especially whenever the interests of transnational actors and states overlap. Hègel and Peretz propose the term SINGOs where such relationships can be expected. They suggest that it is both a natural and comprehensive term for the various kinds of mutual influences that may occur in

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<sup>11</sup> For a broader discussion and problematizing on NGOs relationship with state authorities see Higgot et al., 2000.

between the transnational actor continuum of 'pure' civil society organisations and 'private' state agencies.

### 2.2.3 TNAs as Instruments of National Governments and IOs

Thomas Risse (2002) asks the question concerning transnational actors (TNAs) as instruments of state power. Risse examines the mutual relationship and interaction between the inter-state world, on the one hand, and the transnational world, on the other, he suggests that future research on TNAs needs to take into account that these actors – whether Multinational Companies or principled INGOs – “have lost their ‘innocence’ and have become part and parcel of international governance structures” (Risse, 2002: 269). First, he questions whether the INGO world does represent a ‘global civil society’ or merely reproduce Western enlightenment values. Secondly, he claims that many INGOs are more dependent on the ‘state world’ than many of them would admit. Numbers from the World Bank tells us that public funding for development (I)NGOs increased from 1.5 per cent of their total income in the early 1970’s to 30 per cent in the mid-1990s. And the percentage of EU relief aid channelled through INGOs rose from 47 to 67 per cent from 1990 to 1994. With regard to the European Union, Risse notes that it has been frequently pointed out that the European Commission both created and funded many transnational organisations in order to be able to deal with societal interests on a European rather on the various national levels (Risse, 2002: 260).

Transnational advocacy groups (networks that comprise actors who share specific values, principled beliefs and a common discourse) and epistemic communities (networks of individuals and/or organisations based on authoritative claims to consensual knowledge) often perform tasks that states and international organisations either cannot or do not want to carry out (Risse, 2002: 260). In the issue area of foreign and humanitarian aid, states and International Organisations often subcontract (I)NGOs, because these groups are less bureaucratic, more flexible and can reach those in need of assistance more easily. On the one hand, their work often conforms to the interests of states and international and international organisations, and hence becomes a vital part in handling foreign and humanitarian aid (Risse, 2002: 260). On the other hand the growing involvement of INGOs in partnerships with IOs might alienate them from their

own social base in civil society. As a result some may need to moderate their goals considerable, since they have to accept principal goals of liberalization in order to promote human rights and environmental concerns effectively (Risse, 2002: 261).

## 2.3 Chapter Conclusion

Some scholars suggest that while most transnational actors such as NGOs are often treated as autonomous actors that stand apart from states, either trying to influence or to circumvent them, one should nevertheless not exclude the reverse process, that is, the possibility that states use transnational actors to further their own interests (Hegel and Peretz, 2005). This approach suggests that in many political areas we find a tendency of growing interdependence and interaction between transnational actors and state institutions. While most literature with regard to the interaction between TNAs and states focuses on outcomes in world politics, there is little literature focusing on outcomes at the national level.

Some scholars have emphasised that to be able to explain the nature of the domestic structure – its development, history and structures differ – the international system may itself become an explanatory variable (Gourevitch, 1978). Both the domestic and the international structures matter and thus influence political outcomes at the national level as well as at the world political level. This chapter agrees that the influence of transnational actors have both direct and indirect political effect, and thus enter, along with domestic and international factors, into the formation of national foreign policies (Keohane and Nye, 1971: 343-44). However, it also attempts to show that not only do TNAs seek to influence states in order to achieve their goals, but states also influence TNAs in order to reach their own political *and* idealistic objectives. This proposition suggests that the relationship between states and TNAs is not adequately explained by one-dimensional influence, where only one actor influences the other. I suggest that in some cases opportunities for mutual influence exist when states and TNA have converging objectives.

To conclude, the increasing interaction between state institutions and NGOs makes the relationship more difficult to explain and unclear in terms of who influences whom. Thus blurring the picture of who shapes the outcome of Norwegian development cooperation and engagement policy. In sum, the previous debate on the primacy of the

state-system versus the society-system does not adequately address and describe the problem. As Risse-Kappen and Müller argue, a complex model of international has to be conceptualized, which integrates the three levels of analysis: society, political system, and international environment, and the model should focus on the interaction on the three levels (Risse-Kappen and Müller, 1993: 31). I adopt their argument and suggest that such a complex model is helpful in explaining the symbiosis of foreign policy and development cooperation at the national level. While many scholars have advanced complex models of TNA impact integrating international and domestic levels, they often neglect the possibility of state influence on TNAs. Thus I argue that a complex model of foreign policy and development cooperation has to be conceptualized which integrates state institutions and TNAs (NGOs) at the domestic level. This model should focus on the interaction between state institutions and NGOs. This concept portrays states and NGOs as constantly being exposed to influence from each other.

Before continuing the conceptual discussion of the relationship between NGO and the state in the context of the Western Balkans policy formulation process, it is important to understand how this relationship has evolved in the Norwegian context. The next chapter therefore gives an account of changes in the Norwegian state/NGO relationship, with special emphasis on the gradual politicization of aid.

## Chapter 3:

# The Contextual Framework

In general, a considerable amount of the Norwegian foreign aid is channelled through NGOs. This is also the case in terms of foreign aid towards the Western Balkans. Foreign aid towards the Western Balkans is an interesting case to examine because the conflicts in the Western Balkans in the 1990s demanded a new way of managing foreign aid. The way Norwegian authorities managed aid to foreign countries especially in the South was then challenged. The new situation the conflicts in the Western Balkans represented altered the traditional approach to development aid. Due to the fact that Western Balkan countries are European countries closer to home, they open up a new channel of influence in the European political domain. Additionally countries in the Western Balkans were not regarded as poor development countries but countries in a post-conflict or transition situation in need of other complex remedies.

States are often regarded as the most important organisations in the environment of transnational actors (Krasner, 1995). Organisations that exist in institutionally complex environments can enhance their likelihood of survival by fitting in, by becoming *isomorphic* with the institutions with which they must interact. Isomorphism enhances legitimacy and access to resources and can be the result of coercion, competitive pressures, or concerns about legitimacy (Krasner, 1995: 260). Legal requirements are the most obvious form of coercion. However, organizations also become more similar because they adopt established norms to enhance their legitimacy and access to resources. And competitive pressures encourage organisations to become more similar because they can function more efficiently if they are more alike. As in the case of Norwegian development aid, Norwegian state authorities and NGOs have developed close ties and cooperation between them and this relationship has become a central part in their foreign aid efforts. As NGOs legitimacy is based on popular support, it is often perceived that they continuously work to influence the state to work in line with the organisations' objectives.

However, this study shows that the state also has impact on NGOs' priorities and activities. In order to provide evidence for these claims I will throughout this chapter explain the contextual framework in which one can expect mutual influence between NGOs and state authorities to exist in terms of foreign aid and efforts towards the Western Balkans. Understanding the foundation for the relationship between state authorities (the MFA) and NGOs helps to better understand what *kind* of relationship exists.

### 3.1 Norwegian Development Aid

Norwegian NGOs have since they started receiving state funding in the 1960s had an influence on Norwegian foreign policy. Since the end of the Cold War the Norwegian MFA 'lost' its explicit security policy mandate and relevance. The need for a rethinking of foreign policy deemed relevant, and affected the relationship between the MFA and NGOs. Since the 1990s the character of development aid changed and state authorities sought to harmonize NGOs within the foreign political apparatus. The outcome of this process is what we today know as the 'Norwegian Model'. The present division of labour between the Norwegian government and development NGOs displays several conspicuous features. First, Norway channels a large share of overall aid (humanitarian and long-term development) through NGOs. Secondly, Norwegian NGOs are more closely integrated in government policy than in most, if not all, OECD countries. The following section shows how this change came about, what is meant by the 'Norwegian Model' and how this development have affected the way foreign aid was structured during the time of Norway efforts in the Western Balkans.

#### 3.1.1 From Development Aid to Engagement Policy

In the 1970s the foreign political management was of the opinion that development aid issues should be governed by a department of its own. In that way the ministry of foreign affairs could deal with Norwegian interests in a traditional sense (NATO, EU, etc.). Development aid was not regarded as a political tool in order to promote Norwegian interests. The Department for Development Aid (DUH) was established in the 1980s and

can be regarded as a symbolic act in order to show that development aid projects was concerned with other perspectives and interests than the usual foreign policy. The new department was given the ability to exercise great autonomy and latitude – not because it was regarded as important but rather as unimportant (Tvedt 2003: 64). The 1980s was a period when the development aid was separated from the MFA the most. Representatives from the development aid community were given free reins and the number of actors in the field exploded. A great number of NGOs flourished. This development gave a whole string of actors the “seniority” and the authority they could later benefit from and it formed the basis of the position NGOs later would posit as important and vital actors within Norwegian foreign policy (Tvedt 2003: 65).

In the beginning of the 1990s development aid was institutionally integrated within the foreign policy and the new engagement policy gained a broader scope. Due to changes within world politics (end of the Cold War) and to political processes and incidents at the national level, a new objective was formulated – to promote Norway as a “humanitarian great power” (Leira, 2007a). Issues that previously had dominated Norwegian foreign policy, security policy, became less prominent. The rivalling process between the super powers did not obstruct international cooperation to the same extent and it was possible to direct attention to other policy areas. Foreign policy gained a broader scope of interests, such as those who previously was included in the engagement policy: economic development, fight against poverty, preventing and alleviate humanitarian catastrophes, prevent war and conflict etc. Partly as a consequence of the end of the cold war new (or previously suppressed) conflicts came to the surface. Hence, new possibilities for Norway as an international actor became prominent. It became regarded that Norwegian engagement policy within peaceful conflict management could act as an alternative to traditional military efforts (Liland and Kjerland 2003: 81). Additionally, Norway had the financial resources to engage in peacefully activities abroad. Income from the oil activity gave Norway a freedom of action that other countries did not have. It was asserted at the same time that Norway had a comparative advantage and specific qualifications to engage in the work for peace, democracy and human rights. Norway was rendered as a peaceful country that could not pose a threat to others. In other words, Norway was perceived as motivated not by power politics, but by the virtue of being a small country that was able to contribute in areas that great powers could not.

The motivating factors for being involved in conflict prevention, peace building and development cooperation have been subject of many debates. In situations where Norway has been involved in peace building processes it is often difficult to find a clear strategy behind. Norway has been engaged more or less in every continent, in poor and less poor countries, in countries with an authoritarian system of governance to democratic countries. Many efforts have been initiated by passionate individuals in either NGOs, academic institutions or the MFA itself. On the one hand, humanitarian and later long-term efforts in the Western Balkans, for example, can be explained by the public and official felt obligation to ‘do something’ when the conflict was at its most intense. Not to forget how the media brought the conflict home to Norwegians and exposed how serious the situation was. On the other hand, influential Norwegians such as Knut Vollebæk, who served as a peace negotiator in the former Yugoslavia between 1993 and 1995 and later hold the position as chairman of the OSCE, and Thorvald Stoltenberg, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the former Yugoslavia, long fought for an active international as well as a Norwegian engagement in the Western Balkans throughout the whole conflict.

Moreover, Norwegian development cooperation and conflict prevention agenda is often characterised as placed both in an idealistic *and* realpolitical relationship. It is not a relationship characterized by conflicting interests but by a relationship complementing each other. Norwegian engagement policy is both motivated by a justice and solidarity mentality and interest policy. On the one hand it is often argued that Norway has an obligation to contribute to the economical and social development of the less wealthy and needy countries. And on the other hand Norway’s material prosperity is dependent on a well-functioning international trade, a sustainable environment, a manageable population growth and controlled migration (Liland and Kjerland 2003: 85). In other words, the interest-based motivations for engagement abroad are related to security, economic growth, influence in international relations, and domestic political circumstances.

### 3.1.2 The Norwegian Model

The “Norwegian model” is said to be playing a central part of the Norwegian foreign aid strategy. In this context it is defined as the close ties and cooperation between state



authorities, NGOs, research institutions and media. In 2006 the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, said that “Norway has everything it takes to be a peace nation” (Støre, 2006). He further claims that “it is not anything special about Norwegians that has made us a peace nation” but argues that “there is something about our country’s starting point: our geographical situation, the efforts of many generations to build our society and develop international security around us, and – it must be added – a high level of political consensus about major social issues and core values” (Støre, 2006). Norwegian international development policy, the desire to provide assistance, is based on a high degree of consensus between the political and social movements known as social democracy and Christian democracy in Norway. Støre emphasized that these ties must be nurtured and highlighted the importance of the broad approach taken at both national and international level by the many NGOs in Norway that are now found in all areas of civil society (Støre , 2006).

While the brand or label ‘Norwegian Model’ sounds like it is unique in terms of development aid and peace building efforts, there is nevertheless nothing Norwegian in which characterizes the expertise, networks, experience, commitment and will associated with the model. Norway is yet part of an extensive community of foreign aid actors. However, this would still not do other (Western) countries, contributing foreign aid, justice. Norway tops the list together with the Netherlands in terms of proportion of aid funds managed by and through NGOs (OCED, 2004). However, that does not imply that other countries do not rely on channelling foreign aid through NGOs. At least in the European contexts it is not unusual that state institutions cooperate closely or are intertwined in one way or the other with NGOs, academic institutions and the media in terms of foreign aid. It is neither a particular Norwegian phenomenon that the government provides a large share of the funding of NGOs’ activities. Home governments in most European countries typically provide between 60 and 90 % of their funding (less in the UK and the USA) (Lunde, 2002: 3).

A special feature of Norwegian Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the very large share allocated through NGOs. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) received and managed an estimated 22% of total Norwegian aid in 2002 (MFA, 2006; OECD, 2004). Additionally, Norway relies heavily on Norwegian NGOs for delivering humanitarian action. The MFA have emphasized that the Norwegian authorities and its

efforts throughout the world, especially during the last two decades, have shown a consistent and predictable policy in terms of development aid and peace efforts. Moreover, Norwegian engagement policy is said to be based on solidarity and long-term commitments, the independence of government, and a high level of domestic consensus with regard to Norwegian foreign policy, herein development and peace policy included. This process of committed engagement, which grew out of the Norwegian peace engagements in the 1990s – most famously in the Middle East – implied a completely new way for Norway to relate to the international context than previous efforts. A country that had always firmly acknowledged its status as a small and insignificant nation – its foreign policy being based on this status – suddenly proclaimed itself to be a ‘humanitarian superpower’. With regard to the position of NGOs in this new foreign political sense, their role changed from previous functions. When previously NGOs assumed the function of ‘development diplomats’ implementing Norwegian foreign policy all over the world, this role changed in the 1990s (Tvedt, 1995). What became new in the period of the Norwegian Model is an increasing desire on the part of the state to control and steer the organisations. To an increasing extent they came to be understood as instruments for the state to contract and use in the implementation of its policy towards development countries (Tvedt 2003).

