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**Waging Peace:  
International Mediation and  
Norwegian Society**

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*There are four people without whose support this project could not have been completed. I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Oddrun, the first Norwegian 'mediator' I encountered, and to my father, Humphrey, for his avid interest in Norwegian mediators, my mother included! I also dedicate the thesis to my brother Colin, for providing me with a series of computers and motivational pep talks. Last but by no means least, I dedicate the thesis to Nic Marsh, for his unstinting loyalty, immense emotional and intellectual support, and for believing in me, and the project, even in my darkest moments.*

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## Abstract:

This thesis suggests that more attention should be paid to the identity, “motives” and capabilities of committed mediators than is currently found in the mediation literature, and how these are related to mediators’ socio-cultural positioning, (moving beyond the notion of “constituency”).

The relationship between the mediator and her/his socio-cultural and normative setting is seen as mutually constitutive, in line with structuration theory. A post-positivist, hermeneutic, discourse analytic understanding of Norwegian mediators and other members of their social group is sought, while recognising the limitations of actors’ self-understandings. Lifeworld analysis is combined with structuration theory, to highlight how individual actors are partly constituted by everyday experience within the socio-cultural environment. (The norms, values and discursive continuities of this environment will have entered into actors’ *tacit* ‘practical consciousness’; these continuities will in turn be constituted by agency.)

The thesis argues for a more nuanced understanding of mediatory “power” and “motives” than found in the ‘Realist’ emphasis of much mediation literature. It suggests that more attention should be paid to the *attitudinal* dimension of influence, to the effects of the mediator’s socio-cultural positioning on mediatory capabilities, to the neglected normative dimension of motivation, and to action which is *not directly* motivated.

Norway’s recent peace activism is introduced, situating Norwegian mediators within the *longue durée* of their social group. Relevant historical, normative and discursive continuities of the Norwegian socio-cultural setting are traced, exploring how these are both *drawn upon* by actors when constructing their narratives on Norway’s mediatory role, and *implicated* in their conduct, attitudes and expectations as mediators/“constituents”. Norway’s privileged speakers’ attempts to gain support for mediation are studied; this furthers our understanding of how a constituency *for mediation* can be built up. The “Norwegian model” of cooperation between state and NGOs, and how this impacts upon peace work, is discussed.



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## Part One: Theory

## Chapter One: Introduction:

### Thesis aims, method and ontological basis

*Throughout the post-war period Norway has taken an active role in relation to conflict situations in other countries... During the past decade this commitment has increased...*<sup>1</sup>

In 1993, Norway gained international recognition for its Middle East ‘Oslo Channel’, which had succeeded in breaking the prevailing deadlock in the Arab-Israeli peace process where other attempts had failed. This much-publicised (facilitative) mediation initiative is just the tip of the iceberg where Norwegian peace work is concerned, however; since 1990 Norwegians have contributed to peace negotiations in upwards of fourteen conflicts, with thirteen of these involving Norwegian mediation in some sense.<sup>2</sup> Details of still other mediation initiatives may never be made public knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Norwegian mediators/facilitators have ‘waged peace’ (with varying degrees of success) across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. For a population of just 4.3 million, this level of peace activism is noteworthy. But to regard this recent burgeoning of peace work as something that has spontaneously ‘burst’ onto the Norwegian foreign political scene may be inaccurate. It could, for instance, be construed as consistent with a long-standing Norwegian preoccupation with the peaceful settlement of disputes, both on a domestic and international level. Norway is frequently referred to as an unusually ‘peaceful’ society.<sup>4</sup> Relatively sophisticated mechanisms for handling Norwegian conflicts exist, which are of a remarkably early vintage — mediation was actually rendered compulsory in inter-personal conflict in

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<sup>1</sup> Gunnar M. Sørbo, Wenche Hauge, Bente Hybertsen and Dan Smith: Norwegian Assistance to Countries in Conflict: The Lesson of Experience from Guatemala, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi, UD Evaluation Report 11.98, The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, December 1998, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Jan Egeland, 26 July 1995 and 27 November 1997. The ability to provide low-profile, deniable talks is a Norwegian trademark in peace work.

<sup>4</sup> A ‘constructive conflict society’ or a ‘high-resolving’ society might be more appropriate terminology.

1795, by royal decree.<sup>5</sup> Internationally, Norwegians have entertained dreams of ‘bridge-building’ between belligerent states (or groups of states) at various junctures, and prominent national figures have worked for the cause of peace. When a significant number of actors from a relatively small socio-cultural setting appear to set such store by ‘peace’, could this shared setting in any way be implicated in the decision to mediate, or otherwise *enable* mediation as an activity to occur?

This thesis was partly born out of what I perceived to be a ‘lack of fit’ between the existing literature on mediation and the Norwegian case. In the existing mediation literature, little sustained attention has been paid to specific mediators, over and above their involvement in any given conflict situation. Mediator identity and motives tend to be discussed in context-specific terms, and although the constituencies of the *disputants* are often mentioned, the notion of a *mediator’s* ‘constituency’ rarely appears. Where such analysis does exist, the term ‘constituency’ is itself, I feel, constraining. There have been no attempts to ‘situate’ the mediator within her or his wider socio-cultural environment, or to study ways in which this environment might impinge upon, colour, or otherwise affect a mediator’s decision to ‘wage peace,’ the style of intervention chosen, or the mediator’s capabilities and chances of success. As discussed in Chapter 3, directing attention towards a mediator’s ‘socio-cultural and normative setting’ enables us to transcend the limitations inherent in the notion of a ‘constituency’, (which is here held to be just one *facet* of the wider environment from which the mediator emerges.) The concept of the mediator’s ‘socio-cultural setting’ allows us to look beyond the immediate context of any given mediation attempt, (temporally as well as spatially): to the history, traditions, and cultural heritage of the mediator’s social group, for instance, and how such elements may be implicated in *constituting* the mediator as a social actor, forming (*inter alia*) her/his particular ‘stock of knowledge’ – drawn upon in mediatory intervention.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Edward J. Shaughnessy: Conflict Management in Norway: Practical Dispute Resolution, University Press of America, 1992, pp. 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> What exactly I mean by this (and by phrases such as ‘stock of knowledge’) will be made clearer in due course.

The basic, overriding aim of this thesis is to contribute to our understanding of mediators' 'situated' identities, by exploring how the Norwegian socio-cultural and normative setting may be implicated in its actors' mediatory interventions. It must be emphasised, though, that this is not to infer any 'causal linkage' between the socio-cultural setting and the mediator's identity, attitudes, 'motives' and capabilities. Rather, my underlying assumption here is that mediators, as (inevitably) *social actors*, will both help to *constitute*, and be constituted *by*, the structures of the socio-cultural setting from which they emerge. As Jabri writes, '[t]o conceive of the individual as somehow separate from society is to negate the constitutive implications of normative and discursive processes which define the institutional continuities of social life.'<sup>7</sup> This assumption is discussed more fully in section 1.2.3 (*Ontology and the Agent-Structure Problem*) below.

## 1.1 Aims

The aims of this project can be summarised as follows:

- To draw attention to the importance of studying a 'serial' mediator's situated identity;
- To explore the relationship between a mediator and her/his socio-cultural and normative setting, taking a structurationist view of agents and structures as mutually constitutive;
- To explore how the mediator's socio-cultural and normative setting may be implicated in the actor's mediatory activity, entering into her/his 'motives', tendencies and capabilities as a third party;
- To explore how the actions and discursive articulations of mediators and fellow members of their social group are implicated in the reproduction of the structural continuities of their socio-cultural setting;
- To apply social theoretical concepts to the field of mediation theory;
- To introduce a hermeneutic, discourse analytic approach to the study of mediation, so as to pick up on the self-understandings of mediators and fellow members of their social group;
- To encourage a more nuanced understanding of mediation than is provided by the current theory, with its discernible 'realist' and positivist bias;

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<sup>7</sup> Vivienne Jabri: *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered*, Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 8.

- To encourage a more subtle understanding of mediatory “power” and capabilities, moving away from the one-dimensional view of power that currently prevails in the mediation literature, with its emphasis on military and economic “muscle”;
- To add to the understanding of facilitative mediation;
- To add to the understanding of mediatory “motives”, by bringing in the normative dimension and pointing to the limitations in actors’ knowledgeability and the importance of tacit knowledge or ‘practical consciousness’;
- To move beyond the current notion of “constituency” and highlight the importance of the wider notion of a ‘socio-cultural and normative environment’;
- To add to the understanding of how mediation can become established as a prioritised practice within a socio-cultural group;
- To enhance understanding of how support for mediation as an activity can be summoned within a socio-cultural setting, or how a “constituency” for mediation can be built up;
- Last but not least, to use the case of Norway’s recent peace activism to illustrate the relevance of my chosen theoretical approach, and to provide insights into the relationship between Norwegian mediation and society.

## 1.2 Epistemology, Ontology and Methodology

### 1.2.1 A Post-Positivist Project

It should already be apparent that I am distancing this thesis from the pervasive residual traces of a Logical Positivist epistemology and methodology which are still to be found in a significant number of International Relations texts, also within the field of conflict research and the literature on mediation. In doing so, I am aligning this thesis with a growing body of literature in these subjects that defines itself as ‘post-positivist.’<sup>8</sup>

From around 1940, the ideas of the Vienna Circle – a group of strictly empiricist philosophers committed to, *inter alia*, the idea of a ‘unified science’ – became

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<sup>8</sup> Strictly speaking, the term ‘positivism’ (and by extension ‘positivist’, ‘post-positivist’ etc.) used in the context of International Relations and conflict research is misleading, since it refers to a strain of philosophy which has long since been surpassed by modern empiricism, but as the term is frequently used in debates within the field of International Relations, I continue to use it here.

influential in the Social Sciences, International Relations included.<sup>9</sup> According to this school of thought, the methods of the natural sciences – neutral, ‘objective’ observation, quantitative analysis, and the testing of hypotheses in the quest to discover underlying, immutable ‘laws’ – were equally applicable to the social sciences as to other domains of science. As articulated by one of the group, Otto Neurath, ‘[a]ll laws, whether chemical, climatological, or sociological, must...be conceived of as constituents of a system, viz. of unified science.’<sup>10</sup> The fact that the objects of study in the social sciences – ultimately, human beings – possessed consciousness, did not perturb the Logical Positivists; in their view ‘correlations’ could be established for human or animal behaviour in the same way as for atoms or plants.<sup>11</sup> Exclusive emphasis was placed on the standpoint of the observer, but the observer had to guard against any lapses into ‘unscientific’ subjective participation in the inquiry. Science was to be neutral and value-free; unsullied by the ‘private’ views and perspectives of both investigator and object of investigation. In limiting inquiry to that which was ‘objectively observable’, it is clear that such ‘subjective’ matters as values, attitudes or beliefs could not qualify as worthy of the positivists’ scientific attention; they were neither ‘analytic (logically true) nor “empirical,” that is, about something external to the subject.’<sup>12</sup> The positivists’ methodology also reflected their ontological ideas of what constitutes human consciousness; as Shapiro writes, ‘[t]he positivists’ position on meaning is closely related to their philosophy of mind, which...locates the origin of ideas in the passive perception of “sense data.”’<sup>13</sup> Therefore,

It is understandable... that a positivistic social science based on a philosophy of mind that regards consciousness, not as an active constituting force that constructs a system of entities, but

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<sup>9</sup> The position of the Vienna Circle is presented in English by A.J. Ayer’s Language, Truth and Logic. See Michael J. Shapiro: Language and Political Understanding: The Politics of Discursive Practices, Yale University Press, 1981, pp. 5-12, and Martin Hollis and Steve Smith: Explaining and Understanding International Relations, Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 10-12.

<sup>10</sup> Otto Neurath: ‘Sociology and Physicalism’, in A.J. Ayer (ed): Logical Positivism, Free Press, 1959, p. 284, cited in Shapiro, op cit., p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Shapiro, op cit., p. 12, again citing Otto Neurath.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p. 9.

as a passive recorder of sensations, would develop a view that the scientific observer may disregard the standpoint of subjects involved in conduct.<sup>14</sup>

A full discussion of the enduring influence of positivism on International Relations and conflict research is not warranted here; a few brief points must suffice. In somewhat simplified terms, it may be said that positivism has a certain affinity with political Realism, the school of thinking that ‘calls for the explanation of international behaviour in terms of national interests and without regard for the moral sentiments and hopes which nations profess or which observers may have in their heart.’<sup>15</sup> Although, after decades of Realist hegemony in International Relations, by most accounts the discipline has now witnessed the demise of this ‘paradigm’, there remains what Mervyn Frost has termed a ‘bias towards positive explanation’ in the field.<sup>16</sup> By some accounts, this ‘positive bias’ has persisted in International Relations – a relatively young and epistemologically insecure discipline – longer than elsewhere in the social sciences;

[h]ence the increasingly critical response to the dichotomized crudity of International Relations scholarship that, in the face of generations of counterargument and vibrant debate in other areas of the humanities, continues to represent its theory and practice in universalist and essentialist terms – as “corresponding to” an (anarchical) and unchanging reality – detached from and largely irrelevant to the complexities of domestic theory and practice.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Hollis and Smith, *op cit.*, p. 10. This is a simplification partly because the epistemology of political Realism is not strictly empirical; in Hans Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations*, for instance, there is discernible tension between a positivist and hermeneutic (*Verstehen*) stance. (See Jim George: *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations*, Lynne Reiner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado, 1994, p.92 ) The ‘second great debate’ in International Relations theory between Realists and Behaviouralists, (the version of behaviourism specific to International Relations), was also due to the Behaviouralists’ greater emphasis on quantitative analysis, while Realists were ‘inclined to believe in the structures which a Logical Positivist would reject.’ (Hollis and Smith, p. 12) But, ‘from the standpoint of current usage in other social sciences and the philosophy of science, Realism aspires to be a Positive science and Behaviouralism is a particular version of it with an austere view of what is testable.’ (*ibid.*) Realism was originally, in the first ‘great debate’ of the International Relations discipline in the interwar years, cast as the opponent of ‘Idealism’, ‘an approach concerned with the human will and institutional progress.’ (*ibid.*, p. 11.)

<sup>16</sup> Mervyn Frost: *Ethics in International Relations: A Constitutive Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 17-18.



In 1986, Frost characterised International Relations as ‘the backward discipline’ for its lack of self-consciousness regarding its analytical and research endeavours, and lamented the way in which the ‘positivist bias’ common to Traditionalism and neo-Realism ‘seeks to verify conclusions by reference to the “facts” which are in some sense “hard” and there for all to see...’, symptomatic of the ‘radical distinction’ between the status accorded to ‘factual judgements, to which the discipline of international relations should aspire, and that accorded to value judgements.’<sup>18</sup> In 1996, he reiterated his position:

Common to the dominant approaches in international relations, there is a radical distinction between the status accorded to factual judgements (on which the findings of international relations are to be based) and that accorded to value judgements. Facts are given epistemological priority. This forms the core of the bias towards positive explanation underlying both the traditional and the scientific approaches to the study of international relations.<sup>19</sup>

From the perspective of this thesis, the limitations of a traditional, positivist epistemology and methodology are manifold. The notion that human action (mediation included) can be explained from ‘outside’, without taking into account the subjective meanings accorded to action by the acting subjects, is unacceptable. On the contrary, it is *primarily* the self-understandings of the actors that will illuminate the questions posed in this inquiry. The idea that the investigator can in any way be ‘value-neutral’ is also rejected; neither interpreter nor object of interpretation can detach her/himself from the background convictions, values and beliefs that constitute her/him as a social actor. (This is in line with hermeneutic thinking, outlined in section 1.2.2 below.) As Jabri writes, ‘individuals are knowledgeable agents who draw upon their “depths of experience” or “stocks of knowledge” in their social interactions/interpretations.’<sup>20</sup> This thesis does not seek to propound any relationships of the ‘cause-effect’ variety; rather, the aim is to construct a narrative that is unabashedly an ‘amalgam’ of the self-understandings of Norwegian mediators (and other actors who share the socio-cultural setting), and my own interpretations and assumptions. The ‘positivist bias’ noted by

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<sup>17</sup> Jim George, op cit., p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Mervyn Frost, Towards a Normative Theory of International Relations, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Mervyn Frost, 1996, op cit., p. 18.

Frost in the field of International Relations, and the concomitant relegation of value-based judgements and normative considerations to the theoretical ‘third division’ are also regarded here to be damaging and distorting. Jabri describes the way in which positivist thinking has also infiltrated the field of conflict research:

The methodology conventionally adopted in the field of conflict research is the search for explanation, defined in terms of scientific statements of the cause-effect variety... The methods of the natural sciences are assumed to apply to the social sciences in general and to the study of war in particular. The aim is to discover objective laws which would be devoid of normative considerations and as such would lend legitimacy to a field which could easily be accused of activist-led emotionalism.<sup>21</sup>

In Chapter 3, the lack of a normative dimension in the existing literature on mediation – where mediators are almost invariably portrayed as acting on the basis of some form of (‘objectively observable’) self-interest – is highlighted, while other problematic ‘Realist’ tendencies on the part of mediation theorists are alluded to. In the context of this thesis, one final ‘bone to pick’ with positivism, so to speak, is its inattention to *context*, whether temporal, spatial, social, cultural, or historical. Shapiro notes the ‘emphasis on a timeless or context-free approach to explaining the phenomena of human association’ inherent in positivist epistemology.<sup>22</sup> By placing predominant emphasis on ‘objective’ explanation of human action from ‘outside’, it is all but impossible to tap into the socio-cultural, normative and historical continuities that constitute actors (and by extension their conduct): the ‘horizons of understanding’ and discursive articulations that render behaviour meaningful, and the spatio-temporal backdrop on which action unfolds. (More is said of these matters in due course.)

### **1.2.2 A Hermeneutic (interpretative) methodology**

Critiques of positivism have come from many quarters, but the majority of these derive in some way from hermeneutics, ‘the interpretative tradition in social

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<sup>20</sup> Vivienne Jabri, 1996, op cit., p. 128.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> Shapiro, op cit., p. 12.

thought<sup>23</sup>, that originated in the ancient Greeks' study of literature and in ancient Biblical exegesis.<sup>24</sup> (*Hermeneus* is Greek for 'interpreter'). The many variants of hermeneutics, advanced in the work of Schleimacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer (to name but a few), render a thoroughgoing introduction to the field beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, a few recurrent themes will be mentioned, together with specific concepts of particular relevance to this project.

At the most rudimentary of levels, hermeneutic approaches can be seen to share a commitment to the idea that human action (and texts) must be *understood* from *within*.<sup>25</sup> 'Human beings are considered to be fundamentally self-interpreting and self-defining', living 'in the world of cultural meaning.'<sup>26</sup> Clearly this is a major departure from the positivist position that human conduct can be simply *explained* from outside. In his *Economy and Society*, Max Weber distinguished between *Erklären*, the form of causal *explanation* appropriate in the natural sciences, and *Verstehen*, the kind of *understanding* suited to the social sciences.<sup>27</sup> In current social science parlance, interpretative and hermeneutic approaches are often referred to as the '*Verstehen* school of social science.'<sup>28</sup>

Hermeneutic thinkers have also characterised their approach as one of *Verstehen*; Wilhem Dilthey, for instance, an influential early figure in the genealogy of hermeneutics, sought to identify *Verstehen* as the cognitive goal of the cultural sciences, (*Geisteswissenschaften*), and to thereby distinguish the field from the explanatory-based natural sciences.<sup>29</sup> According to Dilthey, while the natural sciences

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<sup>23</sup> Hollis and Smith, op cit., p. 71.

<sup>24</sup> See John C. Mallery, Roger Hurwitz, and Gavan Duffy: '*Hermeneutics: From Textual Explication to Computer Understanding?*', ('*Origins*'), in Stuart C. Shapiro (ed.): The Encyclopedia of Artificial Intelligence, John Wiley and Sons, 1987.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Hollis and Smith, op cit., p. 87.

<sup>26</sup> Tarja Väyrynen: Sharing Reality: An insight from phenomenology to John Burton's Problem-Solving Conflict Resolution Theory, PhD Thesis in International Conflict Analysis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1996, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Hollis and Smith, p. 71.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, Frost (1996), op cit., p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> See David Held: Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas, Hutchinson University Press, 1980, p. 308.

pursued questions of the form ‘why?’ and ‘how?’, *Verstehen* sought to answer questions of the ‘what?’ variety.<sup>30</sup> Originally, Dilthey related his idea of *Verstehen* to that of *empathy*, ‘the re-enactment or reliving of the psychological state of one’s past self or of others’,<sup>31</sup> made possible in the latter case by a common human nature. Criticised for psychologism, he subsequently refined his position to include the idea that meanings (of texts) were also shaped by the author’s *Weltanschauung*, (world-view), a product of among other things historical period, language and social context.<sup>32</sup>

A central theme of contemporary hermeneutics, as presented in the work of such writers as Gadamer and Ricoeur, is the idea that the interpreter – complete with her/his preconceptions, horizon of understandings and life-contexts – is also fundamentally implicated in any interpretation reached; there can be no ‘neutral’ spectator vantage-point from which a stance of non-participation can be maintained. (This idea was absent in Dilthey’s thinking, where the ideal of pure objectivity was upheld.<sup>33</sup>) Thus, in contemporary hermeneutics, interpretation can be described as ‘a conversation with the text in which the horizon of the interpreter and the horizon of the text amalgamate,’<sup>34</sup> or to use Gadamer’s words, in the process of understanding ‘there always takes place a real fusing of horizons.’<sup>35</sup> For Gadamer, a ‘successful’ interpretation can still be achieved, however; this is marked by arriving, through dialogue, at a position of intersubjective agreement between the interpreter and the interpreted (acting individual or author of text), i.e., ‘on the level of both interpretation and practice.’<sup>36</sup> But crucially, Gadamer held that the *intention* of the creator of a text (or perpetrator of an action) was not synonymous with its meaning; ‘meaning can be

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, and Mallery, Hurwitz, and Duffy, *op cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Held, *ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>34</sup> Väyrynen, *op cit.*, p. 14, (drawing on Gadamer, Hans-Georg: Truth and Method, London: Sheed and Ward, 1979 (2nd ed.) p. 273 and pp. 326-331, and Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, John Thompson (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 143.

<sup>35</sup> Gadamer, *op cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>36</sup> Held, *op cit.*, p. 312.

experienced even where it is not actually intended.’<sup>37</sup> Hermeneutics should therefore not merely describe the ‘surface level’ of intended meaning, but should plumb deeper, to provide an understanding of a text or action in its historical context; furthermore, the insight of the interpreter becomes integral to the quest for understanding. For written texts, as Väyrynen explains, contemporary hermeneutics holds that

the text transcends its own socio-psychological conditions of production and, thereby, opens itself to an unlimited series of readings. The text... ‘decontextualises’ itself in such a way that it can be ‘recontextualised’ in a new situation by the act of reading.<sup>38</sup>

Critical hermeneutics takes these ideas a step further. It is not enough to transcend the intended meaning of a text or action; both the truth claims incorporated in the text and the tradition one is part of become open to question. Structures of ‘ideology’ and domination have over time created a state of ‘false consciousness’, giving rise to distorted or misleading self-conceptions, or skewed ideas of what constitutes ‘reality’.<sup>39</sup> Habermas criticised Gadamer for failing to comprehend the relationship of coercion inherent in his notion of “dialogue”, and proposed a “depth hermeneutics” (which he likened to Freudian psychoanalysis), so as to ‘grasp the history of tradition in such a way as to reveal sources of domination and distortion in communication.’<sup>40</sup> For Habermas, in keeping with the central tenets of critical theory, this project is ultimately an emancipatory one; through self-reflection individuals (whether investigators or the subject-objects of investigation) can ‘become aware of forces which have exerted a hitherto unacknowledged influence on them.’<sup>41</sup>

This thesis adopts a hermeneutic (interpretative) methodology, insofar as it is held that the meaning attributed to mediation work ‘from within’, i.e., by mediators and other members of their social collectivity, should be understood. To this end, it is considered crucial to engage with the discourses which explain and legitimate peace

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<sup>37</sup> H-G Gadamer, ‘*On the scope and function of hermeneutical reflection*’, trans. G.B. Hess and R.E. Palmer, *Continuum*, vol. 8, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring and Summer 1970), p. 87, also cited in Held, *op cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>38</sup> Väyrynen, *op cit.*, drawing on Ricoeur, *op cit.*, pp. 131-140.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 14-15, and Held, *op cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>40</sup> Held, pp. 315-322.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 318

work *among members of Norwegian society*, and with the social and institutional setting and everyday life-contexts within which mediation as an activity is able to emerge.<sup>42</sup>

This said, a critical stance is taken in that it is not necessarily considered appropriate to take the articulations and self-understandings of Norwegian mediators and the society's 'privileged storytellers'<sup>43</sup> as representing the 'whole' – or indeed, the *only* – story. From the perspective of critical theory, as Hoffman notes, "[t]he problem with interpretative social sciences is that they have the capacity to understand but not to critique the boundaries of understanding."<sup>44</sup> What mediators and fellow members of their social group perceive to be "reality" – including their self-understandings and the meanings they attach to peace work – partly derives, for instance, from their spatio-temporal position within the *longue durée* of their social collectivity, as this determines the shared understandings, institutions, norms, 'stocks of knowledge', historical narratives and discursive repertoires which they have at their disposal and draw upon in action and interaction.<sup>45</sup> As Frost writes,

In a critical approach the [social] scientist considers it legitimate to examine the self-understandings of the subject in the context of the practice as a whole and in the context of its history. Such an examination might reveal that the subject's self-understandings help uphold a system within which he (the subject) is being disadvantaged...and thus that his understanding is defective in important ways.<sup>46</sup>

In the case of mediation work, it is imaginable that mediators' self-understandings might for instance partly be based on a dominant discourse within the social group that casts the group's identity in terms of 'peacefulness' (in the interests of societal cohesion, perhaps). Mediation is thereby rendered an activity which seems

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<sup>42</sup> This can be equated with what Wittgenstein refers to as 'forms of life' – more on this in Chapter 4.

<sup>43</sup> David Campbell: Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, & The Narratives of The Gulf War, Critical Perspectives on World Politics Series, (ed. R.B.J. Walker), Lynne Rienner publishers, Boulder & London, 1993, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Mark Hoffman: '*Critical Theory and the Inter-Paradigm Debate*', Millennium, Vol. 16., No. 2, 1987, p. 232.

<sup>45</sup> As will be made clear later, this is not, however, to deny actors' knowledgeability.

<sup>46</sup> Frost, 1996, op cit., p. 30.

‘appropriate’ for group members to partake in, irrespective of whether or not the dominant self-representation as a ‘peaceful’ group is beyond contestation.

While drawing on ideas from both hermeneutics and critical theory, this thesis does not demonstrate a full or rigorous allegiance to any one approach, not even to critical hermeneutics, which is arguably the perspective it falls closest to. This is because while accepting the insights from critical social theory that the descriptivism inherent in certain hermeneutic approaches should be rejected, since the self-understandings of the investigatee are not beyond criticism,<sup>47</sup> the emancipatory agenda characteristic of critical theory is not considered paramount in this study. Rather than attempting a Habermasian ‘depth hermeneutics’ to uncover the structures of ideology and domination which have led to actors existing in a self-detrimental state of ‘false consciousness’, this thesis is primarily concerned with exploring the relationship between social actor (mediator) and her/his society, and the potentially myriad ways in which this relationship impinges upon mediation work. By illuminating this relationship, and taking a critical evaluative stance with regard to social actors’ self-understandings, there may be some emancipatory ‘fall-out’, if mediators are made aware of areas where their self-understandings are deficient, or of structural elements (e.g. dominant discourses) of their social group which have – unbeknown to them – entered into their constitution as actors. Any such emancipatory ‘fall-out’ is welcomed, if it will better our understanding of the nature of mediation and enable mediators to achieve greater self-awareness, but this is not the principal objective of the thesis. Here I align myself with what Adler defines as the epistemology of ‘mediative’ constructivism, which is ‘interested neither in emancipation per se, nor exclusively in uncovering the power structures that affect the marginalized in history, but in providing better explanations of social reality.’<sup>48</sup> Inevitably, a better explanation of the relationship between a situated mediator and her/his social collectivity will involve discussion of structures of domination and power and their possibly distorting effects, but this is a secondary rather than primary focus of the thesis.

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<sup>47</sup> e.g., *ibid.*, p. 30.

### 1.2.3 Ontology and the 'Agency-Structure' problem

*I am not yet born; O hear me.  
Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the  
club-footed ghouel come near me.  
I am not yet born, console me.  
I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,  
with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,  
on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me.  
I am not yet born; provide me  
With water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk  
to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light  
in the back of my mind to guide me.  
I am not yet born; forgive me  
For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words  
when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me,  
my treason engendered by traitors beyond me,  
my life when they murder by means of my  
hands, my death when they live me.  
I am not yet born; rehearse me  
In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when  
old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains  
frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white  
waves call me to folly and the desert calls  
me to doom and the beggar refuses  
my gift and my children curse me.  
I am not yet born; O hear me,  
Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God  
come near me.  
I am not yet born; O fill me  
With strength against those who would freeze my  
humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton,  
would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with  
one face, a thing, and against all those  
who would dissipate my entirety, would  
blow me like thistledown hither and  
thither or hither and thither  
like water held in the  
hands would spill me.  
Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.  
Otherwise kill me.*

'Prayer before birth', by Louis MacNeice

Exploration of the relationship between a situated social actor (a mediator) and her/his social collectivity (i.e., between 'self' and 'society') is central to this thesis, seeking as it does to investigate (*inter alia*) the ways in which a mediator's socio-

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<sup>48</sup> Emanuel Adler: 'Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics', pp. 333-334.



cultural environment may be implicated in *enabling* mediation as an activity to occur, or may impinge upon the mediator's expectations, conduct or attitudes once the actor is involved in conflict resolution work. For this reason, a foray into some highly contested social science terrain is unavoidable – namely that domain often referred to in social science parlance as 'the agency-structure problem' (or '*problematique*'). This is an ontological problem (concerning the nature of *being*, of what *is*), and due to the controversy surrounding the issue it is essential that the ontological assumptions upon which this thesis rests are stated clearly here, to avoid later confusion.

In essence, the problem centres – or at least, centred in the past – on the degree to which an individual agent, or social actor, is considered to be autonomous, rational and purposive, as opposed to 'determined' or 'steered' by social structure(s). To bring in the opening citation from Louis MacNeice, to what extent is the individual agent merely 'a lethal automaton, ...a cog in a machine, a thing'?, or to what extent is she/he an intentional being whose 'humanity' remains unfrozen, able to choose to act as she/he thinks fit? Recently, the "problem" has, according to Carlsnaes, evolved; where before agency and structure were frequently presented in terms of irreconcilable dichotomies, there is now 'an increasingly widespread recognition that, instead of being antagonistic partners in a zero-sum relationship, human agents and social structures are in a fundamental sense interrelated entities, and hence that we cannot account fully for the one without invoking the other.'<sup>49</sup> For Carlsnaes, the locus of the "problem" now lies in the conceptual acrobatics this realisation demands – the paradox that 'although such views of reciprocal implication suggest that the properties of both agents and social structures are relevant to a proper understanding of social behaviour,...the creature facing us seems to remain inveterately Janus-faced, presenting an "action" side to some and a "structure" side to others.'<sup>50</sup>

Since the debate surrounding the agency-structure *problematique* is wide in scope, extending throughout the contemporary social science field and dating as far

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<sup>49</sup> Carlsnaes, Walter: '*The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis*', International Studies Quarterly (1992) 36, pp. 245-246.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 246.

back as the ‘late medieval differentiation between the individual and the state’<sup>51</sup>, it might be helpful to trace its defining contours here. This said, it is beyond the bounds of this thesis to enter into the intricacies of what is a highly complex subject, and there are no pretensions to propound an original ‘solution’ or even (in this section) to provide a substantive contribution to the debate.<sup>52</sup> Following a cursory introduction, then, it must suffice to state the basic stance of the thesis, and how this relates to the positions of those who have devoted more time and attention to the question.

Traditionally the agency-structure problem has demarcated the ontological fault-line of a number of important dualisms in the history of social theory: objectivism vs. subjectivism; holism/structuralism/functionality/collectivism vs. individualism or hermeneutic approaches; macro vs. micro<sup>53</sup>; determinism vs. voluntarism.<sup>54</sup> To some degree, each of these ‘dichotomies’ hinges upon the question of whether it is *structure* or *agency* that is accorded primacy in the analysis of social behaviour. Discrepancies aside,<sup>55</sup> common to objectivism, holism, structuralism, functionality and determinism is the underlying assumption that structures are in some way ontologically *prior* to agents – they are, as it were, the ‘independent’ or determining variable, linked in some kind of causal relationship to the ‘dependent’ variable of agency. Subjectivism, voluntarism, individualism and many hermeneutic/interpretative approaches, on the other hand, share a view of *agency* as ontologically prior to *structure* in the analysis of human conduct.

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p, 245.

<sup>52</sup> The thesis as a whole, however, may provide some substantive empirical support for the ontological assumptions made here.

<sup>53</sup> It is the American debate that has focused primarily on the micro-macro linkage; discussion in Europe has centred on the more specific relationship between “agency” and “structure.” See Carlsnaes, p. 246.

<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Doty, (1997), *op cit.*, p. 365, Jabri, *op cit.*, pp. 54-86, and Carlsnaes, *op cit.*, p, 245. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of dualisms.

<sup>55</sup> The many terms listed here indicate the complexity of the issue, and it is beyond the bounds of this thesis to explain each in turn, or, for that matter, their relationship to each other, which is not simply one of correspondence – some concepts (such as ‘holism’) contain others, some partially overlap, and the epistemological underpinnings of the terms vary.

Those approaches that place primary emphasis on social structures in accounting for action – e.g., structural forms of sociology, from Durkheim onwards,<sup>56</sup> or the later Marx’s ideas on a collectivity’s ‘objective’ pursuit of interests – tend to see individual action as ‘a function of social order’.<sup>57</sup> According to this view – sometimes dubbed ‘methodological holism’, social structures are seen as having a *constraining* effect on action, or action is in some sense structurally determined.<sup>58</sup> Social structures are *external* to the acting agent, and – in *some* variants of structuralism – affect her/him in much the same way as the laws of nature affect inanimate objects. As Giddens notes, functionalism and structuralism share a tendency towards a ‘naturalistic standpoint, and both are inclined towards objectivism.’ Moreover, they both stress ‘the pre-eminence of the social whole over its individual parts.’<sup>59</sup> The ‘knowledgeability’ of individual agents is, like agency itself, rendered subordinate to structure; actors may be largely ignorant of the phenomena which ‘cause’ their activities.<sup>60</sup> Epistemologically there is a clear affinity here between certain of these approaches and logical positivism.<sup>61</sup>

By contrast, approaches that place greater emphasis on the individual agent, such as rational choice theory, phenomenology and hermeneutics, tend to view the *individual* (whether she/he is seen as a rational utility maximiser or a ‘subjective, interpretative’ agent seeking her/his own personal goals) as ‘the primary source of

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<sup>56</sup> The importance attributed to, e.g., processes of *socialisation* in various versions of structural sociology can be traced back to Durkheim.

<sup>57</sup> Carlsnaes, op cit., p. 249; see also Giddens (1984), pp. 169-174.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony Giddens, The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration, Polity Press, 1984, (1997, p. 169; Carlsnaes p. 249.

<sup>59</sup> Giddens, 1984, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, Giddens (1984), p. 26.

<sup>61</sup> Having said this, it is important not to conflate two issues here: firstly, the *ontological* polarity between individualism and collectivism (holism), and secondly, the *epistemological* division between ‘objectivist’ and ‘subjectivist’ conceptions of human agency – i.e. conceiving of actors as either ‘rational’ or ‘interpretative’. Carlsnaes demonstrates that these epistemological and ontological questions in fact cross-cut each other; collectivist (holist) approaches can be *either* epistemologically interpretative/ subjectivist *or* objectivist, as can individualist approaches. See Carlsnaes, e.g., p. 249, for more on this.

social order’; hence the label ‘methodological individualism’.<sup>62</sup> Giddens sums up the respective positions of some of these schools of thought as follows:

In interpretative sociologies, action and meaning are accorded primacy in the explication of human conduct; structural concepts are not notably prominent, and there is not much talk of constraint. For functionalism and structuralism, however, structure...has primacy over action, and the constraining qualities of structure are strongly accentuated....

If interpretative sociologies are founded, as it were, upon an imperialism of the subject, functionalism and structuralism propose an imperialism of the social object.<sup>63</sup>

Within the International Relations and conflict studies literature, the holist or structuralist approach can be found in Wallerstein’s world systems theory, but also in the writings of Galtung on ‘structural violence’, and of other “objectivists”— primarily Marxists, Scandinavians and Quakers (such as Adam Curle) who emphasise the way in which structural constraints inhibit the development of human potential and should thus be seen as the root cause of conflict.<sup>64</sup> According to Galtung *et al*, a situation of ‘structural violence’ or ‘negative peace’ can prevail even where individual agents are themselves unaware of their predicament, since *objectively* they are suffering structural repression and discrimination, e.g., through holding a subordinate social position. (Hence their ‘knowledgeability’ is restricted.) For Galtung, ‘structural violence’ is present wherever ‘human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realisations are below their potential realisations.’<sup>65</sup>

Individualist approaches in International Relations and conflict studies are found in theories of rational decision-making (such as Buena de Mesquita’s) where decision-makers are seen as purposive actors, making cost-benefit calculations before choosing the course of action of greatest anticipated utility.<sup>66</sup> According to such

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Giddens, 1984, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Jabri, *op cit.*, p. 59. For articulations of the ‘objectivist’ position in conflict studies, see Galtung (*ibid.*), ‘*Violence and Peace*’, reprinted from ‘*Violence, Peace and Peace Research*’, Journal of Peace Research, 1969, pp. 167-191, p. 9, and also: Galtung, Johan and Höivik, Tord: ‘*Structural and Direct Violence - A Note on Operationalization*’, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. XVI, No. 4, 1972; Curle, Adam: Making Peace, Tavistock Publications, 1971; and Webb, K.: ‘*Structural Violence and the Definition of Conflict*’, World Encyclopedia of Peace, Vol. 2, pp. 431-434.

<sup>65</sup> Galtung, *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Jabri, *op cit.*, pp. 55-56., on Buena de Mesquita’s *The War Trap* (1981).

rational actor decision-making models human conduct is patterned and predictable, despite the individualist orientation, but Jabri identifies a second individualist approach in conflict studies, cognitive models of decision-making, championed by such theorists as Ole Holsti – that also takes into account “*non-rational*” attitudinal and perceptual elements, and the notion of cognitive constraints on rationality.<sup>67</sup> Common to both of these individualist approaches, despite epistemological differences, however (e.g., the first takes an ‘objectivist’ view of agency; the second an interpretative view),<sup>68</sup> is ‘an epistemological orientation based on individual intentions and frames of reference which generate conduct...’<sup>69</sup> Actors are purposive, knowledgeable and goal-seeking; their behaviour is not generated by structural conditions beyond their control but emanates from *within*, i.e., it is *agency* that determines conduct.

As intimated earlier, however, in recent years a realisation has dawned, both within International Relations theory and in social theory as a whole, that to conceive of either ‘structure’ or ‘agency’ as ontologically privileged is fallacious. Instead, one must ‘view the relationship between actors and social structures in terms of mutual linkage rather than causation.’<sup>70</sup> According to Carlsnaes, the current debate within social theory has revolved around the question of how to resolve the ‘impasse’ wherein ‘either agency is privileged over structure or structure over agency’.<sup>71</sup> In International Relations theory a vibrant debate has sprung up in recent years around the agent-structure problem, sparked off by Wendt in a 1987 article drawing upon

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>68</sup> This highlights the way in which the 1) ontological and 2) epistemological ‘dichotomies’ between (respectively) 1) collectivism and individualism and 2) objectivist and interpretative conceptions of agency can in fact cross-cut each other, and should not be conflated.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>70</sup> Carlsnaes, *op cit.*, p. 250.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

structuration theory.<sup>72</sup> Although there may now be said to be growing consensus among IR theorists that one must take account of *both* agency and structure in the analysis of human behaviour, opinion is divided when it comes to *how* the ‘agent-structure’ problem should be resolved – or indeed whether or not it *can* be ‘resolved.’ Those who advocate a structurationist viewpoint, such as Wendt and Jabri,<sup>73</sup> draw on social theorists such as Giddens and Bhaskar, and support Giddens in his assertion that the *dualism* between subject and social object, i.e., between agent and structure, should be ‘reconceptualized as a *duality* – the duality of structure’<sup>74</sup> (emphasis added). According to this view, agency and structure form a dynamic synthesis; they are *mutually constitutive*. (Structuration theory is described in more detail in Chapter 2.)

Other theorists, however, have not been swayed by the persuasive appeal of Giddens and structuration theory. Hollis and Smith, for instance, replied to Wendt’s structurationist interventions with their thesis that ‘there are always two stories to tell’ about structure and agency; one ontological and the other epistemological,<sup>75</sup> (or, as stated elsewhere, one from ‘outside’ and one from ‘inside’<sup>76</sup>) stressing, in Doty’s words, ‘the intractability of the agent-structure problem and International Relations’ failure to resolve it.’<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Wendt, Alexander: ‘*The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations*’, International Organisation 41 (2) (1987), pp. 335-70. The main tenets of structuration theory will be described in due course.

<sup>73</sup> Naming these two theorists together suggests a misleading affinity between their approaches; in the following discussion some of the divergences in their views should become explicit.

<sup>74</sup> Giddens, 1984, op cit., p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Hollis, Martin and Smith, Steve: ‘*Beware of Gurus: Structure and Action in International Relations*’, Review of International Studies, 17 (4), 1991, pp. 393-410, and Hollis and Smith: ‘*Two Stories about Structure and Agency*’, Review of International Studies, 20 (3), 1994, 241-76. Hollis and Smith’s articles, in turn, prompted a reply from Vivienne Jabri and Steven Chan: ‘*The Ontologist always rings twice: two more stories about structure and agency in reply to Hollis and Smith*’, Review of International Studies, 22 (1996), pp.107-110, and a second, later response by Chan.

<sup>76</sup> Hollis and Smith, op cit., p. 1

<sup>77</sup> Roxanne Lynn Doty: ‘*Aporia: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory*’, European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 3 (3), 1997, pp. 365-392, p. 367.

Carlsnaes and Margaret Archer, (on whom he draws), are also resistant to the suggestion that the dualism between agency and structure can be transcended. While both Giddens and Archer view agency and structure as ‘causally reciprocal entities’, for Giddens no one element can ontologically presuppose the other; rather, they *both, simultaneously*, presuppose each other. By contrast, Archer (and by extension Carlsnaes), retain the distinction (or dualism) between agency and structure, and suggest instead that there is a dialectical *interplay* between the two. Archer accuses Giddens of “central conflation” on this issue, while Carlsnaes warns against ‘collapsing action into structure and structure into action à la Giddens’.<sup>78</sup> Instead, Archer’s position, as summarised by Carlsnaes, is that ‘structural factors...logically both predate and postdate any action affecting them’, and similarly, that any action ‘logically both predates and postdates the structural factors conditioning it.’<sup>79</sup> The ‘solution’ propounded by Archer and Carlsnaes thus involves the notion of ‘morphogenetic cycles’ which introduces a temporal dimension into the equation: ‘Structure I’ pre-dates ‘Action I’<sup>80</sup>, which over time gives rise to ‘Structure II’, followed by ‘Action II’, and so forth.<sup>81</sup>

While much of the debate over the agent-structure issue in IR theory revolves around the ‘credibility’ of the various ‘solutions’ proffered, a third stance on this issue is taken by poststructuralists and postmodernists, who hold that *no* ‘solution’ to the agent-structure problem *can* be found. Doty argues that this position should not, however, disqualify poststructuralists from entering the fray surrounding the ‘agency-structure’ problematique.<sup>82</sup> In a complex piece she summarises her thesis at one point as taking ‘the undecideability issue seriously’ and pressing the paradoxes encountered by theorists of the agent-structure problematique (which she sees as insurmountable)

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<sup>78</sup> Carlsnaes, op cit., p. 258.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*, p. 260.

<sup>80</sup> – Or, presumably, *vice versa*.

<sup>81</sup> See Carlsnaes, *ibid*, for a tabular presentation of morphogenetic cycles.

<sup>82</sup> Doty, 1997, op cit., p. 374.

‘further than they have been pressed by IR theorists.’<sup>83</sup> This endeavour is valuable, in Doty’s view, not least for its potential to expose ‘how current ‘solutions’ of the agent-structure problematique ‘foreclose important possibilities in terms of critical International Relations theory.’<sup>84</sup> According to Doty, the quest for a ‘solution’ is misguided: ‘I am arguing for a critical recognition and acceptance of indeterminacy and contingency as integral to this (and all issues)...’<sup>85</sup> Even the terms in which the agent-structure debate have been cast become open to critical appraisal, since ‘from a poststructuralist perspective there are no essential qualities to structures, agents or subjects. What might very cautiously be referred to as agents and structures are extremely problematic and contingent effects of discursive practices.’<sup>86</sup>

This summary of the current agent-structure debate within International Relations theory has merely scraped the surface of what is a complex and nuanced area; many bones of contention have deliberately been left buried. For the purposes of this thesis, an in-depth exploration of the various positions is unwarranted. What is required is a statement on the ontological stance adopted here and a brief justification of this, rather than the addition of yet another combative voice to a debate with little prospect of ‘resolution’. Chapter 2 then expands upon the perspective chosen in this thesis – namely, structuration theory. For, despite the criticisms that have been levelled at Giddens’ theory of structuration, this thesis holds that structuration theory nevertheless provides us with the richest and most useful conception of human agency – and of its relationship to social ‘structure’ – currently available within social theory and the field of IR. It also provides a conception of human agency and social ‘structure’ that fits well with the aims and concerns of this thesis.

From the perspective of this thesis, the appeal of structuration theory is manifold, and its explanatory strengths outweigh the objections that have been raised

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p. 375. In particular, she calls for more attention to be played to conceptions of power, of practice and contexts of meaning, and to representations, discursive practices ‘and the subject-positions they produce’ (p. 385).

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p. 379.



by its critics. The strengths of structuration theory and its compatibility with the aims and preoccupations of this thesis will be made clearer in Chapter 2, but a few brief points can be noted here. By viewing agents and social structures as mutually constitutive, structuration theory places the individual agent firmly in the context of her/his socio-cultural and spatio-temporal setting. It takes the *contextuality* of action seriously. One of the underlying assumptions of this thesis is that mediators cannot be extricated from the socio-cultural environment which has contributed to constituting them as actors – i.e., that mediators are social actors, and as such they are necessarily *situated* or positioned in relation to their social collectivity and its institutional and normative continuities. Structuration theory also provides a balanced view of the powers of agency, granting that actors are knowledgeable and purposive, but at the same time recognising the limits to their knowledgeability and intentionality – in line with the critical stance of this thesis. Agents are not mere ‘automata’ driven by the structures of social systems, but neither are they entirely free from constraint; rather, structure is both enabling and constraining. Lastly, in its emphasis on the importance of the routine day-to-day life context of social actors, structuration theory fits well with the social theoretical concept of the ‘lifeworld’, introduced in Chapter 4, and with the conjecture of this thesis that everyday experience is centrally implicated in the constitution of social actors and their practices.

Quite apart from the appeal of structuration theory from the perspective of this thesis, it is difficult to see how the alternative solutions – or *non*-solutions – offered by theorists such as Hollis and Smith, Carlsnaes and Archer, or Doty are preferable to the structurationist notion of the ‘duality of structure’. Moreover, the criticisms of structuration theory emanating from these quarters have stopped short of fatally wounding their target. As Giddens admits, conceiving of the ‘duality of structure’ demands ‘a very considerable conceptual effort’<sup>87</sup>, and certain critiques of structuration theory seem to have stopped short of making this effort, instead holding fast to the notion of a presumed *dualism* between action and structure. Archer’s claim that Giddens’ theory precludes the possibility of analysing the empirical *interplay*

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<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 387.

between action and structure, for instance, remains firmly rooted within a conception of structure and agency as binary entities.<sup>88</sup> The ontological agnosticism expressed by Doty is understandable, but leads us nowhere. In viewing agents and structures as the ‘problematic and contingent effects of discursive practices’ she in effect strips actors of any agential powers whatsoever. While recognising the difficulties inherent in structuration theory, then, it is felt that the notion of ‘duality of structure’ remains the most useful and attractive conception of the relationship between structure and agency currently available, and that it would be unwarranted to throw the baby out with the bathwater because of a few apparent blemishes.

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<sup>87</sup> Giddens, 1984, op cit., p. xxi.

<sup>88</sup> See Carlsnaes, op cit., pp. 258-259, and Margaret Archer: ‘*Stucturation Versus Morphogenesis*’, in S.N. Eisenstadt and H.J. Helle (eds): Macro-Sociological Theory: Perspectives on Sociological Theory, Vol. 1, Sage Publications, 1985, p. 61.

### 1.2.3 Discourse analysis as a methodological approach

*We...say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not understand the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them.*

– Ludwig Wittgenstein<sup>89</sup>

As stated earlier, this thesis takes a hermeneutic approach that attempts to pick up on the self-understandings of Norwegian mediators and other actors sharing their socio-cultural and normative environment. In order to do this, a discourse analytic methodology is adopted. Language is, after all, the vehicle by which mediators and other social actors express their self-understandings; it is therefore inevitable that actors' linguistic articulation of their experiences and intentions will feature prominently in this study. But a discourse analytic approach seeks to do more than merely 'extract' actors' articulated self-understandings and present them as unproblematically corresponding to 'reality'. The linguistic resources and repertoires that are drawn upon by actors, as well as those which are not, (that which is left unsaid), can reveal a great deal about the actor's frame of reference, 'form of life', or tacit assumptions and knowledge, and how these factors may be implicated in constituting the actor and her/his practices or conduct. They can also point, for instance, to dominating discourses within the actor's social group which *produce* a certain understanding of "reality", naturalising particular interpretations or constructions of the social world, while excluding or suppressing others.

Discourse analysis is an emergent and multidisciplinary field undergoing rapid growth. In order to navigate my way through this field, and keep the discussion as relevant as possible to the thesis, in the following introduction I draw mainly on writers from within the fields of International Relations and conflict analysis who utilise (or describe) a discourse analytic approach in their work. First, though, a brief

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<sup>89</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations, 1958, IIxi, 223e

definition of what is meant by ‘discourse’ and ‘discourse analysis’ in this thesis is warranted.

### *Some definitions*

As van Dijk notes, the concept of discourse, like ‘such related concepts as ‘language’, ‘interaction’, ‘society’ and ‘culture’’, is ‘essentially fuzzy’.<sup>90</sup> This springs in part from its use in a diversity of contexts. In everyday parlance, ‘discourse’ usually refers to the use of *spoken* language or a particular way of speaking.<sup>91</sup> Discourse analysts, however, ‘introduce a more theoretical concept of ‘discourse’ which is more specific and at the same time broader in its application.’ While agreeing with the definition of discourse as a form of language use, they also include other ‘essential components’ in the concept, ‘namely *who* uses the language, *how*, *why* and *when*.’<sup>92</sup> Moreover, rather than viewing discourse(s) as simply the result of actors’ *use* of language, discourse analysts emphasise the *interactional* aspect of discourse – ‘the participants are *doing* something, something else beyond just using language or communicating ideas or beliefs: they interact.’<sup>93</sup> Discourse can therefore be described as ‘verbal interaction’ taking place in the context of ‘communicative events.’<sup>94</sup> Additionally, since language use is not limited to the spoken word, but also results in *written* texts of all kinds, many discourse analysts also include the written word in their definition of discourse, as well as other modes of representation. For, as van Dijk explains,

...just like talk, texts also have ‘users’, namely authors and readers. So we may also speak of ‘written communication’ or even of ‘written interaction’ although the participants here do not usually interact face-to-face... Thus, despite a number of notable differences, there are enough similarities between spoken and written language use, communication and interaction to warrant inclusion of both these *modes* of discourse in one general notion of ‘discourse’.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Teun A. van Dijk: ‘*The Study of Discourse*’, in Teun A. van Dijk (ed.): Discourse as Structure and Process. Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Volume 1, Sage Publications, London, 1997, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

Discourses are central to communicative interaction and social association; they are social systems of signification. In order to reach intersubjective understandings and construct meaning, actors draw on the discursive resources and *repertoires* ('recurrent patterns in linguistic constructions such as terms, phrases, or metaphors'<sup>96</sup>) available to them. By doing this, actors reproduce the discursive continuities of their socio-linguistic group. For Jabri, '[d]iscourses are social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation.'<sup>97</sup> As Doty writes, a discourse – 'a system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense' – provides *discursive spaces*, i.e., 'concepts, categories, metaphors, models, and analogies by which meanings are created.'<sup>98</sup> In so doing, it 'produces interpretative possibilities by making it virtually impossible to think outside of it.'<sup>99</sup>

The cross-disciplinary and varied nature of discourse studies means that any simple definition of what is meant by 'discourse analysis' will inevitably do violence to many of the approaches subsumed under this label. For the purposes of this thesis, let it suffice to state a few basic ideas that underlie the form of discourse analysis adopted here. More is said of the (written and spoken) texts selected in this thesis – and the discourse analytic concepts and methodology used to analyse them – at the end of this section.

In Doty's words, '[d]iscourse analytic methods facilitate the examination of the various mechanisms at work in texts.'<sup>100</sup> In order to do this, it is necessary for the researcher to look at more than one text, in order to detect, (for instance), recurrent patterns in the use of linguistic elements across a number of texts. As Jabri writes, '[t]he focus of discourse analytic research is on regularities in the construction and

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<sup>96</sup> Jabri, op cit., p. 94.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Doty, Roxanne Lynn: 'Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines', *International Studies Quarterly* (1993) 37, 297-320, (1993), p. 302.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p. 305.

function of linguistic resources.’<sup>101</sup> Milliken emphasises the importance of studying a range of texts in discursive analyses, but not simply in order to pick up on such patterns or regularities:

Since discourses are social systems of signification, it will not do...to base a discursive analysis only on one text, even some ‘key’ document... A single text cannot be claimed to support empirically arguments about discourse as a social background, used regularly by different individuals and groups.<sup>102</sup>

By examining the regularities in what is said – and what is left unsaid – in a range of texts, it may be possible to discern a particular logic at work, and to deconstruct the texts in such a way as to reveal e.g., a ‘dominating discourse’ which favours certain interpretations of social reality while precluding others. (‘We can think of texts that illustrate the same kind of logic’ [in their construction of the ‘same kinds of subjects, objects, and relations’] ‘as constituting a controlling or dominant discourse.’<sup>103</sup>)

Discourse analysis is not merely concerned with actors’ use of linguistic resources, but with the whole socio-cultural setting reflected and reproduced by a system of signification. In other words, the context in which communicative action takes place is also a central concern. Van Dijk thus defines the domain of discourse studies as being ‘*text and talk in context*.’<sup>104</sup>

### ***Background***

The rapid growth of discourse studies in part reflects the so-called ‘linguistic turn’ within the social sciences, which refers to the increasing importance accorded to language across academic disciplines. But, as Giddens comments, this term is somewhat misleading, as the ‘most important developments as regards social theory concern not so much a turn towards language as an altered view of the intersection between saying (or signifying) and doing...’<sup>105</sup> In particular, there has been a growing recognition that language does not simply reflect or mirror ‘reality’, it *does* things.

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101 Jabri, p. 94.

102 Milliken, Jennifer: ‘*The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods*’, European Journal of International Relations, Vol 5(2): 225-254, 1999, p. 233.

103 Doty, 1993, p. 308.

104 van Dijk, (1997) op cit.,p.3.

105 Giddens, 1984, op cit., p. xxii.

And similarly, speech is an *activity*, not merely a mode of designation. These insights are gleaned in part from the writings of contemporary English analytic philosophers such as Austin and the later Wittgenstein, and also certain continental philosophers, particularly Heidegger.<sup>106</sup>

Both Austin and Wittgenstein viewed speech as a form of acting, and drew attention to the *performative* role of many statements; to the way in which utterances can do far more than merely describe or report.<sup>107</sup> Giving a promise, pronouncing a couple ‘man and wife’, or waging a bet are all instances of an utterance performing a function that constitutes an ‘action’ in itself. Austin coined the term “speech-act” to refer to ‘an utterance in which saying something is doing something’.<sup>108</sup> Crucially for this approach, the linguistic and action *context* in which an utterance is made is seen as intrinsic to its meaning; statements only acquire meaning in relation to particular sets of constitutive rules. For instance, Austin pointed out that performative statements or speech acts, such as ‘I hereby christen you...’, are only meaningful when spoken by a person defined as an authorised speaker in the action context in question, i.e., in this case a member of the clergy; ‘they stand or fall in the context of rules linking them to given circumstances.’<sup>109</sup>

Wittgenstein’s notion of “language-games” is central here. Wittgenstein defines a language-game as ‘the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven.’<sup>110</sup> In learning their native language, children learn far more than the ‘labels’ of particular objects; they learn a multiplicity of word functions, along with a ‘depth grammar’ which enables them to *e.g.*, correctly recognise the use of metaphor, or irony.<sup>111</sup> Comparing words to tools in a tool-box, Wittgenstein writes

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<sup>106</sup> See, *e.g.*, Shapiro, *op cit.*, pp. 26-64.

<sup>107</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 46-55 for a good summary of the ‘ordinary language approach’ of Austin and Wittgenstein.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>109</sup> Shapiro, *op cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>110</sup> Wittgenstein, *op cit.*, 7 (5e)

<sup>111</sup> See Shapiro, pp. 47-50 for more on this, and the difference between ‘surface’ and ‘depth grammar’.

‘there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws.—The function of words is as diverse as the functions of these objects.’<sup>112</sup> As Shapiro writes, ‘knowing a language is, in effect, knowing a vast and intricate system of rules of how words are appropriately used.’<sup>113</sup> According to Fierke, for Wittgenstein ‘agents, actions and objects are given meaning within the context of a game, that is, a set of practices based on rules within which they are constituted in relation to each other.’<sup>114</sup> Thus, communication as an activity is inextricable from the context of rules and action in which it is embedded; or as Wittgenstein puts it, ‘the term “language-game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of a language is part of an activity, or a form of life’.<sup>115</sup> Likewise, ‘to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.’<sup>116</sup> More is said of these ideas in Chapter 4, in connection with the concept of ‘lifeworld’.

Heidegger also emphasised the *context* of language use – or what he termed the “way of being-in-the-world” as crucial to uncovering the meaning of utterances.<sup>117</sup> As with Wittgenstein, for Heidegger language use also *reflects* a way of life. Moreover, certain preconceptions – or to use Heidegger’s term, ‘foreconceptions’ – of a particular way of life are built into language, and imperceptibly structure actors’ understandings and perceptions of the world. ‘The foreconception which is always implied in an assertion remains for the most part inconspicuous because language already conceals in itself a developed way of perceiving.’<sup>118</sup> Thus, rather than actors being the instrumental users or controllers of language, language, as a background structuring element of consciousness, also partly controls *them*; ‘persons as users of a

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112 Wittgenstein, op cit., 11, 13, 14.

113 Shapiro, op cit., p. 48.

114 Fierke, K.M.: ‘Multiple Identities, Interfacing Games: The Social Construction of Western Action in Bosnia’, European Journal of International Relations, (1996) Vol. 2 (4): 467-497, p. 469.

115 Wittgenstein, op cit., 23.

116 *ibid.*, 19.

117 Cited in Shapiro, op cit., p. 57.

118 Heidegger, cited in Shapiro (p. 59) from Sallis, John: ‘Language and Reversal’, in Ballard, Edward G. and Scott, Charles E., (eds): Martin Heidegger in Europe and America, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, p. 132.



language are caught in a way of conceiving that may be inconspicuous to them.’<sup>119</sup> (Cf. the earlier citation from Louis MacNeice: ‘*my words when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me...*’) This has much in common with the ideas of French structuralists and philosophers, notably Foucault,<sup>120</sup> and may appear to be veering close to the deterministic view of agency characteristic of functionalism and structuralism which was earlier criticised. But it is possible to hold that language *constrains* thought and action in some ways, while at the same time having an *enabling* effect in other respects, in line with the structurationist perspective adopted in this thesis.

As will be expanded upon in Chapter 2, for Giddens’ theory of structuration, linguistic and discursive rules and resources are to be understood as components of ‘social structure’ or the ‘structural properties’ of social systems. On the one hand, then, language and discourse are structural elements of social association that are *constitutive* of social actors. On the other hand, actors contribute to constituting and reproducing the structural properties of social systems – including their discursive and linguistic continuities.

In one sense, language and discourse are the ever-present backdrop for action, and are constitutive of action’s meaning. They also constitute the ‘background capabilities for people to understand their social world.’<sup>121</sup> Actors *draw on* this significative system – this background of linguistic and discursive continuities (rules and resources) – when involved in communicative action and interaction; it forms part of their tacit knowledge or ‘practical consciousness’, enabling them to ‘go on’ in daily life.<sup>122</sup> It contains ‘interpretative schemes and shared worlds of meaning’<sup>123</sup> as well as linguistic repertoires,<sup>124</sup> ‘foreconceptions’, and categories and criteria by which to organise one’s experience. As Doty writes, ‘[e]ven the most straightforward and

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119 Shapiro, p. 59.

120 *ibid.*

121 Milliken, p. 236.

122 The notion of ‘practical consciousness’ is introduced properly in Chapter 2.

123 Jabri, *op cit.*, p. 94.

ostensibly clear statements bring with them all sorts of *presuppositions* or background knowledge that is taken to be true.’<sup>125</sup> Shapiro describes the way in which linguistic resources or significant systems structure actors’ interpretations of the world and the meanings they ascribe to their experience and the phenomena they encounter:

...the meaning and value imposed on the world is structured not by one’s immediate consciousness but by the various reality-making scripts one inherits and acquires from one’s surrounding cultural/linguistic condition. The pre-text of apprehension is therefore largely institutionalized and is reflected in the ready-to-hand language practices, the historically produced styles—grammars, rhetorics, and narrative structures – through which the familiar world is continuously interpreted and produced.<sup>126</sup>

In this structuring, background capacity, linguistic resources and established modes of discourse perform a dual function; on the one hand they *enable* actors to reach intersubjective understandings and attribute meaning to the referents of speech and apprehension, but on the other hand they *limit* the interpretative options open to actors by confining them to the extant ‘language games’ of the socio-linguistic group, closing off certain possible constructions of social reality.

Through the acquisition and mastery of a native language (replete with its particular ‘language games’), actors’ cognitive and perceptual ‘receptors’ are thus tuned in particular ways. Giddens views this fashioning effect of language on cognition and action as a two-edged sword:

Since any language constrains thought (and action) in the sense that it presumes a range of framed, rule-governed properties, the process of language learning sets certain limits to cognition and activity. But by the same token the learning of a language greatly expands the cognitive and practical capacities of the individual.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Defined by Jabri as ‘recurrent patterns in linguistic constructions such as terms, phrases, or metaphors’, p. 94.

<sup>125</sup> Doty: ‘Foreign Policy as Social Construction...’ (1993) op cit., p. 306.

<sup>126</sup> Shapiro: “Textualizing Global Politics,” in International/Intertextual Relations, ed. Der Derian and Shapiro, 11.

<sup>127</sup> Giddens, 1984, p. 170.

This brings us neatly to two out of three main theoretical commitments identified by Milliken as shared by discourse scholars. The first commitment she notes is to *discourses as systems of signification* ‘which construct social realities’.<sup>128</sup>

Underlying this commitment is a constructivist understanding of meaning – things do not mean (the material world does not convey meaning); rather, people construct the meaning of things, using sign systems (predominantly, but not exclusively linguistic.)<sup>129</sup>

This relates to the point made above that discourses and their underlying knowledge systems form background capabilities which enable actors to interpret the world and attribute meaning to things. The constructions of meaning that are open to actors depend on the enabling and constraining effects of the sign system(s) they draw upon in their discursive interaction, which contributes to constituting them as actors – *e.g.*, entering into their ‘foreconceptions’ and cognitive predispositions. (More is said of the relationship between constructivism and structuration theory in Chapter 2).

Secondly, Milliken sees a theoretical commitment to *discourse productivity* as uniting discourse scholars. That is to say, the belief that discourses are ‘productive (or reproductive) of things defined by the discourse,’ and that ‘beyond giving a language for speaking about (analysing, classifying) phenomena, discourses make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular ‘regime of truth’ while excluding other possible modes of identity and action.’<sup>130</sup>

This brings us to the crucial relationship between discourse and power. For, as Lincoln writes, ‘[n]o consideration of discourse is complete that does not take account of force.’<sup>131</sup> How one discourse comes to be privileged over another in its interpretation of the world, such that it comes to ‘make up common sense for many in everyday society’,<sup>132</sup> is related to the uneven distribution of – and access to – resources in any given social group. As van Dijk writes, ‘[f]or our analysis of the

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<sup>128</sup> Milliken, *op cit.*, p. 229.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Lincoln, Bruce: Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> Milliken, p. 236.

relations between discourse and power,...we first find that access to specific forms of discourse, e.g., those of politics, the media or science, is itself a power resource.’<sup>133</sup> The emergence of dominant or hegemonic discourses is also related to the fact that discourses, in their productive capacity, not only produce particular understandings of the world, but they also ‘define *subjects authorized to speak and to act* (e.g. foreign policy officials, defence intellectuals, development experts)...,’<sup>134</sup> thereby rendering some language users potentially more ‘persuasive’ than others.

As Campbell has written, certain actors – a society’s ‘privileged storytellers’ – are granted greater ‘author-ity’ than others to compose the narratives of a particular group. Thus, although ‘[n]arrativizing is a practice in daily use at multiple sites through numerous actors,...not all participants in the plot share power equally.’<sup>135</sup> Narratives establish order and meaning, and ‘ascribe intelligibility’ when the group is ‘confronted with the novel or the unfamiliar.’<sup>136</sup> The dominating discourses or narratives of these authorised speakers or privileged storytellers (typically élites) tend to uphold the status quo, such that

A recurrent theme in the discourse literature is that discourses produce (reproduce) the common sense(s) of societies, limiting possible resistance among a broader public to a given course of action, legitimating the state as a political unit, and creating reasonable and warranted relations of domination.<sup>137</sup>

Due to their privileged position, a society’s authorised speakers are thus often able to exert a controlling influence over those others in their social group who have, by fiat, been defined as their ‘audience’ or public.<sup>138</sup> As van Dijk argues, ‘since people’s minds are typically influenced by text and talk,’ and ‘action is controlled by our minds’, ‘we find that discourse may at least indirectly control people’s

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133 Teun A. van Dijk: ‘*Critical Discourse Analysis*’, p. 4, Second Draft, January 1998, to appear in Deborah Tannen, Deborah Schiffrin and Heidi Hamilton (eds.): Handbook of Discourse Analysis.

134 Milliken, p. 229.

135 David Campbell, op cit., p. 7

136 *ibid.*

137 Milliken, p. 237.

138 See *ibid.*, p. 229, on the discursive production of ‘audiences’ for authorised speakers.

actions...'<sup>139</sup> It is difficult for 'ordinary' actors to avoid the pervasive presence of dominant discourses, dispersed as they are throughout influential sites in society – schools, the workplace, the media. In such situations people can find themselves 'more or less passive targets of text or talk...', and alternative interpretations of social reality may be hard to come by.<sup>140</sup> This does not mean that individuals will necessarily accept the official line they are being fed without question; depending on, e.g., their positioning in society, '[r]ecipients may be quite autonomous and variable in their interpretation and uses of text and talk...'<sup>141</sup> Despite this, though, 'we should not forget that most of our beliefs about the world are acquired through discourse.'<sup>142</sup> And the greater the extent to which a discourse emanates from what are seen to be 'reliable' quarters, the more likely is its passage into the 'common sense' of a society:

Unless inconsistent with their personal beliefs and experiences, recipients tend to accept beliefs (knowledge and opinions) through discourse from what they see as authoritative, trustworthy or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals or reliable media. In this sense, powerful discourse is (contextually) defined in terms of the perceived power of its authors; for the same reasons, minorities and women may often be perceived as less credible.<sup>143</sup>

Nevertheless, it is *not* the case that the narratives and discourses of a society's powerful, authorised speakers – despite their greater access to linguistic and discursive resources and their modes of dissemination – automatically gain credibility or 'common sense' status within a society. A society's structures of domination are also characterised by what Giddens calls 'the dialectic of control', meaning that less powerful, non-élite and opposition groups – and individuals – always have the capacity to 'make a difference' to the prevailing order.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, discourses are open-ended and constantly vulnerable to alteration by the workings of agency. This idea constitutes Milliken's third 'theoretical commitment' of discourse scholarship, namely '*the play of practice*'. According to this commitment, despite the fact that

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<sup>139</sup> Teun A. van Dijk: '*Critical Discourse Analysis*', p. 4, Second Draft, January 1998, to appear in Deborah Tannen, Deborah Schiffrin and Heidi Hamilton (eds.): Handbook of Discourse Analysis.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*

‘dominating discourses are ‘grids of intelligibility’ for large numbers of people’,<sup>145</sup> all discourses are nonetheless ‘unstable grids, requiring work to ‘articulate’ and ‘rearticulate’ their knowledges and identities (to fix the ‘regime of truth’); they are ‘open-ended meshes’, ‘changeable’, and ‘historically contingent’.<sup>146</sup>

In order for a discourse or narrative to gain widespread support or ‘common sense’ status among members of a social group – i.e., to be ‘persuasive’, far more is called for than its articulation by powerful speakers perceived as authoritative, or even for the discourse itself to have apparent ‘plausibility’. As Lincoln makes clear,

...the question of whether the discourse is persuasive or not...is only partly a function of its logical and ideological coherence. Although such factors, which are by nature internal to discourse, have their importance, it must be stressed that persuasion does not reside within any discourse per se, but is, rather, a measure of audiences’ reaction to, and interaction with, the discourse.<sup>147</sup>

How favourably an audience reacts to, or interacts with, a particular discourse is dependent on a number of factors. Partly, the extent to which a (new) discourse ‘catches on’ will depend on the skill of those ‘carrying’ the discourse in speech and text – their ‘rhetoric’ and ‘performance’ will enter into this.<sup>148</sup> Highly sophisticated language use is necessary. Although a society’s authorised speakers (e.g., politicians, academic ‘experts’ etc.) are likely to be adept at manipulating language, even when a discourse is skilfully articulated across a range of locales and sites within a society, there is no guarantee that it will call forth a following. No matter how persuasively articulated, much depends on the *context* in which the discourse is presented, timing (i.e. the positioning of the discourse relative to the socio-cultural and historical continuities of the social group), and its positioning vis-à-vis other discourses ‘with which it is in active or potential competition.’<sup>149</sup> Above all, the discourse must be compatible with the extant cultural and linguistic resources of the social group, and

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144 The ‘dialectic of control’ is discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

145 Milliken, p. 230.

146 *ibid.*

147 Lincoln, *op cit.*, p. 8.

148 *ibid.*

149 *ibid.*

*e.g.*, its historical narratives, in order to resonate with members of the group in question. As Doty writes,

The reception as meaningful of statements revolving around policy situations depends on how well they fit into the general system of representation in a given society. Even speeches and press conference statements, ...in order to be taken seriously, must make sense and fit with what the general public takes as "reality."<sup>150</sup>

Lincoln emphasises the importance of discourse as 'an instrument of sentiment evocation,' not merely persuasion.<sup>151</sup> Whether or not a narrative is 'accepted' depends on the *sentiments* it evokes in its recipients, which is partly a function of how well it 'resonates' with the extant representations of a given social group. A society's 'privileged storytellers' therefore have to construct, in their narratives, a version of reality that *already makes sense* to the target audience; they must draw on the existing cultural and linguistic resources of the social group in such a way as to strike a chord with their audience. Better still is to create a narrative that appears so 'natural' that there is a seamless join between existing practices and the discourse that *e.g.*, legitimates a new practice.

However, it would be misleading to give the impression that actors are always in control, that they 'use' linguistic resources and discursive repertoires in an instrumental way in order to create a 'persuasive' discourse. While all discourses are socially (re)constructed, the effects of reproduced discursive practices may transcend the conditions of their origin, such that 'what discursive practices *do*...does not necessarily coincide with individual motivations, perceptions, and intentions.'<sup>152</sup> (This ties in with Gadamer's idea, mentioned earlier, that 'meaning can be experienced even where it is not actually intended,' and with Giddens' notion of the unintended consequences of intentional conduct, introduced in Chapter 2). It is therefore not just *actors* who actively construct worlds; *discourses* or social texts may also produce and reproduce certain understandings of 'reality', or render particular courses of action meaningful and others questionable.

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<sup>150</sup> Doty, Roxanne Lynn, (1993), op cit., p. 303.

<sup>151</sup> Lincoln, p. 8.

<sup>152</sup> Doty (1993), p. 305.

In the following section, a number of analytic concepts used by writers who study discourse are introduced. The concepts have been selected for their explanatory value in relation to this thesis, and they deal with the way in which textual mechanisms in discourse(s) construct meaning, or can be used to gain support for a particular course of action. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but it is hoped that by focusing on a select number of textual mechanisms at work in discourse, a simple discourse analytic methodology for this thesis can be devised that reaps valuable dividends, while not becoming too ambitious for the scope of this project.

### ***Articulation and interpellation***

Central to this thesis is the relationship between a social actor (a mediator) and the actors who share her/his socio-cultural setting. One of the key questions posed by this thesis is *how is it possible* for a new foreign policy practice (such as mediation work) to gain widespread acceptance within this wider socio-cultural setting, such that it is enabled to become a prolonged and prioritised feature of foreign policy? In order to gain consensus on an activity (such as mediation) as an enduring foreign policy goal, one would expect that foreign policy élites would have to ‘sell’ the practice in question to members of the wider social group, via legitimising or naturalising discourses, such that it becomes accepted as an ‘appropriate’ or ‘commonsensical’ activity for group members to engage in. Exactly *how* support can be mobilised for a particular activity, course of action or practice is, however, less clear.

Jutta Weldes’ writing on the dual processes of ‘articulation’ and ‘interpellation’ (drawing on the work of Stuart Hall) is illuminating here, as it deals precisely with this ‘uptake’ phenomenon by which people come to ‘take up discursive constructions as representing reality for them.’<sup>153</sup> Taking the so-called ‘Cuban missile crisis’ of October 1962 as his example, Weldes argues that ‘national interests’ are ‘produced in the construction...of representations of international politics,’<sup>154</sup> through

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<sup>153</sup> Milliken, p. 238.

<sup>154</sup> Weldes, Jutta: *Constructing National Interests: The US and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, and Weldes, Jutta: ‘*Constructing National Interests*’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 1996, Vol. 2(3): 275-318, p. 275.



the mechanisms of ‘articulation’ and ‘interpellation’. By way of illustration, he sketches the construction of the US ‘national interest’ during this episode.

The term *articulation* ‘refers to the process through which meaning is produced out of extant cultural raw materials or linguistic resources’.<sup>155</sup> These linguistic resources (terms and ideas) ‘already make sense within a particular society’.<sup>156</sup> Actors, although drawing on familiar cultural and linguistic resources, combine them in such a way as to create something *more* than the sum of its parts, namely ‘contingent and contextually specific representations of the world.’<sup>157</sup> Subsequently,

[w]ith their successful repeated articulation, these linguistic elements come to seem as though they are inherently or necessarily connected and the meanings they produce come to seem natural, to be an accurate description of reality.<sup>158</sup>

In the process of articulation, then, ‘associative chains’ are forged out of the extant linguistic resources, such that ‘different terms and ideas come to connote one another’.<sup>159</sup> Phenomena are then represented in certain ways and attributed meanings that appear ‘self-evident’, or ‘commonsensical’, on which action can then be based. However, the connections and meanings established by the process of articulation remain *constructs*, and as such they are contestable and contingent; ‘they have always to be reproduced and sometimes quite vigorously,’ and there will always be alternative descriptions or sets of associations capable of ousting the representations prevailing at any given time.<sup>160</sup> Inevitably, since the process of articulation draws on the extant cultural and linguistic resources of a social group, the socio-historical *context* in which meanings are created will enter into the content of the representations created, or as Weldes puts it,

The actual meanings that objects like ‘the US’...have for people, the actual articulations or chains of connotation which define them, are rooted in part in the linguistic practices of

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155 Weldes, (1996),p. 284.

156 *ibid.*

157 *ibid.*

158 *ibid.*, p. 285.

159 *ibid.*, p. 284.

