

# Paths of consensus?

*A reshaping of Aid Politics? The place for Humanitarian Assistance within Civil-Military Coordination.*

**Shari Carina Brown**



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*Centre for Development and the Environment*

*University of Oslo*

*Blindern, Norway*

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## Abstract

The focus of this thesis is on the civil-military cooperation (CIMIC<sup>1</sup>) currently used in complex conflicts and post-conflict situations. It examines how this method may have an adverse effect on the hitherto cooperative relationship between the Norwegian state and Norwegian humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGO)<sup>2</sup>. Their close relationship is often referred to as the “Norwegian Model”<sup>3</sup> known for constructive humanitarian assistance based on consensus between the state and the NGOs in which the NGOs played an important and autonomous role. NGOs have for the most part kept a sceptical position towards civil-military cooperation methods, since they are dependent on being perceived as a neutral actor in the field. They are concerned that it may seriously affect the neutrality of humanitarian aid. With the CIMIC approach the political focus stands to shift dramatically and Norwegian NGOs are facing a situation where they have to cooperate and coordinate with a third party, namely the Norwegian military.

This thesis attempts to examine the different perspectives held by the state, NGOs and the military regarding this new approach and to ask whether Norwegian NGOs are indeed affected by this new tripartite approach to aid.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of this term will follow in chapter 1.3

<sup>2</sup> The correct abbreviation would be HNGO, but I will use NGO as this more common.

<sup>3</sup> The “Norwegian Model” is here referred to Terje Tved’s (2003:57-58) definition as a organizational form to arrange the relationship between the state, organization and the research done on north-south development but it is also the ground model for the Norway’s peace making model were this relationship is used as a base for defining NGOs role in foreign political peace work.

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Finally, I would like to say that all faults or omissions are mine and mine alone.

Shari C. Brown  
Oslo, June 2010.

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## List of abbreviations

<b>CA</b>	Civil affairs
<b>CIMIC</b>	Civil military cooperation
<b>ECHO</b>	European commission humanitarian aid
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>HPG</b>	Humanitarian Policy Group
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>ISAF</b>	International Security Assistance Force
<b>IRC</b>	International Red Cross
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>MCDA</b>	Military and civil defense assets (UN)
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of foreign affairs
<b>MOJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>MSF</b>	Medicines sans Frontiers
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>NORAD</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development and cooperation
<b>NUPI</b>	Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt.
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
<b>PRT</b>	Provincial Reconstruction Team
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>US</b>	united States







# 1. Introduction

*”Current civil-military coordination concepts paint a picture in which everyone on the “team” just needs to “pull in the same direction”. However, (...) it turns out that some on the team don’t remember joining, don’t want to be on the boat and refuse to row. Others, who didn’t join the team, will cooperate if the boat is moving in one direction, but not if it turns in another. Some don’t like the unruly nature of the team, and keep asking “who is the captain?” Some are paddling with their hands, while others have huge, mechanized oars. Some complain about that others are not pulling their weight and are slowing the whole boat down. Some want to get downriver, but don’t want to be seen on the boat with the others. Some feel that everyone would get downriver faster if they split up into separate boats (Olsen & Gregorian 2007:12)*

This metaphor, for the civil-military cooperation concept, illustrates how many perceive today’s conditions for the humanitarian and military actors that are deployed to complex conflicts. It appears to be an ‘agreed’ approach, that everybody just needs to pull in the same direction. This is especially the political vision of what needs to be done in the current situation in Afghanistan. However, as the metaphor shows things are not moving along easily. The situation in Afghanistan are bringing the military into the humanitarian sphere, and this is leading to challenges for the Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that traditionally has lead the humanitarian efforts (Shannon 2009).

This thesis is studying this development from the Norwegian perspective. Traditionally, the Norwegian military have worked within in the boundaries of defence and security while the Norwegian civilian effort has been directed towards relief and development. Norway’s current position in Afghanistan stands to alter this traditional division of labour. In Afghanistan, Norway is contributing with a significant military effort by leading a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Meymaneh and a unit of Special Forces in the Kabul area,<sup>4</sup> showing a military side that has not been connected to Norway’s foreign policies earlier. For that reason, this position may possible have a negative affect on the well-

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/campaign/nato07main/nato/afghanistan.html?id=460974>

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established relationship between the Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs due to Norway's small state profile they have been able to maintain a close relationship without it affecting the perception of Norwegian NGOs.

This thesis contributes to the debate by using the Norwegian model to demonstrate the unique relationship Norwegian NGOs have with the Norwegian government, it will discuss what civil-military cooperation is and if it may affect the relationship between the Norwegian government and NGOs. It will examine how civil-military cooperation is understood by the different actors and try to explain what underpins their differences in perspectives. The current situation in Afghanistan is used as a case study since it has developed into '*Norway's largest and most important foreign operation*' (Støre 2009 [speech]<sup>5</sup>).

## 1.1 Background

The ending of the Cold War set the beginning of military intervention based on other considerations than upholding the bipolar standstill between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (Collier 2007). It also marks the time where one started to notice a growth in the size and range of NGOs (Goodhand 2006). The altered state of the political environment after the Cold War had an effect on how security was perceived. From focusing on *inter-* state conflicts as the main source of regional and international turmoil this shifted to focusing on *intra-*states conflicts as the main source for instability (Jackson & Sørensen 2003).

Today, ethnical conflicts, failing states, terrorism, civil wars and their potential extended effects, has been added to the list of new areas of concern for the international society. Norway, which has linked its security measurements to a power structure where the European Union (EU) NATO, US and Russia are the

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<sup>5</sup> Jonas Ghar Støre, speech at Chautau neuf May 14<sup>th</sup> 2009.

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main players, is also being affected by these changes in the international security debate. The last couple of years the power balance between these players has shifted and Russia has become a weaker player in comparison to the others. Further changes have been that NATO's role is shifting and the organisation is expanding its security focus to areas outside of Europe simultaneously the EU is growing and gaining more members from the eastern parts of Europe (Styrke & relevans 2004:19 article 25). These internationally changes has lead Norway to expanded its definition of state security (Evne til innsats 2009:20 article 17-22). Now also social and human security are inherent parts of state security, and it is argued that the best way to achieve human and social security is through civil-military cooperation (*ibid*: 48 article 89).

The change in Norway's definition of state security is linked to the international transition between two guiding norm sets, 'the human rights and humanitarian law norm set' and 'the sovereignty and non-intervention norm set' (Weil: 2001, Jackson and Sørensen 2003). The political shift between these two norm sets is leading the focus towards more civil-military cooperation in complex conflicts. The rights aspect of the new norm set is leading to a trend where humanitarian action is being tied up to donor countries political response to complex conflicts. The situation in Afghanistan is where this is playing out for Norway's part. In Norway's engagement with Afghanistan the focus on approaches that are either 'comprehensive, integrated or holistic' seems to be gaining way.

These approaches often advocates for development methods where security, political and humanitarian dimensions can function in an interlinked or integrated way. Norway's strategic concept report "*Evne til innsats*" (2009) states that through a comprehensive approach one will achieve '*more sustainability in military missions*' and that more interaction between the military, political and humanitarian effort is decisive in achieving this (*Evne til innsats* 2009: 70 article, 152).

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The focus on coherence brought about by the Norwegian government is difficult for the humanitarian and military agents because of little common understanding of what cooperation will mean for each actor. The traditional separation of humanitarian and military effort has beside the conventional division of labour, also historical aspect. The Norwegian aid society has more or less established itself outside the foreign political sphere. Even though the role NGOs have today is viewed as a vital part of the Norwegian foreign policy, NGOs were not viewed as important in this sphere before the mid-nineties (Lie 2006).

In today's complex conflicts NGOs play a central role as providers of humanitarian assistance and as development partners. Their neutral profile provides them with access to areas and to people that are viewed as having consequential importance for maintaining stability (Waldman 2008). This role has over time become central in peace and stability operation as the connection between relief, development and conflicts has become more evident in foreign policy.

According to Terje Tvedt a professor in political science, the use of Norwegian NGOs in foreign policy is first of all due to the existence of the extensive cooperation that had developed between the state and NGOs as part of the Scandinavian welfare model and secondly, because many organisations were already abroad working for governmental funding (Øvrebø 1995). The continuum of further integration has been kept alive through economic and normative integration, made possible by the massive amount of funding that gets channeled from the state to the NGOs each year (Tvedt 2003)

The use of the Norwegian model in the international arena has worked because of the autonomic role the NGOs have played. Even as actors in Norwegian foreign policy Norwegian NGOs have still managed to work on issues that they have found most pressing (Smillie 1994). This new focus on cooperation with other

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actors can affect this relationship so it raises concerns about what impact it may have on humanitarian aid and the principles it is built on. The other concern is security, with more cooperation some fear that humanitarian aid will be understood as a political or military instrument a perception that may have a direct influence on the security level for the humanitarian personnel (NUPI report 2000).

The question on how to best preserve the humanitarian space has become a hot topic within the humanitarian body. Many NGOs that work with humanitarian assistance stress that, in these new conflicts, the multi-dimensional sets of actors is very challenging and they require both cooperation and clearly defined roles (SCHR 2010). The issue of roles and clear lines between the work done by humanitarian actors and military actors got a lot of media attention after the former state Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Bård Glad Pedersen (Eide 2004)<sup>6</sup> stated that in some situations he justified the use of military actors as humanitarian agents; ‘when they (*soldiers*) where operating in areas where there was little or no NGOs, since they (*the soldiers*) had a responsibility towards the local population’ (*ibid.*). The response from Norwegian NGOs came immediately; they argued that this form of blurring led to NGOs becoming perceived as political motivated actors making them extremely vulnerable for attacks.

Through my research on the perceptions held by the various agents I have discovered that, while there is a recognition of the *need* for cooperation there is a sense of unwillingness as well as a view that it is to *difficult* to meaningfully integrate the different dimension into one coherent strategy. Even though there’s seems to be an understanding of the importance of clearly defined roles from all parties.

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## 1.2 Hypothesis

On the basis of this I have made the hypothesis that; *The NGOs and the Norwegian government are at odds, because they have different perceptions of how civilian-military operations will impact Norwegian humanitarian assistance.*

In order to test my hypothesis several sub-questions must be asked:

1. What are the main differences, between the Norwegian government and the Norwegian NGOs regarding their views about co-ordinated efforts?
2. How do Norwegian NGOs see this shift in operations affecting them and their work and how might this affect the overall aims of Norwegian humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan?  
*Will it, for example, limit the kind of projects that only “fit” into the NATO concept of security?*
3. How will the civil-military approach affect the capacity of NGOs to maintain their neutrality in the field, and hence their security?
4. Who, in the end, evaluates these consequences for humanitarian assistance: the Norwegian military, the Norwegian state, the Norwegian aid agencies or NATO?

These questions will be addressed by studying and analysing white papers on Norway’s security, development and relief politics. To see how these government

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mil.no/start/article.jhtml?articleID=87419>



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documents are presenting this current shift. To gain some more insight in the situation for NGOs there have been done two interviews, one with an representative from the Norwegian Red Cross and one interview with a representative from Medicines sans frontiers (MSF), Mons Sydness and Tony Mechant. Both giving insight in how their organisations are handling these changes. Their interviews have for the most part been used to support my findings from the written material that has been used.

The large debate about civil-military cooperation in post conflict operations (Ankersen 2008, Rana 2008, Braem 2008, De Coning 2008) and the theoretical and moral discussions around this form of cooperation (Slim 1997, 2007, Fox 2001, Frangonikolopoulos 2005, Shannon 2009) have been used to give a framework to discuss the how this new form of cooperating may affect humanitarian assistance.

## 1.3 Definitions of actors, terms and demarcations

### 1.3.1 Actors

There are a number of actors involved in rebuilding failed states and in complex conflict situations, but in this thesis the focus will be on these three actors: *the humanitarian actor, the military actor and the political actor*.

#### **Humanitarian actors:**

“*Civilians, (...) which have a commitment to humanitarian principles and are engaged in humanitarian activities*”.<sup>7</sup> In the development field they are also

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<sup>7</sup> From Civil military guidelines at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/ASIN-7CHT7T?OpenDocument> page 8. 02.09.09

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referred to as: voluntary organisations, private development organisations, people's organisations, private voluntary organisations, and the third sector, to name a few. One term that seems to be the most common is the *non governmental organisation* (NGO) and this is the term that will be used in this thesis. One thing they all seem to have in common is that they see themselves as the opposite of governments. This plays an important role in freeing NGOs from established political hierarchies, though this assumption at the same time ignores the extent to which many of their projects are inter-dependent with governments' own activities (Brown 1990:4 cited in Smillie 1994:157<sup>8</sup>).

**Military actors:**

Since this thesis is using the situation in Afghanistan as a case study, military actors will include both the Norwegian national military and multinational military such as NATO<sup>9</sup>.

**Political actors:**

Political actors are to be understood as the Norwegian government and Norwegian political departments that are responsible for the Norwegian political position regarding civil-military co-operation in Afghanistan, however it needs to be acknowledged that the development of such a political position is not made in a vacuum. It is a result of agreements with international political organisations and norms made by the United Nation (UN), European Union (EU) as well as other states and organisations, and can not be seen as a strictly “national” policy.

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<sup>8</sup> Article received at: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/c774047641439g4u/> 04.09.09

<sup>9</sup> Norwegian military actors deployed in multinational military forces are still regarded as Norwegian forces, since the main change of command is reserved Norway. Meaning that all activities Norwegian soldiers are a part of under their deployment is approved in advance by the Norwegian political actor/government or political department.

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### 1.3.2 Definition of terms and demarcations of policies

A predicament when studying this development is finding clear definitions of the different terms. Even though this thesis will not include a study on these debates, a few of the terms need to be defined. The terms ‘war’ and ‘armed conflict’ seems to be fairly clear, but when it comes to civil-military cooperation there are different perceptions and different use of the term by the different actors depending on the wide range of activities that they perceive it to cover. The Norwegian military engagement in Afghanistan is due to Norway’s NATO membership and since Norway has not developed a separate definition on civil-military cooperation<sup>10</sup> NATO’s doctrine will be used to define civil-military cooperation. The military acronym used by NATO of this form of cooperation is CIMIC. CIMIC is:

*"The co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies. (NATO 2003, AJP-9 102-1)*

CIMIC is the coordination and cooperation between the military officers and civilian agents. The purpose of CIMIC is to support ‘the military mission’. Within NATO there is a growing view that CIMIC is the leading approach to gain more integration between the military and the civilian effort (FFOD 2007:141<sup>11</sup>). CIMIC is as such an approach that is aimed at reducing the tendency of overlaps of projects between the NATO commander, civilian organisations like NGOs and local authorities by providing means of better coordination and co-operations. There is no call to conduct humanitarian projects within the doctrine, nor is there an exclusion of such projects, provided that they support

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<sup>10</sup> Other countries like Finland have made their own national CIMIC definition and approach. Norway has not done this and all the white papers and reports from the Norwegian government so far have more or less supported the definition and approach formulated in NATO’s doctrine.

<sup>11</sup> *The Norwegian armed forces joint operational doctrine(FFOD)*

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‘the military mission’. According to Rana (2008) this has led towards a convergence of NATO’s CIMIC and the United States Armed Forces (USAF) Civil Affairs (CA) approach. The United States (US) approach focuses on influencing the environment to support their armed forces through ‘hearts and minds strategies’. *“The two approaches are broadly moving towards convergence, or at least share sufficient common ground to be compatible”* (ibid.2008:230).

Even though this thesis is using the definition presented by the NATO doctrine, other international organisations have formulated their own definitions of what civil-military coordination is, where the military imperative “supporting the mission” is not the leading theme. One example is the definition provided by Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), of the UN that defines civil-military co-ordination as;

*“The essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training”* (IASC: 2009:8).

Here the focus is on the humanitarian principles as the frame in which any interaction should be made. It also argues that coordination only should be used when there are common goals. These goals should be based on the humanitarian imperative which is to give neutral assistance within a ‘humanitarian space’. The reason for coordination in the NATO doctrine is to reach the *mission goal* as stated in NATO (2003) AJP-9 article 102-2c:

*“In co-operating with a potentially wide range of civilian bodies, NATO’s forces will, as far as possible and within military means and capabilities, accommodate and support the activities of these bodies, providing this does not compromise the mission”(1-2).*

The initial comparison indicate that there are two fundamental different demonstrations of what ‘the mission’ entails, placing conflicting value aspects on

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civil-military cooperation activities. It creates more confusion than structure in the discussion on civil-military cooperation and how it may affect the humanitarian space. This is not to say that the civilian body doesn't believe there could be a need for civil-military co-operation, as the IASC (2009) report states, in some cases the humanitarian objective of providing assistance to people in need may give way for a 'pragmatic' approach that might include co-operation with military actors, but the humanitarian body is focused on that it must *not compromise the humanitarian imperative* (IASC 2009:10).