For the purpose of this analysis I nevertheless use the term ‘Norwegian model’ as a way of illustrating the institutional structure of how development aid priorities and policies are constituted on the national level. However, I attempt to avoid presenting the organisation of Norwegian foreign aid as unique but rather displaying several features of the roles and interfaces of Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian MFA. First, Norway channels a large share of overall aid (humanitarian and long term development) through NGOs, and is challenged only by a few countries in this respect. Secondly, Norwegian NGOs are more closely integrated in government policy than in most, if not all, other OCED (Organisation for Cooperation and Economical Development) countries. At its most pronounced, NGOs are active (and sometimes dominant) players in the implementation of Norwegian foreign policy. A consensual political climate with low level of conflict, and a comprehensive NGO presence in countries of political relevance to the Norwegian government – such as the conflict in the Balkans have proved to be an example of and as I will illustrate in this analysis –

have contributed to cement this (on some occasions) uniquely intimate relationship. The next section will clarify how this relationship is constituted in the institutional structures within the foreign political and development cooperation domain.

### 3.1.3 NGOs and ‘Added Value’

The comparative edge or added value of aid through (Norwegian) NGOs has become a central topic in aid administrations as well in broader public forums. This section is aimed at pinning down what is regarded as NGOs’ added value in terms of foreign aid in general, (and towards the Western Balkans in particular), because it gives us a better understanding of why the a relationship between the MFA and Norwegian NGOs exists in the first place.

Yet although there may be no universal agreement on what NGOs are exactly, there is widespread agreement that their numbers, influence, and reach are at unprecedented levels. Until recently, NGOs clustered in developed and democratic nations; “now groups sprout up from Lima to Beijing” (Simmons, 1998: 84). They are changing societal norms, challenging national governments, and linking up with counterparts in powerful transnational alliances (i.e. Save the Children). And they are muscling their way into areas of high politics – such as arms control, democratic development, and economic policy – that were previously dominated by the state.

In general terms, NGOs affect national governments, multilateral institutions, and national and multinational corporations in four ways: setting agendas, negotiating outcomes, conferring legitimacy, and implementing solutions (Simmons, 1998: 84). With regard to setting agendas globally as well as locally, NGOs have long played a key role in forcing leaders and policymakers to pay attention. In 1945, NGOs were largely responsible for inserting human-rights language in the UN Charter and have since put almost every major human-rights issue on the international agenda. Likewise, NGO activism since the 1960s and 1970s successfully raised the profile of global environmental and population issues.

NGOs can be essential in designing multilateral treaties. By providing knowledge based information, expertise and documentation NGOs have been instrumental in helping government negotiators and forerunners understand the imminence of and the

science behind the issues that they seek to address (Simmons, 1998:86). One example of this is the global warming issue. Throughout many years NGOs such as Bellona Foundation, World Wide Fund for Nature, Greenpeace and similar (international) non-state organisations have been vital advocacies of making states realize the challenge world is facing with regard to carbon dioxide emissions. While there is great ambiguity with regard to whether the Kyoto protocol and other similar agreements have had an impact, there is nevertheless evident that advocacy efforts have had an impact. Another issue fronted by NGOs and other non-state networks is the international band on landmines. It came as a result of a broad international popular engagement initiated first and foremost by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), The Red Cross Movement and many other actors, including the Norwegian People's Aid. The international initiative led to altering the status of landmines from being accepted as weaponry in violent conflicts to something the broader international society wanted to ban. The result was a Mine Ban Treaty<sup>12</sup> signed by 122 governments in December 1997.

Moreover, NGOs on the ground often make the impossible possible by doing what governments cannot or will not (Risse, 2002: 260; Simmons 1998: 87). Some humanitarian and development NGOs have a natural advantage because of their perceived neutrality and experience. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), for example, is able to deliver health care to political prisoners in exchange for silence about any human-rights violations that its members witness. Other groups such as Norwegian Refugee Council provide rapid relief during and after complex humanitarian disasters—with and without UN partner organisations. Transnational actors also provide monitoring and supply information to states and international organisations which would otherwise not be available because of concerns about sovereignty rights (Risse, 2002: 260). International NGOs also play critical roles in translating international agreements and norms into domestic realities. Where governments have turned a blind eye or proved ignorant, groups such as the Amnesty International call attention to violations of the UN Declaration on Human Rights. Perhaps one of the most vital but overlooked NGO role is to promote the societal changes needed to make international agreements work (Simmons, 1998: 87).

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<sup>12</sup> Also known as the Ottawa Treaty.

Last but not least, NGO judgments can be decisive in promoting or withholding public and political support. The World Bank learned this lesson after NGOs took part in a sustained campaign to spur greater openness and accountability and to encourage debt reduction and development strategies that were more equitable and less destructive to the environment. Now the World Bank includes NGOs in their discussions and they meet with several NGO leaders to discuss their proposals to increase the fund's transparency.

In most OECD countries, governments cover (directly and indirectly) between 70 and 95 percent of total NGO budgets (Lunde, 2000). Britain and the US constitutes the exceptions in this regard, nevertheless the overall contribution to NGO aid budgets may come to exceed 50 percent. Why do donor governments fund NGOs' budgets to such a large extent? What do they regard as the comparative edge or added value of aid through NGOs? The most obvious answer to it is NGOs to demonstrate their added value, by providing quality aid services in a more targeted and effective way than competing channels of development aid, or at least as effective as the best achievers among other channels (Lunde, 2002: 9). In practice, NGOs have to convince donor governments that they represent a robust way of matching aid resources with relevant demand in developing and post-conflict countries. Then again, how do governments decide what aid channels to use with regard to finding the best and most efficient aid agency, and the relative size and merit of each channel? Choosing aid channels should ideally flow from an objective analysis of aid goals and the competencies of the different candidates for aid service delivery to maximise those goal. However, in an imperfect world it rather seems to be a number of factors at work in an average donor country in terms of choosing efficient aid agencies. These are: (i) the main goals and sub-categories of goals that parliaments have decided should guide the use of aid funds, and the assumed relevance of NGOs in attaining them; (ii) political and ideological traditions in the respective donor countries; and, (iii) the size, role, profile and competence of the NGO community in question (Lunde, 2002: 10).

NGOs seek to operate outside existing formal frameworks, and to move independently to meet their goals and establish new standards that governments, institutions, and corporations are themselves compelled to follow through force of public opinion. However, despite the demonstrated capacity of NGOs to do good, their growing power on the ground has exposed them to heightened criticism, some of it justified. One

recent study on NGOs and peace building in Bosnia criticized the use of advertising (from signboards to t-shirts) by NGOs to promote their reconstruction programs to potential donors.<sup>13</sup> Such advertising, the study noted, had the effect of denigrating local rebuilding efforts and raising questions about where NGOs were actually putting their money. Other longer-term concerns loom for these service-delivery NGOs. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees warned in 1996 that if national governments continue to favour NGOs over multilateral agencies in donor assistance, they may undermine important systems of coordination and cooperation in large-scale emergencies. Intense competition among NGOs in the relief sector has also pushed the sector toward a form of oligopoly that threatens to crowd out smaller players, especially local NGOs in developing countries (Simmons, 1998: 88).

### 3.1.4 Institutional Structures

As already mentioned a large share of Norwegian foreign aid is channelled through NGOs and NGOs are also closely integrated in the government policy. This is to a great extent a result of the institutional structures that Norwegian foreign policy and development cooperation is situated within. The institutional structures are represented by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the MFA.

Norad was established as a directorate under the MFA in 1968. The Directorate had broader sphere of activity than the former institution and was instructed to “draw up plans for the use of Norway’s total official aid to developing countries and for the coordination of such aid” (Norad, 2004a). Norad became a government agency responsible for preparing and coordinating all official development aid, thus responsible for bilateral and long-term aid. The MFA was responsible for the administration of aid through international organisations – such as the UN, the World Bank, and the IMF – and administrating emergency relief and humanitarian aid activities.

The Government (Norad and the MFA) have channelled considerable amounts of their assistance through Norwegian and international NGOs. In general, development cooperation and peace building activities through NGOs can be classified within three main categories: (i) humanitarian aid in which implies protection of and aid to people

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<sup>13</sup> Study referred to in P.J. Simmons, 1998.

who are hit by natural or human created catastrophes, both on a short term basis (earthquake) and on long-term basis (refugees, conflict zones); (ii) long-term development cooperation in which also includes support for democratic processes, preserving public co-determination (participation) and state's respect for human rights; (iii) transitional assistance in which includes peace building in post-conflict areas and rebuilding after catastrophes (, 2006).

Bilateral aid implemented by the Government (Norad and the MFA) and NGOs covers a wide range of substantive areas, and both are present in them. The main distinction to be drawn is between humanitarian assistance and long-term development assistance. In the former category the MFA is the main donor, while implementation is almost exclusively the domain of NGOs and multilateral institutions. In long term development assistance, however, NGOs and the government (mainly through Norad) coexist far more substantively (and operationally) across different aid categories. The same holds to a large extent for so-called transition aid (transition between war and peace), even if that is a blend of short- and long term assistance.

The third category, transitional assistance, was first introduced in 2002 and included in the national budget. The new budget post is aimed at covering assistance to countries and areas recovering from conflict and natural disasters. Transitional assistance was introduced on the background of difficulties in finding resources for this type of development cooperation; institutionally and financially it fell between the traditional long-term development assistance and the more short term humanitarian assistance. Experiences from the field revealed that the time-span between the withdrawal of humanitarian assistance from a country, and the initiation of long-term development cooperation, was often too long. A flexible system of financing was therefore needed to reward and support active peace processes and reconstruction work.

However, the administration of development aid has also changed over time. From April 2004 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took over the responsibility for the bilateral development cooperation in which had been administrated by Norad. Norad's responsibility was concentrated on giving advice and being a 'good' dialogue partner in the development cooperation. Norad also channels a substantial portion of Norwegian development funds through Norwegian partners in developing countries in Africa, Asia, South and Central America, and Europe (Norad, 2004b). However, while Norad provides

funding for long-term assistance projects run by Norwegian NGOs aimed at civil society, funding for civil society projects in Western Balkan are managed by the MFA. The case of foreign aid towards the Western Balkans has held a unique position in terms of who administrates Norwegian efforts and activities in the region (Kamsvåg, 2007; Braathu, 2007). When efforts altered from being purely humanitarian to taking character of more transitional or long-term assistance, responsibility for funding was kept within the MFA. Even though Norad have had the main responsibility for managing long-term support through NGOs the MFA wished to be in control of which activities to support and which channels one should make use of. Both the MFA and the NGOs have acknowledged that there is a political component playing a central role in the allocation of means towards the Western Balkans. Thus, the impact of the involvement has been regarded as too important to be left with the Norad.

### 3.2 Norwegian NGOs as Transnational Actors

As defined in chapter 2, transnational relations are regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organisation (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 3). The non-state agents referred to range from international non-governmental organisations (INGO) and multinational corporations (MNC) to more loose social movements and epistemic communities. This study examines the role of Norwegian humanitarian NGOs and their relationship with state authorities in Norway in terms of foreign aid towards the Western Balkans. These NGOs can be regarded as transnational actors because they have created transnational links with partner organisations, social communities or movements, inside the respective countries. Their main objective is to enrol the support for peace and reconciliation and social development and to advocate the protection of human rights. Whether Norwegian NGOs operate on behalf of the Norwegian state or not is more diffuse. On the one hand NGOs act as autonomous actors with an independent agenda. On the other hand, they nevertheless operate as instruments of the national government. NGOs' foreign aid budgets are to a large extent covered by state funding. The Norwegian state channels a considerable amount of its long-term foreign aid contribution through NGOs because they can provide i.e. the expertise, information and personnel state



authorities consider as beneficial in order to provide efficient foreign aid. NGOs are also central actors in situations where humanitarian aid is imminently needed. In order to be better understand the somewhat diffuse relationship between NGOs as transnational actors and state authorities I explain in the following sections how the relationship developed, especially during the 1990s, why NGOs have a central part in Norwegian efforts in the Western Balkans, and what is regarded as their so-called 'added value' that NGOs they bring to development in their countries of operation.

### 3.3 Norwegian Engagement in the Western Balkans

In order to better understand the state authorities/ NGO nexus in terms of foreign aid towards the Western Balkans we also need to better understand the context in which Norwegian foreign aid takes place. The conflicts in the Western Balkans in the 1990s demanded a new way of managing foreign aid. The way Norwegian authorities have managed aid to foreign countries especially in the South was challenged. The new situation the conflicts in the Western Balkans represent altered the traditional approach to development aid. It is due to the fact that Western Balkan countries are European countries closer to home, they open up a new channel of influence in the European political domain, and they are not poor development countries but countries in a post-conflict or transition situation in need of perhaps other complex remedies. The following sections will give a brief introduction to the historical incidents that lead to Norwegian involvements in the Western Balkans, and what efforts have been done in terms of contributing to peace and reconciliation in the region.

#### 3.3.1 Short Historical Introduction

Norway together with many actors from the international community contributed with humanitarian aid to the Western Balkans from an early stage and is still today involved in a variety of long-term development activities. Several incidents lead to strong Norwegian commitment in the region. The late 1980s and early 1990s brought the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, and as westernization spread through the Balkans, many reforms were carried out that led to implementation of market

economy and to privatization, among other capitalist reforms. The Yugoslav federation also collapsed in the early 1990s, followed by an outbreak of violence and aggression, in a series of conflicts known alternately as the Yugoslav War(s), or *Third Balkan War*.<sup>14</sup> The disintegration of Yugoslavia was particularly the consequence of unresolved national, political and economic questions.

The ten days war in Slovenia in June 1991 was short and with few casualties. However, the war in Croatia in the latter half of 1991 brought many casualties and much damage. As the war eventually subsided in Croatia, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) started in early 1992. Peace would only come in 1995 after such events as the Srebrenica massacre, Operation Storm<sup>15</sup> and the Dayton Agreement – in which provided for a temporary solution – but nothing was permanently resolved. The Dayton Agreement consisted of two parts, a military and a civil. The military part implied that the UN-force was replaced with an international force (IFOR) under NATO command in order to implement the military aspects of the agreement. For implementing and overlooking the civil aspects of the agreement a High Representative was appointed.

The wars caused large migrations of population. However, not only war but also political pressures and threats caused the settlement and the national composition of population in all parts of Yugoslavia to change drastically. Initial upsets on Kosovo did not escalate into a war until 1999 when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) was attacked by member countries of NATO. These attacks lasted for several months placing Kosovo under the international community's trusteeship until a viable solution could be agreed to. The upsurge in Kosovo seriously destabilized Macedonia when an estimated 360,000 ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo took refuge in the country. The Macedonia conflict was an armed conflict which began when the an ethnic Albanian militant group (NLA) attacked the security forces of the Republic of Macedonia at the beginning of January 2001. Albanian radicals on both sides of the border took up arms in pursuit of autonomy or independence for the Albanian-populated areas of the Republic.