160 *ibid.*, p. 285.

particular historical and social contexts. They are the conventional product of continuous and contested social processes of meaning creation.<sup>161</sup>

Having briefly introduced the notion of ‘articulation’, then, its partner, *interpellation*, ‘refers to a dual process whereby identities or subject-positions are created and concrete individuals ‘hailed’ into or interpellated by them....’<sup>162</sup> In order for interpellation to be successful, individuals must *identify* with the ‘subject-positions’ created, and with the representations of the wider context in which they are positioned as subjects, *e.g.*, of their nation-state. (This relates to the earlier discussion on discourses’ need to evoke sentiments and *resonate* with an audience in order to be accepted.) In the case of a nation-state, Weldes stresses that if interpellation is to be achieved, the state must be represented ‘not only as *a* subject, but as a subject which represents an ‘imagined’ national community.’<sup>163</sup> That is to say, it must be represented in a way that accords with the group’s deeply embedded notions of what constitutes their ‘national identity’, or to use Holsti’s term, with their ‘national role conception.’ If individuals *are* successfully ‘hailed’ or interpellated into the identities and subject-positions created, ‘the representations make sense to them and they are naturalized.’<sup>164</sup> Subsequently, ‘the representations appear to be common sense, to reflect ‘the way the world really is.’’<sup>165</sup> In the case of the so-called ‘Cuban missile crisis’, Weldes demonstrates how the Kennedy administration’s process of articulation drew upon ‘a set of linguistic resources already pervasive within American culture and, especially, within the orthodox US narrative of the cold war’<sup>166</sup> in order to construct representations of the US, Cuba, the Soviet Union and the so-called ‘crisis’, which legitimised an activist response from the US to the missile deployment. Concomitantly the US ‘national interest’ was constructed in such a way as to render a decisive reaction to the ‘crisis’ necessary and appropriate; the US was accorded the subject-

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161 *ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

162 *ibid.*, p. 287.

163 *ibid.*, p. 288.

164 *ibid.*, p. 287.

165 *ibid.*

166 *ibid.*, p. 296.

position of 'world leader', which already made sense to American individuals in the post-war era, as it resonated with their 'imagined' image of their 'national community':

The construction of the US drew... on the self-styled image of the US as the 'leader' of the Western hemisphere and the 'free world' and as the global champion of 'freedom' and 'democracy'. The pivotal position occupied by the US in the international system, and its attendant 'responsibilities' and 'obligations' – in short, its national interests – were taken for granted within US orthodoxy.<sup>167</sup>

In turn, American individuals were interpellated into such comfortable subject-positions or identities as 'freedom-loving democrat' opposed to communism, or 'civilised Westerner,' which were already familiar self-representations.<sup>168</sup> Or, as Weldes describes it elsewhere,

They [the representations used by US officials during and after the 'Cuban Missile Crisis'] invited members of their audience...to imagine themselves as a powerful yet concerned family member who – because they were committed to the solidarity of the Western hemisphere, to democracy and diversity, and to the disavowal of secrecy and treachery – was in a uniquely responsible position that both enabled and obliged them to challenge the global threat posed by totalitarianism and the hemispheric threat posed by... 'Communist infiltration' of Cuba. ... The audience was interpellated as a democratic subject which...defended the free way of life around the world... as open and honest people... [who] wished to preserve peace and order, freedom and the independence of nations.<sup>169</sup>

This gratifying self-understanding justified – *mandated*, even – the activist US response to the missile deployment. Moreover, it constructed a particular understanding of the episode, precluding alternative representations of the 'crisis'. For instance, rather different narratives prevailed within the Soviet Union and Cuba at the time, portraying the US, rather than the Soviet Union, as the aggressor, and the missile deployment as a purely defensive measure.<sup>170</sup> But the representations of 'self' and 'other' constructed within the US told a different story altogether; 'the Soviet Union was understood necessarily to be aggressive while the US, in contrast, was necessarily peaceful.'<sup>171</sup>

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167 *ibid.*, p. 299.

168 *ibid.*, p. 288.

169 *ibid.* Also cited in Milliken, p. 239.

170 See Weldes, (1996), pp. 300-301, and pp. 291-295 for more on this.

171 *ibid.*, p. 298.

After all, 'we' who are democratic and open, who 'stand for freedom' and for 'the independence and equality of all nations' do not engage in aggression against our smaller, weaker neighbours.<sup>172</sup>

In short, through the discursive processes of articulation and interpellation, particular constructions of (international) 'reality' – of 'self' and 'others' – can be achieved, which legitimise certain policies or courses of action, or make them seem 'natural' or 'commonsensical'. A collective identity – 'a particular 'we''<sup>173</sup> – is constructed, but as Campbell writes, 'because identity has meaning only through its relationship with difference',<sup>174</sup> it follows that 'a notion of who/what "we" are is intertwined with an understanding of who/what "we" are not and who/what "we" fear...'<sup>175</sup> (More on this in the section on 'subject positioning' below). Thus, representations not only provide the social group with understandings of 'who and what 'we' are,' but also, for instance, with visions of the international system: of 'who and what 'our enemies' are, in what ways 'we' are threatened by 'them', and how 'we' might best deal with those 'threats''.<sup>176</sup> Consequently, the representations created by a society's authorised speakers provide 'warranting conditions'<sup>177</sup> for particular activities, which may additionally be construed to be in the 'national interest'. A particular practice may be legitimised – or made thinkable – if it fits with the background constructions of an agent's subject-position or identity (whether individual, 'national' or other), and of its attendant 'interests', 'responsibilities' or 'defining characteristics'. As Doty puts it, '[t]he possibility of practices presupposes the ability of an agent to imagine certain courses of action. Certain background meanings, kinds of social actors and relationships, must already be in place.'<sup>178</sup>

These background meanings, representations and constructed identities only *enable* a course of action to the extent that they are genuinely accepted by actors as

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172 *ibid.*, pp. 300-301.

173 *ibid.*, p. 301.

174 Campbell, *op cit.*, p. 24.

175 *ibid.*, p. 26.

176 Weldes, (1996), p. 283.

177 *ibid.*, p. 282

representing 'reality', for instance when they have passed into the 'common sense' knowledge of the social group, and thus contribute to *constituting* the actor and her/his frame of reference. The term 'common sense' has been mentioned a number of times now, without clarification. Weldes relates the notion of 'common sense' to what Gramsci termed the 'diffuse and uncoordinated features of a generic mode of thought', and to Stuart Hall's concept of 'categories of practical consciousness'.<sup>179</sup> As mentioned, the notion of practical consciousness (tacit knowledge inherent in the ability to 'go on' in social life) also features prominently in Giddens' theory of structuration (more on this in Chapter 2), and it can also be related to concepts used in lifeworld analysis, such as 'social stocks of knowledge' or 'taken-for-granted' (see Chapter 4). Indeed, the following passage from Weldes, citing Stuart Hall, reflects this affinity:

The creation of common sense is thus 'the moment of extreme ideological closure' which sets limits on the possible and 'becomes the horizon of the taken-for-granted: What the world is and how it works, for all practical purposes.'<sup>180</sup>

According to Weldes, social constructions 'become common sense when they have successfully defined the relationship of particular representations to reality as one of correspondence.'<sup>181</sup> Having gained common sense status, they 'are reified or naturalized and both their constructed nature and their particular social origins are obscured.'<sup>182</sup> In Weldes' view, the processes of articulation and interpellation contribute to the production of societal common sense, by effecting the 'naturalness' of particular representations, while excluding others. More precisely,

Articulations provide the raw material of common sense by linking together diverse linguistic elements into representations of the world. The process of interpellation contributes to the creation of common sense because it hails individuals into subject-positions from which those representations make sense.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Doty (1993), p. 298.

<sup>179</sup> Weldes, (1996), pp. 303-304

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> *ibid.*

Bruce Lincoln's work also demonstrates how individuals can be interpellated into a collective identity, through drawing upon existing cultural and linguistic resources (articulation) in order to create representations of self and other that lead to the feelings of affinity and estrangement necessary for establishing 'taken-for-granted' social borders, which in turn make certain courses of action seem 'appropriate' or 'natural'. As he points out,

...it is worth recalling that the elusive and ill-defined entity that we call society (from the Latin verb *socio*, to join or unite together, to associate) is basically a group of people who feel bound together as a collectivity and, in corollary fashion, feel themselves separate from others who fall outside their group.<sup>184</sup>

In other words, 'that which either holds society together or takes it apart is sentiment,'<sup>185</sup> and, crucially for this context, 'the chief instrument with which sentiment may be aroused, manipulated, and rendered dormant is discourse.'<sup>186</sup> By drawing on cultural resources, especially 'the recollection of specific moments from the past,'<sup>187</sup> members of a social group can be brought to feel attachment to one another, e.g., by virtue of their common ancestry.

But it is not simply the case that the past shapes the present; 'the present also shapes the past that is recollected.'<sup>188</sup> In the process of articulation, moments from the past are selected – 'cherry-picked' – for their instrumentality in the narratives of the present; Lincoln refers to this as 'strategic tinkering with the past.'<sup>189</sup> For instance, if one wants to interpellate individuals into a particular collective identity and make this 'common sense', the invocation of a common ancestor must be tailored to constructing social identity at the specific level of integration required (e.g., tribal, civic, or national).<sup>190</sup> Similarly, one would assume that if one wants to interpellate individuals into a subject-position or collective identity, *and then* link this to partaking in a particular activity or playing a certain role, suitable episodes (or protagonists) from the

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184 Lincoln, op cit., p. 9.

185 *ibid.*, p. 11.

186 *ibid.*

187 *ibid.*, p. 20.

188 *ibid.*

189 *ibid.*, p. 21.

past could be selected to make the activity appear compatible with the identity constructed.

Amid the many historical narratives and formative episodes from the past on which actors can draw in constructing representations, one cultural resource that Lincoln pays particular attention to is that of *Myth*, defined as a social group's 'small class of stories that possess both credibility and *authority*.'<sup>191</sup> Elaborating on this, he writes 'a narrative possessed of authority is one for which successful claims are made not only to the status of truth, but... to the status of *paradigmatic* truth.'<sup>192</sup> This makes myth perhaps the most potent cultural resource that can be drawn upon in the process of articulation; by reciting a collectivity's mythical narratives, powerful sentiments are evoked which can be used to mobilise the social grouping.<sup>193</sup>

According to Lincoln, it is particularly when confronted by a problematic or novel situation in the present that actors are prompted to carry out 'an exploration of the past, a search for models and precedents that might be of help.'<sup>194</sup> In this way a 'dialectic interaction of past and present' can be said to take place. If the intention is to elevate a story to mythical status, Lincoln suggests that this is simpler for narratives which already possess credibility, although in theory the story could be pure fabrication.<sup>195</sup> Taking as his example a skirmish in Swaziland over a proposed foreign airstrip, Lincoln shows how 'actors sought and found a story from the past that could serve their interests in the present.'<sup>196</sup> Having been selected, this narrative, 'in its newly achieved status as myth', despite having previously been 'little regarded – if

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<sup>190</sup> See Lincoln, pp. 20-24, for more on this.

<sup>191</sup> Lincoln, p. 24. 'Myth' is contrasted with 'Fable', narratives which make no truth claims at all; 'Legend', stories that make truth claims but lack credibility in the opinion of their primary audience; and 'History', narratives that possess credibility, but not the paradigmatic, authoritative status of Myth.

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>193</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>194</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> Lincoln, p. 27.

known at all', nevertheless 'proved an effective instrument of resistance and enabled the Swazi... to keep the foreigners' airstrip off their land.'<sup>197</sup>

### ***Subject positioning, presupposition and predication***

The notion of 'subject positioning' as a textual mechanism used in the construction of representations has already been touched on above, where the relationship between 'self' and 'other' was given brief mention. As Neumann notes, a pervasive theme of the international relations literature on collective identity formation is that 'the formation of the self is inextricably intertwined with that of its others...'<sup>198</sup> In essence, the textual mechanism of 'subject positioning' can thus be described as follows:

Texts also work to create a "reality" by linking particular subjects and objects to one another. The production of subjects and objects is always vis-à-vis other subjects and objects. What defines a particular kind of subject is, in large part, the relationships that subject is positioned in relative to other kinds of subjects... We can think of this as *subject positioning*. Some of the important kinds of relationships that position subjects are those of *opposition, identity, similarity, and complementarity*.<sup>199</sup>

As this citation from Doty indicates, a 'subject' (*e.g.* a specific nation-state) is partly defined by being 'set into relief', that is, juxtaposed against or compared to *other* subjects, in relation to which it is positioned. By deconstructing texts one can identify the ways in which subjects are positioned relative to one another in order to convey a particular vision of 'reality.' For instance, an 'oppositional structuring' of the text may be discernible, such that there is a hierarchical arrangement of subjects, with one positioned as 'superior' to the other, which in turn is positioned as 'inferior' or 'deviant'.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>198</sup> See Neumann, Iver B.: '*Self and Other in International Relations*', European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 2 (2): pp. 139-174, 1996, p. 166. See this article for an in-depth analysis of the arguments surrounding collective identity formation – which unfortunately lie beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>199</sup> Doty, (1993), p. 306.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*



‘Presupposition’ can be defined as a textual mechanism ‘that creates background knowledge and in doing so constructs a particular kind of world in which certain things are recognized as true.’<sup>201</sup> As Doty writes,

Even the most straightforward and ostensibly clear statements bring with them all kinds of *presuppositions* or background knowledge that is taken to be true. When one uses language, one is implying something about the existence of subjects, objects, and their relation to one another.<sup>202</sup>

In other words, the terms and concepts used in a particular discourse or narrative are established as background knowledge that the recipient is presumed (or expected) to hold. Insofar as the statements are unquestioningly accepted as meaningful by an audience, the version of ‘reality’ presented in them is shown to be consistent with the recipients’ ‘practical consciousness’ or ‘common sense’ knowledge (if not already an element of this knowledge). *Without* shared understandings that naturalise the terms used in a narrative, the textual mechanism of presupposition will fail; ‘[i]n the absence of the “truth” of the background knowledge and the world it presupposes, the...statements would make no sense.’<sup>203</sup> By deconstructing statements, then, one can identify the presuppositions – and by extension the background knowledge – they take as given, or attempt to create. For instance,

...the statement, “The logic of *realpolitik* retains lasting relevance because it captures best the essential nature of the international political system” creates the background knowledge that there is something called “*realpolitik*”, it has a logic, there exists an international political system that has an essential nature, and the author is in the position to assert this fact.<sup>204</sup>

Paying attention to the mechanism of presupposition in texts is therefore, arguably, one way of ‘tapping into’ the tacit knowledge or ‘practical consciousness’ of actors, since it reveals ideas that appear to be congruent with this, or which are already taken for granted by members of a social group.

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201 *ibid.*

202 *ibid.*

203 *ibid.*

204 *ibid.*

The textual mechanism of ‘predication’ has also already been alluded to above, in describing the construction (through articulation and interpellation) of representations of particular subjects of discourse, which are attributed identities endowed with certain characteristics. Predication ‘involves the linking of certain qualities to particular subjects through the use of predicates and the adverbs or adjectives that modify them.’<sup>205</sup> Milliken describes the study of predication as follows:

Predicate analysis focuses on the language practices of predication – the verbs, adverbs and adjectives that attach to nouns. Predications of a noun construct the thing(s) named as a particular sort of thing, with particular features and capacities.<sup>206</sup>

As Doty writes, ‘A predicate affirms a quality, attribute, or property of a person or thing...Attributes attached to subjects are important for constructing identities for those subjects and for telling us what subjects can do.’<sup>207</sup> Weldes’ observations on the American representations of the US, Cuba and the Soviet Union during (and prior to) the so-called ‘Cuban missile crisis’ are clearly relevant here. In the dominant American narratives at the time, adjectives such as ‘peaceful’, ‘democratic’, ‘civilised’, ‘open’, ‘honest’ and ‘freedom-loving’ were attached to the subject ‘the US’, or ‘the American people’. By contrast, the subject ‘the Soviet Union’ was labelled as ‘aggressive’, ‘threatening’, ‘totalitarian’, ‘secretive’ and ‘treacherous’. One of the most insidious, yet powerful ways in which texts or narratives construct a version of ‘reality’, then, is by attaching certain qualities or attributes to subjects through the mechanism of predication.

Again, by deconstructing texts and directing attention to their use of predicates, one can pick up on the version of ‘reality’ being constructed by a society’s powerful speakers. The constructed nature of such narratives can be highlighted by pointing to *e.g.*, alternative narratives that conflict with the ‘official’ line, or to contra-evidence which reveals the contestability of the predicates used in the text. (For instance, to use Weldes’ case again, evidence of ‘the US’ being aggressive rather than ‘peaceful’.)

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205 *ibid.*

206 Milliken, p. 232.

207 Doty (1993), p. 306.

Predicate analysis therefore involves ‘a process of empirical study and abstraction which goes hand in hand’<sup>208</sup> – a technique well-suited for this thesis.

Milliken mentions *metaphorical analysis* as another method for studying systems of signification, which can be used instead of, or in conjunction with, predicate analysis.<sup>209</sup> In advocating such methods, Milliken is aware that she is introducing ‘more formal approaches for studying language practices than is typical of International Relations research in this area’, but feels that such a move is warranted.<sup>210</sup> ‘Using a method for ‘reading’ or ‘seeing’ can make research better organized... [I]t can also bring greater insight into how a discourse is ordered, and into how discourses differ in their construction of reality.’<sup>211</sup>

### *Discourse analysis in this thesis*

A range of ‘texts’ – both written and spoken – are examined in this thesis. From July 1997 until September 1998 I carried out fieldwork in Oslo. During this time (although not exclusively) I interviewed a number of people, predominantly mediators and members of the society’s group of authorised speakers (e.g., academics and members of the clergy), whose articulations were considered of relevance to this thesis. I spoke with some key figures more than once. In addition to my own interviews, I gathered a large number of other relevant interview transcripts from newspapers, journals and the internet, as well as pieces written by mediators themselves, relevant speeches by politicians and other ‘privileged storytellers’, and sociological/anthropological literature on Norwegian society and culture – by ‘insiders’, i.e., writers based in Norway. I also accumulated a vast collection of other relevant texts, from a proliferation of sources, which I considered to be illuminating to the thesis, such as:

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208 Milliken, p. 234.

209 Metaphorical analysis ‘focuses upon metaphors (conventional ways of conceptualizing one domain in terms of another) as structuring possibilities for human reasoning and action.’ Milliken, p.235.

210 *ibid.*

211 *ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

- texts relating to everyday life in Norway and to the Norwegian socio-cultural and normative setting;
- texts revealing (official and popular) discourses on peace work within Norwegian society (and discourses on 'conflict', 'violence' and 'peace' more generally);
- texts that addressed the issue of 'Norwegian identity' or 'Norwegianness';
- articulations by members of Norwegian society on 'self' and 'other' (and on Norway and the 'outside world');
- texts that considered Norway's international position or role;
- Government White Papers with a bearing on peace or mediation work;
- texts relating to the linguistic resources of the Norwegian language, and to the shared meanings and 'foreconceptions' underlying particular terms and concepts;
- texts relating to the society's relevant historical narratives and/or historical figures;
- relevant citations from the society's well-known literature, folklore etc. (the society's cultural and linguistic resources), especially those drawn upon by authorised speakers.

In addition to gathering source material, I also enjoyed numerous informal conversations with friends, relatives and colleagues, from which I gleaned many ideas and valuable information. While in Oslo I was granted office space by CESAR, an organisation working to resolve international conflicts over scarce water resources, by providing mediation services and scientific expertise. I was able to attend their staff meetings and follow their day-to-day activities and discussions, and for the latter part of the year I worked as part-time Executive Officer for the organisation, gaining additional insight into its internal discourses and written documentation.

This methodology and choice of texts appears to tie in with the suggestions made by Milliken for discourse analytic methods suitable for use in International Relations research. She asserts, for instance, that 'a discourse analysis should be based upon a set of texts by different people presumed (according to the research focus) to be authorized speakers/writers of a dominant discourse or to think and act within alternative discourses....' As mentioned, most of my interviewees and those whose statements I have gathered fall into the 'authorized speakers/writers' category, although some also challenge established narratives on, *e.g.*, Norwegian identity. This ties in with her next suggestion, that 'one might also more narrowly select texts by whether they take different positions on a relevant issue..., and so could provide evidence of a discourse as a social background for meaningful disputes among

speakers of the discourse.’<sup>212</sup> Regarding the selection of texts, she asserts – again in accord with this thesis – that ‘scholars engaged in contemporary studies should use first-hand media reports, Internet network resources and even fieldwork and interviews.’<sup>213</sup>

Milliken advocates paying greater attention to the production of common sense in societies, and suggests two methods of inquiry that could usefully be added to discourse scholarship in International Relations. Firstly ‘a popular culture approach’ could be taken, ‘analysing the ‘everyday’ cultural conditions of novels, comic books, television and film and how they render sensible and legitimate particular state actions’. Secondly, she suggests an anthropological approach, ‘analysing the ‘everyday’ culture of people in their work and family lives.’<sup>214</sup> This thesis adopts both approaches to a degree; in focusing on the ‘lifeworld’ and the domain of practical consciousness, it emphasises ‘everyday’ experience, and how this contributes to constituting social actors, their interpretations of the world and their conduct.

In using discourse analytic methods, this thesis has two broad aims. Firstly, by paying attention to the narratives and articulations of mediators and other actors sharing the socio-cultural and normative setting, the intention is hermeneutic: to ‘tap into’ the self-understandings of the actors, and their ‘form of life’, ‘practical consciousness’, ‘mode of being-in-the-world’ or ‘lifeworld’. Rather than *attributing* an explanation from ‘outside’, the aim is to pick up on insider perspectives, in an attempt to address questions such as:

- how do actors within Norwegian society view mediation work?
- what reasons, motives or background assumptions do mediators cite for their intervention in conflict situations?
- how well do they feel supported by their wider socio-cultural group in its ‘constituency’ capacity?
- how do actors within Norwegian society interpret the world?
- what self-understandings or notions of ‘role’ or identity do they hold?
- how do mediators describe their work – *e.g.*, their style of mediating?

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212 *ibid.*, p. 233.

213 *ibid.*, p.242.

214 *ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

Nevertheless, as stated earlier, the hermeneutic stance of this thesis is critical insofar as it does not take the articulations of social actors as unproblematically reflecting 'reality'. It is recognised that the perspective of the subject is not necessarily epistemologically privileged, since 'persons as users of language acquire systems of meaning, a world of entities and episodes, that predates and preorganizes and affects their personal constructions and perceptions.'<sup>215</sup> With this in mind, the narratives and self-understandings of actors – what they are able to express discursively – are not merely 'accepted' as representing the whole picture; rather, it is recognised that these reflect underlying knowledge systems, and that actors' narratives depend on the discursively constituted 'background capabilities' on which they draw in interpreting their social world. Questions such as these therefore become pertinent:

- how do the socio-cultural, historical and normative continuities of the social group appear to contribute to constituting the social actors, entering into their expectations, attitudes and behaviour?
- which cultural/linguistic resources and discursive repertoires are drawn upon by the actors in their narratives?
- is an underlying 'social stock of knowledge' or frame of reference discernible in actors' narratives?
- does a 'dominant discourse' appear to have entered into actors' self-understandings, such that there are recurrent patterns in actors' discursive articulations?

A note is required here on my use of language. The fact that I am able to read and speak Norwegian (my mother is Norwegian, and my first degree was in Scandinavian Studies) helped me to gain access to 'insider' material and discourses, while still retaining enough of an 'outsider' position to keep a certain critical distance from these. My knowledge of Norwegian also enabled me to engage with the content and underlying meanings of terms, phrases and metaphors – the discursive repertoires and linguistic resources drawn upon by actors – in a direct way, without the distorting effects of translation. To a certain extent, through living in Oslo (and having done so for a year in the past), and interacting with members of Norwegian society, I was also able to tune into the 'depth grammar' and 'language game' when utterances were made – i.e., to understand the wider socio-cultural *context* of text and talk, and how this contributed to the meaning of statements. (Cf. the earlier citation from

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<sup>215</sup> Shapiro, op cit., pp. 55-56.

Wittgenstein, claiming that ‘even given a mastery of the country’s language’ it is not always possible to ‘understand the people’, to ‘find our feet with them’; I have now reached a point where I feel that I *can* begin to find my feet with them.) The fact that much of my source material is in Norwegian means that I have had to translate many of the citations in this thesis into English; wherever this is the case the translations are clearly marked with footnotes, and I have tried to stay as close to the original text as possible.

The second main objective in using discourse analysis in this thesis relates more directly to language; rather than using discourse analysis merely as a means of picking up on actors’ self-understandings and ‘form(s) of life’, here discourse(s) and discourse productivity become a focus in their own right. For instance, how do the discursive continuities, linguistic and cultural resources drawn upon by actors – and the discourses that result from this process – enable mediation to become a prolonged and prioritised foreign policy activity in Norway (if indeed they do)? Here the way in which *e.g.*, the society’s ‘privileged storytellers’ construct representations of ‘self’ and ‘other’, or compose narratives on foreign policy and mediation work (using the social group’s extant linguistic and cultural resources) become areas of inquiry. Also of interest is the extent to which the society’s discursive continuities structure actors’ self-understandings and perceptions of what constitutes ‘reality’ (*inter alia*, ‘Norway’, the ‘outside world’, and ‘Norway’s’ ‘role’ in it), or the way in which they structure perceptions of what constitutes ‘appropriate’ conduct, or foreign policy. The sort of questions posed become:

- what are the discursive repertoires and cultural and linguistic resources that are drawn upon by foreign policy élites and mediators in their narratives (especially when seeking support for peace and mediation work?<sup>216</sup>)?
- are Norwegian actors, in their discursive articulations, actively seeking to establish their role as mediators, or to build up a constituency for mediation work?<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> This is similar to a question posed by Jabri: ‘What are the repertoires...which are drawn upon by actors in their support for war?’ Jabri, *op cit.*, p. 94

<sup>217</sup> The question of whether a constituency for mediation work can be ‘built up’ is posed by Jabri in her Mediating Conflict: Decision-Making and Western Intervention in Namibia, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, p.183.

- what are the discourses relating to ‘conflict’, ‘peace’ and conflict behaviour within Norwegian society?
- what representations of ‘Norway’, ‘Norwegians’, ‘others’ or the ‘external world’ are constructed in the society’s dominant discourses? (How contested/contestable are they?)
- how are these dominant representations used in the construction of Norwegian foreign policy?
- to what extent (if at all) does mediation work feed back into the discursive construction of Norwegian identity?
- to what extent do the discourses surrounding mediation work succeed in naturalising mediation as a foreign policy activity, making it part of the society’s ‘common sense’?
- are individuals interpellated into subject-positions and identities that accord with mediation being a prioritised aspect of Norwegian foreign policy?
- are the textual mechanisms of subject positioning, predication and presupposition visible in texts, and if so, to what effect?
- to what extent might the discourses surrounding mediation work be self-serving for those who construct them – e.g., the foreign political élite or actors involved in mediation? (Do they create prestige, ensure funding etc.?)

The next three chapters build on the theoretical foundation established here. Chapter 2 expands upon structuration theory, Chapter 3 locates this thesis in relation to the existing literature on mediation, and Chapter 4 introduces the social theoretical concept of the ‘lifeworld’, moving on to a discussion of social norms and the ways in which a socially situated actor is constituted by her/his socio-cultural and normative setting. The chapters in Part Two then examine the case of Norwegian society and Norwegian mediation work in the light of the theoretical framework developed in Part One. Finally, Chapter 10 draws the various threads together and points to ways in which the thesis may have wider relevance.



## Chapter Two:

# Structuration Theory, Agency and Structure

### 2.1 *Structuration theory*

*Your joy is your sorrow unmasked...*

*When you are joyous, look deep into your heart  
and you shall find it is only that which has given  
you sorrow that is giving you joy.*

*When you are sorrowful, look again in your  
heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping  
for that which has been your delight.*

*Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow,"  
and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater."  
But I say unto you, they are inseparable.*

*Together they come, and when one sits alone  
with you at your board, remember that the other  
is asleep upon your bed...*

From *The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter provides a more in-depth description of the structurationist perspective adopted by this thesis. Since the relationship between ‘self’ and ‘society’ is so central to this project, a more detailed exploration of the structure-agency problematique is called for. The ideas introduced in this chapter are also built upon in Chapters 3 and 4; in Chapter 3 the mutually constitutive relationship between a mediator and her/his socio-cultural environment is discussed, while Chapter 4 integrates a structurationist perspective with Habermas’s concept of the ‘lifeworld’. Although the lifeworld concept is not explicitly used by Giddens *et al.*,<sup>2</sup> in many ways

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<sup>1</sup> Kahlil Gibran: *The Prophet*, Book Club Associates (by arrangement with William Heinemann Ltd,) London, 1978 (first published 1926), pp. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> Although Giddens does use Schutz’s phrase ‘stock of knowledge’, he prefers the expression ‘mutual knowledge.’

it fits well with structuration theory. The idea of the ‘lifeworld’ also emphasises, for instance, the importance of day-to-day experience in constituting the social actor and her/his self-understandings: the ‘social stocks of knowledge’ routinely drawn upon by actors, and the ‘taken-for-granted’, tacit assumptions (similar to the idea of practical consciousness, or Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘how to go on’) upon which action is commonly based. The positioning of actors in time-space is also emphasised in lifeworld analysis; *e.g.*, the ‘social stocks of knowledge’ include sediments from the social group’s traditions, history and folklore. The affinities between the concept of ‘lifeworld’ and structuration theory are discussed more fully in Chapter 4, together with the ways in which a social actor (a mediator) and her/his conduct are *constituted* by the everyday life context.

### **2.1.1 The ‘duality of structure’ and the socially situated actor**

In essence, structuration theory straddles the presumed ontological ‘gap’ between agency and structure, social subject and social object, through its central premise, the *duality of structure*, mentioned earlier. As explained by Jabri, ‘the aim of the theory of structuration is to show how agency and structure are mutually constitutive such that action is only meaningful in terms of its relationship to structure and the latter only exists as such in terms of human behaviour.’<sup>3</sup> Rather like the relationship between joy and sorrow described in the opening citation from Gibran, agency and structure are not to be seen as separate entities, but as existing *in each other*, and only *able to exist* in such a state of reciprocal implication: *i.e.*, they are only meaningful as a duality.

The duality of structure proposed by structuration theory, by implying that agents and structures *constitute* each other, means that neither agents nor structures can be analysed separately; the individual is placed ‘firmly within the context of society,’<sup>4</sup> and ‘structure’ is likewise inseparable from acting agents:

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<sup>3</sup> Jabri, p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 81.

Structure is not 'external' to individuals: as memory traces, and as instantiated in social practices, it is in a certain sense more 'internal' than exterior to their activities.<sup>5</sup>

One of the fundamental assertions of this thesis is that the activities of mediators, as social actors, cannot be analysed in isolation from the socio-cultural context which *constitutes them as actors*.

Thinking in terms of the 'duality of structure' means that *neither* agents nor 'structure' are the primary focus of analytic attention (as they are in some hermeneutic approaches and structural forms of sociology respectively). Rather than focusing on either 'the experience of the individual actor' or 'any form of societal totality', Giddens states that the basic domain of analysis for structuration theory is 'social practices ordered across space and time.'<sup>6</sup> Instead of analysing isolated human actions, or specific structural constraints on action, structuration theory takes a holistic approach, with the spatio-temporal context of action becoming a central element in this. 'The self cannot be understood outside 'history'...'<sup>7</sup> Giddens repeatedly emphasises the importance of a social actor's 'positioning' in time-space, and the continuous nature of social life:

Human action occurs as a *durée*, a continuous flow of conduct, as does cognition. ...An ontology of time-space as constitutive of social practices is basic to the conception of structuration, which *begins* from temporality and thus, in one sense, 'history'.<sup>8</sup>

In line with structuration theory, this thesis takes the view that mediators – as social actors – should not be extricated from the spatio-temporal position they occupy within their social collectivity if their activities are to be properly understood. Chapters 5, 7 and 8 in essence deal with the 'positioning' of Norwegian mediators in time-space. While Chapter 5 identifies relevant 'formative experiences' from the past, sedimented in the memory traces of the social group, Chapter 7 examines the way in which recent discourses on peace work have drawn upon (*inter alia*) this Norwegian historical context in constructing *e.g.*, current self-conceptions as international 'peacemaker', or

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<sup>5</sup> Giddens, (1984) p. 25

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 36.

in otherwise legitimating peace work. Chapter 8 turns to the contemporary Norwegian socio-cultural setting and investigates how the social ‘situatedness’ of mediators helps to constitute them as actors, and how the wider social context is implicated in the emergence of mediation as a legitimised activity.

### **2.1.2 *Routinization and the everyday life context***

The emphasis placed on the continuity of practices and conduct across time-space in structuration theory means that the mundane, habitual activities of day-to-day social life become elevated to a key position. Giddens defines ‘routinization’ as a ‘fundamental concept of structuration theory.’<sup>9</sup> It is namely through agents’ routine repetition of day-to-day activities that the structural properties of social systems are continuously reproduced – this, in essence, is what Giddens means by the ‘recursive nature’ of social life:

The repetitiveness of activities which are undertaken in like manner day after day is the material grounding of what I call the recursive nature of social life. (By its recursive nature I mean that the structured properties of social activity – via the duality of structure – are constantly recreated out of the very resources which constitute them.)<sup>10</sup>

Far from being trivial, then, it is the seemingly innocuous *durée* of daily, ‘lived-through experience’<sup>11</sup> that constitutes and provides the lifeblood for the more enduring structural properties of a social system – such as the ‘supra-individual’ *longue durée* of its institutions.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, these structural properties constitute the social actors and their day-to-day activities; ‘decision-making and practice...is situated in time and in space such that language, meaning, perceptions and societal institutions are implicated, or drawn upon by actors involved in ... interactions.’<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Jabri, p. 77.

If structuration theory elevates the routines of day-to-day life to a central status, it also places great emphasis on the ‘knowledge’ that actors draw upon in their daily activities. This, for Giddens, is the domain of ‘*practical consciousness*’, consisting of ‘all the things which actors know tacitly about how to ‘go on’<sup>14</sup> in the contexts of social life without being able to give them discursive expression.’<sup>15</sup> Practical consciousness is integral to the reproduction of the structural features of society because it provides the foundation for ‘routinized’ activities which, by definition, are repeated by force of habit, without undue reflection. When patterns of behaviour are unquestioningly repeated by social actors across time and space they serve to reinforce the prevailing structural properties of a social system; it is only when actors start to question the habitual practices of daily life that the structural properties of social systems are redefined and altered.

### **2.1.3 Knowledgeability**

Mention of Giddens’ notion of ‘practical consciousness’ leads directly to another key ontological issue for structuration theory – or indeed, for any theory that examines the relationship between social actor and social ‘structure’ – namely, the degree to which actors are considered to be *knowledgeable*. This issue of knowledgeability is at the heart of the agent-structure problematique, as it concerns the degree to which acting agents are seen to be cognisant of their activities and the reasons for them, as opposed to being mere automata, ‘steered’ by social structure. (Cf. Louis MacNeice’s *Prayer Before Birth*).

Structuration theory, predictably, aligns itself with neither ‘pole’ of this continuum, but argues for a high degree of knowledgeability on the part of actors, which is nevertheless bounded. Giddens criticises functionalism and structuralism for ‘suppressing or discounting agents’ reasons’ for their action, and looking for the

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<sup>14</sup> This phrase, borrowed from Wittgenstein, will be returned to in Chapter 4.

<sup>15</sup> Giddens, p. xxiii.

origins of agents' activities 'in phenomena of which these agents are ignorant.'<sup>16</sup> 'A good deal of social theory...has treated agents as much less knowledgeable than they really are,' he states.<sup>17</sup> The importance Giddens accords to the tacit realm of 'practical consciousness' is crucial here:

Where what agents know about what they do is restricted to what they can say about it, in whatever discursive style, a very wide area of knowledgeability is simply occluded from view. The study of practical consciousness must be incorporated into research work.<sup>18</sup>

In his stratification model of the agent Giddens distinguishes between three kinds of awareness: consciousness – viz., 'discursive consciousness',<sup>19</sup> 'practical consciousness' and the unconscious. Discursive consciousness is defined as 'what actors are able to say, or give verbal expression to, about social conditions, including especially the conditions of their own action; awareness which has a discursive form.'<sup>20</sup> There is no bar of repression between discursive and practical consciousness, however, as there is between these two modes of awareness and the unconscious;<sup>21</sup> 'there are only the differences between what can be said and what is characteristically simply done.'<sup>22</sup> One of the principal failings of structural sociology, in Giddens' view, leading to its underestimation of agents' knowledgeability, is its imperviousness or blindness to the realm of practical consciousness:

...knowledgeability is founded less upon discursive than practical consciousness. The knowledge of social conventions, of oneself and of other human beings, presumed in being able to 'go on' in the diversity of contexts of social life is detailed and dazzling. All competent members of society are vastly skilled in the practical accomplishments of social activities... The knowledge they possess is not incidental to the persistent patterning of social life but is integral to it.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxx.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7. 'I do not intend the distinction between discursive and practical consciousness to be a rigid and impermeable one.'

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

While criticising structuralism and functionalism for their limiting view of human agency and knowledgeability – for basing their claims on an assumed ‘imperialism of the social object’, Giddens also distances himself from those who accord *too much* knowledgeability to social actors, and presume an ‘imperialism of the subject’. He warns against viewing agents as the omniscient controllers of their action and of the conditions surrounding it:

...it is equally important to avoid tumbling into the opposing error of hermeneutic approaches and of various versions of phenomenology, which tend to regard society as the plastic creation of human subjects.<sup>24</sup>

Such subjectivist or individualist conceptions of agency, according to Giddens, fail to acknowledge the *limits* of human knowledgeability and self-understanding. Here the critical content of structuration theory is clear:

To be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons (including lying about them). But terms such as ‘purpose’ or ‘intention’, ‘reason’, ‘motive’ and so on have to be treated with caution, since their usage in the philosophical literature has very often been associated with a hermeneutical voluntarism, and because they extricate human action from the contextuality of time-space.<sup>25</sup>

In the existing literature on mediation, there is much talk of mediators’ ‘motives’ for intervention, but very little attention paid to the spatio-temporal, social or cultural *context* in relation to which mediators act. Apparently rational ‘motives’ are taken at face value, as are mediators’ articulated ‘reasons’ for mediating, without inquiring into the constitutive effects of the socio-cultural, normative and historical environment which forms the backdrop to mediatory activity. Chapter 3 discusses this idea further, and highlights other areas of mediation theory where there is a similar lack of critical reflection.

If, then, the views of, *e.g.*, structuralism and functionalism are rejected for over-emphasising the ‘causal’ effects of social structure upon action, while individualist conceptions of agency are seen as according too *little* importance to the context of action and to the limits of agency, a number of ontological questions arise.

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26

Firstly, in taking a structurationist approach, what exactly are we to understand by the term ‘structure’? Secondly, to what extent should agents be understood to be *constrained* by the structural properties of social systems, (or to what extent should ‘structure’ be seen to impinge upon action)? And thirdly, to what extent should actors be considered to partake in the ‘construction’ of the structural features of the social environment in relation to which they act?

#### **2.1.4 The concept of ‘structure’**

As noted earlier, in contrast to functionalism and structuralism, where social structure is seen to be ‘external’ to human action, ‘as some kind of ‘patterning’ of social relations or social phenomena’,<sup>26</sup> structuration theory holds that ‘structure’ is in many ways more *internal* to human behaviour than external. As Giddens writes, ‘structure exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in [social] practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of human agents.’<sup>27</sup> A similar idea is expressed by Wendt: ‘[i]f society ‘forgets’ what a university is, the powers and practices of professor and student cease to exist... It is collective meanings that constitute the structures which organize our actions.’<sup>28</sup> Rather than having a rigid fixity, ‘structure’ only exists to the extent that it is ‘carried’ (by agents) in reproduced social practices; it is therefore continuously subject to transformation. With this transformative characteristic in mind, Giddens prefers to say that social systems ‘exhibit ‘structural properties’ rather than having the more static-sounding ‘structures’.<sup>29</sup> He then divides the notion of structural properties into two further categories:

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Wendt, 1992, p. 135.

<sup>29</sup> Giddens, p. 17.



The most deeply embedded structural properties, implicated in the reproduction of societal totalities, I call *structural principles*. Those practices which have the greatest time-space extension within such totalities can be referred to as *institutions*.<sup>30</sup>

The constitutive elements of structure, or of a social system's structural properties, are stated by Giddens to be *rules and resources*, drawn upon by situated actors and 'produced and reproduced in interaction.'<sup>31</sup> This is explained more fully in Chapter 4, where the nature of 'rules' is also discussed in some depth. For now, let it suffice to say that Giddens' usage of the term 'rule' implies both what are conventionally labelled 'constitutive rules' and 'regulative rules' – i.e., '[r]ules relate on the one hand to the constitution of *meaning*, and on the other to the *sanctioning* of modes of social conduct.'<sup>32</sup> Giddens distinguishes between two *aspects* of rules, 'codes of signification' and 'normative elements'.<sup>33</sup> These can be understood as referring to constitutive and regulative rules respectively. Thus structure – intrinsic to agency – on the one hand means that actors are able to 'go on' in their daily lives (knowledge of codes of signification partly constitutes their practical consciousness and self-understandings). On the other hand, actors' knowledge of the *normative* elements of the rules 'contained' within this notion of structure will sanction certain courses of action, while encouraging others.

Resources, the other component of structure, are also divided by Giddens into two 'kinds', namely 'authoritative' and 'allocative'.<sup>34</sup> The former 'derive from the co-ordination of the activity of human agents', while the latter 'stem from control of material products or of aspects of the material world.'<sup>35</sup> The degree to which actors have access to both types of resource determines the extent to which they are 'powerful' within the social collectivity; ability to mobilise resources in support of

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, pp. xxxi, 17 and 25

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxxi.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

one's desired course of action implies enablement, inability to do so translates into constraint.<sup>36</sup>

One further important distinction made by Giddens in his theory of structuration should be mentioned, if we are to understand what is to be meant by the term 'structure' or 'structural properties' according to this perspective. Giddens identifies three 'structural dimensions of social systems', namely, structures of *signification*, *domination* and *legitimation*.<sup>37</sup> As Jabri explains, structures of signification 'imply shared symbolic orders and modes of discourse which enable as well as constrain everyday interaction and situate or position actors in time and space.'<sup>38</sup> This is the structural dimension that refers to *meaning*, language and communication; to shared 'interpretative schemes' contained within actors' social stocks of knowledge.<sup>39</sup> This structural dimension is related to what are usually described as 'constitutive rules'; to what Giddens renders an *aspect* of rules, namely 'codes of signification'. Structures of legitimation, as Jabri writes, 'define that second element of the rules of social life, namely norms and the sanctions which accompany their application in social interaction.'<sup>40</sup> These are related to what are conventionally termed regulative rules, labelled 'normative elements' of rules by Giddens; these may or may not be given discursive expression. (Again, more on this in Chapter 4). Finally, 'structures of domination' refer to 'asymmetries in power which rely on the differential capacity of actors to mobilise allocative and authoritative resources in support of their actions.'<sup>41</sup>

Crucially, these three 'structural dimensions' can only be separated analytically.<sup>42</sup> Structures of domination, particularly, are fundamentally implicated in both structures of signification and structures of legitimation, resulting in (respectively) dominant modes of discourse and normative sanctions which uphold the

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<sup>36</sup> See Jabri, pp. 80-81.

<sup>37</sup> Giddens, pp. 30-31.

<sup>38</sup> Jabri, pp. 82-83.

<sup>39</sup> See Giddens, p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> Jabri, p. 83.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Giddens, p. 33.

dominant social order. This points to the ‘pervasive influence of power in social life’, in Giddens’ view.<sup>43</sup> Figure 1, slightly adapted from Giddens, indicates how the three structural dimensions of social systems described here are implicated in human action and interaction. I have added (in italics) the two aspects of ‘rules’ and the two kinds of ‘resources’ identified by Giddens, in the hope of showing more clearly how these components of ‘structure’ also fit into the schema and relate to agency.

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<sup>43</sup> Giddens, p. 31.

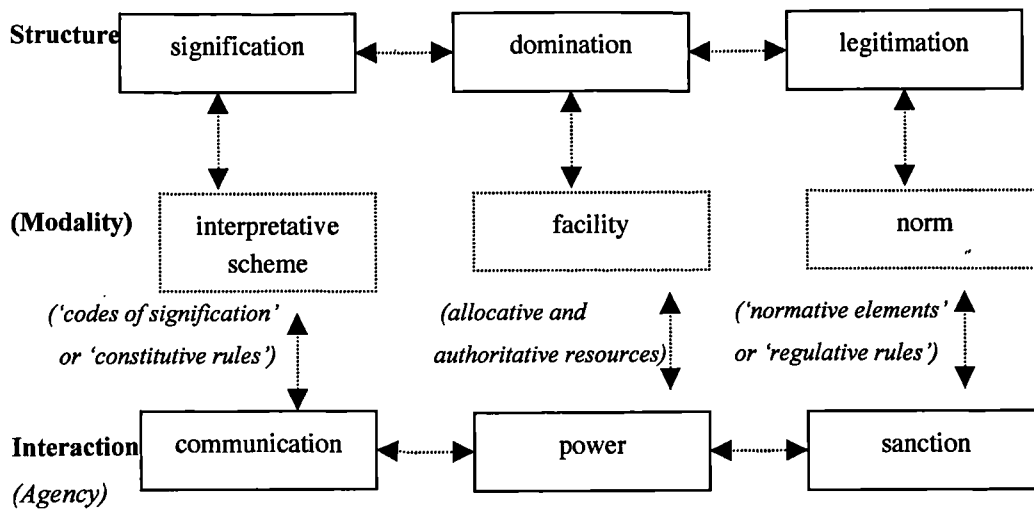


Figure 1: The dimensions of the duality of structure / the association of structure and agency<sup>44</sup>

### 2.1.5 Constraint and enablement

In describing the conception of social ‘structure’ provided by structuration theory, a certain amount has already been said about the degree to which the structural properties of social systems are seen by this perspective to be ‘constraining’. Some further clarification on the nature of constraint is necessary, however, in order to elucidate the extent to which agents are seen in this approach to be affected by their positioning in relation to the social system’s structural properties. In the case of this thesis, is the decision to ‘wage peace’ one taken freely and neutrally by prospective mediators, or do the structural properties of social systems intervene – either positively or negatively – and affect an agent’s chosen course of action?

In arguing against ‘hermeneutical voluntarism’, it is evident that Giddens views actors as having their agency bounded (at least to a degree), just as he sees their knowledgeability as bounded in certain respects. But in no way does he emphasise the

<sup>44</sup> This Figure appears in Giddens, p. 29, as ‘the dimensions of the duality of structure’, but Jabri has also used Giddens’ model, with the title ‘The association of structure and agency’. (Jabri, p. 82). Here I draw on both.

notion of '*constraint*' in the manner that structural sociologists such as Durkheim have done:

Explicitly or otherwise, such authors have tended to see in structural constraint a source of causation more or less equivalent to the operation of impersonal causal forces in nature. The range of 'free action' which agents have is restricted, as it were, by external forces that set strict limits to what they can achieve...

Structuration theory replaces this view with one which holds that structure is implicated in that very 'freedom of action' which is treated as a residual and unexplicated category in the various forms of 'structural sociology'.<sup>45</sup>

For structuration theory, 'structure' is never *merely* constraining; it is always also *enabling*. Identifying two further forms of constraint in addition to structural constraint, *viz.* material constraint and 'constraint associated with sanctions',<sup>46</sup> Giddens states that '[e]ach of the various forms of constraint are ... also, in varying ways, forms of enablement. They serve to open up certain possibilities of action at the same time as they restrict or deny others.'<sup>47</sup> According to structuration theory, 'structure' is centrally implicated in agency, and, as noted earlier, it is not simply an external force operating upon actors, but is in many ways more *internal* to agents than external. Were the structural elements constituting agents merely constraining, they would in a sense 'cancel out' agency. This is clearly incompatible with the idea of structure and agency as mutually constitutive; it precludes the idea of agents reproducing and exerting influence on the social systems in relation to which they act. Clearly, then, for structuration theory to be plausible, 'structure' must also have an enabling aspect.

The idea of 'reification' is crucial to exposing the ontological differences between Giddens and structural sociologists concerning the nature of constraint. Reification is defined by Berger and Luckmann in their social constructivist treatise in the following way:

The objectivity of the social world means that it confronts man as something outside of himself. The decisive question is whether he still retains the awareness that, however objectivated, the social world was made by men – and, therefore, can be remade by them. In other words, reification can be described as an extreme step in the process of objectivation, whereby the

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<sup>45</sup> Giddens, (1984), p. 174.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

objectivated world loses comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-human, non-humanizable, inert facticity.... Man, the producer of a world, is apprehended as its product, and human activity as an epiphenomenon of non-human processes. Human meanings are no longer understood as world-producing but as being, in their turn, products of the 'nature of things'. It must be emphasized that reification is a modality of consciousness... Even while apprehending the world in reified terms, man continues to produce it.<sup>48</sup>

In essence, then, reification occurs when the social world – social 'structure' included – is perceived as having an existence autonomous from human agency; as being part of the 'natural' order of things; as ontologically *prior* to agency and thus able to exert a controlling or determining influence over acting subjects. Again, to cite Berger and Luckmann, '[t]he basic 'recipe' for the reification of institutions is to bestow on them an ontological status independent of human activity and signification.'<sup>49</sup> For Giddens,

...reified discourse refers to the 'facticity' with which social phenomena confront individual actors in such a way as to ignore how they are produced and reproduced through human agency... The 'reified mode' should be considered a form or style of discourse, in which the properties of social systems are regarded as having the same fixity as that presumed in laws of nature.<sup>50</sup>

In Giddens' view, it is precisely this 'reified mode' that is manifest in structural sociology's predilection for exposing the mechanisms of structural constraint that impinge upon agency:

To look for sources of 'structural constraint' is presumed to be more or less the same as looking for the law-governed conditions that put limits on the bounds of free action. ... But according to the view suggested here, it produces a form of reified discourse not true to the real characteristics of human agents.<sup>51</sup>

By conferring a status of independent 'facticity' upon social structures and institutions, acting agents are denied any input into the constitution of these structural elements. Social actors' powers of agency are thus severely restricted.

Giddens does not deny that the structural properties of social systems have a constraining influence over actors; rather, he suggests that it is erroneous to conceive of them *solely* as constraining, or as having 'causal influences over human conduct

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<sup>48</sup> Berger and Luckmann, op cit., pp. 106-107.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Giddens (1984) p. 180

akin to those which operate in nature’, or as existing *apart* from human agency.<sup>52</sup> ‘Structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always both constraining and enabling,’ he states, adding:

This, of course, does not prevent the structured properties of social systems from stretching away, in time and space, beyond the control of individual actors. Nor does it compromise the possibility that actors’ own theories of the social systems which they help to constitute and reconstitute in their activities may reify those systems. The reification of social relations, or the discursive ‘naturalization’ of the historically contingent circumstances and products of human action, is one of the main dimensions of ideology in social life.<sup>53</sup>

In other words, the structural properties of social systems are likely to *confront* acting subjects as objective, reified ‘facts’, not least because the social system’s institutions – ‘by definition the more enduring features of social life’<sup>54</sup> – will outlast the life-span of any single individual; this is in the nature of what Giddens terms ‘the ‘supra-individual’ *durée* of the long-term existence of institutions, the *longue durée* of institutional time.’<sup>55</sup>

The realm of institutions takes on an even greater air of ‘facticity’ vis-à-vis individual actors due to the fact that actors often feel unable to exert any real influence upon it. Giddens admits that the nature of constraint is ‘historically variable,’<sup>56</sup> such that, for instance, ‘the greater the time-space distancing of social systems – the more their institutions bite into time and space – the more resistant they are to manipulation or change by any individual agent.’<sup>57</sup>

Constraint therefore also emanates from actors’ own perceptions and beliefs regarding the situation in which they find themselves. If their knowledgeability relating to social ‘structure’ is such that it leads them to adopt the ‘reified mode’, e.g.,

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 35. (It is the ‘institutionalized features’ of social systems to which Giddens refers when he speaks of ‘structural properties’, since it is these that give ‘solidity’ across time and space.’ *ibid.*, p. 24.)

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p. 171.

believing their situation to be ‘God-given’, there will be a concomitant constraining effect on their powers of agency. As Berger and Luckmann state, when actors view their social environment in reified terms ‘the world of institutions appears to merge with the world of nature. It becomes necessity and fate, and is lived through as such, happily *or* unhappily as the case may be.’<sup>58</sup> Thus Giddens emphasises the relationship between actors’ knowledgeability and constraint: ‘[constraint] is variable in relation to the material and institutional circumstances of activity, but also in relation to the forms of knowledgeability that agents possess about those circumstances.’<sup>59</sup>

However, no matter how naturalised, objectively given or ‘reified’ the structural properties of social systems *appear* to acting agents, structuration theory holds that this appearance is deceiving; ‘structure’ does *not* exist independently of acting agents – it has ‘no existence independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activity.’<sup>60</sup> As Wendt writes,

Institutions are fundamentally cognitive entities that do not exist apart from actors’ ideas about how the world works. ... In this way, institutions come to confront individuals as more or less coercive social facts, but they are still a function of what actors collectively ‘know’.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, the fact that the structural properties of social systems are constituted and reproduced by actors’ knowledge, routine practices and habitual conduct does not mean that their constraining effects are felt by actors to be any less ‘real’.

Moreover, Giddens recognises that constraint is not experienced to the same degree by all social actors. Some individuals may be more constrained by the structural properties of social systems than others, for instance by virtue of their social position. As indicated earlier, the concepts of ‘domination’ and ‘power’ are by no means alien to structuration theory, despite its aversion to the deterministic tendencies

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<sup>58</sup> Berger and Luckmann, p. 108.

<sup>59</sup> Giddens, p. 179.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Alexander Wendt: ‘*Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics*’, *International Organization*, 46 (2), Spring 1992, pp. 391-425; also in James Der Derian (ed):



of structural sociology and functionalism. Giddens asserts that 'domination' and 'power' 'have to be recognized as inherent in social association.'<sup>62</sup> But although some social actors will be privileged while others are rendered subordinate by structures of domination in every social system, 'power is not an inherently noxious phenomenon.'<sup>63</sup> Although power is a *potential* source of constraint, it is 'never merely a constraint but is at the very origin of the capabilities of agents to bring about intended outcomes of action.' Power is implicated in every exercise of human agency – indeed, the term 'agency' even *implies* 'power'.<sup>64</sup> 'An agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to 'make a difference', that is, to exercise some sort of power...'<sup>65</sup> Moreover, no matter how 'dominated' or 'subordinate' an agent may appear to be, there always remains a potential for that actor to exert her/his agency, to 'make a difference' to the existing state of affairs (for instance, through contributing to 'counter-discourses which challenge the given, established order.'<sup>66</sup>) As Giddens writes,

We should not conceive of the structures of domination built into social institutions as in some way grinding out 'docile bodies' who behave like the automata suggested by objectivist social science. Power within social systems which enjoy some continuity over time and space presumes regularized relations of autonomy and dependence between actors or collectivities in contexts of social interaction. But all forms of dependence offer resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors. This is what I call the *dialectic of control* in social systems.<sup>67</sup>

The picture that emerges from structuration theory regarding the relationship between structure and agency – and the nature of constraint and enablement – is a complex one. Behaviour is not 'determined' by social structure as suggested by structural sociology and functionalism. Sources of constraint coexist with sources of

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International Theory: Critical Investigations, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995, pp. 129-177; this citation from pp. 136-137.

<sup>62</sup> Giddens, pp. 31-32.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>66</sup> Jabri, p. 84.

<sup>67</sup> Giddens, pp. 15-16

enablement; agents draw on the structural properties of social systems when acting, and these structural properties are fundamentally implicated in agents' 'freedom of action.' At the same time, the constraining effects of the structural properties of social systems are experienced by actors in a very 'real' way, and the courses of action open to agents may appear limited. Nonetheless, the institutionalised features of social systems are malleable to a degree at least, although they may be deeply embedded in time and space such that they transcend the lifetime of individual actors. Agents are able to act on the structural properties of social systems and 'make a difference'. Ultimately, the structural properties of social systems are constituted by the activities of individuals: is only through agents' reproduced practices that the structural properties of social systems *endure* and are 'carried' through time and space. Equally, it is the transformative capacity of agency that causes institutions and structural features of social systems to *change* over time.

#### ***2.1.6 Agency and the social (re)construction of 'reality'***

The question of exactly how *much* social actors are considered able to exert an influence on the structural properties of social systems – or rather, to what extent they partake in the 'construction' of social reality – needs to be clarified further. In arguing that actors are always able to 'make a difference' to the prevailing social order, and in asserting that the structural properties of social systems only exist in the knowledge agents possess about them in their day-to-day activity, it might appear that Giddens attributes a high degree of 'authorial' capability to actors concerning the continuities of the social setting. However, he repeatedly distances himself from 'hermeneutic approaches and...various versions of phenomenology, which tend to regard society as the plastic creation of human subjects,'<sup>68</sup> and states unequivocally:

It is not accurate to see the structural properties of social systems as 'social products' because this tends to imply that pre-constituted actors somehow come together to create them.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

For structuration theory, it would arguably be more acceptable to speak of the structural properties of social systems as ‘social *re*products’ than ‘social products’, since what Giddens reacts against is the suggestion that actors somehow create the structural properties of social systems *ex nihilo*, as this denies the mutually constitutive relationship between structure and agency intrinsic to the ‘duality of structure’ idea:

Human societies, or social systems, would plainly not exist without human agency. But it is not the case that actors create social systems: they reproduce or transform them, remaking what is already made in the continuity of *praxis*....<sup>70</sup>

This brings to mind Marx’s famous and oft-quoted dictum, ‘men make history, but they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past,’<sup>71</sup> again highlighting the importance of the *positioning* of social actors – the notion that all social action is *situated* action.

Another problem that Giddens has with the view that the structural properties of social systems are ‘social products’ is that this can be taken as implying that agents always act as the *purposive* creators of the structural features of their social collectivity; that the ‘products’ are somehow intentional. Two factors in particular testify against this: firstly, the notion of *unintended consequences of action*, and secondly, the idea of *unconscious motives* for action.

Regarding the former, Giddens argues that social actors, although purposive and knowledgeable when choosing to act in a certain way, are commonly unaware of the wider (spatio-temporal) repercussions of their action. ‘Human agents always know what they are doing on the level of discursive consciousness under some description. However,...they may know little of the ramified consequences of the activities in

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<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>71</sup> This quote is taken from the opening to *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, cited in Carlsnaes, *op cit.*, p. 255, from Marx and Engels: *Collected Works*, Vol. XI, London: Lawrence and Wishart 1975, pp. 103-104. Also cited (in a slightly different translation) in, for instance Giddens, p. xxi, (from Marx and Engels: *Werke*, Vol 8, Berlin: Dietz Verlag 1960, p. 115) and Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, *op cit.*, p..5

which they engage.<sup>72</sup> For instance, through acting in accordance with established practices, norms and modes of conduct, actors inadvertently reproduce the reified structural properties of the social system, enabling these to endure over time. The social group's structures of signification, for instance, are 'carried' by actors continuing to use the linguistic vocabulary, repertoires and modes of discourse which constitute this structural dimension. '...My speaking English correctly is intentional; the contribution I make to the reproduction of the language is not.'<sup>73</sup> Rather than viewing the structural properties of social systems as the 'social products' of pre-constituted, purposive actors, then, Giddens sees them as obviously carried by agents in their reproduced practices across space and time (practices which in turn partly constitute the agents) – as the 'by-products' rather than 'products' of intentional action. 'Human history is created by intentional activities but is not an intended product,' he states.<sup>74</sup>

Secondly, Giddens' assertion that '[u]nconscious motivation is a significant feature of human conduct'<sup>75</sup> conflicts with the notion that social structures are necessarily the intentional products of action. 'While competent actors can nearly always report discursively about their intentions in, and reasons for, acting as they do, they cannot necessarily do so of their motives.'<sup>76</sup> Unconscious motives for Giddens include some of those rooted in practical consciousness – whereby agents simply *do* something by force of habit, in accordance with the social group's constitutive rules or codes of signification. In such cases, what actors are able to *say* discursively about their motives will not necessarily provide the whole story; they are unlikely to be cognisant of the ways in which they – and their action – are constituted by the continuities of the social system. This again is a point of contention between Giddens and certain hermeneutic approaches, due to the latter's neglect of the realm of practical

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<sup>72</sup> Giddens, (1984), p. 26

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

consciousness. By focusing on agents' self-understandings and articulated reasons for their action, these hermeneutic approaches are, according to Giddens, 'not necessarily illuminating to those who are the subject of that research...'<sup>77</sup> By contrast, '[s]tudying practical consciousness means investigating what agents already know, but by definition it is normally illuminating to them if this is expressed discursively, in the metalanguage of social science.'<sup>78</sup>

## **2.2 *The compatibility of structuration theory and hermeneutics***

It should be stated here that despite Giddens' frequent attacks on 'hermeneutic approaches', it is felt that structuration theory is not incompatible with the form of hermeneutic methodology employed in this thesis. Although the focus in this study is largely on the self-understandings of the mediators and other social actors sharing their socio-cultural setting, the contextuality of action, the domain of tacit knowledge or practical consciousness and the limits of agents' knowledgeability are also of central concern; actors' articulations are not necessarily accepted at face value, or taken to be the 'whole truth'. Giddens makes clear that '[i]n structuration theory a hermeneutic starting-point is accepted in so far as it is acknowledged that the description of human activities demands a familiarity with the forms of life expressed in those activities.'<sup>79</sup> Picking up on actors' self-understandings and discursive consciousness is deemed important, as long as this endeavour remains a starting-point, and does not occlude the more significant analysis of practical consciousness – of that which is left unsaid, or that which is merely 'done'. It would appear that it is the uncritical descriptivism inherent in certain hermeneutic studies (and their subjugation of structure to agency) that Giddens objects to, not hermeneutic approaches *per se*.

## **2.3 *'Constructivism'***

If a group or 'school' of theorists within the field of International Relations is to be identified whose theoretical leanings accord with those of Giddens and

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<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p. 328

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

structuration theory, those who fall closest are arguably the so-called ‘constructivists’. (This is not to overlook the fact that Vivienne Jabri integrates Giddens’ structuration theory directly into the field of conflict studies. Her work is drawn upon throughout this thesis, but she does not define herself as ‘constructivist’.) Several constructivist authors – e.g., Wendt, Weldes and Adler – have already been cited in these first two chapters. In Chapter 1, it was also noted that a discourse analytic methodology rests on a constructivist epistemology, particularly when the issues of discourse productivity and the *construction* of representations are prominent foci.

Alexander Wendt first introduced the label ‘constructivist’, in his 1995 article ‘*Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics.*’ Applying the term to social theories which ‘share a concern with the basic ‘sociological’ issue bracketed by rationalists – namely, the issue of identity- and interest-formation,’ Wendt argued that in this respect (*inter alia*) cognitivists, poststructuralists, postmodern feminists and structurationists all belonged in the same camp.<sup>80</sup> He coined the name ‘constructivist’ (as opposed to Keohane’s term ‘reflexivist’) in order ‘to emphasize their focus on the social construction of subjectivity and minimize their image problem...’<sup>81</sup>

According to Wendt’s original formulation of constructivist social theory, a ‘fundamental principle’ of the perspective is that ‘people act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them.’<sup>82</sup> It is collective meanings ‘that constitute the structures which organize our actions.’<sup>83</sup> These structures (of meaning) arise out of social interaction;<sup>84</sup> constructivists within the field of IR ‘share a cognitive, intersubjective conception of process in which identities and interests are endogenous to interaction, rather than a rationalist-

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<sup>80</sup> Wendt, op cit., p. 131.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 140. Wendt identifies this as a second principle of constructivism.

behavioural one in which they are exogenous.’<sup>85</sup> Here the affinity with structuration theory is clear, in that both approaches view structure and agency as *mutually constitutive*; indeed, Wendt even borrows this phrase from Giddens.<sup>86</sup> As in structuration theory, structures are not viewed as external to agents, they are to a large extent *internal*; Wendt defines institutions as ‘collective cognitions’, which despite confronting actors as ‘more or less coercive facts’ are nevertheless ‘a function of what actors collectively ‘know’’.<sup>87</sup>

Conceiving of structure and agency as mutually constitutive, in accordance with structuration theory, is a pervasive theme among constructivist writers, and references to Giddens’ theory of structuration are not infrequent. For instance, Adler asserts that ‘[i]t is crucial to remember...that constructivism, by assuming that agents and structures constitute each other, goes beyond a linear characterization of causality.’<sup>88</sup> Explicitly comparing constructivism with structuration theory, he writes ‘[c]onstructivists, too, believe that ‘ideas’ have structural characteristics.’<sup>89</sup> He elaborates:

First of all, ideas – understood more generally as collective knowledge, institutionalized in practices – are the medium and propellant of social action; they define the limits of what is cognitively possible and impossible for individuals. Concurrently, knowledge-based practices are the outcome of interacting individuals who act purposively on the basis of their personal ideas, beliefs, judgements and interpretations. The main goal of constructivism, therefore, is to provide both theoretical and empirical explanations of social institutions and social change, with the help of the combined effect of agents and social structures.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, according to Adler, constructivists stand at the ‘epistemological and ontological intersection’ between ‘individual agency and social structure’;<sup>91</sup> again, a position shared by structuration theory. Echoes of Giddens are also found in

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<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>88</sup> Adler, p. 351 (footnote 36), with reference to Giddens.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 325-326.

statements such as '[a]ll these knowledge structures are continually constituted and reproduced by members of a community and their behaviour.'<sup>92</sup>

In accordance with structuration theory, constructivists also reject the 'voluntarism' and relativism inherent in certain interpretative approaches, while distancing themselves from deterministic views of agency. They recognise that actors experience structural constraint, but also point to the enabling aspect of structures, and to the role of actors in constituting the structural properties of social systems. Despite believing that 'International Relations consist primarily of social facts, which are facts only by human agreement', constructivists, in Adler's view, remain 'ontological realists'; that is to say, 'they believe not only in the existence of the material world, but also that 'this material world offers resistance when we act upon it.'<sup>93</sup> Moreover,

a constructivist argument does not entail the more radical assertion that there is no 'external reality' outside of human consciousness if by 'external reality' is meant physical reality. What is at issue in the claim that national interests are socially constructed is *meaning* and its social effects, not physical existence.<sup>94</sup>

In a similar vein Weldes describes the 'reality constraints' impinging upon state officials' freedom of action in constructing official narratives and representations, and makes clear that constructivism's commitment to the 'social construction of national interests does not deny that such constraints exist.'<sup>95</sup> Therefore, despite using terminology such as 'social constructs', which appears to conflict with Giddens' assertions that the structural properties of social systems are *not* 'social products', but are *reproduced* by actors through their repetition of existing practices, constructivists are not averse to the idea that actors experience these 'constructs' in a very real way. As Adler claims,

...constructivist theory can be both 'critical' and 'problem-solving', in Robert Cox's sense. 'It is critical in the sense that it stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how the order came about.' But it is also problem-solving, in the sense that, once institutions and practices are reified, 'It takes the world as it finds it...as the given framework for action.'<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 236-327.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>94</sup> Weldes, p. 286.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Adler, p. 334. drawing on Cox (1986, pp. 208-209.)



Nevertheless, it would be misleading to suggest that constructivism is entirely compatible with structuration theory, or that phrases such as ‘social construction’ can be glossed over without inquiring into the ontological congruence of the two approaches. Although constructivist theorists emphasise the mutual constitution of structure and agency, they do not, arguably, fully take on board the implications of the structurationist notion of ‘duality of structure’. In particular, as the warning bells from the emphasis on ‘social construction’ alert us, a tendency to prioritise agency over structure is sometimes discernible in constructivist texts. While Giddens repeatedly states that actors do not exist in any way prior to structures, that they *reproduce* rather than produce *ex nihilo* the structural properties of social systems, constructivist writing *does* sometimes refer back to a time when apparently preconstituted social actors created the structural features of their environment. For instance, Adler asserts that constructivism, ‘rather than focusing exclusively on how structures constitute agents’ identities and interests’ also ‘seeks to explain how *individual agents* socially construct these structures *in the first place*.’<sup>97</sup> (Emphasis added at end of citation). Similarly, as Carlsnaes points out, Wendt’s statement that ‘an historical analysis of social structuring must begin with the intended and unintended consequences of state action’ is incompatible with Giddens’ idea that action and structure ‘ontologically *presuppose* each other,’<sup>98</sup> for if this notion is properly adhered to, it is wrong to suggest that one should ‘*begin*’ with *either* agency *or* structure. Constructivism is, however, a broad church, and it is not the case that *all* constructivists weight their theories towards agency. This does not mean that the ‘duality of structure’ notion is necessarily accommodated, however; some constructivist writers privilege *structure* above *agency*. As Adler writes, the ‘diversity of approaches within constructivism reflects disagreements about the extent to which structure or agents are more important and about whether discourse should take precedence over material factors.’<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>98</sup> Carlsnaes, *op cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>99</sup> Adler, p. 335.

From the perspective of this thesis, though, despite recognising that drawing on both structuration theory and constructivism has its problems, it is felt that the disparities between the two approaches constitute a difference in *emphasis*, rather than a profound divide, and that it is therefore possible to glean ideas from both. The areas of affinity are many, and constructivists bring useful insights as to how a commitment to agency and structure as mutually constitutive can be carried into the realm of international relations.

In Wendt's original piece, the value of his contribution is rather undermined by his failure to transcend the 'realist' notion of states as unitary, clearly defined entities, and his tendency to view states *as* social actors. Hence he speaks of collective meanings – such as the notion of power politics – arising at an international level from interaction *between states*; of states 'internalizing' sovereignty norms,<sup>100</sup> or undergoing 'socialization' which 'teaches' them 'that their sovereignty depends on recognition by other states...'<sup>101</sup> Thus the anarchical international 'reality' of power politics is socially constructed through interstate interaction, it is 'what states have made of themselves.'<sup>102</sup>

Weldes criticises Wendt for his 'anthropomorphized understanding of the state', and argues for a far more nuanced approach, which, in conformity with this thesis, emphasises the socio-cultural and historical context '*within*' states, which Wendt neglects. As Weldes writes,

the political and historical context in which national interests are fashioned, the intersubjective meanings which define state identities and interests, cannot arbitrarily be restricted to those meanings produced only in inter-state relations... The meanings which objects, events and actions have for 'states' are necessarily the meanings they have for those individuals who act in the name of the state. And these state officials...approach international politics with an already quite comprehensive and elaborate appreciation of the world, of the international system and of the place of their state within it. This appreciation, in turn, is necessarily rooted in meanings already produced, at least in part, in domestic political and cultural contexts. After all, as Gramsci has argued, 'civil society is the sphere in which the struggle to define the categories of common sense takes place'.<sup>103</sup>

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100 Wendt, p. 152.

101 *ibid.*

102 *ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

Here there is a clear recognition of the way in which individual social actors are constituted by the structural properties of their socio-cultural setting, and by their positioning in time-space, and how this passes into foreign policy practices. As discussed in Chapter 1, Weldes' writing on societal 'common sense' is also highly pertinent to this thesis, and ties in well with lifeworld analysis, introduced in Chapter 4.

### 3.1 *Final Remarks*

Structuration theory (and, by extension, elements of constructivist theory in International Relations) fit well with the aims and assumptions of this thesis. A view of agency and structure as mutually constitutive is implicit in one of the central premises of this thesis, namely, that mediators, as social actors, should not be analysed in separation from the socio-cultural and normative context which contributes to constituting them as actors, and which in turn is shaped by their practices. Structuration theory provides us with a nuanced picture of agents' knowledgeability and freedom of action, which allows for a large degree of autonomy and innovative ability on the part of actors, which is nonetheless bounded, and influenced by the socio-cultural and spatio-temporal context(s) in relation to which they act.

The next chapter locates this thesis in relation to the existing mediation literature. One of the primary criticisms levelled at this literature is that by failing to view mediators as *socially situated* actors, the constitutive effects of their 'everyday' socio-cultural, normative and historical environment – and how these might influence actors' conduct, expectations or assumptions in peace work, or the degree to which a social group is supportive of mediation work – are not picked up on. This is perhaps particularly the case for 'serial' mediators, where mediation has become a prolonged and prioritised aspect of e.g., a state's foreign policy. In the following citation, Jabri's context is a different one, but our subject – mediation work – can be substituted

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103 Weldes, p. 280.

(through the use of parentheses) for hers – war –, in order to point to the deficiencies of the existing literature on mediation:

In confining analysis to the decision-making process in specific conflicts, taken as discrete events, this form of investigation precludes an understanding of the relationship between everyday forms of interaction and the emergence of support for war [mediation work] as a form of conflict [conflict management] behaviour. Furthermore, it fails to develop an understanding of the relationship between the discursive and institutional continuities of social life and their role in the relationship between the individual and society and the place of war [peace work] therein.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Jabri, p. 21.

## Chapter Three:

### Locating the thesis in relation to the existing literature on mediation

#### Part One: The Socially Situated, Structurally Constituted Mediator

##### 3.1.1 *Situating the mediator*

Central to this thesis is the idea that a mediator, as a social actor, is necessarily situated in relation to her/his social group and to a socio-cultural and normative setting shared with members of this group. Moreover, she/he is situated at a particular spatio-temporal position within the *longue durée* of this setting. To isolate the individual mediator from her/his socio-cultural setting is to negate this fundamental relationship, and how it may be implicated in the emergence of mediatory activity, or in the actor's tendencies, strengths and weaknesses when mediating. In line with the tenets of structuration theory, it is assumed here that the social actor is both *constituted* by the socio-cultural setting (and its institutional, normative and historical continuities), and, in turn, through her/his practices, *contributes to reproducing* its structural properties. Such ideas are not, however, prominent in the existing literature on mediation.

In the existing mediation literature, there have been very few, if any, attempts to study a particular mediator's identity in any depth, taking into account the cultural, historical and normative background from which she or he emerges. Some mention has been made of the mediator's *culture* – by Avruch and Black,<sup>1</sup> for instance, but not even their refreshing analyses include discussion of the wider socio-cultural setting (with its institutional, historical and normative continuities) from which the mediator has emerged.<sup>2</sup> Even the notion of the “constituency” of the mediator has received remarkably little attention in the mediation literature, despite the fact that the constituencies of the *disputing parties* are often mentioned.<sup>3</sup> This topic is returned to in section 3.1.3 below.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Kevin Avruch and Peter W. Black: '*Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: Problems and prospects*', in Sandole and van der Merwe (eds): *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and application*, Manchester University Press, 1993, pp. 131-145.

<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as elsewhere in the mediation literature, the focus remains resolutely on the conflict situation, rather than on the mediator.

<sup>3</sup> When talks are high-profile, we are told of the danger that disputants will posture for their constituencies back home, resulting in a hardening of positions; when talks have been kept secret, on the other hand, we are often made aware of the “re-entry” problem, where negotiators returning home may find themselves unable to justify the concessions they have made to hard-line factions of their constituency.

In fact, little sustained attention has been paid to specific mediators<sup>4</sup> or third parties at all, over and above their involvement in a given conflict situation. The identity, motives and capabilities of mediators tend to be given rather superficial treatment, and generally these questions are only examined in context-specific terms, in the light of a particular conflict situation. Typical lines of inquiry include: *Which aspects of the third party's identity are linked to acceptability and allow entry into a given conflict? What connections does the potential mediator enjoy with the disputants in question? What motivates the mediator to intervene in this particular context — i.e. what interests does the mediator have in the conflict issues or outcome?* This is, to an extent, understandable. Since all conflicts differ, it is often assumed that one must address the idiosyncrasies of the conflict in question when considering the mediator's role. It is therefore generally accepted that mediation is an activity that is, of necessity, adaptive and responsive; contingency models of mediation (such as Fisher and Keashley's) have earned widespread support. All this means, though, that little attention has been paid to *committed* mediators *outside* a given context, or conflict situation. There is, perhaps, an underlying assumption that a mediator's identity, motives and capabilities only acquire meaning when placed against the backdrop of a particular conflict; that there can be no discussion of a mediator's identity *per se*, independent of a given conflict situation.<sup>5</sup>

It would seem, though, that if we are to gain a better understanding of mediation (e.g., why the activity is chosen, how mediatory conduct and capabilities vary, etc.), studies focused more directly on mediators, rather than on the process of mediation *in a given conflict situation*, would be illuminating. In particular, committed, or 'serial' mediators who intervene in a range of conflicts could become the foci of research in their own right, since when a number of mediators emerge from the same socio-cultural environment, this may suggest that the mediator's situated identity is indeed significant. Are there any underlying *continuities* apart from the context-specific 'snapshots' we have of these mediators? Where does commitment to the role of intermediary stem from? To what extent might the wider socio-cultural environment from which the mediator emerges be implicated in the decision to "wage peace", in the conduct and expectations of the mediator, or in the chances of mediatory success? In

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<sup>4</sup> Here the term 'mediator' is used in its broadest sense, to include third parties at every stage of the mediatory spectrum, ranging from those playing a comparatively 'passive' or facilitative role, to 'active' mediators using e.g., coercive strategies.

<sup>5</sup> The fact that mediators have not received much attention 'in their own right' might also be explained by an underlying normative bias in mediation theory: there is, perhaps, a sense in which such an approach seems indulgent, or superfluous—we feel that the conflicts themselves are the "proper" foci of our attention, and so any in-depth examination of a particular mediator which somehow transcends the terrible realities of a given conflict is therefore viewed as time-wasting—irreverent, even.

other words, rather than looking simply at apparent ‘islands’ of mediatory activity, can we discern a ‘continental shelf’ beneath the surface, connecting them?