The humanitarian imperative is best discussed using the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC) definitions of the principles. The three main humanitarian principles are: impartiality, neutrality and independence. It is difficult to separate these three principles because they have no clear boundaries between them and they are built on the same value, humanity, which holds that all human suffering must be addressed with particular attention to the most vulnerable. These principles are important and most NGOs rely on them to provide an image that they are without a political agenda and are to be viewed as neutral actors in a war zone. This is a way to gain protection and access. NGOs are not a homogenous group and therefore there are some different definitions on these principles, but they are for the most part built on the ICRC principles.

The ICRC defines these principles as follows:

### **Impartiality**

*"It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavors only to relieve suffering, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress".<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> Cited from the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement available at: [http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/EA08067453343B76C1256D2600383BC4?OpenDocument&Style=Custo\\_Final.3&View=defaultBody4](http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/EA08067453343B76C1256D2600383BC4?OpenDocument&Style=Custo_Final.3&View=defaultBody4) date:04.09.2009

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Impartiality shows that humanitarian assistance must not discriminate against anyone due to of the elements mentioned above, nor might there be any subjective distinction for whom that receive aid. It also states that one must focus the assistance after the degree of need; the once that are in most need should be the first to receive assistance.

## Neutrality

*“In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Red Cross may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.”<sup>13</sup>*

By not taking side in hostilities, the organisations are also rejecting the idea of working within the frames of a military operation. They can therefore work in areas that are under military control, without supporting one side over the other. By staying neutral NGOs can go into areas and give assistance to who ever needs it. This principle also states that to achieve neutrality one must also avoid having political or other ideological affiliation that might hinder them in their work (Rehse 2004). The neutrality is the principle that has received most critique over the years so today; many NGOs are partly leaving it behind. As explained in the introduction, the new norm set that values humanitarian law and civilian protection is gaining more and more support in the international society and it is affecting the humanitarian debate. Some NGOs are saying that neutrality is undesirable or even unachievable (Slim 1997). For Norwegian NGOs the Norwegian model can also make it difficult to be viewed as neutral. Deliberate integration of NGOs as development partners could contribute to the perception that they are not as neutral as they see themselves. Being perceived as affiliated with military forces on the ground may have security impacts. Being perceived as

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<sup>13</sup> Cf.: footnote No. 12

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acting on the behalf of the Norwegian government can be viewed as political affiliation and can in the long run become an obstacle their work.

### **Independence:**

*“The Red Cross is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their Governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with Red Cross principles.”<sup>14</sup>.*

Being independent is vital for the NGOs. For the Norwegian organisations the biggest issue concerning independence is leniently connected to the funding of NGOs by the state. Even though there is not a 1-1 relation between economy and independence it can become problematic that the same donor is pushing for civil military cooperation. Funding may be conditioned on what is perceived by the Norwegian state and military as most important and most supportive of the mission.

Many humanitarian NGOs believe that through the politicisation and militarisation of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, these ICRC objectives are being transgressed. They fear that the humanitarian imperative based on these three principles will be undermined since the co-operation perspective held by that state and by NATO seems to be the appropriate political response for the challenges they meet in these new types of complex conflicts (Wolf-Dieter 2008 [speech]<sup>15</sup>).

### **Humanitarian space**

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<sup>14</sup> Cf.: footnote No.12

<sup>15</sup> Available at ; [www.challengesforum.org/.../Wolf\\_Dieter\\_Eberwein\\_Challenges\\_Forum\\_2008.pdf](http://www.challengesforum.org/.../Wolf_Dieter_Eberwein_Challenges_Forum_2008.pdf) 01.02.2010

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The humanitarian space is one of the core issues when it comes to the concerns about ‘blurring roles’. From the interviews and research done in this thesis the need for humanitarian space has been referred to as a “core component” for NGOs. The UN’s IASC uses this definition:

*“A key element for humanitarian agencies and organizations when they deploy, consists of establishing and maintaining a conducive humanitarian operating environment (this is sometimes referred to as “humanitarian space”). The perception of adherence to the key operating principles of neutrality and impartiality in humanitarian operations represents the critical means by which the prime objective of ensuring that suffering must be met wherever it is found, can be achieved. Consequently, maintaining a clear distinction between the role and function of humanitarian actors from that of the military is the determining factor in creating an operating environment in which humanitarian organizations can discharge their responsibilities both effectively and safely. Sustained humanitarian access to the affected population is ensured when the receipt of humanitarian assistance is not conditional upon the allegiance to or support to parties involved in a conflict but is independent of military and political action” (MCDA rapport 2003:).*

The “humanitarian space”, and the protection of it, also seems to be the key touchstone in the debate between the State and aid NGOs in Norway. Although there seems to be a common agreement that the humanitarian space must be sheltered, there are different views on how it is best done. This is one of the issue that gets most attention in the discussion about the civil- military approach.

## **Complex Conflicts**

The last term that needs to be defined is “complex conflicts<sup>16</sup>”. One common denominator for complex conflicts is the need for external assistance in form of civil or/and military effort.

The UN's IASC defines complex conflicts as:

*“a humanitarian crisis in a country, region, or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international*

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<sup>16</sup> The UN uses the term complex crises, but the term complex conflicts are used in other reports and articles used in this thesis so I will use the term conflict.



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*response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country program..”(MCDA report 2003:3)*

Many of the post Cold War conflicts have these characteristics and they require the co-operation of military and humanitarian actors to be solved. They are often connected to humanitarian crises where the redistribution of emergency aid becomes vital and the relationship between the military and the humanitarian actors becomes central in achieving sustainable peace and stability (Neuhaus 2008:202). So in these situations the focus on role, co-operation and coordination becomes significant. These conflicts are often based on old conflict-lines like ethnic cleavages and power struggles between different groups, which makes it difficult to get approval from all parties to allow external military and external humanitarian agents to enter into the conflict zone(s). The military will in these cases never be perceived as neutral partners, but they have an important role as stabilisers so that the humanitarian actors may start rebuilding and helping the population (Collier 2007). The fact that military agents will never be perceived as neutral agents makes it even more important that it is a clear distinction between military and the humanitarian agents.

## 1.4 The structure of the thesis.

This thesis has 8 chapters. Chapter 1 has presented the hypothesis and the background for this thesis. The main actors and definitions have also been presented. A short discussion about the definitions has given a glint into the differences between these actors that are now moving closer together. Chapter 2 and chapter 3 will present the methodological and theoretical framework. There will be used different theoretical and methodological angles to give a broad discussion about the challenges surrounding the civil-military debate.

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Chapter 4 gives a short presentation of the Norwegian model as it is only used as an explanatory model presenting the Norwegian government's relationship with Norwegian NGOs, as well as the historical backdrop to this unique relationship. Chapter 5 present the current post-conflict situation in Afghanistan and the civilian and military effort Norway is involved in there. Chapter 6 discuss what civil-military cooperation means and explore the debate around civil-military cooperation and chapter 7 follow closely chapter 6, but brings in the moral debate around what this political shift will mean for the principles behind humanitarian assistance. Chapter 8 sums up the finding done throughout the thesis and discusses what effects this may have for humanitarian assistance and give some concluding remarks.

## 2. Theory

The next two chapters will present the theoretical and methodological analytical frames used in this thesis. The following chapter will focus on the theories used, while chapter three will focus on the methods used and discuss the analytical aspects of choosing them. The purpose of this thesis is to study the perspectives of the government, NGOs and the military regarding civil-military cooperation and to examine whether Norwegian NGOs are in fact influenced, and what consequences it may have for humanitarian assistance. In order to conduct a meaningful study that encapsulates the complexity of this issue I choose to use several theories and methods.

### 2.1 Introduction: Theoretical overview

Three theories have been chosen to try to provide the grounds for a broad discussion to the hypothesis and sub-question made in the pervious chapter. The first theory is integration theory. The works of Lorentzen (1994) will be used; it focuses on the integration of Norwegian NGOs into the Norwegian political sphere through normative and economical integration. Explaining how Norwegian NGOs have developed tight relationship with the Norwegian government resulting in what has been labelled the Norwegian model. What implication might the integration process have now, when it comes to the question of cooperating with military agents?

The second theory is Hirschman's "Exit, Voice and Loyalty" consumer theory (1970). Focusing, on how to responses to declining results from firms, organisations and states. The focus here will be on how NGOs respond to the changing policies from the Norwegian government and the changing context in

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which they operate. The third theory is the humanitarian debate. The debate questions what should be the leading principle to guide humanitarian action. Should one, when faced with today's complex conflicts choose to follow the three traditional core humanitarian principles, supporting the argument that these principles are sufficient (Fox 2001) or should one abandon one of the core principle; neutrality, because it is outdated, as suggested by Slim (1997). In this thesis Hirschman's three types of response mechanisms will be linked to the humanitarian debate to suggest what Norwegian NGOs may do if the shift in politics is compromising their ability to function as independent actors.

Traditionally the three core principles presented in chapter 1, assets the NGO's humanitarian position. They are now being challenged. The two main theories are 'traditional humanitarian' and 'new humanitarianism'. The 'new humanitarianism' is quickly becoming a new banner for NGOs that welcomes a broader cooperation platform and involvement in the political sphere. Other NGOs are concerned about the consequences a broader approach might have for them and their ability to remain neutral and maintain their humanitarian space.

Using these theories will affect the focus of the thesis so that it will mostly look at the types of consequences that may occur in the future based on the experiences that the actors have had so far. By choosing to focus on certain subjects and choosing these theories other subjects will be sidestepped. By using three theories there is also unlikely that all the criteria's will be fulfilled, but hopefully they will be useful to explain the questions that are relevant for this thesis. When working with several theories there is a need for a methodical approach that allows one to coordinate them, pragmatism is a method that allows this so it will be used as a ground stone for the methodological framework.

By definition the goal of civil-military coordination as a method to make coherent approaches trough coordination of different actors that are playing vital roles in

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conflict areas. However in this case focus is on the interplay between these actors and how they perceive to be affected by this new approach for Norwegian assistance, the main question is if NGOs is perceived and portrayed as force multipliers will they lose their role as neutral agents in the field, *what consequences will this in the end have for the humanitarian mission on the ground? What consequences will it have for the civilian population depending on humanitarian aid?*

Today's conflicts and the range of their extended effects are the context in which these issues need to be addressed. By coordinating the armed and civilian effort the goal is to develop approaches that are better equipped to face the challenges of today's conflicts, but what if one of the actors 'looses' their identify as a result of it? In the Norwegian context there are some additional challenges because of the way humanitarian assistance has been organised in Norway. My assumption is that these changes will cause conflicts in the Norwegian model.

So to test my assumption; that the Norwegian government and the Norwegian NGOs are at odds and what consequences this may have, three theories will be used. The integration theory will be used to analyse the relationship between the state and NGOs. As an illustration of how the integration process has developed the works of Terje Tvedt (2003) *The Norwegian model* will be used as an explanatory model. The focus will be to explicate the process that has led the state and NGOs to work so closely together.

## 2.2 Integration theory

Lorentzen (1994:47) argues that "*Strong indicators for integration is when corporative arrangements develops due to economical funding or normative integration*" This types of funding are often viewed differently by NGOs and the

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state. While NGOs perceive funding as a recognition of their work, the state uses funding strategically as a way to get their own interests realised (Groth 1999:13). So disagreements between the government and NGOs are usually connected to underlining principles. In this case civil-military cooperation and the way it may compromise the humanitarian principles seems to be one of the main reasons for the different views on cooperation.

There are several ways integration and integration processes develop. There is no need for direct interrelationship between them, also informal integration can lead to integration. An example of this informal integration is that the process has developed over time and is rooted in historical factors (Groth 1999:13). These informal integration processes developed into a formal integration process when they started having a regulating effect on Norwegian NGOs. Lorentzen (1994:55) presents four main forms of integration; *normative, economical, professionalism and management*. Two of them, normative and economical, will be used. One of the objectives of this thesis is to study the perceptions and consequences these from of integration processes have had.

Perceptions are likely to be influenced by norms both from within the aid system and by norms generated by the government due to the role NGO play in international relations. The economical contributions have played an important part in making the NGOs become a more formal part of the state system (Tvedt 2003) and further more it has affected their role as an independent party.

### **2.2.1 Normative integration:**

Through normative integration of state norms state standards are being used as base for NGOs activities (Lorentzen 1994). This can manifest itself in many ways, but mainly through political descriptions or perceptions of their role. The

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action plan “*New roles for NGOs*<sup>17</sup>” from 2006 sectioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) evaluated Norwegian NGOs as channels in development cooperation is a good example of this. This plan did not only evaluate Norwegian aid and humanitarian assistance, it also predicted some general guidelines on what roles these organisations could play in the future.

The view that these organisations would continue to play an important role is stated through the three main options that were indicated, where one could either keep (1) status quo, with 40% of all humanitarian aid being channelled through multilateral organisations and 50% through NGOs or (2) channel more through multilateral organisations or (3) channel even more through NGOs depending on what capacities one wanted to focus Norwegian aid on. Multilateral organisations like UN being the only legitimate organisation able to enter into countries and taking control. On the other hand the NGOs are perceived to be more efficient when it comes to responding to humanitarian crises (Nye roller plan 2006:233-234).

Norwegian policies towards the NGOs are dependent on normative political interpretations of their role. If measured by the amount of money channelled through them it is likely to assume that they regard them as vital actors in the system and that normative and economical integration is a large part of the model.

### **2.2.2 Economical integration:**

“*Economical integration is the most frequent used indicator of integration between state and NGOs*” (Lorentzen 1994:56). The economical funding of

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<sup>17</sup> Norwegian title; Nye roller for frivillige organisasjoner i utviklingssamarbeid (2006),

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Norwegian NGOs happens in different ways. One way is economical funding to developmental plans that are channelled through different funding measurements like project or program funding. Another is direct humanitarian funding which is channelled directly from the ministry of foreign affairs (MFA) under the budget post 163. The political foundation for this type of funding is stated in White paper no. 1 for each year and the follow-up of this is done through an informal contact between the department and the NGOs (White paper no 1 2001 2002). A critic raised toward this form of funding is that the close relationship with the political sphere can led to politicised aid (Braem 2008, Eriksen 2010). This may leave an impression that the cooperative system has left the NGOs without ‘free will’ but they have developed some forms of counterstrategies.

NGOs are not a homogenous group so they will develop their own ways to handle the changing environment. Some organisations are more critical towards civil-military cooperation than others, so while some open up for some military assistance to secure their humanitarian space, other feared that too much help with this could be perceived as cooperation with armed forces (Harang: 2008). The Norwegian Government and military officials states that while they are committed to developing more cooperation they would like to preserve the humanitarian principles, by better understanding each others role (Støre 2008[speech]). Other argued that humanitarian assistance and aid is already so incorporated into the political sphere that the thought of apolitical aid is unrealistic. To examine what options of response the NGOs may have to represent their perceptions of CIMIC and what consequences they think it can lead to Hirschman’s consumer theory will be used.

## 2.3 Hirschman’s consumer theory

The basic concept is as follows:



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*“(...) members of an organisation, whether a business, a nation or any other form of human grouping, have essentially two possible responses when they perceive that the organisation is demonstrating a decrease in quality or benefit to the member: they can **exit** (withdraw from the relationship); or they can **voice** (attempt to repair or improve the relationship through communication of the complaint, grievance or proposal for change<sup>18</sup>)”*

The new humanitarian approach, advocates for more politically active types of NGOs. The Norwegian model is built on NGOs being contracted into the political sphere through different integration processes, but not being actively involved in the international policy making, outside the sphere of development policies (Lie 2004). Traditional values are still very much connected to Norwegian aid, while the new ideas are gaining more room in the international arena through human rights organisations like Amnesty and more voice active NGOs like the MSF. One can argue that there is developing a discrepancy between the traditional core humanitarian principles advocated by the ICRC and new humanitarianism.

In the context of this thesis the NGOs can choose to use exit, as a tool to distance themselves from becoming political tools for foreign politics, but it will be difficult, at least for the smaller NGOs, to exit their relationship to the Norwegian government since they are more or less state funded. This leads to the interplay of what Hirschman has named loyalty which can affect the reasoning behind using either voice or exit;

*“(...) the interplay of loyalty can affect the cost-benefit analysis of whether to use exit or voice. Whether there is loyalty to the organisation (as evidenced by strong patriotism politically, or brand loyalty for consumers), exit may be reduced, especially where options to exit are not so appealing (small job market, political or financial hurdles to emigrate or move)<sup>19</sup>”*

When it comes to the interplay of loyalty one must bear in mind that the Norwegian aid system has developed in the way that it has, because of an agreed

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<sup>18</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit,\\_Voice,\\_and\\_Loyalty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit,_Voice,_and_Loyalty). Received: 11/5-09

<sup>19</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit,\\_Voice,\\_and\\_Loyalty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit,_Voice,_and_Loyalty). Received 11/5-09

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common “goal”. There has been a political agreement about aid policy and what humanitarian assistance should include (Groth 1999:13, Tvedt 2003:65-67). The economical funding and normative integration that has followed appears to have developed a political dependency on the traditional rhetoric of the relationship with the state. This view has developed a form of loyalty together with the funding dependency. The situation is under pressure as the conflicts between the state and NGOs have changed character. Earlier conflicts have mostly been about administrative issues, but now because of the integrated role NGO’s play in the total assistance this might be changing.