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<sup>14</sup> See for example Glenny, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> A large-scale military operation carried out by Croatia, in conjunction with the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to recapture areas of central Croatia's enclaves designated as United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs).

### 3.3.2 Norway's Engagement

The countries of the Western Balkans are still undergoing major economic, political and social restructuring. Reforms have been initiated in all of the countries, but they are often politically controversial. Euro-Atlantic integration enjoys strong support, but there is also considerable opposition to this in some countries. Although developments in the region over the last few years have generally been positive, the Western Balkans still have the potential for conflict and instability. Norway has for an extensive amount of time been committed to the work for greater stability and prosperity in the region.

Project assistance<sup>16</sup> to the Western Balkans have since the 1990s been carried out in cooperation with agents of the international society. The MFA underlines one of the main purposes of the Norwegian development assistance as being part of internationally agreed processes in which seeks to re-establish regional stability through appropriate assistance with regard to current needs and issues of importance.<sup>17</sup> This approach implies that the project assistance adjusts in accordance with altering conditions and needs within the receiving countries. The Norwegian project assistance to the Western Balkans can be divided into three stages: (i) humanitarian aid; (ii) peace-keeping, restoration and the return of refugees; (iii) building institutions and regional integration. In the early 1990s assistance was aimed at humanitarian situations and critical aid to refugees. After the signing of the Dayton peace agreement in 1995, a greater share of the assistance was aimed at reconstructing areas directly affected by the acts of war. This assistance was in particular aimed at reconstructing houses, restoring schools, and infrastructure such as electrical power and water supplies.

Today, building institutions and regional integration within the Euro-Atlantic cooperation are initiatives with great emphasis. The Euro-Atlantic cooperation is supported through strengthening state institutions, the transfer of expertise, education and industry development. Great focus has been placed on efforts of democratization, with particular emphasize on human rights, an independent media, reconciliation and programmes aimed at youths. Norwegian aid exceeded in 1999 NOK 1.2 billion to the

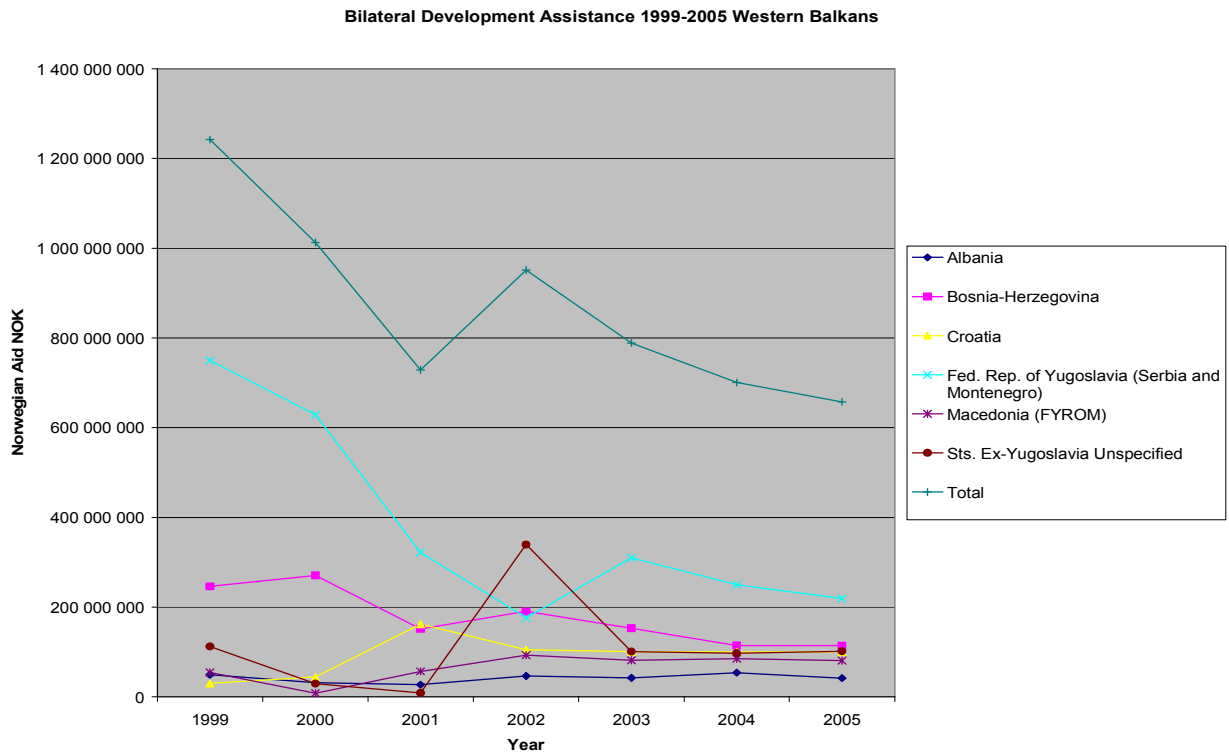
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<sup>16</sup> Financial or other forms of support for individual development project.

<sup>17</sup> Stated in an internal note at the MFA.

Western Balkans. However, until 2005 the total budget has been close to halved (see fig. 1). In 2005 the total budget was set to NOK 650 million (Norad statistics, 2007).

Fig.6



### 3.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter have presented the contextual framework in which we can expect mutual relationship between NGOs and the MFA. As mentioned in the previous chapters, whenever both share common interests, opportunities for mutual influence exists and states can try to use transnational actors to further their own interests. However, in order to better understand the relationship in which both influences each other we also need to understand the context in which this relationship is likely to occur. A field in which reciprocal relationship are especially salient is development cooperation politics. There are several features of the development aid domain in Norway in which such a relationship is likely to occur and create opportunities for mutual influence.

Development cooperation and the objective to promote Norway as a humanitarian “great power” have since the 1990s become central features of Norwegian foreign policy. During the 1990s foreign policy leadership decided to coordinate state interests with the non-governmental actors. The “Norwegian model” is said to be playing a central part of the Norwegian foreign aid strategy, and implies close ties and cooperation between state authorities, NGOs, research institutions and media. Norway has ever since the model was introduced relied heavily on Norwegian NGOs for delivering humanitarian aid, and a special feature of Norwegian ODA is the very large share allocated through NGOs. This is also the case with Norwegian transitional assistance and long-term commitment to the Western Balkans. Additionally the ‘added value’ component has had an impact on the role of NGOs within the development assistance domain in general and in particular with regard to assistance towards the Western Balkans. NGOs operating in the Western Balkans have continuously sought to demonstrate their added value, by providing quality aid services in a more targeted and effective way than competing channels of development aid, or at least as effective as the best achievers among other channels. At the same time the government has expressed great satisfaction with its cooperation with NGOs because they regard NGOs as valuable co-partners in the work for peace and stability in the region. As NGOs have been able to work together with local partners they have contributed to rebuild independent local networks. Additionally the Norwegian MFA has to some extent become dependent on the broad expertise and experiences from various activities in the region that are important to the MFA in order to carry out the comprehensive strategy laid out in policies.

The features of Norwegian development aid towards the Western Balkans discussed in this chapter create a complex relationship between the Norwegian MFA and Norwegian NGOs. The next chapter will examine this relationship more closely in terms of opportunities for mutual influence if and when actors share common interests. While this chapter have shown that reciprocal relationships are salient to development cooperation politics towards the Western Balkans, and that as a result converging or coinciding objectives may exist, the next chapter investigates *how* the objectives and interests of both the MFA and NGOs have come to converge in the case of the Norwegian policy towards the Western Balkans.

# Chapter 4:

## A Reciprocal Relationship between the MFA and NGOs

As I have argued in previous chapters state actors can influence transnational actors in order to influence their own interest. While it is commonly perceived that non-state actors seek to influence state institutions, I argue that the opposite also holds true in the Norwegian case: state authorities exercise substantial influence on Norwegian NGO activities in the Western Balkans in order to further their own interests. However, the extent of state influence on NGOs in this case is moderated by at least two factors: (i) whether the NGO is part of a broader *international agency* or *international alliance*; (ii) the *scope of activities* or *expertise* possessed by the respective organisations. Thus, if the NGO is member/part of an international network and thus somewhat committed to its activities, or/and if the expertise of the NGO is focused at a limited area or the scope of activities have a limited mandate, the Norwegian NGO is less likely to be influenced substantially by the Norwegian MFA.

From a state-centric point of view, interest groups and organisations are claimed to have had little influence on Norwegian foreign policy. According to Terje Tvedt, this point of view may give an adequate description of the relationship in general. However, he claims that it is *not* necessarily so when it comes to Norwegian foreign policy in terms of development cooperation and foreign aid issues (Tvedt, 1995). He argues that within this area NGOs have operated within the policy's open and noisy "numeric-democratic" scene and they have conducted a more quiet activity through what have been called the "corporative-pluralistic" channel (Tvedt, 1995: 261). He argues that the more efficient organisations became integrated within the political process state authorities were able to get hold of more foreign political tools. At the same time its foreign political autonomy opposite NGOs was undermined (Tvedt, 1995: 261). This development implies that while state authorities have tied NGOs

closer to themselves, and made the NGOs dependent upon the authorities, the authorities have become more dependent upon the organisations.

In the present chapter, I will examine the state/NGO nexus by looking at the objectives of Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian MFA in terms of foreign aid priorities and activities towards countries in the Western Balkans. The chapter's main purpose is to examine the extent to which the objectives of the actors coincide; a situation, which as I have argued in previous chapters, opens up opportunities for mutual influence. As I will show, while the objectives of both MFA and NGOs initially coincide to some extent as to the need to provide aid to the Western Balkans, such a situation can open up possibilities for the state to influence the NGOs to further a number of *other* (state) objectives. Objectives, which often being political or dealing with security issues, the NGO initially did not have or share with the MFA. Shared (often idealistic) rationales and aims, as well as target-group orientation with regard to efforts and activities in the Western Balkans, in some cases will result in NGOs furthering state interests which initially were not part of their aim or mandate. It is important to stress that this still holds true for the opposite, as stressed by the literature emphasizing NGOs' ability to influence state interests and policies, namely that in the process of policy formulation, NGOs influence the state to adopt policies which were not within the MFAs original mandate. The ensuing understanding of the policy-formulation process is thus one of *mutual* influence rather than a one-dimensional one (going either way).

I will continue in the next sections giving an account of the rationale behind the use of NGOs in the development aid domain. In the following section I will examine what the state objectives are towards the Western Balkans. Thereafter, I will examine the objectives presented by the 'Big Five' organisations. That is, the Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children in Norway and Norwegian Red Cross. Subsequently I will summarize the findings and compare the actors' objectives in order to see how they fit in line with the MFA's objectives and interests.

## 4.1 Why Use NGOs: Technical and Political Advantages

The Norwegian Government has traditionally highly prioritised and been actively involved in humanitarian aid and emergency relief. With regard to the situation in the Western Balkans during the 1990s the Government showed great engagement in the region and contributed with considerable large amount to emergency relief. In these circumstances it is far easier to mobilize NGOs who either are already there or can mobilize resources and personnel more effectively. While the Government will take on the main responsibility and manage the emergency relief and humanitarian assistance, NGOs are responsible for the actual implementing of the activities.

Humanitarian assistance involves immediate and effective relief such as medical assistance, food and non-food supplies and temporary shelter for refugees. Long-term development and post-conflict assistance towards regions such as the Western Balkans on the other hand is aimed at key reforms (such as security and police) and development processes, focus on democracy-building, long-term capacity- and institution-building, and private sector development. In situations where humanitarian aid is needed the government are usually dependent on NGOs to carry out the emergency relief. Governments do not have the capacity or personnel to act in ways NGOs do. The comparative advantage or added value of NGOs with regard to long-term development or post-conflict assistance is less 'obvious' than humanitarian assistance because the results of the assistance is likely to be vague and it takes time to show that the efforts applied have had substantial effects on the society. The NGOs need to prove that they can contribute in a more efficient way than states can because theoretically the Government could contribute in the same way as NGOs do.

For this reason it is all the more striking, as I will show below, that now humanitarian NGOs have played a central part in the long-term assistance. For the purpose of this study the comparative advantage in organisational terms is meant by that "an organisation has traits or features which make it more suitable for achieving a particular purpose than an organisation which has the same purpose but does not possess these traits or features" (Fowler quoted in Tvedt, 1995: 19). However, there is no consensus as to what the NGOs' comparative advantages in terms of development cooperation and foreign aid are. On the one hand some argue that NGOs are "more likely



to adopt a favourable orientation towards and effective support of the actors in micro-development than are governments” (Uphoff, 1987:14). Another comparative performance study concluded that “the limited evaluation work available so far “tended to show that NGOs have a comparative advantage in addressing basic human needs at the grassroots level” (OECD statistics referred to in Fowler, 1990).

There are many well reasoned arguments for letting NGOs implement projects and manage long-term development assistance. The conventional justification of humanitarian and rights-based organisations as state contractors is that they promote idealistic agendas, they have a civil society and rights-based approach to development and global justice and they are regarded as having a popular support base. This argument can be more thoroughly explained: First, NGOs possess expertise and fundamental knowledge of the civil society and its dynamics in the respective country. They act as a supplementing knowledge base in terms of sector-, issue- and local expertise in which state authorities wish to utilize in order to strengthen the total state’s effort. They also have closer contact with grass root communities and a “bottom-up” approach to development. A long record of expertise, broad network and informal contacts are qualities regarded as valuable to donor governments. In other words NGOs have been instrumental in helping the Government understand the “science” behind the issues that they seek to address (Simmons 1998: 86).

Second, NGOs argue they can provide quality aid services in a more targeted and effective way than competing channels of development aid. While the Government often need to present an integrated strategy toward a region, NGOs with specific competence can allow themselves be more focused and sharpen in their approach and activities. They are also regarded for being less bureaucratic and can act and implement projects more efficient.

Third, organisations act as “gap-fillers”. Sometimes as governments either downsize or have restricted capacity, and new challenges crowd the international agenda, NGOs increasingly fill the breach (Simmons 1998: 87). One argument with regard to the division of labour is that Governments should build capacity and sustain efforts of recipient governments, while NGOs should be charged with partnering with and assisting local NGOs in their political as well as social and humanitarian mission. NGOs (Norwegian) are in position of making partnerships with other organisations in the

respective countries. Direct and often politically sensitive support from a foreign government to a domestic NGO is controversial and blurs the conventional pattern of roles and responsibilities of different aid channels (Lunde 2002: 17). Such support (especially with explicit or implicit political objectives) risks confusing the division of labour between the different stakeholders in a given aid-receiving country. It will in many cases imply opposition to the government in charge. Critics argue that donors should contribute to a sound balance and relationship between the different stakeholders in a given recipient country and not blur the already messy social structures that often exist in many developing countries. In other words, NGOs on the ground often make the impossible possible by doing what governments cannot or will not. Especially humanitarian and development NGOs have a natural advantage because of their perceived neutrality and experience (Simmons 1998: 87).