### 3.1.2 *Bringing in a normative and value dimension*

When the existing literature discusses the presumed ‘motives’ of mediators, the lack of in-depth attention paid to the socio-cultural positioning of the mediator is clearly evident. This thesis holds that mediators, as social actors, will be constituted by *inter alia* the normative continuities of their socio-cultural group. The decision to “wage peace”, or to see mediation as an appropriate activity to engage in, will therefore partly stem from the social norms and values they have internalised. Moreover, the extent to which mediation is supported among members of the group will also depend on how well narratives surrounding mediation work succeed in presenting it as according with, *e.g.*, the collectivity’s dominant values and norms (an element of the social group’s ‘common sense’ or ‘social stock of knowledge’).

The existing literature on mediation, however, is rather lacking on the normative perspective. Perhaps it is taken as *self-evident* that such a dimension exists; that there is no need to examine the normative underpinnings of mediation because they are understood to be fundamental in the quest to contribute to the resolution of violent conflict.<sup>6</sup> In any case, many writers on mediation take a rather ‘realist’ or positivist view, limiting themselves to that which is ‘objectively’ observable, and in so doing they seem to dismiss normative and value considerations.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, by failing to ‘tap into’ mediators’ articulated (*and* unarticulated) self-understandings, *e.g.*, by means of a discourse analytic approach, the normative dimension is further occluded from view.

In the existing mediation literature, mediators are usually portrayed as purposive actors, rational decision-makers, undertaking cost-benefit calculations before deciding to intervene in a conflict. When the motives for mediatory intervention are discussed, there is general consensus that mediators must be self-interested actors in some way or another, although this does not imply that they are necessarily biased, or have a direct stake in the conflict issues. Mitchell distinguishes between three types of *reward* which motivate mediators to intervene in conflicts, namely *process rewards*, gained through

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<sup>6</sup> Here I refer to a comment made by Keith Webb.

‘engaging in the behaviour of an intermediary, irrespective of outcome’,<sup>8</sup> *achievement rewards*, gained through ‘achieving some form of settlement of the dispute which is at least minimally satisfactory to the parties’, and *settlement rewards*, gained through ‘achieving a particular, sought-after settlement, which, apart from at least minimally satisfying the parties, also advances the interests of the intermediary’.<sup>9</sup>

In much of the existing mediation literature, then, there seems to be an underlying ‘realist’ assumption that the choice to intervene in someone else’s conflict can only be rationalised by viewing mediators as seeking some form of gratification. Any possible normative, value-based or ‘altruistic’ reason for intervention is neatly subsumed under the heading “process reward”, such that it may then be explained away or ignored. Moreover, the scenario in which a mediator’s “constituents” support – and thereby *enable* – mediatory activity because it accords well with their values and norms, or those of the socio-cultural setting, has not been adequately considered.

In taking a structurationist approach, this thesis holds that to speak of ‘motives’ for mediating is, in itself, problematic. This is not to deny the knowledgeability of social actors, nor to deny that they engage in purposive, intentional conduct, but rather, to acknowledge that both of these capacities are bounded, partly due to the notion of ‘duality of structure’. To repeat a phrase from Giddens cited in Chapter 2, ‘terms such as ‘purpose’ or ‘intention’, ‘reason’, ‘motive’ and so on have to be treated with caution’, not least because they ‘extricate human action from the contextuality of time-space.’<sup>10</sup> Since actors are partly constituted by their socio-cultural environment, what they are able to discursively articulate about ‘motives’ for acting in a certain way does not necessarily reveal the ‘whole’ story; conduct may, for instance, be grounded in the domain of practical consciousness – in the tacit knowledge of ‘how to go on’ in day-to-day life. There may be unintended consequences of action, or unconscious ‘motives’ for action. If, for instance, there are certain norms for the management of conflict in a socio-cultural group, and these are internalised by actors, their behaviour in the face of conflict may be affected accordingly. It is even possible to imagine a *norm for mediation* in a particular socio-cultural group entering into its members’ cognitive and perceptual make-up, and hence into their conduct, or their acceptance of mediation as an ‘appropriate’, ‘natural’ or ‘commonsensical’ activity to engage in.

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<sup>7</sup> In part, this could reflect a desire to prevent the field from being perceived as a ‘soft’ science.’ See Jabri, *op cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> For instance increased prestige or professional experience.

<sup>9</sup> See Mitchell, *ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 6, and Giddens, 1984, *op cit.*, p. 3.



### 3.1.3 The “Constituency” of the Mediator

This thesis, in following structuration theory and its commitment to viewing agents and social structures as mutually constitutive, holds that social actors (mediators included) *cannot* be extricated from the socio-cultural environment (and its structural continuities) which has contributed to constituting them as actors. As Jabri writes, ‘[i]ndividuals always stand in relation to specific histories, ideologies, symbolic systems, languages and geographic locations.’<sup>11</sup> In many ways social ‘structure’ is more *internal* to acting agents than external.

In the existing mediation literature, however, the closest references to a mediator’s socio-cultural and normative background arguably appear in discussions of “constituencies”, although, as indicated earlier, even allusions to a mediator’s “constituency” are few and far between. From the perspective of this thesis, the notion of “constituency”, while important, and valuable for drawing attention to the mediator’s ‘domestic’ environment, is also severely limiting if taken as the *sole* pointer to the mediator’s situated identity. The idea of “constituency” alone, while useful for superficial analysis of a mediator’s ‘situatedness’, does not encompass the notion of the socio-cultural, normative and historical setting in relation to which the mediator is positioned, nor the implications of the ‘duality of structure’. In section 3.1.4 below, I therefore move beyond – and supplement – the notion of “constituency”, by discussing the wider concept of the mediator’s socio-cultural setting (and its structural continuities), and suggesting possible implications for mediation theory. For the time being, though, the discussion draws on the existing ‘discursive repertoire’ of the mediation literature: *i.e.*, centring on the term “constituency”. What I see to be deficiencies in the use and application of this term will be pointed to in the process.

Botes and Mitchell, in article on mediator flexibility, note the lack of theoretical attention devoted to the mediator’s “constituency” in the mediation literature, compared to the many references to disputants’ constituencies:

Much analysis of [the] negotiator-constituency relationship has been undertaken. ...A much more neglected question in studies of conflict has been the effects that third party constituencies might have on the activities of intermediaries and, hence, upon the probability of achieving a satisfactory resolution of complex and protracted conflicts.<sup>12</sup>

They suggest systematic studies of various types of intermediaries, ‘of the constraints their constituencies place on them, and the resources the latter may provide’ in order to

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<sup>11</sup> Jabri, *op cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>12</sup> Botes, Johannes and Mitchell, Christopher: ‘*Constraints on Third Party Flexibility*’, *Annals, AAPSS*, 542, November 1995, p. 169.

offset this imbalance.<sup>13</sup> It is significant that Mitchell and Botes (rightly) point out that a constituency may be a *capacity* as well as a constraint, and can have a positive influence on mediator flexibility.<sup>14</sup> (Incidentally, this accords with the structurationist idea that social structure is never merely constraining, it is always also enabling.) This is because those mediation theorists who *do* mention the mediator's constituents as an important factor in the study of mediation processes<sup>15</sup> often highlight their constraining effect on the flexibility and manoeuvrability of the representative third party, failing to mention the ways in which they can prove an asset. James Wall, for instance, portrays the third party and her/his constituency as locked in an almost adversarial relationship, each trying to manipulate and out-manoeuvre the other.<sup>16</sup> It is surprising how pervasive Machiavellian ideas like this are among writers on mediation. (More on this in due course.)

Before discussing the ways in which the existing literature portrays the representative third party's "constituency" as a constraint, and pointing to ways in which it could, rather, be considered an enablement, a definition of the term 'constituency' in this context is called for. In broad terms, the 'constituency' of a third party refers to those it represents, whether directly or indirectly, at their behest or unbeknown to them. While there may, occasionally, be a constituency *for mediation*, actively encouraging its representatives to undertake such work,<sup>17</sup> usually the constituency – as viewed here – will have no such *direct* role.<sup>18</sup> The nature of a constituency – its size, complexity, and degree of influence – will, to a large extent, depend on the identity of its representative third party. Moreover, some mediators are more 'representative' than others; a mediating private individual, for instance, may have

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>14</sup> See Botes and Mitchell (*op cit.*) p. 174 and p. 179.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffrey Rubin, and James Wall, for instance.

<sup>16</sup> James Wall, '*Mediation: An Analysis, Review and Proposed Research*', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 25 No. 1, March 1981, p. 168.

<sup>17</sup> Here I borrow from Jabri, who distinguishes between an interested constituency which *indirectly* supports (or pays attention to) mediation work because it involves other issues about which it is concerned, and a constituency which *directly* supports and encourages its representative's intervention *as mediator*; (See V. Jabri: *Mediating Conflict*, pp. 172 and 183). Jabri suggests that mediation may be seen as part of the ideological framework of certain organisations, most notably that of Quakerism. Quaker mediators may therefore find that their constituency (other Quakers) forms a "direct constituency for mediation." (*ibid.*, p. 172).

<sup>18</sup> But it may, for instance, support mediation work undertaken by a representative because it accords with its own values and interests.

only a nominal constituency, while a national government will be answerable to a large body of constituents.

A third party's 'constituency' will rarely be a singular, unitary entity. Usually, a constituency will be comprised of many different groups and factions — we might talk of 'sub-constituencies' — with differing views, and varying amounts of influence over the representative mediator's behaviour. Mitchell and Botes introduce a model of 'Intermediary Constituency Structure' which illustrates this point, comprised of a series of concentric circles surrounding the mediating individual or team. As they explain:

In such a model, the innermost circle consists of an immediate constituency of advisers, colleagues, and superiors. The next constituency is an intermediate one, consisting of those with direct and immediate access to the mediator's inner circle, especially the mediator's or the circle's superiors. Third is a peripheral constituency, consisting of an informed public, rank-and-file followers, or lay members, ...whose views, aspirations, and behaviour can affect a mediator's performance. Finally, an extrasystemic constituency, consisting of entities within the environment of the mediator's country, community, or organisation, may also be influential in enhancing capacity or imposing constraints on an intermediary's activity.<sup>19</sup>

This model is useful in providing a simple conceptualisation of the structure of a third party's "constituency", which nevertheless highlights the very different groups subsumed under this umbrella term. A certain hierarchy of constituency groups is suggested, in that their degree of direct influence over the mediating individual or team in question varies greatly; some may even be the mediator's superiors, while others occupy a more peripheral place, influencing the behaviour of the mediator more indirectly.

### ***The "Constituency" of the Third Party as Constraint***

There is no doubt that a third party's constituency can in some ways constrain its representative mediator's flexibility. Flexibility in this context can be defined as 'greater freedom of action, increased autonomy, reduced constraints, or an ability to entertain innovative ideas.'<sup>20</sup> Further, flexible intermediaries 'possess both freedom of action, arising from lack of constraint, and availability of resources, conferring a capacity to influence.'<sup>21</sup> Mediators traditionally viewed as 'powerful', whose capacity to exert influence depends on the material resources their constituents are able to provide, may be particularly vulnerable to constraints imposed by their constituencies. Their success as mediators depends to a large extent on the contingent rewards and deprivations they are able to offer, which in turn depend on their constituency's willingness to provide. If 'conventionally powerful' mediators' constituents are

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<sup>19</sup> Botes and Mitchell, p. 174. See their article for more discussion of this model, and an illustration (p. 175).

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 171

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 174.

unhappy with a mediation initiative, or perceive it to be in contravention of their interests, they are able to withhold all-important resources, or, failing that, their vote at the next election (assuming the mediating individual or team are government representatives). Mediators with ‘muscle’ therefore have to toe a careful line in order not to upset those they are answerable to, which may often result in a loss of flexibility and credibility, and fewer tactical options.

A third party’s constituency may also have a constraining effect on the mediation process if it has factions with links to the conflicting parties or their constituents. Such links may complicate the mediator’s task, by increasing the number of relationships to be managed, thus detracting from her/his flexibility. As Mitchell and Botes write, ‘[c]riticism on the home front inevitably constrains and leads to reduced flexibility.’<sup>22</sup> Where close links exist between third party constituents and the parties to a conflict, such criticism is more likely to occur, especially if the representative mediator does not strive to limit her-/himself to behaviour deemed appropriate by all factions of her/his constituency.

A constituency can also limit its representative mediator’s chances of being accepted in the first place, by detracting from her/his perceived credibility and legitimacy. As described by Rubin:

...the Secretary-General speaks for the United Nations and its member governments, the Pope speaks for the Vatican and World Catholicism, and the U.S. Secretary of State represents the interests, power, and authority of the United States government.

Aye, and there’s the rub! The third party’s legitimacy is likely to be enhanced by the role of spokesperson for a constituency only so long as this constituency is regarded by the principals as reasonably impartial. ... The [U.S.] Secretary of State may be hamstrung by the disputants’ suspicion of U.S. foreign policy and its underlying motives.<sup>23</sup>

The fact that weighty mediators are often expected to prioritise their own constituency’s interests above those of the disputants (since without constituency support they forfeit the resources which are so vital to them), may detract from their perceived legitimacy. In this respect, representing a smaller or ‘lighter’ constituency can be less of a liability.

In light of the fact that mediators are typically presented in the existing literature as interested parties to a conflict, constituencies can be viewed similarly. Constituents may support their representative if they feel that some kind of benefit accrues from the mediation work undertaken. The nature of the constituents’ interests in the conflict will colour the tactics they use *vis-à-vis* their representative.

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>23</sup> Jeffrey Rubin, Dynamics of Third Party Intervention: Kissinger in the Middle East, pp. 9-10.

Earlier, James Wall's portrayal of the third party and its constituency as locked in an almost adversarial relationship, each trying to manipulate the other, was referred to. Crucially, the constituency which Wall envisages in this less than sanguine view is content-oriented, or, as he puts it: 'typically is not a disinterested party.'<sup>24</sup> The mediator's constituents in Wall's "mediated negotiation system" are therefore demanding, intruding, and perhaps even belligerent, should they not get their own way. The mediator (which in Wall's scenario plays an active, bargaining role with the disputants), handles her/his constituents in the same way as she/he does the parties to the conflict — by manipulating, cajoling, distorting the truth, and, where necessary, threatening:

In exchange for mediator behaviour that facilitates "appropriate" agreements, the constituent bequeaths personal outcomes (such as salary, status, or social approval) to the mediator as well as support for his mediary techniques...

The mediator seeks not only his constituent's support but also a reduction in his comparison level. To attain these goals the mediator, in a sense, turns the tables on his constituency using the same techniques that he utilizes on the negotiators and their constituents. To reduce his constituent's comparison level, the mediator points out his misperceptions and excess expectations, argues that the constituent's demands are not salable to the negotiators, misrepresents or distorts information, exaggerates the extent of disagreement, and threatens to quit if the constituent's demands remain fixed.

...If the mediator is subordinate to his constituents, he usually stops short of employing threats; yet from almost any power position he exaggerates the costs and probability of non-agreement which will result from the constituent's failure to cooperate, and he rewards the constituent with praise, loyalty, hard work and the like whenever he does supply assistance. The mediator's success in employing these techniques against his constituent strengthens his hand in mediating the internegotiator bargaining.<sup>25</sup>

This thesis challenges Wall's portrayal of the mediator-constituency relationship. Where, for instance, a third party's constituency primarily has a process-orientation, and the third party plays a passive, facilitative role in the conflict such that mediatory success is not contingent upon resources the constituency can provide or withhold, it would seem logical to maintain that a more relaxed, cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship could emerge.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, a more subtle understanding — than Wall's strong-arm tactics — of the ways in which constituents' support for mediation can be achieved is called for. This would, among other things, take into account the extant cultural and linguistic resources available to mediators and foreign policy élites when justifying peace work in their narratives, and the extent to

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<sup>24</sup> James Wall, 'Mediation: An Analysis, Review and Proposed Research', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 25 No. 1, March 1981, p. 168.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>26</sup> Wall's description of the mediation process is tinged with the same kind of 'realism' as the writings of Bercovitch, Touval *et al* on mediator impartiality and power mentioned earlier.

which mediation as an activity accords with what Weldes has termed the social group's 'common sense', such that it appears 'natural'. (Cf. Chapter 1.)

### ***The "Constituency" of the Third Party as Resource and Capacity***

While Wall's interpretation of the mediator-constituency relationship does seem overly pessimistic, this thesis does not claim that a third party's constituents should necessarily be viewed as their representative's *supporters*. This is, however, a possible scenario in certain contexts; the degree to which a constituency is supportive will vary in the same way as the extent to which it is resource-rich, and, in some cases 'all these constituents can be potential allies, providing capacity that might be harnessed for the benefit of the mediation initiative.'<sup>27</sup>

To some extent, the supportiveness of a constituency will depend on the relationship with its representative, and on the political, socio-cultural and attitudinal environment which the mediator and constituency share. For example, to what degree do the constituents feel genuinely represented by the accountable third party? Is there constructive communication between the mediator and her/his constituents? What expectations do the constituents have of their representative, and to what extent do they feel that their expectations count? Last but not least, does mediation work accord with moral and cultural values and social norms on the home front?

An article by Margaret Hermann highlights the ways in which constituencies differ, both in terms of behaviour, expectations, and their relationship with the representative.<sup>28</sup> While Hermann's context is that of mediation carried out by heads of government, some of her points are relevant to this discussion. Regarding the different expectations constituents may have of their representative, she writes:

Some constituents want to be led, some want to be partners, some want to be inspired, and some want to lead.<sup>29</sup>

Constituents can be imagined as placed along a continuum, ranging from the most demanding at one end, to the most deferential at the other. Those who are content to be led will grant their representative a high degree of latitude, while those who want to lead will demand more – even total – control over the mediator's actions, causing the third party's manoeuvrability to be severely constrained.

While a third party whose constituents behave in a deferential and unassuming way might be expected to have the greatest flexibility (freedom from constraint), it does

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<sup>27</sup> Mitchell and Botes, op cit., p. 176.

<sup>28</sup> Hermann, Margaret: '*Leaders, Leadership, and Flexibility: Influences on Heads of Government as Negotiators and Mediators*,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 542, November 1995 (op cit.), pp. 148-167.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 159. It may well be possible to attribute these differing expectations to cultural traits, socialisation processes and the like. These questions are explored in the next two chapters.

not necessarily follow that this will render her/him a suitable mediator. Lack of constraint does not imply support, and a constituency which makes no demands may be indifferent to, or ignorant of, its representative's role: incapable of contributing either resources or other positive input. The most 'supportive' constituency type might be that which expects to act as its representative's partner; this would suggest an active interest in the mediation work, without wishing to dominate. Hermann points out that a certain degree of constraint in this respect (an expectation on the part of constituents that they will be consulted) may not be a bad thing for a potential mediator:

...leaders who relate to their constituents through listening and consensus building are patient negotiators and mediators. They realize the importance of moving incrementally and getting everyone on board — or, at least, knowing where everyone stands, what they want, and how much they are willing to give.<sup>30</sup>

Lack of detrimental interference is, arguably, another aspect of support. Mitchell and Botes cite Chester Crocker's claim that a mediator's flexibility is directly linked to the lack of interference from superiors,<sup>31</sup> and his allusion to the fact that 'in the American system of government, an intermediary involved in a complex international conflict is also affected by a very open and visible system of checks and balances', and 'a whole set of internal or intergovernmental constituencies' might potentially interfere with her/his mediation work.<sup>32</sup> A mediator from *e.g.*, a small state could be at an advantage here, with less bureaucracy to contend with than in larger societies, while a small-scale and centralised decision-making élite would imply fewer hierarchical relationships to manage.

A constituency (or groups within it) can also contribute to a mediator's flexibility, credibility and continuity. Members of a mediator's constituency may have established valued links with one or both parties to a conflict (or with their constituents), or have earned a positive reputation or credentials of some kind, thus adding to a potential mediator's "legitimate power"<sup>33</sup> or credibility. Raven and Kruglanski mention a "halo effect" resulting from rewards, whereby the recipient's attitudes and identification with the influencing agent become more positive.<sup>34</sup> Although their context is that of "reward power"<sup>35</sup>, a similar halo effect could derive from a trusted or valued relationship between the mediator's constituency and the parties to a conflict.

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>31</sup> Mitchell, and Botes, *op cit.*, p. 176

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> See Part Two of this chapter for a definition of this concept.

<sup>34</sup> Raven and Kruglanski, '*Conflict and Power*', in Swingle (ed.), *The Structure of Conflict*, p. 79.

<sup>35</sup> This concept is explained in Part Two.

A constituency can also enhance its representative's ability to provide *continuity* as a third party, if it is relatively supportive, patient, and not too demanding in its expectations. Continuity is a crucial quality, since mediation tends to be a slow process requiring long-term commitment, also in the follow-up period after an agreement has been reached. Mediators with small constituencies (*e.g.*, representatives of small states) can be privileged in this respect, since an awareness of their limitations on the global stage arguably renders their constituents less likely to clamour for results than the constituents of more 'powerful' mediators. This enables mediation work, or, in the case of states, foreign policies generally, to be followed patiently over long periods, without falling prey to domestic demands.<sup>36</sup>

In her book *Mediating Conflict*, Jabri includes among the questions arising from her work the following: "*can a constituency for mediation be built up?*"<sup>37</sup> This is preceded by the related questions

Is the constituency factor ever important as a direct influence on a third party's decision to intervene as intermediary? Is it only important as such in the case of organisations where mediation is part of the ideological framework, as, for example, is the case among the Quakers?

The possibility of there being a constituency that is *directly* supportive of mediation work is arguably the most tangible way in which a mediator's constituents can be an enablement to their representative. The question of whether a "constituency" for mediation can be built up, though, inevitably leads us to examine the mediator's positioning in greater depth, as advocated by this thesis. It requires an examination of the ways in which the socio-cultural setting *constitutes* both the mediator and the actors comprising her/his "constituency", entering into their self-understandings, attitudes, conduct and expectations. It is imaginable, for instance, that a constituency for mediation could be built up if peace work accords well with the prevailing normative and institutional structures of the mediator's social group, or with its dominant representations of 'self', or if discourses legitimising mediation can be constructed by drawing on the group's existing historical narratives and cultural resources.

#### ***3.1.4 Beyond 'Constituency': The Mediator's Socio-Cultural and Normative Environment***

Although, in discussing the notion of "constituency", this chapter has attempted to give a less pessimistic impression of the mediator's constituents than the constraining view of theorists such as Wall, it is suggested in this thesis that focusing too immovably on the idea of "constituency" alone is *itself* constraining. To talk simply of the mediator's "constituency" is to look at just one *aspect* of the environment from which

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<sup>36</sup> This idea is discussed in connection with "facilitative power" in Part Two of this chapter.

<sup>37</sup> Jabri, Vivienne, *Mediating Conflict*, p. 183.



the mediator emerges, *viz.*, members of the mediator's social group *when their attention is directed towards the mediatory activity*. For, strictly speaking, a "constituency" only *exists* by virtue of its representative – in our context a mediator. It has no autonomous life beyond this: it is generated by the reciprocal relationship it enjoys with the representative; visible only in the context of its representative's action, as a constraint or an enablement, as that which has to be 'answered to' or that which *directs its attention towards* the action taken on its behalf. Moreover, the "constituency" of the mediator is by definition *external* to its representative, whereas this thesis is concerned with the ways in which a social actor is *constituted* by the structural properties of her/his socio-cultural setting, *i.e.*, how its norms, traditions, and discursive and institutional continuities have in some senses become *internal* to the actor, informing her/his self-understandings.

This thesis, then, seeks to move away from the rather instrumental, positivist view of "constituency" prevailing in the existing mediation literature. Rather than conceiving of the mediator's social 'situatedness' as impinging upon her/his mediatory activity only in the guise of a "constituency" – an entity distinct from the mediator, which *influences* her/his behaviour and capabilities in an 'objectively observable', causal fashion, it is argued here that the mediator's socio-cultural positioning is *fundamental* to her/his constitution as a social actor, and is thus inextricably implicated in the mediator's conduct, motives for intervention, attitudes and capabilities. An attempt is made, then, to provide a broader, more multi-dimensional view of the mediator's 'domestic arena' — a 'Cubist' view, perhaps<sup>38</sup> — as a *socio-cultural and normative environment* with an independent existence above and beyond its role as "constituency" for any mediation work which may be undertaken by its members: an environment which, nonetheless, is implicated in *constituting* the individuals engaged in any such mediatory activity.

It would be inappropriate to seek direct causal linkages between this environment and the mediator's actions in the same way as with the notion of a "constituency", since, as noted above, the socio-cultural environment is not *separate* from the mediator, but enters into her/his self-understandings. In any case, it is too pervasive and temporally diffuse to be 'pinned down' for positivistic causal analysis. The 'domestic' environment of the mediator is temporally diffuse, for instance, in that it has an institutional *longue durée*, a history, traditions, and a certain cultural heritage, and its members have both predecessors and successors. Rather than looking for 'connections' which can be discerned from 'outside' between the mediator and her/his

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<sup>38</sup> Cubist in the sense that all aspects of the mediator's social environment will be included, not just the aspect which is directed towards potential mediation work (what might be termed the 'constituency' aspect, or face).

socio-cultural environment, the social actor's self-understandings are considered to be the only portal to this indissoluble relationship. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, attention will also be paid to that which is *left unsaid*, in an attempt to tap into actors' unarticulated practical consciousness.

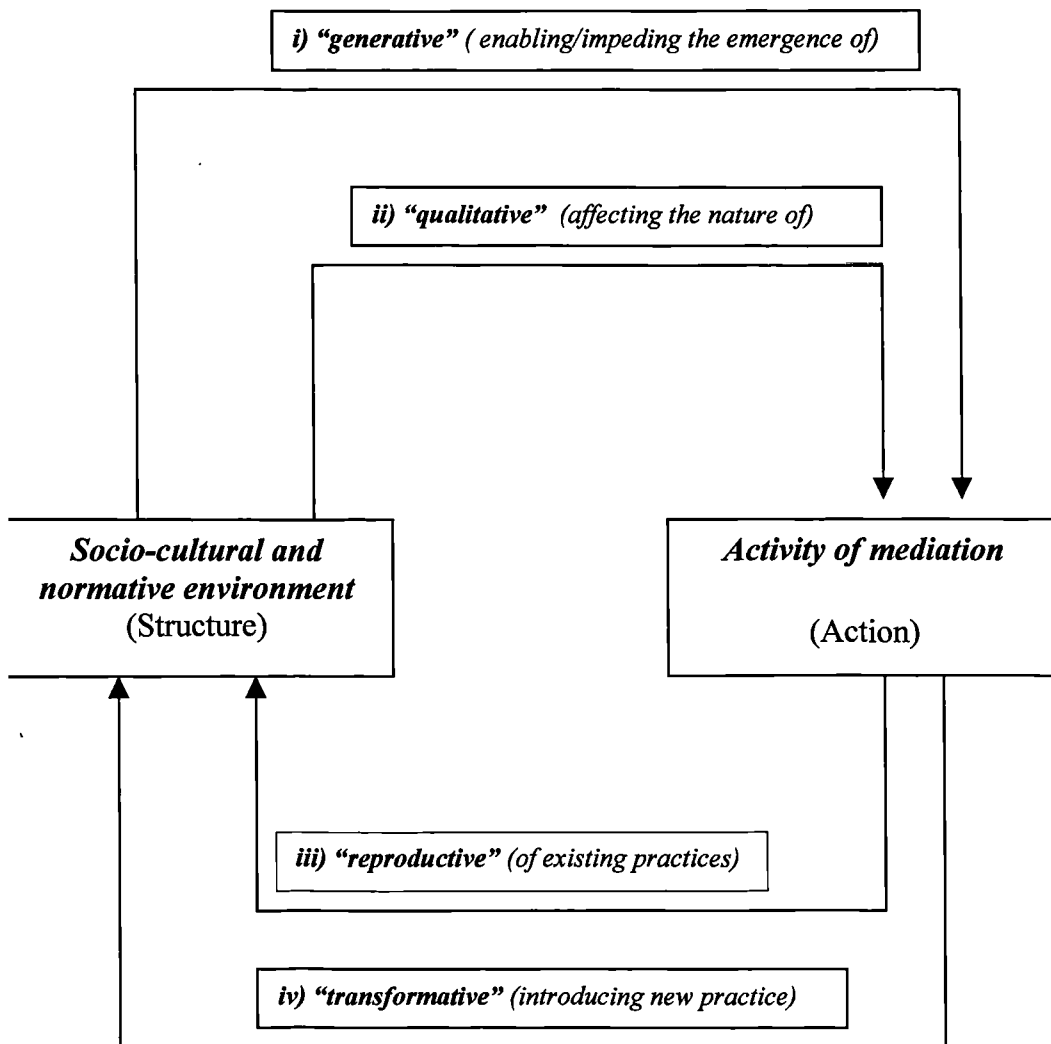
Although direct causal connections between the social actor and her/his socio-cultural environment cannot (*should* not) be sought, through entering into its actors' self-understandings, the influence of the mediator's socio-cultural environment on the likelihood or nature of mediatory intervention may be immense. It is imaginable, for instance, that particular norms regarding the handling of conflict prevail in the mediator's socio-cultural group, or that societal institutions, structures and mechanisms are such that a certain mode of conflict behaviour becomes ingrained in the social fabric, and thereby part of the mediator's (or constituent's) 'practical consciousness'. Similarly, historical experiences which the mediator shares with fellow members of her/his socio-cultural collectivity (whether these are actually 'remembered' events located within the actors' lifetime, or experiences recorded in the social group's history books and national literature) might enter into current understandings of, among other things, conflict. The discursive continuities of the social group, including dominant representations of 'self' and 'other', will also affect actors' understanding of what constitutes 'appropriate' conduct, (or, conceivably, foreign policy.)

In Chapter Four, the ideas introduced here are built upon and supplemented. Relevant concepts from social theory are introduced, and brought to bear on the field of mediation and conflict analysis. In particular, notions of the "lifeworld" and social norms are used to shed light on the mediator as a socially situated and structurally constituted actor. Ways in which the mediator's socio-cultural setting and its normative and institutional continuities may be implicated in the decision – or *repeated* decisions – to "wage peace" are explored, as well as looking to other ways in which the socio-cultural environment can be implicated in its members' mediatory activity, or attitudes towards mediation. In general, it is presumed that everyday life experiences within the socio-cultural environment will have contributed to constituting its members' practical consciousness, or horizon of "taken-for-granted" understanding, and will thus affect their conduct, expectations and attitudes in the face of both familiar and novel situations.

Having emphasised the importance of moving beyond the notion of "constituency" to examine the mediator's situated identity in relation to her/his socio-cultural and normative environment, a rough framework to show *how* the 'duality of structure' can be related to mediation may prove useful. So far, the primary focus has been on ways in which the socio-cultural and normative environment of the mediator may be implicated in the activity of mediation, but the activity of mediation will also be

implicated in constituting the structural properties of the mediator's social system. In Figure 2, four 'dimensions of implication' are introduced, to aid comprehension of the myriad ways in which the mediator's socio-cultural environment and the activity of mediation are mutually constitutive. It should be emphasised that these dimensions of implication are not 'hard and fast', clearly defined categories. There will inevitably be overlap between the various dimensions, and in no way is the aim to establish dichotomous distinctions.

**Figure 2**



Firstly, then, it is suggested that the mediator’s socio-cultural setting will, *broadly speaking*, be implicated in the activity of mediation in two respects, dubbed i) “generative”, and ii) “qualitative”. (See Figure 2). The first dimension of implication refers to ways in which the mediator’s socio-cultural and normative environment can contribute to *enabling* the activity of mediation to emerge, making it possible or even likely; or, conversely, may *impede* its emergence. This would include, for instance, a case in which the prevailing norms and values of the mediator’s social environment accord well with the notion of mediating, thus enabling mediation to emerge as an activity which is compatible with the group’s ‘common sense’. Alternatively, the extant historical narratives or linguistic and cultural resources of the mediator’s social group could prove resistant to being drawn upon in discourses legitimating peace work, thereby impeding the emergence of mediation by making it more difficult to gain

acceptance for the activity among group members. The second dimension of implication (qualitative) refers to ways in which the mediator's socio-cultural environment can be implicated in the form or nature of mediatory activity undertaken. For instance, the everyday life experiences which have constituted the mediator's self-understandings and 'practical consciousness', the social norms that she/he has internalised, and the modes of conduct she/he has learned, will inevitably enter into her/his behaviour and expectations as a mediator, *e.g.*, her/his *style* of intervention, or approach to conflict situations. This dimension, too, can be conceived of as either 'positive' or 'negative'; *i.e.*, the constitutive effects of the socio-cultural environment on the nature of the mediator's intervention could either be 'empowering' or constraining.

Secondly, turning to ways in which the activity of mediation contributes to constituting the socio-cultural setting and its structural continuities, it is suggested here that (again, in simplified terms), mediation will be implicated in constituting the existing social structures in either a "reproductive" or "transformative" manner. That is to say, either mediators will be acting in accordance with pre-existing practices, such that their mediatory activity merely *reproduces* these, (carries them through space and time), or they will be innovators, introducing a new practice which then becomes (or fails to become) part of the structural continuities of the social system. As indicated earlier, these distinctions are "ideal types" rather than 'realistic' descriptions of events. Even if mediation has not previously been a prominent practice within the socio-cultural setting, actors will draw upon existing cultural, normative and historical continuities and practices when mediating, so in this sense they will be *reproducing* the existing social structures, not 'creating' new structures *de novo*. Similarly, actors will never reproduce social structures *exactly*; the continuities of the social system will inevitably undergo transformation through the workings of agency, even if the general trend is reproductive of the existing order. In both cases, (whether "reproductive" or "transformative") the activity of mediation will feed back into the structural properties of the social setting, for instance by entering into the discursive constructions of a collective identity, or into the ongoing process of scripting social narratives.

Having explored the various ways in which a mediator may be seen to be constituted by her/his socio-cultural and normative environment, (and, in turn, may be seen to constitute this environment), the discussion will now turn to a treatment of mediatory power and capabilities, paying attention to how the mediator's situated identity will be implicated in her/his forms of influence in a conflict situation.

## Part Two: Mediator Power and Agency

...[S]ince wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed...

– Constitution of UNESCO

### 3.2.1 Defining the mediating ‘agent’

Before entering into a discussion of mediatory power, a brief introduction to a few of the discursive continuities used to describe mediators in the existing mediation literature may prove helpful. Although this thesis takes the view that many of the distinctions used in the existing literature are overly clear-cut, it is also recognised that it can be difficult to *avoid* using the conventional labels when discussing the nature of a mediator’s intervention. Furthermore, it is perhaps *necessary* at times to use the terminology of existing mediation theory in order to engage with it at all.

In terms of the degree to which mediators exercise their powers of agency, in the existing literature intermediary roles are generally placed on a spectrum, ranging from passive and facilitative at one extreme to active and manipulative at the other.<sup>39</sup> Whether mediators play an active or passive role in a conflict situation will, in part, depend on the ‘stake’ they have in the conflict in question (if indeed they have one at all) – *i.e.*, how ‘biased’ they are.

According to the existing literature, (a point that has already been criticised), *all* mediators are ‘interested’ parties to a conflict in that they have their own private agendas, but only some are ‘biased’ in the sense of having a direct stake in a particular outcome. Others may have no direct or indirect interests in the *issues* or *outcome* of the conflict, but may be motivated simply by the prospect of facilitating any agreement, or creating communication and realistic understanding between the disputants. Mediators with a direct interest in the conflict issues, seeking settlement rewards, will be likely to play an active role and use *content-oriented* strategies; they will also inevitably be partial to some degree. At the other extreme, mediators seeking only process rewards, with no direct interests in the issues of the conflict, may well play a more passive, advisory role and use *process-oriented* strategies; it will also be more difficult to accuse them of being partial. (Norway’s recent mediation work would appear to fall closer to the latter category).

There is a tendency in the existing literature on mediation to divide intermediary activity into distinct categories, based on the identity of the third party, the resources

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<sup>39</sup> To a large extent mediators do not choose their roles or strategies; a mediator’s behaviour is usually determined and restricted by factors such as their identity, interests, capabilities and prestige, and the context of the dispute.

which are presumed to be at their disposal, and consequently the role which they can be expected to play. The reasoning behind this is clear: it aids comparison, and introduces some measure of clarity into a huge and amorphous subject. Thus, the mediating ‘private individual’, ‘scholar-practitioner’, ‘non-governmental organisation’, ‘transnational institution’ or ‘state’ (further labelled ‘small’ or ‘superpower’), are frequently given separate treatment before comparison is attempted.<sup>40</sup> There are times, though, when such distinctions prove constraining or inadequate; indeed, the misleading distinctions between ‘powerful’ and ‘powerless’ mediators are highlighted later in this chapter.

The case study for this thesis, Norway, is difficult to place within any of the above-mentioned ‘identity’ categories. Clearly, with a population of 4.3 million, Norway can be classified as a ‘small state’ (in demographic terms), but to label Norwegian mediation work as that of a ‘state’ (implying *government*) would be misleading. As will be shown in this thesis, Norwegian peace initiatives have, more often than not, been instigated by non-governmental organisations, church groups or academics, in cooperation with ‘the state’ (government / official Foreign Ministry élite). This is a feature of what has become known in some circles as “The Norwegian Model”<sup>41</sup> — characterised by a unique closeness of academic, political, non-governmental and church organisations.

The ambiguous case of Norway reveals a general weakness in the mediation literature. With, for instance, the increasing importance of what may be termed an emerging ‘global civil society’, the tendency of much mediation theory to conceive of ‘states’ as unitary rational actors, distinct from *e.g.*, ‘non-governmental organisations’, is unsatisfactory. When governments and NGOs cooperate in peace work – and this may be seen to be increasingly the case – the units of analysis in writing on mediation must alter correspondingly. There may be a growing number of such cases where clear-cut distinctions lose their explanatory force, and instead actors transcend the categories and cause them to become murky, obscured, or merged.

### 3.2.2 Towards a more nuanced treatment of mediatory power, influence and partiality

In much of the mediation literature, as mentioned, ‘realist’ and ‘positivist’ ideas abound. This is nowhere more visible than in discussions of mediator power and capabilities. Many mediation theorists confine themselves to a narrow, one-dimensional view of “power”, equating it primarily with military and economic resources, and

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<sup>40</sup> See, *e.g.*, Bercovitch and Rubin (eds.): *Mediation in International Relations*, *op cit.*

<sup>41</sup> A term coined by, among others, Jan Egeland, Norway’s Deputy Foreign Minister from 1990 to 1997 and a frequent public commentator on Norwegian mediation work.

admitting its effects only when these are 'objectively observable.' An inherent assumption in much mediation literature is that what are conventionally thought to be 'powerful' mediators have more chances of 'success' than their less weighty counterparts. Saadia Touval, Jacob Bercovitch, and other well-known mediation theorists emphasise the superiority of "mediation-with-muscle" over mediation by less weighty third parties, using truisms in place of convincing arguments. In an article expressly situated within a 'realist' framework, Touval has even stated:

We can assume that American and Soviet mediation was more effective than the mediation of other international actors. This almost follows from the quality of being superpowers: they possess superior resources and carry more influence than other states.<sup>42</sup>

Such standpoints are, however, becoming less convincing. In an age when intra-state rather than interstate conflicts are becoming the norm, with sub-state actors as central protagonists, sheer "muscle" will not always prove as potent as the likes of Touval suggest. Superpowers might be able to exercise power at the level of national leadership, over governments and so forth, but once religious/ideological, guerrilla or militia groups and the like are involved, the language of the 'mighty' – threats of punishment or promises of reward – loses much of its compelling force.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, such intra-state conflicts are often conflicts of *belief*, *identity* or *ideology* rather than of observable "interests", and as such they tend to be particularly difficult to resolve.<sup>44</sup> Here again, the language of force, coercion and bribery will do little to solve the underlying causes of the conflict if the all-important *attitudinal* dimension is not addressed. Under duress from a weighty mediator, a 'solution' of kinds might be attained in such conflicts – e.g., an agreement on paper. But without attending to the underlying conflict of belief or ideology, any agreement will ultimately – like the power of its instigating mediator – be confined to the 'observable' dimension, leaving the attitudinal realm untouched. It will therefore be likely to crumble unless the negative and positive inducements that 'forced' its existence are maintained indefinitely.

The main point here is that in much mediation literature, an overly 'pluralist' view of power prevails.<sup>45</sup> 'Pluralist' in this context implies a one-dimensional, behavioural view of power which attributes primary importance to the domain of concrete, observable *behaviour*, rather than attitudes or other less 'visible' aspects of a

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<sup>42</sup> Saadia Touval, *The Superpowers as Mediators*, in Bercovitch and Rubin (eds.): Mediation in International Relations, p. 246.

<sup>43</sup> It may even be unable to penetrate to these less 'tangible' units of analysis, or do more harm than good if it does.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Jabri, (1996) op cit., p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> The so-called 'pluralist' view of power was propounded by a number of theorists, among them Dahl, Posby and Wolfinger, with regard to the political system of the United States. See Stephen Lukes, Power: A Radical View, pp. 11-15, 1974.



conflict.<sup>46</sup> But as Stephen Lukes has pointed out, such an understanding of power is deficient in significant ways. For instance, pluralists ‘are opposed to any suggestion that interests might be unarticulated or unobservable, and, above all, to the idea that people might actually be mistaken about, or unaware of, their own interests.’<sup>47</sup> Lukes proposes a three-dimensional view of power which accords centrality to the cognitive, perceptual or attitudinal dimension if a proper understanding of power is to be achieved, and devalues the observable, behavioural realm – often accorded near-hegemonic status by realist and positivist mediation theorists:

...is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial?<sup>48</sup>

This notion of power can be related to the discussion in Chapter 1 on Weldes’ notion of societal ‘common sense’, or in Chapter 2 on reified social structures having a constraining effect because they confront actors as part of the ‘natural order of things’.<sup>49</sup> As Giddens argues, ‘[p]ower relations are often most profoundly embedded in modes of conduct which are taken for granted by those who follow them, most especially in routinized behaviour...’<sup>50</sup> In similar vein, Jabri writes:

...overt forms of power must also be seen in relation to more “hidden” forms which, for example, allow certain discourses and self-definitions while rendering others invisible and therefore beyond contestation. Such power runs silently through discursive and institutional practices...<sup>51</sup>

‘Power’ is, of course, an essentially contested concept, and this thesis makes no attempt to propound a definition that encompasses all the complexities of mediation and conflict analysis. The suggestion here is simply that bringing a somewhat more nuanced idea of power to the mediation literature would aid our understanding of the ways in which mediators operate on a conflict. The relative neglect – or underestimation – of ways in which mediators can affect the perceptual, or attitudinal, dimension of a conflict, and how this may also be conceived of as an aspect of ‘power’, is a deficiency in the existing literature, particularly since conflicts of belief or ideology are likely to become increasingly prevalent. Too often mediators presumed to have ‘power’ are

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<sup>46</sup> See for instance, Lukes, *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> Lukes, *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> His three-dimensional view of power also accords well with Galtung’s notion of “structural violence” and Adam Curle’s concept of “negative peace”, in that he allows for the existence of *latent* conflicts which are not necessarily observable, and where people may not even be aware of their ‘real’ interests.

<sup>50</sup> Giddens, *op cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>51</sup> Jabri, 1996, *op cit.*, p. 83.

contrasted with their supposedly ‘powerless’ counterparts. “Muscle”, however, is not synonymous with power or influence, as theorists like Touval would seem to suggest. *All* mediators exercise power, exert influence, or ‘significantly affect’<sup>52</sup> the disputants, no matter how apparently ‘light-weight’ they are, otherwise they would have no effect on any conflict situation. Indeed, as indicated in Chapter 2, ‘power’ is centrally implicated in *every* exercise of agency – including the activity of mediation.<sup>53</sup>

Leading on from this, a further aspect of ‘power’ which the existing mediation literature does not address is the ‘power’ to exercise agency as a mediator in the first place, or the transformative capacity inherent in establishing mediation as an enduring element of a state’s foreign policy. This relates, for instance, to the ‘power’ of those promoting mediation *within* the social collectivity – their access to resources and modes of discourse dissemination, for instance. It is also rooted in the extant cultural and linguistic resources of the social setting, and how easily these can be drawn upon in support of mediation work, or in naturalising it as an activity. The power to exercise agency as a mediator, or establish mediation as a prioritised practice will also depend upon the degree of constraint experienced by actors within the socio-cultural setting – affected, for instance, by the actors’ knowledgeability, and the spatio-temporal contingencies of their positioning. As noted in Chapter 2, social systems which are deeply embedded in time and space will resist manipulation by individuals to a greater extent than those with less time-space distancing.<sup>54</sup> Thus, a small socio-cultural setting, or one with a short history in its present form, could be imagined to allow its members greater manoeuvrability – to establish mediation as a foreign policy practice, for instance – than one whose institutions are stretched more fixedly across time and space.

It is hoped that this thesis, by focusing attention on the case of Norway – a mediator lacking “muscle” – will help to illuminate the many guises that ‘power’ takes, and how a seemingly lightweight third party is able to exert leverage in a conflict situation, not least, perhaps, by addressing the attitudinal dimension. In section 3.2.3 below, a typology of the ‘bases of social power’ first developed by French and Raven, but used by Jeffrey Rubin in the context of mediation, is introduced. This typology of power is preferable to many in that it considers the effects of various kinds of power usage on the *attitudes* of the objects of influence – *i.e.*, it does not entirely limit itself to a one-dimensional, behavioural focus.

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<sup>52</sup> This phrase is used by Lukes to denote the common denominator uniting power and its ‘cognates’ – e.g. coercion, force, manipulation, authority, influence, persuasion, encouragement, inducement.

<sup>53</sup> Here I draw on Giddens, *op cit.*, pp. 9, and 14-15.

<sup>54</sup> See Chapter 2. Here again I am drawing on Giddens, (p. 171).

Two further conceivable bases of power with relevance to mediation are then added to the typology: “reputation”, and “facilitative” power. This is partly in order to address what is seen as a *second* deficiency in the treatment of power in the existing mediation literature, namely, the failure to take into account the possible effects of the mediator’s socio-cultural environment on mediatory power and capabilities. For the suggestion here is that this neglected socio-cultural and normative dimension will also be fundamentally implicated in, and impinge upon, the spectrum of power bases open to the mediator and the degree of leverage she/he is able to exert in a conflict situation. To an extent, the earlier discussions of the mediator’s “constituency” and socio-cultural and normative environment have already addressed this topic, and the idea is alluded to again in Chapter Four.

In tandem with the one-dimensional view of power espoused by ‘realist’ mediation theorists is a tendency to emphasise the credentials of the ‘biased’ mediator. A certain consensus seems to have emerged among those writing on mediation that qualities such as impartiality have been overemphasised as mediatory virtues. Touval, Zartman, and Bercovitch are prominent exponents of this view, which is partly a response to a propensity in early mediation theory<sup>55</sup> to over-emphasise the importance of a third party’s impartiality, almost above all else. Bercovitch and Houston, for instance, write:

We are... doubtful of the importance of this attribute [impartiality]. The traditional emphasis on impartiality stems from the failure to recognize mediation as a reciprocal process of social interaction in which the mediator is a major participant... Mediators are accepted by the adversaries not because of their impartiality but because of their ability to influence, protect, or extend the interests of each party in conflict.<sup>56</sup>

The nature of mediation by biased (content-oriented) third parties has thus become a popular topic; it has, for instance, been amply demonstrated that when such bias is combined with ‘power’ in the sense of economic and military resources, a mediator can exert considerable leverage over the adversaries, particularly over its supposedly ‘favoured’ party, thus creating greater movement towards an agreement.<sup>57</sup> There is, of course, truth in this, but again it is hoped that important nuances will be added to these rather rigid, verging on ‘realist’ views by drawing attention to the case of

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<sup>55</sup> (which had its origins in the realms of industrial relations and family mediation)

<sup>56</sup> Bercovitch (ed): *Resolving International Conflicts*, p. 26.

<sup>57</sup> For instance, at the time of Kissinger’s intervention in the Middle East (from the outset of the October War in 1973 to the final Arab-Israeli disengagement negotiations in August 1975), President Sadat of Egypt, despite seeing an incestuously close relationship between Israel and the U.S. (he refers to Israel in his memoirs as ‘America’s stepdaughter’), chose to accept U.S. mediation. “[W]hatever Kissinger may have lacked in neutrality was presumably more than compensated, in Sadat’s eyes, by his capacity to elicit concessions from Israel.” See Pruitt, ‘*Kissinger as a Traditional Mediator with Power*’, in Rubin (ed): *Dynamics of Third Party Intervention—Kissinger in the Middle East*, p. 141.

a 'small state' facilitator such as Norway. Section 3.2.5 below attempts to show that the impartiality/partiality question – especially when dealing with mediators lacking “muscle” – is not as clear-cut as Bercovitch and Houston suggest. In some cases, perceived impartiality may actually be central to a mediator attaining “legitimate” and “reputation” power or authority, or indeed, to gaining entry to the conflict in the first place.<sup>58</sup>

In challenging these 'realist' and 'positivist' perspectives, the aim is not to suggest that mediators lacking power in a coercive sense<sup>59</sup> (such as “small states”), or with no direct interest in the *issues* of a conflict, and thereby some degree of impartiality (such as Norway in the context of its recent mediation attempts) are in any way superior to other 'species' of mediator. All intermediaries – whether 'muscular' and 'biased', or 'lightweight' and 'impartial' – occupy their important niche in the conflictual international 'ecosystem'. But a mediator's identity, her/his interests or values, the forms of influence she/he will rely on and her/his capabilities will affect (to varying degrees) the structure and dynamics of any conflict situation she/he enters. The context of a given conflict is still important in the sense that it determines which kind of mediatory intervention will be deemed 'suitable', or will be most likely to have a constructive effect. But a more nuanced understanding of mediator 'power' – and how a mediator's 'situated identity' may be implicated in this – is called for. An enhanced treatment of mediator power and partiality, then, should take into account the ways in which the mediator's socio-cultural background impinges upon the forms of power the mediator is able to draw on, and further, how these forms of power will be implicated in the degree to which partiality is acceptable, if at all.

### 3.2.3 Mediator power bases

As suggested earlier, the typology first proposed by French and Raven in 1959 (to clarify the different bases of social power that one individual can use in order to influence another) lends itself particularly well to a discussion of mediator power,<sup>60</sup> not

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<sup>58</sup> “Realist” in the sense that coercion, manipulation and ‘might’ are emphasised in an almost Machiavellian way. Touval and Zartman often explicitly base their discussions of mediation within an environment of 'realist' power politics. In *International Mediation: Conflict Resolution and Power Politics*, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 1985, for instance, they write: “Our discussion in this article is based on the assumption that the context of international relations, and particularly its power politics, has a major effect on international mediation.” (p. 28).

<sup>59</sup> Primarily economic and military resources.

<sup>60</sup> This framework was subsequently developed further by Raven and Kruglanski and by Raven and Rubin. See French and Raven, *The Bases of Social Power* in Cartwright (ed.): *Studies in Social Research*, 1959; Raven and Kruglanski: *Conflict and Power* in Swingle (ed): *The Structure of Conflict*; and Raven and Rubin: *Social Psychology* (2nd Edition), New York: John Wiley, 1983. Rubin also

least because it provides useful insights into the effects of various types of power usage on the *attitudes* of the object of influence — crucial in the realm of conflict analysis.<sup>61</sup> Six different power bases are hypothesised: *reward power* (influencer can offer some positive benefit in exchange for compliance); *coercive power* (influencer has ability to inflict punishment, and threatens to do so); *legitimate power* (object of influence perceives influencer to have a legitimate *right* to exert influence and make requests); *referent power* (object of influence identifies with the influencer, and the latter is able to build on their relationship and the feelings of similarity / empathy which exist); *expert power* (object of influence believes that the influencer possesses superior knowledge or expertise which justifies the requests); and finally *informational power* (influencer is able to provide object of influence with valued information not previously available to them).

To this typology, the notion of “*reputation power*” may prove a useful addition. Although in some respects this power form resembles legitimate power so closely as to appear meaningless, *reputation power* can refer both to the *influencer’s* reputation – a product of, e.g., historical behaviour or international standing (causing the object of influence to perceive the influencer as having a form of integrity, trustworthiness, or even “spiritual” clout), *and* to the possible ramifications of a mediation process on the *disputants’* reputation(s).<sup>62</sup> An additional power base, *specific to mediation*, can also be added to the typology, consisting of other qualities, resources and capabilities which render potential mediators influential.<sup>63</sup> This issue-specific form of power is here termed “*facilitative power*”; facilitative in the sense that the capabilities *facilitate* the mediation process and enhance a potential mediator’s chances of being accepted and exerting influence, not meaning power limited to the facilitative end of the mediatory

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discusses this taxonomy in the context of mediation in his chapter ‘*International Mediation in Context*’, in Bercovitch and Rubin (eds.): *Mediation in International Relations*, p. 269.

<sup>61</sup> As a mediator exerts influence, effects may be observable in the overt behaviour of the parties to a conflict, or the less observable private realm of attitudes and beliefs may change. Thus an outcome may appear ‘successful’, but in fact have little durability, since underlying attitudes remain unchanged (often the case when mediation-with-muscle is used to coerce disputants into compliance), or there may be no apparent solution or sign of improvement in the adversaries’ overt behaviour, when in fact there has been considerable movement in private beliefs towards compromise and settlement.

<sup>62</sup> For instance, a mediator who enjoys a recognised position within the international community, or global civil society, may be able to improve a previously ostracised disputant’s reputation, or the influencer may be able to bring the object of influence into the international “fold”.

<sup>63</sup> *Apart* from qualities which might fall into one of the French and Raven power bases; impartiality, for instance, sometimes contributes to legitimate power.

spectrum. It includes, for instance, the ability to provide a suitable setting for talks,<sup>64</sup> flexibility, enough *affluence* to provide the necessary communication links and facilities when hosting talks, and *continuity* as a third party.<sup>65</sup> Both of these additional power bases are inextricably linked to the mediator's positioning relative to her/his socio-cultural and normative background, and to the characteristics of this setting.

Clearly, 'lightweight' mediators such as small states may be unlikely to draw on the first two power bases in the typology ('reward' and 'coercive' power) to any great degree. Irrespective of how affluent they are in a relative sense, they will probably not possess enough conventional power (economic and military resources) to reward or coerce disputants towards a settlement. (However, there may be occasions when moderate resources channelled and utilised effectively would be sufficient to endow even less weighty mediators with significant reward and coercive power.) By contrast, a conventionally 'muscular' mediator such as the United States will probably rely heavily on its ability to exert influence through threats of punishment or promises of reward.

Such 'carrot and stick' tactics have become the essence of 'mediation-with-muscle', as championed by, for example, Henry Kissinger in the Middle East. Mediators with muscle will *usually* enjoy a virtual monopoly over reward and coercive power, and in some respects this grants them considerable advantages, as Touval *et al* claim. Often they have a greater chance of being accepted by the parties to a conflict, even when the level of hostility is high or they are perceived as 'partial', since it is better to let a third party with serious coercive potential mediate than run the risk of it siding with one's opponent. Once accepted, they can use their vast array of resources to alter the size of the conflictual 'pie', and thus create and sustain momentum in the concession-making process. For instance, by offering rewards for concessions, the powerful mediator can transform a zero-sum dispute into a non-zero-sum exchange – as Carter did at Camp David by offering to build the Israelis a new airfield in return for their evacuation of Sinai, while promising the Egyptians enormous economic and

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<sup>64</sup> In the case of the Oslo Channel, for instance, Norway's ability to provide a secret, deniable setting for negotiations, out of the glare of the media spotlight, proved crucial.

<sup>65</sup> Mediation is usually a very slow process requiring patience and long-term commitment, also in the follow-up period following an agreement. On the importance of continuity, see Oran Young, *The Intermediaries*, p. 85.

military assistance in exchange for their agreement with Israel.<sup>66</sup> Conversely, by issuing threats, the powerful mediator can coerce the conflicting parties into compliance.

There are, however, important reasons against relying too heavily on reward and coercive power, as mediators conventionally described as ‘powerful’<sup>67</sup> are prone to do. Firstly, such an active approach makes a dramatic impact on the structure of the conflict, such that the mediator may become “extremely important, even transcendent...so that the relationship between the principals could no longer continue without the third...”<sup>68</sup> There is a danger that any settlement achieved may be based on the mediator’s threats and promises alone. Consequently, an agreement reached through ‘mediation-with-muscle’ may crumble as soon as the mediator leaves the scene, if the conflicting parties have prioritised their relationship with the mediator above their interactions with each other, and the issues at stake in the conflict.<sup>69</sup> This phenomenon, whereby disputants become fixated with conveying the right impression to a mediator from whom they can extract rewards, can also render a supposedly ‘powerful’ mediator impotent: structurally *incapable* of penetrating to the heart of a dispute to tap the parties’ underlying concerns – especially if these relate to the less “observable” attitudinal dimension.<sup>70</sup> Thus while a “heavyweight” mediator with an active approach may elicit rapid settlements, what is gained in speed can be lost in durability. More passive, advisory techniques such as problem-solving and facilitation may produce slower results, but any agreements reached — since they will be based on the direct interaction of the conflicting parties — are arguably more likely to endure in the long run, with greater internalisation of attitude change.

It is not, however, always easy for a mediator with “muscle” to opt for a more passive approach. Tom Princen argues that President Carter, despite wanting to play a more facilitative, problem-solving role at Camp David than his predecessors’ game of hard-bargaining, was constrained by his prestigious position and the disputants’ expectations and preconceptions to play “power politics as usual.”<sup>71</sup> In theory, mediators representing resource-rich constituencies need not use their coercive or

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<sup>66</sup> For a detailed description of the various ‘carrots and sticks’ used by Kissinger and Carter, see Rubin (ed): *Dynamics of Third Party Intervention—Kissinger in the Middle East*, e.g. p. 27.

<sup>67</sup> i.e, endowed with vast quantities of military and economic resources.

<sup>68</sup> Rubin, *ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>69</sup> If the mediator becomes the disputants’ main concern, this can detract from the negotiations between the conflicting parties, and the real substance of their conflict. At Camp David, for example, both Israel and Egypt were primarily concerned with their relationship to the U.S. “They knew precisely for whom they were performing...Each was trying to score points with the one party both would have to deal with if a settlement was to be reached—the U.S.A. And Carter was ‘powerless’ to do anything about it.” See Tom Princen, *Camp David: Problem-Solving or Power Politics as Usual?*, p. 67.

<sup>70</sup> Princen claims that Carter was unable to elicit revelations because “each side was simultaneously in the bargain of its life with the U.S.A.” *ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p. 67.

reward potential, but in practice they are usually expected to, and will often feel pressurised to act accordingly.

Secondly, a mediator who relies primarily on reward and coercive power can become vulnerable to manipulation, particularly if the parties to the conflict see that the mediator is 'biased' in the sense of having a direct stake in the issues or outcome of the conflict. In such circumstances, the 'currency' of carrots and sticks can become inflated, and spiralling rewards may get out of hand. Kissinger, for instance, invested a huge amount of personal and political prestige in his mediation efforts, and "in effect provided the Middle East countries with a ratchet to extract ever higher tributes from the United States..."<sup>72</sup> Paradoxically, Kissinger's attempts to bring peace to the Middle East dramatically elevated the region's armaments level and capacity to wage war.

A third disadvantage of coercive power, in particular, relates to the effects of such power usage on the disputants' private beliefs, interaction with and identification with the mediator. Raven and Kruglanski suggested that use of coercive power would result in the recipient 'moving against' the agent of influence in all of these three areas, while other power bases were hypothesised to have more positive effects. (See Figure 3.)<sup>73</sup> This is echoed in some mediation literature; Wall and Lynn note that 'parties' satisfaction and mediation pressure are negatively correlated...',<sup>74</sup> and Touval concedes: 'the mediator must win the parties' confidence...It is for this reason that a mediator must rely more on positive incentives than pressures, more on promises of reward than threats of punishment.'<sup>75</sup> In a different context, Lincoln writes 'in all instances, ...force...remains something of a stopgap measure: effective in the short run, unworkable over the long haul,' adding: '[f]urther, the employment of force...modifies the affect of all members within society...'<sup>76</sup> Should a mediator wish to mediate again, or maintain a close relationship with the parties to the conflict following the intervention, coercion should thus not be relied upon too heavily. Coercion has the added drawback that the change induced is highly dependent on the influencing agent (in this case the mediator), and so constant surveillance must be maintained; the disputants' compliance is based on fear of punishment rather than internalised attitude change.

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<sup>72</sup>Straus, in Rubin (ed): Dynamics of Third Party Intervention, Chapter 10, p. 262.

<sup>73</sup>Raven and Kruglanski, p. 78.

<sup>74</sup> Wall and Lynn: 'Mediation: A Current Review', p. 173. (Their findings are seen by some as questionable, since they are based on generalisations made from a few cases).

<sup>75</sup> Saadia Touval, in Bercovitch and Rubin (eds.), p. 240.

<sup>76</sup> Lincoln, Discourse and the Construction of Society, op cit., p. 4.



**Figure 3**

*Effects of the Utilisation of Social Power in terms of moving toward(+), moving away (0), and moving against (—) the agent.<sup>77</sup>*

*Effect on B's:*

	overt behaviour	private beliefs	interaction with agent	identification with agent
<i>Source of A's Power:</i>				
Reward	+	0	+	0
Coercion	+	—	—	—
Legitimacy	+	+	0	0
Expert	+	+	0	0
Information	+	+	?	?
Referent	+	+	+	+

The fact that a 'lightweight' mediator such as a 'small state' will be unlikely to draw on reward or coercive power in its dealings with disputants<sup>78</sup> means that the nature of its interventions will be qualitatively quite unlike those of 'mediators with muscle.' Naturally, there will be conflict situations where a small state's lack of 'conventional power' will render any mediation attempt unfeasible; for instance, if the protagonists are insufficiently motivated to settle their conflict without side-payments and other rewards,<sup>79</sup> or where the level of hostility is so high that any potential third party would have to force entry. At other times, however, the 'constraints' of less weighty mediators such as small states afford great opportunities. As suggested before, the growing number of ethnic and intra-state conflicts may prove immune to attempts to resolve them with sheer might or mediation-with-muscle. Since such conflicts are usually characterised by a residue of years of mutual distrust and resentment, facilitative forms of mediation with a process orientation and problem-solving techniques may accomplish more, (by affecting the perceptual and psychological dimensions of the dispute and encouraging the conflicting parties' direct interaction,) than active, content-oriented forms of mediation aimed at the behavioural dimension and at securing a

<sup>77</sup> Adapted from Raven and Kruglanski, p. 79.

<sup>78</sup> (although it may do so to an extent under certain circumstances)

<sup>79</sup> Fringe economic benefits and other rewards enable negotiators to justify any conciliatory behaviour to their constituents back home in utilitarian terms.

settlement at any price. Small states would appear to be well-suited to playing these more passive, or facilitative, roles.

Having eliminated reward and coercive power, then, from the less weighty mediator's repertoire, French and Raven's latter four power bases remain, together with my notions of 'reputation' and 'facilitative power', as potential sources of leverage or influence. When Rubin applied the French and Raven taxonomy to the realm of international mediation, he hypothesised that while large states or superpowers could draw on reward, coercive, expert and legitimate power, and mediating scholar-practitioners could exert influence through expert, legitimate and informational power, a small state would be confined to using just legitimate and referent power.<sup>80</sup> 'The Norwegian model', however, results in a broader spectrum of power bases being drawn on than Rubin envisaged for a small 'state', since a variety of interdependent mediating actors work in conjunction with each other, thus pooling their capabilities and means of influence. The Norwegian case also demonstrates that certain distinguishing characteristics of the mediator's socio-cultural and normative backdrop can enhance her/his influence potential. As argued earlier, categories such as 'small state' are more fluid than much mediation literature assumes.

Nevertheless, it may be true that 'small states' in general rely particularly on legitimate and referent power (and arguably also reputation and facilitative power) when exerting influence. In terms of legitimate power, as Randa Slim notes:

The strategic weaknesses of the small states do usually endow their attempts at mediation with a moral superiority, to which superpowers cannot claim rights...For the powerful party, a small state can provide a face-saver to whom capitulations can be made without threatening the public-bargaining posture... For the weaker party, a smaller state can provide a sympathetic ally who can understand what it means to negotiate from weakness. Thus, they can succeed in mediating conflicts without leaving the residual feelings of resentment and unfair treatment that usually follow similar interventions by superpowers.<sup>81</sup>

This phenomenon has been referred to as 'the legitimate power of the powerless'. If a conflict is characterised by intense feelings of suspicion and distrust, the non-threatening form of mediation which small states offer has clear appeal. In such cases, the legitimacy of the small state mediator is likely to be further enhanced if they are perceived as disinterested and impartial. (While more 'conventionally powerful' mediators may be considered legitimate even if they are clearly partial, partiality in 'weaker' mediators is less likely to be tolerated. More on this later). Small states are more likely to possess 'subjective impartiality'<sup>82</sup> than larger states, since their interests are usually limited and they may be unburdened by the stigma of a colonial past. (Such

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<sup>80</sup> Rubin, in Bercovitch and Rubin (eds.): *Mediation in International Relations*, p. 269.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 207

<sup>82</sup> Oran Young distinguishes between subjective and objective impartiality, arguing that the important question is how the mediator is *perceived* by the disputants.

historical factors would of course also enhance their ‘reputation power’.) Again, the importance of the mediator’s spatio-temporal positioning is clear. Moreover, small states’ lack of ‘conventional power’ or muscle has arguably *prevented* them from committing the kind of acts that could tarnish their legitimacy as mediators. Legitimate power will be increased if a small state has somehow acquired *credibility* in the eyes of the protagonists — this has been described as a function of two attributes: expertise and trustworthiness.<sup>83</sup>

The above quote also highlights a small state’s referent power; in an asymmetric conflict situation the weaker party may empathise with (and expect empathy from) a small state mediator, because of their inherent (or apparent) similarity. Usually, though, a small state’s referent power will be contingent upon its links with the disputants in question (again, historically contingent). Sometimes a small state may be the *only* actor enjoying some form of relations with both sides in a conflict, in which case its referent power will be greatly increased, relative to other potential mediators. In the case of the 1980 hostage crisis between Iran and the United States, for instance, Algeria was the only party perceived by both protagonists as acceptable; it was one of very few countries with positive and friendly relations with the revolutionary regime in Teheran, while also having tolerable relations with Iran’s ‘Great Satan’, the US.<sup>84</sup> This ‘lowest common denominator’ syndrome is returned to later in the thesis.

Mediators from small states are also likely to score highly in terms of the capabilities in the added category ‘facilitative power’. Since small states usually lack high status, they are rarely in the international limelight, and this will increase their ability to provide a low-profile, secluded setting for negotiations. Where secrecy is considered crucial to the mediation process (for instance to shield the disputing parties from extreme factions in their constituency or to prevent hardening of positions through ‘playing to the gallery’), small states have the added advantage that their decision-making is usually centralised to a small élite group, ‘allowing the highest level of secrecy possible in the age of communications.’<sup>85</sup> In terms of continuity and long-term commitment, too, mediators from small states may be able to offer more than their counterparts with hefty backing. An awareness of their limitations on the global stage will arguably lead to small state constituencies being less demanding, not clamouring for ‘results’ like the constituencies of ‘muscular’ mediators. This will enable mediation work (and foreign policies generally) to be followed patiently over long periods, rather

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<sup>83</sup> C.I. Hovland and W. Weiss, ‘*The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness*’, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 15 (1951) pp. 635-50, quoted in Slim, in Bercovitch and Rubin (eds.), p. 218. This would, of course, vary from context to context.

<sup>84</sup> For an in-depth discussion of this, see Randa Slim, ‘Small-State Mediation’ in Bercovitch and Rubin (eds.).

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

than becoming a slave to domestic politics. As Norway's former Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Egeland has written, 'countries with modest small state expectations have the ...advantage of a public opinion which is less oriented to visible short term impact...'<sup>86</sup>

Having discussed briefly the forms of power and influence which a mediator lacking 'conventional power' (or high coercive potential) will be likely to draw on, and how these differ from those of supposedly 'powerful' mediators, the impact a third party's entrance makes on the structure of a conflict will now be considered. Since mediators exert influence in quite dissimilar ways, and the extent to which they have a stake in the issues or outcome of a conflict also differs greatly, it is not surprising that their effects on the structure and dynamics of a conflict reflect this diversity. Consideration of a third party's structural impact on a conflict situation exposes the fundamental differences between mediators and mediation styles, and thus contributes to our understanding of the nature of process-oriented mediation by a conventionally 'lightweight' third party (such as Norway), and how this contrasts with other, more studied, forms of mediation.

#### ***3.2.4 Mediator Partiality, Coercive Potential and Structural Impact on the Conflict***

Mediators will impinge upon the structure and dynamics of a conflict to varying degrees. While the entrance of a mediator necessarily changes the structure of the conflict from a dyad to a triad (in simple terms), certain mediators will make their presence felt more than others. Mitchell notes that all mediators will vary in two crucial dimensions: *stake in the outcome* of the conflict, and *coercive potential*.<sup>87</sup> (We might conceive of these dimensions as *continuums* of, respectively, *partiality* and *leverage*). At one extreme, interested, 'content-oriented' mediators with a direct stake in the conflict issues, seeking settlement rewards, and with high coercive potential will tend to affect the structure of the conflict dramatically, becoming at least as important as the disputants. They will be likely to play an active role, using bargaining tactics; if necessary drawing on their coercive and reward power to achieve a settlement to their liking. At the other extreme, 'process-oriented' mediators with no direct interest in the issues or outcome of the conflict and little 'conventional power' with which to threaten or reward the disputants, will tend to play a more passive role and have far less impact on the structure of the conflict — detracting less from the disputants' direct interaction.

Tom Princen introduces a dichotomy between the *principal mediator* and the *neutral mediator* (respectively the combined upper, and the combined lower ends of the

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<sup>86</sup> Jan Egeland: 'Focus On—Human Rights—Ineffective Big States, Potent Small States', Journal of Peace Research, vol. 21, no. 3, 1984, p. 209.

<sup>87</sup> —or reward potential, presumably. See Mitchell, The Structure of International Conflict, p. 296.

partiality and leverage continuums mentioned above), thereby showing the two extremes of the mediatory spectrum. His distinction is useful to this thesis, particularly since a process-oriented small state facilitator (such as Norway in the context of its recent mediation attempts) *to a certain extent* resembles his ideal ‘neutral mediator’ type. Princen hypothesises the nature of mediatory intervention by each of his ‘ideal constructs’:<sup>88</sup>

The principal mediator has interests in the disputed issues and can bring resources to bear; the neutral has neither but can offer a low-risk environment....A principal mediator bargains with each disputant...

A neutral mediator cannot bargain with the disputants. It has neither the interests nor the capacity...By its very nature, by the structural relationship between it and the disputants, by its “weakness” in bargaining resources, the neutral can credibly demonstrate its lack of interest (even indirect) in the issues in dispute. As such, it can do nothing *but* work on the disputants’ interaction.<sup>89</sup>

Figure 4 summarises how different mediators affect the structure and dynamics of a conflict. (In addition to Princen’s ‘principal’ and ‘neutral’ mediators, I have shown two other imaginable ‘types’, although of course these are still simplifying constructs). While the entrance of a ‘principal mediator’ will change the structure of the conflict dramatically, with the third party taking its place alongside the protagonists and a fully triadic pattern of relationships emerging (since the mediator has a stake in the outcome, the disputants will also be able to exert leverage), a ‘neutral mediator’, with neither a stake in the outcome nor coercive potential, will remain ‘outside’ the conflict to a far greater degree, leaving the dyadic structure more intact, merely enhancing the disputants’ direct interaction through facilitating the talks and striving to bring about attitude change and improved norms of interaction.

Returning to the topic of mediator partiality / impartiality, it should be clear from type C in Figure 4 that a mediator lacking ‘conventional power’ (high coercive potential) can become vulnerable to manipulation if she/he is also perceived as ‘partial’ (having a stake in the outcome) by the parties to the conflict. It would seem, then, that such partiality renders potential mediators *without* ‘muscle’ unsuitable for a third party role, should they wish to exert any influence at all.<sup>90</sup> Partiality in the sense of having closer ties to one party may also be less tolerated in a ‘conventionally weak’ mediator. While mediators with muscle are able to compensate for any perceived partiality by strong-arming their preferred party into making concessions, thereby maintaining their perceived legitimacy, a more lightweight mediator will be unable to pressurise its

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<sup>88</sup> He makes it plain that these *are* “ideal types” in the Weberian sense; “unreal constructs designed to penetrate to the real causal interrelationships.” Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, p. 31.

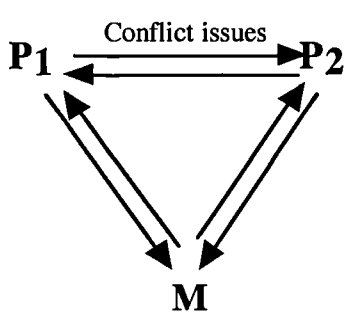
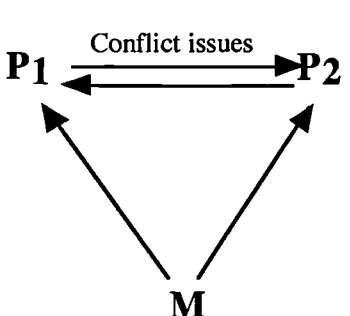
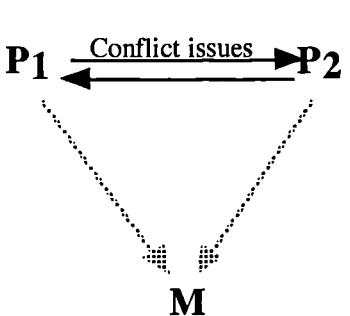
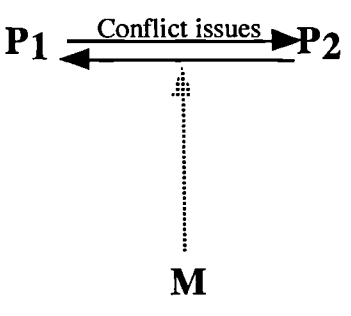
<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 23-31

<sup>90</sup> *In most cases*—exceptions can be imagined, for instance if the mediator has a particularly highly prized capability or alternative base of influence, such as unique access to information or an unrivalled relationship with both parties to the conflict.

Figure 4: The Effect of the Identity of the Mediator on the Structure and Dynamics of the Conflict.

P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub> = conflicting parties; M = mediator

High/Low interest refers to the mediator's interest in the conflict issues (stake in the outcome), as opposed to the process. (High or low content orientation).

<p><b>A</b> "Principal mediator"</p> <p>Mediator has: high coercive potential high interest</p>  <p>Structure becomes fully triadic. Mediator is equally important, even transcendent. Conflict issues no longer central concern. Equal or greater importance given to bilateral relationship between mediator and each party; mediator's interests, reward and coercive potential become issues. Manipulation cuts both ways.</p>	<p><b>B</b></p> <p>Mediator has: high coercive potential low interest</p>  <p>Structure becomes triadic but mediator enjoys greater control over process than the disputants do. Conflict issues remain central. Mediator's coercive potential may lead to an enforced settlement with little internalisation of attitude change on part of the disputants, especially if mediator is seeking settlement rewards, though no stake in particular outcome.</p>
<p><b>C</b></p> <p>Mediator has: low coercive potential high interest</p>  <p>Dyadic structure qualified by parties' knowledge of mediator's stake in outcome. Parties enjoy greater control over the process; can manipulate mediator.</p>	<p><b>D</b> "Neutral mediator"</p> <p>Mediator has: low coercive potential low interest</p>  <p>Dyadic structure remains largely intact. Mediator's influence relates to the process and the parties' interaction rather than a specific outcome. Direct interaction between the parties, and the conflict issues, are central. Leverage minimal. Process is largely self-perpetuating. Mediator's influence based largely on ability to facilitate.</p>

favoured party into compliance, and will therefore lose (all-important) legitimacy in the eyes of the protagonists. In short, although Touval, Zartman and others claim that impartiality is not required for successful mediation, it would seem that this is only the case for comparatively 'weighty' mediators.<sup>91</sup>

An article by James Smith corroborates this view. Smith distinguishes between two fundamentally different styles of mediation: 'pure' mediation and 'power' mediation (which can be roughly equated with Princen's neutral-principal dichotomy mentioned above).<sup>92</sup> He argues that for 'power' mediation, impartiality is not necessary: "Touval and Bercovitch are entirely correct...Disputants often have little choice but to accept mediators." But for 'pure' mediation, the story is different:

Pure mediators, ...while not having to face the possibility of disputants wanting access to their power, must accept the restrictions that lack of power brings. ...[T]heir position is an untenable one: their disputants...may leave the negotiations at any time and, most importantly, may dismiss the mediators if they do something they dislike or...see as biased behaviour.... [I]mpartiality, or, rather, the appearance of impartiality, must be and is the *sine qua non* of pure mediation.<sup>93</sup>

A small state such as Norway will usually fall closer to the 'pure' category of mediators, and hence 'subjective impartiality' will tend to enhance its perceived legitimacy.