By using Hirschman’s theory one can give an analysis of their options and where they can either exit their relationship or they can voice their concerns on how civil-military cooperation will affect humanitarian aid. Here, the choice of *voice* may lead to norm changes and new perceptions on the interaction between the state and NGOs. In a normal consumer-producer situation the consumer has the opportunity to exit the relationship at any given time, but with the Norwegian model the integral relationship between the state and NGOs has evolved over a long period of time leading to a convergence of aid and political interests. So in Hirschman’s theory the interplay of loyalty is used to show how it can have an effect on how NGOs respond to diminishing alternatives.

Given that there has traditionally been a large level of consensus and agreement in Norwegian politics particular in the relationship between humanitarian NGOs and the Norwegian government we can begin to appreciate why Norwegian NGOs have accepted the invitation by the state to work almost as development agents. In exchange, they have been provided with generous funding and been given the opportunity to work on the issues they have found most interesting (Groth 1999:13). This agreement has, until now, been unproblematic because there has been little disagreement as to what aid policies in Norway should include.

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## 2.4 Humanitarian theories

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked a change in armed conflicts which led to a decline in inhibitions to intervene in interstate conflicts (Goodhand 2006:1). This has also reinforced a change in the role played by NGOs. There is an increasingly stronger tie between humanitarian action and political objectives as well as a change in the overall policies from donor countries. These changes are also reflected in the debate around humanitarian assistance. By using humanitarian theories one can also discuss the possibility that maybe the pressure for cooperation is not only an external factor from the government and military, but that it is also a growing view internally within the humanitarian community.

From the traditional classical humanitarianism, locating itself outside political activity to the contemporary humanitarian landscape where humanitarian action is becoming an integral part of the strategy to approach conflicts (HPG report 2001). There has been a fair amount of criticism towards traditional based humanitarian assistance. NGOs have been criticised for creating their own societies within societies and not interacting with the state, to the dependency debate and not being sensitive to how they affect some situations (Collier 2008, Fox 2001). This makes it evident that there are many factors that influence the humanitarian imperative in today's conflicts.

As said the 'New humanitarianism' is the latest direction within humanitarianism and this direction is advocating for a more political sensitive form of aid. It represents a break from the traditional humanitarian approach advocated by the ICRC and it provides NGOs with a new banner, promoting conscious goal orientated aid that recognises that there is some links between aid, military action and diplomatic tools (Fox 2001). There is a new drive for coherence in new humanitarianism and under this coherence agenda, humanitarian action gets implemented into a comprehensive political strategy that makes the argument for

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more cooperation between NGOs, the government and the military more legitimate (HPG report 2001).

The ICRC has its fundamental principles that define their *humanitarian space*, as most of NGOs that work with humanitarian assistance and development. This new form of humanitarianism is challenging these principles and argues that some of these principles, especially neutrality is outdated. New humanitarianism opens up for a widening of humanitarian policy and a more pragmatic approach to today's conflicts, while the traditional understanding of neutrality means that humanitarian assistance must stay as apolitical in nature as possible (Fox 2001). There is however been raised some concerns over how far this can go, if NGOs are willing to have a pragmatic relationship to the principles of humanitarian aid, especially the one of neutrality, does not all of the principles stand in danger of losing its value?

With NATO's CIMIC this new way of cooperating in complex conflicts is developing. The arguments for more cooperation mirror the increasing focus on coherence under the new humanitarianism (HPG report 2001). The new humanitarian approach is also compelling as it allows agencies to say that they are not politically naive (Fox 2001). It may however make it difficult for NGOs to maintain their ability to reach the weakest groups in a conflict situation, due to their lack of classical neutrality or due to political interests that may hinder their access (Shannon 2009).

The ECHO report (2004) on the other hand, focuses on another aspect of this debate, and it links insecurity for humanitarian personnel to the presence of military forces. Linked to the case, Norway is a small country that has had little of non national interest to pursue on the international arena, making it easier for NGOs to keep a close relationship to each other. A coherent approach coordinating humanitarian and military actors would change this (NUPI 2010).

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The main reason for why this would alter the relationship between the government and NGO today is due to Norway's military engagement in Afghanistan, it has given Norway a new profile, giving the debate of new and traditional humanitarian debate a second level to think about. Now Norway is following national interests, by being part of NATO's coalition and leading a PRT team Norway's profile has changed.

By using these theories one can also discuss the possibility that maybe the pressure for cooperation is not only an external factor from the government and military, but that it is also a growing view internally within the humanitarian community.

### 3. Method

The methodology one chooses in a study will eventually affect the results<sup>20</sup>. This is one of the things one has to consider when one is doing a research study. The particular hypothesis for this thesis had not been studied broadly, but the concept of civil military cooperation had been and the same went for NGOs, the Norwegian model and the humanitarian approaches. Putting it all together meant that I needed to choose an approach that would let me pick out certain topics to study. A lot of the data in this study is theoretical, but the outcome of the political shift will affect people in the real world. This is the reason why I went with a combination of three methods that allows me to study key questions regarding this unique situation; where the introduction of a third partner, the military could have an impact on the relationship between the Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs and have long-term affect on humanitarian assistance.

#### 3.1 Introduction: Qualitative research

Qualitative research methods focus on studying phenomena in the real world placing its centre of attention on complexity rather than simplicity. Some qualitative research also holds the view that there is no single ultimate truth; but that the truth exists only as a multiple of perspectives all being equally valid (Leedy & Ormrod 2005: 133). By using a qualitative research method I have been able to compare different perspectives using written material such as documents, reports and plans from NGOs, the government and the military. I have also been able to do interviews to compare the written material with the perspectives of the

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.filosofi.no/epist.html>

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individuals I have talked to, as well as academics papers and articles from newspapers and information gathered at seminars and lectures. To carry out such an in-depth study a combination of three qualitative research methods have been used as guidelines: pragmatism, case study and phenomenological study.

### 3.1.1 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophical school within social science and it can be used when one wants to draw on various theoretical angles. It also denies fundamentalism, the view that it is possible to find one true meaning once and for all (Cherryholms 1992:3) which is in coherence with the approach that I wanted to use. It also states that;

*“Research in a pragmatic tradition (...) seeks to clarify meaning and looks to consequences” (Cherryholms 1992:1).*

By using this method I can examine both the empirical and theoretical parts of CIMIC and the perceived consequences it may have for humanitarian aid. Pragmatism insists that it is the interplay of experience and theory that counts as knowledge (Hollis 1994:77). This means that first of all knowledge is made through interpretation and new or added knowledge is made through reinterpretations. How things are interpreted is dependent on who interprets them, hence it follows that interpretations or knowledge, in the view of pragmatism, is subjective. One’s view of consequences is therefore tainted with *a priori* knowledge built up by other interpretations of the ‘truth’, or in this case due to normative integration, which I will come back to. This also makes pragmatism a good ground stone in analysing what underpins the differences between the Norwegian government, the Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian military. Their priority and experiences will influence their perception on how CIMIC will affect humanitarian aid.

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### 3.1.2 Case study

In a case study “*a particular individual, program or event is studied in-depth*” (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:135). In this thesis a single case study is used to understand the context around humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. This has been done by tracing the consequences it may have for the cooperative relationship between NGOs and the Norwegian state. The theoretical aspect of the Norwegian model and the empirical data on how civil-military cooperation developed by NATO influences humanitarian assistance is used to link the two levels of data. To make a case study I have gone through extensive literature on the situation in Afghanistan and the CIMIC discussion. I have also attended several debates and seminars held by different NGOs, organisations and academic circles. Throughout the process I have come in contact with different people working on issues about Afghanistan, CIMIC and aid they have been helpful in guiding me to new and interesting material. Talking too them has also given me important insight and understanding on the different perspectives.

The situation in Afghanistan, and how the relationship between the military and NGOs are conducted there, I believe, will have a significant impact on how humanitarian assistance will function in the future. Using a case study has also been helpful since it has provided a common issue to discuss and link the various questions around civil-military cooperation gathered through my interviews. It has also functioned as a guideline as to how to conduct further research, who to contact as well as what kind of literature one should study.

### 3.1.3 Epistemology

*”Everyone possess knowledge; most people know that the sky is blue, that horses have four legs, that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris, that the earth moves around the sun, that it is wrong to steal and if one is planning to take*



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*an exam it is necessary to read for it to get a good grade. But how does one attain knowledge<sup>21</sup>? (Authors own translation).*

Epistemology address the question; what is knowledge, how it is acquired, what do people know and how do they know what they know. Epistemology attempts to understand how people acquire knowledge and how they utilizes this knowledge to interpretative the world around them<sup>22</sup>. This thesis looks at how the shift in policies is being perceived by NGOs and how they see this shift affecting humanitarian action. One core issue is therefore how civil-military cooperation is being perceived. There are three areas within epistemology that are important namely; terminology, objective and subjective.

### **Terminology**

Definitions are problematic in epistemology because they move between the abstract and figurative. A 'definition' is first of all understood as an abstract explanation of a 'term' without figurative meaning, and is given meaning through interpretation. The term itself gets figurative meaning through people's subjective interpretation. So divergent perceptions of what civil-military cooperation *is* and *means* is not a strictly methodological problem (Bjerre 2007:14), but a subject-object problem that puts the various actors at different platforms when they interpret civil-military cooperation.

### **The subject-object problem:**

The “*world consists of objects (entities) which are perceived or otherwise presumed to exist as entities, by subjects (observers)*”<sup>23</sup>”

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.filosofi.no/epist.html> 25/4-2010

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.menneskeligutvikling.no/index.php?site=default/179/189/285/288> 26/4 2010

<sup>23</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject-object\\_problem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject-object_problem) 26/4 2010

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The subject-object question is concerned with the analysis of human experience. An objective statement in epistemology holds that there can be an objective truth independent of how anyone perceives it. While the subjective standpoint is that all knowledge or truth is acquired through a subjective interpretation of the social world<sup>24</sup>.

By using this method I will try to show how experiences and reflections affect the interpretation of a situation. To study this I have conducted three interviews, two with people representing humanitarian NGO's (MSF and Red Cross) and one with a professor in political science. The perspective on civil-military cooperation from the Norwegian Government and the military is mostly derived from written sources, but also from seminars and meetings where the views on civil-military cooperation have been discussed. These meetings and seminars have been held under the Chatham rules<sup>25</sup>.

The interviewees were semi-structural in form, so I had some pre-made questions and the interviews were informed on the main topic in advance. The positive side with semi-structural interviews is that one has some structure in the interview subjects and one can compare some of the answers to get some general perceptions. One has also the opportunity to conduct the interviews as a conversation, where one can easily make follow up questions as one goes along and this makes it easier for me the researcher to listen to the participants and pick up meaningful information, that can be used further to find common themes and perceptions by the participants.

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<sup>24</sup> Cf.: footnote No.23

<sup>25</sup> The 'Chatham House Rule' is a rule that governs the confidentiality of the source of information received at a meeting. It states that: *When a meeting or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are not free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker, nor that of any other participant, may be revealed in.*

The interviews were face-to-face and the time aspect was from one to about three hours. In all of my interviews I used a tape recorder, which made the interviews easier as I could concentrate on the conversation and not need to take notes all the time. It was also useful to be able to listen to the interviews again later on in the writing process.

### 3.2 Concluding remarks:

The reason I have to choose several theories and methods is to try to conduct an integrated study that studies this issue from different angles. Linking the ground level perceptions from individuals that work in complex conflicts with the white paper statements and military reports will hopefully unveil different perspectives and what consequences this may have for humanitarian assistance. Three interviews are not sufficient to make a solid statement about the situation, but it did give me some knowledge about the Norwegian system as well as some insight to the experiences the humanitarian personnel experienced on the ground. I have chosen to look at the big picture surrounding civil-military cooperation and tried to narrow it down to the Norwegian context and what this may have to say for the future of Norwegian humanitarian aid. By researching this topic in this particular way I may have neglected some questions, but hope that my conclusion as well as the questions *I do* ask will foster interest as well as contribute to further discussion.

## 4. The Norwegian model

To study the relationship between the Norwegian government and the NGOs, the Norwegian model will be used as an explanatory model. It provides essential background information on how the Norwegian aid societies over time grow into an integrated part of the political sphere. It also provides a frame for discussing why the use of aid and humanitarian assistance as an incentive in foreign politics can be at odds with the consensus aspect and affect the relationship built between the Norwegian NGOs and the government

### 4.1 From the outside, to the inside.

Since the 1990s the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has worked on harmonizing foreign politics and the plans for Norwegian NGOs. This has resulted in what is known as the Norwegian *model* also referred to as *the special relationship* between the Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs. In Norway they have developed an informal and flexible relationship between the state and NGOs. Tvedt (2003:305) emphasizes that this is especially evident within development and humanitarian context, where the ministry of foreign affairs (MFA), research institutes and NGOs are growing closer together.

The first and main reason for Norway having this type of model is the national formation. The society and NGOs have not established themselves in contrast to each other, which have been the case in many other countries. The second reason is external factors. Very early on the international aid system understood the benefits of involving a larger part of the society. Norway has been particularly identified with this model due to the large amount of state funding NGOs receive

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each year (Tvedt 2003). In 2009, 1/5 of all Norwegian aid got channelled through NGOs (Solheim 2009 [speech]).

This has had a twofold effect, some NGOs working with development and humanitarian aid has grown big, strong and some claim bureaucratically. Within the aid society, there is often talked about the '5 larges' ones; the Norwegian Red Cross, the Norwegian refugee council, Church Aid, Norwegian people aid and Save the Children that have developed into vital actors and partners to the government in this field (Øvrebø 1995). The usage of NGOs has been an important instrument for Norway. This close relationship opens up for the Norwegian system to have more channels than traditional (MFA plan 2000). The MFA (2006) takes it a step further stating that this close relationship have given '*Norway a small-state advantage*' highlight that the relationship makes it easier to go into conflicts and have a '*long-term plan and secure funding plans*' (MFA plan 2006:).

On the other side some NGOs have become dependent of the state due to the funding they get. Even if there is no 1-1 relationship between finance and autonomy this process have developed over a long period of time so trough the integration perspective it is likely to presume that this has had an impact on their relationship (Lorentzen 1994). The interesting part to this is to see if this also has an impact when studying the challenges of more cooperation between civilian and military actors. Will their close relationship become a factor in the way civil-military cooperation is perceived and handle.

White paper 35(2003-04) shows a considerable shift in Norwegian policy by connecting aid and political interest. Here development, NGOs and the civilian society gets described as vital tools that Norway can use to reach its millennium development goals, (MDG). The foundation for the Norwegian model also expands with this white paper, aid is no longer understood as a act of charity and

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provided based on poorly need alone, but is following the new norm set where development is closely linked to the ‘right’ approached (NUPI 2004:5) where humanitarian action is considerate to be a legally agreed goal (HPG 2001). The expansion is relevant to today’s picture due to the merger of development and foreign aid politics on one side and a merger of foreign and defense politics on the other side (Goodhand 2008). These mergers is putting the needs versus rights debate on the agenda for NGOs, it brings on the question ‘what moral grounds humanitarian aid should be provided? There are to camps that connect themselves to the humanitarian discussion. As presented in chapter 2.4, one side of the debate there is the traditional front, wanting to keep humanitarian aid ‘value free’, while the other side want assistance with a “meaning”. The new from of humanitarianism is questioning the traditional response and principle, saying that the traditional form is not up to date if they are claiming to be a political.

The use of NGOs as instruments in Norwegian foreign politics has received revitalized attention due to resent developments and issues like the nature of today’s conflicts and the humanitarian debate that are challenging all actors involved in new ways. Norway’s cooperative advantage as a “small and neutral country” in foreign politics (NUPI 2009, Tvedt 2003) is in danger because of this integrated way of operating.

#### **4.1.1 Historical background: The Norwegian model**

This short historical backdrop will give the outlines of the historical development of the relationship between the Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs. Norway’s model is unique due to the amount of funding and the size of the system, no other country has so many organisations working with the government in this way. The closeness between the NGOs and the Norwegian government is also a trademark that is unique for Norway; it shows that within the Norwegian

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system there is a high level of consensus between the different actors (Tvedt 2003).

The trend of donating aid by channelling it through NGOs started in the 1960s<sup>26</sup>. The main reason for channelling money through organisations was that it would be easier to increase support around aid and assistance (Tvedt 2003). However in the 1990s there was a reaction to the alleged comparative advantaged NGOs, as supposed to channelling aid through other types of state institutions. This critic led to a change in the rational for why Norway was using NGOs as the main channel for aid. They where thought to be closer to the ‘grassroots’ organisations in the receiver countries so their mission changed towards supporting civil society in the receiver country and setting focus on good governance and democratisation (Borchgrevink 2006 in Grøndahl 2008:22, Tvedt 2003 ).