The fourth argument is that NGOs are often regarded as institutions based on popular support. By including NGOs in the Government's work to discuss their proposals and priorities in terms of foreign political objectives they increase the authorities transparency (Simmons 1998:86), thus conferring the legitimacy of the policy of the Government. In other words, including NGOs as representatives of the civil society in the policy process is said to give the Government more profound popular support for their activities, thus the policy becomes more legitimate.

On the other hand, some question whether it is possible to compare NGOs and state authorities at all in terms of comparative advantage. Tvedt (1995) argues that NGOs and governments differ fundamentally, at least according to the rhetoric championed by many of the supporters of the "comparative advantage" argument. Many NGOs are based on strong ideological orientations, be they political or religious; "[t]hey are value-rational rather than means-rational (as state bureaucracies are said to be)" (Tvedt 1995: 20). To compare them generally would therefore entail comparison of entities with different rationales and aims. Tvedt also claims that in some cases NGOs and governments and NGOs and for-profit bodies have opposing development goals and declared differences in target-group orientation (Tvedt 1995: 20).

Since the criteria for successful activities vary, and relationships between the organisations and the state are influenced by national traditions, it is also impossible to draw any firm or useful conclusions about which strategic, administrative or operational

factors are important prerequisites for successful activities. To assess how NGO activities in general compare with government activities is also futile, since this depends on context in its widest meaning, the character of the particular NGO and the particular state apparatus. What is possible, however, is to discuss their strengths in relation to certain activities (Tvedt 1995: 22). And we need to acknowledge that while NGOs may have been successful in implementing projects aimed at civil society in the Western Balkans, it says nothing about comparative advantages in general, but only something about differences between particular governments and NGOs in particular areas at a special time in this country's history.

## 4.2 State Authorities' Objectives

In order to be able to examine to what extent the Norwegian state and Norwegian NGOs' objectives coincide in terms of interests and priorities towards the Western Balkans, I will start the analysis by looking at the objectives presented by the MFA. These are laid down primarily in documents such as white papers and national budgets and in guidelines for support for humanitarian aid and development cooperation.

The general objectives of the Norwegian development cooperation efforts cover a wide range of areas. It stretches from general humanitarian relief, fighting poverty efforts, and support social and economical development, to promoting human rights, strengthening democratic processes and support for peace and reconciliation efforts (MFA/Norad, 2002). Topics such as strengthening women participation, promoting children's, disabled and minorities' rights and HIV/AIDS related efforts are also given emphasis.

Efforts towards the Western Balkans are regarded as part of the peace and reconciliation engagement. MFA's general objectives of the peace and reconciliation efforts, are first and foremost to contribute to the development of stable democratic structure in countries where democracy has recently been (re-)introduced. Secondly, to support for peace and reconciliation processes in various general ways, and in particular when the conditions are prepositioned for Norwegian political and diplomatic engagement (MFA, 2000: 206). The National Budget also emphasises that efforts aimed at creating (rebuilding) confidence and the rebuilding of democratic institutions as well as

organisations in which can create a civil society are areas of major importance (commitment) (MFA, 2000: 206). As stated in the national budget of 1999-2000 (MFA) and the white paper (13, 1999-2000) priorities and arrangements of Norwegian support towards the Western Balkans should be based on the Stability Pact. The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SEE) was introduced by the EU presidency in June 1999. In the founding document, the EU, which has assumed a leading role in the Pact, undertakes to draw South Eastern Europe “closer to the perspective of full integration ... into its structures” (Stability Pact, 2004), including full membership. The Norwegian contribution was stated by the Government as part of a joint coordinated international effort in order to secure efficiency of the aid allocated. While the Government supports a joint effort, it also wished to sustain certain flexibility in terms of choosing various and effective channels for financial support.

In 2000 the budgeted contribution to projects in the Western Balkans by the Norwegian Government was approximately NOK 800 millions. According to the white paper no. 13 (1999-2000) further contributions to the region need to be adjusted in accordance with current situations, requirements in other regions and budget means available. The National Budget from the MFA of 2000-2001 confirms that the Stability Pact for SEE will act as the main framework of the assistance, and that a change of direction from humanitarian to long-term development efforts will be conducted in consultation with Norad. They emphasize that various forms of support for democracy will become more obvious. Short-term humanitarian aid will be restricted to areas where the need for such is present. It also states that from the Norwegian side the need for healthy economic reforms and to actively prevent aid dependence will be emphasized (MFA 2000).

In the white paper published in 1999 the Government came with suggestions for initiatives and priorities to meet the needs in the Western Balkans. First, main priority was given to humanitarian aid, including mine clearing. Secondly, the Government also recognized the imminent need for rebuilding and modernizing the infrastructure. The projects such as securing electricity, power and water supplies were prioritised. Thirdly, the white paper emphasizes the need for strengthening the democratic processes in the region. Initiatives such as supporting independent media, strengthening local political parties, organizing free elections and training of people elected by popular vote, building

institutions and reinforcing the rule of law, supporting labour movements and local NGOs, and put emphasis on respect for human rights was regarded as highly prioritised (MFA, 1999). The fourth focus has been on developing a market based economy and support for the development of regional industry.

The main objectives towards the region are as stated in the white paper mentioned above was reconfirmed in the National Budget of 2000-2001. It restated that the Government commits itself to perform sound and efficient humanitarian assistance, strengthen peace and democratization processes, developing a constitutional state and reforms within the security sector, contribute to fighting organized crime, contributing rebuilding and reforms activities, and strengthening the regional dimension of the assistance (MFA, 2000). The MFA has followed up the main objectives by supporting projects such as police training, advice, and assistance within reform processes. Special focus has been given to fighting corruption and trafficking in women and children (MFA, 2007). Measures targeting children, young people and women have also been given high priority.

The Government has made use of a wide variety of channels in order to coordinate its effort. The UN has received substantial funding from the Norwegian Government, as well as the international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Additionally financial support have been allocated through Norwegian and international NGOs, Norwegian departments and research institutions, Norwegian and local industry, and through a “Civilian-Military Cooperation” in connection with the Norwegian defence forces.

According to the White Paper 13 (1999-2000) the Government stated that they regard NGOs as important co-players in the work for promoting peace and stability in the region. The Government emphasize that they will utilize this channel in areas where they regard the NGOs can provide specific competence and have a comparative advantage. Below I will examine the various objectives held by the ‘Big Five’ organisations and see to what extent these objectives are in line with Governmental interests.

### 4.3 Organisational Objectives

As mentioned in chapter 3, Norwegian NGOs have since the 1990s deliberately been harmonized within the foreign political apparatus. It was generally perceived that a closer tie between NGOs and state authorities within the foreign political domain was beneficial for both parts. Most people would argue that these ties have not weakened but rather grown stronger over time. Thus, one could assume that the actors' objectives would slowly move in the same direction due to increasing interaction and close dialogue between them. The purpose of this section is to show that the organisations' objectives to a great extent are in line with the governmental interest. However, we need to keep in mind that the following section does not tell us explicitly who is influencing whom, only that their objectives coincide. This question will nevertheless be discussed in the next chapter.

The term non-governmental organisation is rather elusive. However, for the purpose of this study the organisations in question are similar in the way that they are all humanitarian organisations and that most of their work are targeted at the civil society. While the 'Big Five' organisations share these similarities they also distinguish from each other in several ways. They differ from each other by, for example, what segment of the society they represent, whom their activities target, and what main principles they promote.

The Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) is the labour movement's humanitarian organisation for solidarity. They have chosen to develop its international cooperation in two major ways: firstly, support to liberation movements and groups fighting for political and social justice; secondly, support for the development of society on the local level in close cooperation with local popular organisations so that they can themselves gain control over their own development (NPA, 2003: 10-11). The Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is an ecumenical organisation who works through churches, church-based, faith-based and value-based organisations in order to promote and protect human dignity by upholding human development, human rights and human security (NCA, 2005: 8). Their appeal is that development aid through non-governmental organisations should principally be directed towards the promotion of democracy and human rights through helping strengthening civil society in the cooperation land in question (NCA, 2005: 6).

Save the Children in Norway (SCN) is a non-governmental member organisation which is party-politically and religiously neutral. Their objective is to fight for children's rights and deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide (SCN, 2007a). The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent, humanitarian non-governmental organisation which provides assistance, protection and durable solutions to refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide. The Norwegian Red Cross is also part of the International Red Cross humanitarian movement. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being, and thus the objective is to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found (Norwegian Red Cross, 2003: 2-3). Do these organisational objectives listed above conflict with the overall objectives and comprehensive strategy present by the Government with regard to their Western Balkan policy?

The three organisations NPA, NCA and the SCN have specific strategies towards the Western Balkans, while neither the Norwegian RC nor NRC have separate strategies. The latter organisations work primarily with activities aimed particularly at humanitarian assistance and emergency relief. The next section will first give a presentation of the three region specific strategies by the NCA, the NPA and the SCN. Secondly, the more global strategies by the RC and NRC will be presented, how they relate to the Balkan region and to what extent the 'Big five' organisations' objectives coincide with the MFA's interests.

#### 4.3.1 Norwegian Church Aid

The Balkans Sub-Regional Programme Plan by the NCA states that their overall development goals in the region are "[t]o support and strengthen church and faith-based partners and selected secular partners to be credible and relevant actors within civil society. To strengthen their participation in civil society's response to the challenges facing their respective constituencies as well as society at large" (NCA, 2002: 16). These goals are aimed in particular at the level of local authorities, specifically in relation to water and sanitation; reconciliation, peace building and democratisation; HIV/AIDS and food security (NCA, 2002).

The NCA operational method is either directly implementing programs (as have been mostly the case in Kosovo) or working through local partners and their programs. According to the Programme Plan the primary concern for NCA is to assist vulnerable or disadvantage groups, like minorities, refugees, IDPs and returnees or rural population. They emphasize that the gender-dimension will “to the greatest extent possible be streamlined into all programs”. In this matter priority will be given to special projects aimed at particularly disadvantaged groups such as Roma women or chronically poor rural women (NCA, 2002). Between the years 1999 and 2005 NCA have received funding for projects aimed at infrastructure such as rebuilding water and sanitation facilities, camp management and return assistance for IDPs and the Roma populations, supporting local capacities peace and reconciliation efforts such as inter-ethnic and inter-faith and religious dialogue. The NCA has also received governmental funding aimed at HIV/AIDS related work.

Most infrastructure activities by the NCA fit well in line with the priorities of the MFA. So do the human rights related work in which NCA put great emphasis on supporting disadvantage groups such as refugees and women. The NCA has also been strongly involved in promoting reconciliation among the people in the Western Balkans. The MFA have put great emphasised on the need to engage in reconciliation and peace efforts in the region. They have nevertheless been less specific when stating who such efforts should be aimed at. The religious aspect is more or less left out in the documents expressing the MFA’s priorities. However, that clearly gives the NGOs more leverage for whom they want their projects to be aimed.

With regard to NCA’s projects aimed at HIV/AIDS activities it is less clear how it fits in line with MFA’s priorities. The MFA has not explicitly given attention to the issue in the documents stating the guidelines for support and MFA’s priorities towards the Western Balkans. The MFA is nevertheless not unfamiliar with dealing with HIV/AIDS issues, and has strongly been involved in such work especially in the African countries. However, the MFA has clearly not disregarded the issue of HIV/AIDS in the Western Balkans, by supporting NCA’s efforts. But it is nevertheless a subject which the MFA has given somewhat less attention to compare to other issues.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> During the last few years both the NCA and SCN have received signals from the MFA that it will be necessary to phase out on-going HIV/AIDS projects funded by state means.



### 4.3.2 Norwegian People's Aid

NPA has been working in the region of South East Europe (SEE) since 1993. The NPA mission statement in the region states that the organisations is actively involved in developing a viable civil society as a cornerstone for democracy, bulwark against authoritarianism and foundation for long term stability in the region (NPA, 2006: 3). From the organisation's point of view the organisation has a comparative advantage due to long experience and presence in the region. As stated in the NPA's SEE strategy document the organisation has the competence in which is needed to meet the real needs and priorities of local communities and activists in the focus areas. The organisation claims it has an overview of the socio-political situation, an experienced expert staff, and familiar with local, national and international actors (NPA, 2006).

Since 2000, four main activities have been taken place in the Western Balkan region with support from the NPA: (i) free press in the Balkans; (ii) mine-clearing work; (iii) "Women Can Do It"-project; and (iv) human rights training. Projects aimed at the region as a whole have mainly been aimed at the media, the humanitarian sector and the development of the civil society. Projects have been initiated in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia with regard to networking, support and secure the establishment of organisations, and educating journalists and leaders of media institutions. Country specific projects such as The Mine Program in BiH, cooperation with Croatian authorities and international organisations, and support for local organisations in the work for stabilizing the democratisation process in the country, and support for creating Serbian networks for local independent media, have been the NPA's core activities. Other projects are aimed at rehabilitating schools, and support for local organisations that promote human rights and prevent nationalism from flourishing.

NPA has also contributed in the training of women who are socially active in the society through their programme "Women Can Do It" (Kvinner Kan). Many of activities mentioned above are aimed at refugees, IDPs and the Roma population (gypsies), and recently at women.

Mine-clearance has been one of the main activities of the NPA in the Western Balkans throughout the time NPA has been involved, and thus become a central partner of the MFA in this respect. The other activities with high priority implemented by the NPA are aimed more directly at the civil society and can be categorized into three

different focus areas. The first area is integration of the marginalized, in which target groups such as IDPs, refugees and the Roma population. The second focuses on increased civic participation by especially supporting women, youth, electorate and local communities. The third focus area is media development in which the organisation works together with local media, journalists and the general public. These focus areas fit well in line with the commitment to strengthen democratic processes in the region as emphasised by the MFA.

### 4.3.3 Save the Children Norway

Save the Children Norway (SCN) started their work in the Western Balkans first in Albania during the Kosovo crisis in 1999, and later in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. Save the Children Albania Programme is a joint programme of Save the Children Norway, UK, Italy and Sweden. The programme's strategic goal is to ensure Albanian children's rights survival, development, protection and participation, by strengthening partnerships with government, civil society, and children (SCN, 2007). Their work aims primarily at basic education, early childhood development, convention of the rights of the child advocacy, violence against and sexual abuse of children and children with disabilities.

SCN opened its Regional Programme for South East Europe out of the Regional Office in Sarajevo in 2000. Initial activities had an emergency character which swiftly shifted its focus on strengthening the civil society sector and the governmental institutions in the areas related to promotion and protection of children rights in the post-conflict and transitional societies of Bosnia and Herzegovina (both entities), the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro (SCN, 2007b). In working on accomplishment of its program objectives, SC Norway SEE cooperates with governmental and non-governmental organizations. This cooperation is based on development of long term cooperation with partner organizations through provision of professional and financial support. Professional support to partner organizations includes capacity building in the organizational and development areas as well as networking with other relevant stakeholders in their respective areas of work. The SCN argue that in this way the institutional capacities of the organizations that will in future overtake the responsibility

for the work and influencing positive change on children's situation are strengthened ensuring the sustainability of the interventions after the end of the support by Save the Children Norway (SCN, 2007b).