### ***Final Remarks***

To sum up the position of this thesis in relation to the existing mediation literature, then, a case is made for 'situating' mediators within their wider historical, socio-cultural, attitudinal and normative contexts. The underlying assumption is that we cannot acquire a full and accurate picture of mediators when they are merely viewed within the spatio-temporal confines of a particular conflict, removed from the wider socio-cultural, normative and historical environment which has constituted them as actors. This does not mean, however, that the conflict-oriented approach of the mediation literature is rejected; clearly discussion of the identity and motives of a mediator will to a large extent depend on the conflict in question. It would seem, though, that this approach could be supplemented by more in-depth examination of specific mediators which goes beyond the bounds of a given conflict situation,

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<sup>91</sup> *Impartiality*, incidentally, is not to be confused with *neutrality*. Although neutral, Sweden has earned itself a reputation as a moralistic critic in international relations, detracting from its subjective impartiality. [See, for instance, Ulf Bjereld: 'Critic or Mediator? Sweden in World Politics, 1945-90', JPR, vol. 32, no. 1, 1995]. Norway, on the other hand, with a less outspoken attitude, is arguably perceived in some settings as more impartial than Sweden, despite its 'alignment.'

<sup>92</sup> See James D.D. Smith: 'Mediator Impartiality: Banishing the Chimera', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 31, no. 4, 1994, pp. 445-450. 'Pure' (neutral) mediators have low interest and low coercive potential, whereas 'power' (principal) mediators have high interest and high coercive potential.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 446-447.

especially where we are dealing with ‘serial’ third parties who intervene in a range of contexts.

In general, the thesis aims to challenge some of the ‘realist’ and ‘positivist’ assumptions inherent in much mediation theory. Rather than focusing on the ‘objectively observable’, behavioural dimension, it is suggested that less ‘visible’ aspects of mediation need to be explored, *e.g.*, a possible normative basis for mediating, or the effects of mediatory activity on disputants’ attitudes, perceptions and other cognitive states. It is considered crucial to examine the mediator’s socio-cultural and normative environment, and ways in which it is implicated in constituting her/him as an actor – entering into the mediator’s conduct and expectations in conflict situations, for instance. Similarly, it is considered important to engage with mediators’ own articulations concerning their work, as well as the discourses surrounding mediation within their wider social group, in order to hermeneutically ‘tap into’ the actors’ self-understandings. By taking a ‘deeper’, or more three-dimensional view of mediators and conflict settings, it is suggested that our understandings of mediatory intervention – including mediator ‘power’, capabilities and chances of ‘success’ in a given situation – will be greatly enhanced. The rather constricted view of power in the existing literature on mediation blocks a more subtle understanding of mediatory capabilities, which would, among other things, devote more attention to mediators’ attitudes, tactics and style of behaviour (and how their socio-cultural context is implicated in constituting these). It would also pay attention to the ‘power’ inherent in being *able* to mediate in the first place. This would result in rather less importance being accorded to mediators’ material or military ‘resources’ than is the case in much of the existing mediation literature. Looking at the case of a mediator lacking “muscle” in a conventional sense, and that in some senses defies easy categorisation, may also help to shed light on complexities of mediation that have not hitherto been adequately explored.



## Chapter Four: Social Theory: the ‘Lifeworld’, social norms and values

*Common sense is not a simple thing. Instead, it is an immense society of hard-earned practical ideas – of multitudes of life-earned rules and exceptions, dispositions and tendencies, balances and checks.<sup>1</sup>*

*—Behold! human beings housed in an underground cave; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained, so that they cannot move and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets...*

*And do you see...men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? ... [D]o you think [the prisoners] have seen anything of themselves, and of one another, except the shadows which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave? How could they do so, ...if throughout their lives they were never allowed to move their heads? ...And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that the things they saw were the real things?<sup>2</sup>*

The previous chapters suggest that, in order to properly understand mediatory ‘motives’, capabilities and styles, attention must be paid to the socio-cultural context in relation to which mediators are positioned, and how this contributes to constituting them as actors, entering into their style of behaviour, expectations and attitudes in peace work. This insight was based, in part, on a structurationist view of agents and social ‘structures’ as mutually constitutive. This chapter, in essence, deals with the ‘nuts and bolts’ of *how* individual actors, mediators included, are constituted by the continuities of the socio-cultural and normative environment in relation to which they are situated, and how, in turn, they contribute to constituting this environment.

Since this thesis takes a hermeneutic approach and seeks to pick up on the self-understandings of actors, this chapter introduces lifeworld analysis – a branch of social theory concerned with understanding human action from the participant perspective of those involved – as a means of conceptualising this. A conception of ‘lifeworld’ which fits with the theoretical stance and assumptions of this thesis is developed, by first discussing the ideas of Alfred Schutz and Jürgen Habermas relating to this topic, and then incorporating relevant elements of their views into a structurationist, discourse analytic approach to the lifeworld. The socio-cultural and normative environment of the actor is not viewed in instrumental, positivist terms – as something external to human behaviour that

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin Minsky, (founder of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1958), cited in Kurzweil, Ray: *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, Phoenix, 1999, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, 514a – 515d.

impacts on it 'from outside', but rather as fundamentally implicated in every exercise of agency, as well as in actors' self-(*and other*-)understandings.

## 4.1 The Lifeworld

### 4.1.1 *The Phenomenological 'Life-world'*

Since this thesis takes a 'post-positivist' stance, it is perhaps appropriate that a philosophical method of enquiry which (in a sense) originated as a critique of positivism should be drawn upon here. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is generally considered the founder of phenomenology, a branch of philosophy that arose in response to the encroachment of natural scientific thinking into philosophy's heartland.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, partly due to the impressive inroads made by the natural sciences in describing physical reality, and partly due to the widespread acceptance of Cartesian mind-body dualism, a growing trend emerged in philosophy to disregard subjective aspects of consciousness, and instead view consciousness as amenable to empirical study from 'outside' – using the quantitative methods of natural science.<sup>3</sup> This trend can be seen as corresponding to the prevailing influence of positivism in the social sciences, discussed in Chapter 1, wherein social action was merely to be neutrally *observed*, without entering into the self-understandings of actors, the meanings they ascribed to their action, or the underlying values and beliefs that prompted them to act in a certain way.

This was the background that led Husserl, in a seminal work,<sup>4</sup> to mount an attack on 'the limited and distorted interpretation of the modern natural sciences'.<sup>5</sup> In particular, as Väyrynen explains, he reacted against the 'Galilean style' of the sciences, derived from Galilean physics, 'characterised by a cleavage between the world as it presents itself in the perceptual experience of everyday life and the world as it is in scientific truth and in 'reality'.<sup>6</sup> Husserl criticised the tendency of modern science to deny the validity of the perceptually encountered world, and its quest to seek mathematical structures underlying

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<sup>3</sup> Tarja Väyrynen, *op cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> Husserl, Edmund: The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenology, David Carr (trans.), Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Väyrynen, p. 137.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 137.

our experience. Instead, he argued for the ‘restoration and reinstating of the life-world’; for a renewed emphasis on consciousness and the subjective perception of everyday life.<sup>7</sup>

Phenomenology is thus a thoroughgoing hermeneutic approach; it tends to ‘stress the ‘subjectivist’ view-point: the point of view of an experiencing ‘I’ (consciousness) which is the starting-point of experiences, actions and interpretations in the social world.’<sup>8</sup> It is supposed to start from ‘a scrupulous inspection of one’s own conscious, and particularly intellectual, processes.’<sup>9</sup> Further, ‘in this inspection all assumptions about the wider and external causes and consequences of these internal processes have to be excluded (‘bracketed’).’<sup>10</sup> Craib describes the phenomenological enterprise as follows:

Phenomenology is concerned solely with the structures and workings of human consciousness, and its basic – though often implicit – presupposition is that the world we live in is created by consciousness... [T]he outside world has meaning only through our consciousness of it. The sociologist – or any scientist, for that matter ... must... understand how we make [the world] meaningful. This is achieved through setting aside what we normally assume we know and tracing the process of coming to know it. This setting aside of our knowledge is referred to sometimes as the ‘phenomenological reduction’, sometimes as ‘bracketing’, and in the more technical literature as the *epoché*.<sup>11</sup>

Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) is generally credited for carrying Husserl’s ideas from philosophy into the social sciences, particularly sociology; for developing Husserl’s insights and his emphasis on the ‘life-world’. It is therefore on Schutz’s phenomenological sociology – and especially his elaboration of the ‘life-world’ concept – that the rest of this section will focus. In brief, Schutz’s thesis can be summarised as the commitment that ‘to “understand” human action we must not take the position of an outside observer, rather we must develop categories for understanding what the actor – from his or her point of view, ‘means’ in his or her actions.’<sup>12</sup> The following discussion elaborates on elements of Schutz’s thinking, but no pretence is made to provide a full account of Schutzian phenomenology; rather, ideas of relevance to this thesis are selected for discussion.

Firstly, what are we to understand by the term ‘life-world’ as used in phenomenology? In arguing that the everyday world of the social actor should be the basis for philosophy and the social sciences, the concept of ‘life-world’ is introduced to refer to

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>9</sup> Flew, Anthony (ed.): A Dictionary of Philosophy, Pan Books Ltd. in association with The Macmillan Press, 1979, p. 266.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Craib, Ian: Modern Social Theory: From Parsons to Habermas, 2nd ed., Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992, p. 98.

<sup>12</sup> Väyrynen, p. 139.

precisely this: the everyday world as encountered in day-to-day life.<sup>13</sup> Schutz himself defines ‘what Husserl calls the ‘life-world’ (*Lebenswelt*)’ as the domain in which

in the natural attitude, we, as human beings among fellow-beings, experience culture and society, take a stand with regard to their objects, are influenced by them and act upon them. In this attitude the existence of the life-world and the typicality of its contents are accepted as unquestionably given until further notice.<sup>14</sup>

The lifeworld is the ever-present backdrop to, and arena for, action, and the interpretation of other’s actions. It is therefore our paramount reality.<sup>15</sup> By ‘the natural attitude’, Schutz means that in experiencing the life-world, we make certain assumptions, or idealisations; for instance, ‘that the world as it has been known by me up until now will continue further’<sup>16</sup> (Husserl’s “*and so forth*” idealisation), that we can repeat our successful acts (Husserl’s “*I can always do it again*” idealisation), and that the world’s structure is constant in both these respects — and therefore, that our past experience is valid and we can ‘operate upon the world.’<sup>17</sup> (Incidentally, this is reminiscent of Hume’s notion of ‘natural belief’, by which we assume, for instance, that previously observed sequences of cause and effect will be repeated in the future. It is also similar to Giddens’ notion of ‘practical consciousness’ enabling us to ‘go on’ in day-to-day life.) As Väyrynen writes, through the ‘natural attitude’ that prevails in the life-world, ‘the world appears to us taken for granted and self-evidently real ‘until further notice’. In that attitude we do not question the existence of the intersubjective life-world and its objects.’<sup>18</sup> This means that *i*) ‘I take the existence of fellow-men for granted, just as I take for granted the existence of natural objects’, and *ii*) ‘I assume that the objects of the life-world are, in principle, accessible to the experience of other persons’.<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, Schutz, writing with Luckmann, appears to equate the ‘natural attitude’ with that of ‘common-sense’:

By the everyday lifeworld is to be understood that province of reality which the wide-awake and normal adult simply takes for granted in the attitude of common sense. By this taken-for-grantedness, we designate everything which we experience as unquestionable; every state of affairs which is for us unproblematic until further notice.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Väyrynen, p. 143.

<sup>14</sup> Schutz, Alfred, Collected Papers III, Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy, Schutz, I. (ed.), The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966, p. 116, also cited in Väyrynen, p. 143.

<sup>15</sup> Väyrynen, p. 144.

<sup>16</sup> Schutz and Luckmann, *ibid.*, pp. 7-8, also cited in Habermas, Jürgen: The Theory of Communicative Action: A Critique of Functionalist Reason, Volume Two, p. 132.

<sup>17</sup> Schutz and Luckmann, *op cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Väyrynen, p. 144.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 152-153. Väyrynen notes that Schutz ‘calls these two assumptions the fundamental axioms of the natural attitude’.

<sup>20</sup> Schutz and Luckmann, Structures of the Lifeworld, pp. 3-4

Although phenomenology emphasises subjective awareness, Schutz also considers it crucial to recognise that the ‘I’ – the consciousness – who experiences the life-world is not a solitary ego, rather, she/he is a social actor.<sup>21</sup> Although the individual’s body forms the centre, or ‘zero-coordinate’ of her/his life-world,<sup>22</sup> the life-world contains ‘fellow-men’, contemporaries situated within the individual’s immediate environment (the ‘zone of actual reach’). It also contains contemporaries who are not spatially proximate to the individual, but who may exist in her/his lifeworld’s zones of ‘restorable reach’ or ‘obtainable reach’. In other words, there may be contemporaries who have *been* ‘fellow-men’ in the past, but whose life-trajectories have since diverged from that of the individual in question, or contemporaries who could potentially *become* the individual’s ‘fellow-men’ – involved in face-to-face interaction – at some future time.<sup>23</sup> Schutz claims that, ‘notwithstanding all social distance, contemporaries are in principle able to act on one another.’<sup>24</sup> In addition to contemporaries, the life-world also contains the world of *predecessors* ‘which acts upon us while itself being beyond the reach of our action’, and the future world of *successors* ‘upon which we can act but which cannot act upon us.’<sup>25</sup> This positioning of the individual relative to other members of her/his socio-cultural group has important implications for the way in which she/he perceives the world and acts in it, as well as for what she/he believes, ‘knows’, or expects.

Each individual’s life-world contains a ‘stock of knowledge’, accumulated throughout her/his lifetime, which forms the taken-for-granted background enabling the ‘natural attitude’ to be adopted. Although *portions* of this knowledge will have been gleaned from personal experience, Schutz makes clear that this is only a very small amount;

The overwhelming bulk of this knowledge is socially derived and transmitted to the individual in the long process of education by parents, teachers, teachers of teachers, by relations of all kinds, involving fellow-men, contemporaries and predecessors.<sup>26</sup>

Vicarious learning is therefore the primary source of the individual’s stock of knowledge. This socially derived knowledge is ‘accepted by the individual member of the cultural group as unquestionably given, because it is transmitted to him as unquestionably

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<sup>21</sup> This can be seen as a point of divergence between Schutz and Husserl; Schutz rejects Husserl’s idea of the transcendental, solipsistic ego. See Väyrynen for more detail on the differences between the two thinkers.

<sup>22</sup> See Väyrynen, p. 153.

<sup>23</sup> See Schutz, *Collected Papers III*, pp. 118-119 for more on this.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>26</sup> Schutz, *Collected Papers III*, pp. 119-120.

accepted by the group and as valid and tested.’<sup>27</sup> Largely, the knowledge passed on from fellow-group members in this way takes the form of practical ‘recipes’ enabling the individual to ‘go on’ in day to day life; it forms a kind of ‘instruction manual’ for solving ‘typical problems’ – as Schutz puts it, for attaining ‘typical results by the typical application of typical means.’<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the socially and culturally derived knowledge enables the individual to interact smoothly and meaningfully with other group members; it becomes ‘an element of the form of social life’ (cf. Wittgenstein’s usage of the term ‘form of life’) and thus ‘forms both a common schema of interpretation of the common world and a means of mutual agreement and understanding.’<sup>29</sup> The existence of the social stock of knowledge does not, however, detract from the fact that individuals, due to their unique biographical background and personal experiences, will inevitably have knowledge or beliefs that are not shared with fellow group members. As Schutz writes,

The content of what is known, familiar, believed and unknown, is...relative: for the individual relative to his biographical situation, for the group to its historical situation.<sup>30</sup>

This ties in with Giddens’ emphasis on the *positioning* of social actors affecting their knowledgeableability and conduct.<sup>31</sup>

The individual’s stock of knowledge, containing ‘more or less well founded or blind’ insights, beliefs and prejudices,<sup>32</sup> is therefore *in large part* constituted by the socio-cultural environment and group in relation to which she/he is situated. This realm of what is “taken for granted” does not, however, provide the individual with a complete or necessarily accurate picture of the world. The horizon of unproblematic ‘knowledge’ is piecemeal, sufficient only to enable the individual to find her/his way in the lifeworld.<sup>33</sup> The world as a whole remains, in principle, opaque; ‘as a whole it is neither understood nor understandable.’<sup>34</sup> The stock of knowledge is built up in tandem with the individual’s experience of living in the world. Since at any point in time the social actor finds her/himself in a particular situation which must be defined, it is these contexts of *relevance*

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>30</sup> Schutz: ‘*Some Structures of the Life-world*’, *Collected Papers III*, *op cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>31</sup> Further, Schutz implicitly refers to the unequal distribution of power in social life, and how this impacts upon knowledgeableability: ‘A further fundamental category of social life is the inequality of the distribution of knowledge in its various forms among the individuals belonging to the group and also among the groups themselves.’ (*Ibid.*) Again, this accords with the premises of structuration theory.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 130.

that determine which elements of the pre-given stock of knowledge are selected by the actor in order to interpret the situation in question. It is only when the existing stock of knowledge proves unable to account for a situation which is in some sense ‘radically new’, that new knowledge must be sought, or ‘the knowledge at hand must be transformed into higher degrees of familiarity.’<sup>35</sup> Thus the stock of knowledge grows to incorporate new elements, or previously murky areas – of belief or conjecture – become clarified. Without ‘problematic’ experiences which render the previously unquestioned horizon questionable, the individual’s received stock of socially derived knowledge and ‘recipes’ for action will merely be reinforced.

Another characteristic of the Schutzian view of the stock of knowledge is that the phenomena we experience in everyday life are perceived as *types*. As Schutz writes,

We do not experience the world as a sum of sense data, nor as an aggregate of individual things isolated from and standing in no relations [sic] to one another. We do not see colored spots and contours, but rather mountains, trees, animals, in particular birds, fish, dogs, etc.<sup>36</sup>

How we typify a phenomenon, however, depends on the ‘thematic relevancy’ which the object has for us in the present situation.<sup>37</sup> As Schutz puts it,

...I can perceive my dog Fido in his typical behavior as healthy or sick, as an individual, a German shepherd dog, a typical dog in general, a mammal, a living creature, a thing of the external world, a “something at large.”<sup>38</sup>

Further, the process of typification is itself socially and culturally conditioned. As Väyrynen writes, ‘[s]ocial groups can be distinguished [by] virtue of their commonly held relevance systems from which typifications arise. Thus, typifications included in cultural patterns vary from one social world or culture to another.’<sup>39</sup> In particular, the language – or linguistic resources – drawn upon by the individual actor in cognition and communication, and shared with fellow-members of the socio-cultural group, will lead to phenomena being typified in certain conventional ways:

...language is a storehouse of typifications, and it pre-typifies the world to us. In other words, by using language we accept certain ways to typify the world; we accept a pre-constituted reality.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Schutz, *Collected Papers III*, op cit., p. 124.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Väyrynen, p. 167.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

This clearly echoes the discussion in Chapter 1 relating to the ‘foreconceptions’ existing in language, and of the structuring effects of language on perception and cognition.

Language is a key element of the Schutzian life-world. It is the prime means by which the ego can gain an understanding of the social world and her/his fellow-people, and it forms the basis for social interaction and communication. ‘[L]anguage’ ...facilitates the crossing of the boundary between fellow-men... Language as a socially constructed system of signs which consists of typifications forms the most fundamental element of communication.’<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, language, while facilitating communication, does not render the alter ego transparent; ‘the intended (subjective) meaning of the other is to a certain degree unreachable to me.’<sup>42</sup>

It is not just a *language* which fellow-members of a socio-cultural group share,<sup>43</sup> and which facilitates intersubjective communication and understanding. In drawing upon a common social stock of knowledge, group members also share what Schutz terms a ‘cultural pattern’. Väyrynen describes this concept as follows:

The cultural pattern consists of all the peculiar valuations, institutions, and systems of orientation and guidance (e.g. mores, laws, habits, customs and fashions) which characterise or constitute any social group at a given moment in its history.<sup>44</sup>

In Schutz’s own words, ‘any member born or reared within the group accepts the ready-made standardised scheme of the cultural pattern handed down to him by ancestors, teachers, and authorities as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide in all situations which normally occur within the social world.’<sup>45</sup> The cultural pattern is an element of the taken-for-granted horizon of the individual’s life-world, and it acts as a template for action and the interpretation of others’ action, providing the ‘recipe knowledge’ mentioned earlier which enables actors to ‘go on’ within the social group.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, by internalising the cultural pattern, a ‘relative natural world view’ emerges among members of a specific group, which is ‘taken for granted and commonly shared.’<sup>47</sup> Human existence, in Schutz’s view, is therefore ‘socially and culturally conditioned,’<sup>48</sup> and perceptions of ‘reality’ are socially constructed.

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

<sup>42</sup> Väyrynen, p. 154.

<sup>43</sup> If indeed they *do* all share a common language.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>45</sup> Schutz, *Collected Papers II*, p. 95, cited in Väyrynen, pp. 166.

<sup>46</sup> Väyrynen, p. 167.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 165.



Schutz's view that individuals are socio-culturally conditioned spills over into his ideas on human rationality. Rather than there being a solitary, rational, utility-maximising ego, an individual, as a social actor, orients her/his actions according to 'standards which are socially approved as rules of conduct by the in-group he or she belongs to.'<sup>49</sup> Instead of making instrumental, means-end calculations, '[p]eople act in everyday life on the basis of routines and rules of thumb...'<sup>50</sup> The individual follows the 'recipe knowledge' contained within the cultural pattern or social stock of knowledge, as a formula for action in the life-world. Schutz terms this form of conduct 'practical rationality'<sup>51</sup>, and there are clear affinities to Giddens' notion of 'practical consciousness.' Practical rationality does not imply, however, that actors demonstrate 'rationality' in the usual sense. While following socially approved sets of rules and 'recipes' for dealing with typical problems in the life-world, the actor does not necessarily have 'insight into his motives and the means-end context.'<sup>52</sup> Knowing how to 'go on' in everyday life, following the socially accepted rules of thumb, 'does not imply that [the socially constructed standards] are rationally understood.'<sup>53</sup> Thus everyday, routine action may be reasonable and sensible – i.e. in accord with the social group's prevailing rules for 'appropriate' conduct – but this does not render it 'rational'.<sup>54</sup> Unless a situation becomes problematic for an actor, *e.g.* if it is 'radically new' in some way and the 'recipes' for day-to-day life fall short of providing a formula for how to 'go on', there is no need for the actor to calculate the utility of her/his action.<sup>55</sup> This point ties in with Giddens' writing on unconscious motives for action, and presents a similar view of the limits to actors' knowledgeability.

The constitutive effects of socio-cultural conditioning upon actors and their conduct becomes most apparent when members of an 'in-group' encounter members of an 'out-group'. Schutz writes of the slow and laborious process of cultural adjustment; the way in which the stranger, since she/he has not internalised the cultural pattern or social stock of knowledge of the in-group, is unable to act in the new setting – or interact with the new group – without encountering difficulties.

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p.162.

<sup>52</sup> Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, p. 27, cited in Väyrynen, *op cit.*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>55</sup> See Väyrynen, p. 164, for more on this.

Here, the citation from Wittgenstein in Chapter 1 is again relevant, since it highlights the way in which far more is required than linguistic acumen if one is to understand another actor – who is necessarily also a product of her/his socio-cultural conditioning or the context of her/his ‘form of life’. To re-cap:

...one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country’s language. We do not understand the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.1.2 *The Habermasian ‘Lifeworld’*

Jürgen Habermas, particularly in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, has developed and adapted Schutz’s view of the life-world. Elements of his thinking about the ‘lifeworld’ are of relevance to this thesis, but it should be emphasised that a full account of Habermas’s complex usage of the lifeworld concept lies beyond the scope of this project.

According to Habermas, we should view societies *simultaneously* as systems and lifeworlds. ‘Both paradigms, life-world and system, are important.’<sup>57</sup> To rely exclusively on either a systems theoretical approach, or on an action theoretical or interpretative (lifeworld) approach is fallacious; subsuming one dimension under the other occludes important aspects of the societal whole. While viewing societies as systems allows one to take the position of an outside observer, adopting the perspective of action theory enables one to ‘talk of the identity of society as it is experienced and understood by members of that society.’<sup>58</sup> From this latter vantage point, as David Held explains, social systems appear ‘under the aspect of a ‘life-world’ which is symbolically constituted in terms of normative structures, values, and institutions...’<sup>59</sup> Both viewpoints are important, because:

If the paradigm of systems theory is reduced to that of the life world of action theory, the issues of systems steering and control of essential structures are screened out; investigations stay at the level of commonsense or everyday knowledge of social procedures. If, on the other hand, there is an attempt to reduce the life-world to a systems theoretic approach, we are faced with the danger of losing sight of the realization that social reality is constituted through the meaningful interaction of social agents who, in the last instance, determine the tolerance levels of social conditions. What is needed, Habermas therefore maintains, is the integration of the two approaches in a historically oriented analysis of social systems.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations*, IIxi, 223e

<sup>57</sup> Habermas: *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 4., cited in Held, p. 285.

<sup>58</sup> Held, pp. 285-286.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p. 286.

The *lifeworld*, according to Habermas, is coordinated and reproduced through *communicative action*, i.e., action orientated towards ‘reaching self- and mutual understanding.’<sup>61</sup> By contrast, political and economic *systems* are coordinated ‘through the steering media of money and power.’<sup>62</sup> While the lifeworld medium of communication is *qualitative*, the systems media of money and power are *quantitative*.<sup>63</sup> Both the lifeworld and systems are divided into private and public spheres.

Habermas uses these concepts to mount an attack on advanced capitalism, as found in industrialised Western societies. As White explains, ‘his argument is that Western modernization has constituted a “one-sided” – and thus distorted – development of the rational potential of modern culture.’<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, Habermas wishes to defend the Enlightenment project and its belief in the capacity of human reason. He also has the characteristic emancipatory agenda of critical theorists. In principle, modernity, and the concomitant development of rationality, should, in Habermas’s view, have brought with it greater freedom and manoeuvrability for individuals; more opportunities to exert an influence on their social environment. The reason that this liberating potential has not been realised is due to the nature of advanced capitalism.

Habermas introduces the notion of a “rationalized lifeworld” (according to White, this represents ‘the real distinctiveness of his account of the lifeworld’<sup>65</sup>), in which individuals have become increasingly aware of the ‘clear demarcations between the natural, social and subjective worlds’<sup>66</sup>, and are able to take an increasingly ‘reflexive or *self-critical*’ perspective. (The arrival of modernity was of course marked by the breakdown of the magical-mythical world view, and thus by an increasingly critical attitude.<sup>67</sup>) In a rationalized lifeworld, the individual can use ‘the “formal scaffolding” of modern structures of consciousness as a framework in terms of which new experiences are accommodated to the stock of unproblematic, substantive background convictions which

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<sup>61</sup> Nancy S. Love: ‘*What’s Left of Marx?*’ in Stephen K. White (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 50.

<sup>62</sup> Love, *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> See, for instance, Love, *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Stephen K. White: *The recent work of Jürgen Habermas: Reason, justice and modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 95

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

constitute his lifeworld.’<sup>68</sup> She or he thereby partakes more actively – and more critically – in reproducing her/his lifeworld. This does not, however, mean that the lifeworld has become totally transparent to the individual; there are elements of the lifeworld which ‘can never be made fully conscious or be fully rationalized.’<sup>69</sup>

This rationalized lifeworld of modernity has, in part, been brought about by the growing implication of communicative action – including rational discussion – in the reproduction of the lifeworld. What was previously taken for granted in everyday life is now more often questioned, or discussed, until agreement is reached between group members. Craib identifies modernity, for the Habermasian lifeworld, as the ‘process through which different areas of our life come to be based on mutual, rational agreement, communicative reason, rather than on tradition.’<sup>70</sup> As Habermas writes,

In a rationalized lifeworld the need for achieving understanding is met less and less by a reservoir of traditionally certified interpretations immune from criticism; at the level of a completely decentered understanding of the world, the need for consensus must be met more and more frequently by risky, because rationally motivated, agreement.<sup>71</sup>

Elsewhere, he states that a lifeworld is rationalized ‘to the extent that it permits interactions that are not guided by normatively ascribed agreement but – directly or indirectly – by communicatively achieved understanding.’<sup>72</sup>

The existence of a “rationalised lifeworld” characterised by communicative action brings with it enhanced learning potential, making possible ‘an articulated consideration and evaluation of alternative interpretations of what is the case, what is legitimate and what is authentic self-expression.’<sup>73</sup> However, communication – the core integrative function of the social world – has been ‘disabled’ in advanced capitalist democracies, due to the fact that systems imperatives (relating to material production) increasingly encroach upon the lifeworld. Habermas describes this process as the “colonization of the lifeworld”.

The cursory introduction provided so far has concentrated on Habermas’s usage of the lifeworld concept in the context of his wider critique of advanced capitalism and functionalist reason. By contrast, the following paragraphs will examine his articulations on the *nature* of the lifeworld *per se*; here the divergencies – and commonalities – between

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>70</sup> Craib, *op cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>71</sup> Habermas, cited in White, *op cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>72</sup> Habermas: *The Theory of Communicative Action*, (henceforth TCA) Vol. 1, 1984, p. 70.

<sup>73</sup> White, p. 95.

the Schutzian and Habermasian viewpoints should become more apparent. Again, the discussion is selective.

In developing his concept of the lifeworld, Habermas draws at length on the phenomenological lifeworld concept, particularly that of Schutz (and Luckmann). Insofar as it goes, Habermas accepts much of Schutz's definition of the lifeworld – particularly the view of the lifeworld forming an ever-present, pre-reflective and unproblematic background for action – but he also sees it as limited, 'culturalistically abridged' (or 'one-sided'),<sup>74</sup> and deficient in important respects. In effect, Habermas lifts the phenomenological idea of the lifeworld and incorporates it, almost *in toto*, into his wider and more complex *communication-theoretic* concept of the lifeworld. The phenomenological ideas of the lifeworld are thus integrated into just one *facet* of the lifeworld described by Habermas, which, in turn – as noted above – is seen as insufficient unless paired with the idea of *system*.

Habermas's greatest problem with the phenomenological view of the lifeworld is its tendency towards subjectivism, or 'hermeneutic idealism'. According to Habermas, Schutz and Luckmann, following Husserl, begin with the 'egological consciousness.'<sup>75</sup> Although Schutz moves on from Husserl's notion of the transcendental ego, and focuses on the intersubjectively constituted life-world, in Habermas's view he is constrained by his refusal to relinquish the idea that, ultimately, 'the "experiencing subject" remains the court of last appeal.'<sup>76</sup> Habermas claims that Schutz 'tends to put aside the constitution of the lifeworld and to start directly from an intersubjectively constituted lifeworld'.<sup>77</sup> This means that he fails to transcend the problem 'on which Husserl shipwrecked', namely, 'the problem of monadological production of the intersubjectivity of the lifeworld.'<sup>78</sup>

Further, according to Habermas, this problem is compounded by the fact that Schutz and Luckmann, despite addressing the question of language and linguistic interaction, do not accord language the decisive role it deserves when developing the lifeworld concept. For Habermas, it is *crucial* to give centre stage to language and communicative action if

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<sup>74</sup> See Habermas: TCA, Vol. 2, for instance p. 135 and p.151.

<sup>75</sup> TCA, Vol. 2., p. 129.

<sup>76</sup> Habermas: TCA, Vol. 2., p. 130.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

one is to overcome the problem of intersubjectivity, i.e., ‘how different subjects can share the same lifeworld.’<sup>79</sup> For him, it appears paradoxical that

Although Schutz and Luckmann, operating on the premises of the philosophy of consciousness, play down the importance of language, particularly of the linguistic mediation of social interaction, they stress the intersubjectivity of the lifeworld...<sup>80</sup>

This has the result that ‘Schutz and Luckmann do not get at the structures of the lifeworld by grasping the structures of linguistically generated intersubjectivity directly.’<sup>81</sup>

For Habermas, language is not merely a key element of the lifeworld (as in Schutzian phenomenology); language and culture are ‘*constitutive for the lifeworld itself*’<sup>82</sup> [my emphasis]. Communicative actors cannot ‘take up an extramundane position’ in relation to either language or culture. The language in use – as well as the ‘cultural patterns of interpretation transmitted in language’ – always remain ‘*at their backs*’.<sup>83</sup> Further, the Habermasian lifeworld is necessarily, inescapably, intersubjective. The lifeworld is ‘the transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet...’<sup>84</sup> In contrast to what he considers the Husserlian ‘monadological’ emphasis, Habermas stresses that ‘individuals acquire their competencies not as isolated monads but by growing into the symbolic structures of their life-worlds’.<sup>85</sup>

In order to grasp what Habermas means by the lifeworld, for instance when describing it as the ‘transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet’, it is necessary to clarify the position of the lifeworld relative to the three ‘formal’ (or ‘normal’) ‘world-concepts’ he identifies. It was noted earlier that one of the characteristics of a ‘rationalized’ lifeworld identified by Habermas is individuals’ increasing awareness of the ‘clear demarcations between the natural, social and subjective worlds.’<sup>86</sup> These domains become the formal ‘world-concepts’, viz. – the *objective world*, the *social world*, and the *subjective world* – concerning which mutual understanding between communicative actors is possible. It follows that there are ‘three different actor-world relations that a subject can

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<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, e.g., p. 125.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>85</sup> Habermas: *Towards a reconstruction of historical materialism*, p. 154, cited in Held, p. 278,

<sup>86</sup> White, p. 95

take up to something in a world',<sup>87</sup> depending on whether *i*) the 'something' obtains in the objective world ('as the totality of entities about which true statements are possible'), *ii*) is 'recognised as obligatory' in the social world ('as the totality of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations'), or *iii*) is attributed to the speaker's own subjective world ('as the totality of experiences to which a speaker has privileged access and which he can express before a public.')<sup>88</sup> What any particular speech act refers to therefore appears to a communicative actor as something either *objective*, *normative*, or *subjective*, that is to say, as *facts (or things /events)*, *norms*, or *experiences*.<sup>89</sup> These three worlds are not *part* of the lifeworld, but can be referred to from *within* the lifeworld; speaker and hearer use the reference system of the three world-concepts as an interpretative framework when they 'meet' in the 'transcendental site' of the lifeworld, and seek mutual understanding.<sup>90</sup> It should be added, though, that norms and experiences can, in Habermas's view, 'occupy a double status', as 'elements of a social or subjective world' on one hand, and 'structural components of the lifeworld' on the other.<sup>91</sup> Figure 5, taken from Habermas,

is meant to illustrate that the lifeworld is constitutive for mutual understanding *as such*, whereas the formal world-concepts constitute a reference system for that *about which* mutual understanding is possible: speakers and hearers come to an understanding from out of their common lifeworld about something in the objective, social, or subjective worlds.

The diagram shows the communicative interaction of two actors (A1 and A2) within the lifeworld, how they are supplied with the 'culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns'<sup>92</sup> that make up the lifeworld, and how their communicative acts or utterances (CA1 and CA2) refer to something in either the objective world, the social world, or one of their subjective worlds.

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<sup>87</sup> Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 120.

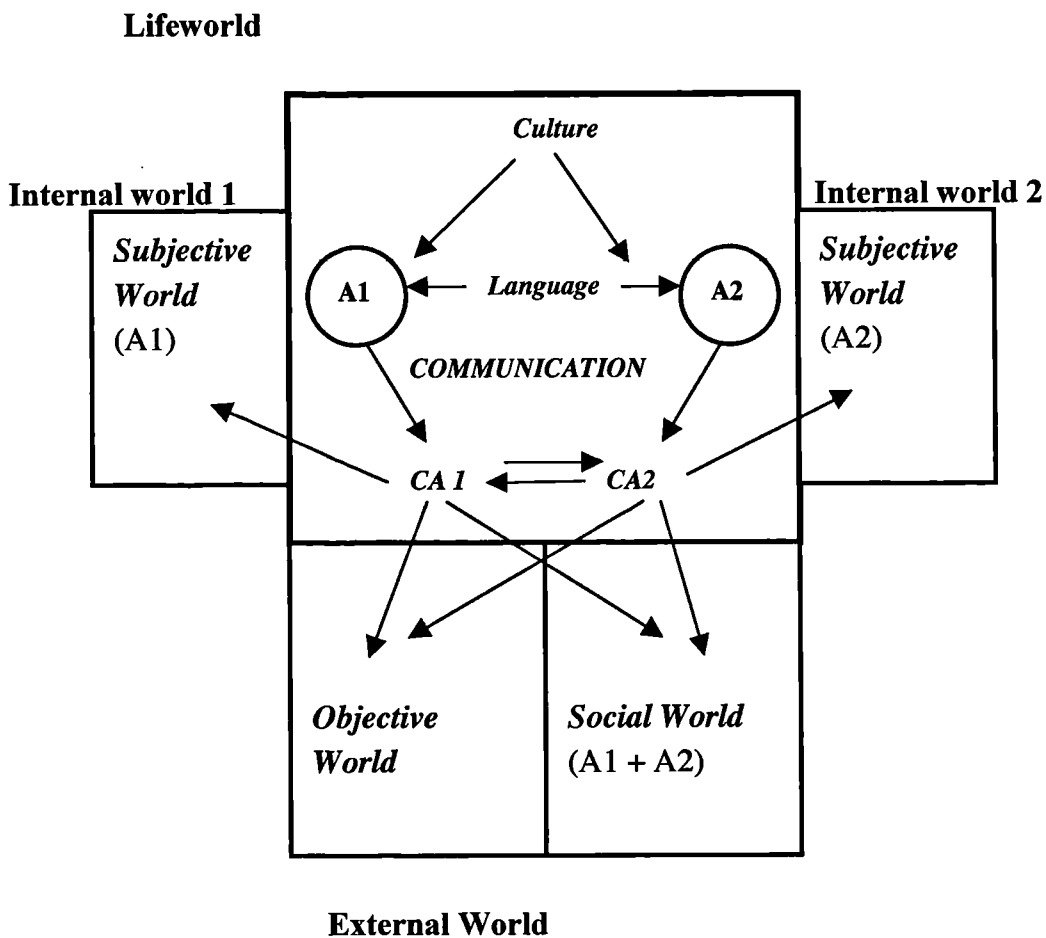
<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p. 124.



*The red arrows indicate the world relations that actors (A) establish with their utterances (CA).*

‘Communicative action relies on a cooperative process of interpretation in which participants relate simultaneously to something in the objective, the social, and the subjective worlds, even when they thematically stress only one of the three components in their utterances.’<sup>93</sup>

‘With every common situation definition [actors] are determining the boundary between external nature, society, and inner nature; at the same time, they are renewing the demarcation between themselves as interpreters, on the one side, and the external world and their own inner worlds, on the other.’<sup>94</sup>

**Figure 5: World Relations of Communicative Acts (CA).**<sup>95</sup>

From the above discussion it should be apparent that for Habermas, the category of the lifeworld has a ‘different status’ from that of the three formal world-concepts.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>95</sup> Taken from Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 127.



Communicative actors cannot 'step outside' of their lifeworld in order to refer to it, and cognitively it eludes their grasp. The lifeworld always remains 'at the backs' of actors, and is 'present to them only in the prereflexive form of taken-for-granted background assumptions and naively mastered skills.'<sup>97</sup> They cannot take up an 'extramundane' position in relation to their lifeworld any more than they can to its constitutive components, language and culture; it is too immediate for this, too implicated in their constitution as actors:<sup>98</sup>

Communicative actors are always moving *within* the horizon of their lifeworld... As interpreters, they themselves belong to the lifeworld, along with their speech acts, but they cannot refer to "something in the lifeworld" in the same way as they can to facts, norms, or experiences... In a sentence: participants cannot assume *in actu* the same distance in relation to language and culture as in relation to the totality of facts, norms, or experiences concerning which mutual understanding is possible.<sup>99</sup>

Similarly, the lifeworld, (and by extension language and the cultural patterns it transmits), cannot become elements of an action situation in the same way as facts, norms or experiences:<sup>100</sup>

Whereas the actor keeps the lifeworld at his back as a resource for action oriented to mutual understanding, the restrictions that circumstances place on the pursuit of his plans appear to him as elements of the situation... This suggests identifying the lifeworld with culturally transmitted background knowledge, for culture and language do not normally count as elements of a situation.<sup>101</sup>

The lifeworld *enables* communicative actors to enter into discussions (with reference to the three formal world-concepts), to have disputes and to reach understandings. It forms 'the indirect context of what is said, discussed, addressed in a situation...'<sup>102</sup> However, the lifeworld and the unproblematic background it provides are in a sense *prior* to the action situation, 'prior to any possible disagreement'.<sup>103</sup> The lifeworld cannot *itself* become problematic; 'it can at most fall apart.'<sup>104</sup>

Having discussed the relationship between the lifeworld and the 'external world' (the objective and social worlds) and the 'inner worlds' of communicative actors (the subjective world), Habermas's views on what the lifeworld itself is comprised of must be

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>97</sup> Habermas, TCA Vol. 1, 1984, *op cit.*, p. 335

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, p. 130.

further explicated. In his view, other writers who have used the concept have failed to recognise the structural complexity of the lifeworld. To describe it merely as an “unproblematic background” for action is insufficient. As White explains,

In searching for a way to elaborate this notion, Habermas finds that no existing theories of the lifeworld satisfactorily grasp the breadth of what actually constitutes the unproblematic background of action. Different thinkers have focused on the lifeworld as a *cultural* storehouse, or as a source of expectations about the ordering of *social* relations, or as a milieu out of which *individual competences* for speech and action are formed. Habermas, on the other hand, wants to emphasize the fact that part of what constitutes a rationalized lifeworld is its “structural differentiation” of precisely these three dimensions: culture, society, and personality.<sup>105</sup>

According to Habermas, these three dimensions of *culture*, *society* and *personality* represent the *structural components* of the lifeworld; together they form a kind of trinity.<sup>106</sup> Habermas describes the three components as follows:

- i) ‘I use the term *culture* for the stock of knowledge from which participants in communication supply themselves with interpretations as they come to an understanding about something in the world.’
- ii) ‘I use the term *society* for the legitimate orders through which participants regulate their memberships in social groups and thereby secure solidarity.’
- iii) ‘By *personality* I understand the competencies that make a subject capable of speaking and acting, that put him in a position to take part in processes of reaching understanding and thereby to assert his own identity.’<sup>107</sup>

Incidentally, this shows how social norms and experiences can occupy a double status, as mentioned earlier. Although they fall under one of the formal world-concepts (the social world or the subjective world respectively), they can also be structural components of the lifeworld – i.e., subsumed under the dimension of either society or personality. In the first case, actors will be able to give discursive articulation to norms and experiences in the process of communicative action – to refer to them explicitly, while in the latter case they will be taken-for-granted elements of the lifeworldly backdrop – intuitive knowledge and background convictions, belonging to the tacit realm of practical consciousness.

Each of the three structural components Habermas identifies has a corresponding reproduction process, respectively *cultural reproduction*, *social integration*, and *socialization*.<sup>108</sup> Language – and ‘everyday communicative practice’ – are the media

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>105</sup> White, *op cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>106</sup> Incidentally, in seeing the differentiation of the lifeworld as a separation of culture, society and personality, Habermas is following Durkheim. See TCA, Vol. 2, pp. 133-4.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138. In Habermas’s text these three definitions appear as a single body of prose, without the numbering which I have added here for clarity.

<sup>108</sup> See TCA, Vol. 2, pp. 137-8, and White, pp. 99-100.

through which the structures of the lifeworld are reproduced.<sup>109</sup> Reproduction of the symbolic structures of the lifeworld ensures that new situations are connected up with the existing conditions of the lifeworld; valid cultural knowledge is continued, group solidarity is stabilised, and responsible actors are socialized into the norms, values and practices of the collectivity.<sup>110</sup> While *cultural reproduction* of the lifeworld ‘secures a *continuity* of tradition and a *coherence* of knowledge sufficient for daily practice,’<sup>111</sup> *social integration* of the lifeworld ‘takes care of coordinating actions by way of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations...’<sup>112</sup> Finally, the *socialization* of lifeworld members ‘secures for succeeding generations the acquisition of *generalized competencies for action* and sees to it that *individual life histories are in harmony with collective forms of life.*’<sup>113</sup> The complex interconnection of the three processes of reproduction is summarised by White: ‘[e]ach of these...processes produces resources for the maintenance, not just of the directly corresponding structural component of the lifeworld, but rather for all three components.’<sup>114</sup>

In Habermas’s view, then,

Whenever “the lifeworld” has been made a fundamental concept of social theory – whether under this name, ...or under the title “forms of life”, “cultures”, “language communities”, or whatever – the approach has remained selective; the strategies of concept formation usually connect up with only one of the three structural components of the lifeworld.<sup>115</sup>

The phenomenological lifeworld concept, according to Habermas, connects up only with the cultural dimension of the lifeworld; even when he has lent Schutz’s analysis a communication-theoretical reading Habermas feels that the lifeworld concept that emerges from this remains ‘limited to aspects of mutual understanding and abridged in a culturalistic fashion.’<sup>116</sup>

The one-sidedness of the culturalistic concept of the lifeworld becomes clear when we consider that communicative action is not only a process of reaching understanding..., actors are at the same time taking part in interactions through which they develop, confirm, and renew their memberships in social groups and their own identities. Communicative acts are not only processes of interpretation in

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<sup>109</sup> See TCA, Vol. 2, p. 138 and p. 143

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>114</sup> White, pp. 99-100. For more detail on exactly how the three reproduction processes relate to each other, see TCA, Vol. 2., pp. 140-143.

<sup>115</sup> Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2., p. 138.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*

which cultural knowledge is “tested against the world”; they are at the same time processes of social integration and socialization.<sup>117</sup>

In other words, actors are doing more than merely seeking mutual understanding when they draw upon their stock of culturally transmitted knowledge in communicative action. They are simultaneously *reproducing* this cultural knowledge, *and also* reproducing their memberships in collectivities and their individual identities.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, they not only draw upon a stock of cultural knowledge (culture), but also on accumulated knowledge of socially customary practices (society) and individual skills (personality).<sup>119</sup>

To prioritise either society or personality above the other two structural components of the lifeworld also results in a one-sided formulation of the concept; a concept abridged in ‘either an institutionalistic or sociopsychological fashion.’<sup>120</sup> According to Habermas, the tradition stemming from Durkheim reduced the lifeworld to the aspect of social integration, whereas the tradition stemming from Mead reduced the lifeworld to the aspect of socialization of individuals.<sup>121</sup>

In order to make all this clearer, it may be helpful to consider how an individual is furnished by the three structural components of the lifeworld when acting; how each dimension of the lifeworld, as Habermas conceives of it, affects the actor and her/his conduct in any given situation. A *situation*, for Habermas, ‘represents a segment of the lifeworld delimited in relation to theme.’<sup>122</sup> When a communicative actor is confronted by a situation which she/he must interpret and act in response to, (and often also define in common with other actors in order to arrive at mutual understanding), the lifeworld remains always at her/his back. Although it may *appear* to the actor that she/he is ‘detached’ when facing the new situation, and that action decisions must be drawn from ‘thin air’, so to speak, or based entirely on individual preferences, this is not, in fact, the case. As Habermas explains,

Whereas *a fronte* the segment of the lifeworld relevant to a given situation presses upon the actor as a problem he has to resolve on his own, *a tergo* he is sustained by the background of a lifeworld that does not only consist of cultural certainties. This background comprises individual skills as well – the intuitive knowledge of *how* one deals with situations – and socially customary practices too – the intuitive knowledge of *what* one can count on in situations...<sup>123</sup>

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117 *ibid.*, p. 139.

118 *ibid.*

119 *ibid.*, p. 135.

120 *ibid.*, p. 139.

121 *ibid.*, p. 140.

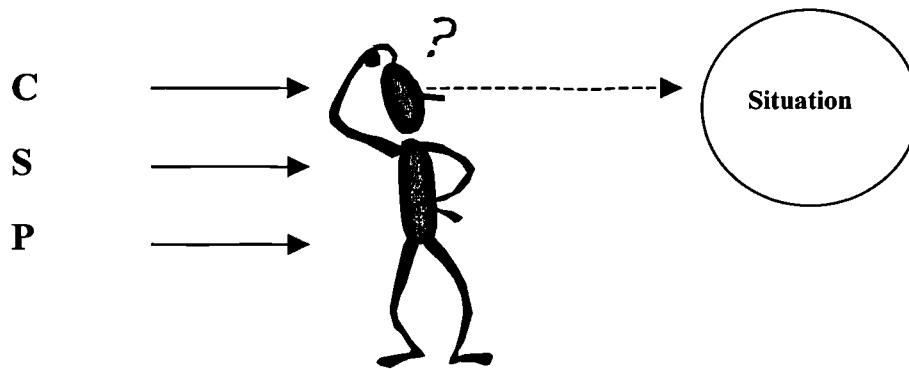
122 *ibid.*, p. 127.

123 *ibid.*, p. 135.

Figure 6 below gives this idea pictorial expression. The idea can be further articulated with the following quote from Habermas:

Action, or the mastery of situations, presents itself as a circular process in which the actor is at once both the *initiator* of his accountable action and the *product* of the traditions in which he stands, of the solidary groups to which he belongs, of socialization and learning processes to which he is exposed.<sup>124</sup>

Cultural traditions, then, are just *one aspect* of the unproblematic, prereflective background knowledge provided by the lifeworld; according to Habermas, ‘the solidarities of groups integrated via norms and values and the competencies of socialized individuals’ *also* ‘flow into communicative action *a tergo*’.<sup>125</sup> This again highlights, in his view, the inadequacy of the phenomenological understanding of the lifeworld.



C = **Culture** (Cultural certainties, background convictions)

S = **Society** (Socially customary practices – intuitive knowledge of *what* can be counted on when ‘going on’ in situations)

P = **Personality** (Individual skills – intuitive knowledge of *how* to ‘go on’ in situations)

**Figure 6: The three structural components of the lifeworld and their relationship to action, or mastery of situations.**

## 4.2 Usage of the Lifeworld Concept in this thesis

### 4.2.1 On the compatibility of approaches

This thesis takes a structurationist and discourse analytic approach to the lifeworld concept, drawing selectively upon both the Habermasian and phenomenological views of

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

the lifeworld. Habermas's usage of the lifeworld concept in his critique of advanced capitalism, for instance, is not considered to be of great relevance to this topic; on the other hand, other aspects of his approach appear to be compatible with the objectives of this thesis, as well as with some of the central tenets of structuration theory.

This compatibility of elements of the Habermasian lifeworld and Giddens' theory of structuration needs to be further explained, since there are significant differences between the two theorists which I am not claiming to gloss over. Many would argue that Giddens' central notion of the duality of structure, for instance, is incompatible with Habermas's insistence on keeping the concepts of lifeworld and system separate. Habermas's notions of lifeworld and system are commonly interpreted as corresponding to the familiar action vs. structure dualism, which for Giddens is rather a *duality*.<sup>126</sup> However, this thesis takes the view that the question is not quite so clear-cut. Firstly, Habermas emphasises the *structures* of the lifeworld, which, ultimately, are the structures *in terms of which the identity of society either stands or falls*.<sup>127</sup> In other words, the notion of structure is not confined to the system. Further, the structural components of the lifeworld are implicated in action: they are described by Habermas as both constraining and enabling,<sup>128</sup> in the same way that Giddens sees structure as simultaneously a constraint and an enablement. Secondly, Giddens' conception of structure as rules and resources which are in many ways more *internal* to acting agents than external, is distant from the structuralist or functionalist notion of structure as some kind of *external* patterning of human behaviour. In effect, this means that Giddens' notion of 'structure' enters into terrain often attributed to 'action'; it also means that there is a certain affinity between Giddens' notions of 'structures of signification' and 'legitimation' and Habermas's emphasis on the linguistic and normative structural components of the lifeworld.

Although the structurationist idea of 'duality of structure' is not explicitly present in Habermas's writing, there are moments when his ideas are evocative of Giddens' position. For instance, the earlier citation on action as a 'circular process in which the actor is at

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<sup>126</sup> See, for instance, Craib, op cit., p. 239: 'These two 'levels', which are in fact the familiar ones of structure and action, should, according to Habermas, be studied together,' and May, op cit., p. 150: 'According to these formulations, society must comprise both system and lifeworld. If accepted, the question is how to connect the two? For Giddens it rests on duality... For Habermas, we need both in order to explain the evolution of societies.'

<sup>127</sup> See, for instance, Habermas: TCA, Vol. 2, p. 151.

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 135: '...society and personality operate not only as restrictions; they also serve as resources.'

once both the *initiator* of his accountable action and the *product* of the traditions in which he stands...'<sup>129</sup> comes very close to idea of structure (in Giddens' sense) and agency being mutually constitutive (see also Figure 2). Habermas also repeatedly makes it plain that actors cannot *extricate* themselves from the structural continuities of their socio-cultural and linguistic background (or lifeworld). Like Giddens, he also suggests that agents *reproduce* these structural continuities when acting: '[i]n drawing upon a cultural tradition, they also continue it.'<sup>130</sup> Communicative action is the vehicle by which the structural properties of the lifeworld are reproduced.

Both the Habermasian and phenomenological concepts of the lifeworld emphasise the spatio-temporal and socio-cultural positioning of actors, as does Giddens in his theory of structuration. Schutz mentions the world of predecessors and the world of successors, and how the individual actor is supplied with a 'cultural pattern' passed down from one generation to the next – this is compatible with Giddens' assertion that 'the self cannot be understood outside history'. It would seem, though, that Habermas's position lies closer to Giddens' than Schutz's does, for while Schutz ultimately emphasises the individual actor's subjective experience of her/his positioning, Habermas, like Giddens, suggests that actors may be unaware of the full context of their action, or how their action *reproduces* the wider structural continuities in relation to which they are positioned. In a statement reminiscent of Giddens' articulations on the unintended consequences of (and unconscious motives for) action, Habermas writes:

Actors never have their action situations totally under control. They control neither the possibilities for mutual understanding and conflict, nor the consequences and side effects of their actions; they are, to borrow a phrase from W. Schnapp, "entangled" in their (hi)stories...<sup>131</sup>

This reflects the fact that Habermas and Giddens share a similar view of social actors' knowledgeability and agential powers. Both theorists argue, against functionalism, that actors are not mere automata 'steered' by social structure. Habermas emphasises the pre-eminence of the lifeworld over the system, in that ultimately value commitments and legitimacy can only originate in the lifeworld. Furthermore, 'What binds sociated individuals to one another and secures the integration of society is a web of communicative actions that thrives only in the light of cultural traditions, and not systemic mechanisms

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<sup>129</sup> See Figure 2, Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 135.

<sup>130</sup> Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 125.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*, p. 149.

that are out of the reach of a member's intuitive knowledge.'<sup>132</sup> Defence of the potential of human reason is, as mentioned, central to his work. Giddens, likewise, asserts that a 'good deal of social theory...has treated agents as much less knowledgeable than they really are',<sup>133</sup> and argues that actors are generally purposive and can provide discursively articulated reasons for their behaviour.

On the other hand, Habermas and Giddens share a suspicion of hermeneutic approaches that attribute *too much* knowledgeability to agents; Giddens argues against 'hermeneutic voluntarism' while Habermas criticises 'hermeneutic idealism.' As stated earlier, Habermas's greatest problem with the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld is its tendency towards subjectivism, or its 'egological' emphasis. As David Held writes, Habermas feels that the forms of interpretative inquiry suggested by thinkers such as Schutz, Garfinkel, and Peter Winch (who introduced Wittgenstein's ideas into social theory) failed to deal adequately with (*inter alia*) the issue of knowledgeability. Thus, in Habermas's view:

In the work of these individuals there is a lapse into a form of descriptivism and relativism and the subsequent loss of ability to assess the nature of ideological distortion and the truth content of tradition; an inadequate treatment of history – of how, for instance, meaning complexes are created and renewed; an ineffective treatment of the objective context of action as social reality is essentially derived from individual activities or language games; an insufficient account of the nature and conditions of the interpretative process. Clearly, a satisfactory treatment of these issues is crucial to Habermas's programme in epistemology and methodology. The plausibility of critical social theory depends on an acceptable explication of the relation between language, action and history.<sup>134</sup>

The critical element is less prominent in Giddens' work, but it is present nonetheless, as discussed in Chapter 2. Partly, both Habermas's and Giddens' problem with hermeneutic 'voluntarism' stems from its apparent negation of the pervasive influence of power in social life, which they both consider to be of central importance. While both theorists view the actors' self-understandings as important, they do not hold them to be beyond criticism; although it may *appear* to actors that they have autonomy and understand the full context of their actions, this is not necessarily the case. Habermas states that conceiving of society solely as lifeworld, as some hermeneutic approaches do, (without the system and its steering media of power and money), leads to the acceptance of 'three fictions', namely: *i*) the autonomy of actors, *ii*) the independence of culture, and *iii*) the transparency of communication.<sup>135</sup> From an insider perspective, this is indeed how

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<sup>132</sup> Habermas, *ibid.*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>133</sup> Giddens, p. xxx. This citation was also used in Chapter 2.

<sup>134</sup> Held, *op cit.*, p. 311.

<sup>135</sup> Habermas, TCA Vol. 2, pp.148-9



things appear; '[t]his is the way things look to the members of a sociocultural lifeworld themselves.'<sup>136</sup> But appearances can be deceptive:

In fact, ... their goal-directed actions are coordinated not only through processes of reaching understanding, but also through functional interconnections that are not intended by them and are usually not even perceived within the horizon of everyday practice.<sup>137</sup>

This echoes an earlier citation from Giddens: '[p]ower relations are often most profoundly embedded in modes of conduct which are taken for granted by those who follow them, and especially in routinized behaviour...'<sup>138</sup> In fairness, Schutz's writing on 'practical rationality', with individuals acting on the basis of 'rules of thumb' rather than making cost-benefit calculations, not having full insight into their 'motives' or the means-end context, and inheriting a 'cultural pattern' with pre-constituted typifications of the world and their place in it, also points to gaps in the knowledgeability of human agents. However, Giddens and Habermas take this one step further by highlighting the potentially distorting role of power (and the uneven distribution of resources) within a social setting.

Perhaps the most striking affinity between ideas of the lifeworld (both Habermasian and phenomenological) and structuration theory, however, lies in the common emphasis on everyday, routine social life, and on the tacit knowledge inherent in being able to 'go on' on a daily basis. Giddens stresses the importance of practical consciousness, which corresponds roughly to Schutz's idea of 'practical rationality', and, more generally, to the taken-for-granted, background knowledge that makes up the lifeworld, and the 'natural attitude' in which the lifeworld is experienced. As Giddens himself states,

Only in phenomenology and ethnomethodology,<sup>139</sup> within sociological traditions, do we find detailed and subtle treatments of the nature of practical consciousness. Indeed, it is these schools of thought, together with ordinary language philosophy, which have been responsible for making clear the shortcomings of orthodox social scientific theories in this respect.<sup>140</sup>

This important topic is returned to in the next section.

Having briefly defended the use of both structuration theory and the concept of lifeworld in this thesis, it should be stated that the lifeworld concept (particularly Habermas's communication-theoretical variant) *also* fits to an extent with the discourse analytic methodology used in this project. The emphasis that Habermas places on language

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<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Giddens, 1984, p. 176, cited in Chapter Three (Mediation Theory), p. 21.

<sup>139</sup> It should be noted here that ethnomethodology to a large extent developed out of phenomenology.

<sup>140</sup> Giddens, 1984, p. 7.

and communicative action – and of the central role of these in the reproduction of the structures of the lifeworld – fits well with the assumptions of discourse analysis that language is far more than merely a vehicle for transparently conveying information and ideas. Both discourse analytical theorists and Habermas share the view that in using language, people not only communicate ideas, they also *interact*. (See Chapter 1).

Moreover, despite Habermas's attacks on the subjectivist tendencies of phenomenology, he nevertheless agrees with Schutz that lifeworld analysis is necessarily from the *participant* view of actors, and outsiders can only gain knowledge of others' lifeworldly background by means of a hermeneutic approach 'that picks up on members' pretheoretical knowledge.'<sup>141</sup> Therefore, the discourse analytic approach of this thesis, which attempts to tap into actors' self-understandings and tacit knowledge by paying attention to their discursive articulations (as well as what is left *unsaid*), is compatible, to a degree at least, with the Habermasian notion of the lifeworld. It should, however, be stated that there are important differences between Habermas and discourse scholars; for instance, Habermas would not subscribe to the discourse analytic view that language constructs reality.

#### ***4.2.2 The Structural Components of the Lifeworld as Constitutive of the Social Actor***

##### ***Practical Consciousness: Encountering the lifeworld in the 'natural attitude'***

As explained in Chapter 2, for Giddens, practical consciousness 'consists of all the things which actors know tacitly about how to 'go on' in the contexts of social life without being able to give them direct discursive expression.'<sup>142</sup> Giddens himself relates practical consciousness to the phenomenological idea of 'stocks of knowledge':

The vast bulk of the 'stocks of knowledge', in Schutz's phrase, or what I prefer to call the *mutual knowledge* incorporated in encounters, is not directly accessible to the consciousness of actors. Most such knowledge is practical in character: it is inherent in the capability to 'go on' within the routines of social life.<sup>143</sup>

It is this tacit 'knowledge' which accounts for the way in which much of the conduct of generally purposive, knowledgeable actors can be seen to be constituted by the continuities of the social system in relation to which they are situated, or by the structural components of their 'lifeworlds'. While in the 'natural attitude', participating in day-to-day, routinised

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<sup>141</sup> Habermas, TCA Vol. 2, p. 153.

<sup>142</sup> Giddens, op cit., p. xxiii.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

behaviour, social actors take a pragmatic approach to the situations they encounter, using the pre-reflective, 'recipe' knowledge incorporated in their stocks of knowledge in order to navigate their way through the terrain of daily life. As long as the taken-for-granted lifeworldly 'stocks of knowledge' prove sufficient to interpret and act in response to each new situation, there is no need to reassess the received typifications, rules of thumb, and socially approved codes for action with which one has been equipped by fellow group-members, (both contemporaries and predecessors). One merely 'goes on' in the way one has learned, in accordance with past experiences sedimented in one's stock of knowledge.

As Giddens writes,

Motives tend to have a direct purchase on action only in relatively unusual circumstances, situations which in some way break with the routine. For the most part motives supply overall plans or programmes – 'projects', in Schutz's term – within which a range of conduct is enacted. Much of our day-to-day conduct is not directly motivated.<sup>144</sup>

It is in the nature of the unproblematic, background knowledge provided by the lifeworld that it is not usually subject to actors' scrutiny; its potency lies in its taken-for-granted, intuitive character:

...lifeworld knowledge conveys the feeling of absolute certainty only because we do not know *about* it; its paradoxical character is due to the fact that the knowledge of what one can count on and how one does something is still connected with – undifferentiated from – what one prereflectively *knows*.<sup>145</sup>

From the perspective of an actor facing a particular situation, 'the lifeworld appears as a reservoir of taken-for-granted, of unshaken convictions'<sup>146</sup> that s/he draws upon, both in action and in the interpretation of others' action. 'The interpretation of the situation relies on a stock of knowledge that "always already" stands at the disposition of the actor in his lifeworld...'<sup>147</sup>

In routine activity, amongst other group members, the individual's taken-for-granted stock of knowledge will rarely be challenged; if anything, it will merely be reinforced, with fellow group members also acting in accordance with socially customary practices, conventional typifications, cultural traditions, and the individual competencies into which they have been socialised. However, in the event of being confronted with a non-routine situation, the actor's unproblematic lifeworldly background suddenly fails in providing the tacit knowledge of how to 'go on'. Instead, the relevant segment of the

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<sup>144</sup> Giddens, p. 6.

<sup>145</sup> Habermas: TCA Vol. 2, p. 135.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*, p. 128.

lifeworld becomes 'thematized' – i.e., the actor directs her/his attention towards it, and in effect 'sees' it for the first time.

It is only in becoming relevant to a situation that a segment of the lifeworld comes into view as something that is taken for granted culturally, that rests on interpretations, and that, now that it can be thematized, has lost this mode of unquestionable givenness...<sup>148</sup>

One instance which can cause an element of the unproblematic background provided by the lifeworld to be thematized is if an 'outsider' enters a group sharing a common cultural pattern or social stock of knowledge, and begins to interact with them (as in Schutz's discussion of cultural adjustment mentioned earlier). Habermas uses the example of a building site, where a young and newly-arrived construction worker is asked by an older worker to fetch some beer for the midmorning snack. If, for instance, the younger worker replied "I'm not thirsty", it would be clear that he did not understand the unwritten hierarchy of the building site, whereby the "new guy" is expected to buy the beer, and he would also 'learn from the astonished reaction that beer for the midmorning snack is a norm held to independently of the subjective state of mind of one of the parties involved.'<sup>149</sup> In situations like this, not only does the outsider learn that he or she has transgressed an invisible boundary, but the 'insiders' are forced to acknowledge, for the first time, a part of their lifeworld which before had been 'at once unquestionable and shadowy'.<sup>150</sup>

Once an element of the lifeworldly stock of knowledge has been rendered problematic or 'thematized', the actor must either seek new knowledge, or, to repeat an earlier citation from Schutz, 'the knowledge at hand must be transformed into higher degrees of familiarity.'<sup>151</sup> Even when the actor's attention is turned to the thematized segment of the lifeworld, though, she or he will still draw upon her/his 'depths of experience' and existing stock of socio-cultural knowledge when interpreting the unfamiliar situation, or determining *what* new knowledge must be sought. After such an episode, the knowledge gained (or deepened) will be incorporated into the individual's existing stock of unproblematic background knowledge.

Relating the discussion to this thesis, the unproblematic background of the lifeworld (in its three structural dimensions of culture, society and personality) *constitutes* the

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<sup>148</sup> Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 132.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>151</sup> Schutz: Collected Papers III, *op cit.*, p. 124.

individual social actor (whether mediator, ‘constituent’, ‘privileged storyteller’ or layperson whose attention is not directed towards mediatory activity), by entering into her/his self-understandings, tacit assumptions and expectations in the face of each situation encountered in daily life. The everyday, lived experience of a social actor, far from being trivial, is central to constituting that actor. The experiences, normative codes of conduct, competencies, and cultural and linguistic resources that become sedimented in the individual’s ‘stock of knowledge’, making up her/his practical consciousness, are fundamentally implicated in that actor’s decisions, tendencies and conduct when encountering the world. This includes the decision to “wage peace”, or the acceptance of international mediation as a ‘natural’ activity for fellow group members to engage in.

Taking seriously the role of practical consciousness means that it is possible to imagine that certain modes of managing conflict, for instance, are not necessarily rationally motivated – or ‘consciously’ adhered to – on the part of the individuals involved. Instead, individuals may be merely ‘going on’ in the manner they have learned through socialisation and daily life within their socio-cultural group. They may be engaging in *routine* behaviour; drawing on their stocks of knowledge and depths of experience. This implies that the situation they encounter appears to them as ‘covered’ by the background ‘knowledge’, convictions and beliefs contained in their lifeworld; it is not encountered as problematic.

The lifeworld is, as noted above, the arena in which the social actor *acts*, and interprets the other’s actions. This includes action taken in the face of conflict. In ‘usual’ circumstances, members of a socio-cultural group are continually renewing and reinforcing each other’s taken-for-granted expectations and assumptions, regarding, among other things, conflict behaviour. Husserl’s “*and so forth*” and “*I can always do it again*” idealisations are explanatory here. Since one is likely to repeat one’s ‘successful’ actions, behaviour which has been met with approval or acceptance by fellow group members is likely to be repeated, whereas behaviour which has created a reaction of surprise, indignation or “astonishment” (as in the case of Habermas’ example of the beer) is unlikely to be endeavoured again. It would seem logical, then, to assume that certain modes of interaction will become habitual within a particular socio-cultural group; that common practices and patterns of behaviour will emerge through the reinforcing reciprocal interactions between group members. For instance, the socio-cultural context in which one is socialised will be implicated in how one views – and deals with – conflict. While some socio-cultural groups, over their *longue durée* of existence may develop confrontational or

aggressive patterns of conflict behaviour, viewing overt conflict as preferable to suppressing disputes, individuals in other socio-cultural groups may be socialised into quite different conflict behaviour; there may, for instance, be commonly-held expectations that one should not express strong emotions in public, or that consensus and compromise are the 'appropriate' ways for reconciling divergent objectives.

The reaction of individuals from the same socio-cultural group in the face of conflict will, however, differ; obviously personality and autobiographical history will be of importance here. (Habermas's notion of *personality* forming a structural component of the lifeworld is relevant here.) Similarly, depending on their positioning within the socio-cultural group, individuals' lifeworldly stock of knowledge (based on lived experience) will vary considerably, according to whether they belong to the working class or middle class, for instance, or to the collectivity's élite group of 'privileged storytellers', or to one of its underprivileged – even silenced – minority groups.

Moreover, even if two actors experience an event from a shared spatio-temporal position, it does not mean that similar perceptions will be sedimented in their lifeworldly stocks of knowledge; a diplomat who plays the role of mediator will have quite different experiences of a series of peace negotiations than will her/his chauffeur. Similarly, spatio-temporal proximity is no longer a guarantee that social actors will consider each other 'fellow men', (in Schutz's phrase), belonging to the each other's lifeworldly 'zone of actual reach'. In practice, an individual living in a tenement block in an urban setting may interact far more frequently with friends in other continents, (via e-mail, for instance), than with her/his neighbours.

This leads on to the important point that elements of an individual's lifeworld may be shared by actors *not* belonging to her/his socio-cultural group. Since each social actor has a multiplicity of identities, it follows that she/he may share background convictions, values, or characteristic modes of conduct with individuals who are not spatio-temporally proximate. As a 'Catholic', for example, a social actor's beliefs and background assumptions may coincide more closely with those of Catholics in other collectivities than with actors from *within* her/his socio-cultural setting, who have other religious persuasions, or none at all.

Ideas, values, norms and beliefs are frequently communicated across geographical distances; individuals from different socio-cultural groups can have many common components to their lifeworlds. Concepts such as 'human rights', for instance, can become taken-for-granted elements of individuals' lifeworlds across a multiplicity of socio-cultural

settings; even if they have localised meanings, sufficient commonality exists to ensure meaningful interaction. Such cross-cutting collective understandings on a supra-national, supra-societal or supra-cultural level enable individuals to 'go on' within *wider* 'communities' (such as groups of states or an emerging global civil society), in accordance with an increasing emphasis on norms of, e.g., democracy and human rights.<sup>152</sup> This has implications for the notion of a mediator's "reputation power", introduced in Chapter 3. By drawing (in their discourses) upon norms and ideas that also resonate *outside* the Norwegian socio-cultural setting, Norwegian mediators can, arguably, exert leverage based on more widely shared understandings of, e.g., 'appropriate' conduct. For instance, if a state which is party to an international conflict has what is broadly viewed to be a 'shocking' human rights record, a mediator can expose this, such that it leads to stigmatisation or a loss of status within the international community. Alternatively, the mediator can *enhance* the state's reputation by, e.g., recognising it as a legitimate party at the negotiation table. The later discussion on constitutive rules returns to the topic of loss of status through non-compliance with commonly-held ideas of how to 'go on', while the notion of reputation power is returned to in Part Two of the thesis.<sup>153</sup>

In no way, then, is it suggested that individuals from the same socio-cultural group will behave in uniform ways, hold similar views, or even possess the same stock of knowledge. Nevertheless, there will be *elements* of shared knowledge, experience, and rules for conduct among group members. For instance, the urban city dweller will share with her/his neighbour a detailed acquaintance with the surrounding neighbourhood; they will also share the practical knowledge that household refuse is collected on certain days, and that one needs a parking permit in order to park in the street. Both will be able to 'go on' within the immediate socio-cultural setting, without necessarily ever having met. Similarly, the urban city dweller will share knowledge of cultural traditions, socially customary practices and linguistic resources with other members of society who live much further afield, due to *inter alia* the existence of a national education system and other societal institutions, a mass media, etc.<sup>154</sup> In short, an individual's lifeworld will, in

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<sup>152</sup> See, for instance, Adler, p. 340: 'Human rights have become a central factor in the interests of democratic nations because they increasingly define their social identities.'

<sup>153</sup> Here I am drawing upon a valuable conversation I had with Professor Mervyn Frost in June 1997.

<sup>154</sup> Habermas, following Schutz, suggests that although the apex of the lifeworld is situated in the everyday, mundane "here and now", its influence spreads beyond this, to 'contexts of relevance [which] are concentrically ordered and become increasingly anonymous and diffused as the spatiotemporal and social distance grows.' Habermas, TCA 2, op cit., p. 123.

general, *tend* to resemble those of other members of her/his socio-cultural group more closely than those of individuals from other groups.

In sum, the cultural traditions, historical memory traces, social norms and individual competencies common to members of a socio-cultural group will contribute to constituting the individual members of the group, entering into their self-understandings, and common-sense knowledge or practical consciousness. These social and cultural continuities will therefore be implicated in the likelihood of mediation emerging as a prioritised aspect of the group's foreign policy, or being accepted as 'appropriate' behaviour amongst group members (the "generative" dimension of implication, as suggested in Chapter 3). The same continuities will also be implicated in a potential mediator's style of conflict resolution behaviour and attitudes to conflict (the "qualitative" dimension of implication). Both of these dimensions of implication will, in turn, impact upon the 'power' of the mediator, as defined in Chapter 3.

#### ***4.2.3 The Constituting effect of Agency on the Lifeworld***

Through their activities, agents will also contribute to constituting the structural components of the lifeworld (just as these structural components enter into their constitution as actors), in accordance with the duality of structure. Although, when partaking in routine behaviour, actors will simply tend to *reproduce* the structural continuities of their socio-cultural setting (or lifeworld), occasions when the lifeworld's unproblematic background becomes thematised present themselves as opportunities for agents to exercise their 'transformative capacities'. As suggested in Chapter 3, the activity of mediation (agency) may be implicated in constituting the structural properties of the actor's socio-cultural setting in either a "reproductive" or "innovative" manner. When actors find themselves in 'problematic' situations, then, which need to be defined, their innovative capabilities come to the fore. As Adler suggests, social actors can 'successfully introduce innovations that help transform or even constitute new collective understandings...' <sup>155</sup>

The extent to which actors are able to exert a constitutive influence on the structures of their lifeworld will depend, among other things, upon their role and positioning within the socio-cultural group. For instance, a society's privileged speakers, by drawing upon the



extant cultural and linguistic resources of the group in the processes of articulation and interpellation, may be able to naturalise an activity to other group members, such that it appears to accord with the common-sense social stock of knowledge, and is thus not ‘thematized’ or questioned by actors in less influential positions.

Once a ‘new’ activity is successfully repeated on a number of occasions, without meeting resistance from fellow group members, it begins to be sedimented into the social stock of knowledge as an appropriate way of ‘going on’. As Jabri writes, ‘each particular war contributes to the institutionalisation of war as a social continuity’,<sup>156</sup> and similarly, the more that peace or mediation work is repeated, the more it may become an activity which forms part of the unproblematic background of the lifeworld. This topic is returned to in section 4.4 (on social norms) below.

As noted in Chapter 3, though, even ‘reproduction’ of the existing structural continuities of a socio-cultural setting is not a passive, or static, process. Even if the *general trend* is reproductive of the existing order, actors will inevitably modify the structural properties of their socio-cultural setting through their action. Actors ‘stand in a cultural tradition that they at once use and renew’.<sup>157</sup> Thus the lifeworld is constantly evolving; it is subject to continuous processes of erosion and deposition. The flow of daily life, the *durée* of action, brings to mind Heraclitus’s statement: ‘one can never step into the same river twice’.

In order to understand more fully how, despite differences, there may be intersubjectively shared expectations and attitudes among members of a socio-cultural group, as well as similar tendencies and modes of conduct in given situations, the chapter will now move on to a discussion of cultural values and social norms. These concepts have already been alluded to repeatedly in the above, but not explained in any detail.

### 4.3 *Cultural values*

*Values:* Ideas held by human individuals or groups about what is desirable, proper, good or bad. Differing values represent key aspects of variations in human culture. What individuals value is strongly influenced by the specific culture in which they happen to live.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Adler, op cit., p. 339.

<sup>156</sup> Jabri, p. 65.

<sup>157</sup> Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 137.

<sup>158</sup> Anthony Giddens: *Sociology*, Third Edition, Polity Press, 1997, p. 586.

As this definition from Giddens indicates, values are closely linked to culture; the environment within which an individual happens to be socialised will to a large extent determine what he or she deems to be 'good' or 'evil,' 'just' or 'unjust', admirable or deplorable. Habermas describes the process of value internalisation [emphasis added] as an aspect of the reproduction of the structural components of the lifeworld:

In coming to an understanding with one another about their situation, participants in interaction stand in a cultural tradition that they at once use and renew; in coordinating their actions by way of intersubjectively recognizing criticizable validity claims, they are at once relying on membership in social groups and strengthening the integration of those same groups; *through participating in interactions with competently acting reference persons, the growing child internalizes the value orientations of his social group and acquires generalized capacities for action.*<sup>159</sup>

Cultural values may become taken-for-granted elements of the individual's practical consciousness, enabling her/him to 'go on' in social life, as Habermas seems to suggest here. Alternatively, cultural values may enter actors' discursive consciousness – if they are discussed openly in the public domain, cited in a culture's self-parodying literature, or invoked by dominant speakers in their discourses. Values influence social actors' *attitudes*, or affective states, and by extension are implicated in their conduct. It does not follow, though, that people will always act according to their supposed values, or that a collectivity's values will be shared by all. Neither does it follow that common values will result in members of a social group being 'in tune' with each other.<sup>160</sup>

Relating this to the thesis, a mediator, as a social actor, will have internalised values specific to her/his cultural environment, as will her/his fellow group members, and these will differ from prioritised values in other groups. These values will, in turn, affect actors' attitudes, among other things towards conflict and 'appropriate' ways of dealing with it. As Jabri comments,

To do that which is "appropriate" suggests some element other than mere cost-benefit evaluation of options in time of conflict. It suggests that as well as role expectations, such continuities as social norms and cultural values must be taken into account. There is, therefore, an interrelationship between purposive agency, institutional frameworks, and the wider normative and discursive continuities which confer meaning on particular acts and situate these in the historical reproduction of society and its institutions.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 137.