Terje Tvedt (2003:55) explains that he uses the term *the Norwegian model* as a reference to the integration processes that has lead to the system one has today. The model gives a picture of how the relationship between the NGOs, state and the research society has been organised. He amplifies the importance of *consensus* between the different actors. But this ground stone in the model is best explained through Jan Egeland’s 1988:185<sup>27</sup> own words cited in Tvedt (2003:59) “*Norway’s potential for political entrepreneurship lays in policy consensus, few conflicting foreign policy interests and increasing founds for foreign assistance*”.

This statement shows that there could be problems ahead concerning the consensus aspect of the Norwegian model. Especially now, when the focus on cooperation and integration has led several NGOs to voice their concerns about how this may affect humanitarian assistance. One of the concerns raised is the

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<sup>26</sup> Terje Tvedt (2003:81) sets the date to the 17<sup>th</sup> of august 1962

<sup>27</sup> Former leader for Norwegian Red Cross, sate secretary and UN mediator amongst other tings.

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use of aid as a strategic instrument, which has not been the norm in Norwegian politics best illustrated by the fact that development politics and Norwegian foreign politics has, as said, developed apart from each other. When Norwegian aid first got established in the 1960s the intention at the international level for other countries was to use aid as an agent preventing communism to spread through what was then called the *third world*. While in Norway developmental aid got institutionalised outside the department of foreign affairs as if it had no relation too Norwegian foreign policy interests (Tvedt: 2003).

Norway's Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) has the main responsibility in co-ordinating aid and aid projects and is the directorate for foreign aid as a separate actor. In 2004 there was a reorganization of the relationship between NORAD and MFA and some parts of NORAD got incorporated in under the MFA. NORAD remained a separate department, but NORAD's main workload is now connected to evaluation of Norwegian aid and aid programs as well as administrative resources that get channeled through different NGOs (Tvedt 2003). This incorporating process did not, however, affect the way the state and the NGOs define their relationship; *as independent of each other*. The reason behind this perception is the history between the Norwegian aid and foreign policies stipulated in a neutrality clause that ensured that Norwegian humanitarian aid was founded on humanitarian principles alone. The clause stated; "*It is important that aid which is donated to less developed countries is donated without political, economical or religious strings attached*" (Lie 2006:141<sup>28</sup>.) In front of the reorganization of NORAD and the MFA, there was also a reorganization of the state budget. By moving some of the budget post around it would become easier to develop a more coherent strategy regarding aid funding (St.prp. no 1 2001-2002).

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<sup>28</sup> Authors own translation.



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This clause was removed three years before the reorganization between NORAD and the MAF. The removal of this clause signals that the clause has played out its role and is no longer needed as a guideline. According to Tvedt (2003:109) the clause got removed due to the symbolic significance of presenting aid as a ‘common’ interest. One can therefore argue that by presenting aid as a common interest the separation between political interest and apolitical interest is removed and a more coherent picture of Norwegian aid politics and aid practices can be made.

## 4.2 Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided with a historical backdrop to the Norwegian model and explained how the integration of Norwegian NGOs has developed over time. The politic consensus that has been somewhat of a backbone to the Norwegian model seems to be under pressure now that Norway’s government is moving towards a more integrated approach in Afghanistan. In the Norwegian political sphere there have been done strategically moves to integrate the Norwegian NGOs further to the political sphere. The removal of the neutral clause and the re-organization of NORAD and the budget change are altercations done to bring the two spheres closer together and to create a more coordinated platform. Making a coherent platform may be useful in achieving a more efficient Norwegian effort, but it also closes down the options for Norwegian NGOs, by becoming an integrated part of the Norwegian system they may have difficult time remaining neutral, independent and impartial when the third partner arrives.

The Norwegian model is unique as said, for different reasons but mostly due to its flexible fashion where the use of Norwegian NGOs as partners gives Norway advantages that few other countries have. If the principles underlining this are changing it is likely that this will present itself in some way that will affect the

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model and the Norwegian aid system. The cooperation focus and the extended use of a national based system in Norway's involvement in other complex conflicts stands to affect the consensus principle that the relationship between the Norwegian government and the Norwegian NGOs have. It is also a question of security whether or not this is a healthy trend for Norwegian NGOs, one way NGOs are staying safe in the field is through their humanitarian space, upheld by their three core principles, but if Norwegian NGOs are forced to cooperate with a third armed party their security net may be damaged and Norwegian NGOs will be associated with political agendas

## 5. The case of Afghanistan

In 2001 Afghanistan was described as one of the world biggest humanitarian disasters, after decades of conflicts, wars and natural disasters the country was seen as a failed state and as one of the least developed countries in the world (CMI report: 2005:11). The fall of the Taliban regime became the start of a new international commitment to Afghanistan. This thesis uses the situation in Afghanistan as a case to show how the context around humanitarian aid is changing. Afghanistan shows the new type of conflicts humanitarian, military and donor countries are facing and Afghanistan has become a testing ground for the new paradigm that has developed between the different actors. Intra-state conflicts and failed states are demanding broader approaches and are challenging how far one can go to establish these forms of approaches without undermining each actor's independent role, especially the role played by the humanitarian actors.

### 5.1 Introduction: Dimensions of conflict

In the period 1979-2001 the country went from a cold war proxy to a regionalized civil war. In 1978 diverse Islamic groups got together and formed a resistance group as a response to the communist party, People's democratic party of Afghanistan, gaining control in the country. This led the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan in 1979. The resistance group called the *Mujahedin* was financed by the US. After nearly ten years the Soviet forces withdrew in 1989 causing the Afghan state to nearly collapse (Goodland 2006:18). In the aftermath old differences became more visible and when the communist government was brought down in 1992, Taliban appeared in the power vacuum that followed. Four years later in 1996 Taliban gained control of the capital city Kabul, and just

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a small fraction in the northern part of the country remained outside of Taliban influence (CMI report 2007).

When Taliban was in charge many restrictions on what kind of humanitarian assistance that could be delivered was made, as well as *whom* could deliver it, one of the restrictions was that female aid workers was not allowed. Due to the many restrictions donor interest declined, in 1995 the total amount aid donated from the international community was US\$ 200 million (CMI 2005:1). However today Afghanistan has become one of the world's largest recipients of aid, but due to a web of conflicts and conflict lines, external actors are having a hard time sorting out all the different factors that are affecting the situation that they are facing. According to Frereks et al. (2006), it is possible to group the most common internal conflict lines:

*“a) imperial and domestic (dynastic) struggles for power and state control; b) ethnic, religious and regional identities and affiliations; c) patterns of feudalism, political patronage and warlordism; d) economies of violence, especially in relation to drugs; and e) interference by superpowers, regional powers, and neighboring countries.”*(Frereks et al. 2006:41)

Afghanistan's geographical position has always been a subject for foreign interest. All the different groups that has struggled for control in Afghanistan has been in some way or another interested in Afghanistan due to the fact that it is located in the crossroads between west, south and central Asia.

*“Afghanistan's (...) strategic position in the age of colonial empire and during the cold war, it always has been subject to foreign interference. Many Afghans are keen to point out that communism, the Mujahedeen, the Taliban, Al Qaeda and even the government were to some extent foreign machinations”* (Frereks et al. 2006:41).

Today, this geopolitical perception is still legitimate; the international interest in Afghanistan is still interlinked to security and the strategic location of Afghanistan. Julian Lindley-French (2009), a member of the Atlantic Council's Strategic Advisors Group, and Professor of Military Art and Science at the Royal Military Academy in the Netherlands, also emphasizes that the overall strategic objective in Afghanistan is to make *“a relatively stable Afghanistan as a counter*

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to *Al Qaeda-style terrorism*” (2009:2<sup>29</sup>). In other words by creating a stable Afghanistan one is hoping to ensure global security.

Other underlying conflicts that the external armed forces, humanitarian and donor countries has to deal with in order to reestablish Afghanistan as a stable country with functional state structures is the level of human development “*due to decades of warfare and state negligence, Afghanistan’s development has suffered and been seriously wounded*. Development wise Afghanistan’s population scores low on human development indicators, especially women have been neglected (Frereks et al 2006:41-42). Weak state structures and the lack of stability are also issues that foreign actors have to deal with in order to reestablish a secure Afghanistan. Frereks et al. (2006) further argue that the state authority in Afghanistan is weak due to the state formation with little or no authority outside Kabul (Frereks et al 2006: 41). NATO’s PRT forces mandate is to work especially on the last issue facing foreign actors in Afghanistan; the lack of state authority outside Kabul.

## 5.2 Humanitarian assistance and aid from Norway to Afghanistan

There are several Norwegian NGOs operating in Afghanistan, during the research for this thesis I have been in contact with two organisations that both have worked in Afghanistan for many years.

### **Red Cross**

Red Cross functions as a partner of national society (PNS), that means that they work together through the Afghan-led Red Crescent Movement in Afghanistan.

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[http://74.125.155.132/scholar?q=cache:LtSOC2ohmCsJ:scholar.google.com/+gaining+stability+in+Afghanistan&hl=en&as\\_sdt=2000](http://74.125.155.132/scholar?q=cache:LtSOC2ohmCsJ:scholar.google.com/+gaining+stability+in+Afghanistan&hl=en&as_sdt=2000)

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At the time of my inquiry Red Cross was the only organisation in Afghanistan working as a PNS. Since 2002 Red Cross have had the responsibility for the Afghan ambulance service in Kabul. They have prioritised questions regarding community-based first aid and mother and child health care.

### **Mèdecins Sans Frontieres**

Mèdecins sans Frontieres had worked in 13 provinces and in over 24 years when they left Afghanistan in 2004. There are several reasons for their withdrawal, but the security issues and a direct attack against one of MSF's cars, resulting in the death of several humanitarian officers, has been indicated as being the main reasons for them leaving the area<sup>30</sup>. Today, five years after they left Afghanistan, they are back, working in Kabul. They report on their webpage that they are not receiving any government funding for their work in Afghanistan, but are solely using private donations<sup>31</sup>.

#### **5.2.1 Aid from Norway to Afghanistan**

An annual report from NORAD on bilateral aid from 2007<sup>32</sup> showed that the Norwegian bilateral aid had focused on economic development and trade, emergency help, environment and energy, good governance and the social sector in Afghanistan (NORAD 2007:29-30). The funding had been channelled through a multitude of channels, but mostly through multinational organisations and NGOs. Larger Norwegian contributions were made to the Norwegian refugee consul (NRC) and the UN refugee organisation UNHCR. So even though the Norwegian government states that state-to-state funding is the best way to

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.sportsrepsjonen.no/node/66>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.legerutengrenser.no/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=4D4F2950-15C5-F00A-250645F3AAE28285&component=toolkit.article&method=full\\_html](http://www.legerutengrenser.no/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=4D4F2950-15C5-F00A-250645F3AAE28285&component=toolkit.article&method=full_html)

<sup>32</sup> Published in October 2008

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strengthen the bilateral relationship between countries, Norway is also to some extent following the trend of bypassing the Afghan government. The issue of bypassing is connected to the need for the Afghan government to be perceived as reliable by the Afghan people. The trend of bypassing makes this difficult to achieve.

In the context of Norway's contribution to Afghanistan, the bypassing of the Afghan government can be related to the fact that Norway has developed an extensive development assistance program in the Northern parts of Afghanistan where it also heads the Provincial reconstruction team (PRT). In 2006-07 the province received 41, 59 million NOK in direct Norwegian support; in addition Norway gave funding to national programs (CMI 2007:1).

The allocation of aid, military effort and humanitarian assistance in one area like this raises concerns about the humanitarian principles of *independence*, because it implies a growing coherence between political objectives and humanitarian assistance. Followed by the use of special funds to make NGOs more involved in high profile areas, some NGOs change their profile to receive these funds. Terje Tvedt (2003:90-91) argues that several NGOs set up projects that fit into the governments' objectives or future development programs to ensure further funding (Tvedt 2003: 90-91).

One of the main arguments to use NGOs is due to their comparative precedence that organizations have makes them important as development partners. This is one of the core arguments for why NGOs and humanitarian aid workers are concerned about the trend towards more civil-military coordinated operations pushed by different actors. The NGOs that want to follow the ethical framework advocated by ICRC are afraid that they may lose the acceptance that they are dependent on to do their work if this trend continues.

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Another issue that Norwegian NGOs face in Afghanistan is the level of difficulty connected to the issue of clear lines between ‘short term relief assistance’ projects and ‘long term development’ programs. The line gets blurred and merges into one another. In Afghanistan the focus of NGOs and donors generally still are relief-orientated, but the strategic framework in which NGOs now operate in have strong links to political and assistance strategies (Goodhand 2006).

Seen in this light, the NGOs that fear it may come to a point where NATO, a military organ, will control what kind of project they may follow can have a good point. “*That only “fit” into the NATO concept of security*”. White paper no. 39 (2003-2004):28) “*Samfunnssikkerhet og sivilt-militært samarbeid*”<sup>33</sup> states that the Norwegian government wants clarity in the roles of civil and military actors, but that there will be times when the only option is to use military forces to conduct what normally would be labelled as civil activities because of the security situation.

### **5.2.2 Military contribution to Afghanistan**

Norway’s relationship with Afghanistan and the South-Asian region was presumed to be marginal or be mostly connected through trade and aid (Frøystad 1995:415). This changed after 2001 when the UN Security Council declared that the situation in Afghanistan was a “*threat against peace*” and “*a matter of international security*” (Støre 2008 [speech]). NATO’s main role in Afghanistan is to assist the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) in gaining control and stabilise the environment. This is done through its UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF’s engagement in Afghanistan started as an operation limited to Kabul, but this has changed and now ISAF is working all over Afghanistan. Today, all NATO member nations are contributing with forces

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<sup>33</sup> Eng. Translation: Human security and civil military cooperation



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in Afghanistan. ISAF's main tasks in Afghanistan is security, reconstruction and development and governance.<sup>34</sup>

Norway is leading a PRT in Meymaneh, located in the Faryab province in the northwest of Afghanistan. The PRT mandate by ISAF is to “ *to assist the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) to extend its authority in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment(...) and enable security sector reforms and reconstruction efforts* ”<sup>35</sup>. There are 26<sup>36</sup> PRTs in Afghanistan and each of them has their own approach to this assignment, but they are all encouraged to include other elements, beside their military component. The Norwegian lead PRT in Meymaneh consists of two main pillars, a military one and a civilian one. The goal with PRT is to create ‘*system-wide or multi-dimensional impact on the reconstruction goals and objectives of the international intervention*’ (NUPI Report 2009:29).

Norway's humanitarian engagement in Afghanistan has a wider focus than its military engagement, which is Meymaneh. The Norwegian embassy in Afghanistan has the coordinating role for most of development and humanitarian assistance that Norway give to Afghanistan. They oversee about 70% of the funds that are distributed to UN projects, Norwegian NGOs and others. “*This way of delegating responsibility throughout the distribution of aid is a result of an explicit Norwegian strategy*” (NUPI 2009:34) based in the relationship the Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs have.

The Norwegian strategy in Afghanistan is to create a ‘whole of government approach’ that harmonises Norway's contribution to Afghanistan. The problem

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_8189.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.mzv.cz/prtlogar/en/learn\\_more/isaf\\_mandate\\_and\\_prt\\_mission/index.html](http://www.mzv.cz/prtlogar/en/learn_more/isaf_mandate_and_prt_mission/index.html)

<sup>36</sup> Cf.: footnote No.35

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becomes the relationship between the Norwegian government and the Norwegian NGOs. Due to the context in which they operate in Afghanistan they may be perceived as an integral part of the military and political assignment in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan the Norwegian military is playing a leading role, and the effect this may have is assumed to most likely to be negative if a link between the military and Norwegian NGO are made (NUPI Report 2009:23-25).

In the discussion about what effects civil-military cooperation has on humanitarian aid the PRTs are often pointed out as the main reason for blurring of roles, due to the fact that their reconstruction projects, also known quick impact projects, often involve rebuilding of roads, buildings and other necessities like water wells<sup>37</sup>. These are all projects usually connected to NGOs development programs. It is turning the discussion into what falls under the label ‘humanitarian assistance’ and ‘development work’, and since the Norwegian government has stated that there need to be clear roles between what is humanitarian work and what is military work this issue is challenging this statement. Even though there is a notion by the government that it is through a clear understanding of roles cooperation can prosper. The PRTs mission statement opens the door for PRTs to do developmental work such as building roads, as a facilitating act for further development in the area (Shannon 2009:25).

After 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq became the main recipients of aid and humanitarian assistance from almost all of The Development Assistance Committee’s member countries (DAC)<sup>38</sup> (Harang 2008:102). The United Kingdom more than doubled its aid contribution to Afghanistan and Norway’s donation to humanitarian aid doubled in 2008 and is currently NOK 750

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.mil.no/fo/afg/start/dagboker/meymaneh/article.jhtml?articleID=126199>

<sup>38</sup> The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the principal body through which the OECD deals with issues related to co-operation with developing countries.