The programme priorities for the SCN's regional programme are defined in the four-year strategy plan of Save the Children Norway SEE (2006 – 2009). Projects implemented on the regional level are focused on "Strengthening implementation and monitoring of children's rights". Specific objectives of Save the Children Norway SEE Regional Office relate to important external conditions necessary to achieve sustainable and lasting results for children. In other words, the SC will combat economic and political structures and systems that violate children's rights and achieving better results for children through a stronger Save the Children (SC, 2007b). Examples of project activities in line with the SEE program have been 'Child Trafficking Prevention', 'Basic Education Right', Sexual Education and HIV/AIDS prevention in BiH', and 'Regional Network of Ombudsman for Children'.

The MFA have expressed great concern with improving the condition for women, children and youths in the Western Balkans. With regard to efforts aimed at children, rebuilding schools and giving children equal rights to education have been important MFA priorities (see for example MFA, 1999a, 199b). While the Norwegian government has been one of the greatest contributors to the UNICEF and their work in the Western Balkans, the SCN has to a large extent received funding from the MFA for their activities in the region. Most of the activities by the SCN are initiated in cooperation with other national SC organisations. However, some activities and projects are initiated by the organisation itself and others are responses to International Save the Children Alliance appeals. This implies that their projects are often responses to initiatives taken within the greater alliance and not necessarily actions taken at the national level.

#### 4.3.4 Norwegian Refugee Council

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent humanitarian organization whose task is to assist and protect people who have been forced to flee their home countries (refugees), or their homes within their country (IDPs), due to war or conflict. The main objective is protecting the rights of refugees. They base their activities on the

principles set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights and on global and regional refugee agreements and conventions such as the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.<sup>19</sup> The type of activities offered by the NRC range from the distribution of food and other emergency assistance, building and reparation of shelter and schools (Camp management), primary teaching for children and young people (Education), and Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA). In most of the countries in the Western Balkans NRC have seconded election experts and observers, and seconded personnel to various international organisations such as the OSCE mission, the ECMM (European Commission Monitor Mission), the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) and UNMIK (UN Mission In Kosovo). Moreover, NRC have been engaged with projects such as Civil Rights Projects (CRP), legal aid to IDPs and refugees, and to some extent capacity building of local NGOs. Additionally NRC has contributed to the rehabilitation of health centre and houses, rehabilitation and repatriation of minority returns such as the “Refugee Self Help Shelter” in Vojvodina, one of the two autonomous provinces in Serbia, and the rehabilitation of infrastructure.

The priorities of the NRC fit well in line with the priorities of the MFA. The protection of and relief for refugees and displaced persons has been of great concern within the MFA. The NRC has been a central partner to the MFA in order to meet these concerns. Additionally the NRC has received funding for secondment of personnel to positions in various international organisations. These activities are very much in line with the MFA’s interest. That is to take part of a broader international engagement and to be able to have Norway represented within these organisations. In this way the NRC are important co-partners in the Norwegian official engagement in the Western Balkans.

#### 4.3.5 Norwegian Red Cross

The overall strategy for the Norwegian Red Cross (RC) states that “[t]he Red Cross is needed in a world, where people are afflicted by poverty, natural disasters, epidemics, violence and armed conflict” (RC, 2005). Their aim is to act as a “courageous voice” to

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<sup>19</sup> The convention was approved at a special United Nations conference on 28 July 1951. It was initially limited to protecting European refugees after World War II but a 1967 Protocol removed the geographical and time limits, expanding the Convention’s scope. It is also interesting to note that unlike the UNHCR, the mandate of the NRC does not limit itself to refugees per se, but also includes other categories of displaced people, such as IDPs.

ensure respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law. While great efforts is being put down in response to a variety of needs in Norway they also stress the importance of assisting their sister societies in countries that are hard hit by poverty, conflicts and natural disasters, and to strengthen their joint abilities to help where the need is greatest (Norwegian RC, 2005). The Norwegian RC also participates in international cooperation in order to provide vulnerable groups with access to vaccines, to prevent infectious diseases and contribute towards better health.

In general the Norwegian RC does not set individual agendas aimed at activities abroad. They usually join in on IFRC and ICRC appeals whenever they are published. Most financial support applications to the MFA are aimed at the purpose of following up these international appeals. There is no regional or specific country specific assistance strategy available for the Western Balkans presented by the IFRC. However, the Federation presents an annual report for each country in the beginning of the year where objectives, achievements and constraints are accounted for.

In 1999 and the beginning of the new millennium most appeals were directed at “Crisis in the Balkans”, “Humanitarian Aid”, and “Disaster Preparedness”. In 2001 much attention was given to the flood disaster that called for RC engagement in the Balkans. From 2002 and onwards most appeals have been related to the Federation’s six priority programme areas in the respective countries. That is: “Disaster Response” to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups in countries in the Western Balkans (refugees, minorities, newly displaced people, host families) through provision of relief aid; “Disaster Preparedness” to further develop the Disaster Preparedness activities of the national Red Cross in order to increase its effectiveness in local disasters; “Health and Care” in order to continue to provide health services and public education and support the most vulnerable groups of the society; “Humanitarian Values” to contribute to further promotion of humanitarian values in the civil society; “Organizational Development” to continue to strengthen the overall capacity of national Red Cross organisations in order to establish well-functioning society; “Co-ordination and Management” to assist newly established Red Cross Society in Balkan countries to develop its capacities and skills to be able to efficiently help vulnerable populations through its programmes and activities (IFRC, 2002). The six core areas are not applied to each country to the same extent. They are rather put

together in a country specific annual appeal to fit with the circumstances in the various countries where RC are operating.

Yet, most activities by the Norwegian RC in the Western Balkans are in accordance with ICRC and IFRC appeals, they have time to time initiated individual projects, funded partly with governmental assistance and partly own resources. During the time of the Kosovo crisis in 1999 the Norwegian RC initiated a national fund-raising campaign. A large amount of the collected funds was allocated to a mental hospital and an agriculture workshop in Kosovo, the management of a soup kitchen in Serbia, and a project in which contracted ambulances and training of personnel in cooperation with governments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. These initiatives were solely Norwegian efforts and was not responses to appeals by the Federation.

The MFA regards the International Red Cross' priorities as setting the benchmark for Norwegian efforts in the region (MFA, 1999a), and the Norwegian RC has been a central partner to the MFA in distributing humanitarian relief such as temporary hospitals, medicines and medical personnel. While most of the appeals the Norwegian RC has responded to between 1999 and 2005, is more of a humanitarian character, such as relief during flood emergencies or relief to people during the cold winters in the Western Balkans, they nevertheless engaged in transitional assistance projects. This reflects the strong position of Red Cross within the MFA and thus gives the organisations an advantage that the other organisations do not have.

#### 4.3.6 Coinciding Objectives

To what extent do NGOs' and state authorities' have coinciding objectives with regard to support to development cooperation in the Western Balkans? The comparative advantage of NGOs with regard to humanitarian assistance will not be further elaborated here as it has been elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> However, I will concentrate on the objectives with regard to civil society efforts. The Government seems to acknowledge that NGOs possess competence within areas such as human rights activities, return of refugees, health and education. They also acknowledge that NGOs are important actors in rebuilding democratic structures and implementing dialogue and reconciliation projects. Both RC and NRC

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<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Lunde, 2002; MFA, 1995.

have been important partners especially in terms of preventing from or relief in humanitarian catastrophes. These are also organisations that do not have a specific regional strategy towards the Western Balkans. The two organisations in the “Big Five” group are the ones that primarily have aimed their work at humanitarian assistance. It is difficult to argue otherwise than that they are fulfilling the objectives of the government as well as their own in situation of emergency by providing relief to distressed people. However, they also extend their work from being solely emergency relief to include transition aid – a blend of short- and long-term assistance, as they have been doing in the Western Balkans.

The Norwegian RC has been involved in providing emergency relief such as, temporary housing, field hospitals, clean water, food, etc., to being involved in repatriation and reintegration projects, anti-trafficking projects, and support for various ICRC and IFRC Appeals. NRC has first and foremost been involved in support for refugees in times of emergency. Yet, according to Norad statistics of the Norwegian involvement in the Western Balkans in the period 1999-2006,<sup>21</sup> they too have furthered their work to support for civil rights projects, legal aid for IDPs and refugees, reconstruction for minority return and of housing and infrastructure. The activities provided by RC and NRC, and listed briefly above, clearly fall within the first and second objectives in the White Paper (13, 1999-2000) that emphasised the need for humanitarian aid, rebuilding and modernizing the infrastructure. NPA, NCA and SC are organisations that have been involved in the humanitarian relief work in the Western Balkans but their efforts are first and foremost aimed at projects with long-term perspectives, projects which initially fell outside of their mandate. This is especially telling for NPA and NRC which is first and foremost humanitarian organisations.

As shown in the previous section both the MFA and the NGOs clearly agree on the ends in which Norwegian efforts are to achieve. But what if the MFA and the NGOs comply to the same objectives and not with the means in order to obtain those objectives? Yet, whereas their interests are usually ultimate goals for NGOs, the same interests are sometimes only partial or instrumental goals for states. The government might support an NGO because it shares its humanitarian mission in a foreign country, but also for other overarching foreign policy reasons (Högel and Peretz, 2005). It is a mechanism for

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<sup>21</sup> Most of these statistics were made available to me through personal email correspondence with Norad.

state influence on transnational actors by using value-interests to achieve non-value goals (Payne, 2001). Another mechanism is to influence “the normative framework of meaning” (Högel and Peretz, 2005) in a policy area, so that transnational activism takes place in a normative context that better suits state interests. Examples within development aid as well as the Western Balkan policy area can be seen as the state’s attempt at reshaping the normative framework of development cooperation by incorporating new concepts such as “institution building”, “transfer of competence” and “local ownership”. These terms are often used in official MFA documents such as various white papers, strategic framework and guidelines for project support documents. These documents are then again often used by NGOs in order to help them formulate applications which are in line better in line with the Government’s current priorities (Kjærnet, 2007; Petersen, 2007).

As already mentioned above, the Norwegian Model constitutes the basis for Norwegian efforts abroad. It is defined as different entities – state institutions, NGOs, academic institutions and the media – join hands in implementing of Norway’s foreign aid policy (Borchgrevink, 2004b: 176). In this context it implies that Norwegian NGOs and state authorities have developed strong ties and close dialogue in their ambitions and efforts towards the Western Balkans. Consequently one can assume that such a relationship has an affect on who influences whom. It is likely to assume that when two actors interact closely over time they will influence each other, directly and indirectly, in terms of objectives, priorities and means. Thus makes it easier to agree on not only the ends but also the means in which Norwegian efforts should make use of.

If interests between states and transnational actors (NGOs) coincide, cooperation can be conducted openly, as loose interest coalitions, within advocacy networks or as public-private ownerships (Högel and Peretz, 2005: 471). The Norwegian government and NGOs involved want to contribute to restabilising the region, and to promote social development as well as economic prosperity. In order to reach these objectives NGOs and the Norwegian Government are involved together in or work in close symbiosis with (financially and at the implementation level) projects aimed at promoting democracy and reconciliation, support for human rights and rule of law, strengthening civil society and local initiatives; in spite of the fact that many of the NGOs involved are organisations meant to deal with primarily short-term, immediate humanitarian activities.



## 4.4 Chapter Conclusion

In situations where humanitarian aid is needed the government are usually dependent on NGOs to carry out the emergency relief. Governments do not have the capacity or personnel to act in ways NGOs do. As the situation becomes less imminent and the need for humanitarian relief reduces the actors' efforts aims to a larger extent at long-term assistance. The arguments for relaying on NGOs in terms of long-term assistance and discussed in this chapter are that NGO often act as a supplementing knowledge base, which provide the Government with information it otherwise would not have had access to. NGOs have also been by many states regarded as a foreign aid channel which can provide quality aid in a more targeted and effective way than competing channels. They can also act as 'gap-fillers' in order to fill the breach when states' efforts are constrained or limited. NGOs may also legitimate state policies.

The present chapter have shown that while the objectives of both MFA and NGOs initially coincide to some extent as to the need to provide aid to the Western Balkans, such a situation can open up possibilities for the state to influence the NGOs to further a number of *other* (state) objectives. Objectives, which often being political or dealing with security issues, the NGO initially did not have or share with the MFA. The promotion of value interests are often followed close by non-value interests. While the Norwegian MFA have framed its interests as promoting human rights, encouraging solidarity and strengthening civil society, it has also emphasised objectives such as regional stability, strengthening democratic processes, political and social development, and contributing to European and transatlantic integration such as the EU and NATO.

Again, it is important to stress that this still holds true for the opposite, as stressed by the literature emphasizing NGOs' ability to influence state interests and policies, namely that in the process of policy formulation, NGOs influence the state to adopt policies which were not within the MFAs original mandate. The next chapter will investigate how mutual influence are exercised and also how the extent of state influence on NGOs in this case is moderated by various characteristics of the 'Big five' organisations.

# Chapter 5: Mutual Influence between Transnational Actors and the State

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the fact that state and NGOs initially had converging value interests, made it possible for them to collaborate within the context of the Norwegian aid and development policy in the Western Balkans. Furthermore, as this collaboration went on, the NGOs, of which several are originally mainly committed to short-term humanitarian relief and aid, have been strongly involved in the long-term development activities of the Norwegian government. Thus, to recall Hëgel and Peretz' argument, while it was the shared value interests that brought NGOs and the state together initially, as a result of the collaboration, the NGOs became increasingly involved in furthering other non-value goals of the state.

In the present chapter, I set out to understand which factors facilitate such influence. While I argue that state institutions, such as the MFA, have an effect on NGOs' activities and priorities, the extent of state influence on NGOs is constrained due to at least two factors: i) whether the NGO is *connected to an international agency or international alliance*, (ii) the *scope of activities or expertise* possessed by the respective organisations. Thus, as the present study shows if the NGO is member/part of an international network or/and if the expertise of the NGO is focused on a limited area or if the scope of activities have a limited mandate, the influence of the Norwegian MFA is less substantial.

The chapter begins with showing first, how the state can exercise influence on NGOs, and thereafter how NGOs exercise influence on the state. The chapter follows with a section that investigates the factors constraining state's opportunity to affect NGOs. Towards the end I give an account on why organisations such as the NPA, and to some extent the NCA are more likely to be influenced by the MFA than others.