<sup>160</sup> As Kratochwil argues, '[f]rom the observation of the often murderous infighting among people who profess the same values, such as "true believers," it is obvious that common values by themselves are insufficient to ensure cooperation and avoid conflict...', op cit., p. 154.

<sup>161</sup> Jabri, pp. 70-71.

Cultural values need not directly refer to “conflict” in order to be implicated in actors’ attitudes to – and conduct in response to – conflict situations. For instance, in certain cultures or societies, “peace” or “harmony” may be prominent values. Alternatively, “equality” and “justice” could be greatly valued.<sup>162</sup> In both cases, *attitudes* and *behaviour* towards conflict will be affected, even though the values themselves do not explicitly refer to “conflict.” In the first case,

1. conflict will be viewed in a negative light (the *attitudinal* dimension);
2. where possible (assuming agents act in accordance with their cultural values), steps may be taken to limit, avoid or resolve conflicts which occur (the *behavioural*, or *action* dimension).

In the second case,

1. conflict may be viewed in terms of inequalities, or right and wrong (*attitudinal* dimension);
2. it may be handled either by an emphasis on *prevention* through greater equality (equitable distribution of wealth, etc.), or remedially through institutions of formal justice (*behavioural* dimension).

These are, of course, only possible interpretations of the effects of the values cited above, and obviously a whole host of other values, too, will be implicated in attitudes towards, and behaviour in the light of, conflict. Some values may be more ‘directly’ relevant to the actual handling of conflict – or to mediation – than the examples given. A society might exist where “consensus” and “compromise” are held to be key values, for instance.

What is valued within a particular culture will, in part, depend on the shared historical experiences of the group – their collective ‘memory traces’ and the cultural traditions that have emerged over time. For instance, negative past experiences of conflict or war could lead to “peace” becoming highly valued within a cultural group.

#### 4.4 *Social norms or rules*

[I]n the internalization of norms there is a progression from, ‘Mummy is angry with me *now*’ to, ‘Mummy is angry with me *whenever* I spill the soup.’ As additional significant others (father, grandmother, older sister and so on) support the mother’s negative attitude towards soup-spilling, the generality of the norm is subjectively extended. The decisive step comes when the child recognizes that *everybody* is against soup-spilling, and the norm is generalized to, ‘*One* does not spill soup’ — ‘one’ being himself as part of a generality that includes, in principle, *all* of society... This abstraction from the roles and attitudes of concrete significant others is called the generalized other. Its formation within consciousness means that the individual now identifies not only with concrete others but with a generality of others, that is, with a society. Only by virtue of this generalized identification does his own self-identification attain stability and continuity. He now has not only an identity *vis-à-vis* this or

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<sup>162</sup> All of these are of course essentially contested concepts; what they mean will vary from group to group, and from individual to individual.

that significant other, but an identity *in general*... This newly coherent identity incorporates within itself all the various roles and attitudes — including, among other things, the self-identification as a non-spiller of soups.<sup>163</sup>

Definitions of norms abound. According to Giddens, norms are ‘rules of conduct which specify appropriate behaviour in a given range of contexts.’ Further, any given norm ‘either prescribes a given type of behaviour, or forbids it.’<sup>164</sup> For Goffman, ‘[a] social norm is that kind of guide for action which is supported by social sanctions, negative ones providing penalties for infraction, positive ones providing rewards for exemplary compliance... [A] norm is a rule for behaviour, the violation of which can be cited, and acceptably so, in justifying a sanction.’<sup>165</sup> As these definitions indicate, in many respects norms and rules are synonymous, and they will be treated as such in this thesis.

Already, a controversial claim has been cited: namely Goffman’s assertion that a norm or rule is backed by *sanctions*. This is the case for what are frequently referred to as *regulative* rules or norms, but it is arguably not the case for their *constitutive* counterparts.<sup>166</sup> Whereas regulative rules ‘are defined in terms of their influence on behaviour’,<sup>167</sup> constitutive rules are, as their name suggests, *constitutive* of behaviour’s meaning. ‘A form of behaviour is only recognisable through its constitutive rules.’<sup>168</sup> In accordance with Giddens’ view of rules as a component of social ‘structure’, Jabri makes plain that both conceptualisations (constitutive and regulative) ‘assume that rules form an element of the *structure* of social life...’<sup>169</sup>

The common analogy used for constitutive rules is that of the rules of chess: one cannot engage in play without knowing them. They enable social actors to ‘go on’ in the plurality of contexts of social life; to interact meaningfully with others. It is often argued that, just as it would be meaningless to ‘punish’ a novice chess player for not following the rules of chess (of which she/he is ignorant), so it is nonsensical to talk of ‘sanctions’ in the

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<sup>163</sup> Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann: The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Penguin Books, 1966, p. 153.

<sup>164</sup> Giddens, 1997, op cit., p. 583.

<sup>165</sup> Goffman, Erving: Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order, Harper and Colophon, New York, 1972, p. 95, quoted in J. Bilmes, Discourses and Behaviour, (Plenum Press, New York, 1986, p. 173), and in Jabri, op cit., p. 72.

<sup>166</sup> Some theorists distinguish between regulative and constitutive rules, but this distinction is not used in this thesis.

case of noncompliance with constitutive social rules. By failing to follow constitutive rules, one forfeits a certain status, but not through any *wrongdoing*, as when one breaks a regulative rule (or command) and incurs a sanction. For instance, if a social actor fails to observe the constitutive rules of language, such that her/his utterances appear to be mere “gibberish” to fellow group members, she or he loses the status of a competent speaker and is unable to interact meaningfully with others. Goffman, of course, has written extensively on the subject of stigma, ‘the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance.’<sup>170</sup>

The example of language as a rule-governed activity is appropriate, since constitutive rules are inextricably bound up with communication and processes of conferring *meaning* on acts. ‘[C]onstitutive rules cannot be treated as “causes” of action but as inferences of behaviour’s meaning where they enable communication through a shared understanding of the nature of the “game” being played.’<sup>171</sup> (Cf. the earlier discussion of Wittgenstein’s notions of ‘language games’ and ‘forms of life’ in Chapter 1). Thus, for example, even understanding what is meant by the concept “peace” in a particular socio-cultural setting depends on an acquaintance with the constitutive rules (linguistic resources, typifications, and interpretative schemes) of that setting. As Shapiro writes,

The meanings of concepts like “violence”, “social inequality”, and the like depends not only on measurements and observations...but also on the rules or norms which constitute the meanings of such concepts. So “violence” and “social inequality”... are not things that can be observed or recorded outside of a rule-governed context.<sup>172</sup>

Constitutive rules or norms are at the heart of the lifeworld, and, like the rest of the taken-for-granted lifeworldly knowledge inherent in being able to ‘go on’, they cannot be questioned: they can at most fall apart.<sup>173</sup> Since this thesis is concerned with the ways in which a social actor is *constituted* by her/his socio-cultural environment, and its normative, institutional and historical continuities, it is natural that constitutive rules or norms are considered to be of greater interest than their regulative counterparts in this context.

Unlike values, norms are *necessarily*, inevitably social. A “private norm” would be a contradiction in terms, or, as Wittgenstein puts it: ‘it is not possible to obey a rule ‘privately’: otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying

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<sup>170</sup> Erving Goffman: *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Penguin Books, 1963, p. 9.

<sup>171</sup> Jabri, p. 73.

<sup>172</sup> Shapiro, op cit., p. 43.

<sup>173</sup> Here I am drawing on a valuable conversation with Professor Mervyn Frost, on 24 June 1997.

it.’<sup>174</sup> An individual, through primary and secondary socialisation processes, internalises the norms of her/his socio-cultural environment by interacting with significant others, as the opening quote from Berger and Luckmann describes. Norms are in a sense constitutive of the individual’s identity, since their internalisation contributes to the formation of the “generalised other” within the social actor’s consciousness. They enable her/him to identify with fellow members of her/his social group, and gain a meaningful *social*, rather than simply *private* identity – a “*me*” as well as an “*I*”,<sup>175</sup> (as, for example, a “non-spiller of soups”). As Jabri points out, ‘[r]ules...constitute the social continuities which situate the acting self within the wider realm of society.’<sup>176</sup> The socialised individual can be safe in the knowledge that he or she has ‘comrades in arms’ with regard to these norms. Moreover, norms are constitutive of society, in that they establish *patterns of behaviour* and interaction; without norms, members of a given collectivity might not demonstrate such behaviour patterns, and would, in a sense, cease to be a “society”.

Normative statements may be recognised by their ‘*modal predicate*, the verbs (implicit or explicit) of “ought” or “should” or “must” or “deserve” that distinguish [them] from existential statements, that is, statements about matters of fact.’<sup>177</sup> As already suggested, though, this does not mean that they will always be explicitly stated, verbalised or intersubjectively articulated. Rather, ‘[c]asting rules in explicit verbal form is...the most basic form of institutionalization...’<sup>178</sup> Giddens emphasises the importance of tacit rules or norms, rooted in practical consciousness, as distinguished from norms which can be given discursive expression:

Most of the rules implicated in the production and reproduction of social practices are only tacitly grasped by actors: they know how to ‘go on’. *The discursive formulation of a rule is already an interpretation of it...*<sup>179</sup>

However, according to Kratochwil, such norms (variously termed “implicit norms”, “tacit norms” or “unspoken rules”), where direct communication does not take place among the parties concerning the norm but instead ‘its meaning is inferred or imputed from the

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<sup>174</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* I, 81e, 202, (op cit).

<sup>175</sup> It was Mead who introduced the concept of the “generalised other” and made the distinction between “*me*” — which implies interaction with others, alter-egos — “he did this to *me*”, and “*I*”, which refers to the ego acting in isolation — “*I* did this.”

<sup>176</sup> Jabri, op cit., p. 74.

<sup>177</sup> Finley Scott, op cit., p. 70.

<sup>178</sup> Kratochwil, op cit., p. 148.

<sup>179</sup> Giddens, 1984, op cit., pp. 22-23.

other's action', are the least understood.<sup>180</sup> This supports Giddens' claim that the domain of practical consciousness has been a neglected area of study.

The relationship between a social environment's norms and its actors is intensely dynamic.<sup>181</sup> Norms are created and reproduced by social actors in their interaction; they are not independent variables which 'cause' action. Often they will be based on a social group's core values, and without popular support, they would cease to be upheld as "norms", indeed, a particular society's norms do change with time. Through their actions, social actors constantly renew, reinforce, modify or render obsolete the norms of their society.

As Holy and Stuchlik note, (referring to *regulative* norms), '[s]tudies aimed at the investigation of the relationship between norms and actions have clearly shown that people do not treat norms as causes or reasons for action, but at best as guidelines for action... [N]orms can be manipulated, applied, disregarded... they have no internal compelling force to summon action.'<sup>182</sup> Rather than being 'controlled' by norms, agents may in fact 'use' the dominant norms of their social environment in order to justify their actions. Norms can, in other words, be *invoked* by purposive agents in order to legitimate their behaviour to other group members. As an aspect of social 'structure', as defined by Giddens, it follows that norms are both constraining and enabling. A society with a particular normative constitution may *enable* its actors to adopt certain modes of behaviour, or undertake specific forms of action; alternatively, it may be difficult for actors to find an appropriate norm to draw upon in the justification of a preferred course of action.

Relating the discussion more directly to the thesis, since societies differ in terms of their normative make-up, actors from different social groups will behave in dissimilar ways, in that they will be bound to draw on the norms of their particular collectivity when acting. There will be certain *normative expectations* regarding 'appropriate' behaviour within any given social environment. (Again, like values, the nature of a collectivity's norms will be related to the culture of the group in question: shaped by their collective 'memory traces', traditions, literature/folklore, and self-representations). Moreover, behaviour may be deemed appropriate if it *accords* with a specific norm, not only if it is directly *based* on it. In this way, there is a reflexive relationship between social actors' behaviour and the normative expectations of their society. Or, as Jabri writes: '[h]uman conduct is...both constitutive and transformative of the normative structures which render conduct and social interaction meaningful.'<sup>183</sup> Through acting in ways which *accord with*

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<sup>180</sup> Kratochwil, op cit., 146.

<sup>181</sup> See, for instance, Kratochwil, p. 152.

<sup>182</sup> Holy and Stuchlik, *Actions, Norms and Representations*, op cit., p. 83.

<sup>183</sup> Jabri, op cit., p. 74.

their social environment's norms, but are not directly *prescribed* by them, social actors will gradually generate *new* norms, or normative expectations.

Thus, one could imagine a society in which there is a normative expectation for, say, emotional self-control: 'one ought not to show one's feelings in an uncontrolled way.' At first this norm seems to have little bearing on our context, but if it is applied to the realm of conflict, a style of conflict resolution behaviour where the emphasis is placed on cool discussion of the issues (without emotive polemics) might emerge. This behaviour, which would accord with the society's norm for emotional self-control, would in turn generate new normative expectations, more immediately relevant to our context. For instance, members of the society could find that *mediation* proves a suitable method for resolving disputes in a cool and controlled setting, and so mediation could gain a foothold as a pattern of behaviour which accords with the norm for 'emotional self-control', without yet having the status of a norm itself. With time, though, a normative expectation could emerge from this pattern of behaviour: 'one should solve one's disputes by talking things over with a third party.' In other words, particular norms might *enable* certain modes of conflict behaviour, including mediatory activity, by entering into actors' self-understandings and conduct and leading to patterns of conflict behaviour among group members, which in time become norms. (This relates to the discussion in Chapter 3 concerning whether a norm *for mediation* can emerge in a particular socio-cultural setting.)

#### **4.5 Final Remarks**

This chapter has endeavoured to shed light on the myriad ways in which a social actor (in the case of this thesis a mediator, or members of her/his social group) is constituted by the continuities of her/his socio-cultural setting, and, in turn, contributes to constituting these continuities. The concept of 'lifeworld' was introduced to add depth and clarity to the notion of the actor's situated identity, and to highlight the hermeneutic approach of this thesis which stresses the self-understandings of actors (while taking a somewhat critical view of the extent of actors' knowledgeability). Following Habermas, it was suggested that an actor's unproblematic, background 'knowledge' and assumptions will be comprised of three dimensions, *viz.*, culture, society, and personality.

Part Two of this thesis now applies the theoretical ideas introduced in Part One to the case of Norway, and to the recent peace activism of a significant number of Norwegian actors. The ensuing chapters trace the cultural traditions and historical 'memory traces' which make up the 'social stock of knowledge' shared by actors within the Norwegian socio-cultural setting. Discourses on peace work, and the institutional and normative continuities of the Norwegian socio-cultural setting (as articulated by actors *within* this



setting) are examined, with a view to uncovering ways in which individual actors are *constituted* by these features of their socio-cultural environment. Attempts are made to tap into the 'lifeworlds' of individual actors, or to suggest how their lived experience and the socio-cultural setting in which they exist have entered into their self-understandings, expectations and assumptions, *inter alia*, in the face of conflict situations. Norway's recent peace activism is introduced, and an attempt is made to highlight ways in which Norwegian mediators – and their conduct and capabilities – may be constituted by their socio-cultural setting.<sup>184</sup> Attention is also paid to ways in which the activity of mediation has, in turn, contributed to constituting the normative and institutional continuities of Norwegian society.

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<sup>84</sup> (Across a range of peace processes, with particular emphasis on Norwegian actors' involvement in the Guatemalan peace process.)

## Part Two: Practice

## Chapter Five:

# Formative Experiences of a Mediator: the Story of Norwegian Involvement with Conflict and Peace in the International Arena

GINA: *Do you think young Werle is truly mad?*  
RELLING: *No, unfortunately; he is no madder than people tend to be. But he does have an illness.*  
GINA: *What's the matter with him, then?*  
RELLING: *Mmm, let me tell you, Mrs. Ekdal. He is suffering from an acute righteousness<sup>1</sup>fever.*  
GINA: *Righteousness fever?*  
HEDVIG: *Is that a kind of illness?*  
RELLING: *Oh yes, it's a national illness, but it occurs only sporadically.*

Henrik Ibsen: The Wild Duck, Act III, 1884.<sup>2</sup>

*More valuable by far than common customs posts and frontiers...is the fact of sharing, in the past, a glorious heritage and regrets, and of having, in the future, [a shared] programme to put into effect, or the fact of having suffered, enjoyed, and hoped together... [I]ndeed, suffering in common unites more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort.<sup>3</sup>*

This chapter provides a selective overview of Norway's foreign political history since 1814, when the country passed from Danish rule into a union with Sweden. The events presented here are chosen for their relevance to this thesis – they comprise 'formative experiences' of conflict and peace, or 'being in between' that accord with Norway's contemporary countenance as "peace-monger". In essence, the chapter traces some of the key episodes and events in Norway's recent history, which have entered into the social group's collective 'memory traces', and are drawn upon

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<sup>1</sup> There is no direct translation for the Norwegian word 'rettskaffenhetsfeber'; I could also have translated it as 'uprightness fever' or 'justice fever' (this sounds better in English, but is further from the original Norwegian). In Michael Meyer's Methuen translation he uses the expression 'a surfeit of self-righteousness'. (See Henrik Ibsen: Plays: One: Ghosts, The Wild Duck, The Master Builder, Methuen, 1980, p. 177).

<sup>2</sup> (My translation).

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Renan: 'What is a Nation?', in Bhabha, Homi K. (ed): Nation and Narration, Routledge, 1990, p. 19. Originally from a lecture delivered at the Sorbonne, on 11 March 1882: 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', published in Oeuvres Complètes (Paris, 1947-61), translated & annotated by Martin Thom, Vol. I, pp. 887-907.

by privileged speakers in their narratives, for instance when legitimising and ascribing intelligibility to Norway's recent peace activism. (This is explored in Chapter 7). The chapter aims to place Norwegian mediators in relation to the *longue durée* of their socio-cultural group; to provide evidence of the reproduction of foreign political practices across time and space, through differing historical contexts and periods with varying opportunities for agents to exercise their transformative powers. 'The self cannot be understood outside history', and this chapter attempts to trace some of the historical, institutional and discursive continuities which constitute Norwegian actors, mediators included.

No attempt is made to construct a narrative here which is of relevance to *all* Norwegians. Individuals' stocks of knowledge and memory traces will of course differ greatly, and even when two actors have experienced the same event the constitutive effects of this will be specific to the individual. For instance, the experience of World War Two was a major formative experience for a great many Norwegians, but how they responded to this, for instance in relation to the question of joining NATO, differed dramatically.

This chapter focuses on Norway's recent history, and on the country's consistent preoccupation with peace and solidarity with the Third World. However, it would be wrong to claim that Norwegians have always exhibited an interest in such matters. Their Viking heritage, at any rate, would seem to testify to a rather different attitude towards conflict than that which might be argued to prevail today. However, most modern Norwegians view their Viking predecessors with considerable pride, and as Elise Boulding writes: 'Every culture has contradictory components, including usually an idealization of both the warrior and the peacemaker.'<sup>4</sup> It could even be argued that this glorious and gory past provides a form of catharsis which enables Norwegians to enact a more peaceable present and future.<sup>5</sup>

### **Norwegian Foreign Policy Relating to Conflict and Peace: An Overview**

This chapter will focus on the period from 1814 onwards, since this year marks a watershed in Norwegian political history: it was in 1814 that Norway

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<sup>4</sup> Elise Boulding: 'States, Boundaries and Environmental Security', in Sandole and van der Merwe (eds.): Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application, Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 204.

<sup>5</sup> It has been claimed, incidentally, that although Viking warriors were feared throughout Europe, the domestic society was relatively peaceful. See Eckstein, Harry: Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway (1966), p. 115, and Ross, Marc Howard: The Management of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective, (1993), p. 57.

became a constitutional monarchy and a representative democracy, and for the first time in four centuries regained a degree of autonomy, despite being in a union with – and ruled by – Sweden.<sup>6</sup> Two public figures were particularly prominent during the nineteenth century: the writer, publicist and orator Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, (1832-1910), and Fridtjof Nansen, (1861-1930), the scientist, explorer and champion of humanitarian work.<sup>7</sup> Bjørnson, who enjoyed far greater contemporary acclaim than Ibsen<sup>8</sup> and far-reaching political influence, worked ‘indefatigably for the cause of peace among nations,’<sup>9</sup> playing an active role in the International Peace Movement during the 1890s and campaigning on behalf of oppressed minorities such as the Czechs and the Slovaks, and individuals like Alfred Dreyfus.<sup>10</sup> Bjørnson became in many ways the mouthpiece for Norwegian nationalism, which at that time implied taking a more progressive political stance than Sweden, and expressing a ‘repugnance of great power politics that so often appeared to work to the detriment of Norway.’<sup>11</sup> A pacifist streak thus developed during the course of the period of union with Sweden. Burgess writes:

There emerged in Norway an undeniably pacifist ideology which, as far as relations among nations were concerned, anticipated international law as the rule, adjudication as the means, and political non-involvement as the strategy for peace.<sup>12</sup>

Alfred Nobel recognised as much when he gave Norway the honour of awarding the Peace Prize; this was largely due to the Norwegian pacifist orientation, and the fact

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<sup>6</sup>For more information about this period see Philip M. Burgess: *Elite Images and Foreign Policy Outcomes: A Study of Norway*, Chapter I: ‘*Norwegian Foreign Policy in Perspective*’, The Ohio State University Press, 1968 pp. 17-19, and Olav Knudsen: ‘*Norway: Domestically Driven Foreign Policy*’, in *the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 512, November 1990, p. 104.

<sup>7</sup> Fridtjof Nansen's main projects arguably took place at the beginning of the twentieth century; he became an important representative of the League of Nations in refugee matters and humanitarian work, and he raised large sums of money for the repatriation of Russian prisoners of war, refugees and famine victims—tens of thousands of displaced persons were allocated ‘Nansen passports’ as their first internationally accepted means of identification. See Egeland, Jan: *Impotent Superpower, Potent Small State*, op cit., p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> And, as Popperwell writes, “even today in Norway Bjørnson seems to loom larger than Ibsen and to be more representative of the Norwegian spirit of his times.” See Ronald G. Popperwell: *Nations of the Modern World: Norway*, Ernest Benn Ltd., 1972, p. 240. (In an ironical twist of fate, Bjørnson's daughter ended up marrying Ibsen's son, despite their fathers' intense rivalry).

<sup>9</sup> Burgess, op cit., p. 19

<sup>10</sup> Popperwell, op cit., p. 242. See also Egeland, Jan: *Impotent Superpower, Potent Small State*, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Burgess, op cit., p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

that 'far back into the nineteenth century...the Norwegian parliament was interested in mediation and arbitration and the peaceful settlement of disputes.'<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps appropriately, modern Norway was born out of what has been described as 'the first Nordic *non-war*';<sup>14</sup> the union with Sweden, which had commenced with a war between the two countries in 1814, was dissolved peaceably in 1905.<sup>15</sup> The main concern of the newly independent Norwegians was to maintain their neutrality, which was seen as inextricably linked to their quest for peace and security, and to secure, if possible, a great power guarantee of this neutrality.<sup>16</sup> The Swedish concept of armed neutrality was alien to Norway, who 'looked more to the international status of states like Belgium and Switzerland than to the international posture of her former overseer.'<sup>17</sup> Neutrality was therefore viewed as a strategy for peace; a means by which the Norwegians could maintain their late-won independence by isolating themselves in 'the quiet corner of Europe' where they would be insulated from any foreign conflict which might impinge upon their security. In addition to these security concerns, Norway saw neutrality as the best way of preserving her trade and commercial interests, and as Olav Riste rightly points out, Norway's dependence on foreign trade and the earnings of her merchant navy meant that '[t]he Norwegian brand of isolationism, after 1905, did not — in fact could not — mean isolation.'<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Personal interview with Professor Geir Lundestad, Director of the Nobel Institute, Oslo, July 6 1995.

<sup>14</sup> Wiberg, Håkon: 'De nordiske lande: et særligt system?' [The Nordic Countries, A Particular System?], p. 15, in Nils Petter Gleditsch, Bjørn Møller, Håkon Wiberg & Ole Wæver: *Svaner på vildveje?* Copenhagen: Vindrose, 1990, cited (and translated) in Archer, Clive: 'The Nordic Area as a *'Zone of Peace'*', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1996, p.453.

<sup>15</sup> Although there had been a build-up of forces on both sides, and some sabre-rattling by the Swedes, a referendum in Norway in August 1905 showed that the population firmly supported its government in its declaration of independence (by over 368,000 votes to 184!), and the leader of the Swedish Social Democrats, Hjalmar Branting, declared that the use of force against Norway would trigger a general strike in Sweden. See Clive Archer: 'The Nordic Area as a *'Zone of Peace'*', op cit., p. 453.

<sup>16</sup> Even prior to the dissolution of the union with Sweden, Norway had attempted on two occasions (in 1898 and 1902) to obtain such a guarantee, but Sweden scuppered both these attempts. In 1907 the Norwegians finally received a guarantee of their integrity (but not neutrality) from France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Burgess, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Burgess, op cit., p. 21. Calvocoressi makes a distinction between Sweden's "empirical neutralism" and Switzerland's "doctrinaire neutralism", which is illuminating in this context. See Peter Calvocoressi: *World Politics since 1945*, Seventh Edition, Longman, 1996, p. 238.

<sup>18</sup> Olav Riste: 'The Historical Determinants of Norwegian Foreign Policy', p. 14, in Holst (ed.): *Norwegian Foreign Policy in the 1980s*, Norwegian University Press (Universitetsforlaget), 1985.

By the time of World War I, Norway had been following a policy of unilaterally declared, strict neutrality for almost a decade. Following the declarations of war across the continent, an intra-Scandinavian “peace entente” developed in which all three states<sup>19</sup> succeeded in keeping out of the hostilities. This success confirmed the Norwegian belief in the efficacy of neutrality and in other nations’ respect for Norway as a ‘small, peace-loving and highly cultured nation.’<sup>20</sup> Since Norway had existed in a state of uninterrupted peace since the seventeen day war with Sweden in 1814, had no territorial ambitions, and boasted prominent figures in the international peace movement, it was thought that the country enjoyed an inviolable pacifist stance and integrity. Burgess sums up the attitude, held by many Norwegians, that:

...the peace traditions of the Norwegian people were extraordinarily deep-rooted and were of such a nature that they would surely be respected by other nations. Indeed, Norway had demonstrated in World War I that even under extreme provocation and the most adverse circumstances she would not permit herself to be drawn into war—just as World War I had demonstrated to Norway that a small nation could maintain peace in the midst of conflict. In short, history and experience had “taught” the Norwegians that peace was divisible, that war was an affair of the great powers into which the small nations need not be drawn if only they exercise prudence, demonstrate will with the proper verbalisations, and intelligently manage their political affairs.<sup>21</sup>

In retrospect, this assumption seems naïve, but until the experience of World War II there were few who doubted that the policy of neutrality would continue to be successful in the future. From the ‘hallowed’ ground on which they stood, the Norwegians felt able to look down on the strife of the less privileged, or the less enlightened. This false sense of security — apparently predicated on neutrality — gave rise to pretensions of being morally superior; here Riste notes a similarity with the United States:

Giving to their neutrality and non-entanglement the credit for a security which both nations owed largely to the shield of British sea power, Americans and Norwegians alike tended to approach the problems of international politics with a feeling of moral superiority. And in Norway's case, our membership in the League of Nations provided a perfect forum for the development of a philosophy which saw the small state as a paragon of virtue, and European great power politics as the embodiment of evil... Few realised that the label of Norwegian neutrality had served as a cover for a passive alliance under the protective shield of British naval supremacy in the North Sea.<sup>22</sup>

However, unlike the US, Norway did become an active supporter of the League of Nations, which was seen as being capable of protecting small states via the

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<sup>19</sup> (Denmark, Norway and Sweden)

<sup>20</sup> Burgess, p. 25

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> Riste, in Holst (ed.), *op cit.*, pp. 14-15.

promotion of the peaceful settlement of disputes and the ultimate guarantee of collective security.<sup>23</sup> However, by 1936 Norway had become thoroughly disillusioned with the League's dismal track record in preventing conflict and providing security for small states, and she withdrew from the organisation. The experiences of the 1930s served to inflate Norway's moralistic stance; according to Burgess, in the dominant Norwegian view of world politics at this time,

...the international system was composed of the larger, opportunistic states together with the small, justice-seeking states, whose work for peace and the rule of law was often undermined by the power orientation of the large. In short, the small states were, in the Norwegian view, sorts of Latter Day Saints, pleading the cause of rectitude and acting as the collective conscience of the great powers.<sup>24</sup>

The self-righteous and complacent Norwegian attitude, which had only been reinforced by the experience of World War I, did not last long. If the First World War had "proved" that a small, peace-loving nation could maintain peace in the midst of conflict, World War II set about destroying any such delusions. The impressive cloak of neutrality which the Norwegians had worn with such pride turned out to provide little protection against the harsh elements of the international system with which they were now faced. The ruling Labour party's aversion to armaments and dedication to pacifist principles, which were "supported by an overwhelming majority of the Norwegian people,"<sup>25</sup> meant that the Norwegians were totally unprepared for what was to come. In a very real sense it was their resolute commitment to peace that sealed the fate of the Norwegian population in World War II. Norwegians had always, rightly, assumed that Britain would not permit a hostile power to threaten the North Sea via occupation of Norway;<sup>26</sup> however, the Norwegian armed forces' chronic state of unpreparedness meant that the British did not have time to send more than a token force to Norway before the country was overrun.

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<sup>23</sup> Burgess, op cit., p. 26. Within the League, the "Scandinavian bloc" jointly advocated, supported and lobbied for: 1) universality; 2) a declaration of rights for national minorities; 3) codification of international law; 4) wider competence for the Permanent Court of International Justice; 5) the creation of permanent institutions for inquiry and conciliation; 6) radical reduction of armaments, and 7) increased authority for the League Assembly. (Burgess, p. 27).

<sup>24</sup> Burgess, op cit., p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> See Andenæs, Riste, and Skodvin: Norway in the Second World War, Johan Grundt Tanum Forlag, Oslo 1966.

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Riste: 'The Historical Determinants of Norwegian Foreign Policy', op cit., pp. 13 and 15. "A reliance on a more or less automatic protection by Britain, in the unlikely event of Norway being seriously threatened by any other great power, hence came to serve as a reinforcement of Norwegian isolationism. ... we had believed that England in her own interest would have done what could be done to throw the Germans out of Norway".



The German assault on Norway on 9 April 1940 marked the start of the bleakest period in the history of a state that was only some 35 years old. The King and government escaped to Britain, and from London they led resistance forces in Norway and formed units of Norwegians who had managed to escape across the North Sea to the UK.<sup>27</sup> Nazi rule over Norway was no less brutal than in other parts of the Third Reich – political freedoms were abolished, and thousands of Norwegians who refused to co-operate were imprisoned in a concentration camp established near Oslo at Grini, or sent to camps in Germany or used as slave labour. In 1944, German troops in the north of Norway, fearing invasion by the Russians via Finland, initiated a scorched earth policy that left much of the population to face the arctic winter without food or shelter.<sup>28</sup>

The events of 1940 and the subsequent experience of German Occupation mark a turning point in Norwegian foreign political thinking; not only were the Norwegians forced to re-assess their policy of neutrality, they were also given cause to re-evaluate their own international position and status. Peace could no longer be achieved through political non-involvement; instead, participation in the international community became the only realistic means to this end. The experience of World War Two, then, severely tempered the Norwegian idealism, complacency and feelings of moral superiority which had prevailed before; it was an altogether more “worldly” country which emerged following the period of Nazi occupation.

Johan Galtung has spoken of his experiences of WWII as part of the motivation behind his later involvement in peace research; at the age of 13 he witnessed his father, a former Deputy Mayor of Oslo and a physician, taken away to a concentration camp by the Nazis.<sup>29</sup> When I asked him about this, he emphasised the mark left by the War in the collective memory traces of Norwegians:

That was a trauma. And we call it the April 9 complex, of course. All Norwegians have to relate to that in some way or another; we are all obligated to relate to that... A majority of course chose NATO... I obviously chose another route; but we've all had to relate to it in one way or the other.<sup>30</sup>

This subject is returned to in Chapter 7.

While the war was still continuing, the initial policy proposals of the Norwegian Cabinet (from their exile in London) concerned a ‘North Atlantic mutual

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<sup>27</sup> For more information see Popperwell op.,cit. and Andenæs, Riste, and Skodvin, op cit.

<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., Andenæs, Riste and Skodvin (op cit.) and Popperwell (op cit.)

<sup>29</sup> Choose Peace: A Dialogue between Johan Galtung and Daisaku Ikeda, Pluto Press, London, 1995, p. 3. ‘On a private level I was influenced by the violent madness that afflicted Norway in general and our own small family in particular during World War II. I wanted to find out how all that horror might have been avoided.’

<sup>30</sup> Personal interview with Johan Galtung, Oslo, 11.2.98.

security system embracing both Northwest Europe and the United States.<sup>31</sup> This became known as the ‘Atlantic policy’, and however far-fetched it might have seemed at the time, (prior even to American intervention in the war), it reflected a genuine Norwegian belief that trans-Atlantic cooperation, ‘with the United States and Great Britain providing the main axis,’<sup>32</sup> was not only possible, but essential. The ‘Atlantic policy’ did not preclude regional security arrangements, but these were not perceived as sufficient without the additional protection of the Anglo-Saxon powers which Norway had always looked to as *de facto* guardians. During the final years of the war, however, as Roosevelt and Churchill emphasised the need for global co-operation above all else (including Atlantic or regional security schemes), Norwegian Government hopes too became focused on the prospective United Nations.

### *After the War: Dreams of Bridge-building*

Norwegian foreign policy in the immediate post-war years was termed “bridge-building”. According to Riste, however, this policy was not as active as the name suggests; it was ‘hardly more than a hope against hope for the re-establishment of a great power understanding about Scandinavia as a sanctuary from the threatening Cold War.’<sup>33</sup> It reflected considerable Norwegian concern over the deteriorating Soviet-American relationship, and the repercussions this might have for the United Nations as a security organisation. Norway shared a border with the Soviet Union, and at this time there was much residual gratitude towards the USSR for the substantial role it had played in the liberation of northern Norway and for its liberation of Finland.<sup>34</sup> There was therefore a feeling that Norway’s strategic position between East and West, and the amicable relations it enjoyed with both sides could be put to good use:

...Even bold and activist foreign policies were considered: could Norway exploit her international goodwill to become what the government termed a ‘bridge-builder’ between the major powers?

For some Norwegians the United Nations represented the ideal forum for such initiatives.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Riste, op cit., p. 16

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18

<sup>34</sup> ‘The feeling toward the Communists in general and the USSR in particular is relevant to postwar Norwegian foreign policy, for it demonstrates the absence in Norway, unlike in many other countries, of a deep-rooted fear of a Communist coup, nor was there evidence in Norway of the Russophobia which existed in many other Western nations.’ See Burgess, op cit., p. 80.

<sup>35</sup> Jan Egeland: *Impotent Superpower — Potent Small State*, pp. 35-37

The election of the Norwegian, Trygve Lie, as the first Secretary General of the United Nations was interpreted by most contemporary observers as a vote of confidence in the policy Norway had been following, and recognition of its ability to straddle the emerging East-West divide — ‘the Norwegian government had been able to gain the trust of the Soviet Union without simultaneously forfeiting the confidence of the United States and the other Western powers.’<sup>36</sup> Trygve Lie described the “bridge-building” policy in the following terms:

The smaller nations have a great part to play in cementing the peace. They are disinterested in many political disputes; their ambitions are cultural and economic. And so, in the opinion of the Norwegian delegation, their foreign policy should aim at making a sincere contribution to the mutual understanding and confidence of the great powers.<sup>37</sup>

It is fair to say, however, that this policy existed more in the realm of ideas than of concrete action; as a statement of the *ambitions* of Labour politicians rather than a series of acts. Helge Pharo reminds us that:

In terms of actual policies, Norway in 1946 declined a seat on the UN security council and frequently abstained on UN and peace conference votes when east-west cleavages were pronounced. Occasionally Norway shifted support between the emerging camps for tactical rather than substantive reasons when divisive issues were voted upon.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, once it became clear that the divisions between East and West were too deep to be smoothed over by any well-meaning small state, Norway’s dreams of “bridge-building” rapidly faded.

Events in 1948 (namely the communist coup in Czechoslovakia, Soviet pressures in Finland, and rumours of similar intentions towards Norway)<sup>39</sup> also acted as catalysts in convincing the Norwegians that alternative routes to security, more promising than the incapacitated United Nations, needed to be sought out. In the final analysis, as Egeland writes:

[T]he ambition of becoming an international entrepreneur for peace and human rights was always secondary to the search for security through a military alliance.<sup>40</sup>

The first alternative security option to be considered was that of a Scandinavian defence union. However, talks with Sweden foundered, mainly due to the latter’s

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<sup>36</sup> Burgess, op cit., p. 82

<sup>37</sup> Trygve Lie, cited in Burgess, ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Helge Pharo: ‘Norway and the World Since 1945’, in Anne Cohen Kiel (ed.): Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Norway, Scandinavian University Press, Oslo, 1993, p. 235.

<sup>39</sup> Pharo, p. 236.

<sup>40</sup> Egeland, Jan, op cit., p. 37.

insistence that any union must not jeopardise its neutrality by establishing links with Britain, the US or other Western European states, while Norway viewed such links as desirable.

This, then, forms the background to the Norwegian decision, in 1949, to join NATO. Prime Minister Gerhardsen, in a parliamentary debate on NATO membership, was clearly aware of this sea change in the Norwegian attitude to neutrality, and how it came about:

We used to think, in this country before the war, that it was possible and right to provide ourselves with a special Norwegian peace regardless of how the world outside was going.<sup>41</sup>

The question of NATO membership was still controversial, especially among members of the ruling Labour party, as it was viewed by many as a drastic breach of past policies.<sup>42</sup> However, joining NATO could also be seen as formalising the tacit assumption that had underpinned pre-War Norwegian neutrality – that Norway's strategic position meant that Britain would intervene militarily in the event of Norway being attacked. The Occupation had showed that while Britain wanted to aid Norway, this could not be done in an improvised manner. NATO membership, then, extended this assumption to include the US and created the physical means to effectively reinforce Norway should the need arise.<sup>43</sup>

NATO membership, however, did not end Norway's ambitions to reduce conflict between East and West; the desire to be a 'bridge-builder' remained. Although critics on the home front poured scorn on their country's behaviour within the alliance, describing Norway as "NATO's model schoolkid",<sup>44</sup> in fact the Norwegian stance was by no means submissive. Most significantly, Norway hoped to avoid any situation which could be perceived by Russia as threatening, by prohibiting the stationing of foreign armed forces on Norwegian territory during peacetime,<sup>45</sup> (while

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<sup>41</sup> Gerhardsen, quoted in Riste, op cit., p. 19. Incidentally, Gerhardsen was himself an initial NATO sceptic.

<sup>42</sup> Riste, p. 19. The sceptics viewed membership in a military alliance as a clear breach of Norway's traditional international stance, and were dubious as to whether or not a small state's voice would be heard, or its interests served in such an alliance.

<sup>43</sup> See Pharo p. 233.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., Riste, p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> This policy was also implemented for domestic reasons. See Holst, *'Norway's Role in the Search for International Peace and Security'*, in Holst (ed): *Norwegian Foreign Policy in the 1980s*, p. 145: 'The Norwegian policy of not permitting the stationing of allied troops in peacetime reflected strategic calculations as well as domestic considerations. Five years of occupation had hardly increased the social acceptability of foreign troops...'

of course balancing this with sufficient military preparedness to deter the Soviets from any thoughts of attack).

This cautious, non-provocative stance reflected Norwegian feelings of vulnerability vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, but it also demonstrated a commitment to conflict *prevention* (or “provention”, in Burtonian terms) qualitatively not unlike a commitment to conflict *resolution* through mediation. Former Norwegian Foreign Minister Holst explained the Norwegian security rationale in terms of “reassurance” on several levels:

Provocation is the Scylla of deterrence, and Norway has attempted to steer clear of its entrapment. Hence, reassurance is the counterpart of deterrence in Norway’s security posture. Reassurance of neighbouring countries, the Soviet Union and the Nordic states, has been an explicit purpose of the self-denying ordinances which have been incorporated into the national security posture. In addition, the self-imposed restraint has served implicit purposes concerning the reassurance of Norwegian society against alignment leading to an erosion of sovereignty.<sup>46</sup>

Although Norway gave up its cherished neutrality when it joined NATO, the country showed a continued understanding of the need to limit international tension as a fundamental building block of a security policy.

### *Norwegian security preoccupations during the Cold War*

The tradition of Norwegian peace activism was largely muted during the two decades after the end of WWII, as Norwegian policymakers prioritised security and trade issues. There are of course exceptions; since 1954 Norway consistently and vehemently criticised the *apartheid* regime in South Africa through the United Nations,<sup>47</sup> and in 1959 the *Storting* passed a motion [still valid today] that Norway should not supply weapons to countries in a state of war, civil war, or faced with the threat of war.<sup>48</sup> Hans Engen, Norwegian Ambassador to the UN from 1952-8, carried out a series of mediation assignments through his close cooperation with UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld,<sup>49</sup> and Foreign Minister Halvard Lange

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<sup>46</sup> Holst, op cit., p. 146.

<sup>47</sup> See, for instance, Svein Gjerdåker, ‘*Norsk menneskerettspolitik*’, (‘*Norwegian policy on human rights*’), in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds), op cit., p. 209.

<sup>48</sup> Nils Butenshøn: ‘*Norge og Midtøsten*’ (Norway and the Middle East), in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker, *ibid.*, p. 349. This is not to say, though, that this policy has always been consistently followed; particularly controversial on the domestic front has been Norway’s supply of weapons to Turkey, despite the Kurdish problem. (*ibid.*)

<sup>49</sup> Eriksen, Knut Einar and Pharo, Helge Øyvind: *Kald Krig og internasjonalisering*, Volume 5 of *Norges Utenrikspolitikk*, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1997, p. 383; and Bucher-Johannessen, Bernt, *Den norske modellen: bruken av ikke statlige aktører i norsk utenrikspolitikk*, Hovedoppgave, Universitetet i Oslo, 1999, p. 57.

played the role of “reassurer” through his contacts with his Polish counterpart, Adam Ripacki.<sup>50</sup> However, during the 1960s, the generally muted profile began to change:

...governments have been more inclined to speak out on the public stage, particularly within the United Nations. We can discern a drift from an almost exclusively behind the scenes pragmatism to a somewhat more declaratory policy aimed at both a world and a domestic audience.<sup>51</sup>

This shift in attitude ran in tandem with the development of institutions for the study of Norwegian foreign policy on a domestic level, and consequently with a greater self-consciousness regarding foreign political behaviour. Until the 1950s, no such academic field existed, but in 1959 the Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs (NUPI) was set up, followed rapidly by other organisations.<sup>52</sup> The International Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), established in 1966 as an independent organisation<sup>53</sup> and led by Johan Galtung, took a more radical stance.<sup>54</sup> While NUPI, with Johan Jørgen Holst at the helm, focused primarily on security issues, PRIO’s research agenda was wider: Galtung emphasised research into the causes of war and the necessary conditions for peace; human rights; and development and dependency issues regarding the Third World.<sup>55</sup> The more normative aspect of the Norwegian attitude towards foreign affairs, which had been largely sidelined for twenty years, began, then, to surface again — resuscitated by prominent figures such as Galtung. Dependency theory and Galtung’s ideas on centre and periphery were influential in Norwegian foreign political thinking, and gave rise to a more outspoken Norwegian position regarding issues such as decolonisation and the North-South economic divide. During the 1960s and 1970s, then, traditional Norwegian preoccupations with peace, human rights and justice again became more apparent, although usually expressed via the United Nations. One case of purely Norwegian activism was the role played by Ole Ålgård, Norway’s ambassador to China, between 1967 and 1969, in establishing peace talks between North Vietnam and the US. A secret channel was set up, and in September 1968 talks were held in Oslo between the two parties, with Norway acting as messenger. This has been seen as one of the most promising peace

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<sup>50</sup> This was also during the 1950s. See Bucher-Johannessen, *ibid.*, and Eriksen and Pharo, *ibid.*, pp. 221-2.

<sup>51</sup> Pharo, *ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>52</sup> Torbjørn Knutsen, ‘*Norsk Utenrikspolitikk som forskningsfelt*’, (‘*Norwegian Foreign Policy as a Field of Research*’), in Knutsen, Sørbø and Gjerdåker (eds): *Norges Utenrikspolitikk*, *op cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup> It had previously existed as the Department for Peace and Conflict Research within the Institute for Social Research — *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> During the Vietnam War, for instance, NUPI represented Norway’s official line, remaining faithful to the US, while PRIO expressed a more critical, internationalist line, in opposition to the US. Knutsen, *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>55</sup> Knutsen, *ibid.*

initiatives in the context of the Vietnam War, prior to the commencement of official talks in Paris in 1969.<sup>56</sup> In effect, this was the very first “Oslo Channel”.

Together with the other Nordic states, Norway has been a resolute supporter of the United Nations since its inception, consistently supporting peacekeeping operations, and contributing large amounts of aid. This behaviour can also be seen as an extension of the Norwegian commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, and conflict prevention. As Clive Archer notes, each of the Nordic states

has a long history of involvement [in peace-keeping operations] dating back to the establishment of the UN Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) in the Israel/Palestine area in June 1948 and the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in January 1949. The Nordic states were also part of the first peace-keeping force (as opposed to observers or truce supervisors) UNEF 1, established in the Middle East after the Suez conflict of November 1956.<sup>57</sup>

Elsewhere he, too, makes the point that the active Nordic participation in such peacekeeping operations can ‘be placed in a category of [its] own, whereby the Nordic states are seen to be contributing to the creation of a stable and peaceful international society rather than participating in warlike adventures.’<sup>58</sup> By 1988 Norway was — in relative terms — the largest contributor to the United Nations,<sup>59</sup> and since the organisation’s inception Norway has contributed almost 40, 000 troops to peace-keeping operations.<sup>60</sup> According to Gunnar Fermann, Norway’s participation in peace-keeping operations has traditionally been based on the country’s support of norms for the peaceful management of conflicts between states.<sup>61</sup> Further,

When the UN is presented as *a goal in itself* in Norwegian foreign policy, this is also because the UN system itself is a *step on the way* to a utopian world, where norms for social justice, for freedom, independence and human rights, and norms for peaceful coexistence between states are put into effect. Many of these norms *resonate with Norwegian historical experience*.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Skjærstad, Atle M., ‘Norge Sentral i fredsprosess’, Bergens Tidene, 3.2.95, and Gjerdåker, in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.) op cit., p. 217.

<sup>57</sup> Archer, Clive: ‘Conflict Prevention in Europe: The Case of the Nordic States and Macedonia’, Cooperation and Conflict, 1994, Vol. 29 (4), p. 375.

<sup>58</sup> Archer, Clive: ‘The Nordic Area as a ‘Zone of Peace’, (1996), op cit., p. 457.

<sup>59</sup> Jan Egeland, Impotent Superpower — Potent Small State, p. 44

<sup>60</sup> Gunnar Fermann, ‘Norge og FN’ (Norway and the UN), in Knutsen, Sørbo, and Gjerdåker (eds): Norges Utenrikspolitikk (Norway’s Foreign Policy), Cappelen Akademisk Forlag a.s., 1995, p. 189.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 187 (my translation, and my emphasis of last four words).

A Government White Paper states that the UN is a 'main cornerstone in Norwegian foreign policy.'<sup>63</sup> Within the UN, Norway has often played an entrepreneurial, or initiative-taking role. In 1964, for instance, together with the other Nordic countries, Norway established a Nordic *beredskapsstyrke* (Stand-by force) consisting of 4000 troops, which could be mobilised at short notice for peace-keeping operations, should any of the Nordic countries be approached by the Secretary-General.<sup>64</sup> Since the end of the Cold War, with conflicts such as that in the former Yugoslavia emerging closer to Norwegian borders, Norway's support of UN peace-keeping missions has increased. In 1993, the Norwegian component of the Nordic Stand-by force was increased from 1330 to 2022 troops, partly to meet the new demands of the post-Cold War era,<sup>65</sup> and partly as a reflection of increasing Norwegian feelings of vulnerability in the face of the growing numbers of ethnic and national conflicts on European soil.

Despite this consistent support of United Nations peace-keeping, Norway has also made moves to entice the organisation away from a *reactive* approach to conflict resolution, to a more *proactive* attitude. Since the beginning of the 1980s, Norway, again together with the other Nordic states,<sup>66</sup> has worked to strengthen the UN's capacity to *prevent* armed conflict. In 1986 the Nordic states succeeded in creating a (fact-finding) body within the UN Secretariat for intelligence-gathering about potential new conflicts.<sup>67</sup> Archer notes that the Nordic governments have 'explicitly called for conflict prevention actions to prevent discord from turning into conflict and then into war.'<sup>68</sup> He attributes this emphasis on conflict prevention to what he postulates to be 'the liberal institutionist—or pluralist or Grotian—view of European security espoused by Nordic governments' which, in contrast to the realist school, 'contends that states and societies can interact in ways that form a community of interests across frontiers' and places the emphasis in international

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<sup>63</sup> Stortingsmelding nr. 11, 1989-90: 78, cited in Fermann, *ibid.*, p. 185 (my translation).

<sup>64</sup> Fermann, *ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>65</sup> (As a constructive response to Boutros-Ghali's repeated calls for member states to reduce the gulf between the demand for peace-keeping operations, and the willingness to provide troops for such operations). Fermann, pp. 189-190.

<sup>66</sup> When I refer to the Nordic states collectively, I refer to Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland unless I state otherwise; Iceland will not usually be included.

<sup>67</sup> Fermann, *ibid.*, p. 197 (footnote no. 16). See also Government White Paper (Stortingsmelding) No. 11, 1989-90, p. 82f.

<sup>68</sup> Archer, Clive, 'Conflict Prevention in Europe: The Case of the Nordic States and Macedonia', *op cit.*, p. 376.



relations on ‘solidarity that can encourage this civility and prevent the outbreak of conflict.’<sup>69</sup>

The Nordic states have also backed up their words with concrete action; in 1993 the Nordic-dominated United Nations Protection force (FYROM), deployed to Macedonia, was the first example of a UN conflict prevention force — with a mission to ‘deter any threats against Macedonia, to monitor the borders with Serbia and Albania, and to report any developments in the border areas that could undermine confidence and stability in Macedonia or threaten its territory.’<sup>70</sup> The fact that such a mission, unprecedented in mandate, could be established so rapidly and with comparative ease was, as Archer points out, due to

...the extensive Nordic experience in UN peace-keeping operations and...the infrastructure of coordination offered by NordSamFN. This body consists of the representatives of the respective military authorities in each of the Nordic countries and pools the peace-keeping experience of all the members in manuals, training programmes and seminars... Furthermore, the four Nordic governments had agreed, through their national legislation, to place a certain number of troops — about 8600 in all — at the UN’s disposal at any one time.<sup>71</sup>

The Nordic states have, therefore, ensured that their innovative ideas regarding conflict prevention can quickly be realised on the ground, by creating, collectively, the requisite infrastructure and mechanisms for such action to be undertaken.

### **A Mediator in the Making: Experiences of Being “In Between”**

Holsti writes of a *national role conception*, consisting of ‘the policymakers’ own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system.’<sup>72</sup> Among the possible role conceptions he mentions is that of *mediator-integrator*, which may arise in states with a particular geographical location which have traditionally played such a role, while maintaining a stance of non-involvement in conflicts; he lists Sweden and Lebanon in this category, but Norway would also seem to fit this description.<sup>73</sup> A national role

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<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 376. (It was, of course, a Swede, Dag Hammarskjöld, who introduced the concept of ‘preventive diplomacy’ into United Nations vernacular; this was originally conceived as using diplomatic means to prevent Cold War superpower rivalry from spreading into the newly-emerging Third World). *ibid.*, p. 372.

<sup>70</sup> Archer, *ibid.*, p. 371.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 370-371.

<sup>72</sup> Holsti, K.J: ‘*National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy*’, in Walker (ed.): *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1987, p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately Norway was not one of the seventy-one states Holsti chose for his study.

conception can be used to predict a state's likely future behaviour;<sup>74</sup> a self-perception as a mediator and previous mediation work, for instance, will motivate continued commitment to this area, which will in turn reinforce the national role conception. Norway's experience of being strategically located between East and West during the Cold War is not the sole example of Norway finding herself "in between" opposing, or separate camps. The various experiences of being "in the middle", (some of which will be traced in this section) coupled with the ongoing Norwegian preoccupation with the peaceful settlement of conflicts, could be expected to generate a national role conception as mediator or bridge-builder, which would then motivate Norwegians to undertake such work. Holst, in his 1985 edited volume on Norwegian foreign policy (written prior to Norway's recent activism in peace and mediation work, and to his own involvement in the Arab-Israeli *Oslo Channel*), writes:

Small states ...are often searching for roles to play in the broader process of dialogue and negotiation. [Regarding arms control and disarmament, specifically]. Norway has considered several options without ever making a clear-cut choice. The roles of initiator and conceptualizer, of architect or preacher have been identified as well as the more modest role of craftsman. In the words of a former Minister of Foreign Affairs Norway must adopt 'the role or combination of roles which seem most suitable in the circumstances at hand.' However, he concluded that the most suitable and appropriate roles are those of intermediary and mediator. Such a role does not bring demonstrable and visible results and is ill-suited to scoring political points in a domestic debate.<sup>75</sup>

Had Holst still been alive today, it would be intriguing to know whether or not he would still stand by the final statement in this passage. In any case, it is interesting to see that policy-makers continued to deem mediation or bridge-building a suitable activity for Norway, long after the "bridge-building" ambitions of the 1940s had faded, and before the 'peace activism' of recent years began. This may be partly due to other experiences of bridging cleavages, both on a domestic and an international level, which continued to forge a self-image as go-between or mediator. Two of these experiences at a foreign policy level will now be discussed, namely Norway's role – together with the other so-called 'like-minded' countries – in the negotiations between North and South regarding a New Economic World Order, and the experience of being situated "in between" the oil-importing countries, her traditional "allies", and the members of OPEC, her new brothers-in-arms following the discovery of North Sea oil off the Norwegian coast in 1969.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> More so than traditional decision-making theories, Holsti seems to imply.

<sup>75</sup> Holst, Johan Jørgen: *'Norway's Role in the Search for International Peace and Security'*, in Holst (ed): *Norwegian Foreign Policy in the 1980s*, op cit., p. 158.

<sup>76</sup> Dag Harald Claes: *'Norsk olje- og gasspolitikk'* ('Norwegian oil and gas policy') in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdaaker (eds): *Norges Utenrikspolitikk*, op cit., p. 145.

During the period 1974 to 1981, demands for a cluster of reforms to the international economic system, collectively known as the New International Economic Order (NIEO), were made by Third World countries, who had gained a new assertiveness and group cohesion, partly due to a collective realisation that their newly-won independence had not brought them the benefits they had anticipated; '[t]hey saw that their countries were still severely impoverished, that their options were few, that the gap between their wealth and that of the rich countries was widening, and that their control of their own development was insecure...'<sup>77</sup> The proposed reforms were wide-ranging, but included measures to augment developing countries' control over their own resources, economies and development, to secure an increased flow of resources from the rich North to the Third World, and to enable the LDCs to play a more active role in managing the international economic order.<sup>78</sup>

It was in this context, then, that a small group of Western powers began to play a particularly active role within UNCTAD,<sup>79</sup> in an attempt to encourage the industrialised market economy (or Group B) states to take a more generous and responsive line with regard to the demands from the South (or the Group of 77).<sup>80</sup> The so-called Like-Minded Group was borne out of a joint initiative by Norway and the Netherlands, or to be more precise, by two social democratic politicians: Norwegian State Secretary Thorvald Stoltenberg, and Dutch Minister for Development Jan Pronk:

Pronk's and Stoltenberg's original idea was to rally "like-minded" politicians and governments in an effort to mediate between the demands of the Third World and the defensive positions taken by the United States and other "hardliners" among the larger industrialised countries of the North. The group developed in more or less concentric circles around its initiators.<sup>81</sup>

It was hoped that by mobilising other sympathetic governments to support the Like-Minded cause, pressure would be exerted on hard-line industrialised countries to adopt a more conciliatory approach to the South. The Like-Minded Group aimed to promote North-South dialogue and foster constructive communication between the two "sides", such that compromise solutions could be reached. For one reason or

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<sup>77</sup> Cranford Pratt (ed.): Middle Power Internationalism, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990, p. 26.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>79</sup> (The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)

<sup>80</sup> Cranford Pratt (ed.): Internationalism Under Strain: The North-South Policies of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, University of Toronto Press, 1989, p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> Asbjørn Løvbræk, 'International Reform and the Like-Minded Countries', in Pratt (ed.), 1990, *op cit.*, p. 32.

another, the Like-Minded countries failed to achieve their objectives; they were unable to bring about meaningful attitude change among the more 'hawkish' Northern states, let alone introduce reforms amounting to a New International Economic Order, and by the 1980s Group meetings were largely limited to stock-taking on current North-South issues. The last meeting of the Group took place in 1987. This ultimate failure does not, however, detract from the relevance of the Like-Minded Group to our purposes here; as an example of Norwegian international activism in a bridge-building capacity, Norway's work within the Like-Minded Group can be seen as an important precedent to her recent, independent, peace and mediation work.

Although at one time the Like-Minded Group had twelve members,<sup>82</sup> a core group developed around the central players, Norway and the Netherlands, which included Sweden, Canada and Denmark. Within this core group, it is generally acknowledged that Norway became the 'most active and persistent member.'<sup>83</sup> For instance, Norway realised that the bridge-building role it envisaged for the Like-Minded group required links with both sides, and yet the group only had continuous, formal contact with the other Western industrialised countries (through Group B in Geneva and the OECD in Paris); contact with the Southern countries was far more intermittent and erratic.<sup>84</sup> Norway therefore hosted two meetings, one in Bolkesjø in April 1981, and the second in Oslo in October 1982, where like-minded participants from both North and South were invited to attend in their personal capacity.<sup>85</sup> To cite another instance of Norwegian activism, even once it became apparent that the NIEO would not be achieved, Norway was unwilling to accept total defeat, and proposed that the Like-Minded Group or a smaller group of countries could create a mini-NIEO, which would serve as a model for others to emulate. This idea too, though, was still-born; while Norway continued to promote the concept within

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<sup>82</sup> At the end of 1984; namely Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. (ibid). (Britain was a member, but dropped out in 1978).

<sup>83</sup> Løvbræk, op cit., p. 32. See also, for example, Antony J. Dolman: *The Like-Minded Countries and the New International Order: Past, Present and Future Prospects*, *Cooperation and Conflict* (Nordic Journal of International Politics), XIV, 1979, p. 63: "With the demise of the centre-left government in the Netherlands and the disappearance of Jan Pronk, Norway has become the most active member of the group."

<sup>84</sup> Asbjørn Løvbræk, ibid., p. 54.

<sup>85</sup> Since there was concern within the group that these gatherings, which included the most 'Like-Minded' and conciliatory Southern countries, should nevertheless not be equated with the official meetings of the Like-Minded Group. Ibid., pp. 54-55.

Nordic circles, there was insufficient interest within the wider Like-Minded Group to carry the proposal further.<sup>86</sup>

What, then, motivated Norway to take on this ambitious role as bridge-builder between North and South? On a basic level this activism can be viewed as further evidence of a Norwegian preoccupation with the peaceful settlement of disputes and with social justice; a conflict of interests between North and South had clearly arisen, (or become apparent, due to the South's more vocal expression of its grievances), and Norway wanted to prevent this from escalating, and, by working for a more equitable distribution of resources between North and South, nip other latent conflicts in the bud. There was a clear normative agenda, then: to combat the inequities which were perceived in the international economic order, accompanied by a belief that a more equal distribution of wealth would also serve the interests of the rich, since it would create a more stable world.<sup>87</sup> More specifically, it has been suggested that both Norway and the Netherlands (together with the other core countries in the Like-Minded Group), shared a "reform internationalist" view, which could be traced back to their Social Democratic governments; as articulated by Løvbræk:

...the position taken on North-South issues by such social democrats as Pronk and Stoltenberg was in essence an extension to these issues of attitudes and values that had first developed in regard to class tensions in domestic politics...

...As social democratic political parties began to obtain control of governments...the state began to be seen as the administrator of redistributive social and economic measures and the mediator between conflicting class interests... When this experience and these ideas were transferred to North-South economic relations, they led to an emphasis on the possibility of converting the growing confrontation of North and South into stable co-existence through the negotiation of major compromises and reforms.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, according to the internationally-minded Social Democrats of these countries, in order to secure a peaceful international community structural reforms were required (entailing the redistribution of resources), such that a condition of "positive peace"<sup>89</sup> might obtain, free from the "structural violence" present in the existing international order, with its inequitable (and morally indefensible) division of

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<sup>86</sup> There are various reasons for this; some countries felt that the concept of a mini-NIEO was misleading and counterproductive, undermining the idea of a global NIEO, whereas others felt that there might be a negative reaction in the Third World—that the mini-NIEO might be interpreted as preferential treatment or favouritism, since only a select group of Southern countries were to be included.

<sup>87</sup> The Like-Minded countries would also benefit from this, of course, especially since they all had open economies which depended on maintaining worldwide trade links.

<sup>88</sup> Asbjørn Løvbræk, in Pratt (*ibid.*), pp. 33-35.

<sup>89</sup> (To use the terminology of the objectivist school in conflict theory, i.e. Adam Curle, Johan Galtung, *et al.*...)

resources. The North-South divide was, therefore, articulated as analogous to class divisions in domestic politics, and the imperative to intervene in the domestic arena was externalised, such that it entered the foreign policies of these countries.

A second reason behind the solidarity which these Social Democratic governments, Norway's included, exhibited towards the Third World was the strength of non-governmental organisations which sought to promote an interest in Third World issues,<sup>90</sup> and, more particularly, the fact that '[i]n many concrete situations there existed a politically powerful alliance based on humanitarianism between social democratic, liberal and Christian political parties and movements.'<sup>91</sup>

By the 1980s, the momentum behind the NIEO had largely petered out, and Reagan's election, with his subsequent promise that the US would only negotiate via the GATT and IMF, proved to be the final nail in the coffin. While it would be unfair to blame Norway and the rest of the 'Like Minded' group for the failure of the NIEO, their efforts have sustained much more serious criticism. It has been argued that their aims were ill-conceived, and that by placing too much emphasis on universality and consensus it became impossible to bridge the already antagonistic cleavages which had emerged.

More importantly, it has also been argued that the NIEO negotiations served as a smoke screen which enabled the hard-line industrialised states to placate, and maintain amicable contact with, a united G-77 which would otherwise have posed a very real threat to the West, (since it controlled vital commodities, not least oil), without there being any real intention on the part of the hard-liners to compromise. According to this view, the work of the Like-Minded countries achieved little except the unrealistic raising of Southern expectations, and protection of the western industrialised nations from the unmediated wrath of the South. The industrialised states were then able to use the breathing space to fend off the G77, and eventually undermine its unity by securing agreements with certain groups of states while excluding others.

Norway's experience with the NIEO, then, can be seen as a precursor to her peace activism of the 1990s, and a hark back to her pre-War idealism. Norwegian politicians were motivated by a normative desire to create a more just system of international trade, to build bridges (or even to mediate) between the rich and poor, and to limit conflict through preventative action. However, their actions could be seen to have been tainted by some naïveté; the whole enterprise has been seen as

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<sup>90</sup> Cranford Pratt (1990), p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> Løvbræk, *op cit.*, p. 36.

inimical to the interests of the states they were trying to aid, and they certainly overestimated the willingness of other industrialised states to reform.

Norway's sense of being "between" North (or West) and South, and therefore having divided loyalties, was already acute by the 1970s for another reason: namely the discovery of North Sea oil off the Norwegian coast at the end of the 1960s.<sup>92</sup> Suddenly a new dynamic was introduced into Norway's international relations, which has affected Norwegian foreign policy ever since; as Dag Harald Claes puts it,

Norway's traditional political allies are the largest [oil] consuming countries, and the interests of these countries clash with those of the producer countries, with which Norway has gained more common interests. This relationship has created a dilemma for Norwegian foreign policy. If emphasis is placed on Norway's positive relationship with the West, this creates a negative relationship with, for example, OPEC. If emphasis is placed on the Norwegian petroleum interests through a positive relationship with OPEC, this creates a negative relationship with buyers in the West. As long as the Western countries, led by the US, have regarded the relationship with OPEC also in security terms, Norway has had to take account of the political aspects of the relationship with OPEC. That is to say, the Western countries have influenced Norway's behaviour in the oil market, through political alliances. Norway, in turn, has sought to avoid such attachment, since it will diminish her own freedom of action in the oil market.<sup>93</sup>

This conundrum has meant that Norway has been forced to toe a careful line in order not to offend important allies on both "sides"— a balancing act which, in itself, can almost be equated with the demands of mediation work. The discovery of Norwegian oil coincided with a period when Middle East producer countries gained greater control over their own resources. Whereas before Western companies had controlled oil production in the area, from 1972 onwards (when the National Iranian Oil Company was created), oil production in the Middle East became increasingly nationalised. Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia quickly followed suit.<sup>94</sup> Two implications of this are relevant here: firstly, the establishment of state control and active participation in the petroleum industry took place simultaneously in both the Middle East and Norway, contributing to a sense of shared experience. Secondly, the fact that the producer countries in the Middle East had gained greater control over oil prices meant that they were now able to exert significant pressure on the West, and so OPEC's relationship with the consumer countries, Norway's

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<sup>92</sup> Norway was in 1995 the seventh largest oil producer, the second largest oil exporter, and among the ten biggest gas exporters in the world. (Dag Harald Claes, *Norsk olje- og gasspolitikk*, (Norwegian oil and gas policy) in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p. 144).

<sup>93</sup> Dag Harald Claes, *'Norsk olje- og gasspolitikk'*, (Norwegian oil and gas policy) in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p. 144. (My translation).

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

traditional allies, deteriorated rapidly. Norway suddenly found herself, therefore, in an exposed position within the increasingly turbulent oil system, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that in the early years as an oil producer Norway kept a low profile so as to avoid behaviour which could antagonise either side. Nonetheless, a Government White Paper of 1973-74 recognised Norway's self-interest in promoting understanding and cooperation between the conflicting parties:

it is in the Norwegian interest to obtain a *stable development* of prices, production and consumption. Such development can best be accomplished through organised cooperation. Therefore it is important to establish closer contacts and cooperation with the traditional producing countries, such as the member nations of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)... At the same time it is in the Norwegian interest to further *cooperation with* the most important consuming countries, through the Nordic Council and within the framework of the OECD.<sup>95</sup>

There was also a short period of activism, in 1979 and 1980, when both Prime Minister Nordli and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Knut Frydenlund, 'repeatedly spoke of a constructive Norwegian role and envisaged new diplomatic initiatives to promote negotiations about a 'global energy order'... [T]he UN was seen as the foundation for the bridge across the gap and Norway as one of the bridge-builders.'<sup>96</sup> Nordli met the Saudi Arabian oil minister, Sheik Yamani, in the summer of 1980, and afterwards claimed there were grounds for "some degree of optimism". What prompted this sudden bout of "oil diplomacy" is unclear; the steep price rises of 1978-79 may have been a catalyst – the 'deteriorating atmosphere between the West and OPEC was detrimental to Norwegian interests, since it threatened to bring the country's double position to the full attention of the major actors.'<sup>97</sup> In any event, this bridge-building idea was very short lived, disappearing from Norwegian political discourse by early 1981, but, of course, Norway's experience of being "in between", and feeling obligated to pursue a balanced foreign policy, continued.

### **The Nordic 'Zone of Peace'**

Throughout the Cold War, the Nordic region as a whole was widely considered to be an area of exceptional peace and stability. In order to explain this, the "Nordic Balance" theory was often invoked: the region owed its stability to the fact that Finland fell into the Soviet sphere of influence, Denmark and Norway into

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<sup>95</sup> Parliamentary Report No. 25, 1973-74, *Petroleum Industry in Norwegian Society*, appendix, p. 93. Emphasis in original. Cited in Helge Ole Bergesen: "Not Valid for Oil": *The Petroleum Dilemma in Norwegian Foreign Policy*, *Cooperation and Conflict*, XVII, 1982, p. 111.

<sup>96</sup> Bergesen, *ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p. 112.



the American or Western sphere, and Sweden acted as a neutral fulcrum between the two 'sides'. A stable state of equilibrium was thereby maintained. There has been much criticism of this theory, not least because it is seen as misleading in its portrayal of the Swedish stance.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the fact remains that the region *did* enjoy peace and stability, and the Nordic Balance theory, if a fiction, may even have contributed to this, for, as Knutsen notes:

...the balance theory contributed to maintaining a calming fiction during the Cold War, and it had a calming effect, and in that way it was not merely a theory in political science, but also a political tool.<sup>99</sup>

The Cold War experience can be viewed in a broader context, which Archer describes as a Nordic "Zone of Peace,"<sup>100</sup> defined in terms of the following characteristics:

- (i) little or no interstate war in the region;
- (ii) little or no war between the states of the region and other states;
- (iii) little or no armed conflict in the region in the form of civil war or armed uprisings;
- (iv) no or few military interventions by armed forces from the region in other parts of the world (with the possible exception of internationally sanctioned actions);
- (v) little or no expectation of (i) to (iv) above, thereby creating a region of 'low tension'.

This has meant that, for instance, when disputes *have* arisen between the Nordic states they have:

...either been resolved peacefully... or have rumbled along as minor skirmishes between fishing vessels of one state and the coastguard of another...<sup>101</sup>

And that:

Compared with all the other regions of Europe, the states of the Nordic area displayed a lower level of hostilities — from threat through to warfare — during the 1816 to 1992 period, both in absolute and percentage terms.<sup>102</sup>

In fact, there has been no interstate war between the Nordic neighbours for some 180 years.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Which was, it is argued, far more aligned with the West than the theory implies.

<sup>99</sup> Knutsen, *ibid.*, p. 25 (my translation).

<sup>100</sup> Clive Archer: 'The Nordic Area as a 'Zone of Peace'', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1996, p. 452.

<sup>101</sup> Archer, *ibid.*, p.454.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, p. 455. Archer draws on Singer and Small's Correlates of War Project: International and Civil War Data, 1816-1992, (1994), and Kalevi Holsti's Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order 1648—1989, Cambridge University Press, 1991, as a basis for his assertions.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, p. 454.

The Nordic region also fares well in terms of a lack of civil war and armed uprisings, and a lack of military intervention by armed forces from the region in other parts of the world; ‘the incidence of low-level international violence involving the Nordic states has been negligible,’<sup>104</sup> and where disputes *have* occurred (largely relating to the division of fisheries zones), these have, again, been resolved peacefully – for instance, a fisheries dispute between Norway and the United Kingdom was referred to the International Court of Justice, and settled in that way.<sup>105</sup> In general, Archer maintains, ‘[w]hile disputes do occur between Nordic and other states, these are resolved through diplomacy, by methods short of violence and far from warfare.’<sup>106</sup> This has been the case even where governments have foreseen that their causes would be lost through the use of peaceful means.<sup>107</sup> Terrorism has also been largely absent from the Nordic region; Archer describes the way in which minority groups within these states have generally expressed their views by legal means, such that ‘especially since the 1960s when terrorism has – so to speak – boomed, the Nordic region has remained a haven of calm.’<sup>108</sup> In Norway, the only terrorist blots in the national copybook have been the shooting of an Arab by Israeli secret service agents and a small device detonated by a Sami protesting against the building of a dam.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p. 455.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, p. 456, drawing on Miall, Hugh: The Peacemakers: Peaceful Settlement of Disputes Since 1945, London, Macmillan, 1992, p. 112.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p. 461: Archer cites four examples of this kind: 1). The Swedish decision not to threaten Norway with armed action when the latter claimed independence, even though this resulted in the division of Norway from Sweden; 2) Sweden's decision not to take the Åland islands from Finland when it had the opportunity to do so between 1919 and 1920, and arguably the justification (the population of the islands was almost entirely Swedish), but instead to refer the matter to the League of Nations. Again, this resulted in the islands being designated to Finland; 3) The Norwegian government's decision not to confront Denmark over the sovereignty of East Greenland in 1932-3, even though Norwegian commercial interests were perceived to be at stake; instead a judicial settlement awarded the area to Denmark, and 4). The Danish government's avoidance of the use of force over the Schlesvig issue.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, p. 457. Elder, Thomas and Arter also note that ‘Alienated sub-groups, and the resort to violence in the pursuit of political objectives, are both almost completely absent in Scandinavia.’ (See The Consensual Democracies? The Government and Politics of the Scandinavian States, Basil Blackwell, 1988, p. 13.

<sup>109</sup> Archer, *ibid.*, p. 456

Archer concludes from all this that ‘the Nordic area must be one European area where there has been least expectation of conflict since the Second World War’, but warns against inferring from this that the Nordic peoples are innately pacifist:

...there is a record of previous conflict both within the Nordic region and between Nordic states and the rest of Europe; ... the Norwegians fought longer against Nazi invasion than did France... and there have been no lack of volunteers from Nordic countries to join peacekeeping operations in dangerous parts of the world, that may involve fighting and death.<sup>110</sup>

Instead, he pinpoints four broad factors which have contributed to the relative lack of conflict in the Nordic region in recent years: a) its strategic position; b) the lack of ethnic or cultural differences within the region that have potential for conflict; c) the policies that have been followed by its decision-makers; and d) its political culture.<sup>111</sup> Clearly, the first two factors relate more to structure and environment, while the latter two involve agency to a greater degree; these latter two are also interrelated: ‘[t]he cause of such decisions being taken in preference to those that resorted to war, conflict and confrontation lies in the political culture of the Nordic countries. The decisions by ministers represents [*sic*] an externalisation of this culture.’<sup>112</sup> Even with regard to point a), though, the workings of agency should not be overlooked: while some claim that the Nordic area ‘has been condemned to be peaceful because of its geography’, located on the European periphery, this is not sufficient explanation in itself; moreover it underestimates the strategic significance of the region. The Nordic states, in the face of the fluctuating strategic importance accorded to their area, have actively sought to reduce the expectation of conflict, so that

[i]f the Nordic region was ‘the quiet corner of Europe’ (certainly after the Second World War), it was not *just* because of its strategic position but also because conscious efforts were made to lower the noise-level.<sup>113</sup>

Likewise with point b): although the Nordic states have very small ethnic minorities and unusually homogenous populations, ‘the region has had some potential for division but choices have been made by governments and groups not to push these to armed conflict...’<sup>114</sup> The apparently ‘objective’ factors behind Nordic peacefulness can therefore not be separated from the invisible hand of a political culture which, even if blessed with certain preconditions for maintaining peace, has nevertheless

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p. 459.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 460.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*

exerted its will on the environment in which it has found itself, and sought to defuse any potential disputes before they have reached the level of armed conflict.

The effects of culture on conflict (and mediatory) behaviour is, of course, one of the central themes of this thesis and will be dealt with in the following chapters. Since Archer touches on these themes, however, an introduction here might not go amiss:

...the Nordic culture has – increasingly since the nineteenth century – required Nordic decision-makers to prefer the peaceful over the conflictual and negotiation over threat... A culture developed within the Nordic states, originally during the nineteenth century and then more rapidly from the 1930s, that placed an emphasis on social peace. This culture was eventually inserted into the dominant political culture and was increasingly externalized in the attitude of the Nordic states to other countries with which they were potentially in conflict... Throughout the twentieth century the Nordic countries...developed advanced modern democracies that allowed this easy transmission of the concept of social peace based on a culture of conflict resolution and societal solidarity. Parallel with this process has been one that has led to an increased responsiveness of politicians to their electorate, even on foreign policy matters... Thus the views of domestic social movements – about social solidarity, compromise, respect for law and conflict resolution – have been increasingly externalized into foreign and security policy and, with the help of increasingly open political structures, may have encouraged a propensity towards peace in the policies of these countries.<sup>115</sup>

Norway's [and in Archer's context, the Nordic states'] existence in a state of peace for most of the twentieth century cannot simply be attributed to external, or circumstantial factors. To a great extent foreign policies stemming from a domestic political culture which emphasises social peace have been followed, and have contributed to a lack of involvement in conflicts. The fact that Norway has enjoyed a prolonged state of peace, therefore, is not accidental. One might say that Norway's recent non-involvement in conflicts can be interpreted as congruent with – even as an extension of – Norwegian peace work in other areas; it is simply that a *preventive* approach to conflict has been taken in Norway's relations with other states, meaning that the 'peace work' which one might argue to be taking place is not so visible, and may be mistaken for luck or the dictates of geography. Moreover, both these dimensions of Norwegian peace work – the external and the internal, perhaps, for want of a better terminology – arguably derive from the same underlying motivation: a culture which both values "peace" and has devised mechanisms for securing it.