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million<sup>39</sup>. The correlation between aid, political focus and military strategic investments looks to be strong when it comes to high profile conflicts such as Afghanistan. In high profile conflicts there seems to be a concentration of humanitarian assistance. According to Braem (2008:40), this concentration of assistance is often connected to a geopolitical division of labor, which corresponds with the distribution of global military power, followed by the world's distribution of humanitarian assistance. He further argues that this geopolitical division of military power demonstrates how the military forces are deployed in the different conflicts.

High profiled conflicts are conflicts where northern/rich countries participate with military and humanitarian assistance, while conflicts of less strategic value become UN-led peacekeeping staffed by countries from Latin America, Africa and the Indian sub-continent (Braem 2008). This is also one of the topics the civilian actors raise in the discussions on civil-military cooperation and its effects on NGOs. Their concern is that the focus on staying neutral and impartial can be undermined when there is such a clear correlation between strategic interest and humanitarian aid.

If one looks at the flip side of the coin, the massive arrival of NGOs to conflict areas like Afghanistan after military intervention answers the question of '*which side of the conflict they are on*'. Especially in Afghanistan where many NGOs who had little or no experience in the region, are now working with development and humanitarian assistance (Braem 2008). This indicates that the effect of policies must not always be perceived as a one way street, the use of NGOs in high profile conflicts can be brought about by themselves and therefore the questions surrounding their neutrality can be legitimate.

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.norad.no/Land/Asia+og+Oseania/Afghanistan>

### 5.3 Concluding remarks

The situation in Afghanistan is highly uncertain and the level of stability goes back and forth. Norway is engaged in the conflict in Afghanistan through both humanitarian and military assistance. The Norwegian government is now saying that they want to follow the international trend and developed a “whole of government” model in Afghanistan, trying to coordinate its civilian and military effort in a more coherent way. The critic toward this form of coordination is that they tend to become too static and the flexibility one has without them becomes lost (SCHR 2010). There is also the security debate on how this may affect the NGOs that are working in Afghanistan if a whole of government plan is executed.

In relation to the Norwegian effort the down side to this model is that it will most likely affect the perception of the Norwegian humanitarian effort. It is likely that the small state advantage Norway usually has will be lost in Afghanistan due to the role Norway have as a military actor. The focus on ‘Whole of government approaches’ is not unique, what is unique it that Norway is presuming this whey of coordinating when Norway have the Norwegian model to consider. This shows that the government and NGOs are not viewing the consequences of this merger the same way. While the government is looking to make the Norwegian effort more efficient the NGOs are worried that this type of coordinated effort my seriously hurt their reputation.

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## 6. Civil-military cooperation and changing roles.

The debate around civil-military cooperation has not developed in a vacuum, but is a result of the changes that have developed within ‘humanitarian assistance, military strategies and development’ (Frerks et al. 2006:21). The altered conditions in today’s conflicts have led several actors to adjust to the current situation; more civil-military cooperation is one of these adjustments. Civil-military cooperation must be understood in a context where conflicts are becoming increasingly more difficult to handle. Conflicts that are confined within a state border might evolve and become international security hazards. The concern is how they affect Norwegian security in the long run (White paper no.13 2008-2009):60). The level of complexity in many of these conflicts is challenging and requires both multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional response models. The share volume of actors and the lack of consensus, coordination and coherence between them have in some cases lead to actors struggling with each other over resources and roles (NUPI Rapport 2008). In the end, it stands to affects the quality of aid and assistance to those who depend on it the most.

This has led the EU, NATO and the UN as well as several NGOs and some governments<sup>40</sup> to develop various forms of civil-military cooperation through coordination doctrines, guidelines and handbooks<sup>41</sup>. These guiding principles have made it possible for them to work together, or interlink their activities in such a way that they have been able to function somewhat coherently.

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<sup>40</sup>Countries like Finland, UK and the US have all developed Civil-Military Cooperation concepts

<sup>41</sup> The UN has developed two definitions of civil-military coordination one by the UN department of peace keeping (DPKO) and one definition by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).The European union’s Military committee endorsed *Civil military concepts for EU led crises Management Operations* in march 2002. Several NGOs have through NGO coordinating efforts made guidelines to how humanitarian actors should interact with military actors in the field; example the MCDA guidelines 2004.

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## 6.1 Introduction: What is Civil-military cooperation?

In this chapter the different perspectives on civil-military cooperation will be studied. How do the three main actors view this approach, what are their main differences? And what underpins these differences? Are their perspectives so far apart that cooperation is unattainable? Or are their differences marginal and can be worked out? Will this lead to changes to the current relationship between the Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian government and in the long run affect humanitarian assistance?

According to Ankersen (2008:3) the first question one ought to ask when studying how civil-military cooperation is perceived, is to establish if it is understood as a 'side track' or a 'core activity'. In Ankersens article he is first and foremost interested in how military actors view civil-military cooperation, but this line of inquiry will also reveal how other actors perceive this approach. These questions can also determine what effects civil-military cooperation will have in the future.

The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, has stated that *“In order to succeed in Afghanistan there need to be a civil-military coordinated strategy, where the political processes are enhanced”* (Jonas Gahr Støre[speech] 2008). This statement together with White paper no. 39 (2003-2004) from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and White paper no. 15 (2008-2008) from the MFA, supports the idea that more cooperation between the different actors, as well as more cooperation between the different political departments is one way to achieve a more coherent approach. The main guidelines for creating clearly defined roles between the military and humanitarian actors will be through coordination between the different actors throughout the different phases of the operation. The main goal should be to use the resources made available more efficient and try to lay the best foundation for stabilisation, peace and re-building.

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The military, NATO's role in this is to ensure security and stability so that the humanitarian actors can operate (White paper 39(2003-04):28).

Even though the statement made by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs indicates that civil-military cooperation is a vital entity, or to use Ankersens term; a 'core-activity', in the progress towards sustainable stability in Afghanistan, the Norwegian government has been careful not to advocate for an approach that disregards the humanitarian principles as base for humanitarian assistance. The Norwegian government goes far in advocating in favour of preserving the humanitarian space (Evne til innsats 2009:70 Article 154). The main criticism towards NATO's ISAF forces have been that they have not been able to do this<sup>42</sup> and therefore is failing one of their main objectives, gaining stability in the country. Thus the Norwegian government has supported an approach where a clear division of labour is viewed as a way to gain consensus, coherence and cooperation and not create more diversity.

The epistemology method presented in chapter 3.1.3 suggests that different experiences provide different forms of knowledge and that this later on affects how one perceives the world. So when studying how civil-military cooperation and co-ordinate efforts are viewed by different actors, one must keep in mind that their viewpoint is tainted by their own experiences and their own focus. The first feature to examine to find out the differences between military and humanitarian view of civil military cooperating is to study the underlining issues, one of them being the relationship the Norwegian government have to the military and the NGOs.

While NGOs have several alliances and divided loyalties, military forces are state servants (HPG report 2001). In this case the military actor NATO, functioning as

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.morgenbladet.no/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071109/OAKTUEL/711090016/0/AKTUEL>

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Norway's first line of security, NATO's view on cooperation will influence Norway's security policies. Within NATO there is a growing perception that civil-military coordinated operations should be a concrete tool to contribute to stability and development. Combining military and civilian means is also used in EU-governed operations. This has made the EU a key actor in international security policies (White paper no. 15 2008-2009): 30). So even though the Norwegian government has largely been in favor of holding the roles of civilian and military effort separated, the development in NATO, as well as in other international arenas, is surely challenging the Norwegian policies in this area.

The task of bringing humanitarian and military actors together on this issue and creating a sustainable model does presuppose some amount of agreements like; shared platforms of value, principles and priorities to develop some form of common framework (NUPI:2008). This is for the most part lacking according to Kristin M. Haugevik and Benjamin de Carvalho's discussion paper for (2007) "*Civil military cooperation in multinational and interagency operations*" they think it is highly unlikely for;

*"Military personnel making use of conceptual frameworks developed by civilian actors or vice versa. In addition, and due to the large military-civilian as well as intra-civilian differences when it comes to planning, working procedures, and end-goals, it is doubtful that such overall concepts would even be meaningful or adequate in the field"* (Haugevik & Carvalho 2007:10).

One reason for them to draw this conclusion is that the institutionalization of civil-military cooperation methods have for the most part been dominated by military approaches, humanitarian and civilian groups that have tried to collaborate with their military counterparts feel that they are being co-opted into aid paradigms where humanitarian policies are not the dominating factor (HPG Report 2001). According to Meinrad Studer (2001:380) a diplomatic adviser to the ICRC's International Organizations Division "*The military tend to assume that since they are responsible for security, they should play the lead role in coordinating operations*". For humanitarian actors this view is alarming since the



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military can easily become part of the problem. Therefore they hold that the military never should have a leading role in any operation that involves humanitarian components. This view is also presented in the IASC reference paper (2009) made by the UN and IASC and the MCDA (2003) guidelines that was developed with the collaboration of a broad representation of the international humanitarian community and other committees representing a diverse spectre of countries and organisations<sup>43</sup>.

The current challenge for the Norwegian government and the Norwegian NGOs is connected to the interpretation of what cooperation means and the saying “where you sit, depends on where you stand” comes to mind. The patchwork of operational environments that both humanitarian action and military action are facing is becoming more and more challenging. The definitions on civil-military cooperation presented at the start of this thesis hold two different themes. NATO’s definition holds a military-centric position in comparison to the definition presented by IASC which ranges from ‘cooperation’ to ‘coexistence’. The coexistence view comes close to the outline of what traditional humanitarian NGOs wants to maintain; keeping the focus on communication and equal information sharing based on security measurements and not strategy purposes (de Coning 2008).

The main focus of NATO’s definition is placed at the tactical level, or mission level, in contrast to the civilian definition. One reason behind the different levels of defining can be connected to the organizational and cultural differences between the military and NGOs. While military institutions are characterized by

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<sup>43</sup> A drafting Committee consisting of representatives of Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Sudan, Switzerland, UK, USA, DPKO, SCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, as well as a Review Committee consisting of representatives of Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Ghana, Greece, India, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, Yugoslavia, COE, ECHO, EC, EUMS, ICDO, ICRC, ICVA, INTERACTION, IOM, NATO, OCHA, THW and WHO.

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command and control, top-down structures and clear lines of authority. NGOs on the other side tend to be horizontal and organized with decisions being made along the way. They also pay more attention to socio-cultural questions because they tend to have a long term perspective (Jenny 2001). The military on the other hand uses development projects as quick impact projects, without considering the long-term effects of their contributions (Lundes 2008 [speech]). The criticism from the humanitarian body is that this falls under development work, which they view as their field of operation. While the military holds that it is strictly humanitarian emergency assistance they need to stay clear of (Jenny 2001).

Political actors view the use of the Norwegian model in international affairs as a natural extension of their relationship to Norwegian NGOs (NUPI 2009). The Norwegian government is seeing this as a way to incorporate Norwegian NGOs into a comprehensive framework (Tvedt 2003, Lie 2006). Norwegian NGOs are starting to see this as a possible obstacle in their work<sup>44</sup>. Arguing that due to this cooperative from of working NGOs are in danger of being integrated into a framework that might affect the way NGOs are perceived. NGOs are therefore using the humanitarian principles as argument against too much coordination. Raising the issue of the relationship between them, as neutral partner, and the military which are dependent state partners constantly subject to political control (Frangonikolopoulos 2005: 53). The consensus aspect of the Norwegian model is diminishing with little agreement on the level of impact a third partner will have and how using NGOs as political instruments will affect their reputation.

Trine Linnè Eriksen, professor of Development studies at Høgskolen in Oslo argues that the shifts within Norwegian aid policies has led to the death of the Norwegian model altogether since this change alters the basis and character of

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.bt.no/nyheter/innenriks/Etterlyser-upolitisk-bistand-450104.html>.

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Norwegian aid<sup>45</sup>. She argues that the first political shifts, that killed the model was when the Norwegian government aligned itself with the economical reforms presented by the world bank and IMF in the 90s, this lead the focus away from where it should be, namely poverty reduction and not the size of government control. The second factor leading to the death of the Norwegian model was the Uruguay negotiations, where the Nordic counties along with the rest of the West have high barriers against trading with the South. Today, she argues that it is the changing policies and the massive funding going to political hot-spots that is killing the model. When there is no independent steering wheel for Norwegian aid and in Norway is following the direction of where NATO or USA are currently operating, then the policies behind the model has shifted too far away from the ideal the Norwegian model should represent.

### **6.1.1 Other issues connected to civil-military cooperation**

Context dependency is another issue raised in NUPI (2009) and Hugo Slim (2004) when it comes to the debate about civil-military cooperation and the impact it may hold for humanitarian assistance. Both the report and Slim argue that due to the current situation Afghanistan today, civil-military cooperation has become a significant part of the strategy in regaining stability. It is argued that; it would be a mistake to base the entire discussion about what effects civil-military cooperation may hold for NGOs and humanitarian assistance in the future solely based on the practise and development in Afghanistan today. There need not be a crossover effect between the situation in Afghanistan and other conflicts, but it may set an example that is easily followed (Slim 2004). This means that the effects of civil-military cooperation must be considered in relation to the situation at hand and therefore it is likely that any changes and effects will be strongly

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.dagbladet.no/2010/04/12/kultur/debatt/kronikk/bistand/11240925/> online

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context-dependent. As Eriksen (2010) argued above there seems to be a link between the political changes and how aid is distributed. Knight (2008) argues that there seems to be a similar connection to the use of ‘coherency’ and the ‘war against terror’. He argues that there is an increase in approaches that are referred to as coherent or that are otherwise multidisciplinary in form when it comes to conflicts that can be connected to “the global war on terror” (GWOT). He further argues that when there are conflicts in connection to the GWOT, one will observe approaches that are based on civil-military coordination merging humanitarian assistance and political interests. Due to this development security has become an integrated part of the picture. The altered security image is affecting how civil-military cooperation is viewed. One of the variables Ankersen (2008:3-4) uses when he is establishing if civil-military cooperation is viewed as a ‘core activity’, is to see if there is used considerable resources, time and effort on developing doctrines, guidelines and procedures. Within NATO, Norway is playing an important role in the development of approaches concerning civil-military cooperation and other approaches used in Afghanistan (NUPI 2009). At the national level, Norway’s government has kept to the position that Norway as a NATO member follows NATO's doctrine on civil-military relations, so the work on developing a national approach has been put off.

NATO’s doctrine is first of all meant as a guideline to how military forces can meet other non-combat actors and the civil population (Rana 2008:230). CIMIC was thought to be a steppingstone toward even more integrated approaches. But concerns were raised by some NATO members and NGOs about the level of institutionalization it would result in has slowed down this process (DIIS report 2008:30-31). The approach that NATO is trying to get through is called the ‘comprehensive approach’. This approach will work as a framework that will function in all phases, all the operational levels and involve all actors (DIIS report 2008). While the CIMIC doctrine has a greater focus on the military side

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of the mission (Evne til innsats 2009). The focus by NATO to develop such an approach shows that on the multinational military level civil-military cooperation is viewed as a ‘core activity’.

The focus on a coherent approach in Afghanistan from the Norwegian political perspective has conceptualized the different actors as working side by side, but within clearly defined roles (White paper no.39 2003-2004). This fits well with the change the Norwegian military has gone through, from being mostly a homeland defense unit and occasionally operating as UN ‘citizen in uniform’ to becoming increasingly connected to international operations through NATO, due to a heightening of military professionalism of the Norwegian military (NUPI 2009). So when it comes to determining whether or not civil-military cooperation is viewed as a ‘core’ or ‘side activity’ by the Norwegian government, one can say that the government recognises the need for more cooperation proven by statements made by core political actors in the field of international relations, but they also want to have an approach that co-ordinates different actors working in complex conflicts. This is evident by Norway’s active role at the international level. The progress made within the military should function well with the emphasis made on the preservation of the humanitarian space. In the Afghanistan context however a report made by NUPI (2008) state that;

*“(...) Norway’s identity has become more complex, because its military role (there) is undertaken as part of the NATO ISAF mission. Norway’s military role in Afghanistan is a complex mix of a nationally identified PRT, an association with NATO that is emphasized at the operational level, and an association, at the strategic level, with the USA and the post-9/11 campaign against international terrorism. Norway has become prominently associated with NATO and the broader Western coalition and that erodes much of the small-state advantage it could otherwise have had in Afghanistan (NUPI 2008:25).*

The fact that Norway is now linked to the Western coalition in Afghanistan will also affect how Norwegian NGOs get perceived in Afghanistan. The role Norway plays in the armed operations in Afghanistan discussed earlier, and the fact that Norway’s military effort stands without their own civil-military cooperation definition making NATO’s CIMIC ‘their’ CIMIC (Bodding 2008)

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will also affect the relationship between the humanitarian actors and the military actors. The value of civil-military cooperation for the military will be dependant on this. If one had to determine NATO's CIMIC as a 'core' or 'side' activity, it is evident that within NATO/ISAF operations CIMIC is a 'core' activity. And since NATO's CIMIC, opens the door to a pragmatic approach towards civil-military cooperation to be used as a 'core' or even as a 'side' activity dependent on the situation at hand it will be difficult to maintain separate roles for the different actors.