## 5.1 State Influence on NGOs

As already mentioned a government might support an NGO because it shares its humanitarian mission in a foreign country, but also for other overarching foreign policy reasons. Thus, engagement abroad opens up new channels of influence in both the European and international political domain. As Høgel and Peretz have demonstrated, a mechanism for state influence on transnational actors consists of using value interests to achieve non-value goals (2005: 472). Moreover, they also suggest a more sophisticated mechanism. That is to influence the “normative framework of meaning” (Høgel and Peretz, 2005: 472) in a policy area, so that transnational activism takes place in a normative context that better suits state’s interests. The MFA have framed its interests as promoting human rights, strengthening democratic processes, and contribute to social economical development as central elements of its support for peace and reconciliation efforts. The MFA creates a framework of meaning, by influencing NGOs value interest, in order to achieve their non-value interest, as in order to make Norway more visible and to strengthening Norwegian position abroad. In other words, Norwegian efforts abroad is part of a strategy to open up more channels of influence to European and international political domains, in which they otherwise would either have had limited influence over or access to.

To exercise influence on transnational actors, states have to offer something in return. This can be resources, or a framework of meaning as described in the previous section. The most obvious resource the state can offer is financial support for NGO projects. Norwegian NGOs’ foreign aid is to a large extent provided by the MFA. Government funding of projects towards the Western Balkans are provided on a one year basis which implies that organisations need to apply each year in order to further ongoing projects or implement new ones. In situations where state institutions interact with NGOs it is important to distinguish between formal and informal point of contact. Formal point of contact can be explained by contact in which is done in accordance with convention or etiquette; and is constituted as official. The informal channel is where contact is made in an unofficial manner, and not imposed by some rule of conduct or regulation.

When distinguishing between formal and informal channels of influence the MFA is said to have formal influence by having the political power to allocate the state's financial resources. In other words, the MFA actual does the selection of which projects to support. The MFA considers applications from organisations in terms of three qualifications: i) the 'quality' of the application itself; (ii) previous experiences with the organisation and achievements and results of completed projects; (iii) the extent of the objectives of the application/project fits within the priorities in the national budget and guidelines set by the MFA (Kamsvåg, 2007).

Once a year the NGOs are invited to a formal meeting with the MFA. The MFA is divided into sections with specific areas of responsibility. As in the case of issues regarding the Western Balkans, NGOs engaged within this region meet with the Western Balkans section within the MFA. The Section of Western Balkan Affairs is responsible for giving assurance to projects in which it regards as both competent and credible and are in accordance with the priorities and objectives stated in the relevant guidelines and provisions. The meeting is moreover not only restricted to the 'Big Five' organisations by to the broader NGOs community with commitments in the region. Throughout the meeting the MFA informs NGOs what political priorities the MFA has for the coming year and they discuss country specific priorities (Kamsvåg, 2007).<sup>22</sup> While, at least all 'Big Five', organisations invite the MFA to separate meetings in order to inform the MFA of their points of view and their activities, the information meeting arranged by the MFA is particularly aimed at signalling the MFA's priorities and focus areas for the coming budget year (Kamsvåg, 2007). The main purpose of the meeting is to specify the guidelines for support and clearly indicate what the main objectives and priorities of the Government are (Kamsvåg, 2007), in order for the organisations to better steer their projects in the same direction as the MFA interests.

The MFA do not only exercise influence on the NGOs by signalling their current priorities and main objectives. The MFA also decides which projects applied for by NGOs will receive state funding. According to the guidelines for government funding organisations who apply for financial support for humanitarian aid, human rights and democracy efforts need to be able to provide "swift, efficient and quality humanitarian support [...] contribute to peace and reconciliation in conflict situations

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<sup>22</sup> E-mail correspondence with Søren Pedersen at SCN on 20 October 2007.

through both preventive and post-conflict activities [...] and also promote human rights, the rule of law, political pluralism and democracy” (MFA/Norad, 2002).

The way in which the MFA evaluates the various applications has three implications for the NGOs applying for project support. First, they need to make sure that their application is in line with the “Logical Framework Approach” format required by the MFA. The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) which is based on the “Logical Framework” method,<sup>23</sup> is a way of structuring the main elements in a project, highlighting logical linkages between intended inputs, planned activities and expected results (Norad, 1999). Thus, the organisations need to address the objectives of their projects in this particular format. According to the guidelines for government funding organisations who apply for financial support for humanitarian aid, human rights and democracy efforts need to be able to provide “swift, efficient and quality humanitarian support [...] contribute to peace and reconciliation in conflict situations through both preventive and post-conflict activities [...] and also promote human rights, the rule of law, political pluralism and democracy” (MFA/Norad, 2002).

While most NGO representatives interviewed in this study agree with the way they are required to structure the applications they nevertheless emphasis that it helps them to shape the applications in a manner that ‘pleases’ the MFA (Kjærnet, 2007; Myrvold, 2007; Pedersen, 2007; Petersen, 2007). NGOs examined in this study have experienced that a quality application is an application in which can fulfil the requirement set in the LFA. It follows that the better the NGOs are to fulfil these requirements the more likely they are to receive the funding.

Secondly, the NGOs often need to prove their efficiency and quality by referring to previous experiences and achievements. This implies that most organisations seek to highlight success stories and to down-play projects that have not achieved the results as planned when applying for financial support (Pedersen, 2007). Even though NGOs are required to report to the MFA on unforeseen challenges and how these where met, it is nevertheless the NGO’s ability to prove their track-record that has an effect on the MFA’s decisions (Kjærnet, 2007; Pedersen, 2007). This

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<sup>23</sup> The first “Logical Framework” was developed by the U.S.AID at the end of the 1960’s, and have since been utilized by many of the larger donor organisations, both multilateral and bilateral. OECD’s Development Assistance Committee is promoting use of the method among the member countries. The Nordic countries have also shown interest in the use of the “Logical Framework”. See also Norad, 1999.

implies again that the better NGOs are to flag success stories the more likely they are to receive funding.

The third and the most decisive channel of influence the MFA can exercise towards the NGOs is that the MFA approves of project applications as far as they are in line with the interests and objectives of the government. The most important provisions for NGOs applying for financial support for projects in the Western Balkan region are the White Paper no. 13 (1999-2000), yearly budget propositions presented by the MFA (budget line 192, post 72) and in the “Guidelines for subsidy arrangement...” (MFA/Norad, 2002). Some organisations claim they “give what the government wants” (Kjærnet, 2007) in terms of what projects they seek to implement and what they believe the MFA are willing to fund. Others claim that they seek to act in accordance with their mandate and their own priorities but they nevertheless take notice of what the MFA expresses as their priorities (Myrvold, 2007; Pedersen, 2007; Pilegaard, 2007). Søren Pedersen at SCN stated that the organisation (SCN) is in the short run able to cover projects rejected by the MFA with own expenses. However, they are nevertheless in the long run dependent on donors and thus cannot deny that the organisation adjusts their priorities in a more MFA-friendly way in order to provide finances.

Since many organisations are dependent on government funding it affects the way in which the MFA exercises influence on the NGOs. The MFA can make demands which NGOs need to comply with. With regard to how humanitarian organisations seek to obtain these resources the MFA exercises influence on NGOs. First NGOs need to provide quality applications in line with the format required by the MFA. Secondly, they need to show positive results and achievements of previous efforts. Third, they need to aim their projects towards focus areas and target groups in line with the priorities by MFA.

Most organisations are of the opinion that they cooperate more than they conflict with the MFA. However there is one issue that seem to form different opinions among the ‘Big five’ NGOs, and that is how each organisations approach the region in either a country specific way, or with a regional approach, or even both. After Section for Western Balkan Affairs was established under the department for European Affairs organisations have had to apply for projects support either to the regional desk or to the respective country desks. The MFA says they are satisfied with

how the application process works today (Kamsvåg, 2007). Most projects have been directed towards specific countries. The MFA argues that each country in Western Balkans is faced with different problems, which need to be dealt with in different ways. However, On the one hand, governmental policy papers, white papers and priorities in the national budget states that to deal with the challenges in the region one needs to take on a comprehensive regional approach. Creating peace and stability in the region as a whole is a task that depends on peace and stability in all the countries. On the other hand, the MFA prefers to approach the task in a *country-specific* matter.<sup>24</sup> So the paradox is that even though they emphasise that the regional aspect of the engagement in the region is of great importance, yet they encourage organisations to aim their projects toward separate countries. Most organisations claim that it is harder to get acceptance on projects aimed at the region as a whole than to projects aimed at specific countries. SCN is on the other hand of a different opinion and representatives of the NGO claim that they do not look at the issue as a problem since most of their projects in the region are nevertheless aimed towards specific countries.<sup>25</sup> Whether the decision of having a country specific approach rather than a regional approach is made on the basis of organisational priorities or based on their interpretation of MFA priorities is unclear. NCA and NPA both have expressed that they could do better of in many circumstances with regard to applications if they could apply for financial support for regional activities rather than country-specific. Some of their projects are aimed at cross-country relations but do not necessarily include the whole region, such as preventing trafficking issues and the return of refugee activities. In many cases this implies that they need to turn to each country-specific desk, with separate applications, rather than turning to the regional desk with one application. Even though some organisations, such as the SCN, NRC, and the Norwegian RC, express that this is not an issue of great consequence (Myrvold, 2007; Nesje, 2007; Pedersen, 2007), organisations such as NPA and NCA nevertheless think it makes the whole application process more extensive and the workload greater

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Deputy Director General, Nils Ragnar Kamsvåg, Section for Western Balkan Affairs, on 4 October 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Søren Pedersen on 27 September 2007.

than most necessary (Kjærnet, 2007; Petersen, 2007). Furthermore, it gives the organisations a feeling of being forced to make decisions in a way they otherwise would not have taken. This also shows that when organisations disagree on the procedures set by the MFA they nevertheless have to comply with them in order to have their projects accepted. Thus the MFA exercise influence on NGOs by shaping the way in which organisations implement activities in the Western Balkans

## 5.2 NGO influence on State Authorities

The foreign policy arena has traditionally been perceived as elitist, centred around security policy reserved for the MFA and the Ministry of Defence (MD). But organisations which have since the 1960s received governmental financial support have an *influence* on the Norwegian foreign policy (Lie, 2006: 139). There are nevertheless different opinions with regard to the relationship between development assistance and foreign policy. At one point, for instance, the leading opinion in the Norwegian Parliament was that development policy and foreign policy should be concerned with different objectives – and that development assistance should contribute to reducing poverty on an altruistic basis (Ofstad and Stokke, 2000: 43). Many have pointed out, however, that despite the fact that development assistance is not meant to be political, it cannot but have political effects (Lie, 2006: 142).

Simultaneously as the amount of development cooperation support from the government and the numbers of NGOs increased, the demand from the Government with regard to organisations providing own capital of their project budgets was reduced from 50 percent in 1963 to 10 percent in 2001. This development was questioned by representatives from the development community at the time it was reduced. Some organisations appreciated the new practice because in the light of having almost their whole budget financed by the Government they could to a greater extent secure the survival of the organisation. Others were more sceptical and argued that it would imply greater governmental control and management from the state authorities (Lie, 2006: 144-145).

However, as argued in the present study, financing various NGO projects fully by the MFA does not necessarily imply less organisational autonomy in relation to the state



authorities. This does not mean in practice that the MFA has incontestable control with the organisations' work on the ground. This situation can be explained both by the development of a "confidence-based relationship" between NGOs and the MFA, and the capacity and competence within the MFA.

Firstly, the "confidence-based relationship" between organisations and the MFA has evolved over time as a consequence of increased closeness and interaction between them. According to representatives from the "five great" NGOs, the interface between NGOs and the MFA has been broadened, and most claim that they have contact with the MFA staff on a regular basis (Kjærnet, 2007; Petersen, 2007; Pedersen, 2007; Pilegaard, 2007; Myrvold, 2007). At the same time, when the Western Balkans Section grants funds to NGO projects, the final decision is often based on previous experiences with the organisations (Kamsvåg, 2007). The MFA's working methods and capacity problems have created a system where much is based on trust between consent-oriented partners. Hence the organisations are to a great extent independent when carrying out projects.

Secondly, while the foreign aid and development cooperation budgets have steadily increased over the years, the administration and resources of the MFA have not necessarily increased proportionally. Ambassador Jan Braathu, previous Deputy Director General to the Section of Western Balkan Affairs, claims that during the early stages of Norwegian support to the Western Balkans, Norad came in at one point to assist the MFA in managing the substantial financial means that were allocated to the conflict area. Norad was then in charge of about 40 % of the aid portfolio to Western Balkans. When the MFA took charge over the financial means again, the MFA had to manage a far greater budget than during the previous years without increasing the administrative and institutional resources of the MFA. In other words the section within the MFA that was put in charge of the aid budget to the Western Balkans was not able to increase their staff in order to handle the increased work load. Compared to when Norad was managing parts of the portfolio, the MFA, now fully in charge of the aid budget, had less people to manage the funds (Braathu, 2007). Thus, the NGOs gained more 'independence' because the MFA had less capacity than the size of the budget would otherwise require. The MFA experienced that they could not follow up their strategy towards the Western Balkans or coordinate the NGO projects to the same extent as intended. The NGOs had the

opportunity to influence the MFA because the MFA was to a greater extent dependent on the information and capacity that NGOs could provide (Braathu, 2007).

### 5.3 Factors Constraining State Influence

Most previous research has privileged transnational actors as autonomous, and treated the relationship between them and states as one-directional. This approach implies that transnational actors, be they profit-oriented enterprises or non-profit civil society organisations (NGOs) are studied in their effort to influence state actors in order to reach their material or normative goals (Risse, Ropp and Sikkink, 1999). Høgel and Peretz (2005) claim this seems to be due to at least three reasons: First, almost all NGOs present themselves as independent from states. Second, a lot of research seems to be guided by the “society versus state” framework wherein sympathies frequently side with social actors and their role as normative vanguards. Third, a reliance on social movement theory which explicitly theorizes social movements as social action directed towards state policies.

However, as this study shows the opposite also holds true. Thus, one can argue that states seek to influence and sometimes even implicitly direct NGOs to further their own interests. In Norway there has for the last years been a close and very direct connection between the MFA and the NGOs. While this is not unusual in other donor countries, Norway is nevertheless in the lead of channelling foreign aid through organisations and a common feature is the high level of funding of organisations projects. The MFA has developed a clear strategy for NGOs, which is pursued with great effort. State authorities regard using organisations for the means of giving Norwegian foreign policy a flexibility that they otherwise would not have. It is widely perceived that NGOs are not only as important tools in times of emergency relief, but also as political process agencies and in times of diplomatic negotiations. They can not only negotiate “secretly” but also exercise greater flexibility compared to the authorities’ own representatives because NGOs’ apparatus are often less cumbersome. Additionally, one can argue that NGOs can to a greater extent lose their face than what a government can allow itself to do. On the surface the Norwegian model resembles more established superpower patterns, where the state uses ‘its’ NGOs as policy instruments, though often

in a less direct manner than is possible in Norway (Tvedt 1995: 103). Hence, the Norwegian model is different because the structural conditions are not the same.