It is important, however, to note a number of reasons for not viewing Norwegian (and of course Nordic) society in a smug, or even triumphalist, sense. The tendency toward naïveté, complacency and self-righteousness, and their disastrous

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<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 462-464.

consequences in 1940, has been noted above. In addition, several writers on Norwegian foreign policy have commented on a persistent Norwegian tendency towards isolationism,<sup>116</sup> (partly due to the country's late-won and jealously guarded independence), which seems to conflict with another tendency: namely the missionary impulse, or the proclivity to moralise about others' international behaviour. As Knudsen, for instance, writes:

Sober observers have pointed out that Norwegian foreign politics is marked by an astounding combination of, on the one hand, strong appeals for international cooperation and, on the other hand, repeated rejections of concrete proposals to involve Norway in the international community.<sup>117</sup>

Apart from membership in NATO, the prospect of joining other alliances has been met with widespread scepticism — the two “no” votes to membership in the EC / EU are perhaps the most striking examples of this. First in 1972, and then again in 1994, a majority of the Norwegian electorate turned a deaf ear to their government's cajoling, and demonstrated in both of these referenda that isolationism (not unlike that practised before World War II) still had clear popular appeal.

### ***Concluding remarks***

This chapter has provided a narrative on Norway's foreign political experiences relating to conflict and peace from the early 19th Century until the end of the Cold War. This period was characterised by long periods of external constraint on Norway's freedom of action, which frequently thwarted the country's bridge-building ambitions. The next chapter continues the narrative, tracing the development of an activist peace policy since the end of the Cold War – a juncture which arguably released Norway's latent potential.

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<sup>116</sup> See, for example, Riste, Olav: '*Norsk tryggingsspolitikk frå isolasjonisme til atlantisk integrasjon*', (Norwegian security policy from isolationism to Atlantic integration', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, årg. 72, nr. 3, pp. 318-32, 1993; Lundestad, Geir: '*Nasjonalisme og internasjonalisme i norsk utenrikspolitikk: Et faglig-provoserende essay*', ('Nationalism and internationalism in Norwegian Foreign Policy: a provocative technical essay'), *Internasjonal Politikk*, temahefte 1, pp. 39-54, 1985; Olav Knudsen, '*Norway's domestically driven foreign policy*' (op cit.); and Knudsen, in Knudsen, Sørbø and Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p. 22.

<sup>117</sup> Knudsen, Olav: '*Norway: Domestically Driven Foreign Policy*', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, (AAPSS), 512, November 1990, p. 105.

## Chapter Six:

### Introduction to Recent Norwegian Peace Work

*The nature of constraint is historically variable, as are the enabling qualities generated by the contextualities of human action. It is variable in relation to the material and institutional circumstances of activity, but also in relation to the forms of knowledgeability that agents possess about those circumstances.*

- Anthony Giddens<sup>1</sup>

*Historically Norway has been a “sleeping beauty” in the work for peace and democracy right up until the 1990s. We used many billion kroner, but had little power of initiative and influence. But then Thorvald Stoltenberg, Johan Jørgen Holst and Bjørn Tore Godal wanted to prioritise this area, and indisputable results have been achieved. Norway has become a kind of marker [merkestein] for a new kind of diplomacy...*

- Jan Egeland, Deputy Norwegian Foreign Minister, 1990-1997<sup>2</sup>

Despite the dreams of ‘bridge-building’ which surfaced at various junctures in Norwegian foreign political thinking during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the emphasis placed on promoting “peace” in Norwegian foreign policy, it was not until the 1990s that Norway’s peace activism really took off. The end of the Cold War was a decisive factor here. However, prominent individuals within the Norwegian political élite during the 1970s and 1980s were influential in preparing the ground for the blossoming of Norwegian peace work which was enabled by the removal of Cold War constraints, and in laying the foundations of the so-called “Norwegian model”– central in Norway’s recent peace initiatives.

As the above citation from Giddens indicates, the ability of actors – including foreign policy élites – to ‘make a difference’, or exercise their transformative agential powers, depends in part on the historical context in which they find themselves; on their spatio-temporal positioning within the *longue durée* of their socio-cultural group. At certain points in history – for instance when an

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<sup>1</sup> Giddens, 1984, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> (My translation). Egeland, interviewed (with Nils Morten Udgaard) by Kristin Clemet: ‘*Moderne utenrikspolitikk: idealer eller interesser?*’ (‘Modern foreign policy: ideals or interests?’) in *Tidens Tegn*, 7, 1997, p. 12.

unfamiliar situation is encountered, as was suggested in Chapter 4 – the innovative capabilities of agents are granted a freer rein; the structural continuities in relation to which they act prove more malleable than previously experienced. Moreover, a novel situation *requires* that social actors direct their attention to elements of their taken-for-granted lifeworldly knowledge that have now been rendered problematic or ‘thematized’, and either deepen their existing knowledge or seek new knowledge (e.g., representations, typifications, concepts or organising principles) which satisfactorily enables them to ‘go on’ in the hitherto unencountered situation.

The end of the Cold War can be understood as just such a crossroad for Norwegians. Received, common-sense notions of the outside world and Norway’s place in it were being challenged. Norway was no longer at the strategic centre of a bipolar world; its role no longer clearly delimited by external constraints. With the demise of bipolar thinking, space had been created for Norway’s privileged storytellers and policy-makers to redefine Norway’s role in the world; to create new representations of Norway and the ‘outside’; even to establish new foreign policy practices as appropriate ways of ‘going on’. Although prominent individuals within the Norwegian foreign political élite had attempted to do this during the preceding decades, their manoeuvrability had been restricted by the dominating Cold War discourse, with its emphasis on Norway’s strategic vulnerability. At the start of the 1990s, though, this discourse no longer prevailed. It is in this context, then, that the new Norwegian foreign political activism of the 1990s, including the development of an active role as a facilitative mediator in international conflicts, must be understood.

The end of the Cold War did not just create an opening for a redefinition of Norway’s role in the international system; in a sense it created an *imperative* for such a redefinition. Following the demise of the USSR, Norway also lost its central position for the US, and by extension its privileged channel for promoting Norwegian interests in the US State Department.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the

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<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Bernt Bucher-Johannessen: Den norske modellen: bruken av ikke-statlige aktører i norsk utenrikspolitikk: Et mulig svar på utenrikspolitiske utfordringer for Norge etter den

Norwegian sense of vulnerability continued; there was still a feeling that a residual threat from Russia remained, and a suspicion that ‘arms control agreements may have re-positioned troops and weapons nearer to Norway’.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, ‘many of the post-Cold War insecurities’ were ‘uncomfortably close to Norway’s frontiers.’<sup>5</sup> The fear of international marginalisation became even greater among the Norwegian foreign political élite following the country’s “no” vote to the joining the EU in the national referendum of 1994. This was viewed as a disastrous result by then Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and many members of her ruling Labour party, (as well as among members of the Conservative party, *Høyre*.) It became all the more important to forge a clear role for Norway in the international community, in order to avoid total marginalisation.

There had already been conscious moves to recast Norway’s profile during the 1980s, and an awareness of the changing international climate. Moreover, as described in Chapter 5, Norwegian foreign political activism had existed during (and prior to) the Cold War too, to the degree that this was possible. Norway’s influential Foreign Minister Knut Frydenlund, who held office on two occasions during the 1970s and 1980s for a total of nine years,<sup>6</sup> published a book in 1982 entitled *Little Country, What Now?* [*Lille land, hva nå?*], which is generally viewed as a formative text for Norway’s recent foreign political activism.<sup>7</sup> Frydenlund also initiated a 1989-1990 Government White Paper, [*Stortingsmelding nr. 11*]<sup>8</sup>, the drafting process for which began in 1977. This

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kalde krigen, 1999, pp. 71-72, and Egeland, interviewed by Clemet, Tidens Tegn, nr. 7 1997, op cit., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Archer, (1996), p. 460.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Olav Fagelund Knudsen: ‘*Beslutningsprosesser i norsk utenrikspolitikk*’, in Knutsen, Sørbo & Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p.70; and Bernt Bucher-Johannessen, op cit., p. 30 and p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Gjerdåker, in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p. 213

<sup>8</sup> Entitled ‘Developments in International Society and Consequences for Norwegian Foreign Policy’ [*Utviklingstrekk i det internasjonale samfunn og konsekvenser for norsk utenrikspolitikk*].



White Paper has been dubbed the “Bible” of Norwegian foreign policy, since it is the only document of its kind to address Norway’s foreign role in broad terms.<sup>9</sup>

The 1989-90 White Paper introduced the notions of an “extended foreign policy concept” and an “extended security concept” into Norwegian political discourse.<sup>10</sup> These notions represented a clear break with the traditional, narrow view of national security, suggesting that Norwegian security could no longer be guaranteed by a strong national defence alone; instead this must be supplemented by attempts to reduce regional and global tension:

Poverty, overpopulation and conflicts in one part of the world have repercussions which spread faster than before to other areas... Concepts such as nation-state, sovereignty, security and international cooperation are acquiring new meaning. The changes pose new challenges for foreign policy.<sup>11</sup>

This redefinition of Norwegian interests and security in effect meant that ‘Idealistic’ activities such as aid and peace work were *constructed* in such a way as to also be ‘Realistic’ – i.e., in defence of Norway’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.<sup>12</sup> In this way, it was possible to continue the tradition of idealism in Norwegian foreign policy, without appearing to underestimate the lessons of World War Two and the Cold War.

### 6.1 *The 1990s: A “New” Norwegian Foreign Policy Emerges*

With the end of the Cold War and the ‘change of gear’ suggested by the 1989-90 White Paper,<sup>13</sup> the Norwegian foreign political élite had gained far greater manoeuvrability, as well as a clear mandate to profile Norway abroad. Three Labour Foreign Ministers, Thorvald Stoltenberg, Johan Jørgen Holst and Bjørn Tore Godal, presided over Norwegian foreign policy between 1990 and 1997. These three individuals were instrumental in bringing about Norway’s active role as mediator, but arguably even more influential was Deputy Foreign Minister Jan

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<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Bucher-Johannessen, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Torbjørn Knutsen, in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Stortingsmelding* nr. 11, 1989-1990, cited in Knutsen, ‘Norsk utenrikspolitikk som forskningsfelt’, in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p. 19 (my translation).

<sup>12</sup> Bucher-Johannessen, p. 6.

Egeland, whose presence in the Foreign Ministry for the entire 1990-97 period also rendered him the most enduring figure. Norway's recent peace activism has even been described as part of an "Egeland line" or "Egeland portfolio" in Norwegian foreign policy.<sup>14</sup>

Egeland was one of a 'new breed' of actors at the Norwegian Foreign Ministry (UD). Whereas traditionally individuals had been recruited directly from the diplomatic establishment to the post of State Secretary,<sup>15</sup> during the 1990s this changed, with a majority of the Foreign Ministry's advisors having a non-diplomatic background.<sup>16</sup> Egeland was due to be Stoltenberg's advisor in his position as High Commissioner for Refugees, but when Stoltenberg was given the job of Norwegian Foreign Minister in the autumn of 1989, he made sure that his 33 year old protégé followed him into the Foreign Ministry soon afterwards.<sup>17</sup> Egeland had a solid academic and NGO background behind him; this included positions at the Norwegian Red Cross<sup>18</sup> and Amnesty International. Most significantly, perhaps, in 1988 his book *Impotent Superpower – Potent Small State* had been published, based on his Masters dissertation, with its main thesis that

'small states' can be more powerful as human rights advocates than is commonly recognized by students of international relations – and that a major power like the U.S. has so many and so diverse foreign policy interests that its human rights initiatives may become ineffective.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bucher-Johannessen, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> ('Egeland-linjen' or 'Egeland-porteføljen').

<sup>15</sup> This traditionally important (non-elected) post in Norwegian politics was previously termed 'Political Advisor'. From 1980 it became upgraded to being the Deputy post to Foreign Minister. (See Bucher-Johannessen, p. 30). Ministerial posts in the Norwegian Government are not only given to elected MPs; the Prime Minister is able to hand-pick her/his Ministers from society as a whole, on the basis of their skills and expertise.

<sup>16</sup> See Tamnes, Rolf: 'Oljealder 1965-1995', Norsk Utenrikspolitisk historie, bind 6, Universitetsforlaget, 1997, p. 464, and Bucher-Johannessen, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Ragnhild Imerslund: 'Med verden som arbeidsplass: Jan Egeland forlater UD etter sju år', Arbeiderbladet, 28.9.97, and Bucher-Johannessen, p. 94.

<sup>18</sup> As Head of Information and Head of the Foreign Section.

<sup>19</sup> Egeland, Jan: Impotent Superpower–Potent Small State: Potentials and Limitations of Human Rights Objectives in the Foreign Policies of the United States and Norway, Norwegian University Press, 1988, pp. ix-x.

Egeland's book went beyond Frydenlund's, in that it took a more activist and ambitious attitude to the kind of human rights policy a state such as Norway should adopt.<sup>20</sup> Towards the end of his 7-year term in the Foreign Ministry, it was suggested on various occasions, only half in jest, that his aim had been to prove his thesis in practical politics.<sup>21</sup>

At first, the new foreign political activism (initiated by Stoltenberg and Egeland at the start of the 1990s) met with resistance; but gradually, particularly after the "no" vote to joining the EU in 1994, this resistance died down.<sup>22</sup> The discourses and debates surrounding Norway's recent peace activism are discussed in Chapter 7. Egeland, though, has made plain that on entering the Foreign Ministry he felt that he had a clear mandate following the introduction of the new and extended security concept in the 1989-90 White Paper, a document regarding which there was "broad agreement".<sup>23</sup> In a 1998 newspaper chronicle charting the lessons he had learned from practical peace work, he described his 'mission' on entering the Foreign Ministry in the following terms:

For 40 years the Cold War placed clear limits on<sup>24</sup> both *where* and *how* the small state could promote its ideals regarding human rights and peace. It was therefore a privilege to be able to take part in the building up of a new generation of peace work in Norwegian foreign policy from 1990 to 1997.<sup>25</sup>

It is significant that it was a *new generation* of peace work which now emerged, rather than a completely "new" foreign political countenance. As discussed in Chapter 5, there had been precedents in the past, and a consistent prioritising of "peace" and international stability in Norwegian foreign policy. In other words, there were traditions, collective memory traces and historical figures that could be drawn upon – invoked – by actors such as Egeland in order to

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<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Gjerdåker, in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), op cit., p. 213.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Imerslund, (*Arbeiderbladet*), op cit.

<sup>22</sup> This was particularly the case regarding the Barents cooperation launched by Stoltenberg at the start of the 1990s. See Bucher-Johannessen, pp. 90-91.

<sup>23</sup> Interviewed by Bucher-Johannessen, *ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>24</sup> [*satte klarer rammer for*]

legitimise an activist peace policy and make it appear ‘natural’ or commonsensical, in line with received representations of Norwegian identity. This is returned to in Chapter 7. In particular, three traditions from the past could be drawn upon when legitimising an activist and idealistic foreign policy, namely the Norwegian missionary tradition, the humanitarian tradition linked to Fridtjof Nansen, and the Norwegian Labour movement’s work for justice and equality.<sup>26</sup>

## 6.2 *The Norwegian Model*

The overriding, core ingredient of the “Norwegian model” is the close cooperation between Norwegian authorities (or UD) and non-state actors or NGOs of various kinds (e.g., representatives of voluntary organisations, research institutes, Church organisations) in certain areas of foreign policy, particularly humanitarian aid and peace work.<sup>27</sup> It is this dimension of the model that will be focused upon here; other literature can be referred to for a more complete analysis.<sup>28</sup>

During the past decade, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry (UD) has increasingly collaborated with non-state actors, to the extent that the latter have sometimes been described as becoming ‘contract workers’ for the state. In recent Norwegian peace initiatives, this cooperation has been striking; as noted in Chapter 3, it renders any discussion of Norwegian mediation as that of a ‘small state’, (implying ‘government’), problematic. The increasing closeness between UD and NGOs has been the subject of some debate in Norway.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> (My translation). Egeland: ‘*Lærdommer fra praktisk fredsarbeid*’, Chronicle in *Aftenposten*, 14.5.98.

<sup>26</sup> Bucher-Johannessen, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., Bucher-Johannessen, pp.7-9.

<sup>28</sup> See Bucher-Johannessen for a good (Norwegian) study of the model.

<sup>29</sup> This debate mainly concerns the degree to which the increased interdependence between the Foreign Ministry and the voluntary organisations is wise or appropriate. For instance, can the NGOs be seen to be retaining their autonomy, when in some cases they receive some 90% of their funding from the state? Are they becoming mere pawns of the Foreign Ministry? Equally, to what extent is the Foreign Ministry losing control over its political activities, by surrendering a degree of responsibility to NGOs, or becoming vulnerable to manipulation due to the sharing of delicate political information? The debate is large in scope, and since it is not directly relevant to this study

Jan Egeland is in many ways the embodiment of the so-called “Norwegian model”, and his name is connected to it more frequently than any other. However, credit for its development by no means lies with him alone; innovative groundwork was completed by other actors, and the development of the model was *enabled* by the pre-existing structural continuities and traditions of Norwegian society which could be drawn upon.

The Norwegian corporate channel has traditionally been strong,<sup>30</sup> and there has been a tradition of state benevolence towards the voluntary organisations. As Tvedt notes,

...the idea that there is a civil society in need of defence – against the state – has not been prominent in Norway. The organisations have generally come to expect public support, and the state has naturally assumed this role. This state benevolence towards the organisations has dominated ever since the... beginning of the 19th century.<sup>31</sup>

However, it was not until the 1960s that a degree of State–NGO *cooperation* began,<sup>32</sup> and in the past thirty years this relationship has deepened considerably. NGOs are now sometimes up to 90% funded by the Norwegian state.<sup>33</sup> Since the 1980s, *direct* collaboration between the Foreign Ministry (UD) and NGOs (with UD often largely financing the organisations’ activities) has become an established

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it will not be entered into here. For English sources, see Tvedt, Terje: *'NGOs' Role at the 'End of History': Norwegian Policy and the New Paradigm'*, Forum for Development Studies, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), No. 1-2, 1994, and Tvedt, Terje: *Angels of Mercy or Development Diplomats? NGOs and Foreign Aid*, Trenton and London: Africa World Press and James Currey, 1998. Norwegian sources include Tvedt, Terje, 1992, op cit.; Tvedt, Terje: *'Norsk utenrikspolitikk og de frivillige organisasjonene'*, in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), 1995, op cit; and Bucher-Johannessen, op cit.

<sup>30</sup> The Norwegian voluntary organisations, which have traditionally been controlled by their members, played an important role in the development of democracy and national independence, and missionary organisations were powerful from the mid 19th Century until the 1960s.

<sup>31</sup> Tvedt, Terje: *'NGOs' Role at the 'End of History': Norwegian Policy and the New Paradigm'*, Forum for Development Studies, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), No. 1-2, 1994, p. 146.

<sup>32</sup> with the establishment of an official aid body (NU, which became NORAD in 1968) from which the voluntary organisations could receive state funding for up to 50% of their project costs.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

practice. This is particularly the case for the group of five largest humanitarian organisations,<sup>34</sup> whose activities have also broadened in scope during the last decade, moving beyond purely “humanitarian” initiatives to include more “political” pursuits such as conflict resolution work and mediation. In part, this development is congruent with an international trend,<sup>35</sup> but there are nonetheless aspects of the Norwegian model which are rooted in the specific historical and structural continuities of Norwegian society.

One striking feature of Norwegian social and political life is the close personal links which exist between individuals in (*inter alia*) political, non-governmental, church and academic circles. This is in large part due to the small social setting afforded by a population of just 4.3 million. With just four universities, for instance, (in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø) and a concentration of other institutions and organisations in Norway’s handful of large towns-cum-cities, it is inevitable that the paths of the society’s élites and decision-makers will cross. The actors involved in the Middle East ‘Oslo Channel’ had such close personal links that they have been described as ‘dynastic’.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, there is much fluidity of movement between the various ‘camps’, which contributes to mutual understanding and consensus. Egeland’s seamless transition from NGOs to Government, and then (in 1997) back again, is symptomatic of this, but there are countless other examples. For instance, Gunnar Stålsett, the initiator of Norway’s involvement in the Guatemalan peace process,

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<sup>34</sup> (Often referred to as “*de fem store*”), namely Norwegian Church Aid (Kirkens Nødhjelp), Norwegian People’s Aid (Norsk Folkehjelp), Norwegian Save the Children (Redd Barna), the Norwegian Refugee Council (Flyktningerrådet) and the Norwegian Red Cross.

<sup>35</sup> A move towards a more interventionist, political approach has been a general trend for humanitarian aid organisations internationally during the last two decades. See, e.g., Sørbo, G., Hauge, W., Hybertsen, B., and Smith, D.: Norwegian Assistance to Countries in Conflict: The Lesson of Experience from Guatemala, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi, UD Evaluation Report 11, 1998, p. 62.

<sup>36</sup> The central protagonists, Terje Rød-Larsen and Mona Juul were husband and wife; Egeland was at university with Juul; Stoltenberg, Foreign Minister at the secret channel’s outset was brother-in-law to Marianne Heiberg, whose study of living conditions in the West Bank was used as the initial cover for the channel; she in turn was married to Johan Jørgen Holst, who became Foreign Minister after Stoltenberg. It was Nils Butenschøn who first used the term ‘dynastic’ to describe the group.

was at that time General Secretary of the World Lutheran Federation, but his other guises include leader of the Norwegian Centre/Agrarian Party [*Senterpartiet*], academic professor, and Bishop of Oslo. Tvedt notes that a number of “central political actors” have come from NGO backgrounds, and comments:

This must have contributed to the enthusiasm with which the organisations have been met by the state, and the mutual trust which has existed. The important role which the organisations have attained in Norwegian foreign policy is partly in line with an international trend, but the nature and form of this role must be viewed to a large degree as a result of Norwegian domestic political conditions.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, although an increasing closeness between foreign policy establishments and NGOs is not *in itself* a peculiarly “Norwegian” phenomenon, aspects of what is referred to as the “Norwegian model” *are* firmly rooted in the specific structural, historical and institutional continuities of Norwegian society. Prominent actors have been able to create the particular model they have because of the structural features of the social system they draw upon in their actions. The small size of Norwegian society, the traditional relationship of trust between government and NGOs, and the openness and fluidity of movement between the Foreign Ministry and other domains of society have all contributed to the development of such a model. In structurationist terms, agents have been able to innovate – to use their transformative capabilities – in the development of the model, but they have also been drawing upon and reproducing the existing structural continuities of Norwegian society, which have been both enabling and constraining.

Thorvald Stoltenberg, for instance, has emphasised that the Norwegian model as “product” could not have been created without the tradition of cooperation between the Norwegian state and organisations which had existed for over 30 years.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Trond Bakkevig, a mediator, theologian and a predecessor of Egeland at the Foreign Ministry, who was one of the main pioneers

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<sup>37</sup> (My translation). Tvedt, '*Norsk utenrikspolitikk og de frivillige organisasjonene*', ('Norwegian Foreign Policy and the Voluntary Organisations'), in Knutsen, Sørbø & Gjerdåker (eds): *Norges Utenrikspolitikk*, (Norway's Foreign Policy), Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 1995, p. 247

<sup>38</sup> Stoltenberg, interviewed by Bucher-Johannessen, p. 51.

of the Norwegian model in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s<sup>39</sup> (when as leader of the ecumenical Church organisation *Mellomkirkelig Råd* he smuggled aid to the various opposition and liberation movements in South Africa, with the cooperation of the Norwegian Government), highlighted the socio-structural underpinnings of the model:

...Norway is a very small country. So you can almost not avoid knowing each other. It means that you go to the same universities, you participate in the same organisations, for example the Council for Southern Africa was very important [regarding] Southern Africa policy, and everybody from political conservatives to left [-wing] socialists were members, together with Christian organisations. And...especially around foreign policy you have this close link between the politicians and the civil servants, friendship lines... So being a small country is of fundamental importance..., because it means that we can operate very smoothly, with trust, and take quick decisions. ... So you can say it's a Norwegian mentality; it's also a Norwegian *possibility* because of the ...size and organisation of the country.<sup>40</sup>

Gunnar Stålsett emphasised the way in which, in some respects, the model really is unique to Norway:

There are countries where the foreign ministry or the official political tradition is more rigid and critical towards this [mode of developing] policies. Even in the Nordic or Scandinavian region there are great differences... The Swedish Foreign Minister said 'how is it possible, how can this be done?'<sup>41</sup>

This again highlights the importance of actors' spatio-temporal positioning within their social group, (which determines the traditions they are able to draw upon, etc.), if we are to understand the modes of behaviour which emerge, or in the case of the "Norwegian model", the nature of the State–NGO cooperation that prevails.

Implications of the "Norwegian model" for Norway's recent peace activism will now be briefly discussed, before closing this chapter with a summing up of the current position of mediation and peace work in Norwegian foreign policy, and a list of some of the many mediation initiatives in which Norwegian actors have been involved during the last decade. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to enter into the intricacies of each case of Norwegian mediation, it is

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<sup>39</sup> Along with, for instance, Knut Vollebæk (another key figure, who will be mentioned again later – his various roles include Political Advisor at the Foreign Ministry during the 1980s, mediator, Foreign Minister between 1997 and 2000, and Chairman of the OSCE) and Bjarne Lindstrøm.

<sup>40</sup> Trond Bakkevig, personal interview, Røa Church, Oslo, 11.03.99.

<sup>41</sup> Gunnar Stålsett, personal interview, Oslo, 16.12.97.



deemed important to grasp the *breadth* of Norway's recent peace activism, and the number of different actors involved, since this testifies to a socio-cultural setting which in some ways clearly *enables* mediation to emerge as a prioritised activity among group members.

### **6.3        *Implications of the Norwegian model for mediation initiatives***

This section will only provide a cursory pointer to ways in which the "Norwegian model" can be seen to be implicated in Norwegians' recent mediation work, the nature of their mediatory intervention, and their capabilities and chances of success. Chapter 9 looks in more depth at some of Norway's recent peace initiatives, particularly Norwegian involvement in the Guatemalan conflict, so some of the points made here are later expanded upon; actors' own articulations on the Norwegian model are also included in the discourses chapter, Chapter 7.

#### ***Mediatory identity***

In Chapter 3 a tendency in the existing mediation literature to divide mediatory activity into distinct types, depending on the identity of the mediator, the resources which are assumed to be at their disposal, and consequently the role which they can be expected to play, was criticised. It was suggested that dichotomous distinctions between, for instance, unitary 'small states', and 'superpowers', or, for that matter, between 'private individuals' and 'small states' can be misleading, and that the case of the "Norwegian model" demonstrates how such categories can be rendered murky, or transcended. The integrated policy of aid and peace work which has developed of late in Norway, with close cooperation between UD and NGOs, means that Norwegian peace work defies easy categorisation of this sort. Further, the "Norwegian model" testifies against a number of assumptions in the existing mediation literature regarding, for instance, the presumed capabilities of (strictly separated) 'States' or 'non-governmental organisations'.

#### ***Mediatory motives: A normative and value dimension***

In Chapter 3 the relative lack of a normative dimension in the existing literature on mediation was noted, along with the prevalent assumption that mediators must in some sense be seeking *rewards* in order to mediate. The

increased interdependence between Norwegian UD and non-state actors, humanitarian aid organisations etc., is one reason for the clear visibility of a normative dimension in many Norwegian mediation initiatives. Often, Norwegian attempts to “wage peace” have been *initiated* by NGOs, for ‘altruistic’ or value reasons, with the Government (UD) only becoming involved at a later stage, or taking a back seat until an initiative appears to be leading somewhere. Moreover, as will become clearer in the next chapter, a normative and value-oriented dimension is prominent in dominant Norwegian foreign political discourses. This is not to deny, however, that Norway has gleaned considerable rewards from its recent peace activism – not least in terms of prestige, and gaining a profile on the world stage.

***Facilitative power: flexibility, efficiency and deniability***

The co-operation between the various mediating actors enabled by the “Norwegian model” makes for an extremely flexible and efficient mediation system. By drawing upon their combined strengths, the various actors endow Norway with wider influence potential and more room for manoeuvre than the mediation literature presumes for “small states”. For one thing, a well-established network of Norwegian non-governmental and voluntary organisations is already in place, enabling ‘the state’ to reach areas it otherwise could not, for fast and effective aid distribution and the establishment of contacts for possible peace work.<sup>42</sup> In a report on Norwegian assistance to countries in conflict, which addresses the use of NGOs in mediation and conflict resolution work, it is suggested that

As a result of their focus on the middle and grassroots levels of societies in crisis, NGOs tend to be particularly effective at working with both a country’s mid-level officials and local populations. Because of their familiarity with the country and its decision makers, NGO representatives often have a keen understanding of the realities on the ground, allowing them to reach across their counterparts from other agencies into a web of indigenous officials and resources...<sup>43</sup>

Such knowledge of local conditions could also, of course, feature under the headings of ‘expert-’ or ‘informational power’.

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Sjørubø, Hauge, Hybertsen and Smith, *op cit.*, 1998, p. 63.

In sheer logistical terms, the use of actors from NGOs enables the Norwegian Foreign Ministry to pursue a policy of peace activism which it would otherwise not have the capacity for. In this way, a large number of peace initiatives can be pursued simultaneously, or groundwork can be carried out by non-state actors to establish whether or not there is ripeness for a peace process with political involvement. As Egeland put it,

We have to have... a minimum of realism in all of this and also we cannot carry out too many parallel initiatives. Still, what we often did was to say to this or that actor, "okay, it sounds interesting, here's a little bit of money to—yes, you can travel to the area and yes, you can explore possibilities for peace on either side", or "yes, we're willing to help observe the exchange of prisoners in the Colombia thing, but we don't know whether we want to go into a peace process, it depends on what the parties would like". So we took many limited initiatives also.<sup>44</sup>

Not only are NGOs suited to such delicate, testing-the-water activities; as partners in peace work they can also provide invaluable deniability for a peace process which must be kept secret. On numerous occasions, (as in the case of the Middle East 'Oslo Channel' and the Social Science research institute FAFO), Norwegian research institutes or humanitarian organisations have provided a cover for a mediation initiative by staging a "project", "seminar" or "conference" of some kind to ensure an alibi for delegates should the truth come out. Other cases which can be mentioned here are the Resource Geographic Research Institute CESAR's work with water conflicts, and the Christian Michelsen Institute's hosting of seminars in order to facilitate talks regarding the conflict in the Sudan.

The close personal links between individuals characteristic of the Norwegian model enables the circumvention of bureaucracy, enabling rapid decisions and arrangements to be made. Again, this is invaluable in clandestine negotiations, and it endows Norwegian mediators with a high degree of flexibility and manoeuvrability.

### *Legitimate, referent and reputation power*

Norway's integrated aid, peace and human rights policy, and the close cooperation between UD and humanitarian NGOs (which have often had a long presence in conflict-torn regions), can contribute greatly to Norwegian actors' perceived legitimacy and reputation power as potential mediators; these factors

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<sup>44</sup> Jan Egeland, personal interview, Oslo, 27.11.97.

can also *enable* Norwegians to gain acceptance as mediators in the first place. In the Guatemalan conflict, as discussed in Chapter 9, Norway's involvement in the peace process was at first *entirely* due to the contact networks and local involvement of Norwegian non-state actors, but this gradually secured a *political* role for the Norwegian Government, too. Furthermore, the Norwegian Government's willingness to provide purely financial support for peace processes, as in the case of Guatemala, (initially), or by funding the activities of non-Norwegian mediators (e.g. the St. Egidio Society's peace work in Burundi), would also appear to add to the country's legitimate, referent and reputation power as an "honest broker".

A full exploration of Norway's development aid policy is beyond the scope of this thesis, but a few points should be mentioned here, particularly since Norway's development aid and peace work have now become so interdependent. Traditionally, Norwegian development aid has always been non-military, aimed at promoting economic and social development in the recipient countries. In 1962, Parliament stipulated that aid 'must be provided on a general humanitarian basis and should not be based on economic, political or particularistic interests.'<sup>45</sup> Most importantly, unlike that of many countries, aid has traditionally been 'untied' – i.e., not conditional on the money being spent on Norwegian goods and services.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the *quantity* of Norwegian aid is impressive; in 1994 Norway ranked first in terms of aid donated as a proportion of national wealth (out of twenty-one countries),<sup>47</sup> and second when amount of aid per person, and as a percentage of total government expenditure, were calculated. Since 1974 the amount of aid contributed by Norwegians has consistently exceeded the UN target of 0.7% of GNP; Norway is one of only four countries to manage this at all.<sup>48</sup> In a 1974 *Africa Report* article, Zdenek Cervanka described the legitimate power of the Scandinavian countries in Africa:

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<sup>45</sup> Stokke, *ibid.*, p. 122

<sup>46</sup> Bergesen and Østreng, *Internasjonal Politikk*, Aschehoug, Oslo, 1984, p. 125 (Norwegian text). This has, however, been a matter of some debate recently, and there may in future be a degree of 'tying'. Jan Egeland has supported the idea that Norway should be able to benefit from the aid it provides.

<sup>47</sup> Randel and German (eds.), *The Reality of Aid 1996: An Independent Review of International Aid*, Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1996.

<sup>48</sup> Predictably, the other three are Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands. *ibid.*, p. 15

They have no colonial past...they all excel in espousing UN rhetoric on the evils of apartheid and colonialism. But more significantly, they alone have taken seriously the United Nations goal of one per cent of GNP [*sic*] for development...<sup>49</sup>

The fact that Norwegian aid policy has developed along the lines it has is partly due to strong traditions of Social Democracy, Christianity<sup>50</sup> and humanitarianism,<sup>51</sup> and partly due to structural conditions of Norwegian society – in particular, to the presence of political cleavages which *cross-cut* the Left-Right divide (e.g. the questions of joining the EU or NATO). Such factors have necessitated compromise decisions by the Government élite; for instance, individuals from the left-wing of the ruling Labour party were allowed to shape Norway's aid policy, as compensation for their defeat over the issue of joining NATO. This arguably led to a more radical stance than might otherwise have been taken.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, minority governments and coalitions are frequent in Norway, which has led to further compromises. The small centre parties – the Agrarian *Senterparti* and the Christian People's Party (*Kristelig Folkeparti*) – have enjoyed a disproportionately large say in foreign policy (and other) matters, because of the importance of their support in forming coalition governments. Again, this has impacted on aid policy, since 'the causes most dear to the Christian People's Party have traditionally been Israel's situation, development assistance and humanitarian

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<sup>49</sup> Cervanka, Zdenek, 'Scandinavia: A Friend Indeed for Africa?', *Africa Report*, May/ June 1974, p. 39.

<sup>50</sup> A powerful Christian lay tradition dictates foreign policy concerns such as solidarity with the Third World and peace work, and Norwegian church groups and missionaries have been active throughout Africa, Asia, and South and Central America. In fact, Norway has dispatched more missionaries per head of population than any other country. (See, e.g., Tvedt, 1995, op cit).

<sup>51</sup> These traditions are mentioned time and again in the literature as motivating factors for Norwegian human rights and peace work. Both Geir Lundestad (Director of the Nobel Institute) and Jan Egeland mentioned their significance when I interviewed them. Geir Lundestad told me: "*the social democratic heritage is that Norway should play an active role in reducing conflicts and maybe particularly in alleviating class or national differences in growth.*" (Personal interview with Geir Lundestad, 6.07.95). As Egeland put it: "*Historically there have been two movements...[T]he Labour movement which...has always underscored international solidarity with the disadvantaged and the poor, and the Christian layman's movement, which has also been very strong in this country, which has...'Love Thy Neighbour' kind of motivation.*" (personal interview Egeland [while Deputy Foreign Minister] 25.07.95).

<sup>52</sup> Olav Stokke in Holst (ed), op cit., p. 120.

aid.’<sup>53</sup> Knudsen, in an article entitled *Norway: Domestically Driven Foreign Policy*, writes:

To a greater extent than other Nordic states...Norway has a complex structure of domestic politics that to an exceptional degree reaches into its foreign relations. This makes it an interesting case for studying the interplay of foreign and domestic politics.<sup>54</sup>

To return to the effects of the “Norwegian model” on the capabilities of Norwegian mediators, the ‘recipient-oriented, altruistic’<sup>55</sup> nature of Norwegian development cooperation policy and the close relationship between development aid and Norway’s recent peace work has undoubtedly added to Norway’s perceived credibility and legitimacy in certain conflict-ridden areas. As noted in Chapter 3, Raven and Kruglanski mention a “halo effect” resulting from rewards, whereby the recipient’s attitudes and identification with the influencing agent become more positive.<sup>56</sup> A similar effect can be postulated to derive from Norway’s aid donations. Back in 1995 Egeland described the country’s reputation abroad in these terms:

Our legitimacy as an honest broker is very high and is undisputed and is one of our strong points...[W]e are seen as a non-threatening do-gooder, not having any other hidden dangerous motives than that of being of help—our self-interest if any would be that we as diplomats and as the Norwegian government would like to be perceived as succeeding in our foreign policy, apart from also our idealistic belief in peace and brotherhood and what not...

Most US assistance focuses on strategic allies, like Israel and Egypt, but most of our assistance goes to the really poorest countries where we have no strategic or economic interest.<sup>57</sup>

Although Egeland emphasised the importance of long-term development assistance in 1995, he has more recently suggested that such aid can merely be a

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<sup>53</sup> Knudsen, Olav F. 'Beslutningsprosesser i Norsk Utenrikspolitikk', in Knutsen, Sørbø & Gjerdåker (eds): *Norges Utenrikspolitikk*, p. 72, (my translation). A point of clarification: the Christian lay tradition has played a larger role in peace work than the political *Kristelig Folkeparti*, but many of the former group will tend to vote for KrP.

<sup>54</sup> Knudsen, Olav F.: 'Norway: Domestically Driven Foreign Policy', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 512, November 1990, p. 102.

<sup>55</sup> Olav Stokke: 'Norwegian Development-Cooperation Policy: Altruism and International Solidarity', in Holst (ed.), *Norwegian Foreign Policy in the 1980s*, p. 143

<sup>56</sup> Raven and Kruglanski, 'Conflict and Power', in Swingle (ed.), *The Structure of Conflict*, p. 79.

<sup>57</sup> Egeland interview, *op cit.*, 25/07/95.

palliative, even *prolonging* conflicts at times. Norwegian aid is divided into two categories, long-term and short-term, and Norway's recent peace initiatives fall under the latter category, which is presided over by the Foreign Ministry.<sup>58</sup> Egeland has argued that peace work is better "value for money" than Norway's traditional, long-term development assistance; he has spoken of the futility of administering "expensive humanitarian plasters" to the wounds inflicted by conflicts, rather than attempting to resolve or prevent the conflicts themselves. One aspect of Egeland's 'mission' has been to make Norway more an "active player" and less a "passive money bag". All this suggests a de-valuing of Norway's traditional humanitarian assistance on his part, in favour of an active policy as "peacemonger". When I spoke to him again in 1997, shortly after his departure from the Foreign Ministry, he expressed his view as follows:

I'm actually sceptical [about] the value of some of the traditional development assistance. I think that the actual *effect* of our money... spent on the large, old general country programmes in Africa is very questionable. Personally,... I'd rather spend \$100, 000 on St. Egedio's efforts to actually bring the parties together in Rome in the Burundi conflict, a conflict that is costing tens of thousands of lives, than build many of these bridges and roads and infrastructures and factories and so on, which actually [do] not function at all any more in these African countries where we... gave it to them. I think development assistance has improved, but still, I think...in the peace, human rights and democracy sphere – (which...let's see, maybe it's one per cent of our total foreign assistance. One per cent is after all 90 million kroner<sup>59</sup> so it's a considerable sum) – I think it's the most well-spent money there is.<sup>60</sup>

Nonetheless, Egeland admitted that the results of a report he had commissioned into the effects of long-term development assistance in the Sudan had been a "bit more confused" than he had expected,<sup>61</sup> and it seems undeniable that it is precisely the *enduring* presence of Norwegian NGOs in certain conflict regions which has reaped such dividends for Norway in terms of, e.g., legitimacy and expertise.

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<sup>58</sup> Long-term development assistance, on the other hand, is the domain of Norway's development agency, NORAD.

<sup>59</sup> (Very roughly, £9 million)

<sup>60</sup> Egeland, personal interview, 27.11.97

<sup>61</sup> Interview, 27.11.97, *ibid.*

### ***Reward and coercive power***

Although, as mentioned in Chapter 3, “small states” (or ‘neutral mediators’, in Princen’s sense) such as Norway are not usually seen by the existing mediation literature as possessing significant reward or coercive potential, the Norwegian model’s linking of a generous aid policy to mediation work means that Norwegian actors *do* have significant bargaining resources as third parties. In the Guatemalan conflict, aid was consciously used by Norwegian UD as both carrot and stick; more aid was offered if agreements were signed, while a cessation of donations was threatened if they were not.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Expert and informational power***

The knowledge of local conditions gained by NGOs with an enduring presence in a conflict region has already been mentioned, but UD can also, due to the Norwegian model, augment its expert and informational power in peace processes by collaborating with (or contracting in) NGOs / research institutes with expertise in specific areas relevant to the conflict in question. The cooperation between CESAR, (Centre for Environmental Studies and Resource Management) and UD is a case in point: CESAR provides scientific, resource-geographical expertise in its work to resolve water conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, while UD supplies CESAR’s initiatives with funding and prestige.<sup>63</sup>

The above analysis has focused largely on the potentially *empowering* effects of the “Norwegian model” on Norway’s mediation initiatives. It should also be stated, though, that if the model ‘malfunctions’, the effects can be severely detrimental to a peace process. Norway’s involvement in the conflict in Sudan, for example, has been criticised for the lack of coordination between the Foreign Ministry and its collaborating organisations, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) and the Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen. According to Groth, UD ended up pursuing two separate ‘channels’ simultaneously, to the extent that NCA, the principal mediating actor, was kept in

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<sup>62</sup> Aid has been used in this way in other regions too, an example is in Sri Lanka.

<sup>63</sup> (E.g., through the involvement of high-level officials).



the dark about talks being held in Bergen under the auspices of CMI. This had a negative impact on NCA's credibility among its important network of Sudanese contacts, since it was clear that communication between the organisation and its Government was inadequate.<sup>64</sup> A separate report criticises Norway for 'not having a consistent, coherent Sudan policy', and recommends that 'the Norwegian government's diplomatic initiatives (which should be strengthened) and the objectives of the aid programmes of the NCA and NPA should be more closely linked.'<sup>65</sup>

### *Norway's recent peace activism in context*

To sum up, then, the 1990s have witnessed renewed prioritising of an activist Norwegian foreign policy, particularly in the sphere of human rights, promotion of democracy, and conflict resolution and mediation work. This is partly due to the removal of Cold War constraints, partly due to an increased need to profile Norway on the world stage, and partly due to prominent individuals exercising their powers of agency and seeking to create an activist foreign political role for the country.

Norway's recent "peace activism" has now spanned the terms of four Prime Ministers (Brundtland, Jagland, Bondevik, and Stoltenberg [Thorvald's son, Jens]); five Foreign Ministers (Stoltenberg, Holst, Godal, Vollebæk and Jagland), and three governments (Labour [*Arbeiderpartiet*] from 1989-1997; a Centrist coalition led by the Christian People's Party from 1997-2000; and the Labour Party again since Spring 2000.) All the indications are that mediation work is not becoming any less prioritised; neither is it purely the preoccupation of the Labour Party. Norway's peace activism continued during the term of the coalition government led by Kjell Magne Bondevik, with Norway's role as "peace-promoter" being referred to repeatedly in public speeches by the government élite (more on this in Chapter 7). In May 2000, the new Labour government announced its decision to establish a new post: that of 'Special Advisor' for peace, reconciliation and democratisation. The new position was perceived as necessary

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<sup>64</sup> Anne Marie Groth: *Frivillige bistandsorganisasjoner som aktører i norsk utenrikspolitikk: En studie av Kirkens Nødhjelp og Norsk Folkehjelps nødhjelpsarbeid i Sudan*, Institutt for Statsvitenskap, University of Oslo, 1995, pp.99-114.

<sup>65</sup> Sørbo, Hauge, Hybertsen and Smith, op cit., p. 64.

in order to coordinate Norway's various peace initiatives in different regions of the world, and strengthen the staffing in this area. Arne Aasheim, a veteran of the peace process in Guatemala, and with further experience from the conflict in Haiti, (together with 'Oslo Channel' initiator Terje Rød Larsen), was selected for the post.<sup>66</sup> Such a move can be interpreted as a further institutionalisation of Norway's role as mediator.

There has not always been full agreement on Norway's mediation work, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, but mediators I spoke to did not see the critical voices as seriously threatening. Back in 1995, Egeland spoke of the widespread support he perceived among the general populace:

It's true that there have been a few negative comments...but it is nothing near what you would have in other countries like the United States and even Britain where...it would be highly controversial and debated in Parliament... I think definitely the population is very eagerly supporting our mediation work around the world... I get numerous invitations every month to go and lecture...which is an indication of a positive interest.<sup>67</sup>

In 1997 he reiterated this view:

I think Norwegians in general are very supportive of and even quite proud of the role Norway has played in certain areas,... like peace – the Middle East, Central America, the Balkans and elsewhere – but also the humanitarian initiatives and the humanitarian activism we have been responsible for. I do see that there's been a bit of a criticism in relation to the possible mis-use of public funds, especially in the Palestinian areas. But still I would maintain – and it was interesting when I was debating these issues in Liverpool, Belfast and Dublin with fairly large audiences – that in Britain as in the United States, as in the Continent at large, many think it is a very big *capital* of ours that we do not have to *fight* for every penny to do this kind of work. There is a very broad consensus to be spending large sums on this, and also to take a number of rather *altruistic* stands internationally...<sup>68</sup>

During the last decade, then, Norwegian foreign political élites have been striving to “re-invent Norway as a humanitarian superpower”<sup>69</sup> and peace-monger, since this is one area in which a small, affluent state, in a post Cold War

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<sup>66</sup> Nils Christian Helle: 'UD styrker mannskapet for fredsarbeid', *Aftenposten*, 07.05.00. Aasheim has previously been Norway's ambassador to Guatemala, and before that Norway's Regional Advisor for Latin America.

<sup>67</sup> Egeland interview, 1995, *op cit.*

<sup>68</sup> Egeland interview, 1997, *op cit.*

<sup>69</sup> Terje Tvedt, 1995 (*ibid.*), (my translation).

environment and outside the EU, can excel.<sup>70</sup> As Nils Butenshøn writes, these attempts have been successful, in that a unique role has been created for Norway in this post-Cold War era, based on a kind of “specialised bridge-building policy”: contributions to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the form of established mediation channels and strategic aid to exposed areas.<sup>71</sup> It is interesting to examine the discourses which have surrounded the development of this foreign political role, to see how Norway’s privileged storytellers have drawn on the cultural, historical and linguistic resources of the social group when constructing their narratives on Norway as a “nation of peace”. Such an examination may help us to understand how a “constituency” for mediation work can be built up, also in other contexts or social settings. It is to the discourses surrounding Norway’s recent mediation work that the next chapter turns.

Figure 7 overleaf shows the extent of Norway’s recent peace activism. Bearing in mind that UD turned down around ten requests for help for every conflict they intervened in, and that many of Norway’s mediation initiatives may never become known (‘there were certainly also initiatives, proposals, ideas, *many* which were tried out in these seven years when I was there [at UD] which will never be known... and should never be known, or at least not in the short run...’<sup>72</sup>), the scale of Norway’s mediation work for a country of its size is impressive.

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<sup>70</sup> Tvedt notes, for instance, that Norwegian flags have recently been added to the (previously unmarked) tents of various NGOs abroad, and several different organisations were forced / encouraged to join ranks under the umbrella term ‘Norwegian Aid,’ in a deliberate attempt by the foreign ministry to profile Norway and gain prestige and recognition from such work.

<sup>71</sup> (My translation). Butenshøn: *Norge og Midtøsten* (Norway and the Middle East), in Knutsen, Sørbo and Gjerdåker (eds.), *op cit.*, p. 356.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Egeland, 1997, *op cit.*

**Figure 7:  
Overview of Norway's recent and potential peace and mediation initiatives  
which have become public knowledge (1990-2000)**

Peace initiative(s)	Prominent actors /organisations involved
Middle East 'Oslo Channel'	Terje Rød-Larsen; (FAFO); Mona Juul; Jan Egeland; Thorvald Stoltenberg; Johan Jørgen Holst; Marianne Heiberg.
Guatemala	Gunnar Stålsett; Petter Skauen; Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Trond Bakkevig, (Mellomkirkelig Råd); Jan Egeland; Arne Aasheim; Fredrik Arthur.
Sudan	NCA, NPA, Christian Michelsen's Institute
Sri Lanka	
Colombia	Jan Egeland; Petter Skauen; PRIO
Cyprus	PRIO; Jan Egeland
Haiti	Terje Rød-Larsen; Wegger Strømmen
Former Yugoslavia / Balkans – including Nansenskolen's work in the area	Thorvald Stoltenberg; Kai Eide; Knut Vollebæk; Inge Eidsvåg; Steinar Bryn (Nansenskolen); Trond Bakkevig
Mali	Kåre Lode, NCA
CESAR's work with Middle East water conflicts	Jon Martin Trondalen; Tor Wennesland; Asgeir Føyen (CESAR); Wegger Strømmen; Jan Egeland.
East Timor / Indonesia	
South Africa	
Burundi	St Egidio society, <i>funded by UD</i>
Bakkevig's work as religious mediator in the Middle East	Trond Bakkevig
Sierra Leone	International Alert, <i>funded by UD</i>
Ethiopia / Eritrea	

## Chapter Seven: Discourses on Norwegian Peace Work

*The language of politics is not a neutral medium that conveys ideas independently formed; it is an institutionalized structure of meanings that channels political thought and action in certain directions. Those who simply use established concepts to get to the facts of political life, those who act unreflectively within the confines of established concepts, actually have the perceptions and modes of conduct available to them limited in subtle and undetected ways. ... For to adopt without revision the concepts prevailing in a polity is to accept terms of discourse loaded in favor of established practices.<sup>1</sup>*

*Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.<sup>2</sup>*

The previous two chapters have ‘set the scene’, so to speak, for Norway’s recent peace activism, and have situated Norwegian mediators within their spatio-temporal context, based on the assumption that ‘the self cannot be understood outside history’. In tracing the development of the increased priority accorded to peace work in Norwegian foreign policy over the last decade, while also showing this to be part of a longer tradition, the chapters have attempted to highlight the contextuality of action, and how the nature of constraint is ‘historically contingent’. In Chapter Six it was suggested that international mediation and conflict resolution work appear to be becoming established features of Norwegian foreign policy.

This chapter, in essence, aims to engage with Norwegians’ *own* discourses relating to this increased proclivity to “wage peace”. In part, the intention is hermeneutic: to ‘tap into’ actors’ self-understandings, and the ‘form of life’ reflected in the society’s discourses. Equally, though, attention is paid to discourse productivity, and how agents, in their discourses, *construct* versions of ‘reality’ and attribute meanings to phenomena (mediation work included), while reflexively drawing upon –

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<sup>1</sup> William E. Connolly: *The Terms of Political Discourse*, Second Edn., Princeton Uni. Press, 1974 and 1983, pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> William E. Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 64.

and reproducing – the institutional and discursive continuities of their social group. If indeed international mediation work *has* become an established component of Norway's foreign policy, how have the society's privileged speakers and storytellers managed to construct their narratives concerning peace work in such a way as to accord with societal notions of 'common sense', or with the taken-for-granted, background assumptions which constitute individuals' lifeworlds? Which dominant representations of 'Norway' (and the 'outside world') are discernible across a range of texts, and how are these made to fit with the notion of mediating? Which extant cultural, historical and linguistic resources have been drawn upon by authorised speakers in their narratives on mediation and peace work?

The texts used in this chapter are of various kinds. Particular emphasis is placed on speeches by Norwegian society's authorised speakers – Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, even the King – where peace work has been referred to. In particular, New Year addresses to the nation, and speeches on Norway's National Day, the 17th May, (occasions when national identity moves clearly into the foreground) are included in the analysis. These speeches are considered of importance to this thesis, since they are targeted at the 'general populace', and therefore the widest possible audience within Norway. As such, they (i) provide unrivalled opportunities for disseminating a 'dominant discourse'; (ii) their speakers are 'powerful' in the most tangible of ways, through their access to the potent resource this form of discourse represents; and (iii) the representations they contain are deemed by privileged speakers to fit sufficiently with existing notions of societal common sense or grids of intelligibility to be 'taken up' by the target audience – *i.e.*, to be experienced as persuasive by a broad spectrum of people. When recurrent patterns emerge in these speeches from one year to the next, this would suggest that the narratives constructed by dominant speakers *have* indeed been received as representing 'reality' by the majority of the target audience, since if elements of the speeches had been rejected or ridiculed they would probably not have been included in future speeches.

Apart from speeches, a number of other written and spoken texts are drawn upon in this chapter. Debates over peace and mediation work are considered of

particular relevance to this thesis, since they reveal the ways in which Norway's peace activism has been justified or legitimised (and, equally, ways in which it has been contested). Prominent mediators' articulations on their work – either in written form or in interviews – are also included, as are observations made by social commentators and journalists, where appropriate. Since almost all the sources used here are Norwegian, I have had to translate the actors' articulations for this thesis. This, of course, poses problems for a discourse analytic methodology that focuses on the textual mechanisms in use and the linguistic resources that are drawn upon; for this reason I have stayed as close to the original Norwegian as possible, even at the expense of colloquial English at times. Wherever there is ambiguity, or a significant 'gap' between the original meaning and the translation, I have included the original Norwegian phrase in parentheses. It should be emphasised that the analysis here is not meant to be exhaustive in any way; rather, certain broad themes are discussed, and pointers given for possible further research.

### **The Instrumentality of the Past in the Discourses of the Present**

In Chapter One it was suggested that in the discursive process of articulation (the production of meaning from existing cultural raw materials and linguistic resources), moments from the past are selected for their instrumentality in the discourses of the present; this was described by Lincoln as a 'strategic tinkering with the past.' In particular, it was suggested that a dialectic interaction of the past and present takes place when novel or unfamiliar situations are encountered (and individuals' lifeworldly knowledge is rendered problematic, or thematised); such situations prompt actors to carry out an exploration of the past in search of precedents which may be of help. A common ancestor may be invoked, a specific moment from the past recollected, or the social group's mythical narratives drawn upon, in order to evoke sentiments and generate support for a new course of action or dominant narrative. In this way, 'the present shapes the past that is recollected.' In Chapter 6, it was suggested that the post Cold War world represented just such a "new" or problematic situation for Norwegians; received assumptions about the world and

Norway's place in it were being questioned, and an opening was created for Norway's privileged speakers to redefine the country's role.

Collective memories, historical formative experiences, or "national traditions" are indeed frequently invoked in the discourses surrounding Norway's recent conflict resolution and mediation work. The experience of WWII, described by Galtung as a "trauma", is often alluded to in speeches, if not always referred to explicitly. The presence of this memory trace is arguably discernible in all narratives which attach predicates such as "small" and "vulnerable" to Norway. The experience of WWII arguably provides the single most potent underpinning for the "extended security concept" introduced into political vernacular in 1989-90, with the experience of strategic vulnerability during the Cold War coming a close second. The essence of this concept, after all, is that Norway's security is inescapably bound up with that of surrounding regions; that an activist, peace-promoting foreign policy is therefore in Norway's interests. This resonates with the Norwegian historical experience. In a 1995 speech, Foreign Minister Godal argued for an activist foreign policy, drawing on the "extended security concept" and Norway's experience of German invasion and Occupation (the sections of most relevance here are underlined):

War and conflict in other parts of the world will also be able to threaten our stability and security. Neither Norway nor the other European countries can shield themselves from poverty, overpopulation, environmental problems or racism and violent intolerance on the European continent, in Europe's vicinity, or in the Third World. I would like to warn against attempts to construct an artificial dichotomy between Norwegian national interests in our local environment and our crisis aid work for vulnerable people in war- and conflict-torn countries. Norwegian foreign policy is based on the premise that it is possible to do something to make the world a better place for ourselves and our fellow human beings. Attempting to isolate ourselves from others' problems is no tenable option for Norway. We have bitter historical experience of this.<sup>3</sup>

Here Godal is using the textual mechanism of presupposition in the last sentence – establishing background knowledge that the recipient is presumed (or expected) to hold.

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<sup>3</sup> My translation, from a speech by Bjørn Tore Godal to the UNICEF committee, in Norway for the occasion of UNICEF's 50th anniversary, Oslo, 11 December 1995: '*Nødhjelpens plass i norsk utenrikspolitikk*' ('*The place of crisis aid in Norwegian Foreign Policy*'), from *Odin* (Norwegian Foreign Ministry Home Page).



As noted in Chapter 5, Galtung mentions the experience of WWII as one of the primary factors that led him to prioritise peace work, but other actors involved in peace and mediation work have also emphasised this experience as central to their self-understandings. Trond Bakkevig, for instance, commented that “I don’t think you can understand Norwegian foreign policy on these issues if you don’t include the war experience.”<sup>4</sup> He related the story of the youth worker who had lived in the tower of Røa Church, where we held our interview, and been a weapons instructor in the Norwegian resistance movement, hiding eight radio receivers in the pulpit. “So of course that kind of experiences [*sic*] is so deeply ingrained in the experience of many Norwegians. And for my generation, which comes just after the war, we feel that the war is our war. I mean, I wasn’t born, ...but it’s *my* war.”<sup>5</sup> Assuming then that many Norwegians will have similar memories of the war to Bakkevig, (either from first-hand experience or passed down from their elders), experienced with similar immediacy, referring to this moment from the past in official speeches etc. is likely to evoke *sentiment* in the recipients – greatly adding to the potency of the discourse. Bakkevig explained how the recollection of WWII enabled him and his collaborators to gain popular backing for their activist policy of supporting the liberation movements in South Africa:

There *was* a little discussion in Norway, but it was nothing like in England or in Germany or in the US, because people just said, well, just like we fought the Germans, of course the ANC has the right to fight the whites... We didn’t have the strong pacifism... as for example in...[Germany.]...Defence is necessary and armed struggle is at times necessary.<sup>6</sup>

The experience of WWII, then, translates relatively easily into discourses supporting an activist foreign policy, but it would also seem that Norway’s experience of the war has influenced attitudes to war and peace among members of Norwegian society. Although, as Bakkevig makes clear, there is no longer a prominent *pacifist* streak among Norwegians, (defence is necessary), it would seem that the militaristic culture found in many countries is distinctly lacking. For instance, while Jabri examines the culture of militarism, and suggests that ‘[n]ations are constructed around

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Trond Bakkevig, 11.03.99

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

“narratives” of war, the “heroes” of which acquire symbolic significance in the reproduction of a national identity based on war,”<sup>7</sup> the notion of war (as a positive) is definitely *not* prominent in discursive representations of Norway, or narratives on Norwegian identity. So, when Jabri asserts that

... the symbolism which accompanies specific national commemorations which glorify past victories in war may be said cumulatively to reproduce and perpetuate a culture of violence where identity is constituted in terms of adversity, exclusion, and violence towards past and present enemies,<sup>8</sup>

the Norwegian case is again rather different. Instead of having historical military *victories* to draw upon in their discourses, Norway’s privileged speakers have a history of suffering at the hands of occupying forces. Instead of Norwegian identity being constituted in terms of ‘violence towards past and present enemies’, what is striking in the narratives of Norwegian élites is the linking of Norwegian identity to *peace* and *peacefulness*. By paying attention to the textual mechanisms of subject positioning and predication in texts, it is clear that ‘others’ *are* portrayed as ‘threatening’, while Norway is portrayed as ‘vulnerable’.<sup>9</sup> Others may even be ‘bad’, while Norway is ‘good’. Nevertheless, the process of articulation has *not* been used to establish ‘chains of association’ between being threatened, and taking an aggressive stance towards those who do the threatening.

To an extent, Norway’s powerful speakers have been constrained by their positioning within the spatio-temporal *longue durée* of their group, and by the limited number of cultural and historical resources upon which they can draw in their narratives. On the other hand, they have *chosen* to emphasise peacefulness when they could have selected other moments from the past to serve more belligerent purposes in the present. One case in point is the invocation of Fridtjof Nansen – a figure of considerable national pride – in discourses on Norwegian identity; Nansen is sometimes drawn in to emphasise the long-standing humanitarian tradition in Norway. However, what is *left unsaid* in these discourses is equally interesting: Nansen was

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Jabri, 1996, *op cit.*, p. 140.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>9</sup> As in the citation from Godal on page 212, for instance.

also an ardent nationalist with imperialistic intentions underlying his famous Greenland expedition.

### **Representations of Norway and the ‘outside world’**

One of the striking features of representations of Norway in Norwegian discourses is the prevalence of the predicate “small” (or “little”) attached to the name of the country. In Chapter 6, Frydenlund’s influential book *Little Country, What Now?* was mentioned, but across a variety of texts similar references or allusions to Norway as “small” and “vulnerable” persist. At the same time, Norway’s “smallness” is usually counterbalanced by the presence in texts of other attributes, or capabilities which in some sense “compensate” for the smallness. For instance, in a speech by Prime Minister Bondevik in 1999, (where the same point was even made twice):

Norway is a small country. We can nonetheless play an important role in conflict resolution in different parts of the world. I want an international engagement that gives a respected Norway.

Norwegian foreign policy shall safeguard Norwegian interests, it shall promote development and human rights, and it shall contribute to security, peace and reconciliation. Although Norway is a small country, we provide important contributions to conciliation- and peace work in many [flere] conflict-ridden regions of the world.<sup>10</sup>

Or in Prime Minister Jagland’s speech on Norwegian National Day in 1997:

Despite the fact that we in Norway are few in number, we have shown that we can do much. By balancing between the big countries [*de store*]. By filling voids between the big countries – we have shown that together it is possible to achieve feats which the big countries cannot achieve alone. Norwegian mediation of recent years, among other things in the Middle East and Guatemala, is a good example of this...<sup>11</sup>

Here, although “little” Norway is juxtaposed against the “big countries”, (subject positioning with oppositional structuring), Norway’s ability to “play an important role”, “provide important contributions”, “do much”, or “achieve feats” are also emphasised. The result is that there is a subtle shift onto factors which compensate for the country’s lack of political clout, isolation and vulnerability. Another interesting

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<sup>10</sup> (My translation.) Kjell Magne Bondevik, to his Christian People’s Party conference (KrF landsmøtet), 17.4.99.

<sup>11</sup> (My translation.) Thorbjørn Jagland: speech for 17. mai arrangement, Frogner Church, Oslo, 17.5.97.

feature discernible across texts is a redefinition of what is *meant* by ‘power’ and ‘greatness’, moving away from quantifiable measures of these things to qualitative measures which cannot be ‘objectively observed’ in the same way. For instance, in Prime Minister Bondevik’s New Year speech to the nation 1999-2000 (broadcast on two channels of national television), he asserted that

...greatness [storhet] is measured in what we do for others.<sup>12</sup>

Interesting in this context is the phrase “humanitarian superpower” [*humanitær stormakt/ -supermakt*] which has been used repeatedly in recent years to describe Norway’s foreign political activism, both by critics and supporters of the new role. Often, when creating representations of Norway as a “humanitarian superpower”, the past is invoked – particularly Nansen’s achievements, presumably as a way of adding credence to the representations which are constructed, so that they fit with people’s ‘common sense’ background knowledge. Through their discourses, privileged speakers construct Norway’s position as “humanitarian superpower” as grounded in a long tradition; this makes Norway’s role seem established and stable, again compensating for the country’s smallness and vulnerability.

What is more, the past is invoked as a means of morally *obligating* Norwegians to continue the admirable traditions of their predecessors, as in the following citations from speeches:

Since Fridtjof Nansen’s historic effort for refugees in Armenia, Norway has always had a reputation as a humanitarian great power [stormakt]. This is a badge of honour [adelsmerke] Norway must always hold on to [kjennes på]. The Government wants to continue [føre...videre] this tradition of solidarity!<sup>13</sup>

The question is: What will we use our national freedom of action [*handlefrihet*] for? Here we have an inheritance to live up to.<sup>14</sup>

...we have been a pioneering country with regard to aid for the poor countries. This must be a matter of honour [æressak] for Norway, in the same way as we must support the work of the United Nations.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> (My translation). Kjell Magne Bondevik, Nyttårstale, 1.1.00.

<sup>13</sup> Prime Minister Bondevik to *KrF landsmøtet*, 17.4.99, op cit.

<sup>14</sup> Bondevik’s New Year Speech, 1.1.00, op cit.

<sup>15</sup> Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland, National Day speech, 17.5.97, op cit.

Noteworthy here is the emphasis on “honour” and “living up to” one’s “inheritance”: Norway must always retain its “badge of honour”; pioneering aid work must be a “matter of honour”, etc. By invoking predecessors who are held in high esteem, such as Nansen, and interpellating (‘hailing’) Norwegians into subject-positions as the descendants of such “moral”, “pioneering” people, sentiment is evoked – e.g., pride, patriotism and a sense of being part of an *honourable* tradition. This provides an impetus to support an activist, “idealistic” foreign policy.

Another interesting feature of official discourses is the way in which the concept of “freedom” is greatly emphasised, again as a way of obligating Norwegians to partake in peace work and foreign political activism generally. The comparatively recent memory traces of foreign rule and occupation are drawn upon to great effect by Norway’s privileged storytellers. “Victory” is constructed in terms of winning *freedom*, rather than in terms of military conquest:

The 17th of May is a day for freedom which is won. But no victory lasts for ever. We must therefore have the ability to see what threatens freedom in today’s society, and what can threaten it in tomorrow’s society.<sup>16</sup>

In five years’ time we will celebrate the centenary of our national independence. It is worth celebrating, as also happened in 1945 – when we won back freedom.<sup>17</sup>

In order to maintain freedom, an active foreign policy must be pursued – in order to identify and pre-empt the “threats” to this freedom, such as conflicts elsewhere in the world. Later, it will be shown how the concept of “freedom” was invoked in debates over Norwegian peace work, in defence of the mediation policy. Due to Norway’s particular historical experiences, “freedom” is arguably a concept which evokes strong feelings among Norwegians. This highlights the way in which a language also contains all kinds of ‘foreconceptions’ and ‘hidden ways of perceiving’, related, for instance, to a group’s social stock of knowledge; it is not a neutral medium for conveying ideas, and neither can one necessarily ‘find one’s feet’ with people by merely knowing their language.

Norway’s National Day, then, is a day for celebrating the “victory” of gaining freedom, not the “victory” of a military conquest. Past glories are not linked to a

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

culture of violence expressed against ‘past and present enemies’, but to the regaining of national freedom and independence. War “heroes” are not decorated warlords, but members of a resistance movement who bravely fought a “just” battle, as the clear underdogs. The prevalence of Norwegian flags on the 17th May therefore has few of the militaristic connotations found in many other countries; as Gullestad explains:

For most people in Norway, national symbols, such as the flag and the national anthem, carry only positive popular connotations. Other people’s flags may be associated with military aggression, colonialism or imperialism, but for Norwegians the Norwegian flag is associated with peace. For example, some autobiographical writers focus on how they learned about the German capitulation (8 May 1945), through the sudden appearance of Norwegian flags, virtually everywhere. This is something they will never forget.<sup>18</sup>

This, then, forms the background for Prime Minister Jagland’s statement on Norway’s National Day in 1997:

Norway is, as far as I know, the only country in the world which celebrates the National Day with children in processions, and not soldiers in military parades. We are the country to which Alfred Nobel gave the task of giving out the Peace Prize.

The 17th May 1945 was a huge celebration, since it fell less than two weeks after the German capitulation. This has, arguably, made the associations between, on the one hand Norway’s National Day, the Norwegian flag and other national symbols, and on the other hand the notion of “peace” all the more evident. Again, this is a cultural resource which can be drawn upon to great effect by privileged speakers in their discourses, especially when attempting to establish a role for Norway as “peacemonger”.

The concern for maintaining freedom and independence is arguably also manifested in a striking preoccupation with national *identity*, and with how Norway is perceived in the ‘outside’ world. This could be seen as a kind of adolescent identity crisis; even a sign that Norway is still in the “mirror phase” of “personality” development. After all, the country has a short history of independence, rendered even shorter by the experience of German occupation. One area where this “obsession” is

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<sup>17</sup> Bondevik’s New Year Speech, 1.1.00, op cit.

<sup>18</sup> Marianne Gullestad: ‘A Passion for Boundaries: Reflections on connections between the everyday lives of children and discourses of the nation in contemporary Norway’, Childhood: A global journal of child research, Volume 4, No. 1, February 1997: Children and nationalism.

clearly visible is in the reports of foreign correspondents to Norwegian newspapers: here a remarkably self-referential style is apparent. For instance, when high-profile meetings were held for the Middle East in Oslo during the autumn of 1999, with President Clinton among the distinguished guests, a journalist based in Washington seemed more concerned with the profiling effect the visit had for Norway in the American media, than with the substance of the talks. The newspaper headline proclaimed: "Clinton gives Norway good publicity in the USA,"<sup>19</sup> and the article continued:

Never before have so many Norwegian flags been visible on American TV screens as right now. ... The Middle East negotiations – not Norway – completely dominate the coverage in the American media of what is happening in Oslo. But in the background, Norwegian flags wave vigorously and visibly [friskt og synlig]. Pictures of happy children around King Harald and President Bill Clinton contribute to reinforcing the impression in America of Norway as a peaceful and friendly country.<sup>20</sup>

The journalist even translated comments in American newspapers regarding Norway's profile in the US, its relationship to the superpower, and particularly the representation of Norway as a "peaceful" society:

[The Washington Post] ... writes that Clinton was warmly received in Norway, "a country which does not appear to have any significant disagreements with the USA". The bilateral Norwegian-American meetings are described as one long love-party [en eneste lang kjærelighetsfest]. The huge security mobilisation in Oslo, with heavily armed police visibly placed everywhere, is described as shockingly unfamiliar [uvanf] in a "peaceful society where neither the police nor anyone else normally carries weapons."<sup>21</sup>

A recurrent theme is that Norway is the birth-place of the peace process. Nor has the fact that the foundation for the Oslo agreement was laid in all secrecy in Norway escaped the attention of other American newspapers. On Monday, the New York Times had a long and eulogistic [rosende] article on Terje Rød Larsen's role in the peace process. ... Norway can hardly get better publicity than this.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas Hylland Eriksen, a professor of Anthropology who has written extensively on Norway, explained the Norwegian identity fixation in terms of Norway's vulnerability, its small size and lack of internal contradictions, and thirdly

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<sup>19</sup> 'Clinton gir Norge god reklame i USA' Aftenposten's correspondent Morten Fyhn in Washington, Aftenposten, 2.11.99

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

“from the fact of being such a small nation you enter into relations with foreigners all the time. *So your relations with the outside world become constitutive dimensions of who you are*” [my emphasis].<sup>23</sup> This is arguably one reason why Norway’s peace and mediation work has become so bound up with Norwegian identity; as Dale writes, “Peace” has gained a central place in the discourse which puts Norwegian identity into practice,<sup>24</sup> and Galtung has commented:

Norwegian politicians now present Norwegian peace work as part of the national narrative [*fortellingen*], together with the Viking ships. They also succeed in transmitting this picture around the world, where Norway and Norwegians are perceived as peaceful.<sup>25</sup>

Or, as articulated by Rolf Tamnes, (in Cartesian terms), “Norway saves the world, therefore Norway exists.”<sup>26</sup>

The profiling aspect of Norway’s mediation initiatives is clearly referred to by official speakers. According to Egeland, (back in 1995),

...after the Oslo agreement we get much more attention in the Norwegian and international media for all our humanitarian and peace-promoting work. Now, when I visit other countries, there is enormous interest in what little Norway [*lille Norge*] can do. Often there are exaggerated expectations.<sup>27</sup>

(Note the use of “little Norway” again.) In 1997, Prime Minister Jagland asserted that

Much of our national identity and pride is attached to a Norway which sails on all seas, Norway as participant in NATO, in European cooperation, as one of the strongest supporters of the UN, of peace mediation.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Hylland Eriksen interview, Oslo, 12.11.97

<sup>24</sup> (My translation) Dale, Geir (ed.) ‘Fredsskaperen Norge’, X, 3. Verden Magasinet, No. 2, 1997, Vol. 6, p. 16; also in Dobinson and Dale, ‘*Den norske ryggsekk: an analyse av “norsk” fredsdiplomati*’ in Dale, Dobinson, Fougner, Friis et al, *Grenser for alt*, Spartacus forlag, Oslo, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> (My transl.) Galtung, interviewed by Dale, in Dale (ed.): ‘Fredsskaperen Norge’, *op cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> (My translation). Rolf Tamnes: *Oljealder 1965-1995, Norsk utenrikspolitiske historie, bind 6*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997, p. 339. Also cited in Bernt Bucher-Johannessen: *Den norske modellen: bruken av ikke statlige aktører i norsk utenrikspolitikk – Et mulig svar på utenrikspolitiske utfordringer for Norge etter den kalde krigen, hovedoppgave*, Department of Political Science, Oslo University, 1999, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> (My transl.) Egeland, interviewed in *Dagbladet*, by Jan Erik-Smilden: ‘*Ingen Mor Theresa*’, 13.12.95.

<sup>28</sup> Jagland, Opening of Arbeiderpartiet’s election campaign, 23.8.97



Even the King has joined the chorus of voices linking peace work to Norwegian identity, and noting its profiling effect; the following is an excerpt from his New Year speech in 1997:

As a meeting-place for important conferences and as a contributor to peace work in different parts of the world, Norway has attained a considerable position. Indomitable optimism, solid diplomatic handicraft and good Norwegian stubbornness [stahet] are qualities which I think have contributed to achieving results.<sup>29</sup>

Interesting here is his reference to “good Norwegian stubbornness”: through the textual mechanism of predication, the quality of stubbornness is made to appear inherently *Norwegian*. It is commentworthy that Egeland attributes the same quality (stubbornness) to Nansen, in an article on the latter’s meaning for Norwegian foreign policy.<sup>30</sup>

There have been other suggestions by privileged storytellers that Norwegians are in some ways naturally *suited* for peace work. For instance, in August 1999 Foreign Minister Vollebæk reportedly commented that ‘Oslo Channel’ protagonist Terje Rød Larsen’s “Norwegian stock of conceptions”, literally, “Norwegian thought-baggage” [*norske tankegods*], “would be of great help to him” in his future work as UN envoy to the Middle East.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps the most blatant linking of Norwegian identity to the role of peace-promoter came in the articulations of Prime Minister Bondevik in his New Year speech, 1999-2000:

Norway must be a nation of peace [fredsnasjon] – an actor for conflict resolution and peace-creating activity [virksomhet]. A nation which follows Nordahl Grieg’s strategy: “If you create human worth, you create peace.” A couple of months ago we were host for a large Middle-East [arrangement], and for the President of the USA, something which contributed to new movement in the peace process. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo; now we are also working to establish a Holocaust centre and a peace museum. I want our capital city to stand out [framstå] as an international city of peace [fredsby]. If we are remembered as a nation of peace, Norwegians will have reason to be proud. [Huskes vi som fredsnasjon, har nordmenn grunn til stolthet.]<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> (My translation). King Harald’s *Nyttårstale*, January ’97.

<sup>30</sup> (Along with ‘organisational capability’ and ‘stamina’/‘persistence’ [*utholdenhet*].) Egeland: ‘Nansen og norsk utenrikspolitikk’, in Christensen, Olav and Skoglund, Audhild (eds.): *Nansen ved to århundreskifter*, Norsk Folkemuseum, Aschehoug, 1996, pp. 150-151.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Beck: ‘Norge inn i to nye roller i Midtøsten’, *Aftenposten*, 22.08.99

<sup>32</sup> Bondevik, New Year Speech, 1.1.00, op cit.

Here Bondevik draws on a famous poem by Norwegian writer Nordahl Grieg, i.e., a cultural resource belonging to the social stock of knowledge of many Norwegians.<sup>33</sup> Norway has had a number of poets and authors who have expressed similar anti-war views; elsewhere Bondevik cites another well-known line by the famous poet Arnulf Øverland: “we shall not tolerate so very well the injustice which does not affect ourselves.”<sup>34</sup> By tapping into this literary tradition, the carriers of a dominant discourse can link the meanings they are attempting to construct in their narratives to deeply-embedded collective memory traces, and pre-existing chains of association; for instance, both these poems vividly hark back to Norway’s turbulent wartime experience.

The bold statements made by Bondevik in this speech (“Norway must be a nation of peace”, etc.) and some of the earlier citations clearly suggest that the Norwegian political élite have recently been actively constructing in their narratives a version of “reality” according to which Norway is a “peace-promoting”, “peaceful” nation. Moreover, peace work is being constructed as a ‘natural’, ‘common-sensical’ activity for members of Norwegian society to engage in – even a moral *obligation*, based on the “inheritance” one has to live up to. However, in the past, discourses on Norway’s role as peace-maker were more cautious, not least because at times Norway’s activist peace policy came under attack, (mainly by members of the moderate right wing party *Høyre*, or the extreme right wing party *Fremskrittspartiet*.) The growing boldness visible in the articulations of privileged speakers regarding peace work indicates that this criticism has died down. According to Bucher-Johannessen, this is indeed the case; in the years following Norway’s “no” vote to the EU, critical voices gradually became less prominent, since peace work became a way of profiling Norway on the world stage – even a *tactic* to compensate for the country’s perceived marginalisation internationally.