According to Cedric De Conning (2008:54) the contemporary form of civil-military coordination is an attempt to systematically regulate the civil-military interface and Frangonikolopoulos (2005:51), takes it a step further and argues that it is a systematically way to integrate NGOs and humanitarian aid into the political sphere . The focus in integrating humanitarian aid and politics is gaining much support within the international multilateral governance regime and in the new branch of humanitarianism (HPG report 2001:9). The situation many NGOs working with humanitarian assistance are facing has furthered this discussion. The problem seems to be that there is some discrepancy between the different actors in their view on how *much* and *what* kind of cooperation is needed.

The humanitarian body is not a homogenous group and stands divided when it comes to the perception of civil-military cooperation (Harang 2008). The current discussions concerning the neutrality dilemma in humanitarian aid is leaving room for diverse views on cooperation with other actors. The humanitarian actors, who are supporting the traditional form of humanitarian aid, are concerned that open cooperation with the military may be hazardous for their security as well as their credibility with the local population. Another concern is that the new form of humanitarianism is open to founding humanitarian action on other criteria than the humanitarian principles. The followers of the new humanitarianism are arguing that more cooperation could also strengthen their

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own role. This way they can more easily control the role they are playing and voice their concerns.

As this discussion illustrates many different perceptions on the meaning of civil military cooperation is circulating. These differences can be traced back to the diverse premises used in the definitions of civil-military cooperation presented in chapter 1.3.2. These premises can again be traced back to the different culture and structures that are between armed and unarmed actors. Each actor is basing their focal point on matters that are connected to their own interest, making it more than difficult to find common ground. The relationship between knowledge and reality of civil-military cooperation changes with each actor. Knowledge is developed through people's perceptions of the situation and is therefore a subject-object problem, which again will affect their actions. Soldiers and humanitarian personnel will use different concepts and considerations when they reflect on the effects of cooperation, due to their different perception and experiences.

## 6.2 The new security agenda and new roles for NGOs

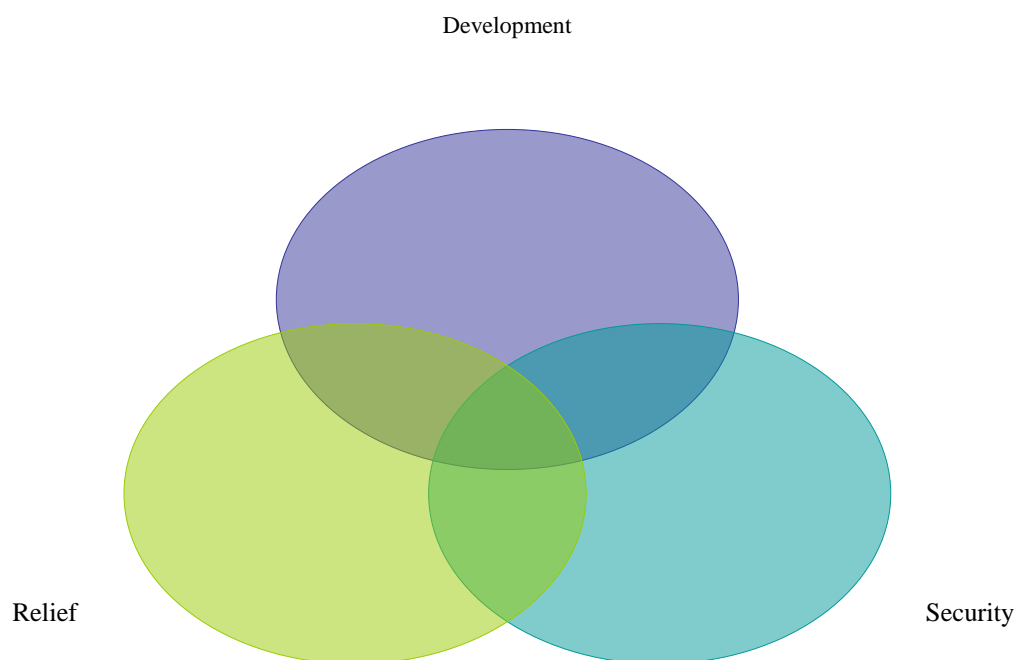
The security aspect of civil military cooperation is also a feature that is affecting the perspectives each actor has toward civil-military cooperation. At the political level this has led to an extension of the "security agenda" (White paper no. 39 2008-2009, *Evne til innsats* 2008). The concept of national security has as explained in chapter 3.1.3 expanded and now human security and social security are inherent parts of the concept. This expanded vision also view failed states as potential risk factors, due to their inability to provide human and social security (White paper 13(2003-2004):60-62). As said, today's conflicts are often intra-states conflicts and they are meant to be more comprehensive because they often consist of non-state entities that fight for different reasons like ethnical conflicts,

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power, independence, resources or religious beliefs (Knight 2008:15). These types of conflicts have a high possibility for creating humanitarian crises and complex conflicts where traditional humanitarian often falls short (HPG report 2001:5).

All of the issues said above is leading to a merging of aid and politics and the view that these problems must be dealt with by comprehensive approaches where several actors cooperate. The three fields concerning relief, development and security has as a result of the merging processes between aid and politics grown closer together and now play an interlinked role. Goodhand (2008:78) illustrates this development as three overlapping circles (figure 1).

*Figure 1 the relationship between relief, development and security*





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The wide political agreement in Norway to use NGOs as channels in humanitarian and developmental work is making humanitarian actors fear that they may be used, or perceived, as political instruments due to the growing overlapping of development, security and relief (Lie 2006:143) as shown in the figure above. The expansion of the security agenda has therefore resulted in a new debate within the humanitarian body, not only in Norway, but amongst all NGOs working with humanitarian assistance. One of the main topics being how the promotion of integrated approaches may affect the integrity of humanitarian principles, humanitarian assistance and what consequences it will have for their security on the field (HPG report 2006).

This makes the separation between *why* and *how* especially important in complex conflicts, where both military and NGOs need to relate to large scale strategy plans and having different roles to fulfill. The ‘blurring’ of these roles have lead to an increase in concerns surrounding the security for NGOs working in complex conflict situations. This has fostered different views on how it’s best to respond to this issue. New humanitarianism advocates that security links NGOs and the military so that the political objectives for closer coordination and cooperation are the next natural steps to gain security (Fox 2001). While NGOs that are based on the traditional principles feel that the humanitarian principles should be the guidelines to better security for NGOs. They also argue that being closely associated with international military forces could jeopardize the humanitarian space (Jenny 2001:28).

While White paper no.13 (2008-09):67) from the Ministry of Environment and Development recognises that in complex conflict situations, security is connected to having clearly defined roles, it also recognises that the deteriorating security level has made it unsafe for NGOs to work in some areas. Many NGOs are therefore relying on military support in form of armed protection. It is mostly seen as a “last resort” to use armed convoys, not only since it would be going

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against humanitarian principles but it would also give the military a double role. While protecting NGOs they often have to perform tasks related to humanitarian work while being armed and representing one side of the conflict (Harang 2008).

In this patchwork of operational environments humanitarian actors who stand without armed forces for protection can easily become ‘soft’ targets. The ECHO report (2004:20-25) states that while there have been some reports of attacks against humanitarian aid workers, it is not enough to confirm whether or not humanitarian work is becoming more dangerous. However, what is more evident is that security incidents of a more *serious* nature than before seem to be increasing. There is also a correlation between when and where the different attacks occur:

*“In various contexts, new threats have emerged during the so called ‘war on terror’. For example, four recent shooting incidents in Somaliland – a previously stable context – were attributed to Islamic extremists targeting Westerners. Following recent security incidents in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Mullah Omar’s statement of October 2003 that Western humanitarian organizations were the “worst enemies of Islam”, terrorist violence against humanitarian personnel is a real possibility in many parts of the world” (ECHO 2004:21).*

The promotion of more integrated approaches and the link between armed forces and Norwegian NGOs gives Norway a more complex role as described by Cedric de Coning et al. (2008:25). It is all having an effect on the capacity of NGOs to maintain their neutrality in the field, hence their security. Being faced with the prospect of losing their neutrality has sparked different reactions. Several NGOs, like MSF are now working in areas in Afghanistan where there is little connection between them and military forces. They are also refusing to use or receive state donations for their work. More organisations are engaging in platform discussions with other actors to influence the directions the political actors in Norway are making. One platform for this is the Afghan forum that is functioning as a pipeline between NGOs and the Norwegian government (NUPI 2009).

This shows that there are large challenges when it comes to the politics, policy and practice regarding the security concerns for people working in post-conflict zones. While the politics are clear on what the goals for Norway's involvement in Afghanistan are, there are still some difficulties when it comes to what type of practise one should follow. NGOs and the humanitarian regime is facing a transformation where the new humanitarian approach is trying to bridge the gaps between the different camps by abandoning some of the core principles embedded in humanitarian aid and arguing that they are absolute in today's conflict picture. The last chapter will discuss how NGOs in the Norwegian system are handling these changes. Are their close ties to the Norwegian government hindering NGOs to speak out towards this new trend or is the model helping NGOs keeping the status quo?

### 6.3 Concluding remarks: How are Norwegian NGOs handling changes?

The civil-military debate and the situation in Afghanistan is challenging because in the Norwegian context this is fairly new. The role Norway has presumed in Afghanistan has been somewhat of a hybrid between a small country focused on humanitarian assistance and a country with a highly professionalised military unit that are rewarded by their accomplishments in war (Bakkeli 2007). The integration process that Norwegian NGOs have been through has made the Norwegian case somewhat unique. Norwegian NGOs are too close and too far apart at the same time. Too close so that they are easily linked to Norwegian political interests, making it difficult to maintain a neutral profile and to find a way through their lack of political engagement to affect the current situation. Or are they?

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According to the HPG report 2001

*“The tendency towards using political criteria to determine the allocation of humanitarian assistance was constrained to some extent by appeal to the conventional principles of humanitarian action: neutrality and impartiality. These principles reflected a shared understanding between humanitarian organizations, politicians and the military (...)”* (HPG report 2001:9)

In the Norwegian context it is likely that the relationship between Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian government also is a determining factor. As shown the Norwegian government has been very vocal about the importance of the humanitarian space and it is only the ministry of defence that has advocated for a pragmatic use of military forces. Norway has also been an active participant in NATO for developing NATO doctrines as well as guidelines for humanitarian actors at the international level, but has not followed this engagement up at the national level. This could be due to the standing Norwegian NGOs have in the Norwegian model. As the outcome of civil military cooperation still is under development most of the discussion around civil-military cooperation is based on assumptions, but what is evident is that there is a change in the sails. The cooperation focus is slowly becoming integrated into the Norwegian model. The use of NGOs as apolitical partners is becoming more difficult because the Norwegian system is not operating in a vacuum. While this is a relatively new aspect of Norwegian aid this has developed into international strategies for other countries and through Norway's NATO membership Norway and the Norwegian model stands to be perceived in the same way. How this is being debated within the humanitarian body will follow in the next chapter.



## 7. The humanitarian debate

This chapter will give an overview of the humanitarian debate and connect it to the situation Norwegian NGOs are faced with. So far much of the debate in this thesis has been centred on the changes happening around the NGOs and how these changes are affecting the context around them. This chapter will look at the debate within the humanitarian body and how this debate is changing humanitarian assistance. The tools from Hirschman's theory that NGOs have to influence the system around them will also be discussed.

### 7.1 Introduction

There are some key trends that are making commotion in the debate of preserving humanitarian principles and the humanitarian space. One side is the mounting debate about humanitarian assistance needing to become more politically sensitive due to the nature of today's conflicts. This view supports an increasingly coherent approach under 'new humanitarianism' and it is mirrored by the cooperation focus held by the government and military (HPG report 2001).

The counterview is that by keeping with the traditional-based humanitarian principles the humanitarian imperative is preserved and NGOs will be able to work in highly sensitive conflicts due to their independence and neutral profile. The Norwegian model has strong roots within traditional-based aid. This is also the reason for their strong role in the Norwegian model; their neutral profile has so far made it possible for them to work in areas the Norwegian government has had to stay clear of. The shift towards more comprehensive models where all actors work together stands to alter this system (NUPI 2009).

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## 7.2 The security debate

There has been an increase in concerns surrounding the security for NGOs working in complex conflict situations. This has fostered different views on how to best respond to the issue. New humanitarianism advocates that there is a link between NGOs, military efforts and political objectives where closer coordination and cooperation are natural steps on the way to achieve security (Fox 2001). NGOs that are based on the traditional humanitarian body view the core humanitarian principles as the best way to ensure their security in the field. They also argue that being closely associated with international military forces could jeopardize the humanitarian space (Jenny 2001, Morris 2002).

Today Afghanistan is called the most dangerous place for NGOs (Olson 2006:11). The yearbook for 'global civil society' shows an increase of nearly 1300% in attacks on NGOs working in Afghanistan from 1990-2005 (p.432)<sup>46</sup>. The security issues in Afghanistan are creating "no go" areas. Blurring of roles is meant to be connected to the development projects performed by military or non humanitarian actors. This has led some NGOs to stay more or less based in secure places like Kabul (Braem 2008). When NGOs don't spread out it can lead to little redistribution of assistance which again may lead to more insecurity.

The Norwegian political perspective on how best to respond to the security issues shows an understanding for the connection between development and aid. Both White paper no. 13 (2008-2009) and White paper no. 15 (2008-2009) holds the position that the government supports the notion of 'no security without development, and no development without security'. White paper no.15 (2008-

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<sup>46</sup> Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics. "Terrorist Incidents targeting NGOs: Record 19, data program." *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2005/6*, 432. Available online <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Publications/Yearbooks/2005/recordsection05.pdf>

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2009) also links the security debate to a global level by stating that “*Norway has a responsibility to engage itself with what happens “out there” because of the long-term consequences it may have for Norway in the future*” (White paper no. 15 2008-2009):103).

In Afghanistan there have been three main operational issues that have been prioritized by the international community, stability, development and good governance. Stability has been connected to the international military’s mandate while development, in part has been linked to the work of NGOs (Bodding 2008: 37). Some NGOs are willing to coordinate with military forces and see them as playing a vital role in their own security (Gourly 2000:38), but most want to keep this coordination at an information sharing level concerning combat zones and other security issues (Jenny 2001:25). The roles of the international military forces in Afghanistan held by NGOs are linked to restoring order, armed combat and maintaining post-conflict peace. If they involve themselves in other aspects it is often criticized as “blurring of roles” PRTs and the PRT have received especially criticism as they through their focus on *reconstruction* often undertake many of the activities mainly performed by NGOs (Olsen 2006:14).

Through my interviews with representatives from Medecins Sans Frontieres and Red Cross the main view I could gather on the security issue was that when working in a complex conflict situation, like the one in Afghanistan, being understood as neutral and independent and working out of humanity and not other agendas was seen as the most important way to preserve security and the humanitarian space. To achieve this the guidelines and the humanitarian principles must be followed and respected by all actors. The issue of ‘blurring of roles’ seemed to be the main concern, when it came to issues where their security and perception of them was disturbed. The link between security and development was not raised much and it appears that non of the NGOs sees



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cooperation with military actors as a means to more security. Their security was more connected to their own plans and restrictions.

Another issue affecting the NGOs working in Afghanistan is their financial situation. Many Norwegian organisations in Afghanistan are financially dependent on the Norwegian state and that could be a factor that limits the organisation's decision-making ability. It also has an effect on their independence profile; most of them receive large donations from the state. Peter Rehse (2004) makes a point of this when he talks about the value of being independent for humanitarian organisations.

“Being dependent, especially financially dependent, could limit the organization's decision-making ability, since a financial associate could try to gain control or intrude into the organization's politics by exercising financial pressure. The fact that the work of humanitarian agencies depends mainly on donations makes the conditions difficult” (Rehese 2004:20-21).

So the issue of independence becomes highly relevant when one looks at the context around the organisations. Afghanistan was not a country that got prioritised in the Norwegian aid budget before 2001 and now Afghanistan is one of Norway's largest receivers of Norwegian aid, both through state – state aid and also bilateral aid channelled through organisations<sup>47</sup>. Now, there is a political focus on more cooperation and a more holistic approach. The level of independence may be affected. Organisations that work with humanitarian assistance should be able to follow their own values, principles and ideas. Norwegian organisations, in general, are in a dependent relationship when it comes to financial support, even though there is no 1-1 relationship between autonomy and finance; it is more than likely to have an impact. When it comes to the situation for the Norwegian NGOs this has developed over a long period of time and that will affect their autonomy. The individual share, that each organization has to pay, shrunk from 50% of their total budget to 10 % in 2001

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<sup>47</sup> [http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/kampanjer/bistand\\_afghanistan/bistand.html?id=573478](http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/kampanjer/bistand_afghanistan/bistand.html?id=573478)

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(Groth 1999, Tvedt 2003, Lie 2006). The individual share symbolized that the organizations represent the civil society and not the state's interest. Today, most organizations don't need to contribute any share at all when entering into a project, since there are constantly more and more grants provided to cover the expenses the organization gets. This is in contrast to the principle that all humanitarian assistance should be led without political strings attached.