During the last few years it has become more common that the MFA tie the NGOs to their initiatives rather than previous practise where organisations – through political contacts – mobilized the MFA in order to finance their projects (Tvedt 1995: 272). This, again, could also signify greater state control and NGOs attempting to influence the state to a lesser extent.

### 5.3.1 International Network and Alliances

If the state has influence over NGOs, which of the NGOs are more likely to be influenced and why? There are more risks involved for organisations such as the NPA and NCA because they do not have a strong international back-up, both in terms of financial support and with regard to organisational priorities (e.g. in connection with efforts in the Western Balkans).

SCN and RC are both organisations who are backed up by a strong international network of sister organisations. SCN is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance and is the world's largest independent organisation for children (ISCA, 2007). One can argue that being part of an international network of sister organisations gives Norwegian NGOs greater freedom, therefore being less prone to be influenced. First, such Norwegian organisations are less dependent on government funds than other NGOs who do not have an international back-up. If their budgets are not covered by the government they can turn to their sister organisations in order to be able to carry out their projects. At the same time organisations such as SCN who are economically strong can to some extent cover the project expenditures if their application is turned down or if the application process is delayed (Pedersen, 2007). Secondly, being part of an international alliance implies that they already have natural cooperation partners in the respective countries, such as Save the Children in Albania, when operating in the country. SCN can also cooperate with other SC members in countries where there are no national SC organisation.

The situation in terms of funding, donors and organisational back-up is similar for the Norwegian RC. The organisation is part of the International Red Cross and the Red

Crescent Movement. It is the world's greatest humanitarian organisation and the network consists of three components: national organisations (Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The ICRC, the Federation and the National Societies are independent bodies. Each has its own individual status and exercises no authority over the others. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies such as the Norwegian RC embody the work and principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 186 countries, and "act as auxiliaries to the public authorities of their own countries in the humanitarian field and provide a range of services including disaster relief, health and social programmes. During wartime, National Societies assist the affected civilian population and support the army medical services where appropriate" (IFRC, 2007). This implies that while the Norwegian RC does receive government funding for activities abroad (e.g. in the Western Balkans) they also can rely on means provided by the IFRC as well as the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO).<sup>26</sup>

The NCA acts as an independent organisation without international back-up. However, the NCA has expressed the necessity to join forces internationally (NCA, 2005b). NCA was one of the initiative-takers in forming the Action of Churches Together (ACT) network, which works to coordinate the relief efforts of the world's Christian churches in catastrophe situations. NCA is also members of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, a broad network that advocates to influence political decision-making, and a part of the worldwide ecumenical family through membership of both the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. This network is important according to NCA because it give them greater weight abroad and opens up for more donor possibilities. Yet, the NCA rely heavily on government funding, and to some extent on funds left by wills (Petersen, 2007).

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<sup>26</sup> As an example, the total cost to the Norwegian RC of relief operations and long-term development abroad was NOK 498 million in 2004. Support from the Norwegian MFA and Norad totalled NOK 384 million, support from ECHO totalled NOK 5 million and NOK 109 million was provided for from the Norwegian RC's own funds. Of the contribution to international work, NOK 221 million was channelled through the ICRC, NOK 173 million through IFRC and NOK 103 million as bilateral assistance/ other activities (RC, 2005b).

According to Runa Myrvold, adviser at the NRC, the NRC holds a unique position in terms of NGOs in Norway. Both in terms of a long and credible history of engagement for the safety and rights of refugees world wide, and due to the fact that the NRC is the only independent humanitarian organisation in Norway who have specialized to “give help, protection and sustainable solutions to people fleeing their homes or countries all over the world” (NRC, 2007). They are not part of a broader international organisation, nor do they have sister organisations. However the NRC has close cooperation with the UN and other organisations, abroad and at home (NRC, 2007).

### 5.3.2 Expertise and Scope of Activities

As already mentioned above, the MFA provides project funding on the basis of the applications from the organisations. The MFA base their decision on the ‘quality’ of the application itself, previous experiences with the organisation and achievements and results of completed projects, and the extent of the objectives of the application/project fits within the priorities in the national budget and guidelines set by the MFA (Kamsvåg, 2007). This implies that what the NGOs can report back to the MFA, what they have achieved or contributed with and the quality of the application is essential. The organisations experience that the better they are to emphasis on how successful their respective projects have been, the chances for obtaining further project support is better. They experience that the better they can point to previous successful operations and activities in their applications, better their chances for obtaining funding. In other words, the more positive way organisations present themselves and relate their work to previous (good and successful) results, progress within the civil society sector in the application process and their final reports have an influence on government funding in the future. Kari Kjærnet at the NPA expressed that the organisation needs to get better at writing and presenting themselves in a positive way in the future in order to receive project funding (Kjærnet, 2007). Søren Pedersen, coordinator of humanitarian aid at Save the Children, says that the organisation has been able to focus on success stories and good results in their feedback to the MFA and thus built up a reputation for being an organisation which achieves results in the area in which they are engaged in (Pedersen, 2007). This does not imply that they have obtained a good reputation solely based on their abilities to inform

the Government of their success stories. The organisation does contribute to the region in a positive way. However, the point emphasised by Pedersen is that the way organisations present themselves in application forms and final reports does have an impact. The better the organisations can relate their previous work to good results and inform the MFA about such stories the more likely the organisations will receive funds for projects in the future.

A case in point is SCN's "Final report on the use of project funds" in relation with their project on child trafficking prevention in Bosnia and Herzegovina presented to the MFA, the report says that "Objectives set in the project plan are achieved even in bigger extent than originally planned, contributing to the achievement of the main purpose of the project" (SCN, 2007c, my emphasis). Moreover, the report also states that: "All activities within the project were implemented as planned. Huge success has been achieved in stronger participation of children at various project levels [...]. Working with professionals on application of cooperative approach in combating trafficking and violence against children proved to be very efficient and innovative aspect of project implementation in 2006" (my emphasis) (SCN, 2007). A final report of a different project called "Quality of Education Project" states that even though "[e]ducation activities were affected by the unstable political environment in the country and the impact this had on our key partner the Ministry of Education [...] SCiA staff [Save the Children in Albania] intensified work and their hard work made possible that the project was implemented according to the plan" (SCN, 2007). This statement emphasise that even though they meet unforeseen challenges they manage to carry on through with their project with intensified and hard work. The positive mood in the reports of various SCN projects in the Western Balkans seems to fit with the description given by Søren Pedersen of how the organisation evaluates their projects towards the MFA.

A challenge for all the organisations is how to measure to what extent their respective projects have been successful. The more concrete goals are the easier to measure whether organisations have achieved their objectives. Say, rebuilding infrastructure and other material objectives such as rebuilding roads, homes and schools are far easier to measure because such efforts have physical outcomes. As more and more projects have rather conceptual and idealistic aims, such as "increase the level of understanding", "promote reconciliation activities" and to "prevent discrimination" are

tasks that not so easily can be measured. The challenge for the organisations is to be able to present success stories when the outcome of a project is vague and difficult to measure. How can they argue that their efforts have made a difference in the respective country or the region as a whole when the various projects do not produce concrete outcomes? It is most likely that organisations, who are able to find a way to present reasonable and concrete outcomes of civil society-based projects will be more likely to receive project funds from the Government in the future.

Another challenge is to maintain some sort of continuity in terms of donors. Many projects implemented by NGOs during the last ten years in the Western Balkans have a long-term perspective. This implies that projects need to run for a period of time in order to show results or have an impact. While both NGOs and the MFA are aware of the need to assist on a long-term basis so that projects and responsibilities can in the end be left in the hands of local partners and actors, project support from the MFA is given on a one year basis. The MFA have stated that they will reserve the right to exercise flexibility towards NGOs receiving financial support and which projects to prioritise. They state that efforts towards the Western Balkans need to be continuously evaluated in order to be effective. On the one hand, the flexibility argument is rational due to several reasons. First, support for projects that do not have the intended effect is neither in the interest of the MFA, who finances the project, nor in the recipient part, who will not benefit from it or in the worst case will experience counterproductive outcomes. Second, the MFA also need to take into account that the size of their budget may vary from year to year. The overall national budget covers one year at the time and priorities from the government may vary across the years due to both internal circumstances, such as change of government, and external circumstances. Thus, to the MFA, flexibility is necessary for political as well as technical reasons.

## 5.4 From the Most to the Least Influenced NGO

My analysis finds that that the state exercises various degrees of influence due to two factors: first, whether the NGOs connects to an international agency or alliance; and secondly, the specific expertise and focus areas of the NGO. An international network gives the NGO some degree of financial independence, as well as access to other

“normative framework of meaning”. Expertise, on the other hand, strengthens the NGOs’ bargaining position vis-à-vis the MFA, as the NGO is more indispensable to the MFA. I propose to rank organisations in the following positions with the organisation experiencing the strongest influence by the state first: (i) Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), (ii) Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and Save the Children in Norway (SCN), and (iii) Norwegian Red Cross (RC).

The NPA is ranked as being the organisation that is to a larger extent influenced by the MFA than the other organisations within the ‘Big Five’ group because, first, it does not connect with an international agency or alliance, and secondly, the organisation is said to hold wide expertise and competence within many different areas. The organisation has a clear Norwegian foundation and their efforts in the Western Balkans are based on their experiences in the region. Not being part of a greater and worldwide organisation has two implications. First, the organisation is not backed up financially from a stronger source. This means that they are to a large extent dependent on the financial means the Norwegian Government can provide. Secondly, they define their own agenda, formulate their mandate and initiate projects on their own since there is no other agency above them providing strategies or focus areas. In order to be able to carry out their projects they need the government to provide the means. On the other hand, it enables the organisation to more independently define their focus areas and target groups.

Additionally, as stated in their general mandate and in their mission statement to the Western Balkans, its activities and focus areas encompasses a wide field of foreign aid. NPA is guided by the values of national and international solidarity, human dignity and equality (NPA, 2002: 5). Its general development program covers a wide range of issues or thematic areas. In the NPA policy and strategy program of 2003-2007 these were: the right to participate, aimed at oppressed people; young people and their rights to participate; the right to freedom and expression and information; the right to have access to free and independent media; land and resource rights, aimed at rural oppressed people; indigenous peoples rights; violence against women; and a mine action program (NPA, 2002). While these are specific focus areas they nevertheless cover a wide range of areas in which does not give them a specific profile. Moreover, the mission statement, in terms of NPA’s foreign aid towards the Western Balkans, says that “through support to local and regional civil society organisations, NPA is actively involved in developing a



viable civil society as a cornerstone for democracy, bulwark against authoritarianism and foundation for long-term stability in the region” (NPA, 2006). The statement is likewise vague and opens up possibilities for the organisation to engage and target groups in a more flexible and adjustable way than other organisations with a more fixed mandate and with specific target groups. This is also reflected in the wide variety of activities implemented in the Western Balkans. According to Norad, activities implemented between 1999 and 2005 have ranged from collection of arms, humanitarian aid to refugees, rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools and public buildings, post pessimist projects and projects aimed at women in particular (‘Women Can Do It’) to de-mining and similar mine clearance activities, local media support and media development, civil rights and integration of IDPs and refugees.<sup>27</sup> The NPA presents itself an organisation with expertise in many domains and thus is an organisation that is flexible and ‘usable’ in most development areas. Being both flexible and ‘usable’ make the organisation able to more easily adjust its priorities with changing MFA priorities.

By not being part of an international agency or alliance, together with their broad agenda and wide mandate, makes the NPA much more dependent on government funding but at the same time flexible enough to keep in line with MFA’s objectives and changing priorities. Thus, in order to better safeguard their chances to get hold of these means, their project objectives follow closely to the priorities set by the MFA.

Due to the two factors constraining state influence on NGOs investigated in this study, the Norwegian Red Cross is ranged as the organisation least influenced by the state. First, the organisation is organised within the broader and world-encompassing organisation, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies around the world are running a variety of activities in relation to the promotion of the Movement’s Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values. The seven Fundamental Principles<sup>28</sup> bond together the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, The ICRC and the IFRC. As already mentioned in chapter IV the Norwegian Red Cross does not set individual agendas aimed at activities abroad in general. They usually join in on IFRC and ICRC appeals whenever they are activated. Most financial support applications to the MFA are aimed at the purpose of

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<sup>27</sup> These numbers were made available to me through email correspondence with Norad.

<sup>28</sup> Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

following up these international appeals. Being part of a broader network has two implications for the Norwegian RC. First, it rarely sets its own agendas or formulates independent strategies or policies toward countries, regions or specific conflicts. It is subject to the strategies and policies of the IFRC which is the main body of the organisation and coordinates the efforts by the various national Red Cross and Red Crescent organisations. Secondly, they are to a large extent backed up financially by the international network, thus makes the Norwegian RC less dependent on government funding. Within the 'Big Five' NGO group examined in this study, the Norwegian RC is the organisation where the MFA provides the least share of the total development budget.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to the second factor constraining influence by the MFA on humanitarian NGOs, the scope of activities and expertise, the Norwegian RC covers a wide range of humanitarian aid. The Norwegian RC and has been central partner to the MFA especially in providing humanitarian relief. While most of the activities implemented by the Norwegian RC have been responses to IFRC's appeals and not initiatives taken by the national organisation, their ability to adjust their priorities and objectives in accordance with the interests of the MFA is reduced. Thus their activities are constrained by the appeals and therefore less influenced by the MFA than the other organisations.

Placing the three organisations NCA, NRC and SCN in the continuum of state-influenced organisation is less clear. All three organisations target specific groups and have particular focus areas which would imply that the impact of the MFA's priorities is somewhat limited. The NCA is an ecumenical organisation which targets mainly faith and religious based societies. The NRC is primarily a humanitarian organisation which its primary objective is to alleviate people forced to flee their homes or countries, but also to some extent improve the conditions for refugees and IDPs in post-conflict situations. The SCN is primarily a rights-based organisation which promotes children's rights. In terms of the constraining factors all three organisations are to some extent committed to their specific mandate and are somewhat less flexible to changes of MFA priorities. Moreover, one can argue that the SCN is less influenced by the MFA than the other two NGOs, because it is to some extent committed to the work of the International Save the

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<sup>29</sup> For a comparison see the various organisations Annual reports.

Children Alliance. This commitment to an international agency is nevertheless not as strong as RC's commitment to the IFRC, because while SCN comply with the values and principles of the ISCA it is responsible for setting its own agenda in terms of activities and efforts (Pedersen, 2007). Neither the NCA nor the NRC are part of an international organisation or alliance. However one could argue that on the one hand, the NCA is to some extent less influenced by the MFA because it has a broader international ecumenical network to relay on (such as the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and Action by Churches Together). It is important to stress that becoming part of this network is voluntary and cannot be regarded as a membership or a commitment to the organisation on the same terms as the SCN or Norwegian RC. This network has been able to provide the NCA with both support for its engagement and financial support.