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<sup>33</sup> Another line of the same poem reads “War is contempt for life, peace is to create.” (My translation.) Nordahl Grieg (1902-1943): *Til ungdommen*. Also cited in Dobinson and Dale, op cit.

<sup>34</sup> (My transl.) “Vi skal ikke tåle så inderlig vel den urett som ikke rammer oss selv...” (Bondevik, speaking to KrF landsmøtet, 17.4.99).

## Discourses of Dissent

The arguments used by critics of Norway's peace activism will now be given brief mention, since they reveal that the dominant discourses on Norway as "peace-promoter nation" and inherently "peaceful" are not beyond contestation; moreover, they show the ways in which speakers of the emerging dominant discourse struck back in defence of peace work, *i.e.*, how they justified and legitimised it when challenged.

The debate over Norway's role as peace activist was most heated (by Norwegian standards) during 1995, following the "no" vote to the EU. In the immediate aftermath of this, prominent figures from *Høyre*, notably Kaci Kullmann Five, former leader of the party, and Nils Morten Udgaard, former State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry and the foreign political editor of the national newspaper *Aftenposten*,<sup>35</sup> spoke out against what they saw as the Labour Party's squandering of diplomatic resources on far-flung international conflicts, while neglecting what they perceived to be the more important task of building diplomatic links with Norway's neighbours, in order to counteract, what they saw as, the disastrous "no" vote to joining the EU.

Kullmann Five expressed her scepticism towards Norway's peace work in January 1995, at a time when Norway's lengthy involvement in the Guatemalan peace process, apparently without concrete "results", was beginning to attract critical attention domestically. Added to this, it had been revealed the previous week that Norway had contributed to the peace process in Sri Lanka, while at the same time the conflict in Sudan was occupying UD's attention. In essence, her argument read as follows:

For example, we should now raise the question whether it is natural for us to be the main driving force for peace in Guatemala.... We must not believe that we can play the role of the UN all over the world...The fact that we have been involved in achieving peace should not mean that we spread our resources everywhere.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> For a detailed exposition of Udgaard's position, and its relation to that of Egeland, see Kristin Clemet: 'Moderne utenrikspolitikk: idealer eller interesser?' ('Modern foreign policy: ideals or interests?') in *Tidens Tegn*, 7, 1997, (combined interview with Egeland and Udgaard).

<sup>36</sup> Per Anders Hoel: 'Advarer mot for mye fredsmegling' ('Warns against too much peace mediation'), *Vårt Land*, 20.1.95, my translation.

...we must show a willingness to prioritise limited foreign policy resources to a greater extent. I suggest among other things a deepening of our relationship with Russia. There is no other area where the challenges are greater at present.<sup>37</sup>

Although Kullmann Five did not call for an immediate curtailment of Norway's involvement in the Guatemalan peace process (which was in a critical stage), and although similar views had been expressed in the media before, her comments provoked outcry. There was a near-unanimous response from a cross-section of politicians, mediators and journalists. Bondevik, at that time leader of the Christian People's Party<sup>38</sup> (although later to become Prime Minister), was quick to defend the line taken by the Labour government:

the freedom of action [*handlefrihet*] to take part in such assignments is a positive aspect of Norwegian foreign policy. We should stand firm on this.<sup>39</sup>

The concept "freedom of action" is a compound noun in Norwegian, frequently used in discourses on Norwegian foreign policy; also, as discussed earlier, "freedom" is an emotionally charged concept for Norwegians. By using this term here, then, Bondevik alluded to collective memory traces and the value accorded to freedom and autonomy within Norwegian society, and to the cherished ability to determine one's own foreign policy.

An editorial in a Norwegian Christian newspaper the following day lamented *Høyre's* renewed exposure of its "isolated position in demanding less Norwegian involvement for the cause of peace in Guatemala."<sup>40</sup>

The fact is that irrespective of one's opinion on Norwegian membership in the EU, we are managing just fine outside it.<sup>41</sup>

Further,

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, my translation.

<sup>38</sup> (*Kristeli Folkeparti*, or KrF).

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, my transl.

<sup>40</sup> 'Klagesangerne', *Vårt Land*, 21.1.95, p. 2, my translation.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, my translation.

It is perfectly natural to discuss how many peace processes a country with a population of four million people should become involved in, but when things are moving in the right direction in Guatemala it would be wrong for Norway to pull out... We believe many of the electorate agree with us when we ask the politicians to be a little more positive in 1994 [sic] than they were last year. But so far it does not look promising.<sup>42</sup>

Petter Skauen, Norway's principal actor in the Guatemalan peace process, took personal exception to Five's comments:

I think it is very unfortunate that a central Norwegian politician questions the Norwegian involvement for peace in a distant country which has no significance for Norwegian industry and commercial interests, and where 'there are only Indians'...

One can no doubt live with the outburst in the domestic debate in Norway, but it will create depression among those suffering under the conditions in Guatemala. It will be very painful for me to tell Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú about this outburst.<sup>43</sup>

It is interesting that these defences of peace work play largely on Norwegians' sense of "right" and "wrong"; on their *consciences*; on their attitudes towards "fellow human beings" in need. The "Realist" attack is thereby deflected with "moral" arguments rooted in Norway's deeply-embedded humanitarian, Christian and Social Democratic traditions. In the following section, the prominent normative discourses surrounding Norway's peace activism will be further explored.

Jan Egeland, on the other hand, partly couched his defence of peace work in Kullmann Five's "Realist" terms, but with a clear moralistic twist. He pointed out that overall UD was using "very few resources on mediation,"<sup>44</sup> arguing that the secret of the Norwegian Model's success lay in its delegating of all time-consuming and demanding mediation operations to voluntary organisations.<sup>45</sup>

If Kullmann Five had been paying attention, she would have seen that *Høyre* votes in favour of using billions [*milliarder*] of kroner every year for carrying out emergency aid and first aid as a consequence of war and conflicts in the Third World. If Kullmann Five feels that Norway should not use a tiny fraction of this amount [*promiller*]<sup>46</sup> on ending the wars which cost so much in terms of suffering and money, it would seem as if for *Høyre* it is a

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, my translation.

<sup>43</sup> Geir Ove Fonn: 'Et vondt utspill', *Vårt Land*, 21.1.95, my translation.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, my translation.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> Literally, 'thousandths'.

question of cold calculation in terms of money and staffing [*mannkapsressurser*] rather than the prevention of human suffering.<sup>47</sup>

He also emphasised the prestige Norway had gained from its recent mediation initiatives, referring to the “long queue” of countries which had approached UD with questions about the Norwegian model of conflict resolution.<sup>48</sup>

We cannot afford not to work for peace, and we have no intention of doing what Kullmann Five suggests and quietly sit and watch wars raging while we send cheques for hundreds of millions to pick up the pieces. It would be sensational [oppsiktsvekkende] if a democratic, Western country refused to make a contribution when the parties to a conflict asked for one, and when the country has something to contribute.<sup>49</sup>

Here, by hailing individuals into subject-positions as members of a “democratic”, “Western” society, with “something to contribute,” (representations of Norway and Norwegians which were already familiar), Egeland sought to make mediation appear the “natural” thing to do. (Cf. Weldes on the Cuban missile crisis in Chapter 1). Moreover, his oppositional structuring of “cold calculation in terms of money” versus “the prevention of human suffering” was obviously aimed to jar with Norwegians’ self-understandings as “peaceful”, “humanitarian” people, with an “honourable inheritance”.

This debate can be seen as a minor watershed in Norwegian foreign political thinking; as the 1990s progressed Norway’s active role as peacemaker gained ground, increasingly becoming an element in the construction of Norwegian identity. In 1996 a final peace agreement was signed for Guatemala, ostensibly vindicating Norway’s lengthy involvement in the peace process there. Moreover, it was becoming clear that peace work served an important profiling function for Norway internationally.

### **The Normative dimension**

As the above discussion has indicated, there is a strong “moral” or “value”-based component to discourses on Norwegian peace and mediation work. Largely, this

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, my translation.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, my translation.

is grounded in the powerful Lutheran, Social Democratic and humanitarian traditions which are deeply anchored in Norwegian society. Even critics of Norway's peace activism have defended the national tradition to help the "needy" – Udgaard, for example, acknowledged that

It is a tradition in Norwegian foreign policy to involve oneself [*engasjere seg*] in humanitarian work, and we should continue to do that....<sup>50</sup>

According to Egeland, the "broad consensus" on the values and ideals that should be promoted in Norwegian foreign policy represents the very "inheritance silver" [*arvesølvet*] which Norwegian foreign ministers have presided over. (Again, the past referred to in terms of "inheritance"). In the words of Gunnar Stålsett, one of the key Norwegian actors in the Guatemalan peace process,

my own impression from my Geneva years, ... is that we have a very strong consensus on applying values which are not only, say, self-interest or economy, or security, but other humanitarian values... The discussions are usually about details, ...but there is a *shared* commitment to *value* which is seen both to be, quote unquote, Norwegian and to be universal. Therefore you find reference to human rights instruments, global, regional problems and so on, and you find a very strong openness to organisations like the Red Cross, or Amnesty International and so on; these are most common words in the Norwegian society; I would say probably in every corner of our nation.<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, in Egeland's view,

Norway has always been among the countries which have used the most powerful human rights rhetoric – precisely because this resonates with [*vinner qjenklang i*] our ideals.<sup>52</sup>

A statement made by Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, which has since resurfaced in government brochures and other speeches, asserts that

The Norwegian society's deep respect for human worth [*menneskeverdef*] has made protection and promotion of human rights a cornerstone in all our politics. It particularly has a place in all our peace work, where it unites idealism with self-interest: the greater the respect for human rights, the safer the world for us all.<sup>53</sup>

Here Norwegian society is anthropomorphised as an entity capable of *feeling respect*. Individuals are interpellated as members of this "caring", "moral" (and unitary/

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<sup>50</sup> Udgaard, interviewed (with Egeland) by Clemet, op cit.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, 16.12.97.

<sup>52</sup> Egeland, interviewed by Clemet in *Tidens Tegn*, op cit., 1997.

<sup>53</sup> 'Utenrikspolitikk og menneskerettigheter', Utenriksdepartementet [UD]: *Menneskerettigheter og norsk utenrikspolitikk* (Redigert sammendrag av redegjørelser holdt av Utenriksministeren, Handelsministeren og Bistandsministeren in Stortinget), October 1996.

united) society. The same term, “human worth” [*menneskeverd*] appears here as in the earlier citation from Nordahl Grieg’s poem; this is one of a cluster of interrelated terms or linguistic resources (some with religious undertones) frequently drawn upon in Norwegian political discourse, such as “fellow-human-being-ness” [*medmenneskelighet*] and “love-of-one’s-neighbour” [*nestekjærighet*].

On occasion peace work has been justified using explicitly religious language, not least by Bondevik, (who is also a Lutheran minister):

Peace and freedom are values we must be prepared to fight for – every day. It is not for nothing that it is written: “Blessed are the peacemakers...” It brings blessing to create peace – both for our nation, and for the conflict areas we help. It is my vision that Norway shall above all serve as peacemaker, as a peace-nation!<sup>54</sup>

Norway must be a nation of love-for-one’s-neighbour and a nation of solidarity. Let us follow in Fridtjof Nansen’s tracks through faithful efforts for refugees and the destitute [nødlidende] in other countries. Our nation is now leading the way [*går nå foran*] in cancelling the poorest developing countries’ debt. Norway is among the world’s foremost [donors] in aid. ... If we are remembered as a solidarity-showing [*solidarisk*] Norway, Norwegians will have reason to be proud.<sup>55</sup>

The notion that Norwegians are in some sense fundamentally value-driven and altruistic, (as these dominant narratives suggest), has, however, been criticised. Counter-discourses assert that dominant representations of Norway and Norwegians are self-aggrandising, self-righteous, and self-congratulatory. As Galtung has commented,

The Norwegian self-image resembles that of Askeladden [a character from Norwegian folklore not unlike a male Cinderella], who is neither very rich nor very powerful, but uses what he finds to help the decrepit old lady, and is more moral than the others.<sup>56</sup>

Or, as he said in our meeting,

I would have as my basic thesis that we simply are rather convinced that we are about the best society in the world. And our task or mission in this world is to help others come up to our level. And... of course...we’re not the only ones who think like that; ...[but] we have one *distinct* advantage: we are so small. So since we *are* so small we cannot do it with the sword; we have to do it with the word. So we drop that ‘s’. And we cannot do it with money either actually, so it becomes profoundly moralistic.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Bondevik speech to KrF conference, 17.4.99.

<sup>55</sup> Bondevik, New Year Speech, 1.1.00.

<sup>56</sup> (my transl.) Galtung interviewed in ‘*Fredsskaperen Norge*’, X, op cit., p. 27.

<sup>57</sup> Personal interview with Galtung, 11.2.98.



According to Udgaard,

I think ... we will see a gradual provincialisation of Norwegian society: that we will forget Europe more and more and concentrate on being in love with our own, self-glorifying newspaper headlines...

We pursue a self-centred and self-congratulatory foreign policy, something which has been reinforced since the Olympic games at Lillehammer. They were an enormous success, which boosted Norwegian self-confidence; something many thought would make it easier for us to cooperate with the big countries. But instead, the result was the opposite. We became self-satisfied and isolated, even more self-satisfied and isolated.<sup>58</sup>

In Hylland Eriksen's view, however, Norwegian feelings of superiority have their limits; they are tempered by an equally profound inferiority complex. As he expressed it in our interview,

The moral superiority complex is very evident...; the general idea about other countries is that they can't run their affairs in a morally acceptable way, probably because they're too complex, they're too big, or simply because the people are not as good as we are. Whereas the inferiority complex is just as obvious, which has to do with the fact that every Norwegian, when all is said and done, knows that the idea of Norway as a big and important country is a fiction.<sup>59</sup>

This is precisely why it becomes so important to profile Norway abroad, through peace work and other activities (such as sport) which can have symbolic value:

...since Norway is not really a ... powerful country, at least one can try to behave as *though one were* a powerful country, on the international stage. You see this in the enormous investments that have been made in the symbolic fields... for example the Olympics; ... events which are seen as very big domestically, and which seem to place Norway in the world as a major nation. And clearly part of the motivation behind the peace negotiations is ... to make Norway famous. Since we cannot be an important country in the real sense at least we can be it in the symbolic sense, in sports and the United Nations and so on.<sup>60</sup>

## Final Remarks

This chapter has attempted to engage with the narratives and discursive continuities surrounding Norway's recent peace activism. Admittedly, the discussion has been selective, but an effort has been made to point to the cultural, historical and linguistic resources drawn upon by privileged speakers when constructing their discourses on Norway's role in the world, and to reveal some of the mechanisms at

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<sup>58</sup> [*Vi ble oss selv nok, enda mer nok*]. This is a very Norwegian idiom, coined by Henrik Ibsen, which defies direct translation.

<sup>59</sup> Hylland Eriksen interview, Oslo, 12.11.97, op cit.

work in texts. It could be argued that the particular historical experiences shared by a great many Norwegians, (as well as the strength of traditions with a normative tinge), lend themselves well to discourses supporting an activist peace policy. Although there is truth in this, it is also clear that Norway's privileged storytellers have *chosen* to construct their narratives in certain ways, leaving some things unsaid. For instance, Norway's new-found affluence, which could potentially be constructed as a "power resource" or "weapon," has, if anything, only been represented as imposing a *duty* on Norwegians to help others. To quote former Prime Minister Jagland:

We are a country rich in money, therefore we must not be poor in values.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, Norway's history of poverty is sometimes invoked, arguably to evoke feelings of empathy with current underdogs:

What vision do the Norwegian people have at the turn of a century – the people who entered the 20th century without national independence and as one of Europe's very poorest countries? The country which has had the greatest rise in prosperity of all?<sup>62</sup>

The case of Norway is therefore interesting, because it provides insights into the ways in which a constituency *for* mediation can be built up, or how mediation can be made to seem a "natural" activity, which accords well with a social group's cultural values and historical memory traces. In order to understand *why* Norway's powerful speakers have emphasised peace work in the way they have, though – why they have acted in certain ways rather than others –, it is also necessary to 'tap into' the norms, socially customary practices and common modes of behaviour of the socio-cultural setting. This will help us to understand more fully how the social actor is *constituted* by this environment, such that it enters into her/his self-understandings and conduct. It is to these questions that the next chapter turns.

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Jagland's speech at election campaign opening, 23.8.97, *op cit.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

## Chapter Eight:

### The Norwegian socio-cultural and normative setting

*Personally, I consider myself a citizen of the world, part of an all-embracing life that transcends humanity and includes past and future. On my list of priorities, I put my Norwegian-ness below my roles as peace activist and peace researcher...*

*Having said these things, however, I must admit that my homeland has had a profound impact on me — an impact that others may detect better than I can myself.*

– Johan Galtung<sup>1</sup>

This chapter provides a brief introduction to a select group of cultural, normative and discursive continuities which are prominent within Norwegian society – and frequently referred to by actors in their own articulations on their society. The aim is to ‘tap into’ socially customary practices and rules for behaviour in Norwegian society, some of which actors from within the social group may only have a *tacit* grasp of – knowing merely how to ‘go on’, by following socially derived, routine ‘recipe knowledge’ which cannot necessarily be discursively articulated. It is assumed that social norms and cultural values, as well as the ‘foreconceptions’ present in the Norwegian language, will have become elements of Norwegian actors’ lifeworldly knowledge, and thereby fundamentally implicated in their attitudes, expectations and behaviour in the face of each new situation encountered in daily life – including, for instance, situations of conflict.

Any attempt to speculate as to the content of an individual’s lifeworld is riddled with potential methodological pitfalls. The only way to ‘tap into’ actors’ most basic self-understandings and assumptions is via a hermeneutic approach that seeks to pick up on their pre-theoretical knowledge. On the other hand, since this ‘knowledge’ is usually practical (rather than discursive) in character, it becomes necessary to ‘read between the lines’ in some way. However, this can easily lead to the researcher imputing values, beliefs and assumptions ‘from outside’, which do not necessarily correspond to the actors’ own tacit understandings. There is a fine

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<sup>1</sup> Choose Peace: A Dialogue Between Johan Galtung and Daisaku Ikeda, Translated and Edited by Richard L. Gage, Pluto Press, London and East Haven, 1995, pp. 1-2.

line between investigating practical consciousness in such a way that one's results are *illuminating* to the objects of one's study, (as Giddens suggests the study of practical consciousness *should* be), and presenting results which appear *alien* to them. Although this thesis takes the view that actors' knowledgeability is bounded, *attributing* beliefs 'from outside' is not appropriate. A fundamental problem with using this form of analysis is that, although actors who share a socio-cultural setting will share norms, values and the social stock of knowledge, the constitution of each individual will differ, sometimes radically.

This chapter, then, looks mainly at Norwegian actors' presumed social and cultural stocks of knowledge, consisting of social norms, cultural values, linguistic acumen and the like. It focuses on possible commonalities between members of Norwegian society, but remains acutely aware of the great differences which remain in terms of personality, personal experience etc., as well as between regions, classes, genders and so on. In no way is the suggestion that all members of Norwegian society are "the same". The source material used is largely a combination of my own interview transcripts, and texts written by actors living in Norwegian society about their socio-cultural and normative environment. The articulations of relative 'newcomers' to Norwegian society are included, since their problematic encounters with the tacit, constitutive rules of the society can help to shed light on that which is left unsaid by Norwegians. Furthermore, by noting similarities in the discursive articulations of a range of Norwegian actors, underlying social 'rules' may be surmised with a degree of confidence that they are not *wholly* 'off the mark'. Finally, since, according to Giddens, there is no 'bar of repression' between discursive and practical consciousness, and the boundaries between the two realms of consciousness are fluid and permeable, it is possible that when actors are asked to reflect on issues that they had previously taken for granted, the appropriate segment of their lifeworld 'comes into view as something that is taken for granted culturally, that rests on interpretations, and that, now that it can be thematized, has lost this mode of unquestionable givenness...'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Habermas, TCA, Vol. 2, p. 132.

The cultural, discursive, and normative continuities discussed in this chapter have been selected for their relevance to this thesis. For instance, socially approved rules for behaviour in conflict situations are deemed highly relevant, since these rules may be implicated in the decision to “wage peace”, in the acceptance of peace work as a “natural” activity for one’s group to engage in, or in the style of behaviour adopted as a mediator. Also of relevance are other ‘modes of being’ or normative continuities which could be imagined to have a bearing on practical peace work, style of intervention, etc. While this chapter remains focused on Norwegian society, Chapter 9 turns to the mediation and peace work of Norwegian actors, and attempts to establish links between the topics introduced here and the practical behaviour and articulated self-understandings of Norwegian mediators *qua* mediators.

The methodological difficulties inherent in such an approach are manifold, and it must be stressed that in no way is an attempt being made to establish a ‘regime of truth’ which asserts that “this is the way Norwegian mediators *are*.” Not least, it is recognised that there is often a discrepancy between what actors *state* to be their self-understandings, and what they actually *do*. The intention is merely to create a narrative which presents a plausible account of how Norwegian mediators’ situated identities can be seen to be implicated in their conduct and tendencies in peace work, but which remains tentative, making no claim to ‘paradigmatic truth.’<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, it is hoped that this narrative will add to our understanding of mediatory identity, “motives”, capabilities and conduct, and how the mutually constitutive relationship between mediators and their socio-cultural setting is fundamentally implicated in these things.

### **The existence of a ‘Norwegian’ socio-cultural environment**

In the above introduction the notion that there is such a thing as a ‘Norwegian socio-cultural environment’ has been presented as unproblematic. However, this issue should be briefly clarified. The most pertinent question, when deciding

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<sup>3</sup> Here I refer to Lincoln’s notion of ‘Myth’, introduced in Chapter One.

whether we can discuss ‘Norwegians’ as a social group, is of course whether such a category can even be identified, and if so where its boundaries lie. In defining a social group, it is not enough simply to assume that it exists merely because all the members share, say, a common passport, or even a language. In no way is it suggested by this thesis that the equation *state = social group* is being put forward as a general rule – indeed it is suggested that in many ways Norway is exceptional in this respect. Furthermore, as already indicated, it is not to be inferred that all Norwegians share the same norms, rules and social stock of knowledge, or even that all individuals will feel themselves to be ‘Norwegian’ (some, like Galtung, may feel that they have transcended such a ‘national’ identity, and others, such as newly arrived immigrants, may feel that Norwegian society is alien to them).

What is being asserted here is that there are sufficient cross-cutting commonalities among the majority of Norwegians to make a discourse about a ‘Norwegian’ socio-cultural environment meaningful. A superficial glance can point to the small size of the population, and its lack of significant class, religious, or ethnic divisions. More important, however, are the articulations of Norwegians, who express a belief, and often great pride, in belonging to a relatively homogenous people, as well as the powerful discursive continuities which emphasise the ‘sameness’ of Norwegians. Thus, Norwegians not so much share a common identity, as they share a common *field of discourse* in which it is frequently asserted that they share such an identity.

One point worth reiterating here, which has already been noted in Chapter 7, is that Norwegians *themselves* often demonstrate a highly developed, almost self-conscious awareness of their own *Norwegian-ness*. Norwegian identity, or what can be considered ‘typically Norwegian’, are topics which feature prominently in domestic discourse, and even those who criticise such self-obsessiveness inadvertently feed the addiction. As Hylland Eriksen puts it:

It has been said that the only thing which holds Norway together as a cultural community is the insatiable interest for the phenomenon “Norway”, which is by no means least among those who more or less flagrantly express disgust over — or demonstrate an ironic distance from — this interest.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hylland Eriksen, 1993 (ibid.), p. 9 (my translation).

Norway's national day is a huge celebration almost on a par with Christmas. The Viking heritage is also frequently recalled or alluded to. A whole host of "national symbols" (the omnipresent Norwegian flag, brown cheese (*brunost*),<sup>5</sup> well known national figures such as Ibsen, Munch, Grieg, Heyerdal and Nansen, stave churches, national folk costumes, trolls, whaling, the cheese slicer and the paperclip)<sup>6</sup> serve to unite people around a shared *image* of "Norwegian identity."<sup>7</sup> Hylland Eriksen described the Norwegian identity fixation in the following terms:

Even in countries which are...quite conceited, and even in small countries with inferiority complexes, such as Trinidad where I've worked, for example, where people are really quite...similar to Norwegians – I mean, they're very vain on a national basis, and they think that their contributions to music such as calypso and steel band music are the most important innovations in the twentieth century,...even so, people have other things to talk about. I mean, when you meet Trinidadians abroad, *they* wouldn't start the conversation by talking about Trinidad, but when you meet Norwegians abroad they talk about their own country.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the emphasis on shared national characteristics and symbols, Norwegians generally *act as if* they have much in common. This is closely related to the egalitarian ethos of the society, in reference to which Gullestad introduces the notion of "equality as sameness", since in her view Norwegian society "is not as homogenous as many people think, but similarities are stressed over differences and cleavages."<sup>9</sup> Crucial in this context is the fact that in the Norwegian language the same word, *likhet*, is used for both 'equality' and 'sameness.' Sameness therefore has the same positive connotations as equality; Hylland Eriksen points out that in certain dialects of Norwegian the comparative adjective '*likere*' (more equal,

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<sup>5</sup> This was voted the most Norwegian object or cultural trait in a radio programme survey in 1990. See Thomas Hylland Eriksen, '*Being Norwegian in a Shrinking World: Reflections on Norwegian Identity*', in Anne Cohen Kiel (ed.): *Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Norway*, Scandinavian University Press, 1993, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> To this list could be added countless others. Although Norwegian pride over the invention of the humble paperclip may seem ridiculous, there is more to this than meets the eye. During the Occupation supporters of the resistance movement would wear a paperclip on their lapels; the small metal artefact therefore alludes to this struggle for the homeland.

<sup>7</sup> To what extent these symbols truly are *typically Norwegian* is of course open to debate, but this does not detract from their unifying or uniting function. The Lillehammer Olympic Games in 1994 provided ample evidence of deliberate national image construction.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, personal interview, 12.11.97

<sup>9</sup> Gullestad, Marianne, *The Art of Social Relations*, p. 104.

more similar) is even synonymous with the word 'bedre' (better).<sup>10</sup> The Norwegian socio-cultural environment is not so much homogenous, as homogenised by the rules, norms and prominent values of the society.

### **Lutheranism and Social Democracy**

*"the Social Democratic heritage is that Norway should play an active role in reducing conflicts and maybe particularly in alleviating class or national differences in growth".*<sup>11</sup>

It has already been noted that there are strong Social Democratic and Christian traditions in Norwegian society. Since many of Norway's normative and discursive continuities can be seen to derive in some way from these traditions, they deserve brief mention here.

Norway's social democratic heritage is striking; the Labour party (*Arbeiderpartiet*) "ruled from 1935 to 1965 except for the wartime occupation and a month in 1963, and has held office on a minority basis, but with a narrow overall left-wing majority, for most of the time since 1973."<sup>12</sup> This dominance of *Arbeiderpartiet* led Jens Arup Seip to describe Norway, in 1963, as "the one-party state".<sup>13</sup> This situation has changed somewhat since the 1960s, particularly due to a proliferation of left wing parties challenging *Arbeiderpartiet's* Social Democratic hegemony. But in any case, as Knudsen writes, "Socialism as a humanistic, egalitarian ideal has long had a strong position. Capitalism has few positive connotations in Norwegian culture."<sup>14</sup> To a large extent there is broad consensus on social democratic values across the political spectrum; as Øyvind Østerud writes, in some respects "Norwegian politics is characterised by a general social democratic hegemony, reaching far into the bourgeois bloc."<sup>15</sup>

Christianity is practised widely in Norway, especially in the South Western region, a traditional "Bible Belt". In particular, there is a powerful Christian lay tradition. Norwegian missionaries were active from the middle of the 19th Century

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen: *Typisk Norsk: Essays om kulturen i Norge*, 1993, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Professor Geir Lundestad, Director of Nobel Institute, July 6 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Torbjørn Knudsen: *Norsk Utenrikspolitikk som forskningsfelt*, op cit., p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* This was a polemic thesis whose followers became known as the "Seip School".

<sup>14</sup> Olav Knudsen: *Norway: Domestically Driven Foreign policy*, op cit., p. 104.

<sup>15</sup> (My translation). Øyvind Østerud, *Nasjonalstaten Norge – en karakteriserende skisse*, in Lars Allmén, Natalie Rogoff Ramsøy and Mariken Vaa (eds): *Det Norske Samfunn* (Norwegian Society), 3<sup>rd</sup> completely revised edition, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, Oslo, 1986, p. 29.



onwards; Norway has sent out more missionaries per head of population than any other country. Membership of the Norwegian Lutheran Church is extremely high, “comparable only with that of the Roman Catholic Church of Ireland”, according to one view.<sup>16</sup> Writing in the late 1960s, Johan Galtung commented that “The Evangelical Lutheran Church is thus even more strongly dominant in Norway than the Roman Catholic in Brazil or the Buddhist in Thailand...”<sup>17</sup> Even today, after a degree of cultural, ethnic and religious diversification, membership in the Church of Norway lies at around 93 per cent, although only a small proportion of this number are active or regular churchgoers.<sup>18</sup>

Children and young people in the Norwegian socio-cultural environment are socialised into the core Lutheran and Social Democratic values of the society, not least through the education system. The egalitarian emphasis of Norwegian society means that almost all children are given the same education, to a far greater extent than in most societies; correspondingly they receive a more uniform socialisation than may be the case elsewhere. “The class is regarded as an important unit, both socially and educationally. It is kept together as much as possible in a homogenous unit...”<sup>19</sup>

Not only is socialisation broadly similar for all, but certain core values are much emphasised in the Norwegian socialisation process, and are therefore likely to be internalised by the majority of Norwegians. One of the stated aims of the Primary School, clearly a key agent of socialisation, is to provide “moral upbringing”, and since “the Evangelical-Lutheran religion is Norway’s state religion...the norms and directives for upbringing, behaviour, rights and responsibilities are based on it.”<sup>20</sup>

Social Democratic and Lutheran values are therefore prominent in Norwegian society, and often deeply rooted in people’s self-understandings. As noted in Chapter 7, there is a striking use of religious concepts – such as “fellow-human-beingness” [*medmenneskelighet*] and “love-of-one’s-neighbour”

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16 Elder, Thomas and Arter: *The Consensual Democracies?*, p. 68.

17 Galtung: ‘Norway in the World Community’, in Rogoff Ramsøy (ed), op cit, 1974 (compiled 1967), pp. 397-398.

18 According to a 1995 investigation, only 5 per cent of the Norwegian population attend a church or prayer-house every Sunday, but almost 66% attend a church at least once a year, and around 11.5% take part in a Christian service or meeting at least once a month. See Jan Arild Holbek: ‘*Er fem eller 93 prosent av nordmenn kristne?*’ *Vårt Land*, 1.12.95

19 Oddvar Vormeland: ‘*Education in Norway*’, in Cohen Kiel (ed), op cit., pp.207 – 211.

20 *ibid*, p. 207.

[*nestekjærlighet*] in official political discourses. This suggests that these values and concepts resonate with a majority of the population in some way. The normative underpinnings of much of Norway's recent peace work are clearly based on these traditions, as well as the humanitarian tradition stemming from Fridtjof Nansen. As Egeland put it,

Historically there have been two movements...[T]he Labour movement which...has always underscored international solidarity with the disadvantaged and the poor, and the Christian layman's movement, which has also been very strong in this country, which has... 'Love Thy Neighbour' kind of motivation.<sup>21</sup>

Together, the Social Democratic notion of equal rights for all and the Christian idea of a universal humanity provide the basis for Norway's egalitarianism.

### **Egalitarianism and Conformity**

*Norwegian society is among the most egalitarian in the world. An egalitarian ideology which focuses on questions of equity in the human condition has structured attention and approaches to foreign policy.*

- Johan Jørgen Holst<sup>22</sup>

*Small egalitarian countries with relatively few problems at home, with a highly educated public, with an international interest, with news media channelling into the country international problems...have considerable pressure to build up a system of international solidarity.*

- Jan Egeland (interview)<sup>23</sup>

Norwegian society is renowned for its egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is, of course, a central tenet of the so-called 'Scandinavian (or Nordic) model' which is frequently invoked when referring to common features of Scandinavian societies.<sup>24</sup> These societies are famed for their highly developed welfare states, in which, supposedly, "care-taking of the weakest groups is a priority, and equal

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<sup>21</sup> Personal interview with Jan Egeland [while Deputy Foreign Minister] 25.07.95.

<sup>22</sup> Holst, Johan Jørgen (ed.): Norwegian Foreign Policy in the 1980s, Norwegian University Press, 1985, p. 11

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Egeland, 1995, op cit.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Mouritzen: *The Nordic Model as a Foreign Policy Instrument: its Rise and Fall*.

opportunities for all social groups to work and achieve self-determination have nearly been realised.”<sup>25</sup>

Social relations in Norway are characterised by a marked informality and an aversion to pomposity and rank; the late King Olav V was regularly spotted riding around Oslo on his bicycle, or riding on a public tram. Eckstein has written of the “collegiality of authority relations” in Norway.<sup>26</sup> As Galtung comments:

Norwegians have a sense of genuine equality and insist that respect be conferred only on the deserving and not be associated with position only. For instance, if someone – say the prime minister – enters a room, we Norwegians do not bow subserviently. A prime minister must demonstrate that he or she merits respect by doing a good job. The position alone is only an empty shell.<sup>27</sup>

For Norwegians, an informal style is a very important expression of the egalitarian norms of the society. It is seen as contributing to equality, by cloaking hierarchy, and to sameness, by de-emphasising difference – such as in wealth or level of education. Thus informality is seen as constituting one of the elements of what is thought of as ‘typically Norwegian’, a visible expression of the distinctiveness of Norwegians when compared to other, more hierarchical societies.

It should be noted, however, that the practice of Norwegian egalitarianism often falls short of its ambitions or ideals. Despite Norway’s reputation for its gender equality, for instance, there remains room for improvement. Although there are a large number of women in the Norwegian workforce (by 1991 over 70% of women had paid employment outside the home<sup>28</sup>), few have reached the upper echelons of the private or public sector, and there remains a high degree of gender division in the labour market, with a majority of women in lower-paid “caring” and service professions.

Moreover, there is a darker side to Norwegian egalitarianism, which is discussed in the next section.

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas P. Boje and Sven E. Olsson Hort, ‘Introduction: Scandinavia Between Utopia and Anarchy’, in Boje and Olsson Hort (eds): Scandinavia in a New Europe, Scandinavian University Press, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Eckstein, H.: Division and Cohesion in Democracy: The Case of Norway, op cit., 1966.

<sup>27</sup> Choose Peace: A Dialogue Between Johan Galtung and Daisaku Ikeda, Pluto Press, 1995, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Mørkhagen, op cit., p. 3.

## ***The “Law of Jante” and “Equality as sameness”***

*You shall not believe that you are something.  
You shall not believe that you are just as good as us.  
You shall not believe that you are cleverer than we are.  
You shall not imagine that you are better than we are.  
You shall not believe that you know more than we do.  
You shall not believe that you are more than we are.  
You shall not believe that you amount to anything.  
You shall not laugh at us.  
You shall not believe that someone cares about you.  
You shall not believe that you can teach us something.*

– The Law of Jante, (*Janteloven*), Axel Sandemose.<sup>29</sup>

Norwegians themselves often invoke the above-cited “Law of Jante” (*Janteloven*), a poem by the Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose, when criticising their egalitarian tradition. Its dictates, “*Thou shalt not think highly of thyself,*” for instance, are seen as encouraging modesty and sameness, while repressing people of distinction or ambition.<sup>30</sup> Hylland Eriksen sums up this argument:

The ideology of egalitarian individualism, it has been argued, expresses itself through a strong suspicion of social climbers and rejection of formal social hierarchies. In political rhetoric, equality is a positively valued word... The Law of Jante...expresses...an ideology of equality which deprecates the original and the unusual. It is widely held that the Law of Jante is a deeply embedded aspect of Norwegian culture, and that it discourages brilliance and high achievements.<sup>31</sup>

Johan Galtung has also spoken out against the emphasis on conformity and levelling in Norwegian society – this, he explains, is why he has abandoned Norway for more differentiating pastures:

I share neither the relative reticence or shyness nor the modesty – genuine or false – of many Norwegians. Norway tends to chop off the heads of those who stick out their necks to proclaim their own knowledge; this is the flip-side of Norwegian equality. My own fair, no doubt well-deserved, share of such treatment is one reason why I prefer to live outside my country of origin.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> This translation of *Janteloven*, from Sandemose’s novel: *En flyktning krysser sitt spor*, is given in Cohen Kiel, op cit., p. 60.

<sup>30</sup> This is rather like Fukuyama's idea of “Men with no Chests”, in his *End of History and the Last Man*.

<sup>31</sup> Hylland Eriksen: *Being Norwegian in a Shrinking World...*, op cit., p. 17.

<sup>32</sup> Johan Galtung, cited in: *Choose Peace: A Dialogue between Johan Galtung and Daisaku Ikeda*, op cit., p. 2.

Of relevance here is the phrase “*equality as sameness*”, formulated by the sociocultural anthropologist Marianne Gullestad<sup>33</sup> to capture the essence of the Norwegian word “equality”, as mentioned earlier. To recap, the Norwegian word for “equality”, *likhet*, has this dual meaning – it implies *similarity* as much as it does equality. (This is a clear case of language already containing within it a developed way of perceiving – see Chapter One.) According to Gullestad, “what is characteristic about Norwegian notions of equality is a specific emphasis on defining equality as similarity or sameness in very concrete ways.”<sup>34</sup> Gullestad argues that Norwegian society is not as homogenous as people claim, but that “similarities are stressed over differences and cleavages.”<sup>35</sup> She expands:

Norwegians have...adopted an interactional style whereby sameness between the participants of an encounter is emphasised, and differences are, as much as possible, tactfully concealed. The Norwegian egalitarian tradition is therefore not necessarily actual sameness, but a way of *emphasizing* sameness and undercommunicating difference.<sup>36</sup>

If indeed the concept of “equality” in Norwegian society is as bound up with emphasising similarities (or *sameness*) between people as Gullestad suggests,<sup>37</sup> this may have serious implications for the degree to which *difference* and plurality are accommodated in the society. More is said of Gullestad’s thesis later, but the notion of *avoidance* is a central idea: she suggests that when people in Norway perceive the differences between themselves and someone else to be too profound to find sufficient commonalities to bring to the fore in their encounter, they tend to avoid each other. This means that by applying the “value” of equality as sameness to those who are perceived as roughly similar to oneself, “subtle social barriers” are created “against those who are, in one way or another, not perceived as being the same.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Gullestad: *The Art of Social Relations: Essays on Culture, Social Action and Everyday Life in Modern Norway*, Universitetsforlaget, 1992, p. ix.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> A number of other writers corroborate the view (see, for instance, Cohen Kiel (op. cit.) pp. 60-65), and it would seem to be implicitly supported by still more.

<sup>38</sup> Gullestad (1992), op cit., p. 7.

Gullestad's ideas are supported by empirical evidence and by the articulations of other authors. Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1962–), for instance, confirmed that much emphasis had been placed on “similarity” in his own socialisation: “from [when] you're in Kindergarten...you've been taught *continuously* that Norwegians are really similar, and that we are, as it were, a “people”, and so on.”<sup>39</sup> According to Anne Cohen Kiel, “[i]n the quest to be viewed as the same, one might say that Norwegians prefer to be private and faceless in a crowd.”<sup>40</sup> Dahl suggests that “because of the excessive emphasis on equity values”, the Nordic countries collectively “will score comparatively low on “pluralism”, on their ability to tolerate alternatives and allow a multiplicity of groups and opinions to blossom.”<sup>41</sup> And Knudsen writes of Norwegian society specifically:

Social values are strongly egalitarian and levelling. There are consequent tendencies to exclude those who seem different and toward group introversion. Many reject immigrant groups and strangers generally. Racist attitudes are more frequent than the predominant ethos of the nation would lead one to expect.<sup>42</sup>

One of the less desirable features of the Norwegian brand of egalitarianism, then, may be the way in which it not only creates “subtle social fences” against those who are perceived as “different”, but also drives away or devalues talented or colourful individuals who fail to comply with the “equality as sameness” norm or value. Gullestad described the experience of many Norwegians who at some point find themselves on the wrong side of a “social fence”:

There is this sort of myth of homogeneity which is, of course, partly true but also partly false, like all myths are, and there is a lot of difference which has been concealed. So I think there are many people who would feel that their background is *a little bit different*. I think that may be more common than one thinks. Because there are all kinds ... of ways of being a little bit different and having experienced the – er – I wouldn't say *problems*, but at least the experience that this gives in a society focusing on sameness, or as much social life focuses – at least, has focused on sameness, and still *does*, in new ways, transformed ways.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Personal interview with Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Oslo, 12.11.97.

<sup>40</sup> Anne Cohen Kiel ‘*Confessions of an Angry Commuter*’, in Cohen Kiel, (ed.): Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Norway, Scandinavian University Press, 1993, p. 65.

<sup>41</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, ‘*Those Equal Folk*’, in Graubard (ed.), op cit., p. 108.

<sup>42</sup> Knudsen: ‘*Norway: Domestically Driven Foreign Policy*’, op cit., p. 104.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Marianne Gullestad, Oslo, 1.3.99

Although Gullestad suggests that the norm of equality as sameness does not necessarily cause “problems” for those who are perceived (or perceive themselves) to be different, there are indications to the contrary. For instance, a recent survey revealed that one in four Norwegian gays under the age of 25 had attempted suicide, and that over 20 per cent of gays experienced harassment at their workplace.<sup>44</sup> It is clear that the everyday lifeworlds of individual Norwegians will vary greatly, according to how much they differ from, or are similar to, the “average” Norwegian.

### Handling difference

It would appear, then, that the particular norms of Norwegian society render “difference” a difficult concept to deal with. According to Gullestad, “[G]iven the notion of equality as sameness, Norwegians have difficulties relating to people who are clearly different.”<sup>45</sup> Or, in the words of another author, “[t]he Norwegian equality-society has problems with difference, and often regards difference as dangerous and damaging.”<sup>46</sup>

Traditionally Norwegian society was, in relative terms, extremely homogenous in terms of ethnicity, language and religion; although there were cleavages, these bore no comparison to the situation in more complex societies. As Galtung wrote (in the late 1960s):

Our immediate impression is that Norway must be an extremely anti-pluralistic society. It is dominated by one school system, one set of institutions for higher education, one church denomination, one national broadcasting system for radio and television; and all four of these are, in addition, state controlled.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the prevailing Social Democratic, Christian and humanistic values of the society, a failure to accommodate difference has at times been a severe black

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<sup>44</sup> Anne Hafstad and Sylvi Leander: ‘Ny rapport viser gamle holdninger: Sjokkerende hverdag for homofile’, *Aftenposten*, 26.02.99.

<sup>45</sup> Gullestad, 1992 (op. cit.) p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> My translation. Nina Karin Monsen: ‘Kampen alle kan vinne. Likhetssamfunnet: Hvis det særegne og personlige defineres bort, blir det øde rundt oss,’ [I dag], *Aftenposten*, 13.07.98.

<sup>47</sup> Johan Galtung: ‘Norway in the World Community’, in Rogoff Ramsøy (ed), op cit., p. 395.

mark on the Norwegian copybook. The “dark side” of equality as sameness was perhaps most evident in Nordic policies of forced sterilisation from the 1930s onwards, uncomfortably reminiscent of those of Nazi Germany.<sup>48</sup> Between 1934 and 1976 over 40 000 Norwegians deemed “unfit” for reproduction – the majority of these women – were sterilised against their will.<sup>49</sup> Gypsies were particularly targeted. One of the stated aims of the policy was to lessen the burden on the welfare state.

A second skeleton in the Norwegian cupboard relates to the country’s treatment of its Jewish population. Jews were forbidden to enter Norway according to the 1814 Constitution, and only allowed to do so in 1851.<sup>50</sup> Then, during World War II, Norwegian Jews were identified and handed over to the SS with relatively little resistance.<sup>51</sup> Around half of Norway’s Jews escaped to Sweden; the rest met their fate in concentration camps.<sup>52</sup> Norway’s treatment of its Jews differed greatly from Denmark’s, where a united front was formed to protect the Jewish minority, and almost all were rescued.<sup>53</sup> In the aftermath of the war, according to Dahl, “responsibility for this atrocity was touched upon rather lightly by the Norwegian courts, not because of any anti-Semitic sentiments, but *simply because Jews were “different”* and not regarded as a protectable minority.” [My emphasis.]<sup>54</sup>

Contemporary Norwegian society has in many ways reached a critical juncture; the society is rapidly becoming more pluralistic. With the comparatively recent entrance of immigrants, for instance, the societal make-up has changed quite noticeably over the last decades. Norwegian society remains relatively homogenous (or “homogenised”) to this day, but “difference” is now encountered more frequently in everyday life, and traditional norms and patterns of interaction are increasingly being challenged by new members of the society. In a sense, one could say that the taken-for-granted of the Norwegian socio-cultural environment are

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<sup>48</sup> See Per Norvik: ‘*Nordisk rasehygiene i Auschwitz’ skygge*’, Leading article, *Aftenposten*, 30.8.97.

<sup>49</sup> The corresponding figures for Sweden and Denmark are 60 000 and 6 000 respectively. (ibid.)

<sup>50</sup> ibid., p. 643.

<sup>51</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, op cit., p. 109.

<sup>52</sup> ibid.

<sup>53</sup> ibid.



more often being thematised, set into relief, or rendered problematic than was previously the case.

This transition towards a more pluralistic society has been difficult for many Norwegians to swallow; the perceived disintegration of traditional norms and values has been lamented in popular discourse, and immigrants are often portrayed as culpable in the supposed loss of “community”.<sup>55</sup> This partly explains the renewed preoccupation with “*Norwegianness*” – as a quest to return to what is often depicted as a Paradise Lost. A right-wing upturn has been visible in recent years, with the far right *Fremskrittspartiet* coming second in terms of votes in the 1997 election.

These are testing times for Norway, particularly since the transition towards a more pluralistic society is difficult to reconcile with a traditional emphasis on “equality as sameness.” Galtung attributed Norway’s relatively restrictive policy on immigration to such friction:

We’re being tested, you see, being tested. And since we know that we’ve not passed that test, we see to it that not too many come in. That is *not* for the reasons given; I think it is because we don’t want to be tested.<sup>56</sup>

In order to meet the challenges ahead, Gullestad emphasises the need “to develop notions of equality not posited on sameness, but allowing for various kinds of difference.”<sup>57</sup>

However, there is sometimes an ambivalence visible in Norwegian discourses on difference, which betrays a tendency to strive for sameness, even when speakers are paying lip service to the merits of social diversity. For instance, in this citation from Bondevik’s New Year speech in January 2000, Norway’s then Prime Minister appears to suggest that diversity should be embraced, while at the same time making clear that newcomers to Norwegian society are expected to conform, and become as ‘Norwegianised’ as possible:

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<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> ‘*Med andre ord*’, interview with Marianne Gullestad, *Dialog*, 03/97.

<sup>56</sup> Johan Galtung, personal interview, 11.2.98.

<sup>57</sup> Gullestad (1992) *op cit.*, p. 16.

We must prevent our new landspeople, immigrants from other countries, becoming new out-groups in the wider society [*i storsamfunnet*]. Therefore they must learn Norwegian, know our culture and our laws, so that they can participate on an equal footing with others. Therefore they shall have the same rights – same duties, same rights. Racism and foreign-agitation [*fremmedhets*] shall be un-Norwegian [*u-norsk*]. Equal worth [*likeverd*] and respect shall be obligating common national values. Difference must never be the source of enmity, but of enriching diversity [*mangfold*]. To attain this, we need conciliatory solidarity [*felleskap*].<sup>58</sup>

Being able to participate on an *equal* footing requires that immigrants become the *same* as Norwegians. ‘It is difficult, almost inconceivable, for Norwegians to see people as being both different and equal.’<sup>59</sup>

The increased visibility of foreigners – “difference” – in a social setting that was previously so homogenous,<sup>60</sup> means that the issue of immigrants has become a prominent topic in Norwegian domestic discourse, despite the fact that, in relative terms, the numbers remain small.<sup>61</sup> Often, in the heated debates immigrants become scapegoats for – *inter alia* – the rising violence and increased tensions in Norwegian society. As Long Litt Woon comments, the current debates surrounding the new members of Norwegian society can appear to jar with Norwegians’ self-understandings and with the values of their collectivity, making the topic an uncomfortable one:

Accusations of racism in particular seem to cause Norwegians much discomfort and embarrassment. These accusations are at odds with their self image of being tolerant, moral and righteous members of the international community.<sup>62</sup>

Relating this discussion more directly to the thesis, the lack of reflection on difference in Norwegian society (prior to the contemporary transition phase), and Norwegians’ lack of first-hand experience of *profound* divisions, could point to potential weaknesses for Norwegian mediators. If Norwegian mediators, when

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<sup>58</sup> (My transl.), Bondevik’s New Year speech, 1.1.00, op cit.

<sup>59</sup> Gullestad, 1992, op cit., p. 105.

<sup>60</sup> Or ‘homogenised’.

<sup>61</sup> As Long Litt Woon writes, “[i]mmigration has become a topic of social interest in Norway. It is discussed everywhere...and at all times..., often arousing much emotion. Therefore, although the absolute numbers of new “visible” ethnic minorities are relatively modest and, in most probability, will continue to remain so in the future, this does not mean that Norway has avoided the dilemmas and debates which many countries in the industrialized world have faced as a result of major global migrant worker flows in the 1960s-70s, and refugee and asylum seeker flows in the 1980s.” *ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

mediating, continue to 'go on' in the ways learned within their society, it is possible that these actors may underestimate the cleavages of more heterogeneous social settings, or be blinkered to extreme factions in "foreign" conflicts.

Norwegian "differences" can usually be placed within a narrower 'spectrum' than those of more "complex" social groups, and they have traditionally been *contained* by common adherence to the norm of "equality as sameness". But the normative continuities and socio-structural features of Norwegian society must not be assumed to be comparable to other social settings, and 'Norwegian' modes of handling difference are, in any case, not particularly admirable or beneficial. So while on the one hand Norwegian actors may be imbued with a valuable optimism with regard to the possibilities of reconciling differences (which could be a potent resource in peace work), on the other hand they may fall prey to a certain naïveté: by failing to see the way in which their formative experiences with "difference" are reliant upon idiosyncrasies of the social setting into which they have been socialised.

### **The handling of conflicts**

*Just as every familial household develops its own problem-solving behaviour, so each social group has developed its own strategies of conflict resolution over time, uniquely rooted in local culture and passed on from generation to generation... These are the hidden peace-building strengths of every society.*<sup>63</sup>

Within each social group it is reasonable to presume that particular norms of conflict behaviour will have evolved, together with distinctive assumptions, attitudes and expectations regarding conflict and its resolution. Is it then conceivable that the socio-cultural and normative backdrop of actors socialised in Norway will be implicated in the way these actors view conflicts – and the possibilities for their resolution? To use Elise Boulding's terminology, what are the "hidden peace-building strengths" (or indeed *weaknesses*) of Norwegian society?

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<sup>62</sup> Long Litt Woon, *ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>63</sup> Elise Boulding: 'Peace behaviours in various societies', in From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace, UNESCO publishing, 1996, pp. 36-37.

***a) A peaceful society?***

Norway is often described as a comparatively peaceful, or “low conflict” society. It might be more appropriate to speak of a “constructive conflict society”<sup>64</sup>, though, since conflict is of course an endemic feature of human existence — it is the extent to which it is managed, contained or resolved which varies from one society to the next. In contemporary Norwegian society, although apparently rising levels of violence are the cause of great public concern and discussion, empirical studies show that by international standards levels of overt conflict and aggression remain low.<sup>65</sup> There are myriad reasons for the generally low level of overt conflict in Norwegian society; structural features of the society, its normative continuities, and the existence of relatively sophisticated institutions for the handling of disputes (of remarkably early vintage), are among the variables implicated in inhibiting open violence and aggression, or overt conflicts.

Whether or not a lack of overt violence really implies a “peaceful” society is, however, a moot point. Aggression or overt violence is only one way in which conflict manifests itself; people can also be harmed through, e.g., social isolation, stigmatisation or discrimination. Damage can also be inflicted by denying an individual or a group a ‘voice’ for expressing grievances.

***b) Conflict circumvention and avoidance***

*Peace is not a state of general tranquility, but rather a network of relationships full of energy and conflict which is nevertheless kept under societal control.*<sup>66</sup>

An observation common to many of those who write about Norwegian society is the way in which Norwegians attempt to *avoid* conflict if at all possible.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Here I use the terminology of Marc Howard Ross.

<sup>65</sup> See Galtung, ‘*Norway in the World Community*’, *op cit.*, in Ramsøy (1974), pp. 402-403: Section 5: ‘*Norway as an exceptionally peaceful country*’. The six forms of conflict behaviour identified in the study were ‘turmoil’, ‘revolutionary’ and ‘subversive’ (domestic level), and ‘warlike’, ‘aggressive diplomacy’ and ‘belligerent’ (foreign realm).

<sup>66</sup> Michael Banks, ‘*Four Conceptions of Peace*’, in Sandole and Sandole-Staroste (eds.): Conflict Management and Problem-Solving: Interpersonal to International Applications, Pinter, 1987, p. 269.

Historical experiences of living in small, isolated communities are no doubt partly responsible for the emergence of this mode of conflict behaviour; in such small social settings, one could not avoid one's neighbour, so circumventing serious disagreements made co-existence simpler. Conflict avoidance was, in a sense, a *constitutive* rule or norm; Norwegians were only able to live alongside each other as community members if they acted in accordance with the rule and demonstrated at least a modicum of emotional self-control in potentially explosive situations. An old Norwegian proverb, "*Love thy neighbour but keep the gate*"<sup>68</sup> reflects this need for maintaining a certain distance in possibly conflictual social relations.

In many ways, though, this traditional conflict-avoiding mode of behaviour remains equally important in modern Norway. A large proportion of the population still lives in remote, rural communities. Hollos studied one such community in the early 1970s, and described a highly structured designation of family roles in order to avoid possible tensions and conflict.<sup>69</sup> Ross sums up her observations:

A mother-in-law and daughter-in-law who live in the same household stay out of each other's way; father and adult son often engage in the same job in different locations – chopping wood for hours, for example, on opposite sides of the house. Because of the norm against expressing aggression, people who don't like each other sometimes appear together in public and refuse to let this interfere with task performance.<sup>70</sup>

Even Norway's larger urban centres are small in scale compared to most European cities; as mentioned in Chapter 6, it is inevitable that paths will cross. This means that it is difficult to avoid those with whom one disagrees. Trond Bakkevig, (a Norwegian mediator, theologian and pioneer of the Norwegian model, but perhaps

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<sup>67</sup> See, e.g., Eduardo Archetti: '*Om maktens ideologi – en krysskulturell analyse*', in Arne Martin Clausén (ed): *Den norske væremåten: Antropologisk søkelys på norsk kultur*, 1984; Marc Howard Ross: *The Culture of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective*, Yale University Press, 1993, pp. 160-165; Gullestad (1992), *op cit.*, and Thomas Hylland Eriksen: '*Being Norwegian in a Shrinking World*', in Cohen Kiel (ed.), 1993, *op cit.*

<sup>68</sup> [*Elska din granne men lat grinden standa*], cited (and translated) in Gullestad, (1992), *op cit.*, '*Symbolic Fences*', p. 165.

<sup>69</sup> Hollos, Marida: *Growing up in Flathill*, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1974.

<sup>70</sup> Ross, 1993, *op cit.*, p. 163.

best known for his work supporting liberation groups in South Africa from the 1960s onwards)<sup>71</sup> described this situation well:

You know, in Britain you can always choose another social setting for your encounters with people. Here it's impossible. I know I'll meet people who belong to different political opinions, who have different theological views – if not for family reasons, then for social reasons. And somehow, you know, the people you meet face to face – and can't avoid meeting – you have to find a way of isolating where the disagreements are and see if there are common grounds...<sup>72</sup>

By their own accounts, Norwegians tend to avoid conflict by emphasising commonalities between people and groups, and where possible downplaying differences. However, when differences become too great to be avoided, according to Gullestad, people avoid each other. Bakkevig also made this point:

I think there is a double tendency. On the one hand we strive for agreement, probably because we're small and we know that we have to rely on each other. On the other hand there is also a tendency of wanting to *isolate* people who disagree very much.<sup>73</sup>

Although this can result in an apparently “peaceful” social setting, such conflict avoidance is not necessarily a good thing. Dan Smith, Director of PRIO and a relative newcomer to Norwegian society, gave his impression of Norwegian conflict behaviour:

They [Norwegians] have a particular style of *not* handling conflicts. My strong impression since – I have been living here for five years, and this is not scientific – I think by and large Norwegians run away from conflicts; they don't like them, can't handle them, and because of that, when they do emerge they are often quite destabilising and they don't have good ways to resolve them. Whereas in Britain, I think, where the political system is...adversarial, the justice system is adversarial, and in universities you are, or at least were, taught to improve your ideas by *arguing* about them with other people, you have a kind of acceptance that conflict *can* be a good thing. Phrases like “we had a good old argument and really cleared the air”; “we had a terrible fight but we're great friends now”, and so on. I think those sorts of ideas are completely alien to Norwegians.<sup>74</sup>

In a study of the everyday lives of Norwegians, as articulated by the actors themselves, Gullestad notes the break-down of relationships that occurs when differences become too great to gloss over. ‘When equality as sameness is not

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<sup>71</sup> Norway actually smuggled aid to the ANC, the IFP and other groups opposing the Apartheid regime at this time, and Bakkevig was central in this endeavour.

<sup>72</sup> Trond Bakkevig, personal interview, Oslo, 11.03.99.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Dan Smith, personal interview, *op cit.*

possible, people avoid each other.’<sup>75</sup> When I suggested to her that this might be a form of conflict polarisation, or of conflict existing on a structural, or latent level, she responded:

Hmm... I'm not sure about that. I'm not sure about that. What examples would you give? If you have avoidance, you have avoidance, and then the conflicts – (laughs) they're no longer there, in a way, you know...<sup>76</sup>

### *c) Compromise and consensus*

Norway, like the rest of Scandinavia, is known for the emphasis placed on *consensus* in all aspects of social life. Elder, Thomas and Arter describe the Scandinavian states collectively as “consensual democracies,”<sup>77</sup> in which, for instance, conflict is obviated by maximising agreement *before* decisions are made. The nature of the Scandinavian political systems is such that consensus, and its attendant virtue, compromise, are often necessary prerequisites to policy-making and political action. Norway’s multi-party system and the tradition of proportional representation mean that, unlike in more adversarial political systems, politicians in Norway cannot usually afford to view conflicts in zero-sum terms; “in the prevailing multi-party conditions parties have a choice between seeking to maximise their influence over the shaping of decisions or making oppositional gestures.”<sup>78</sup> Coalitions are frequent, and so consensus through compromise is needed in order to avoid political stalemate. This means that “[t]he predominant style of policy-making is...concertative and deliberative,”<sup>79</sup> characterised by long periods of uneventful bargaining around tables. In any case, there is much inter-élite consensus between the major political parties, partly due to the fact that they

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<sup>75</sup> Gullestad, 1992, op cit., p. 105.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Marianne Gullestad, op cit.

<sup>77</sup> As opposed to *adversarial* democracies. According to their typology, a 'consensual democracy' is a liberal democratic state characterised by (i) a low level of opposition to the rules and regulations for the resolution of conflict within that state; (ii) a low level of conflict about the exercise of power within that state; (iii) a high degree of concertation in the gestation of public policy. (See Neil Elder, Alastair Thomas and David Arter: The Consensual Democracies? The Government and Politics of the Scandinavian States, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1982, 1988, pp. 10-11.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, Chapter One: 'The Scandinavian States: The Consensual Democracies?', p. 28.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p. 182.

are used to collaborating, and partly because, as mentioned in Chapter 6, cleavages over issues such as EU or NATO membership cross-cut the Left-Right political divide. The experience of WWII is also a factor in the Norwegian emphasis on consensus:

The war...fostered a deep understanding of the value of cooperation and 'staying togetherness' which produced a deep and lasting consensus in the post-war years.<sup>80</sup>

In their interpersonal relationships, too, it has been claimed that Norwegians are consensus-oriented; again, this is one way of avoiding overt conflict. As Thomas Hylland Eriksen informs us,

The Argentinean anthropologist Eduardo Archetti...has compared the Norwegian *style of discourse* [to] that prevalent in Catholic countries. In his view, Norwegians are consensus-oriented and issue-oriented when they are forced to solve tasks together... This entails that (i) they tend to be unwilling to accept disagreement; (ii) they stick to the facts and avoid including personal or other formally irrelevant aspects into the situation. Regarding the consensus orientation, Norwegians would, according to Archetti, tend to prefer a poor compromise to a violent quarrel — even if they were eventually to emerge victorious from the latter: They strongly wish to *agree*.<sup>81</sup>

Hylland Eriksen appeared to accept this characterisation of Norwegians' behaviour as plausible when we spoke:

I mean, after discussing for years and years where the new opera is going to be, you end up making a decision which nobody is really pleased with, but which everyone can at least *live with*.<sup>82</sup>

Similarly, with the coalition government which was formed in the autumn of 1997, 'you find...a group of parties — apart from *Senterparti* which is very controversial — you find a couple of parties which nobody really *dislikes* very strongly any more, and which is therefore okay; nobody feels very enthusiastic about it.'<sup>83</sup>

There are many words and phrases relating to compromises in the Norwegian language, which indicates the centrality of the concept. One particularly colourful expression is 'to swallow camels' [*å svelge kameler*]. When the new coalition

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<sup>80</sup> Stein Ugelvik Larsen and Ingrid Louise Ugelvik: 'Scandinavia', in Roger Eatwell (ed): *European Political Cultures: Conflict or Convergence?*, Routledge, 1997, p. 220.

<sup>81</sup> Hylland Eriksen, Thomas: *Being Norwegian in a Shrinking World: Reflections on Norwegian Identity*, in Anne Cohen Kiel (ed.), op cit., pp. 17-18.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Thomas Hylland Eriksen, 12.11.97.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*



government was formed in the autumn of 1997, with ministers with completely divergent views on issues such as the EU, there was so much mention of ‘camel swallowing’ in the press that a reader wrote a letter of complaint to the newspaper *Aftenposten* about the ‘camel epidemic.’ This shows, though, how a language also reflects a ‘form of life’.

#### *d) Conflict delimitation and pragmatism*

Eduardo Archetti has observed that conflicts are often delimited in Norwegian society. ‘There is a strong tendency to set clear boundaries for the conflicts and define certain problems as irrelevant.’<sup>84</sup> This mode of behaviour is quite unlike what he experienced in his native Argentina. In Latin America, according to Archetti, one actively seeks out the history of a conflict between people; ‘we find out who the father, mother and relatives of the parties are, in order to identify self-interests in the conflict.’<sup>85</sup> In Norway, however, a conflict must always be ‘relevant to the issues and observable’.<sup>86</sup> For this reason, Archetti suggests that Norwegian conflict behaviour can be understood as “behaviouristic”, in contrast to the “Freudian” Latin-American style.<sup>87</sup>

Interestingly, when I spoke to him, Archetti did not share Dan Smith’s view that Norwegians have a negative attitude towards conflict. In his view, they have a *positive* attitude; people deliberately *create* conflicts because they know their views will be taken into account – after all, the end result is invariably a compromise. It is not conflict *per se* which is negative, but rather its overt manifestations. So long as it is managed, contained, and kept within certain limits, it is not a bad thing.<sup>88</sup>

Archetti has also observed that Norwegian conflicts are delimited in the sense that they are not usually allowed to reach a climax. Explosions are rare in Norwegian culture, he claims, with a few exceptions:

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<sup>84</sup> (My transl.) Archetti, Eduardo: ‘*Om maktens ideologi – en krysskulturell analyse*’ in Klausen, Arne Martin (ed.): *Den norske væremåten: Antropologisk søkelys på norsk kultur*, J.W. Cappelens forlag A.S., 1984, p. 50.

<sup>85</sup> (my translation). *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, my transl.

The party as an explosion, as a climax, as a way of losing self-control, as something wild, is an important and very appealing characteristic of Norwegian culture.<sup>89</sup>

*e) An optimistic view of conflict resolution's possibilities?*

According to the structurationist, lifeworld analytic methodology adopted by this thesis, which emphasises the importance of actors' practical consciousness, rooted in everyday, routine experience, Norwegians' experiences with handling conflicts in Norwegian society will also be implicated in their perception of *international* conflicts. However, since Norwegian society has traditionally lacked profound cleavages, and there have been powerful normative continuities which emphasise compromise, conflict avoidance and delimitation, it may be that Norwegians' tacit assumptions about the possibilities of conflict resolution in more cleavage-ridden settings are over-optimistic. As Geir Lundestad, Director of the Nobel Institute, said to me:

Since Norwegian conflicts can be solved through some sort of machinery, many Norwegians tend to think that...getting together and talking things over is very useful. They are very optimistic about the results this can bring. Many would of course say that this is utterly naive because conflicts in different parts of the world are entirely different from Norwegian conflicts, but this naiveté may be useful under certain circumstances. I sometimes say that if we hadn't had this kind of naive people they would never have taken on the Middle East, for instance, because any expert could have told them that this was ridiculous, it was impossible.<sup>90</sup>

Other people I interviewed echoed his sentiments. Galtung inferred that the relatively simple Norwegian setting was responsible for the country's relative lack of conflict, rather than this being due to the conflict resolving abilities of his fellow Norwegians:

Now when it comes to our own society,... let us say that we [are] small, homogenous and homologous. But that means we may have conflicts but we don't have big conflicts. And since we don't have big conflicts, many Norwegians confuse that and think that's due to our ... model, ... whereas in reality it is 'rettskaffenhet' [righteousness]. And the fact is we live in a social formation which has saved us. ... We know that things are feasible. Now how we analyse that is another matter, and I think many Norwegians would not be sufficiently able to

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with Professor Eduardo Archetti, 25.9.98.

<sup>89</sup> (My transl.) Archetti, 1984, op cit., p. 57.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Geir Lundestad, 6.7.95.

see the social context that made that possible and the habitat which contributed to our model.  
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Hylland Eriksen spoke of the Norwegian collective identity 'connected with the countryside', and linked this to an optimistic view of the possibilities of resolving conflict:

You know, cities are complex, the countryside is simple. So the idea that Norway is really a rural place – a big rural place. And with a fairly simple structure and also you have this – way of relating – I mean, a rather optimistic view of conflict resolution in general because you think that agreement is possible. You tend to believe that if we only sit down and discuss a matter we'll reach an agreement; viewpoints can always be reconciled...<sup>92</sup>

### *f) The value attached to peace*

*The first thing a Latin American notices in this country is the quietness – a rhythmic quietness in the streets, cafés, buses, workplaces....*<sup>93</sup>

It is generally argued that "peace" is a concept of great importance to Norwegians. Chapter 5 has shown that "peace" has been a central preoccupation of Norwegian foreign policy and prominent individuals for over a century. The country's past experiences with war and occupation have no doubt contributed to "peace" becoming highly valued. Chapter 7 demonstrated the frequency with which the concept appears in domestic political discourses, and how representations of Norway often present an image of a "peaceful" country, to the extent that peace work has become an important element in processes of national identity construction.

According to Gullestad, the notion of 'peace' ( *fred*) together with that of 'quiet' ( *ro*) form a central category in Norwegian culture, 'intrinsic to social identity and action in the world.'<sup>94</sup> She notes the regularity with which the word 'peace' enters common Norwegian expressions and sayings, and the fact that during fieldwork it struck her 'that very often people explained that they had both undertaken definite actions or refrained from action, by referring to peace or quiet

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Galtung, op cit.

<sup>92</sup> Hylland Eriksen interview, op cit.

<sup>93</sup> (My transl.) Archetti, 1984, op cit., p. 56.

<sup>94</sup> Gullestad: *The Art of Social Relations*, Chapter VI, 'Peace and Quiet', op cit., p. 140.

or both together.’<sup>95</sup> Expressions such as ‘for the sake of peace in the house’ and ‘the most important thing is to keep the peace’, for instance, are ‘used as justifications for avoiding open conflicts’, and a certain emphasis is put on self-control; for instance, ‘to keep the peace one ought not to say things directly, but rather indirectly.’<sup>96</sup> In keeping with the strength of Lutheranism in Norway, Gullestad argues that the notion of ‘peace’ takes on religious connotations at times, and is valued for that reason; ‘Norwegian culture can be analysed as secularised pietism’, she writes.<sup>97</sup>

The association of “peace” with “quiet” is interesting. “Peace” is, of course, an essentially contested concept. If “peace” for Norwegians does indeed have the connotation “quiet”, this could be seen to tie in with the society’s norms for conflict avoidance – “peace” as “*quiet*” is not necessarily a condition of justice, or a situation in which individuals are able to realise their potential in an unhampered way; it refers merely to the absence of overt, “noisy” conflict. In other words, such an understanding of “peace” could imply a state of “negative peace” or “structural violence”, rather than “positive peace.” As a Norwegian friend of mine tends to say about Norway, ‘there are many who weep, but none who scream.’<sup>98</sup>

The category “peace and quiet” identified by Gullestad also refers to Norwegians’ renowned love of nature. This representation of Norwegians has, however, been contested. Hylland Eriksen, for example, commented:

...some of the categories that Marianne Gullestad argues are typically Norwegian could be seen as typical middle class, urban, values. Such as “peace and quiet” for example. It’s the urban middle class that go up the mountains all the time, and go trekking, and so on, whereas you’ll find that working class people, when they go on vacation, they will go to ... a much more noisy place – a beach in Spain...<sup>99</sup>

Gullestad also emphasised, though, that “peace and quiet” would mean different things for different Norwegians, but that nonetheless it was a central category that everyone could refer to.

There’s no one-to-one relationship even in everyday contexts between the *category* of peace, or peace and quiet, and people’s behaviour, because it’s precisely the point that you may *use* this category, everybody understands you, but you may use it in very different situations, as

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<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p.153 and p.161.

<sup>98</sup> Conversation with Tore Fougner (my transl.).

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Hylland Eriksen, *op cit.*

one person may say “I need some peace, let’s have a drink” and another person may say “now I’ve got peace, because I’ve stopped drinking” or whatever.<sup>100</sup>

The common ‘denominator’ for members of Norwegian society, in Gullestad’s view, was the fact that “peace is certainly a very positive category.”<sup>101</sup> Her own commitment to “peace” seemed straightforward and without reservations:

But there is a *self-evidence* to the notion of peace, I mean, it’s universal, everybody must love peace!

... Well, at a certain level of abstraction, don't you think that peace is universally [good]...? Well, maybe that was too strong, but more or less. Don't you think that? I mean, it's the kind of value that is self-evidently positive?

### *g) Discourses on violence*

One indication that “peace” is highly valued in Norwegian society is the scope and intensity of popular discourses surrounding the apparent increase in violent behaviour, particularly street violence in Oslo and other large towns. The topic of “violence” and how it can be combated regularly fills newspaper discussion pages; again, this topic has even been referred to by the King and Prime Minister in their speeches. The scape-goating of foreigners and a self-image as peaceful are recurrent themes. For instance, one bouncer at the door of an Oslo nightclub was interviewed regarding the constant threats he was experiencing, and commented:

But it is foreigners who come with death threats. It seems as though they often have a different, more aggressive culture than ours.<sup>102</sup>

### **Love of nature and the simple life**

*Norwegian adoration of nature is a vital ingredient in the country's national identity. Over half the population have ready access to a cabin, the schools arrange annual obligatory ski days, and most postcards produced by the tourist industry depict nature scenes rather than cultural traditions.*<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Interview with Gullestad, op cit.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Nina M. Eriksen: ‘*Drapstrusler – en del av jobben*’, *Aftenposten*, 30.6.98, my transl.

<sup>103</sup> Hylland Eriksen: ‘*Norwegians and nature*’, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ article series, summer 1996.

In Norwegians' discourses surrounding their identity and what constitutes "Norwegian-ness", love of nature is a characteristic that is frequently singled out. As Hylland Eriksen writes,

Few Norwegians admit that they love the city. ... Norwegians have slowly become an urban people to the extent that many of them live in towns and cities, but they have scarcely become an urban people in their own view. The rural connection and love of nature are very important aspects of the public self-definition of "what is typically Norwegian".<sup>104</sup>

Norway's natural beauty is a source of considerable pride, and skiing, walks in the woods and other outdoor pursuits are extremely popular. "Skiing in the intense Easter sun, with a backpack containing oranges, chocolate bars and cocoa, is viewed by many Norwegians as one of the strongest, most positive experiences they can imagine."<sup>105</sup> Such pastimes leave others cold, though. For instance, Archetti writes that he feels that his integration into Norwegian society will never be fully complete, because "going for a walk" or "going skiing" will "never be the source of boundless joy for me."<sup>106</sup>

Most Norwegians, though, are not as nature-loving as the national narratives suggest. In 1996 only 13% of the population went to the mountains at Easter, despite this being seen as a "typically Norwegian" thing to do. Nevertheless, "the mountains at Easter time occupy a special place in the Norwegian self-image, as a symbol of the good life in Norway."<sup>107</sup> Similarly, living the simple life in wooden cabins is seen as far superior to city dwelling for many Norwegians, and often forms part of an idealised image of Norwegian identity.<sup>108</sup>

### **Final remarks**

This chapter has attempted to chart some of the normative and discursive continuities that occupy a privileged position in Norwegians' own articulations on their society. The themes have been selected for their relevance to this thesis, but

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<sup>104</sup> Hylland Eriksen: 'Being Norwegian in a Shrinking World', in Anne Cohen Kiel (ed.) op cit., p. 21.

<sup>105</sup> Hylland Eriksen: 'Norwegians and nature', op cit.

<sup>106</sup> (My transl.) Archetti, 1984, op cit., p. 46.

<sup>107</sup> Hylland Eriksen, 1996, op cit.

<sup>108</sup> See, e.g., Hylland Eriksen, *Typisk Norsk*, 1993, p. 82.

also by the frequency with which they are referred to in popular discourses in Norway. The next chapter explores the relationship between the continuities introduced here, and Norwegian actors' recent mediation work, to see if the constitutive effects of the socio-cultural setting upon its actors are in any way apparent.

## Chapter Nine:

### International Mediation and the Norwegian socio-cultural and normative setting

This thesis, with its structurationist view of the relationship between actors and their socio-cultural and normative environment, has already examined the mutually constitutive relationship between a mediator and her/his society in a number of contexts. This chapter seeks to explore how, (if at all), the themes introduced in Chapter 8 manifest themselves in the public articulations, self-understandings and conduct of Norwegian mediators and peace workers. The aim is to highlight how the normative and discursive continuities of Norwegian society will, to a certain extent, constitute the actors' practical consciousness, enabling them to 'go on' in all aspects of their lives, and colouring their behaviour – including their international mediatory activity.

This chapter draws on a range of Norwegian peace initiatives, and attempts to identify patterns in the Norwegian actors' behaviour and expectations across different peace processes. Norway's role in the Guatemalan peace process is particularly emphasised; the fact that this case marks the start of Norway's recent peace activism renders it interesting, as does the length of the Norwegian actors' involvement (6 years). The fact that Guatemala's "Oslo Channel" is less well known than the "Oslo Channel" for the Middle East also makes it deserving of attention. It should be stressed, though, that Norway was only *one* of several actors who played a third party role in the conflict. Having said this, Norway gradually became one of the most active players, and the Norwegian involvement is interesting not least for its wide-ranging strategies, and for the clear visibility of the "Norwegian model" in the process.

There is not scope in this chapter to enter into the details of the various peace initiatives, or of the conflicts they sought to resolve. Instead, the focus remains on the relationship between the mediator (as a situated social actor) and her/his socio-cultural and normative background, and possible ways in which the mediator's experiences and taken-for-granted knowledge (attained within this background) may be implicated in her/his mediation work.



## **The normative dimension**

Norwegian mediators often appear to have a clear normative orientation. This is partly rooted in the strong Lutheran, Social Democratic and humanitarian traditions of Norwegian society, but equally it is an effect of the “Norwegian model”, which grants non-state actors (often with explicitly value-based reasons for intervening in conflicts) a greater political role than is usually the case.