### 7.3 Humanitarian assistance

*“Humanitarian assistance is aid to an affected population that seeks, as its primary purpose, to save lives and alleviate suffering of a crisis-affected population. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality.” (UN-OCHA pamphlet 2006<sup>48</sup>)*

Humanitarian assistance has as an objective to alleviate human suffering and is not supposed to engage in political objectives nor make distinctions between victims. This point is currently under debate. First of all due to the fact that aid is not impact-free and there seems to be a growing perception that traditional humanitarian action is failing. The argument is that the traditional approach has problems dealing with the altered conditions of today's conflicts (Freriks 2006, Slim 1997).

Even though the objective of humanitarian assistance is to stay neutral, humanitarian assistance has always been influenced to some degree by political activity. Nevertheless, NGOs try to ensure that their main principles, humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality are respected. One of the main reasons is that these principles sustain the humanitarian space, which NGOs depend on when working in the field. This was confirmed by both NGO informants that

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Default.aspx?tabid=291>

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were interviewed for this thesis<sup>49</sup>. Nonetheless, it has been a shift in the contexts surrounding humanitarian assistance and aid. One where humanitarian assistance and aid appears to be linked to wider political objectives, such as the security agenda presented in chapter 6.2. The focus on more coordination, cooperation, comprehensive and integral approaches appears to be part of the political answer to face complex conflicts. This has led to a change in the role of NGOs and humanitarianism.

The role of NGOs are changing from being situated outside the foreign political sphere, they now play an important role in how resources used in Norwegian foreign affairs are distributed. So even though the Norwegian aid system is built on traditional humanitarian values some features from the new humanitarian approach is making its mark. While the traditional approach is based on the linear progression of aid, first emergency humanitarian assistance; secondly transition aid and thirdly long-term development programs. In complex conflicts all of these stages are put into motion at more or less the same time which is also contributing to blurring of roles by the NGOs themselves. Since it is difficult to know the motivation from all the different NGOs, and to know what all the different actors on the ground are doing (Stene 2005:56-57). It is also difficult to make distinctions based on the word *humanitarian*.

While humanitarian aid is supposed to be *a short term* assistance project, they are now prolonged by the ongoing need for basic assistance. This way the line between humanitarian assistance and development aid are in many cases erased. The policy connected to aid is therefore also changing, and this has consequences for those receiving it, in this case the Afghan people. It is therefore important to separate between the reasons for why and how aid is used. The new humanitarian

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<sup>49</sup> Interviews on 27/2-09 and 16/1-09

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approach advocates for a more politically sensitive approach that recognises that there are connections between NGOs, politics and military efforts.

There has been a paradigm change in the security-political landscape and the use of humanitarian interventions, peacekeeping operations and civil-military cooperation has all lead to new challenges (Jackson&Sørensen 2003). This has also affected the use of aid and given it an instrumental value as a “stabiliser tool”. While there is a larger political focus on achieving a more comprehensive approach towards peace and rebuilding Afghanistan, the involved actors have different opinions on how this should be done. There are two actors in particular that needs to be studied and that is the role of military and that of the NGOs.

The core distinction between NGOs that work with humanitarian assistance and the military can be found in the *means* and the *goals* of their work. While the NGOs focus on aid founded on humanitarian criteria; humanity, neutrality and non-discrimination the military thinks of this as a secondary criterion. A large part of the debate is centralised around the question of ‘humanitarian space’. It is defined by the European commission as ” *the access and freedom for humanitarian organisations to assess and meet humanitarian needs*” (ECHO report 2004:71).

The traditional perspective is concerned that pollicisation of aid will make aid into a tool to ensure the donor country’s own political agenda. And that the problems concerning the promiscuity of the military and humanitarian aid workers’ roles in the field are being downplayed. The notion that civilian-military co-operated operations gets portrayed and understood as an agreed goal is a large part of the debate and there is a general concern that principles, goals and methodologies for working in the field are different and often clash in Afghanistan (Harang 2008 & Olson and Gregorian 2007). There is also a general concern that developments strategies build on military strategies are at risk for

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having too little understanding of the socio-cultural aspects and are more focused on legitimating the external military presence, rather than tending to the Afghan people's needs.

The opposite perception is that civil-military coordination is necessary in today's world and that external military intervention have an important role in restoring order, maintaining peace, and preventing mobilisation from militant groups in the stabilisation and rebuilding phase (Collier 2007:124-125,). While many now are optimistic towards this trend and agree on the fact that it is almost impossible to separate military and humanitarian roles in the field, they argue that there are guidelines that the military and humanitarian aid workers are following. The general meaning seems to be that they all should focus on pulling in the same direction rather than holding on to notions like apolitical aid. The Norwegian government states in White paper no .22 (2008-2009:71-75);

*“[T]hat further work on improving guidelines, too better the information flow and improving the civil-military coordinated work is crucial”* It also states *“that civil-military coordinated work not merely is the best way to work in conflict areas, it is the **only** way<sup>50</sup>”*

This shows the two main challenges around coordination in complex conflict situations. While the government and military seem to mean that there is a valid need for more co-operation and integrated approaches towards complex conflicts, the humanitarian circle seems to be sceptical and have a general concern towards this way of working. This thesis will examine closer these perceptions and how it is affecting the relationship between the Norwegian government and NGOs.

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<sup>50</sup> writers own translation and emphasize

## 7.4 The Norwegian humanitarian mission statement

Norwegian humanitarian engagement is a part of Norwegian foreign and development policy. Norwegian humanitarian assistance and aid is built on humanitarian principles that are recognised by the UN and international humanitarian law. It is also based on *need* and *requirement* estimations. Even though Norwegian aid and humanitarian assistance is built on these principles and guidelines, several Norwegian NGOs have stated that the underlying principles for providing assistance have changed. They have reported that it is unclear what strategic priorities humanitarian aid is being based on and that this makes it unclear what role they play. Further it has been reported that this makes it difficult to implement and follow political guidelines and turning them into concrete actions (Riksrevisjonen 2.3 2008:9). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has contradicted these statements and argued that their strategic priorities are clear, but that they need to be flexible due to unforeseen changes (Riksrevisjonen 2.3 2008:9). The need for flexibility is important when one is working in complex conflicts since the situation can change rapidly.

The Norwegian humanitarian mission statement (2008) shows that there are narrow margins between the political objective and humanitarian action. In the statement it is claimed that “*Norway wants to be a leading partner both politically and financially in humanitarian effort, and aid the international society to best meet the future challenges*”, then it goes on to say that “*There is a common understanding within the Norwegian government alongside*

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*humanitarian groups that this can best be obtained by humanitarian principles and with civilian leadership” (Humanitære strategier 2008:9)<sup>51</sup>.*

However, not all parties of the government support the idea that this should be done by humanitarian principles and civilian leadership alone. While the MFA support the humanitarian imperative (within certain boundaries) the Ministry of Defence (MD) and several politicians have on several occasions talked about the need to focus more on cooperation and integration in part of constructing a more comprehensive approach <sup>52</sup> .

The Norwegian government recognizes with the document “humanitarian strategy report” (2008) the need for viewing humanitarian assistance as apolitical and validates the concerns about the issue of military forces doing humanitarian work. But they also emphasize that in some cases due to security issues military actors have to engage in humanitarian work. Some NGOs see this as a problematic stand, because it also signifies that the government puts security assessments as bases for delivery of humanitarian assistance and not need and requirement. The fear is that this will become the standard and not the exception. One example is in the UK security assessments which have a direct effect on NGOs working in Afghanistan. The government ruled that because of the security concerns any NGO sending expatriates to Afghanistan would automatically lose their funding from the Department for International Development (DFID). This restrictions was linked to a wider political objective developed by the US and UK as a way to isolate Taliban (HPG report 2001:9). So

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<sup>51</sup> from the department of foreign affairs “*Humanitære strategier 2008*” available at [http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/pressesenter/pressemeldinger/2008/hum\\_strategi.html?id=526419](http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/pressesenter/pressemeldinger/2008/hum_strategi.html?id=526419)

<sup>52</sup> This was argued by Ine Eriksen Søreide, leader of utenriks- og forsvarskomiteen in an extra ordinary meeting at the Norwegian parliament (TV2 nyheter onsdag 20/12-09).

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what does all of this have to say for Norwegian humanitarian assistance and NGOs?

First of all, it confirms that there is a marginal process between the political sphere and the humanitarian regime. Secondly, the link to security has also ties to policies in donor countries, in the Norwegian context there has been an increase in funds channeled to one particular province in Afghanistan, Faryab, which is the same region that most of Norway's civil and military effort is situated. One explanation for gathering the Norwegian resources like this is because one wants to increase the efficiency of Norwegian effort, but this has also led to questions concerning the level of independence. The level of funding is a result of the international response to the crisis following 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001; it may also be understood as an economical integration process since this is a trend that has a long history in Norway. With altered conditions it appears that this may affect the overall aims of humanitarian assistance.

## 7.5 Traditional vs. New humanitarianism

According to Shannon (2009:16-17) who, where and what aid is sent out is increasingly constrained by conditions on the ground. So, the civil-military cooperation approach and the security issues facing humanitarian aid workers in Afghanistan is not just having an impact on how NGOs work, but also the overall aims of humanitarian assistance. The security constraints are affecting the NGOs possibility to freely move around. They have reported that they are closing or not starting programs, staying in Kabul and working under strict safety guidelines (*ibid.*:23-24). This is leading aid away from areas where it is needed and it is reducing contact and making "no go-areas" where only military actors venture. The security restraints put on the NGOs due to the situation is also having an impact on the military actors. Many feel that they need to reach out to the

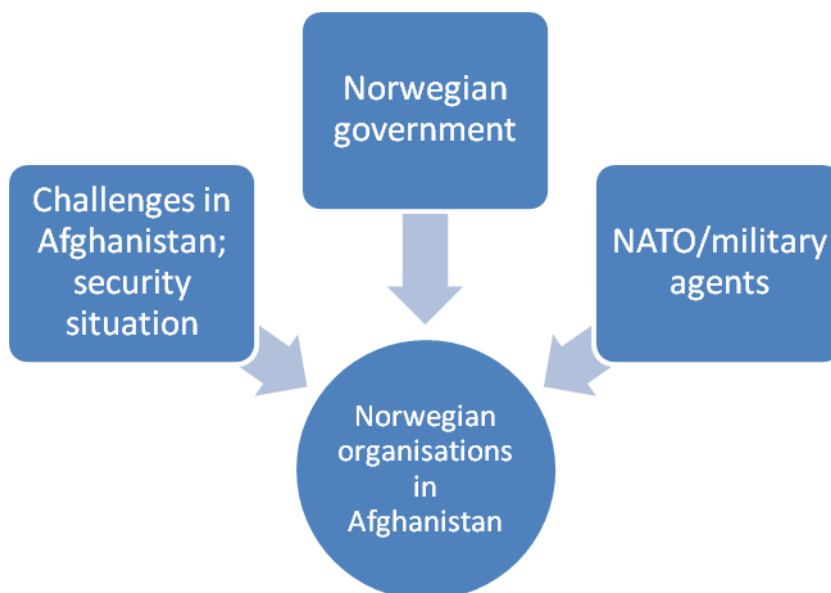


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communities that the NGOs are not travelling to as expressed by the former Secretary of the Ministry of Defence Bård Glad Pedersen in chapter 1.

The paradigm shift in the security-political landscape and the use of humanitarian interventions, peacekeeping operations and civil-military cooperation have all led to these new changes (Jackson&Sørensen 2003). This has also affected the use of aid and given it an instrumental value as a “stabilising tool”. While there is a larger political focus on achieving a more comprehensive approach towards peace and rebuilding Afghanistan, the involved actors have different opinions on how this should be done. The way Norwegian NGOs respond to the current changes may affect what role Norwegian NGOs will play in the future, when responding to complex conflicts.

*Figure 2 Different influences on Norwegian NGOs in Afghanistan*



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As figure 2 shows Norwegian NGOs are being influenced by different actors and circumstances in Afghanistan. The context around them is frequently changing and the humanitarian debate provides two distinctive ways to respond to the altered conditions. One way is to stay true to the core principles and use the principles of need as a way of conduct or one can follow the new branch of humanitarian aid and follow a new trend within humanitarian assistance (HPG 2001)

The core distinction between NGOs that work with humanitarian assistance based on traditional humanitarianism and those basing their work on the principles of new humanitarianism are both the *means* and the *goals* of their work. While traditional-based NGOs focus on aid founded on the humanitarian criterions; humanity, neutrality and non-discrimination as a way to gain access, the new humanitarian's advocates for a more political forward form of aid. They view the neutrality principle as expired which marks a break from the past. By taking back the political side of aid and re-legitimising it, they are sending a message that neutral aid is a thing of the past (Fox 2001: 275, Slim 1997). The new humanitarian approach is a product of today's political environment and today's complex conflicts. It offers new political-based solutions that also want to alleviate suffering, but not at any cost. They view their integrity as a vital part of their profile, emergency assistance is not viewed as sufficient, one also needs to advocate for issues like human rights, democracy and goal-oriented assistance. It opens the door for NGOs to voice their concerns and act if what they are reporting is not being taken into account by the politicians.

Neutrality is at the heart of the traditional form of humanitarian aid. In order to gain the confidence of all parties in a conflict and maintain the humanitarian space one should stay neutral. The traditional perspective is concerned that if NGOs become to voice active it will lead to a politicisation of aid. And that will make aid into a tool to ensure the donor country's own political agenda (Slim

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1997). One area that has been debated is that the promiscuity of the military and humanitarian aid workers roles in the field will be downplayed as a result of that. The notion that civilian-military co-operated operations gets portrayed and understood as an agreed goal is a large part of the debate (HPG 2001).

The new humanitarianism and the traditional form of humanitarian aid have two different outlooks on how to deal with these issues. While the traditional form of humanitarian assistance aid is advocating a stricter use of the humanitarian principles as guidelines for all humanitarian assistance, they are especially concerned about the perception of NGOs and their security if military forces or hybrids like the PRT are filling in the gaps between military and civilian efforts (Shannon 2009) and the diminishing humanitarian space. The blurring of roles and security triangle, built on acceptance, protection and determines the conceptual basis for traditional humanitarian NGOs as their main choice as operational security.

By analysing and discussing these two positions against each other using the three positions of response used in Hirschman's theory one can examine what form of impact the political shift toward more cooperation may have on the relationship between Norwegian NGOs and Norwegian government and further discuss how their security concerns and civil military cooperation approach may affect their ability to stay neutral in the field.

### **7.5.1 Hirschman and humanitarian aid**

In the research done in this thesis I did two interviews, one with a representative from the MSF and one with a representative from the Red Cross. They provided two different takes on how NGOs are seeing and understanding the shift in Norwegian policy when it comes to civil-military cooperation and the humanitarian debate surrounding this. Both Red Cross and MSF have voiced

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criticism towards blurring of roles, but only MSF have actively criticized the use of humanitarian assistance as a means to an end in the war in Afghanistan (Rana 2008).

Both of these organizations are internationally based organizations (INGO), but they get funding from Norway and they are facing many of the same questions raised in this thesis so they will be used in the following debate. But as they are two large international organizations that are not financially dependent on funding from the Norwegian government like many small Norwegian organizations are. So the way they are handling donor interest connected to funding will not be considered representative for the Norwegian model.

As argued for in chapter 6, there has been a convergence between three different areas; relief, development and security. This has led to a broadening of the scope of NGOs involvement and they need to re-negotiate their relationship to the government and military. In Albert O. Hirschman (1970) study of consumer behavior he explores how consumers react in the face of deteriorating quality of goods. NGOs can either exit their relationship or they can voice their concerns on how the use of aid as a political instrument will affect their work and the aim with humanitarian assistance. Exit and voice can both lead to norm changes and new perceptions on the interaction between the state and NGOs. There is however the interplay of loyalty which can affect the way NGOs chooses to respond to this trend. Loyalty is understood as keeping quiet and leaving things as they are. By understanding this mechanism one can start to better understand what the effects of civil-military cooperation may have for the relationship between the Norwegian government and that of the NGOs.

The broadening of humanitarian action has put pressure on each NGO on how they should engage within international or domestic political realm (Goodhand 2006:187). The Red Cross has a strict relationship to their core principles. It may

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not take sides in any types of conflicts and does not engage in political, racial or religious nature (Fox 2001:227). The way Red Cross is working in Afghanistan is through a partnership with the Afghan led Red Crescent Movement and they have focused their work on humanitarian issues, within the humanitarian space. They are not voicing any criticism toward any side of the conflict making them one of the few NGO in Afghanistan working in Taliban-controlled areas.