With regard to the NRC one could also argue that the organisation is to some extent less influenced by the MFA because it has a unique status in Norway as being the only organisation solely targeting refugees. By possessing expertise within this specific area and as their activities are limited to the helping people on the run from their homes or countries would nevertheless confine MFA influence over the organisation because its mandate does not approve of much flexibility in terms of focus areas and priorities.

## 5.5 Chapter Conclusion

While the traditional approach to transnational actors in relation with states holds true in this study, it has also shown that the state exercise influence on NGOs. The MFA exercise influence on the NGOs by both being a central donor, providing the means in which most organisations are much dependent on, and by shaping a common framework of meaning in which that reaches beyond the state value-interests. This chapter have also shown that some organisations are to a greater extent influenced by the MFA than others. My findings are that the NPA is more likely to be influenced by the MFA than the other organisations investigated. By not being part of an international agency or alliance, together with their broad agenda and wide mandate, makes the NPA much more dependent on government funding but at the same time flexible enough to keep in line with MFA's objectives and changing priorities. As also pointed out by the organisations

representatives they try to adjust their programme activities by the following the guidelines for support and the regional priorities set by the MFA as in order to get the budget acceptance. Thus, in order to better safeguard their chances to get hold of these means, their project objectives follow closely to the priorities set by the MFA.

Additionally this present study show that the Norwegian RC is the organisation that is less influenced by the MFA than the other organisations. The organisation is organised within the broader and world-encompassing organisation, and is 'constrained' by the principles and values of the international body. The Norwegian RC is also to a large extent backed up financially by the international network, thus makes the Norwegian RC less dependent on government funding. Additionally, the Norwegian RC is primarily engaged with humanitarian issues, and less involved in long-term assistance which often frames NGOS activities as a value-interest, while other (state) objectives, often being political or dealing with security issues, are involved.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> While my research has clearly indicated that the extent of MFA influence over the 'Big Five' NGOs is strongest in the case of NPA, while the Norwegian RC remains the most independent of the five, ranking the exact level of the MFA's respective influence over the remaining three "intermediary" NGOs, namely NCA, NRC and SCN, is less straightforward, as my research indicates that this influence varies over time.

# Chapter 6: Conculsion

In Chapter 1, the overall aim of this study was presented, and the the research question was posed, namely ‘Who influenced whom in the situation of Norwegian aid policy towards the Western Balkans (1999-2005)?’

In Chapter 2, the reader was introduced to the research on states and transnational actors. The chapter concluded that a complex model of foreign policy and development cooperation has to be conceptualized in order to integrate state institutions as well as TNAs (NGOs) at the domestic level. I suggested that this model should focus on the interaction between state institutions and NGOs, as this portrays states and NGOs as constantly being exposed to influence from each other.

Chapter 3 explained the contextual framework in which one can expect mutual influence between NGOs and state authorities to exist in terms of foreign aid and efforts towards the Western Balkans. It shows that the features of Norwegian development aid towards the Western Balkans create a complex relationship between the Norwegian MFA and Norwegian NGOs, and that the close ties between them has become a central part in their foreign aid efforts.

Chapter 4 moved on to examine this relationship more closely in terms of opportunities for mutual influence if and when actors share common interests. It shows how the objectives and interests of both the MFA and NGOs have come to converge in the case of the Norwegian policy towards the Western Balkans. It concludes that, while the objectives of both MFA and NGOs initially coincide to some extent as to the need to provide aid to the Western Balkans, such a situation can open up possibilities for the state to influence the NGOs to further a number of other (state) objectives. Chapter 5 examined how mutual influence is exercised and also how the extent of state influence on NGOs in this case is moderated by various characteristics of the ‘Big five’ organisations. It shows that if the NGO is part of an international network and committed to its activities, or/and

if the expertise of the NGO is focused at a limited area or the scope of activities have a limited mandate, the NGO is less likely to be substantially influenced by the MFA.

Before offering a conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the two questions posed in Chapter 1, as well as recapitulate the evidence examined and the answers suggested throughout the study, namely *How and under what condition does the MFA affect Norwegian NGOs?*, and *What are the implications of the relationship between the MFA and the Norwegian NGO for our understanding of transnational actors and state institutions?*

## 6.1 The MFA's Influence over NGOs

As I have showed in the present study, in line with recent studies on the relationship between states and NGOs, whenever both actors share common value interests or objectives, opportunities for mutual influence exist and states can try to use NGOs to further their own non-value objectives and political priorities.

However, as this study shows, in the formulation of the Norwegian Western Balkans policy, NGOs also sought to influence state authorities. As I showed in Chapter 5, NGOs can also influence state authorities to some extent because they have something to offer. In this case it is resources. The clearest cases of resources are expertise and competence of various kinds, local knowledge of civil society and its dynamics, flexibility, efficiency and broad networks and informal contacts. The relationship between state authorities and NGOs in the formulation of the Norwegian Western Balkans policy, is thus best described as a reciprocal relationship.

### 6.1.1 A Reciprocal Relationship

This study shows that most NGOs are to a large extent dependent on state funding in order to implement their projects. The various forms of influence are summarized in Figure 7 below:

Fig. 7:

	<b>(i) Direct influence</b>	<b>(ii) Indirect influence</b>
<b>(a) Norwegian NGOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- close dialogue with the executive officers within the respective MFA sections (lobby)</li> <li>- integrated as a partner through the Norwegian model: government dependent on NGOs</li> <li>- mobilize popular support through campaigns</li> <li>- media</li> <li>- advocacy network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- comparative advantages (i-iv) including capacity</li> <li>- normative power</li> <li>- information (final reports)</li> <li>- project formulation and applications</li> </ul>
<b>(b) Norwegian MFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- funding</li> <li>- public consultation and information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- legal framework: guidelines for support resources: information, funding and political power</li> <li>- priorities stated in the national budget</li> <li>- decides which projects to support</li> </ul>

There are especially three channels through which NGOs seek to influence the priorities of the MFA. The two first are more of a formal character, while the third is rather informal. The first influence channel is through the NGO’s annual meeting with representatives from the MFA. Most organisations invite the MFA to hear their organisation out on subjects and focus areas that are of importance to them specifically.

The second channel NGOs can seek to influence the MFA through, is through applications for project funding. All of the ‘Big Five’ organisations examined in this study seek to convince the MFA through their applications that they are entitled to the funding they apply for. The various NGOs seek to influence the MFA by sending off the most qualified, convincing and relevant applications in order to gain funding assurance. Most NGOs have experienced that these applications need to contain not only exhaustive descriptions of the what, why and how of their projects, but also show that earlier projects have achieved good results or contributed to improve conditions in some way. In other

words most organisations seek to refer to their success stories in order to show that their efforts actually make a difference. While the qualitative part of the application is an unconditional requirement, it nevertheless becomes even more important to the NGO to manifest itself as a credible contractor and as an actor with a good reputation if the main objectives of the project in question are not or only partly in line with the MFA's priorities or focus areas. This also implies that the more the project's objectives are in line with the MFA's priorities at the present time the organisation is more likely to get funding assurance.

The final channel is rather informal in character. NGOs can seek to influence decisions and priorities within the MFA through a dialogue on a regular basis. There is frequent contact between the executive officers in the MFA and representatives from the various NGOs. Usually they are in contact with each other through e-mail or by telephone. Moreover, representatives from the NGOs are now and then invited to attend seminars in the auspice of the MFA together with the executive officers. Most, if not all, NGO representatives claim they have contact with the MFA on a regular basis in one way or the other. They also claim that MFA officers are to a large extent available for requests and that getting in touch with the MFA is easy.

The extent to which the NGOs successfully manage to influence the MFA is still unclear, though. One reason is that if the MFA rejects an application the NGOs rarely receive feedback or response on why the MFA did not approve of the project. The usual custom is that either the NGOs get assurance or they do not. The MFA do not provide reasons for why they declined the application. Thus, it is hard to interpret what went wrong or why they failed to convince the MFA of the project's relevance or of the NGO's credibility. The NGOs need to evaluate their projects themselves in order to improve their application capabilities and their future abilities to get their projects approved, but often conclusions are vague and flawed.

This study also finds that on the other end of the influence spectrum, the MFA influences NGOs' priorities and activities in the Western Balkans. To exercise influence on NGOs, the MFA also needs to offer something. This can be resources or a framework of meaning. In this case it was both. The state is in a strong position to influence the NGOs because they provide funding for NGOs' projects and activities. Most of the organisations examined in this study rely heavily on state funding in order to implement



their projects. In order to obtain these resources or funding NGOs need to apply for them in a matter that coincide with the priorities and criteria set out by the MFA.

The MFA exercises influence through official documents, the annual meetings and by granting support for the projects NGOs have applied for. The MFA signalizes its priorities and main objectives through annual national budgets, white papers and guidelines for support. Additionally the MFA holds annual meetings with the NGO community prior to the application dead line in order to transmit their strategies, main priorities and objectives as stated in the documents mentioned above. In order for the NGOs to obtain funding, the NGOs need not only prove through their applications excellence in aid provision, but their projects also needs to fall in line with the main priorities and objectives of the MFA. In other words, the more NGOs activities and planed projects are in line with the priorities stated by the MFA the more likely they are to obtain state funding. This implies that some of the organisations regularly seek adjust their programme portfolio in accordance to the MFA's engagement priorities. Representatives form both the NPA and the NCA have expressed that this is often the case for their organisation (Kjærnet, 2007; Petersen 2007). They have experienced that they need to phase out various projects because the focus area of the MFA have changed. For example projects related to HIV/AIDS issues have over timed had less focus and organisations have had to start phasing out their projects within this domain. On the other hand, the MFA have increasingly expressed the importance of targeting women, thus projects improving the condition for women in the Western Balkans or projects aimed at preventing trafficking have been rewarded (Kjærnet, 2007).

### 6.1.2 Constraining Factors on State Influence

While it is commonly perceived that transnational actors seek to influence state authorities in their project support priorities, my study shows that in the case of the formulation of the Norwegian Western Balkans policy, state actors also influenced transnational actors. These findings are in line with what one would expect from the research of Høgel and Peretz (2005). However, *how* states influence NGOs is less studied. As I have shown in the present study, the processes through which states and NGOs seek to influence each other need to be studied empirically too. For, as the present

study has shown, the relationship between the two is not straightforward. The extent of state influence on NGOs is moderated by at least two factors, namely: (i) whether the NGO connects to or is part of an international agency or international alliance, and (ii) the the scope of activities or expertise possessed by the respective organisations. As the present study suggests, if the NGO is member/part of an international network and thus somewhat committed to its activities, or/and if the NGO possesses expertise within a limited area or the scope of activities have a limited mandate, the NGO is less likely to be influenced substantially by the MFA.

In terms of the two hypotheses advanced in Chapter 1, it is clear that  $H_1$  is strengthened at the expense of  $H_0$ . The understanding of the influence between MFA and NGOs presented in the present study shows that this relationship is to a large extent reciprocal, with both the MFA and the NGOs exercising influence over the policies adopted in the case of the Western Balkans. To recall both hypotheses,  $H_0$  was that: *Norwegian Western Balkan (WB) policy is determined by a one-dimensional relationship between state authorities and NGOs with one influencing the other*, and  $H_1$  that: *Norwegian Western Balkan policy is determined by a reciprocal relationship between the MFA and NGOs*.

## 6.2 Transnational Actors and States

Throughout the present case study, I have showed that states are not only targets of NGO activism, but can also influence and even initiate non-governmental activities. Transnational actors (TNAs) such as (International) Non-Governmental Organisations ((I)NGOs) are often assumed to be autonomous in their attempts to influence states. However, many NGOs rely heavily and are directly dependent on the 'state world'. Particularly in the issue-areas of international development and humanitarian aid, funding for the activities of NGOs originates to a large extent from public funds. In most European countries (although less so in the UK), home governments of NGOs typically provide between 60 and 90 per cent of their funding. NGO dependence on the resources of states and international organisations suggests that it would be mistaken to claim that NGO world simply represents global or their home civil society against the state system, as is often claimed. As the case study of Norwegian efforts towards the Western Balkans

has shown, Norwegian NGOs often perform tasks that the state either cannot or do not want to carry out. In the issue-areas of foreign and humanitarian aid, states and International Organizations often sub-contract NGOs because these groups are more flexible, they often possess expertise and local knowledge of civil society and can reach those in need of assistance more easily. Not least, the non-governmental actors can provide monitoring capacities and supply information to states which would otherwise not be available because of concerns about sovereignty rights. Therefore, NGOs should not be seen as necessarily in opposition to the (inter-) state system. Rather, their work often conforms to the interests of states and international organisations.

This perspective has often been overlooked in research dealing with the relationship between states and NGOs. And, as the present study suggests, the implications of this perspective can contribute to further our understanding of the power dynamics between different actors involved in the processes of globalization. While generalizing these findings is beyond the scope of the present case study, I nevertheless point to the fact that of the relationship between state actors and TNAs may be less straightforward than what is often stipulated in the research on the topic. Furthermore, while some research has suggested that states influence TNAs in two ways, namely through resources and through framing their normative framework of meaning (see Høgel and Peretz 2005), the present study suggests that the efficiency of these strategies on the part of the state largely depends on other factors as well, namely the expertise of the NGO vis-à-vis the state, as well as their access to other normative frameworks of meaning through international or global alliances with other TNAs. In the present case, the state's ability to influence NGOs depended not only upon domestic or national factors, but also on international ones. Thus, while these findings show the usefulness of the 'domestic' perspective on the relationship between states and TNAs adopted in the present study, this study also suggests that in order to understand the different facets of the relationship between states and TNAs, future research should take into account the interactions between domestic structures and global ones.

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## Interviews

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- Nils Ragnar Kamsvåg**. Director General, Section for the Western Balkans, the Department for European Affairs and Trade Policy, MFA. Interviewed 4 October 2007.
- Kari Kjærnet**. Adviser, International Department, Norwegian People's Aid. Interviewed 25 September 2007.
- Søren Pedersen**. Coordinator for International Emergency Aid, Save the Children Norway. Interviewed 27 September 2007.
- Benedicte Petersen**. Program Coordinator, Western Balkan, Department for International Programmes, Norwegian Church Aid. Interviewed 26 September 2007.
- Lisbeth Pilegaard**. Head of Technical Support Section, International Programme Department, Norwegian Refugee Council. Interviewed 1 October 2007.
- Runa Myrvold**. Adviser, External Relations, International Programme Department, Norwegian Refugee Council. Interviewed 1 October 2007.
- Oddbjørn Nesja**. Political Adviser, Red Cross Norway. Interviewed 27 September 2007.
- Karsten Solheim**. Regional Coordinator, Red Cross Norway. Telephone interviewed 01 November 2007.