Gunnar Stålsett, one of the initiators of Norway’s involvement in the Guatemalan conflict, (through his position at that time as General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation), described his own personal identity make-up as containing elements of Norway’s “national traditions both for human rights and peace,” but also a very strong Church identity, both from inside the Church of Norway and ... from the ecumenical movement. I believe this in itself certainly reflects the Norwegian model...”<sup>1</sup> Stålsett emphasised the value consensus among Norwegian foreign policy élites as a key factor in the country’s recent peace activism. To repeat an earlier citation:

My own impression ... is that we have a very strong consensus on applying values which are not only, say, self-interest or economy, or security, but other humanitarian values... [T]here is a shared commitment to value which is seen both to be, quote unquote, Norwegian and to be universal. Therefore you find reference to human rights instruments, global, regional problems and so on, and you find a very strong openness to organisations like the Red Cross, or Amnesty International and so on; these are most common words in the Norwegian society; I would say probably in every corner of our nation.<sup>2</sup>

Trond Bakkevig, who has mediated between religious groups in the Middle East, also summed up his normative commitment in relation to what he perceived to be ‘Norwegian’ values:

... I think the struggle for justice and equality in the Norwegian history is a strong part of my inheritance – discrimination of small farmers working for political influence which started during the last century and the trade unions’ struggle for justice are really two – they belong together, and seeing that to have a good society in Norway we have to see these two things together also makes me think that that’s the way it has to be on the international level.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Conversation with Gunnar Stålsett, 16.12.97

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

Dan Smith, Director of PRIO, traced the motives for Norway's value orientated foreign policy to what he perceived as a belief among Norwegians that they have a duty, or an obligation, to follow an activist foreign policy, arising from their obvious wealth:

I think also that there's a sort of moral feeling that having been blessed with wealth and oil that they should do some good for the world. I think there's also a sense, a kind of sense that you get in a lot of European countries, that this is rather a special place, special people, so therefore they should also – and *can* do – something for the world, and ... the UN has always been taken very seriously, active participation in the UN has always been a major priority, so it's all in that line, and that tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the Norwegian mediators and third parties who have been active during the last ten years seem to have a clear normative agenda. For instance, Petter Skauen, Norway's most prominent figure in the Guatemalan peace process, first entered Guatemala as an aid worker following the 1976 earthquake.<sup>5</sup> It was during the bloodiest period of the civil war<sup>6</sup> that Skauen and his colleagues at Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) “fully realised that peace was essential if they were to achieve anything at all in Guatemala.”<sup>7</sup> When Skauen visited Guatemalan colleagues, and asked them what they needed, the unanimous response was “peace, no more violence, no more sudden death.”<sup>8</sup> Any self-interest on Skauen's part would seem to be linked to the fact that, as an aid worker, the conflict was proving an impediment to his activities. Despite being subject to numerous death threats and two attacks, Skauen persevered with his work in Guatemala. His unwillingness to court the limelight<sup>9</sup> or take too much credit for the successes of the peace process would also seem to bear witness to genuinely altruistic motives, rather than a quest for process rewards or recognition.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Trond Bakkevig interview 11.03.99

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Dan Smith 27.04.1998.

<sup>5</sup> Having previously worked for the Norwegian organisation *Santalmisjonen* in Ecuador. He stayed in Guatemala until the completion of the peace process in 1996.

<sup>6</sup> From 1980 to 1982.

<sup>7</sup> Hauge, p. 43, op cit.

<sup>8</sup> Wenche Hauge, citing her interview with Skauen, *ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> I can confirm that he is an elusive interviewee. ☺

<sup>10</sup> This is corroborated by the comments of various Norwegian journalists; see for example '*Fredens Mann*', *Fredrikstad Blad*, December 1996, where his contribution is described as “completely stripped of self-interest.” (My translation). In one interview he emphasised that his role as aid worker was a privilege,

According to Uri Savir, one of the Israeli team in the Middle East “Oslo Channel”, Terje Rød Larsen, one of the channel’s main Norwegian protagonists, also showed a clear normative commitment:

For Terje, the process we had experienced was of universal significance. He strove to bring out the good in man, and the "peace laboratory" he had helped create for us had given him a glimpse of what he'd been searching for all his life.<sup>11</sup>

These articulations suggest that there is an important normative component to much of Norway’s peace and mediation work. However, Norwegians have sometimes been accused of being overly self-righteous, exhibiting the ‘national illness’ of “righteousness fever” [*rettskaffenhetsfeber*] which Ibsen wrote about over a hundred years ago.<sup>12</sup> As Galtung put it,

...I would have as my basic thesis that we simply are rather convinced that we are about the best society in the world. And our task or mission in this world is to help others come up to our level.

Now when it comes to our own society, ... let us say that we [are] small, homogenous and homologous. But that means we may have conflicts but we don’t have big conflicts. And since we don’t have big conflicts, many Norwegians confuse that and think that’s due to our ... model, ...whereas in reality it is ‘*rettskaffenhetsfeber*’.<sup>13</sup>

It would appear, though, that self-righteousness as a mediator is unlikely to be tolerated by parties to a conflict in the long run. If mediators realise that their “moralistic” modes of behaviour are inhibiting their role, then they will be forced to re-assess their ‘taken for granted’ or ultimately be unsuccessful. Jan Egeland spoke of this ‘formative experience’ in his own work:

I don't think that anybody in the rich North very easily can take the role of being the world's bad conscience, in each and every area. ... But if we come, from, sort of the filthy rich Norway to say, Ethiopia, as we did, and told them that they really have to shape up in terms of human rights, their reaction was quite negative, actually.<sup>14</sup>

### **Equality as sameness (1): universality and “fellow-human-being-ness” (*medmenneskelighet*)**

As noted in Chapter 8, one of the dominant normative continuities of Norwegian Society (by Norwegians’ own accounts) is the treatment of others as

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*not* a calling; what sustained him was being surrounded by so many courageous and determined people. (Skauen interviewed by Marianne Torp in *Familien*, 12.95, op cit., p. 11.)

<sup>11</sup> Uri Savir, *The Process*, New York: Random House, 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in Chapter five.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Galtung, 11.2.98.

if they are equal, despite differences. This normative continuity is implicated in some of the more obvious facets of the Norwegian socio-cultural environment, such as informality (acting as if no hierarchies exist), social conformity (the pressure to act the same as others and so minimise difference), and the egalitarian emphasis of the welfare state (which attempts, in theory, to make people's quality of life as equal as possible). These socio-cultural norms are predicated on Norwegian normative discourses which equate 'equal' with 'good'; a heritage of Lutheranism and Social Democracy which emphasises equality as a social and moral priority; Norwegian conflict behaviour which tends to stress the similarities between people as a way of avoiding conflict, (and so sweeps differences under the carpet), and the notion, articulated by Gullestad, of 'equality as sameness' – the idea that Norwegians are equal because they are the same. To sum up, one *acts as if* all are alike, even though one *knows* that they are not.

To claim that an emphasis on equality is unique to Norwegian mediators would be patently untrue. Emphasis upon equality is arguably a distinguishing mark of the facilitative mediator *per se*; it is because they are unbiased that they are able to treat – and be seen to treat – the parties in a conflict equally (and so gain their trust). (In Chapter 3 it was suggested that impartiality is still an important quality for mediators without “muscle”.)

While it is in no way asserted here that Norway is unique as a mediator in treating parties in a conflict as equal, then, it is apparent that Norwegian mediators pay *particular* attention to treating parties as equals – it is a hallmark of their mediatory style. The treatment of disputants as equals, even if one knows that they are not, has, in some cases, produced positive outcomes, particularly by bringing parties into a peace process who would otherwise be excluded. However, this process may also act as a blinker, causing the mediator to overlook some of the differences that caused the conflict in the first place, and bring parties to a negotiating table who, arguably, should not be there.

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<sup>14</sup> Jan Egeland interview 27.11.97

An emphasis on treating the parties to a conflict equally was apparent in the articulations of Professor Jon Martin Trondalen, head of the Oslo-based research institute CESAR (which is engaged in mediation in Middle East water conflicts, among other things):

...we aim to be neutral (but not value-free; this is impossible), ... and we try to treat the parties equally. Sometimes this can be difficult, because one party may be more demanding of attention than the other, and then – like with children – they may easily end up getting more. If one child is constantly jumping up onto one's lap and asking to be cuddled, one has to go up to the other child and give it attention too. So we try to do this during breaks etc. – talk to the less attention-seeking party. ... We also try not to blame one individual or single out individuals, but treat each delegation as a whole, as a single entity.<sup>15</sup>

This emphasis upon equality was, according to Corbin, also clearly evident in the Middle East Oslo channel:

The Norwegian ground rules were that each group would be treated with scrupulous equality regarding accommodation and even who would meet and accompany them between the airport and their destination. On this occasion Terje Larsen met the Israelis, who came first and drove with them up to Borregaard. Even Aas and Mona Juul went to meet the Palestinians later that evening. On the way back the two teams would swap drivers so that neither side would feel that it was somehow less important.<sup>16</sup>

Dan Smith linked features of the Norwegian socio-cultural environment to this type of 'egalitarian' mediatory activity:

I think that those things mean that Norway – the atmosphere that you're likely to – this sort of, the informality, the sense of equality between people, the lack of a very deferential – or lack of an *openly* deferential culture, because I think Norway is clandestinely deferential in lots of ways – I think all of those things *fit well* with the conflict resolution context.<sup>17</sup>

Arguably a more influential, and controversial, aspect of this policy of equality (as sameness) was visible in Norway's treatment of Guatemalan Army Officers during the peace process for Guatemala. Where others had ostracised the military and treated them as pariahs, it was the Norwegians who gradually drew them into the process, addressed their sense of isolation, and attempted to treat them with respect. The Guatemalan armed forces had been implicated in the political murder and torture of hundreds of thousands of largely unarmed

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Trondalen 26.02.99

<sup>16</sup> Corbin, Jane, *Gaza First*, Bloomsbury, 1994. p. 58.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Dan Smith, op cit.

‘supporters’ of the guerrillas, as well as partaking in numerous human rights violations. As Mexico’s ambassador to Norway, Gustavo Iruegas, commented:

Norway treated them [the Guatemalan military] professionally. No other country made contact in the same way; neither Spain, Mexico, Colombia nor Venezuela did that.<sup>18</sup>

Petter Skauen has spoken of his reasons for treating even those whose actions disgusted him as equals:

Many times I have had to motivate myself vigorously in order to be able to meet some of the oppressors.\* After all, my heart has always been with the suffering [people]. But perhaps no-one had spoken to the military in a human\*\* way before.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in the context of the Guatemalan peace process, the Norwegian mediators made a unique gesture. By treating the Guatemalan Officers as *medmennesker* – “fellow-[human]-beings” – a phrase which occurs frequently in everyday Norwegian discourse,<sup>20</sup> (see Chapter 7), Skauen was able to draw the military into the peace process. This meant that they were able to visit Norway and experience an alternative military doctrine, and, more importantly, he was able to offer them the one thing they lacked in the current status quo – an end to their status as pariahs.

By treating members of the armed forces in the same way as he treated those who had suffered at their hands, Skauen has told how military men slowly began to open up to him, and he gradually gained a greater understanding of the conflict issues. He began to realise how alienated they had felt in their own country, faced with daily criticism which at times felt too much to bear, and never receiving a positive response.<sup>21</sup> This had led to an increasing sense of bitterness, which simply reinforced their isolationist and defensive tendencies. Members of the armed forces also spoke to him of their terrible fears for the future in the event of there being no amnesty for war criminals, and some even spoke of their deep remorse. Moreover, by acting in this way, Skauen also achieved results. As one journalist commented:

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<sup>18</sup> Iruegas, interviewed by Hauge on 16 January 1998, cited in Hauge, *op cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> Petter Skauen, to Terje Carlsen, ‘Det velsignede jordskjelvet’, *op cit.*, my translation. [\* *overgriperne* \*\* *menneskelig*].

<sup>20</sup> *Medmenneske* defies direct translation; literally it means ‘with-person’ – perhaps even more inclusive than the closest English equivalent, ‘fellow-person’.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

NCA's Petter Skauen has turned a blind eye to the pasts of many generals and landowners/ squires\* when he has chatted\*\* with them and invited them on guided tours in Norway. But no matter how bloodied their hands are, they have learnt something from the trips to Norway, and have subsequently become more positive about participating in a peace process.<sup>22</sup>

This strategy was criticised, however, particularly by Norwegians opposed to the 'rehabilitation' of people regarded as war criminals. One newspaper, accounting for what it regarded as the relative lack of an avid following of the Guatemalan peace process in Norwegian society, wrote:

...many of the few who *have* been interested in Guatemala [have] resolutely fought against the way in which the Norwegian-supported peace process has been carried out. They have disliked good old Norwegian treatment of the rulers,\* the land-owners and uniformed officers with a bloody past.<sup>23</sup>

Interestingly, in this analysis the equal treatment accorded to the military, as "fellow-human-beings", was criticised as a *typically Norwegian* way of behaving. By acting in this manner, then, some argue that although the Norwegian mediators helped to bring about "*peace*", they may have forfeited the opportunity to bring *justice* to Guatemala.

One outcome of the peace process was that the Guatemalans who had been implicated in the most appalling abuses of human rights abuses, members of the military, government, police, and land owning classes, gained most from the process, while for the rest of the population, it was very much 'life as usual'. As summed up by *The Economist*:

Of the many problems bequeathed to Guatemala by almost four decades of civil war, three stand out. Its indigenous people, who make up almost two-thirds of the total 11m, remain downtrodden; its army is still over-mighty; and active citizenship is a right exercised only by a minority.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, it could be said, to use the terminology of Galtung, that Norway helped to create a situation of 'negative peace' in Guatemala, in which the oppressors in the country were, arguably, stronger following the peace process.

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<sup>22</sup> Geir Terje Ruud: '*Fredsavtale uten krig*', *Verdens Gang*, 04.12.96, again my translation. [\**godseiere*, \*\**hyggesnakket*]

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* My translation and emphasis added for clarity; [\**makthaverne*].

Stålsett summed up his view of the process, including his reservations, and emphasised that the peace process should only be seen as a ‘first step’ towards attaining a more just society:

I think the agreement is quite good, quite satisfactory; I felt when I was there for the signing in December last year that very much had been achieved, the necessary compromises had been made...; ... but I was also reminded the day after the signing we went with a small delegation of government, former guerrilla leaders, Rigoberta Menchu and myself to the Northern part of Guatemala where most of the conflicts—the armed conflicts—have taken place and the people there they came forward, about 10, 000, to the two meetings we had where we wanted to tell them about the peace process, and there I realised that those people who had suffered the most had perhaps not felt, or been enough informed, about the peace process as such. So there was a certain, I wouldn’t say reservation, but restrained expressions of joy, and when they spoke they said we have ‘peace’ now, they said, but do we really have — because we don’t have ‘tierra’, we don’t have land to work on, we don’t have schools, we don’t have the health and so on. So if you really tell us peace has come then we must see it in these practical ways. I thought that was a very good reminder about the necessary operationalisation of peace accords to those who have suffered the most, to those who have had the greatest problems, and in *that* respect I think we still have a long way to go.<sup>25</sup>

### **Equality as sameness (2): Handling difference**

A second, and arguably more important, example of the emphasis on viewing actors as equals again draws upon Gullestad’s notion of ‘equality as sameness’ and its observation that Norwegians view each other as equal because they act as if they are the same – and so prioritise behaviour that emphasises the similarities between people within the same social group. While this behaviour helps to maintain a low level of overt conflict *within* the society, it is sometimes claimed that Norwegians are unable to handle, or even fully understand, social difference.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen touches upon a recurrent theme among critics of Norway’s recent peace activism when he comments:

Since there is so little reflection on difference in this country, I think that must be a very severe handicap for Norwegians involved in peace negotiations.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Fear and Cynicism in Guatemala’, *The Economist*, Volume 351, Number 8120, 22.5.99, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett 16.12.1997

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Thomas Hylland Eriksen, 12.11.97.



Several commentators have suggested that Norwegians' lack of understanding of difference has been implicated in an inability to understand the profound complexities – and differences in ethnic and religious identity – that characterise many of the conflicts that Norway has become involved in. In the case of the Middle East Oslo Channel, it has been argued that the Norwegian mediators did not sufficiently take into account the *differences* between, and *within*, the two societies – Palestinians and Israelis –, thus creating an 'incomplete' peace accord that was very difficult to sell to a large proportion of the two populations.<sup>27</sup> Galtung is a prominent exponent of this view. In our interview he remarked:

They [Norwegians] don't even understand the word difference. They would have a tendency not to believe that it exists. And you can see it in a sense in the Norwegian approach to the Middle East; they believed that Israel was a society, and they didn't see the difference between, let us say, Rabin and Netanyahu. It is almost a civil war there—it *is* a civil war, because if one faction kills the Prime Minister of the other one that's about as close as you can get. I don't think they would be good at sensing such differences, and if there are differences they would tend to see it as misunderstandings ... and maybe if invited to live in Norway to stay in Norway and live with us and see how decently we behave, they would change their mind.<sup>28</sup>

The consequence of a norm for egalitarianism or 'equality as sameness', as described or reflected in the articulations of a number of mediators and commentators on Norwegian culture, may be a tendency toward naïveté, or the belief that all people are as 'reasonable' and willing to compromise as Norwegians believe themselves to be. It is possible, for instance, that Norwegian mediators may underestimate the cleavages of more heterogeneous social settings, or be blinkered to extreme factions in "foreign" conflicts. Hylland Eriksen spoke of the Norwegian "democratic, optimistic notion" of difference, based on historical experiences of living in small communities, and how this differed from that of the Middle East, for instance:

It's very different from the Israeli-Palestine situation where what you have is – in Lyotard's sense... – "*la différence*" with an "a", not "*différence*" with an "e" – *différence*

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<sup>27</sup> It is of course important to note that this view is not a consensus opinion. For instance, according to Dan Smith, "I don't think it is true to say that the conflict was being oversimplified, I mean, it didn't – it was not a surprise, I don't think, that Hamas and Islamic Jihad continued in the West Bank and Gaza and Hizbollah continued in the North and so on; I think that the belief was that in such a complex conflict you had to find the things on which they could agree and then keep the momentum going in the process." Interview with Dan Smith, op cit.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Galtung, op cit.

with an “a” is a difference which cannot be reconciled. Which would belong, ...in Wittgenstein’s sense, to different language games, ...entirely different worlds that clash.<sup>29</sup>

The notion that Norwegian mediators may be prone to a certain naïveté is also to be found in the articulations of mediators. For instance, Trond Bakkevig told me that there was a danger that Norwegians could underestimate the complexities in other societies due to the simplicity of their own; this meant that “I think we believe that conflicts can be solved.”<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Jan Egeland admitted that, in the peace processes he had been involved in,

I’m sure we have [underestimated complexities]. If we had fully estimated the problems we would probably never have gone into many of these things.<sup>31</sup>

The Norwegian ‘assumption of reasonableness’ on the part of others was further summed up by Dan Smith:

...the average, well-educated Norwegian would believe that it’s so obvious that prosperity lies in peace, that it’s just logical and rational to get out of violent conflict and into a peace arrangement.<sup>32</sup>

In similar vein, Jan Egeland emphasised the need to avoid naïveté in an article on the “lessons” he had learnt from his experience as a mediator. The fact that it was a “lesson” indicates that he *was* perhaps more naïve before his ‘taken-for-granted’ were thematised by the experience of warlords for whom “peace” was *not* inherently positive:

One of the most important lessons we’ve learned is that we mustn’t be naïve democrats who believe that all parties come to the negotiating table with a true desire for peace. Peace is a scary prospect for many warlords. If there’s no clear winner or loser in a conflict, you have to find a compromise, and that is usually extremely hard to sell to the people.<sup>33</sup>

A certain amount of naïveté when choosing to intervene in some of the world’s most protracted conflicts can, however, be an advantage. As Egeland hinted above, if he, and his colleagues, had been fully aware of what they were stepping into, they would probably never have got involved in the first place.

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Thomas Hylland Eriksen 12.11.97.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Trond Bakkevig 11.03.99

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland 27.11.97

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Dan Smith 27.04.1998.

<sup>33</sup> Jan Egeland, quoted in Scanorama, December 1996/January 1997, p 80.

This point was summed up by the Eduardo Archetti, echoing the citation from Geir Lundestad in Chapter 8:

...a given degree of naïveté is very important for these things, and Norwegians are very naïve... [laughs].<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, the problem with naïveté is that it can lead to unrealistic expectations about, *inter alia*, conflict protagonists' willingness to compromise. This can result in agreements that fail to engage the more hard-line groups in a conflict, and the possibility that Norwegian good offices could be manipulated by the cynical and duplicitous.

However, it is not necessarily fair to say that Norwegians are any more naïve than other mediators, who may also share an optimistic view of the possibilities of conflict resolution. As Dan Smith commented, with regard to third parties in general:

I think that for everybody who's motivated in that kind of way, it's difficult to get used to the idea that other people may have a completely different calculus, a completely different ethical logic, in which it simply makes no sense for me to agree to a peace agreement – so what if it will bring an end to the war and the killing and the misery? The war and the killing and the misery has made me who and what I am today. Had a good time, want more of it, yippee. And I think it's very very hard for, ... humanitarian or human rights ...people to be understanding of that motivation ... And those conflicts are going to be much harder to resolve, and much harder to intervene in. And the *glee* with which people in hopeless conflict situations, where there's absolutely no win situation, the glee with which they set out their *refusal* to compromise. ...<sup>35</sup>

### Norwegian society as a model

*...the conflict resolution tradition which we see on various levels of society — civil strife, marriage, conflict about how the law has been applied, ... and all that where you have the ombudsman's very important role. ... It has become an integrated part of our democracy, national development and so on. And I know that we are conscious of this when we are faced with civil strife and so on, I mean [in Guatemala] the role of the military, in relation to human rights, we want their traditions...to be ours. And we welcome new instrumentalities and emerging democratic society...<sup>36</sup>*

In one respect the Norwegian socio-cultural environment was clearly implicated in the Norwegian actors' involvement in the Guatemalan peace process – namely, when the Norwegians decided to bring Guatemalans to Norway to be exposed to discourses on democracy and human rights. At a first

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Eduardo Archetti, 25.09.1998

<sup>35</sup> interview with Dan Smith, op cit.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett 16.12.97

glance, such an attempt to use Norwegian society and its social institutions as a model for conflict-ridden societies to emulate would appear to be an extreme example of 'righteousness fever'. However, during Norway's involvement in the peace process for Guatemala, this technique was used in a subtle way to help bring about an attitude change among some of the conflict's most 'hawkish' protagonists, rather than as a self-aggrandising activity for Norway.

Norwegian democratic institutions and martial traditions were used as a model for the Guatemalan military (and to a lesser extent other Guatemalans) to learn from.<sup>37</sup> Gradually, the Norwegian mediators built up close contacts with a number of representatives of the Guatemalan military. Delegations were sought, and then brought to Norway, where they were subjected to what might almost be described as a form of immersion in 'Norwegian' values. At Norway's UN training camps Onsrud and Linderud, they were exposed to discourses on human rights and peacekeeping, while witnessing Norway's training programme for its UN personnel.

The Norwegian actors' motives for this project were twofold. Firstly, it was perceived to be crucial to the peace process to contribute to the democratisation of the military — to affect a radical change in the role of the Guatemalan military establishment from being an oppressive "state within a state", to having a role suited to a truly democratic country.<sup>38</sup> Not surprisingly the Guatemalan generals were extremely unwilling to relinquish the unparalleled power they had enjoyed for decades. Secondly, the Norwegians felt that they were "biased as an honest broker", enjoying much better links with the guerrillas and the civilian Government than with the military, and this was one way to offset the balance and gain the all-important image of impartiality, with its concomitant translation into legitimate and referent power. As Egeland explained the Norwegian strategy back in 1995: "You have to be equally

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<sup>37</sup> Stålsett admitted that the use of Norway as a model of democracy – to emulate – was very clearly the goal of those who initiated the military visits. Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, 16.12.97.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, 1995.

respected by all sides, and we are now equally respected by the military...the strong men of this country.”<sup>39</sup>

The strategy of bringing the military generals to Norway to meet their Norwegian counterparts was a controversial one; it was also difficult to predict its efficacy. Gunnar Stålsett spoke of the risks involved and the careful deliberation which took place before the plan was considered to be worth entering into:

We had a discussion in the NGO environment, but also in relation to people in the Foreign Ministry, about the risk element in getting involved with the military officers who not only symbolised but in fact were part of the oppressive force. And we — it was a calculated risk saying that, okay, there will be no peace unless they are involved. We did not think it would be possible to get them on board just by ordinary negotiations. They had to *see* how the military could function in a democratic society, where they would not lose their prestige in terms of military professionalism and pride, but that this would be possible to maintain within a framework of [democracy]<sup>40</sup>

But the high-risk strategy seemed, in many ways, to pay dividends. A special relationship was gradually formed between Norway and representatives of the Guatemalan military, which seemed to have a positive impact on the wider peace process by bringing about a degree, at least, of attitude change. Again, to cite Stålsett:

... I think it worked *very* well; the dialogues which took place as these officers came and met their counterparts or their peers in our military system where they particularly were exposed to reflections on human rights, and where we provided not only for that sort of counter-exposure in Norway but also in relation to other seminars in other countries.

I think it had an overall good impact on them; there was enthusiasm; I think they felt honoured that they were taken seriously as people with their professionalities, as people who would play a role in the future Guatemalan society. There was a *lot* of enthusiasm; every time we had a delegation here the spin-off of it, besides sort of, professional exchange, would be of say, social celebration, of friendship and contact and so on, so it was indeed a very strong *socialising* effect of that encounter.<sup>41</sup>

The Guatemalan military were provided with *counter-exposure* to the norms and values of the Norwegian military doctrine – which in turn represented those of the wider Norwegian socio-cultural environment – in an almost *socialising* endeavour. Their taken-for-granted assumptions from the Guatemalan socio-cultural environment were set into relief, thematised, and challenged, and they were shown alternative modes of behaviour and thinking.

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland, 1995.

<sup>40</sup> Conversation with Gunnar Stålsett, 16.12.97

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

But this project was not as didactic as it might seem, as Hauge notes, “the Norwegian representatives emphasised the importance of not moralising.”<sup>42</sup> Instead, the intention was to make the military feel that they were not excluded from the peace process, or as Hauge writes, “to break... [their] sense of isolation.”<sup>43</sup>

The first time an important Guatemalan military delegation visited Norway was in January 1994.<sup>44</sup> Then, in April 1994, Guatemalan Lieutenant Colonel Otto Noack – playing a key liaison role between President de León Carpio and the country’s military leadership – also visited Norway.<sup>45</sup> He met with Norwegian Advocate General Arne Willy Dahl, with whom he discussed the importance of addressing the Guatemalan armed forces’ attitudes to human rights, were they to adapt to the changed political realities in the country in the event of a peace agreement being signed.<sup>46</sup> Following these visits, the Guatemalan military returned the invitation, and in May 1994 three senior Norwegian officers travelled to Guatemala.<sup>47</sup> According to Hauge, this reciprocation proved that “Guatemala’s Ministry of Defence considered it important to increase contacts with professional groups in other countries in order to strengthen awareness-raising human rights efforts among military personnel.”<sup>48</sup> The contacts between the Guatemalan and Norwegian armed forces were subsequently formalised,<sup>49</sup> and a series of visits – some more official than others – ensued.

The visits provided the Guatemalan military, then, with a model, or an example, of how armed forces could be integrated into a democratic society, without being stripped of their professionalism,<sup>50</sup> and while still retaining a *raison d'être* – albeit redefined, and reflecting discourses on human rights. It

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<sup>42</sup> Wenche Hauge, *op cit.*, p. 60. This assertion is based on information gathered from her interviews with Arne Aasheim and Peter Skauen in 1998.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 59

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61. These officers were General Vigleik Eide, Advocate General Arne Willy Dahl and Colonel Stein Andreassen.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, (1995)

seems that being able to *experience* such a model in practice did have a profound effect on the military delegations that visited Norway, and the “counter-exposure” did bring about attitude change – according to Egeland many of them returned to Guatemala “as changed people.”<sup>51</sup>

In December 1997 I asked Stålsett how *lasting* or profound this attitude change had been; one might, for instance, expect that the re-entry problem would surface once the delegations returned to Guatemala and were confronted with colleagues who had not taken part in the exchange programme. Stålsett was cautiously optimistic in his assessment, although he emphasised that it would take a long time before attitude change could really permeate all levels of the military establishment and its supporters:

I think that the *direction* of the military at present, the general direction, is in keeping with the spirit of the peace accords, and the *experiences* and the *values* which laid the foundation of those accords. I do, however, also believe that we're speaking about a very difficult process, where individual experiences and individual ambitions will play *against* the common good as defined by the government and by the military, initially. It is very difficult from outside to assess the *depth* of this transformation. My own inclination is to observe the direction of [line](...): they are in dialogue with their own society and with the outside society about the values which have to be the foundation of a democratic future for Guatemala, but they are also working with a *tradition*, a historic tradition of the military as the power, not only (...) within the usual confinements of the military but really as the strongest force in society and attached to every social aspect of Guatemalan life, so it's really a task of transformation (...) [on the inner level]: the minds and hearts of not only the professional military but also of those in Guatemalan society who have supported that sort of regime through generations.<sup>52</sup>

Jabri opens her *Discourses on Violence* with a citation from Slavica Draculic's *Balkan Express*, illustrative of her thesis that war and violent human conflict are continuities in social systems, *enabled* and *legitimated* by discursive and institutional continuities in relation to which acting agents are situated.<sup>53</sup> As Stålsett emphasised, the perceived invincibility of the army in Guatemala (and arguably also the institutionalisation of political violence) had been reproduced and legitimised through the activities of agents for *generations*. This state of affairs was never likely to change overnight, no matter how influential the strategy of counter-exposure to the norms, values and institutions of

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland, 1995, op cit.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, 16.12.97.

<sup>53</sup> Jabri, op cit, pp. 1-4

Norwegian society may have been. In this context, the word “war” in the Draculic quote might be substituted for “peace”:

War [peace] is not only a state of affairs, but a process of gradual realisation. First, one has to get used to the idea of it. The idea then has to become a part of everyday life. Then rules can change, rules of behaviour, of language, of expectations.<sup>54</sup>

It was not just the Guatemalan *military* for whom the Norwegian socio-cultural environment functioned as a model. Links were formed with Guatemala’s powerful landowners through their organisation CACIF, although this was not a project of “counter-exposure” in the same way.<sup>55</sup> There was also contact between Guatemalan and Norwegian political parties – in April 1996 a delegation of six Guatemalan politicians visited Norway to learn about procedures in the Norwegian Parliament [*Storting*].<sup>56</sup> Last but not least, enduring ties between representatives of Guatemala’s indigenous population and the Norwegian Sami were built up. Although Norway’s treatment of its indigenous minority has not always been equally commendable, by the 1990s the Sami struggle for equal rights had come much further than that of indigenous Guatemalans, and the Sami could therefore serve as a source of inspiration, and to some extent an example to follow. During an ecumenical consultation taking place in Oslo in September 1994, the leader of one of the two largest umbrella organisations for the Maya peoples<sup>57</sup> argued for greater internal self-rule for the Maya, and alluded to the host country’s treatment of its own indigenous minority: “we could also do with some kind of *sameting* [Sami parliament].”<sup>58</sup>

It should be emphasised that although much was invested in these initiatives, Norwegians were cognisant of the impracticability of transplanting ‘Norwegian’ norms and institutions into Guatemala. As one Norwegian Guatemala-specialist writes:

If we compare [Guatemala] with Norway, the difference is that the society is not integrated. It is a collection of settlements\* and linguistic communities without a national icing on top, or at least only a very thin one.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Slavencja Draculic, *Balkan Express*, 1993, cited in Jabri, 1996, op cit., p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Hauge, op cit., p. 62. The CACIF representatives were invited by UD, and met with Jan Egeland, who emphasised the importance of their active participation in the peace process, and also argued that their demands for a URNG (guerrilla) cease-fire did not improve the current negotiating climate. (See Hauge for more on this).

<sup>56</sup> Hauge, op cit., p. 63

<sup>57</sup> (Demetrio Cojti Cuxil)

<sup>58</sup> Kjell Arne Strai: ‘*Gi Indianerne selvstyre*’, *Aftenposten* (morgen), 15.9.94

<sup>59</sup> Stener Ekern, Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, cited in ‘*Guatemala i gledesrus: 36 år med borgerkrig*’, *Faktaservice* Nr. 5, January 1996/97, source Nils Christian Helle, *Aftenposten*, my translation. [\*bygder]



The purpose, then, of using Norway as a model was not simply to show the Guatemalans how they should run their society, but to expose them to an alternative model, to thematise their ‘taken-for-granted’ and encourage them to reassess their judgements on vital issues like the role of the military or the importance of democracy and human rights. If their ‘thought baggage’<sup>60</sup> subsequently included some ideas picked up from their Norwegian hosts, then so much the better. Guatemala’s defence minister Enriques certainly waxed lyrical about the visit to Norway:

Norway stands for respect for human rights and humanitarian efforts. That is why we can gain from coming here. It has been very interesting to see how you train officers and the whole interplay between the armed forces and the civilian society.<sup>61</sup>

It should be reiterated here that the Guatemalan generals gained more than just lessons in human rights and democracy from their visits to Norway. They also gained an enhanced status internationally through their liaison with the Norwegian military. This is a clear example of Norway’s ‘reputation power’ in action: the parties to a conflict could lose some of their international pariah status through their contacts with an “honest broker” like Norway.

### **Peace and Quiet**

The concept of peace obviously has a central importance to mediators. As discussed in Chapter Eight, in the Norwegian context the notion of “peace and quiet” [*fred og ro*] is, according to Gullestad, a central category in Norwegian culture. Is there, then, a peculiarly “Norwegian” emphasis on “peace”, over and above the usual commitment to peace held by mediators?

It would appear that “peace” is sometimes prioritised by Norwegians as the immediate and overriding goal of a mediation initiative – that it is most important to establish a state of “peace” before the conflict issues can be tackled and subsequently solved. The advantage of this approach is that it seeks to ameliorate the worst symptoms of a conflict – and so improve the quality of life of the people (most of whom will be civilians affected by the fighting) – and subsequently the parties can negotiate in a spirit of enhanced trust, and resolve

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<sup>60</sup> Here I am using the term which Norway’s former Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk invoked when speaking of Terje Rød Larsen’s capabilities as a mediator being enhanced by his “Norwegian thought-baggage”. See Chapter 7.

<sup>61</sup> Øystein Franck-Nielsen: ‘*Guatemalas generaler ønsker våpenhvile*’, *Vårt Land*, 17.2.95, my translation

their outstanding issues. The disadvantage of this approach is that it may lead to outcomes that are ethically very difficult to swallow (such as Guatemalan officers remaining unpunished for their crimes), and more importantly, that a “peace” without an element of justice is unlikely to be accepted by a people that feels that it has been oppressed or ‘wronged’ (arguably what has happened to both sides of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict). For a peace agreement to be successful, it needs to be accepted by the people involved in the conflict, and if traditional military or economic ‘muscle’ is not being used as a carrot and stick, perceived ‘fairness’ is more important in ensuring the acceptance of any agreement.

A tendency to prioritise attaining “peace” at all costs is at times discernible in the articulations of Jan Egeland.

I feel that peace is better than war in all contexts, and one should therefore work for peace even though one knows that the chances of succeeding are smaller than the chances of failing.<sup>62</sup>

In our interview, he reiterated this view, and implied that it was one shared by most Norwegians:

I think we’re fundamental believers in peace; peace is better than war, and *imperfect* peace is better than a perfect war, we tend to say. The end result is usually an imperfect peace, and the alternative is the full-scale *fighting*.<sup>63</sup>

However, he also demonstrated an awareness of the limitations of such an emphasis on “peace” above all else:

... [T]he only danger I could see would be in relation to a kind of Just War argument ... — would it have been correct to go in and make peace which would cement all Serb advances ... at the expense of the Bosnian side? Yes, if that was “peace” then it would not be good. But in most cases what you end up with is some rectification of the wrong which was done. But certainly, a fundamental dilemma is that you’re not necessarily getting ... fifty per cent on each side equal split of justice. The stronger side is usually given an advantage. ... [T]he Oslo agreement is certainly tilted in a way towards Israel, because it’s the stronger party. But the alternative would be continued Israeli occupation. And is it better to have *less* occupation than full occupation? Yes, I think it’s important to get less occupation and a process towards increasingly greater justice.<sup>64</sup>

Clearly it would be wrong to assume that all Norwegian actors involved in mediation work share Egeland’s view of “peace”. Trond Bakkevig, for instance, expressed a more cautious stance, and did not see “peace” as an end in itself:

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<sup>62</sup> Egeland, interviewed by Imerslund, *Arbeiderbladet*, 28.9.97, op cit., my translation.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland, 1997, op cit.

...for me there's never peace without justice, the justice element which also includes human rights and economic justice ...– if they are not taken care of they will always threaten any peace agreement.<sup>65</sup>

The notion of 'peace' is, then, essentially contested, even among mediators from the same socio-cultural setting.

An episode in the Guatemalan mediation process also illuminates the subtle nuances which characterise the concept of "peace". The Guatemalan government's chief negotiator, Hector Rosada, claimed that relatively speaking it was easier to negotiate in Oslo; "[i]n pure geographical terms one is further away from the surroundings and one works better. The best agreements are those we have negotiated in Oslo."<sup>66</sup> But it should be pointed out that Rosada may have appreciated the "peace and quiet" for different, and rather less sanguine, reasons. As Hauge writes, referring to the talks held in Norway in June 1994:

The reason why the parties wanted Norway to host these negotiations appeared to be that they wanted peace and quiet. During the previous negotiating round in Mexico, representatives from the civil sector in Guatemala turned up to press the URNG [anti government guerrillas] on the question of the Truth Commission. The government wished to avoid this. In various conversations with URNG commanders, it also emerged that it could be problematic when representatives of the civil and social sectors periodically adopted views tougher than their own.<sup>67</sup>

There was a duality to the "peace and quiet" provided by the Norwegian surroundings, in other words. In a positive sense, there was peace and quiet *to* create a fruitful environment for talks. More negatively, by removing the negotiators from the Latin American setting, there was peace and quiet *from* the voices and demands of Guatemalan civil society. In effect, those who were already marginalised became silenced still further by sheer geographical distance. "Peace and quiet" perhaps meant something rather different for the official Guatemalan delegations than it did for the Norwegians.

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Jan Egeland 27.11.97

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Trond Bakkevig 11.03.99

<sup>66</sup> Øystein Franck-Nielsen: 'Vi avslutter gjerne fredsavtalen i Oslo', *Vårt Land*, 31.1.95

<sup>67</sup> Hauge, op cit., p. 57.

Away from the pressurising influence of civil society and human rights groups, and under considerable pressure from the Norwegians to compromise, the guerrilla representatives gave way on a number of the controversial issues regarding the Truth Commission.<sup>68</sup> It is not surprising, then, that Rosada considered the agreements signed in Oslo to be the “best”. Once back in Guatemala, though, the URNG had great problems selling the Truth Commission Agreement, both within its ranks and in the civil sector, where the agreement was regarded as weak.<sup>69</sup>

### **Attitudes to conflict; compromise and pragmatism**

In Chapter Eight, the particular strategies of conflict resolution visible in the Norwegian socio-cultural environment were discussed – e.g., tendencies towards conflict avoidance, circumvention and delimitation, and the emphasis on consensus and *compromise* at all levels of social interaction. To reiterate the earlier citation from Elise Boulding in that Chapter, “each social group has developed its own strategies of conflict resolution over time... These are the hidden peace-building strengths of every society.” Norwegian societal norms tend to support a pragmatic approach to conflicts, delimiting disputes to the “objectively” observable issues at any given time, and where possible breaking them down into constituent parts to be tackled separately over a period of time.

To re-cap, according to Archetti, Norwegians deem it inappropriate to bring past events and “unobservable” issues into a current conflict situation. “There is a strong tendency to set clear boundaries for the conflicts and to define certain problems as irrelevant.”<sup>70</sup> It is postulated here that it was possible to discern residual traces of “Norwegian” modes of conflict management in the various peace processes, in the Norwegian actors’ behaviour and expectations *vis à vis* the disputants.

In the Guatemalan conflict, in various subtle but significant ways the Norwegians attempted to alter the disputants’ perceptions of their conflict, and

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<sup>68</sup> A body designed to investigate human-rights violations. It was so watered down during the negotiations that eventually it proved to be ineffectual.

<sup>69</sup> Hauge, *op cit.*, p. 58.

their conflict aims. They cajoled one side or the other to take a more pragmatic approach, lessen their demands, and not expect to solve all their grievances at once. In general they urged both parties to demonstrate greater flexibility and to take a *gradual* approach, accepting compromise solutions in the interim. They sought to persuade the parties that the remaining controversies could be addressed in due course, once the democratisation process had been allowed to gain ground. In other words, not only did the Norwegian actors attempt to influence the parties' attitudes to substantive issues such as, say, human rights, they also plumbed deeper, trying to alter the way in which the Guatemalans viewed their conflict. They sought to change the *fundamental rules of the game*, not merely to address its manifestation in the form of contested issues.

For the protagonists starting meetings via the Middle East Oslo channel, the key difference between the Norwegian secret 'back channel' and formal talks in Madrid, Washington and elsewhere was that in Norway each side was prepared to imagine new strategies, to show a will to compromise, and to move from the easier to the harder issues, thereby developing trust between the parties. Secrecy was essential as "[t]hey knew that the failure of the talks in Washington was in large part due to the intense publicity which surrounded them."<sup>71</sup> The role of the Norwegian hosts was to play the role of facilitator, to enable, and encourage, this spirit of trust and compromise to develop:

The Norwegians would bring the parties together, use their good offices to promote trust and explain the difficulties each side faced to the other party. ... [T]he Norwegians would be prepared to help them reach an accommodation, by building trust and using their unbiased stance to interpret and clarify positions when the going became difficult.<sup>72</sup>

As noted by Uri Savir, "For Terje, the essence of the Oslo channel was to come up with creative solutions by a process of free thinking, not traditional hard-nosed bargaining. He believed that the relaxed Norwegian atmosphere would have an osmotic impact on the talks and hoped we could achieve a blend between Oslo and Jerusalem."<sup>73</sup> Abu Ala, Palestinian negotiator in the Oslo Channel, summed up this approach, and how it would be different from the

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<sup>70</sup> Archetti, 'Om maktens ideologi – en krysskulturell analyse', op cit., p. 50, my translation.

<sup>71</sup> Corbin op cit, p. 39.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 40.

concurrent rounds of negotiation in Washington that had reached an impasse, in his opening speech to the first meeting between the two sides during the Oslo Channel:

We have to deal directly with the issues, and not go back to history – to repeat our history over and over again. We have our point of view – that Palestine is for the Palestinians. You have your point of view – that Israel is for the Jews. If we go back into our history we will spend years arguing – without any achievements. We must go directly to the substance, to the points where we can agree and where we can't. We must take what we can agree and put it down and then go to where we have different points of view and find a way to deal with them. That's what we must do. We are not here to compete, to show who is cleverest or most intelligent.<sup>74</sup>

As Uri Savir noted, the Norwegian hosts became “environmental architects,”<sup>75</sup> performing the essential role of fostering this growing, and often fragile, attitude of trust and compromise.

This style of negotiation, which would ultimately provide the parties with a breakthrough, was drawn directly from Terje Rød Larsen's experience of Norwegian industrial negotiations. As Corbin explains:

In putting such an emphasis on a secret channel for discussions, Larsen was drawing upon his own experience of Trade Union politics in Norway. In his country the political structure between capital and labour is very different from that in Britain, America, France or Italy. Both sides see that there are conflicting interests, but there is also common ground. In Norway a negotiating structure exists, which means there are few strikes. Compromise and recognition of the national interest are the country's guiding principles. Larsen argues that the result of this has been responsible wages bargaining, sustaining a steady growth economy, which in turn has supported the country's extensive welfare state. The tradition has always been that, when the going gets tough, the chairman of the Congress of Trade Unions and the chairman of the Businessmen's Union get together over a quiet dinner and resolve the problems. There is thus a permanent clandestine channel in Norwegian labour relations acting as a safety valve.

It was natural, therefore, for Larsen to think in terms of front, or public, channels and back, or secret, channels when it came to the problem of the Middle East.<sup>76</sup>

A statement made by Jan Egeland in February 1996 on the Guatemalan peace process further illustrates the way in which the Norwegians emphasised compromise and delimitation of conflict issues, as well as the way in which they attempted to change the parties' underlying attitudes to their conflict. Emphasis is added in the citation to highlight the way in which Egeland's *own* expectations and beliefs are implicit in his choice of words. To caricature a

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<sup>73</sup> Savir op cit, p. 11

<sup>74</sup> Corbin op cit, p. 40.

<sup>75</sup> Savir, op cit. p. 42.

<sup>76</sup> Corbin, op cit, p. 40.

little, Norwegian common sense and pragmatism eventually prevailed, and the guerrillas learned the error of their ways:

Now for the first time we see light at the end of the tunnel. The new President has the power to enter into *the necessary compromises*. At the same time, the guerrillas have become more *realistic* than they were before. The *mistake* before was that they wanted to solve all the detailed problems\* within the framework of the agreement. But there are a number of things that must be left to the parliament and the continuing democratic process in the country, and *they have now understood that*.<sup>77</sup>

### Creating a 'Norwegian' environment for mediation.

*I had met them at the airport and they were very suspicious of whether the other party would come or not, and they said "we're certainly not going to stay in the same hotel"...and I said no, you're staying in different hotels, but we want to invite you to a party tonight. And we had food and drinks and the fireplace and I think that evening probably was one of the most crucial ones in the peace process. Because they met—some of them met for the first time after thirty years—and some of them had studied at the same university and came from the same village, and more or less "oh, are you still alive?", etcetera, and this embracing which was very moving. And they met each other very much on a human level.*

— Gunnar Stålsett on the first meeting of the Guatemalan delegations at *Heftyevillaen*, a grand wooden villa situated on a picturesque, forested mountainside, in secluded surroundings above the city of Oslo<sup>78</sup>

One of the striking continuities of recent Norwegian mediation initiatives is the emphasis on creating an atmosphere that is conducive to breaking down the barriers between often bitter enemies. Another, though less striking, continuity is the way in which these events resemble an idealisation of a typically 'Norwegian' environment. In attempting to create the perfect atmosphere for trust, compromise, and respect for human worth (values which are also thought of as being very 'Norwegian') the various mediators have created an atmosphere that is highly 'Norwegianised'. As suggested in Chapter Eight, the 'taken for granted' of the Norwegian socio-cultural environment include a number of representations and idealisations of 'the good life', Norwegian style. Arguably, it is these same themes that are used to create the special atmosphere that characterises Norwegian mediation initiatives.

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<sup>77</sup> Jan Egeland, to Øystein Franck-Nielsen, '*Nå ønsker de alle fred*', *Vårt Land*, 7.2.96, my translation. \* [detaljproblemer]

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Gunnar Stålsett, 16.12.97.

For the Norwegian mediators, the characteristic setting for talks tends to be an old, but fairly unpretentious, building set in beautiful Norwegian countryside (sometimes several hours drive from the city), which is peaceful, quiet, and equipped with rustic paraphernalia such as open log fires and log cabins, where the parties can relax and get to know each other in an informal setting. These scenes correlate very closely with several idealised representations of 'Norwegianess' or what is 'typically Norwegian' that are found in popular discourse: peace and quiet, love of nature and informality.

These themes have been noted by a number of negotiators and observers of the 'Norwegian Model.' According to Uri Savir:

Our meetings were usually held a few hours' drive from Oslo, in comfortable lodgings and pastoral settings. The meals tended to be lavish. The woods lured us out for walks and intimate chats.<sup>79</sup>

On August 14 we walked to a cabin a few miles away and sat by the fireplace planning out work once the agreement was signed ...<sup>80</sup>

Savir also stressed the informal atmosphere that the Norwegians created:

On our way into the mountains, while I was trying to decipher Norwegian road signs, Terje was indoctrinating me into the spirit of the talks - the 'Oslo spirit,' he called it. He evidently considered me a staid young technocrat, perhaps too stiff for the mission at hand. He explained that humour was an important element in the talks, and that the interchange would be informal ...<sup>81</sup>

Terje Rød Larsen also used humour in contexts that would be very unusual in more 'formal' negotiations. Here Uri Savir describes his first meeting with the PLO delegation:

Then Abu Ala was standing directly in front of me.

"Meet your Enemy Number One, Ahmed Qurei, better known as Abu Ala," said Terje.<sup>82</sup>

In similar vein, Jon Martin Trondalen, director of the research institute CESAR, described the environment created by his organisation when hosting peace talks as characterised by "traditional Norwegian hospitality", not too

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<sup>79</sup> Savir op cit, p. 30

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*,



ostentatious, but with a degree of luxury.<sup>83</sup> According to Trondalen, while the French style, for example at Rambouillet, emphasises long meals with many courses of French cuisine, the Norwegian emphasis is more on nature, and surroundings.<sup>84</sup>

The informal, ad hoc Norwegian style was also clearly visible in the Guatemalan peace process. Following the success of the first Oslo meeting for Guatemala (described above), Gunnar Stålsett even used his birthday party as a cover for a diplomatic initiative. In a phase where the Guatemalan negotiations were stalled, he ensured that both delegations were able to meet. He told me that the fact that both delegations were in Oslo simultaneously was not a coincidence, but rather a cleverly calculated move:

[T]here was one time in 1995 when the... Norwegian foreign minister had invited the government to come...; they had not invited the guerrilla. But then I invited the guerrilla to my 60th anniversary, and they came to that party, and they stayed in the same hotel, and of course this was in order to bring them together...<sup>85</sup>

Since they 'happened' to be staying at the same hotel, it was inevitable that they would end up speaking to each other informally, at least, in the hotel foyer, but at the same time Stålsett's birthday provided deniability should the parties be willing to talk; no-one could claim that the talks had been planned.<sup>86</sup> Stålsett mentioned this to me in the context of the informal atmosphere created in the first Oslo meeting which "continued to play into the process". This ploy worked; when asked whether the URNG (guerrilla) delegation would be meeting the Guatemalan military generals and the defence minister during their stay in Oslo, guerrilla leader Asturias replied:

We are not prepared for meeting them. We came to celebrate Gunnar Stålsett who is a good friend and who understands the situation in Guatemala very well, and to speak with Jan Egeland.<sup>87</sup>

After this incident, it was revealed that the two delegations had indeed spoken to each other, despite the fact that their respective stays at the hotel had only

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Trondalen, 26.02.99

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Conversation with Gunnar Stålsett, 16.12.97

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Øystein Franck-Nielsen: 'Døra på gløtt for nye Guatemalaland-runder', *Vårt Land*, 14.2.95, my translation.

overlapped by 24 hours.<sup>88</sup> Apparently, though, it was only after “a good deal of bar-diplomacy” that it had been possible to bring them together at all.<sup>89</sup>

Perhaps the prime example of the Norwegian combination of peace and quiet, informality and the use of nature in peace talks occurred at another stage in the Guatemalan peace process. Meetings were held at Petter Skauen’s country cottage [*hytte*] on an island near the town of Fredrikstad – a place where “peace and quiet” took on a whole new meaning. Skauen is renowned for a particularly informal personal style, and he has told of the way in which the peaceful, relaxed surroundings at his cottage influenced the talks:

I have taken, among others, representatives of the military, the landowners and the guerrillas with me to Norway. The latter actually stayed at my cottage [*hytte*] on Kråkerøy while they were here. It was really nice.\* It is easier to get close to each other, and you talk better together when you’re sitting on the terrace in the sunshine looking out at [the river] Glomma, you know...<sup>90</sup>

Skauen has described the rationale behind using the relaxed, informal and peaceful surroundings at his island cottage in exactly these (confidence-building) terms:

Much has been aimed at creating trust and confidence [*tillit og trygghet*], and I have taken people from both sides with me here to Kråkerøy so that they could relax. So there have been many ‘peace-negotiations’ here in the kitchen.<sup>91</sup>

It was not just Skauen who demonstrated this awareness of finding scenery conducive to instilling a positive attitude in the minds of the Guatemalan delegates, however. Arne Aasheim of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry (UD) also saw the Norwegian scenery as instrumental in bringing about a signing after the dramatic talks held in Oslo in June 1994. “One can certainly add that the beautiful sunshine [and] the birds that sang...contributed in their way to the signing of the agreement against all odds.”<sup>92</sup> On this occasion, talks were held, once again, in a rustic building on a wooded hillside overlooking the city of Oslo. On another visit, in February 1996, pictures

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<sup>88</sup> Øystein Franck-Nielsen: ‘*Men hva vil Five si til enkene?*’, *Vårt Land*, 16.2.95

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.* :-)

<sup>90</sup> Petter Skauen interviewed by Marianne Torp, *Familien*, December 1995, *op cit*, my translation. [*Man kommer lettere nær hverandre og snakker bedre sammen når man sitter på terrassen i solskinnet og ser på Glomma, vet du...*]

<sup>91</sup> Petter Skauen, to Terje Carlsen, ‘*Det velsignede jordskjelvet*’, *Fredrikstad Blad*, 1996, *op cit*, my translation.

<sup>92</sup> Peter Beck: ‘*Guatemala-avtalen i havn: Gjennombrudd i siste øyeblikk*’, *Aftenposten*, 24.6.94

appeared in the Norwegian press of Jan Egeland walking in one of Oslo's famous parks with Colonel Hugo Aguilar of the Guatemalan armed forces and Commander Rodrigo Asturias from the URNG, snow lying deep underfoot.<sup>93</sup>

Jane Corbin has written of the "Norwegian style of solving problems by communing with nature"<sup>94</sup> in the context of the Middle East Oslo Channel, and there have been other occasions, in other peace processes, where the delegations have suddenly ended up on a forest trail. In the summer of 1998, for instance, talks held for the Cyprus conflict were conducted in open air surroundings, walking in *Nordmarka* forest outside Oslo.

The essence of the 'Norwegian style' of facilitation is to foster trust between the protagonists. This atmosphere of trust has been responsible for much of Norway's successes; however it does have a potential disadvantage, namely the "re-entry problem" – where delegates find that agreements reached via mediation cannot be 'sold' to their 'constituencies' at home. This problem may be compounded if delegates return to their home environments and find that the trust so carefully built up and nurtured by the Norwegians between *individuals* cannot be transferred to others in their society, or to its institutions, in an abstract way. Eduardo Archetti thought the Norwegian model of peace work to have serious limitations in this respect because he believed that Norwegians and South Americans have very different notions of what "trust" is:

In Norway they have the model that you... aggregate from persons into institutions. But I would say that in many societies there is a lot of discontinuity between persons and institutions. You can have a totally corrupt institution in Latin America – imagine Mexico, the police – but inside you can have very nice persons, but these persons will not transfer to the institutions their personal qualities, because there are institutional dynamics... Norwegians believe that everything is possible from the personal to the institutional... This idea that you can intervene, that there is a civil society that is functioning in Norway, that is open, and that everyone will tell you the truth.<sup>95</sup>

Archetti believed that it is this different notion of trust that may limit the effectiveness of Norwegian peace processes:

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<sup>93</sup> See, for example, Øystein Franck-Nielsen, 'Nå ønsker de alle fred', *Vårt Land*, 7.2.96, op cit.

<sup>94</sup> Corbin, op cit., p. 87

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Professor Eduardo Archetti, 25.09.1998

What the Norwegians have achieved... [is] taking these initiatives that are very special, very informal, with this idea that you put enemies together in the same room and at the end they will be friends,...and that then you will develop some kind of trust...

Because the Norwegian model is that trust is abstract, trust... must be generalised, because all human beings are equal and... if you give the opportunity all human beings are kind, and so forth. And I think they have been using this kind of approach, that is related to the way many Norwegians and Norwegian culture sees – defines – personal relations and human beings. And then they imagine that from this abstract trust you can develop *particular* trust. ...But once the persons change, you see, the other things, like in Israel –.... In Guatemala it's the same – the Generals change, and it's new Generals, and they're not interested in many things.

I would say this is one of the limitations of this model, that this model is related [to] Norwegian cultural values. ...How Israelis and Guatemalans define trust is quite different, and once these personal networks are not working, ...then you cannot transfer the trust that you gave to Rabin to Netanyahu... Because Norwegians have this perspective... in all this, to personal relations. You break down mistrust and you create trust, confidence: Arafat will tell about his family to Rabin, and Rabin will tell about his family, and the sufferings of his family, and at the end they will – you see? But one of the main problems is that when you are dealing with power, and there are power relations and institutions, then it's not one *General*, it's one *institution*. ...The irony with Guatemala is [that] there is history, dynamics that are very difficult to change. But of course, many things have been achieved in Guatemala, I would not deny this; what I will say is that this model can not be used, the model of developing individual and personal trust can not be transferred to institutions...<sup>96</sup>

## Final Remarks

This chapter has explored some of the recurrent features of Norwegian peace processes, and related these to the normative and discursive continuities of the Norwegian socio-cultural environment introduced in Chapter 8. The aim has not been to assert with any certainty the existence of the particular “correlations” that I have identified here between customary modes of behaviour in the Norwegian socio-cultural environment and the activities of Norwegian mediators. Rather, the aim has been to show that such a relationship exists, not in a concrete, causal way, but through the ‘accumulation of circumstantial evidence’ across a range of cases.

The idea that individuals’ societal and cultural background will be implicated in their modes of behaviour, tendencies and attitudes is a problematic notion for many people. Those who emphasise the primacy of agency above structure, for instance, would assert that an individual *can* make ‘rational’ decisions, quite independently of the socio-cultural environment which she/he happens to be born into. Furthermore, an approach which emphasises the

constituting effects of culture on individuals (and vice versa), as this thesis does, can be criticised for creating “categories” of people based on social group, or generalising and reifying “national” characteristics. A project such as this lays itself open to charges of essentialism: that it implies that individuals within a particular group share characteristics which render them distinctive *as* a group, and hence *different* from other groups. Moreover, by choosing to emphasise the socio-cultural setting of individuals, one can be criticised for partaking in the narrative construction of a community that is ultimately ‘imagined’; thus, rather than being emancipatory, one is merely reinforcing the version of truth conveyed in existing dominant discourses. It may even seem as if a positivist stance is being taken – that one can ‘observe’, for instance, a socio-cultural norm *causing* an individual to behave in a certain way.

The above criticisms, however, would arise out of a misunderstanding of the position that this thesis takes on the relationship between an individual and her/his socio-cultural environment. The notion of practical consciousness is central here: most behaviour is habitual, as opposed to consciously motivated, and therefore social norms will be followed until a situation is encountered as problematic. An individual will then exercise her/his powers of agency to re-evaluate the situation, thus the ultimate influence of the socio-cultural environment is rooted in its members’ agency.

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<sup>96</sup> Interview with Archetti, *op cit.*

## Chapter Ten: Concluding Remarks and Wider Implications of the Thesis

*If I am inclined to assume that a mouse has come into being by spontaneous generation out of grey rags and dust, I shall do well to examine those rags very closely to see how a mouse may have hidden in them, how it may have got there and so on. But if I am convinced that a mouse cannot come into being from these things, then this investigation will perhaps be superfluous.*

– Ludwig Wittgenstein.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis has adopted a post-positivist, hermeneutic approach, seeking to pick up on actors' self-understandings, and to explore the myriad ways in which social actors (mediators and fellow members of their social group) are *constituted* by their lived experience within their socio-cultural environment (and, in turn, contribute to *constituting* this environment). It is also recognised that my *own* self-understandings and lived experience are implicated in my action – e.g, my choice of study. After all, the positivist notion that social scientific inquiry can be carried out by a neutral 'observer' devoid of values, attitudes and presuppositions has been thoroughly rejected. I am conscious that this thesis has – just like the texts I have examined – been an exercise in 'narrativising'; that I have been drawing upon my own background convictions and 'stocks of knowledge' when constructing the various chapters, or conceiving of the project as a whole. Obviously, though, any insights into my own way of perceiving are limited to the realm of discursive consciousness: to that to which I can give linguistic expression.

Two main points emerge from a host of details. Firstly, my experience of being half British, half Norwegian, and therefore 'straddling' two cultures, is centrally implicated in my choice of topic. On my many visits to (and experiences of living in) Norway, the many *subtle* differences between the Norwegian and British socio-cultural settings and socially customary practices became apparent to me, becoming a personal preoccupation. Secondly, I have a strong personal commitment to the value of peace work, which (eventually) led me to this field of

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, I, 26e, 52.

study. When, in 1992, I first happened upon cases of Norwegian “peacemongering”, these two ‘strands’ of my personal experience, beliefs and identity became intertwined. To tie this in with the opening quote from Wittgenstein, it is clear that personal beliefs and inclinations are implicated both in *what* one chooses to study (and what one omits), *how* one does so, and ultimately, the validity of the topic chosen.

A brief note on the development of this thesis may aid the process of drawing it to a close. Having chosen my topic of study, I set about acquainting myself with the mediation literature. Before long I discovered that there was a distinct ‘gap’ at precisely the point that interested me: namely, the relationship between mediators (or the activity of mediation) on the one hand, and the culture or society from which mediation emerges as a prioritised activity, on the other. The lack of adequate theory for my topic meant that the emphasis of the thesis shifted, from being primarily concerned with the Norwegian case, to a more theoretical emphasis. The theoretical ‘vehicle’ had to be built before I could drive it. The aim therefore became to ‘plug’ the gap I had discovered, and then, using the case of Norway, to attempt a practical application of my theoretical ideas. Hence the two-part, theoretical–“empirical” structure of this thesis. As discussed in Chapter 3, other ‘gaps’ in the mediation theory, from the perspective of my project, soon emerged. These will be summed up briefly, before drawing together the various threads of my analysis and discussing the wider implications of the study.

In the existing texts on mediation theory, remarkably little attention has been paid to the *culture* of the mediator, or to the socio-cultural setting from which s/he emerges. The culture of the *disputants* has been considered a little more often, but this area too is sparse. Mediators’ identities, motives and self-understandings are generally given superficial treatment if they are mentioned at all. There is a tendency to regard mediators as rational actors, undertaking cost-benefit calculations before choosing to intervene in a particular conflict. Further, this “decision” is based on the “benefits” or “rewards” they can hope to accrue from such a venture – there is a distinct lack of emphasis on the normative or value

dimension in the existing mediation literature. Moreover, the implication frequently appears to be that mediators can simply be ‘observed’ from outside, without tapping into their articulated (or indeed *unarticulated*) reasons for mediating. Little *sustained* attention has been paid to specific mediators or third parties over and above their involvement in a given conflict situation; the focus generally remains on the conflict context at hand. Where attention *has* been paid to the mediator’s ‘background’, this has been limited to discussions of a mediator’s “constituency”.

Furthermore, much of the existing literature on mediation exhibits what can be described as a “Realist” understanding of mediatory “power” and capabilities. Authors such as Touval, Zartman and Bercovitch emphasise the capabilities of ‘biased’, ‘weighty’ mediators over their less “powerful” counterparts. A one-dimensional, behavioural view of power prevails, attributing prime importance to the realm of concrete, observable behaviour, and to quantifiable “resources.” Although “mediation-with-muscle” has been proven to elicit rapid and dramatic “results” in certain contexts, it also has serious limitations which should not be overlooked. In general, a more nuanced treatment of mediatory power is called for, especially when dealing with conflicts which are based on issues of belief or ideology, rather than territory. Such conflicts are particularly immune to being resolved (as opposed to merely *contained* or *managed*) by sheer “muscle” alone.

It is hoped that this thesis, by taking a post-positivist, hermeneutic and structurationist approach to mediatory identity and motives, has furthered the understanding of mediators and the activity of mediation. Introducing the notion of the mediator’s *socio-cultural and normative setting* (rather than merely “constituency”) encourages us to view the mediator as a *socially situated actor*, constituted by the historical, cultural and normative continuities of her/his socio-cultural environment (and also, through her/his mediatory activity, contributing to constituting these continuities in either an ‘innovative’ or ‘reproductive’ fashion). This wider notion draws attention, for instance, to the spatio-temporal positioning of the actor within the *longue durée* of her/his socio-cultural group. The limited notion of “constituency” does not alert us to the contextuality of action in the same way: the collective memory traces, traditions, social norms, and cultural and



linguistic resources which contribute to constituting the mediating actor (and her/his conduct and expectations) are not so much as hinted at. The “constituency” has a purely instrumental role, as a specific group of the mediator’s contemporaries (external to the mediator) which either directs its attention towards mediatory activity, or must be ‘answered to’.<sup>2</sup> The structures of the mediator’s socio-cultural environment, by contrast, are in many ways more *internal* to the mediator than external (cf. Giddens’ view of social ‘structure’); they do not *cause* or *prevent* action, but are fundamentally and reflexively implicated in every exercise of agency. The mediator’s everyday, lived experience is constitutive of her/his lifeworld and practical consciousness, which remain always at her/his back, intrinsic to the ability to ‘go on’ in daily life.

Conceiving of a mediator as a socially and culturally constituted actor enriches our understanding of mediatory ‘motives’ and capabilities. For instance, taking a critical structurationist and lifeworld analytic view of social actors highlights the fact that action may not even *be* consciously motivated; there are limits to agents’ knowledgeability, and much routine behaviour is merely a matter of following the constitutive rules one has internalised from one’s socio-cultural setting over the course of one’s lived experience. The existing mediation literature’s fixation with “motives” therefore occludes the important domain of practical consciousness as a motivating factor in conduct, mediation included. Moreover, the constitutive effects of the mediator’s socio-cultural and normative environment on, e.g., the expectations, values and taken-for-granted assumptions which comprise the individual’s ‘lifeworld’ will be directly implicated in the way a mediator, or fellow member of her/his social group, reacts in the face of a given situation – e.g., encountering an international conflict, or taking a stance in relation to mediation work prioritised by one’s government. Although the actor may feel that s/he is confronting the situation “alone”, and able to “decide” on a course of action, in fact s/he is also constituted *a tergo* by a host of internalised cultural

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<sup>2</sup> As such, it is portrayed in the mediation literature as impinging on the mediator’s behaviour and manoeuvrability in an observable, ‘causal’ way.

traditions, collective memory traces, social norms, socially customary practices, and individual competencies gained through the process of socialisation within a particular group. Neglecting the fundamental relationship between a mediator and her/his socio-cultural background, then, leads to a simplified and superficial treatment of mediatory identity, behaviour and motives.

The mediator's socio-cultural and normative background is also implicated in her/his capabilities as a third party. Possessing 'power' as a mediator should be viewed as far more than simply the ability to exert *leverage*. Ability to affect the attitudinal dimension of a conflict is often equally, if not more, important. The French and Raven taxonomy of social power bases draws our attention to the effects of the utilisation of different kinds of 'power' on the *attitudes* and private *beliefs* of the objects of influence; to the fact that being perceived as e.g., "legitimate" or "knowledgeable" can also enhance a potential mediator's standing with the disputants. This will depend, in part, on the mediator's spatio-temporal position within the *longue durée* of her/his socio-cultural group – factors such as a Colonial past, or a history as aid donor will play in here.

In addition, the notions of 'facilitative' and 'reputation' power added by this thesis are inextricably bound up with the mediator's socio-cultural positioning. Facilitative power, specific to the area of mediation, refers to capabilities that *facilitate* the mediation process and enhance a potential mediator's chances of being accepted and exerting influence in a conflict situation. Included under this concept are such attributes as *flexibility*, enough *affluence* to support a mediation process and host meetings, cover travel costs etc., the ability to provide a suitable setting and facilities for talks, and the ability to provide *continuity* as a third party. 'Reputation' power refers both the *influencer's* reputation (in this sense it resembles 'legitimate power'), and to the possible effects of a mediation process on the *disputants'* reputations. For instance, a previously ostracised party to a conflict can be brought into the 'international fold' if a credible mediator endows it with status at the negotiating table. Both these 'power bases' will be rooted in the mediator's situated identity, as this is implicated in, e.g., the support given or

withheld by fellow group members, and the position of the mediator's group internationally.

Furthermore, the 'power' inherent in being able to exercise agency as a mediator in the first place, or implicit in being able to render international mediation a priority within one's social group, has been overlooked by the existing mediation theory. This is also closely linked to the potential mediator's positioning within her/his social group, and the 'power' (in terms of access to resources, such as dominant discourses) that s/he commands there. The mediator's power within her/his socio-cultural setting will also depend on the degree of constraint s/he experiences there, which will in part be a function of the spatio-temporal distancing of the setting – i.e., how 'malleable' its normative and institutional continuities are to the workings of agency.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, whether or not mediation as an activity is supported within a social group (enabling a potential mediator to exercise her/his agential powers) will depend on the normative continuities of the social setting and the group's prominent self-representations, and how well these accord with the notion of 'mediating'. It will also depend on the extant cultural and linguistic resources in the social stock of knowledge which are available for communicative actors to draw upon, and how well these lend themselves to narratives supporting mediation and peace work.

In sum, an enhanced treatment of mediator 'power' should take into account the ways in which a mediator's situated identity and socio-cultural background are implicated in the forms of 'power' the third party is able to draw upon. 'Power' should not be equated with economic and military 'might'. A more nuanced exploration of mediatory *capabilities*, examining such things as mediators' (socio-culturally constituted) attitudes, taken-for-granted assumptions and modes of behaviour, and how these impinge upon the negotiation process, leads to a more subtle understanding of the many ways in which a third party can exert *influence* in a conflict situation.

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<sup>3</sup> This depends in part on how deeply embedded they are in time and space, and also whether or not a 'novel' situation has been encountered where there is greater scope for agents to exercise their transformative powers.

One scenario in which a potential mediator's 'power' to engage in mediation in the first place is particularly pronounced is if s/he has a constituency which is *directly* supportive of mediation work. In order to examine whether a "constituency" *for mediation* can be built up, greater attention must be paid to the potential mediator's socio-cultural situatedness. The existing historical, discursive, normative and institutional continuities of the socio-cultural group are of particular relevance here. A social group's prevailing norms for behaviour in the face of conflict, for instance, are relevant to this question.

In order to better understand how a mediator and her/his socio-cultural environment are mutually constitutive, the concept of 'lifeworld' can usefully be drawn upon. The lifeworld encompasses the unproblematic stock of background convictions, assumptions, rules and 'knowledge' which social actors draw upon in action and interaction in everyday life, as well as being the ever-present backdrop to, and *arena for* action. By introducing a structurationist and discourse analytic concept of the lifeworld concept and applying it to the realm of mediation, a more nuanced picture of how mediators (and other members of their social group) are constituted by their everyday lived experience in their socio-cultural setting, and by its normative, discursive and institutional continuities, can be attained. By following Habermas's division of the lifeworld into three structural dimensions, *viz.* culture, society, and personality, we can see the lifeworld as containing, respectively, knowledge of cultural traditions, socially customary practices, and individual competencies. Further, culture and language are *constitutive for the lifeworld itself*. Large portions of the lifeworldly knowledge are socially derived, and intersubjectively shared; other elements are specific to the individual and her/his autobiographical history. The social actor – in the case of this thesis, a mediator or fellow member of her/his group – can never 'step outside' her/his lifeworld; it remains always at her/his back. The unproblematic, unquestioned background of the lifeworld enters into the mediator's (or "constituent's") self-understandings, tacit assumptions and expectations – it is thus fundamentally implicated in the actor's decisions, modes of conduct, and tendencies when confronted by a situation which she/he must interpret and act upon.

A structurationist, discourse analytic concept of the lifeworld therefore provides a theoretical conceptualisation of the relationship between the individual (mediator) and her/his socio-cultural environment. Giddens' structuration theory and Habermas's notion of the lifeworld are sufficiently compatible to enable the development of such a concept, due to their common emphasis on the importance of everyday experience, practical consciousness, and their similar views of agents' knowledgeable ability. By paying careful attention to actors' discursive articulations of their self-understandings, (or the articulations of outsiders interacting with an in-group) attempts can be made to 'tap into' actors' tacit practical consciousness, or most basic lifeworldly knowledge, which enables them to 'go on' in day-to-day life and colours their behaviour. This practical consciousness or lifeworldly background is of central importance to understanding the tendencies of actors who partake in, or choose to embark upon, mediatory activity.

The case of Norway's recent peace activism provides an interesting illustration of the relationship between mediators and their socio-cultural setting; moreover, the sheer number of mediation attempts for such a small population is noteworthy. The Norwegian historical experience is characterised by a short history of independence, and experience of great strategic vulnerability. Memory traces of foreign rule and German occupation during WWII are deeply embedded elements of the social stock of knowledge. Norwegians have historically demonstrated a commitment to the cause of peace, which is rooted in strong Social Democratic, Christian and humanitarian traditions. Moreover, the domestic society has a developed system of mechanisms for conflict resolution, of a remarkably early vintage. Since the end of the Cold War, and the "no" vote to joining the EU, Norwegian foreign political élites have striven to create an activist role for Norway as international "peace-maker", partly as a strategy for combatting growing feelings of vulnerability and marginalisation. Norway's privileged speakers have, over the last decade, frequently drawn upon the country's historical experiences in order to justify and naturalise the current peace activism. Representations of Norway as a small, vulnerable, but "peaceful" nation appear frequently in the dominant discourses on Norwegian identity, while the outside world is constructed in these

discourses as threatening and volatile. In this way, peace work has increasingly become an institutionalised aspect of Norwegian foreign policy; it would appear that a constituency of sorts for mediation *has* been built up. The fact that this has been possible is due in large part to Norway's particular historical experience and the prevailing norms, values and cultural/ linguistic resources in Norwegian society, but it would also seem that the country's 'privileged storytellers' have used their transformative agential powers to *construct* a narrative in which peace- and mediation work accord well with the existing structural continuities of Norwegian society, such that they appear 'natural' or 'common-sensical' activities to engage in. Rather than Norway being an inherently "peaceful" place, dominant discourses have constructed a 'regime of truth' which holds this to be the case, and which it is difficult to think outside of.

The case of Norway could therefore be valuable for showing how "peace", rather than war, can become a central element in a social group's processes of identity construction, and how mediation can become a prioritised foreign policy activity that meets with little resistance within a particular group. A society's privileged speakers *can*, in other words, influence the development of a national narrative, for instance by selecting "peacemongers" rather than warlords from the group's cultural resources when seeking to establish figures from the past as national "heroes". Clearly, though, the extent to which the Norwegian experience could be repeated in other socio-cultural contexts would be a matter for further research.

The case of Norway is also important for students of mediation because of the "Norwegian model" of cooperation which has developed between the government and NGOs in many areas of foreign policy, not least peace work. The fluid and flexible mediatory system which this model provides (*when* it functions well) means that a wide spectrum of 'power' bases can be drawn upon. For instance, NGOs can provide invaluable academic or scientific expertise, grass-roots knowledge of a conflict region, or a 'halo effect' caused by, e.g., sustained aid work in a particular region. The model also allows for a high degree of deniability, and provides a large number of personnel, with varying expertise and experience, for

peace and mediation work. It enables many limited, inexpensive, low-key peace initiatives to be 'tested out', thus, potentially, leading to a peace process at an earlier stage in a conflict than would otherwise have been possible – potentially saving lives and human suffering. The "Norwegian model" is clearly rooted in the specific historical and structural continuities of Norwegian society, so whether or not it could be emulated elsewhere is a moot point. On the other hand, it is conceivable that slightly different models could emerge in other socio-cultural settings, with the same basic ingredient of cooperation and the pooling of resources between a government and NGOs.

Since social actors (mediators included) and their socio-cultural setting are considered by this thesis to be mutually constitutive, it follows that the socially accepted rules for conduct, cultural values and discursive continuities of the environment in which mediators have been socialised, and their experiences from everyday life and communicative action within this setting, will be implicated in their conduct, expectations and attitudes – among other things, in the face of conflict. The structural continuities of the socio-cultural setting will have entered into the individual actors' lifeworlds, forming a stock of unproblematic background knowledge and competencies, socially learned modes of 'appropriate' behaviour, etc. This thesis suggests, then, that the constitutive effect of the socio-cultural environment will be fundamentally implicated in the mediator's tendencies, capabilities and conduct as a third party.

However, the relationship between a mediator and her/his socio-cultural environment, and the practical ways in which the latter is implicated in the former's mediatory activity, is opaque and difficult to pin down. Not least, it is difficult to ascertain how the socio-cultural setting is implicated in an actor's attitudes and behaviour because the constitutive effects of the socio-cultural environment will predominantly have entered into the actor's tacit, practical consciousness. Using a hermeneutic, discourse analytic approach is the only way to access another actor's self-understandings, yet when these self-understandings are unarticulated, or pre-reflective – 'that's just the way I *am*', significant methodological difficulties arise for the researcher. Furthermore, the actor's articulated self-understandings or

rationalisations for her/his action may not reveal the whole, or only, story. The knowledgeability of agents is bounded, and self-insight is no simple matter. Still, this does not grant the researcher *carte blanche* to determine the actor's tacit knowledge as she/he thinks fit. There are, however, methods of 'tapping into' the tacit, constitutive rules of a social setting, although ultimately such a venture must remain speculative, to an extent. In some ways it is easier to determine the constituting effects of *agency* upon a socio-cultural setting – especially by paying attention to the productive effects of discourse – than vice versa.

In Norwegian society, there are a number of dominant normative and discursive continuities which are referred to in actors' own articulations on their socio-cultural setting, and which have been observed by writers on Norwegian society in group members' patterns of behaviour and articulated self-understandings. Norms relating to conflict behaviour have been commented upon; for instance, it is generally suggested that Norwegians exhibit a tendency to avoid or delimit overt conflicts wherever possible, and that they place great emphasis on compromise. It would also appear, from actors' articulations, that "peace" is highly valued within Norwegian culture.

When examining Norwegian peace initiatives, it is sometimes apparent that Norwegian mediators exhibit some of the tendencies and modes of conduct which have been attributed to their socio-cultural group. When a number of different Norwegian mediators exhibit similar patterns of behaviour or styles of intervention, or provide similar articulations of their self-understandings as mediators, this suggests that the mutually constitutive relationship between mediators and their socio-cultural setting is indeed significant.

This thesis suggests that a full and nuanced understanding of mediatory 'motives', identity, tendencies and capabilities cannot be acquired unless a mediator's 'situated identity' is taken into account, and the mutually constitutive relationship between the socio-cultural background and the social actor addressed. If our understanding of the activity of mediation is to be enhanced – and by extension our chances of resolving conflicts which create untold human suffering,



further study of the relationship between a mediator and her/his socio-cultural background will be both useful and fruitful.

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