By keeping close to the traditional humanitarian principles they are achieving access to all parties in the conflict. One of the major concerns when it comes to the issue of civil-military cooperation has been the issue of ‘blurring of roles’. The Red Cross has had little problems in Afghanistan with this due to the fact that they hold a low profile in Afghanistan. They do not involve themselves with state building nor with the good governance focus made by political actors. They stay neutral due to the fact that in Afghanistan the military actors, NATO and the National Guard and police, are connected to the government and to political alliances. The Red Cross does not see it as their role to involve themselves in the developmental features of the mission in Afghanistan. Other reasons for them not to involve themselves is the fact that in Afghanistan Taliban the group NATO is fighting actually is one of the authoritarian figures. The traditional form of humanitarian aid does not hinder NGOs in working with development aid, but because of the complex situation in Afghanistan the Red Cross is careful not to involve themselves in this part of the mission.<sup>53</sup>

The Red Cross refusal to engage in political sensitive issues and to stay neutral in any case, is in contrast to how MSF work. Their focus has been in the principle of impartiality, and combines this with voicing their concerns (Goodhand 2006:187-188). The MSF view the ability to use voice actively as a way to maintain their

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<sup>53</sup> Interview 27.02.09 Oslo

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independence. Another way they maintain their independence is by keeping government funding low.

The security issue has been one of the main focal points for NGOs when it comes to more coordination. In 2004 MSF left Afghanistan due to an attack that led to the death of several MSF workers. There is still some uncertainty around why the MSF was attacked, and if it was intentional. The security aspect of NGOs is closely connected to their ability to maintain their humanitarian space. When MSF was attacked they meant that the context around them and how humanitarian assistance was functioning in Afghanistan was unsatisfying, due to diminishing humanitarian space<sup>54</sup>.

The MSF used the exit position after the attack in 2004 and did not venture back before 2009 when they thought they could maintain an independent role in Afghanistan. They are keeping to the impartiality principle that allows them to voice any concerns if they feel that they are losing their humanitarian space. They are also working without government funding and only use private donations to fund their work in Afghanistan to ensure their independence<sup>55</sup>.

One of the criticisms towards the new humanitarianism is that without the neutral principle they can in complex conflicts become too critical and lose their humanitarian space due to their own outspokenness. Although, those who supports the new humanitarian approach accept that speaking out carries a risk, they argue that this is the price for getting the attention they need (Fox 2001:282).

Hirschman's three ways of responding gives the two organisations the same options, but due to their different views on what is the best way to keep their integrity. They base their choices on different foundations. While the MSF is

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<sup>54</sup> Interview 16.01.09 Oslo

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.legerutengrenser.no/Aktuelt/Artikler/Tilbake-i-Afghanistan>

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choosing to be an ‘active voicing NGO’, in order to keep their independence the Red Cross is choosing to do the opposite. Both gain their objectives in the process. The fact that they are two major NGOs staying financially independent and where one, the Red Cross has the responsibility to implement the Geneva Convention is having an impact on how they can use two so different approaches and still keep their humanitarian space.

For smaller NGOs the situation will most likely be different. While one can advocate that today’s conflicts need the new humanitarianism, the fact that Red Cross has access to almost every type of conflict and to both sides can not be disregarded. So is new humanitarianism the answer? While organisations like the MSF have been in the forefront advocating for a more political role, there seems to be a limitation to which organisations that can do this. Large organisations like the MSF can clearly handle the realm that follows unpopular statements. Smaller NGOs wanting to follow in their footprints can easily be forced into aid paradigms that are based on other political agendas than their own, resulting in becoming part of the problem and not the solution.

## 7.6 Concluding remarks

The debate between traditional and new humanitarianism is challenging humanitarian principles as the main way to conduct humanitarian assistance and as the best way to stay secure. The debate is also questioning the traditional humanitarian approach’s capability to respond to the altered conditions surrounding today’s conflicts.

The traditional way is supported by most Norwegian NGOs while the Norwegian government and military seem to be more interested in the new humanitarian

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view; the humanitarian equivalent of the cooperation strategy presented by the military. This also seems to be the base for the main differences between them.

The security issue appears to be the key issue that concerns the humanitarian body, independent of which way they see it resolved. Another key issue is the reasons behind assistance and intervention. The view that security measurements may influence who delivers are highly debated. The humanitarian principles appear to be the leading principles Norwegian NGOs want to use when trying to ensure their security when working in conflict zones.

As the Norwegian NGOs grow more and more dependent on government funding their autonomous role will be affected. The years with little or no conditions connected to funding have gradually changed and now NGOs need to show result and efficiency (Lorentzen 1994). Few agencies except Red Cross and MSF, who receive large private donations, can afford to withstand donations from the state. The financial dependency, economical integration and the normative integration process of the organizations have brought back the question of independency. The dependency on donations can in the long run pressure them to make a choice. They can either choose to continue to receive large funds, while advocating for independency and apolitical aid, or reduce their activities.

The focus on civil-military cooperation and coherence is furthered due too the wider political focus on aid and what role aid might play in the re-building of failed states. However the asymmetrical relationship between the Norwegian government, military and NGOs will not be beneficiary for the NGOs. Therefore the interplay of loyalty might play a more important feature when NGOs decides on what role they will play in the future. While the military is benefiting on being loyal 'state servants', NGOs have diffuse allegiances and other principles that lead their actions. Building on their relationship as development partner the civil-



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military cooperation approach will not strengthen their independence, but it might weaken it and lead them to become more biased than they initially bargained for.

So to sum up, the Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) and Red Cross responded to the shift in politics and the focus from NATO to form more coordination between NGOs and themselves in different ways. Similar to Hirschman's *exit* and *voice* strategies. MSF exited their working arrangements in Afghanistan primarily due to the worsening of the security situation and the diminishing humanitarian space. They clearly voiced their concerns of what civil-military cooperation approaches like NATO's CIMIC and all kind of interrelation with military forces may have on humanitarian assistance. MSF has now, since 2009, returned to Afghanistan, but is not using state resources in their work.<sup>56</sup>

Red Cross has on the other hand found ways to remain in Afghanistan and keep their humanitarian space, mainly by keeping to strict neutrality and impartiality principles; under the interviews there was by very different means they responded to the effects of this trend. There could be several reasons *for* why my respondents had so different perceptions. It could be their international connections to umbrella organisations or it could be that they have adapted different roles in the aid and humanitarian assistance society due to different historical bases. The Red Cross foundation is connected to the Geneva Convention and MSF was founded in the aftermath of a humanitarian crisis in Biafra and basing their work on the *Témoignage*-principle, meaning that in contrast to the ICRCs the MSF will speak out in public when faced with mass violations of human rights.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> [http://www.leger-uten-grenser.no/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=4D4F2950-15C5-F00A-250645F3AAE28285&component=toolkit.article&method=full\\_html](http://www.leger-uten-grenser.no/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=4D4F2950-15C5-F00A-250645F3AAE28285&component=toolkit.article&method=full_html)

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.doctorswithoutborders-usa.org/publications/article\\_print.cfm?id=1393](http://www.doctorswithoutborders-usa.org/publications/article_print.cfm?id=1393)

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This discussion shows that there is no single answer on how NGOs should respond to a diminishing humanitarian space. It does however weaken the argument made by the new humanitarians; that staying neutral is not functioning in today's conflicts. As one can see it is most likely Red Cross's profile as neutral actors that are gaining them access in Afghanistan and to people in other conflict areas.

## 8. Conclusion

I started this thesis with a rowing metaphor found in an article written for the *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* as that metaphor illustrated how there is little common ground within or between the different actors on how they can work together and get the boat in the direction that they want to go.

The question that I asked was if this new approach based on cooperation between the different actors would influence the Norwegian model and Norwegian humanitarian aid as it was evident that in complex conflicts, like the one in Afghanistan the different actor may need to work together in new ways. Based on this and the political shift towards more co-operative approaches, I then made the hypothesis that; *“The NGOs and the Norwegian government are at odds, because they have different perceptions of how civilian-military operations of NATO will impact Norwegian humanitarian assistance”*. To study the perspectives kept by the Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs and the new third party the Norwegian military I made 4 sub questions. Throughout this thesis I have tried to answer these questions and discuss the different aspect of what I have found.

### 8.1 Summary

So is the Norwegian model being influenced by the introduction of a third party, the military? And if so how is this affecting humanitarian aid? There seems to be several answers to this, a short recap will sum up the main points found in this thesis.

From the Norwegian model the fact that Norwegian NGOs have a solid foundation outside the political sphere was established, because they were more

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or less developed outside of the political sphere first (Groth 1999, Tvedt 2003). Many have over the years grown to be financially dependent of the state due to the massive funding they get. Funding and normative integration is turning Norwegian NGOs into development partners, making it difficult to claim that they are independent actors. However Norway's small country profile has made it easier for NGOs to have a close relationship with the Norwegian government and still claim that they are neutral.

The main focus with the Norwegian model has been that the working relationships between the state and NGOs have been based on a sense of consensus on what humanitarian action should be based on. The current political shift stands to have an affect on this, and Norwegian NGOs and the state are not agreeing on the impact civil military cooperation will have on humanitarian assistance. The fear for many NGOs is that by cooperating with armed forces they themselves may be seen as working for one side of the conflict, thereby losing the humanitarian space they need to operate.

There is also the debate about how the core principles reject the idea that NGOs should play any other role then one where it is a provider of assistance to all parties of a conflict. The base for all humanitarian assistance should, by the traditional viewpoint, be based after the level of need. If NGOs take a step towards cooperating with the military, other consideration then need and humanity might influence how and where humanitarian assistance is delivered.

So even though the Norwegian government is using the model within an international setting the larger Norwegian NGOs are strong and are viewed as 'development partners'. Giving them more room to develop their own role and many of them have ties to the grassroots' that hinders them in being co-opt into a paradigm that is built on other political agendas. The situation may however be

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different for smaller NGOs that are more dependent on state founding (Braem 2008).

One of the theories used in this thesis is the integration theory. It assumes that over a period of time Norwegian NGOs have been integrated into the Norwegian political sphere through normative integration and economical integration. The argument that some organisations align themselves to the Norwegian model due to financial support, functions to a certain extent, at least for the smaller NGOs. While larger NGOs are more likely to integrated trough normative integration. Normative integration theory suggested that the government used state standards as base for their view of NGOs and their capabilities. Larger organisations that can match the state standards and still stay flexible seem to be one of the criteria.

What then about the crossing views on impact of more cooperation? The focus on consensus is one of the main pillars in the Norwegian model. How is that notion functioning? As shown it is clearly a difference between the various actors view on how humanitarian assistance will be affected by a tripartite approach to aid. The shortage of a common platform is suggested as one reason for the lack of consensus. The epistemology theory suggested that the view and understanding of how civil-military cooperation will affect humanitarian aid and the model shifts between the various actors due to their experiences. This is also supported by the discussion about the terminology used by the different actors.

One issue all parties seemed to agree on was the need for clear defined roles and clear division of labour, but again there are some differences of opinion on where these lines should go. While the Norwegian government view the importance of clear defined roles and labour as a means to better cooperation. On one hand clear defined roles was viewed as a way to preserve the humanitarian space and the integrity of NGOs, but as the context around the NGOs changes the view on what is 'humanitarian' seems to change. The discussion around how 'quick impact'

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operations, that often are lead by military actors, seems to lead towards activities of a developmental art. NGOs argued that t blurred the lines of what role the military and the NGOs should have. The military on the other hand did not see it this way, arguing that what they were doing was not humanitarian, but development work a part of their mission statement.

The role of PRTs in Afghanistan was another topic in this thesis. This hybrid made to fill in the gaps between the military and humanitarian actor was also given most of the blame for the 'blurring of roles'. Their mandate to assist and facilitate development was interpreted in different ways, making the distance between NGOs and the military grow smaller in theory, but increase in practice.

Another topic has been the discussion of humanitarian principles and the criticism towards the principle of neutrality. The debate within the humanitarian body suggested that it is time to make a break from the traditional form of humanitarian assistance. The traditional form, due to its narrow focus on the core principles, is by some NGOs viewed as outdated. They argue that it hinders NGOs to actively engage themselves in political matters. The traditional based humanitarians disagrees stressing that it is only trough neutrality NGOs can guarantee for apolitical assistance and gain full access to people that need assistance. The new humanitarian approach stress that more cooperation is needed to face today's conflicts. The merging of relief, development and security is what is having most impact on humanitarian aid. Used in correlation to the question raised in this thesis it is evident that the role Norway play in Afghanistan is affecting the Norwegian model and Norway's humanitarian aid. The use of Norwegian NGOs as development partners in foreign actions and as partner in a comprehensive approach in Afghanistan may lead to the perception that Norwegian aid is not as neutral as one would like it to be.

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## 8.2 Is Consensus lost in Co-operation?

The current debate on civil-military cooperation and the possible outcome it has for the humanitarian space is as shown a broad discussion. The use of Norwegian NGOs as development partners becomes difficult if these NGOs also will be incorporated into the 'whole of government' approach that the government wants to develop in Afghanistan. The impact civil-military cooperation will have on the unique relationship will depend on how the approach recognizes the different roles each actor has and how especially the NGOs respond to the changing contexts. Hirschman's theory provides three options, and as shown there is several ways NGOs can maintain their integrity, while working closely to the Norwegian government and military. The only factor that may be a hinder is if funding becomes problematic if they choose to exit or voice against government policies.

Another factor to consider when discussing civil-military cooperation is that this is a fairly new approach and a lot of the premonitions on how this is going to alter humanitarian aid are built on assumptions. The situation in Afghanistan is also a unique situation, where many actors are involved and a lot of them are following their own agenda.

So is consensus lost in cooperation? The civil-military cooperation model is about coherence and to achieve a coherent approach there needs to be consensus. The research done in this thesis shows that there seems to be little of both when it comes to the civil-military cooperation debate. It is clear that the humanitarian actors only want military actors' assistance when they ask for it and even then in a soft manner. All parties agree on the need for clearly defined roles and see that this is vital for each and any one of them for them to coexist in the same conflict. The problem with today's conflict are that the insecurity level goes back and

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forth all the time, one area that is safe today, may be unsafe tomorrow making it difficult to develop approaches where all three actors can function together .

And how will that affect humanitarian assistance? It may seem that with this political shift the principle behind where and when aid is delivered will affect humanitarian assistance. The consensus aspects will also be affected, but as the humanitarian debate showed there are also changes within the humanitarian body that may foster a new platform for cooperation and therefore one can assume that a new platform for consensus may develop.

### 8.3 The end?

Is civil-military cooperation the new way to go when approaching the complex conflicts of today? And how does it affect the relationship between Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian government? Today, the diminishing humanitarian space and the insecure environment many NGOs face is due to the civilization of armed forces, either by being driven to, or wanting to, engage themselves in more civilian operations. The merging of security, development and relief will most likely continue as a result of today's complex conflicts and if one wants to try to mold this development, some level of cooperation may be needed to develop a better understanding for the roles each actor has.

Before engaging in a complex conflict situation today, it is evident that there needs to be some level of coordination and cooperation between the different actors involved. So the question is how much cooperation is enough? Some NGOs mean that any coordination over information sharing is pushing it, while others are comfortable with having military convoys around them in the field. For Norwegian NGOs the idea of civil- military cooperation is a fairly new concept, even though Norwegian NGOs have for many years worked closely with the



Norwegian government. The hesitation of openly working with a third armed actor is due to the security risk this will lead to on the ground. NGOs are dependent on presenting themselves as independent to establish trust. Working with armed forces is assumed to have a negative impact.

Norway is not functioning in a vacuum, but in a globalised world events on the other side of the world can affect us here. The focus on failed states as a security dilemma has driven military forces to expand their role beyond their traditional position. The structural drivers behind this are the linkages between security and the unstable environment and it is leading to an expansion of different peacekeeping missions.

The current political shift towards a more explicit use of NGOs and military actors to create more sustainable approaches seem to stir up different underlining perceptions of how NGOs see their work being used. NGOs have the possibility to work in areas and with people that under any other circumstances would not have received help. The new trend towards more cooperation and the new humanitarianism may lead to NGOs losing this ability due to their political standing or because they may become too much embedded into military structures and political interests.

So does this mean the end for the Norwegian model and the cooperation that has been between the NGOs and the state. Will it be replaced with civil-military cooperation? Norway's involvement in the process within NATO and Norway's own 'whole of approach' supports a shift towards more integrated approaches in the future. This is also a way to adapt to today's conflicts. NGOs as I see it have different options and can affect the role they might get in this process. Some form of cooperation will always be the standard in Norway due to the level of integration Norwegian NGOs have gone through. It is important to remember that it is their role as independent, impartial and neutral actors that give them access

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to areas where other actors might not be able to reach. If they lose this position it will hit the weakest the hardest, those who rely on humanitarian assistance.



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**INTERVIEWS**

<b>PERSON</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>	<b>DATE/PLACE</b>
Tony Mechant	MSF, Emergency unit coordinator	16.01.09 Oslo
Mons sydness	Red Cross	27.02.09 Oslo
Terje Tvedt	Political science professor and researcher at “Senter for Grunnforskning”	03.03.09 Oslo





